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The historical development and transformation of the International Izmir Fair

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Abstract

The perspective on the Izmir Fair, possessing both national and international significance in the history of the Republic, forms the main theme of this study, dating from the present day of the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the Republic. Established in 1923 during the Izmir Economic Congress, the fair gained global recognition after moving to Kültürpark. Throughout its century-long history, it endured the challenges of World War II and the Cold War, serving as a diplomatic platform. Despite hosting the International Union of Fairs (UFI), Kültürpark faced a dilemma in becoming profit-oriented, leading to a lack of clear direction. In 1990, Kültürpark was recognized as a 2nd-degree natural and historical site by the Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Regional Board but controversy arose with the Izmir Fair Kültürpark Environmental Planning and Fair Complex Architectural Project Competition, conflicting with preservation efforts. This controversy exacerbated the tension between Izmir Metropolitan Municipality and professional chambers, persisting today. This study aims to shed light on how Kültürpark, recognized for hosting significant international achievements during the Republic era and considered one of the symbols of the Republic, has deviated from its essence in contemporary times due to various urban development activities and decisions.

Keywords
Izmir Fair, Kültürpark, Urban memory, History of the Republic, Commons

Introduction

Located in the city center and assuming various roles, Kültürpark has been one of the significant public spaces in Izmir, persisting from the past to the present. In other words, Kültürpark offers participants multifaceted, layered, and communal spaces with cultural, political, entertainment, relaxation, and green space elements. With these aspects, Kültürpark has become one of the architectural-sociological images shaping urban memory. While becoming a focal point for urban dwellers, Kültürpark also creates different focal points for itself, including organizational and architectural elements (such as gates, pavilions, museums, etc.). Over the 100-year period from 1923 to the present, Kültürpark has experienced changing and evolving functions, sometimes emphasizing its role as a fairground and sometimes as a park. However, above all, its endurance for a century as a symbol of the Republic and modernity, persisting in national and international arenas, has been the most significant aspect.

The study investigates the Kültürpark's urban space, common and its place in social memory, as well as the relationship between space and memory. Located centrally in Izmir, Kültürpark took its place in the city's memory as a fair, trade, and cultural area when the Izmir International Fair, founded in the first year of the Republic, was moved to Kültürpark in 1936. The park has undergone transformations and changes over the years, shaping its present form.

The development and evolution of cities are shaped by past events, cultural activities, and social movements. In this context, urban spaces, with their history, constitute a significant element of urban memory, forming the identity of cities. Izmir, hosting many different civilizations throughout its history, is a city that encompasses cultural riches. In 1922, during our struggle for independence, a major fire

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broke out in the city of Izmir, resulting in significant damage. The belief in the future and our values brought by the Victory of Liberation (Turkish War of Independence) gave our nation the strength of revival. Immediately after our victory in the Turkish War of Independence, the Izmir Economic Congress was convened in 1923 to outline new roadmaps, a testament to this belief. The transformation of the Congress into an exhibition showcasing local products was an important first step towards the future formalization of the Izmir Fair. Starting with its inaugural and official edition in 1927, the *9 Eylül Sergisi* (September 9 Exhibition) began to represent the outward-facing aspect of Izmir and Türkiye (Turkey). Starting in the early years of the Republic, the Izmir International Fair, which moved to Kültürpark in 1936, has enriched the urban memory by hosting not only trade fairs but also trade, culture, and other social activities. As a space that bears witness to the city's history, this location is a crucial formation for understanding the city's history and carrying it into the future.

The changes the Izmir Fair has undergone have a long history of debate. Founded with an exhibition during the Izmir Economic Congress in 1923, the Izmir International Fair evolved into the September 9 Exhibition in 1927. This exhibition's participation from domestic and foreign institutions established it as a modern and international status indicator for Izmir. Despite the global economic crisis of 1929, the exhibitions continued as the September 9 Exhibition in 1933. By transitioning from an exhibition to a fair, it expanded its scope successfully during that era. Various events with fair identities increased participation, highlighting the need for a new location. A crucial turning point came with the relocation of activities to Kültürpark, a prominent public space in Konak district, which was once home to the Armenian neighborhood and St. Stepanos Church before the 1922 fire (Kültürpark, 2024). After the fire, the area lost its previous identity and developed a new one. With traditional fairs moving to Kültürpark in 1936, exhibitions replaced fairs, marking another transformative period. This shift saw a significant rise in local and foreign participants, government pavilions, and visitors, enhancing Türkiye's recognizability and position. From 1939 to 1947, the fair faced reduced participation due to World War II. During the Cold War, it became a platform showcasing global relations. These fairs, characterized by their international, national and local qualities, became multifaceted focal points. A notable aspect of the Izmir Fair was its unique position as a significant fair held sustainably every year. Serving both commercial and cultural purposes, the fair prompted new demands until the 2000s, leading to uncontrolled urbanization. The proposal to build an underground parking lot and the subsequent legal processes further marked significant changes, turning the park from a center of commercial and cultural activities into a site of tension. The perception of the Izmir Fair has changed over time due to political, social and urban transformations, yet it has grown in commercial activities. The opening of a new fairground in 2015 has reduced it to an ordinary green space. Although the Izmir Fair, established in the Republic's early years and continuing today, has lost its modernity and international qualities, its historical value should not be overlooked.

Figure 1. Izmir Kültürpark

Source: Google Earth (02.02.2024)

Literature Review: The History of Studies on the Izmir Fair

Between the 1950s and the 1980s, the Izmir Fair was one of Turkey's most significant cultural, economic, and political events. Although the fair has lost some prominence from its peak years, it continues to exist. Literature reviews on the fair, which possesses a multi-layered and multifaceted identity, reveal numerous studies related to Kültürpark, where the fair experienced its most vibrant periods.

Kültürpark, as a significant component of Izmir's collective memory, has played an important role in urban life through various functions over different periods. Since its opening in 1936, it hosted the Izmir

International Fair, losing this function when the fair was relocated in 2015. This change marked a turning point in the identity of the park and in the collective memory of Izmir's residents. Emel Kayın (2015), in her article titled *Anımsama ve Unutmanın Temsilleri: Izmir Enternasyonal Fuarı ve Kültürpark'ın Hafıza Katmanları* emphasizes that the Izmir International Fair and Kültürpark have been significant elements of the city of Izmir in socio-economic, cultural, ideological and spatial dimensions. She also highlights that through the transformations experienced from the past to the present, the area has become a multi-layered memory space. According to Kayın (2015), Kültürpark has undergone changes in four fundamental periods throughout its historical process: from the 1940s to the 1950s, Kültürpark served as a stage for Republican modernization; from the 1950s to the 1980s, the period described as the era of worn ideals and settled habits where entertainment culture came to the forefront; from the 1980s to the 2000s, the period characterized by popular culture and consumer consumption, where the functions of Kültürpark and the fair intertwined; and from the 2000s to the present, a period of searching for representations of the past and the construction of the future following the relocation of the fair (Kayın, 2015). In this context, memory layers were examined through the representations of remembrance and forgetting, which create different identity definitions for the place. Kayın (2015) proposed a conservation framework for the memory layers of the Izmir International Fair and Kültürpark within the legacy of the Modern era. This framework aims to integrate the park, which holds an important place in the city's memory, well into urban life and to sustainably relate the memory layers with contemporary living (Pasin, Kılınç & Yılmaz, 2015).

During the establishment process of the Republic, Kültürpark, which hosted the Izmir Fair, played a significant role both spatially and ideologically in the construction of the state, in line with the economic goals of the period (Altan, 2015). Altan's study titled *Izmir Fuarı, Kültürpark ve Türkiye'nin İnşası* examines how the new urban identity, defined through the modernization and contemporary policies of the era, was represented in public spaces that encompassed exhibition, entertainment, and leisure functions. It also evaluates the shaping process of new urban life practices that occurred and were intended to occur in the newly constructed spaces (Altan, 2015). According to Altan, both the fair and the park served not only as spaces for displaying a modern and urban identity but also played an active role in continuously reproducing this identity through spatial practices in the park's cultural and entertainment structures.

Various studies have been conducted to explore how Kültürpark forms a collective ground in terms of social and individual identities and memories. Can and Drinkwater (2015) analyzed their oral history interviews with Kültürpark users through Punter's conceptual framework of activities, physical structure, and meaning that transforms space into a 'place.' The analyses revealed that activities such as dining, entertainment, concerts, strolling, and sports, as well as physical spaces like casinos, tea gardens, pavilions, theaters, and amusement parks, are key reminders in data collection, deeply intertwined with Kültürpark's history. According to Can and Drinkwater (2015), the ideological, nostalgic, and social meanings attributed to these activities and spaces play a significant role in the identity construction of ordinary urban users. In this context, it was emphasized that Kültürpark users, regardless of their ethnic, sexual, cultural, and class differences, acquire a collective Izmir identity. Values such as family, childhood, entertainment culture, and democracy are reconstructed and positively reinforced in memories as they are orally shared through the reminder activities, spaces, and their associated meanings. However, current issues such as overcrowding, insecurity, pollution, and urbanization interrupt this construction process and lead to memory distortion. This study essentially presents a cognitive memory map of Kültürpark.

After reviewing the literature, this study aims to summarize the 100-year multi-layered history of the Izmir Fair and establish a foundation for transferring this knowledge to the future. Given that collective memory is constructed through the shared experiences, testimonies, agreements, and conflicts of individuals in public spaces, future scenarios for Kültürpark cannot be considered independently of this memory (Pasin, Kılınç & Yılmaz, 2015). In this context, the study aims to provide a comprehensive account of the park's memory layers. The primary goal of the study is to offer a framework for existing research in this field and to establish a solid basis for future research. Accordingly, the historical changes of the Izmir Fair, its place in collective memory, and potential future projections will be examined in detail.

Aims and Method

The aim of this study is to examine the spatial and functional changes of the Izmir Fair, which stood out with its socio-cultural, economic, and contemporary roles during the founding period of the Republic of Türkiye, in the urban memory. The article that addresses the urban memory and commonality of Kültürpark examines its changing and transforming aspects, its functionality, and the actors responsible

for these changes. The tragic position of Kültürpark, caught between the conflicting ideas and tensions among the actors, as well as the concerns of development and profit, is questioned.

The selected period of 1923-2023 has been analyzed chronologically by identifying the transformations and turning points of the Izmir Fair in the city based on the information obtained from sources and individuals. Given that this 100-year period coincides with the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye, it is aimed to emphasize once again the importance of the Izmir Fair, which is one of the symbols of independence.

The early Republican Period witnessed the accelerated modernization efforts and initial formations shaped by state policies between 1923 and 1936. The second period (1936-1960) encompasses the processes leading to the transformation of the Izmir Fair into Kültürpark. Between 1960-2000, the study delves into the evolving functions and meanings in the context of a globalized world, capitalism, and consumer society and their impact on space and urban memory. Post-2000, attention is drawn to the changes in decisions and debates concerning the transformation of the Izmir Fair and Kültürpark into areas of rent.

The Izmir Fair constitutes a layered reading that has become one of the symbols of the Republic in the urban memory, starting with the early period of the Republic of Türkiye and continuing in some form for years with its steadfast stance. Despite facing adverse practices, demolitions, and additions, the Izmir Fair is a complex structure that ensures the continuity of collective memory. In other words, the Izmir Fair and Kültürpark are valuable Republican legacies with a 100-year steadfastness that ensures the continuity of urban memory.

Literature Review: Izmir Fair from The Republican Era to The Present

From the Izmir Economic Congress to Türkiye's First International Fair: The Interwar Izmir International Fair (1923-1936)

The year 1922 encompassed critical periods in Izmir, including discussions on the city's infrastructure and demographic structure following the Great Fire of Izmir, as well as deliberations on economic decisions amidst the ongoing struggle for independence. Preparations began for the Izmir Economic Congress, scheduled to take place from February 17 to March 4, 1923, following the victory of the Turkish War of Independence in 1922. Concurrently, an exhibition was opened to facilitate communication among Türkiye's sectoral workers and to promote local products. The Economic Congress and the exhibition were held at the Aram Hamparsumyan Stores in the Kemeraltı Yemişçiler Bazaar. The exhibition showcased local products such as cotton, oranges, olive oil, carpets, soap and fabrics (Aşkan, 2011). These initiatives constituted an important development laying the groundwork for the Izmir Fair.

Figure 2. Izmir Economic Congress at Aram Hamparsumyan Stores, Apikam Archive,
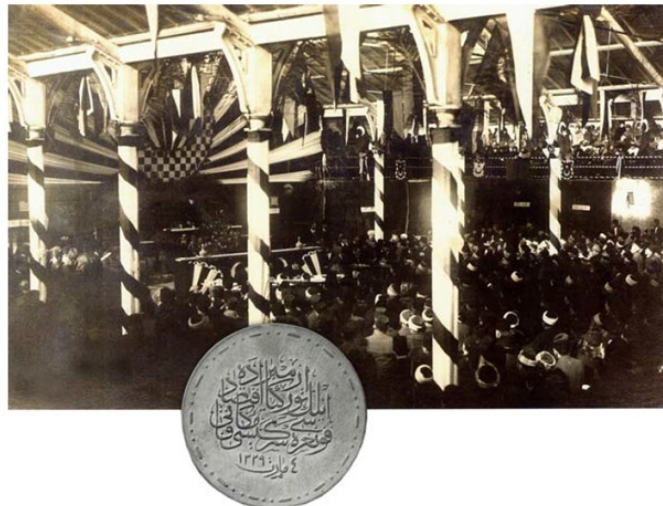
Source: Karpat (2009).

In commemoration of Izmir's liberation and with significant contributions from the governor of the time, Kazım Dirik, the first official September 9 Exhibition, was organized in 1927. The exhibition, which included both indoor and outdoor spaces, was held at the Izmir School of Arts, known at the time as the Mithatpaşa Vocational High School (Aşkan, 2011). What distinguished the September 9 Exhibition from the exhibition at the Economic Congress was the participation of numerous foreign companies

alongside many domestic official institutions and firms (71 state institutions, 195 domestic companies and 72 foreign companies) (Çakmak, 2023). In this regard, Izmir, one of the symbolic cities of the independence struggle, became the birthplace of the Izmir International Fair, which symbolized both the transition to the republic and modernity and international status.

Figure 3. Kültürpark Izmir International Fair

Source: İzfaş (2024a).

Following the consecutive exhibitions held in 1927 and 1928, the global impact of the 1929 Great Depression also affected Türkiye. Izmir, being a port city, played a significant role in this influence. Izmir Port, one of the commercial ports with a wide hinterland, experienced a period of stagnation and as a result of this adverse effect, the September 9 Exhibition could not be held again after 1929.

By the 1930s, efforts to overcome the impact of the economic crisis were made under state-driven economic policies with the aim of achieving self-sufficiency in the country through domestic products. In line with this objective, the city of Izmir, with its experience in exhibitions, hosted an event on 9th September 1933 under the name *Dokuz Eylül Panayırı* (September 9 Fair). With the participation of foreign and predominantly local companies (23 foreign, 130 local, 9 chambers of commerce, and 11 government institutions), the event, attended by approximately two hundred and forty thousand people, transformed into a stimulating economic activity (Çakmak, 2023). The internationalization of the September 9 Fair in 1934, followed by the Arsıulusal Panayır (Inter-National Fair) in 1935, became a traditional fair that, with increasing interest and participation, gave rise to other needs. Alongside addressing these needs, the development of a *Kültürpark* (Culture Park), which would symbolize a modern stance, became a topic of discussion.

Establishment of Kültürpark: Attaining a Significant Fair Identity on a Global Scale (1936-1960)

Kültürpark is a collective structure that accommodates the social, cultural, health, and recreational activities of the public and domestic and foreign visitors and participants under one roof. It has transformed from traditional fairs into official event venues. Kültürpark, with its 360,000 square meters of green space and modern facilities, hosted the Arsıulusal Izmir Fuarı (Inter-National Izmir Fair) for the first time in 1936. Significant economic revenues were generated through the participation of both domestic and foreign exhibitors and visitors. Many state institutions such as Sümerbank, Türkiye Şeker Fabrikası (Türkiye Sugar Factory), and Devlet Demiryolları (State Railways), which had participated in previous years, also participated in this year's fair. Additionally, Kültürpark hosted over 300,000 domestic and foreign visitors in total (Çakmak, 2023). With the increasing number of participants, the Izmir fair strengthened Türkiye's national and international position. Starting from 1937, the fair began to be referred to as the *Enternasyonal Izmir Fuarı* (International Izmir Fair). In the 1938 fair, unlike previous fairs and festivals, the opportunity for the commercial sale of products was provided. In this context, not only social and cultural but also commercial revenues were opened up.

The event, which had been organized since 1927, encountered a challenging period as it continued into the ninth edition in 1939 with the onset of World War II. The fair in 1940 concluded with financial losses due to the ongoing war and reduced participation. Despite the tense environment, the International Izmir Fair maintained its functionality and continued to be organized. The fair, which was closed in 1942, reopened in 1943. Particularly during the years 1944-1946, it served a national function, while from 1947 onwards, it resumed its organization with an international character (Aşkan, 2011).

During the 1950s and 1960s, new relationships emerged under the influence of the Cold War. The Izmir Fair gained a new dimension with the display of products from the United States of America (USA), one

of the actors in the Cold War. In other words, the fair became a mediator in the economic and diplomatic relations between Türkiye and the USA. Moreover, the Izmir fair served as a platform reflecting the tensions between the USA and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), becoming a center for power displays. After 1960, the competition between the USA and the USSR shifted towards space exploration. The Izmir Fair continued to serve as a venue for power displays in this context as well. This time, the fair transformed into a space where arguments representing the space ideologies of the two powers were exhibited alongside its traditional purpose (Babaoğlu, 2023).

Kültürpark, hosting the Izmir Fair, has preserved the spatial changes in its qualitative and quantitative values in a spatial sense. Particularly, until the 1960s, it showcased its spatial transformations as demolition and construction. According to the data from 1959, it encompassed various spatial elements of many qualities (Karpat, 2009):

Figure 4. Kültürpark Izmir Fair Organization Spatial Elements, 1959
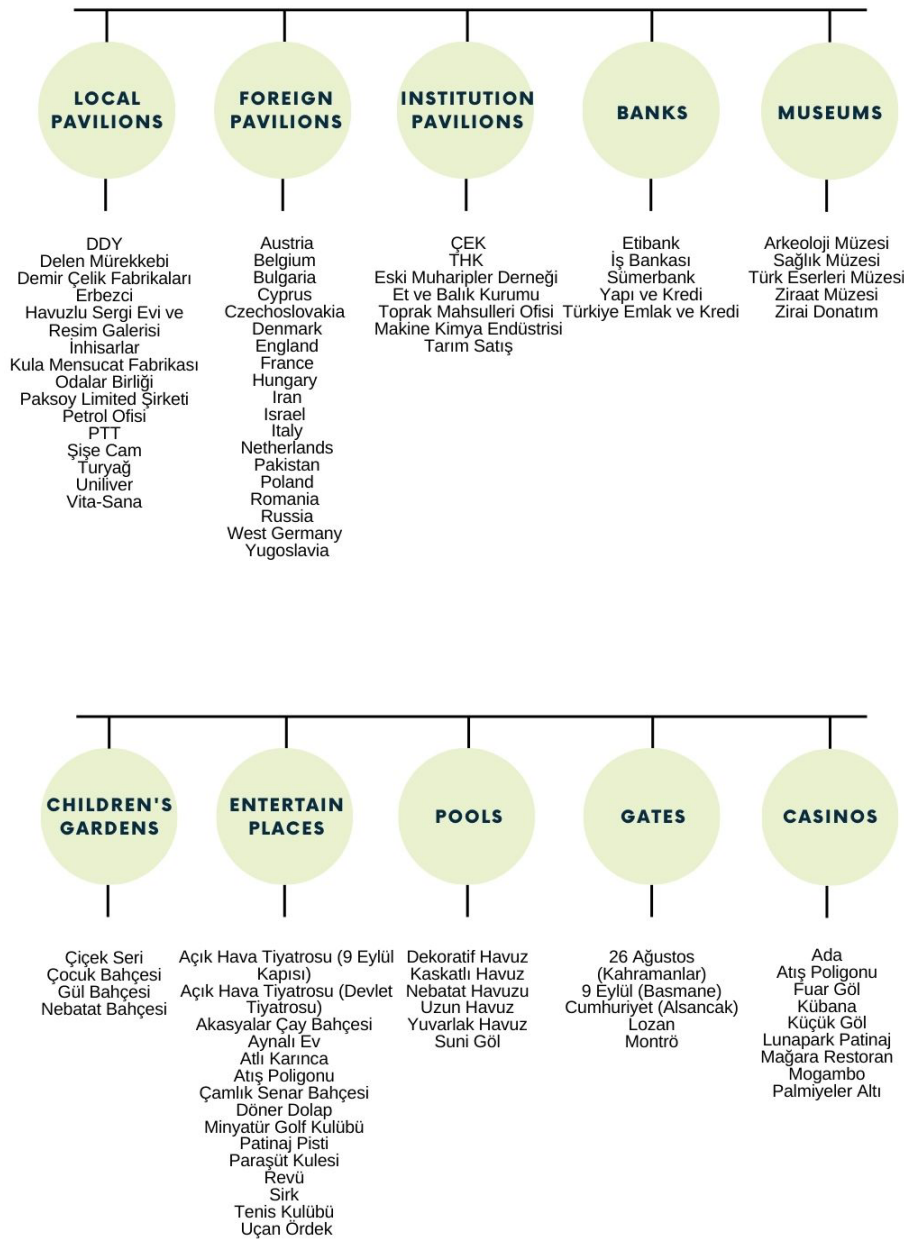
Source: Adapted from Karpat (2009).

Kültürpark not only serves as a fairground but also invites cultural, social, entertainment, and recreational activities. According to data from 1959, spatial elements and organizations are things that people of all ages want to spend their time on. With its collective structure, Kültürpark is a significant asset as a city park, embodying important values for the period. While Izmir Fair progressed between 1960-80, Kültürpark experienced a decline. The prioritization of economic values over cultural values led to negligent planning and construction in Kültürpark. Positioned in the city center and dominating an important green area, Kültürpark suffered from imbalanced destruction and construction, resulting in a loss of green space (Karpat, 2009). As a consequence of these changes and transformations, Kültürpark's directions of use as a fairground and a park have left traces in the city's memory, sometimes overshadowing each other and sometimes complementing one another (Karakuş, Akalın, 2017).

Figure 5. Izmir Fair 1969 (APİKAM Archive)

Source: Karpat (2009).

The Gradual Loss of Fair Identity between 1960-2000

Gaining significant attention and evolving into a prominent event nationwide, the Izmir International Fair continued its development similarly during the 1960s. On May 27, 1960, a military revolution, the first in Turkish history, took place. Approximately three months after the revolution, the Izmir Fair reopened with international status (Demokrat Izmir Newspaper, 21.08.1960; Karpat, 2009).

In the 33rd Izmir Fair held in 1964, the miniature train began to circulate within the KültürPark for the first time. The Democratic Izmir Newspaper, published in the same year (20.08.1964), emphasized that the miniature train was the most captivating feature at the fair (Karpat, 2009).

Beginning in the 1950s, fair cabarets, which gained significant popularity, continued to exist as one of the peaks and references of Türkiye's entertainment scene until the era of multi-channel televisions. Fuar Göl Gazinosu, Mogambo Gazinosu and Manolya Bahçesi, named by Zeki Müren, were among the most significant cabarets. Renowned artists such as Safiye Ayla, Zeki Müren, Bülent Ersoy, Gönül Yazar, Sezen Aksu, Tanju Okan, and many others became synonymous with the Izmir Fair during that period. Even today, musical activities during fair days are predominantly carried out through open-air concerts (Arkitera, 2024a).

In his article published in 1968, journalist Sadun Tanju likened the Izmir Fair to a globally respected *public school* through educational exhibitions held periodically (Yeni Asır Newspaper, 21.08.1968; Karpat, 2009). Despite making progress in fair development between 1960 and 1980, the Kültürpark deviated from its initial goal of being a public school. Efforts to enhance exhibition areas within the Kültürpark during this period led to the loss of its function, resulting in unregulated and unplanned construction (Karpat, 2009).

In 1968, the Kültürpark hosted the Congress of the International Union of Fairs (UFI). This development, which contributed to the international recognition of the fair, facilitated participation not only from American and European countries but also from Asian and African countries (Kaya, 2016).

In 1973, the 1/25000 scale Izmir Metropolitan Master Plan, prepared by the Nazım Plan Office, was revised in 1978. According to the plan, KültürPark was designated as an urban green area and a

fairground and a decision was made to relocate it to an approximately 4220-hectare area in the northwest of the city (Karaçorlu, 1995).

During the 45th UFI Congress held in 1978, the then mayor of Izmir, İhsan Alyanak, proposed the celebration of 1981 as the *Year of Atatürk* in all world fairs. Considered an honorable matter for Türkiye through ongoing efforts, this proposal was accepted. Consequently, the 50th Izmir International Fair, which was held in 1981, was opened under the name *Atatürk Fair* (Kaya, 2016).

Until the year 1990, the fair organized by the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality was transferred to IZFAŞ (Izmir Fair Services Culture and Art Affairs Inc.), established in partnership with the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye, Aegean Region Chamber of Industry, Aegean Exporters' Association, Izmir Chamber of Commerce and Izmir Commodity Exchange. In their public announcement during the establishment of IZFAŞ, they stated their aim to elevate Izmir fairs to a competitive level with international fairs (Kaya, 2016).

Due to both its historical significance and natural wealth, Kültürpark was registered within the framework of the Cultural and Natural Assets Protection Law in the 1990s. It was officially designated as a 2nd-degree natural protected area and a historical site by the 1st Regional Board for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets in Izmir (Alpaslan, 2017).

On February 16, 1990, the specifications for the Izmir Fair Kültürpark Environmental Arrangement and Fair Complex Architectural Project Competition were published in the Official Gazette. According to the specifications, the old power plant garage area was included in the Kültürpark area, and an approximate area of 105,000m² was designated for the construction and planning of specialized fairs, commodity exchanges, securities exchanges, hotels, conference centers, open exhibition areas, an 800-vehicle parking lot and revenue-generating facilities (Karaçorlu, 1995). An article in the Planning Magazine in 1995 criticized the absence of urban and regional planners and landscape architects in the competition team during the preparation of the competition specifications. It emphasized that this situation was attributed to the political circles of the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality viewing the Kültürpark area as an urban rent zone. These factors led to the content of the competition not considering the city residents and social life.

There was a controversial development in the results of the competition. The project by Şükrü Kocagöz, Merih Karaaslan and Şükrü Günday won the first prize. The victory of Şükrü Kocagöz, who was a member of the board of directors of the Izmir branch of the Chamber of Architects, against the decisions of the Chamber resulted in changes in the board and related decisions after the competition (Karaçorlu, 1995).

The main approach of the team consisting of Merih Karaaslan, Mürşit Günday, and Şükrü Kocagöz in the competition was the purification of Kültürpark from arabesque entertainment venues and fair cabarets. Instead, these areas were proposed to be transformed into semi-open spaces for leisure and sports activities, contributing to cultural life when not in use during fairs. Additionally, the integration of Kültürpark with nature was aimed at adding geographical elements such as meadows, rivers, lakes, and mountains to the park, which was initially a flat area. The team indicated that they based these decisions on the concept of Olmsted's *general environmental park* that went beyond the understanding of English and French gardens, as seen in the Central Park competition in 1853. According to this perspective, the infinite diversity of nature should be reflected in designs. In the context of Kültürpark, they aimed to synthesize this approach with the concept of geometry and geography contrast, striving to design clear, memorable perspectives (Öztan, 1993).

Figure 6. The Izmir Kültürpark project was designed by the team of Merih Karaaslan, Mürşit Günday and Şükrü Kocagöz
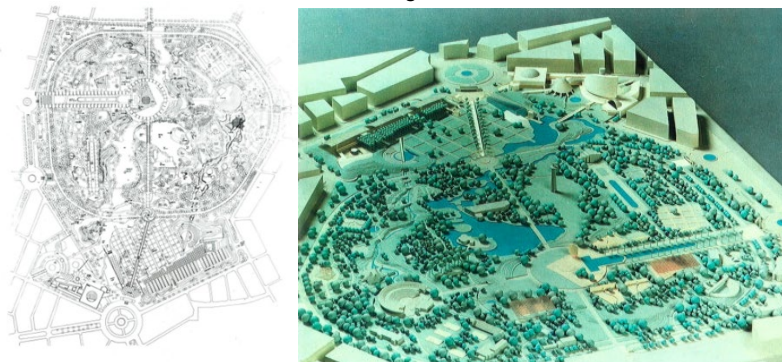
Source: Öztan (1993).

After the developments in the Chamber of Architects, a lawsuit to suspend the execution was filed on 10.04.1990 at the Izmir Administrative Court on behalf of the relevant chambers of TMMOB (Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects) (Karaçorlu, 1995). During that period, different perspectives emerged on this issue. The Chamber of Architects, considering Kültürpark as the city's largest and most well-organized green area, argued that removing the functions and structures causing noise and environmental pollution, occupying green areas, and renovating the recreational, sports areas, and landscaping of Kültürpark was the correct decision. However, the municipality emphasized that the competition aimed to develop the vacant area adjacent to Kültürpark to the requirements. It was stated that this development should integrate with the existing area, and uses related to entertainment, sports, art, and culture should continue while preserving the main characteristics. Despite the decision of Izmir 1st Regional Board for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets on 1.2.1990, which declared the competition, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality and Konak Municipality proceeded with the competition, and it was noted that this irregular procedure could harm the competitors (Karpat, 2009). However, later on, the 1st Cultural and Natural Assets Protection Board, on 19.04.1990, accepted the approval of the competition under certain conditions with its decision numbered 1851. This decision stated that, besides preserving the natural structure of Kültürpark, it could be opened to public use, taking into account the public interest, and the protection boards should also approve the conditions for this use. Following this decision, the Board filed a lawsuit against the Ministry of Culture (Karaçorlu, 1995).

During this tense period, the lawsuits filed against the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality Presidency and the Ministry of Culture were rejected. The competition was postponed for an indefinite period but was reopened after the decision was made.

The years 1980-1990 were highlighted on the official page of Kültürpark, emphasizing that Kültürpark had lost its former significance in the field of trade fairs and many specialized fairs similar to the Izmir Fair had been opened worldwide.

> The technological advancements and globalization of the 1980s and 1990s reshaped the global understanding of trade fairs. General trade fairs and cabaret entertainments entered a period of decline. Initially, there was a transition from international fairs where countries participated to fairs representing companies; then, the era of specialized fairs began. From the Izmir International Fair (IIF), numerous specialized fairs that gained global recognition were born. The boundaries of the fair industry had now surpassed Kültürpark (Kültürpark İzmir, 2024).

As of 1997, the cultural and artistic aspects of the Izmir Fair were emphasized alongside its commercial aspect. In line with this, cabaret activities within Kültürpark were discontinued (Karpat, 2009).

The Transformation of Kültürpark into a Speculative Area Until Today

With the changing approach to trade fairs in the 2000s, the need for exhibition halls arose to maintain the tradition of Izmir fairs in Kültürpark. Until the new fairground planned in Gaziemir came into operation, temporary exhibition halls and hangars were erected using detachable elements (Alpaslan, 2017). These temporary structures continue to exist to this day.

In 2006, with the Strategic Planning Project, the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality Council decided to construct an underground parking lot with a capacity of 590 vehicles in Kültürpark. Despite objections, warnings, and concerns raised by professional chambers, civil society organizations, and city residents based on scientific, technical, ecological, and social reasons, the construction of the underground parking lot in Kültürpark commenced. Legal experts argued that the underground parking lot would not be a solution to the parking problem in Izmir; instead, they emphasized the need to address traffic issues first. A lawsuit was filed to cancel the urban planning amendment that paved the way for the construction of the underground parking lot and to suspend its implementation. The Izmir 1st Administrative Court initially ruled to suspend the implementation, thereby annulling the plan that foresaw the construction of the parking lot. After the case, the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality announced its intention to appeal the decision and expressed its commitment to legal struggle (Arkitera, 2024b). In 2008, following the acceptance of the appeal by the Council of State, the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality announced its goal to deliver the parking lot for the 2009 fair. The 594-vehicle capacity underground parking lot, covering an area of 16,000 m² and completed in time for the 2009 fair, was landscaped as a green area. This arrangement was argued to fulfill Kültürpark's parking needs while enhancing the greenery (Karpat, 2009).

In 2015, with the completion of the new fairground in Gaziemir, the exhibition function of Kültürpark was relocated to the new area. This development turned Kültürpark's transformation into a subject of debate (Alpaslan, 2017). Concurrent with the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality's introduction of the new

fairground, on May 21, 2014, a meeting titled *Common Wisdom Tours* was organized at the Historical Gas Factory. The purpose was to present projects and discuss the future of Kültürpark with the participation of academics, chamber presidents, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and business figures. The agenda of the meeting highlighted the separation of Kültürpark and the fairground, emphasized as the testament of the park's founder, Behçet Uz, and the winning project in the architectural design competition concluded in 1990 by the team of Merih Karaaslan, Mürşit Günday, and Şükrü Kocagöz. In the project, it was decided to build a convention center in Kültürpark and increase the green area by 70%. The Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB) Izmir Provincial Coordination Board conveyed their views during a press conference held on September 10, 2014. They emphasized the need to preserve Kültürpark as a green area against new construction after the relocation of the fairground. They advocated for maintaining the existing functions of Kültürpark, including the fair, park, sports, culture, art, and entertainment, and suggested that the areas of the demolished fair structures should be used as green spaces (Pasin et al., 2016).

In September 2017, the Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board decided that a *Conservation-Oriented Zoning* Plan was necessary for Kültürpark, rendering the Kültürpark Revision Project, which the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality had been developing since 2014, unfeasible. In May 2018, the Kültürpark Platform organized a workshop where ideas such as removing the park's *fair* function and transforming it into a green space were discussed. However, the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality Council's decision in August 2018 to allocate the IZFAŞ building to Izmir Tınaztepe University was met with significant opposition, particularly from the Kültürpark Platform. After the 2019 local elections, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Tunç Soyer annulled the IZFAŞ allocation protocol, signaling a positive step towards a participatory governance model, but this process was soon disrupted by new conflicts. In 2021, Soyer acknowledged the ongoing disputes over Kültürpark's future, and in 2022, the Conservation-Oriented Zoning Plan for Kültürpark was approved. However, attempts to establish a collective management approach have failed, and the struggles over Kültürpark continue (Aydıner & Penpecioglu, 2023).

Figure 7. Izmir Fair Plan, May 12, 2023

Source: İzfaş (2024b).

The Transformation and Commonality of the Izmir International Fair in the Context of Urban Memory

This section emphasizes the role of Kültürpark in the transformation of urban memory, focusing on its communal nature, which has been at the center of various actors and discussions due to its functions as a fairground and park.

The term *memory* is defined by the Turkish Language Association (TDK) as the conscious ability to keep experiences, learned subjects, and their relationship with the past in the mind: consciousness, repository, mind, and memory (TDK, 2024). In the context of this study, the emphasized expression *experiences* become significant when considering the conscious experience of existing and still-present urban spaces. Halbwachs stated that individual experiences, when combined with human interactions,

form collective memory within society, emphasizing that individual experiences within this interaction create social memory (Halbwachs, 2018). Time and space have been determining factors in a memory attempted to be remembered both individually and collectively. Discussing the role of spatial images in collective memory, Halbwachs (2018) highlighted that the connection between people and places would change with human movements, and consequently, the nature of collective memory would change, and physical spaces could no longer remain the same. In this approach, places shaped by individual or social movements contribute to the formation of collective memories, thus enabling the creation of urban memory. Therefore, cities are places where events occurring over time are reflected, expressing various aspects through individual narratives and memories (Ringas, Christopoulou & Stefanidakis, 2011). In addition, memory is a synthesized reality emerging from the patterns of emotions, ideas, experiences, and actions within the virtual universe of the human mind (Thompson & Madigan, 2005). In this context, every experience and event provides an individual with a new opportunity for interpretation (Casey, 2000). This dynamic state becomes particularly significant when considering the collective aspect of the commons that intersect with the city and society.

The term *müşterek* according to the Turkish Language Association (TDK), generally conveys meanings such as *common* or *shared*—used collectively (TMMOB, 2024). When considered in the context of the city, commons can also refer to shared and historically rich elements within urban memory. Ostrom emphasizes the incomplete yet evolving nature of the concept of the commons, highlighting its collective character, which includes both natural and artificial elements under changing conditions. However, this collective stance often leads to situations fraught with dilemmas and tragedies, reflecting the complexities of being common (Ostrom, 1990). On the other hand, according to Harvey (2013), common spaces establish social and physical relations that are open to external influences. They offer collectivity on the condition of being accessible to all social groups without pursuing commercial interests. In this sense, the commons, with its political, capital and capitalist dimensions—whether abstract or concrete—necessitates the production of relationships within both sociological and urban contexts. The tensions and struggles between forces give rise to new forms of commonality. Additionally, the privatization of spaces, the closure of public spaces, the destruction of these spaces, and their sociocultural consumption inflict deep wounds on urban memory.

The transformation and changes in this common space from 1923 to the present must be discussed, including the roles of various actors. The ongoing debates around Kültürpark's fair and İpark dichotomy have led to the emergence of new definitions of commonality driven by actors pursuing different goals and actions. Particularly, developments in Kültürpark since 2014 have brought about significant tensions. One of the factors complicating the achievement of commonality through effective management is the presence of numerous influential actors with differing objectives. Some of these actors emphasize the fair aspect of Kültürpark, while others focus on its park attributes. The Izmir Metropolitan Municipality (IzBB), responsible for authority and management, has experienced these tragic dilemmas (Aydıner & Penpecioglu, 2023).

In terms of urban commons, Kültürpark's primary actor is the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality (IzBB), followed by professional chambers, civil society organizations, the Kültürpark Platform, and commercial and local capital-focused entrepreneurs. In 2014, the Izmir Chamber of Commerce (IZTO, 2014) proposed the Kültürpark Revision Project, which met with significant opposition. IZTO, an actor advocating for the continuation of the fair function, sought to facilitate zoning and commercial functions under the theme of a congress and cultural center. On the other hand, this proposal faced strong reactions from opposing viewpoints.

The Kültürpark Platform is a civil society organization opposing the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality's policies and advocating for Kültürpark to maintain its status as an urban park. The Platform aims to keep Kültürpark free from commercial interests and commodification (Aydıner & Penpecioglu, 2023). The Turkish Union of Engineers and Architects Chambers (TMMOB) Izmir Provincial Coordination Board (İKK) has supported this perspective, highlighting the need to prevent further zoning. It has been reported that events held in Kültürpark have led to ecological damage (URL-8).

The multifaceted debates surrounding Kültürpark have unfortunately led to uncertainties about the park's future. Indeterminate management decisions and pressures from various actors have left unanswered the critical question of whether Kültürpark should remain a park or function as a fairground. Actions that consider the interests of urban memory would be far more valuable and meaningful for Izmir and Turkey as a whole. Implementing policies and urban approaches that preserve and strengthen the layered historical and cultural structure of the commons, as well as their ecological, public, and aesthetic aspects, would resolve the ambiguities regarding Kültürpark's future.

Planning must include clear and inclusive definitions, as each functional and spatial modification to Kültürpark could potentially cause new disruptions to its layered urban memory. Even if each intervention does not cause harm, actions driven by commercial interests may lead to frightening and tragic consequences. Therefore, the future of Kültürpark should be prioritized over the interests of individual actors.

Discussion and Conclusion

Parks play a significant role in shaping the social, historical, and cultural fabric of cities, occupying an important place in urban memory. These spaces serve as venues where various cultural events are organized, green and recreational areas are provided, and historical heritage is preserved. Parks can be evaluated from various perspectives. In terms of preserving historical and cultural heritage, they serve as reminders of the city's past through the museums, monuments, pavilions, fairgrounds and exhibition areas they contain, thereby keeping the urban memory alive. Furthermore, in the context of social interaction and cultural activities, parks offer common environments where different socio-cultural groups and people of different age groups can engage in shared experiences. They also serve as platforms for events such as concerts, festivals, and international fairs. In addition, parks support people's connection with nature and contribute to their mental well-being, thus enhancing the quality of urban life. In terms of identity and character formation, parks not only become part of historical and sociocultural identity but also transform into symbols of the city through their spatial qualities. In addition to all these components, Izmir Kültürpark's status as one of the symbols of our national independence struggle has made it even more valuable for both Izmir and Türkiye. Therefore, the planning, design, and management of cultural parks are of great importance in preserving and strengthening urban memory and identity. Hence, further research and strategies are needed to better understand and evaluate the role of cultural parks in the development of cities and the enhancement of quality of life.

Kültürpark can be assessed from various perspectives. Firstly, it is a project. It stands as a representation of the Republic and modernity, enduring until the present day. Secondly, it is the focal point of the city. With its existence and content, it provides urban dwellers with multiple focal points. Thirdly, it is the city's park. With its extensive green areas, it offers the urban population a space for relaxation and recreation. Fourthly, it is a public school. Although this aspect of the park has receded into the background today, Kültürpark played a role in providing cultural and social education to the public during the Early Republican Period. Fifthly, it is the memory and image of the city.

In addition to its layered structure within the city, Kültürpark, with its own layers, occupies a significant place in collective memory. Since the declaration of the Republic, it has been an important common asset for both the city and the country. The fairs and cultural events that started in 1936 transformed Kültürpark functionally through new construction and demolitions. At times, the fair and cultural aspects of Kültürpark have dominated, while at other times, the entertainment and park aspects have remained more subdued. Changes in urban planning pose a threatening position to the longstanding urban memory. Situated in the Konak district, the city center, Kültürpark enhances its own and its surroundings' real estate value due to its central location in the transportation network, proximity to the Aegean Sea and surrounding districts, and the residential areas along its perimeter. Therefore, it is vulnerable to threats such as the increase in construction (hotels, shopping malls, etc.) alongside the reduction of green spaces. Since each alteration to the park would essentially impact the urban memory, the necessity of each step must be thoroughly debated. Therefore, Kültürpark plays a crucial role in urban management.

The most significant obstacles facing Kültürpark include unclear management decisions, conflicting interests, and pressure from various stakeholders. The concerns of modernism and capitalism, driven by the pursuit of profit, are reflected in urban policies. At Kültürpark, competing views on whether it should primarily serve as a *park* or a *fairground* have led to conflicts, complicating the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality's (IzBB) management and planning efforts. This issue has become even more pronounced since 2014. Once a symbol of independence and international stature, Kültürpark has become the focal point of functional concerns.

By learning from these concerns and debates, Kültürpark could evolve into a model for improving and structuring urban memory through new spatial and management plans. Revitalizing Kültürpark with contemporary technologies for interactive engagement could produce new syntheses and interpretations for urban memory and the city's residents.

Despite the various tensions and conflicts surrounding it, Kültürpark can contribute to urban memory through new proposals within the field of digital humanities. In the realm of digital humanities, collective urban memory can be archived, and new memories can be added to provide up-to-date archives for

both the city's residents and researchers. By incorporating interactive access routes, a bridge can be established between past and future generations while also strengthening the sense of belonging.

Through collaborative efforts between the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, a digital museum or platform could be developed to capture and archive the experiences and memories of the city's residents. This initiative could create a collective urban memory repository, preserving and enhancing the shared historical and cultural narratives of the community.

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İslam yerleşimlerinde kutsal-dini mimarinin sembolik dili üzerine bir değerlendirme: Kâbe örneği[*]

ⓘ Ayşe Nur Canbolat[1] ✉

Öz

İslam mimarlığında kutsal kabul edilen, dinin etkisiyle veya dini amaçlarla inşa edilen kimi yapılar anlam yüklü kutsal sembollerdir. Ait olduğu inanç sisteminin öğretilerini, mesajlarını, bilgilerini ve tarihini geleceğe aktaran bu yapılar aracılığı ile kutsal sembolik bir dil oluşturulmaktadır. Bu yaklaşımla, bu çalışmada kutsal sembol niteliği taşıyan, kutsal olan ile iletişime geçilmesini sağlayan, hatta bulunduğu yerleşime anlam katarak din olgusu üzerinden kent kimliğini belirleyen İslam inancına ait yapılar ele alınmıştır. Kutsal veya din ile ilişkili yapılar hem mimari-fiziksel özellikleri hem de olanak sağladıkları işlevler ve gerçekleştirilen dini ritüeller ile taşıdıkları anlamları somutlaştırmaktadır. İslam inancının sembolik ve fiziksel merkezi konumundaki Mekke'ye kutsal yerleşim niteliği kazandıran Kâbe; dini, görsel ve işlevsel bir odak olarak sadece bulunduğu coğrafyayı değil İslam inancının etkisi ile inşa edilen tüm kutsal yapı ve yerleşimleri biçimlendiren, kutsal ve tarihi anlamların yüklü olduğu kutsal bir yapıdır. Bu nedenle Kâbe'nin kutsal, dini, manevi, tarihi ve kültürel değerlerini anlamak üzere kutsal bir sembol olarak ele alınması, korunması ve geleceğe aktarılması gerekmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Kutsal Mekân, Kutsal Sembol, İslam Yerleşimleri, Kâbe

An evaluation of the symbolic language of sacred-religious architecture in Islamic settlements: The case of Kaaba

Abstract

In Islamic architecture, some buildings that are considered sacred, built under the influence of religion, or for religious purposes, are sacred symbols loaded with meaning. A sacred symbolic language is created through these buildings that transmit the teachings, messages, information, and history of the belief system to the future. With this approach, this study focuses on the buildings belonging to the Islamic faith, which have the characteristics of sacred symbols, enable communication with the sacred, and even determine the identity of the city through the phenomenon of religion by adding meaning to the settlement where it is located. Sacred or religion-related buildings embody the meanings they carry with their architectural-physical features, the functions they enable, and the religious rituals they perform. The Kaaba, which gives Mecca, the symbolic and physical center of the Islamic faith, the quality of a sacred settlement; as a religious, visual, and functional focus, it is a sacred structure with sacred and historical meanings that shape not only the geography where it is located but also all sacred buildings and settlements built under the influence of the Islamic faith. For this reason, the Kaaba should be treated as a sacred symbol, protected, and transferred to the future in order to understand its sacred, religious, spiritual, historical, and cultural values.

Keywords

Sacred Place, Sacred Symbol, Islamic Settlements, Kaaba

Extended Summary

With the influence of religions and belief systems that emerged simultaneously with the history of humanity, places that have been characterized as sacred have emerged from the past to the present. These places are sometimes sacred structures built by human hands and stand out with their cultural features, sometimes sacred places formed by attributing sanctity to a natural area, and sometimes sacred settlements that have developed with a focus on faith. Sacredness is a concept related to God or the Creator, respected, mysterious or extraordinary, evoking eternity and certainty, and is seen in all belief systems. Places associated with the concept of sacredness are distinguished from the ordinary and are privileged for the members of the faith. Sacred spaces have architectural and cultural significance as a concrete expression of the architectural tradition of the belief system and culture to which they belong; functional significance by enabling religious rituals to be performed; social and social significance as a gathering space that allows believers to come together; and sacred and spiritual significance with the tangible or intangible symbols they carry in relation to holiness.

In order to define the relationship between sacredness and buildings in Islamic architecture, which has developed with the Islamic religious tradition and has a common language even though it varies according to the geography, time, and culture to which it belongs, it is necessary to read the space through sacred symbols. One of the most important elements that shape space and settlements is how sacred symbols are used and their locations. With these features, sacred buildings and settlements carry sacred religious messages for members of faith with a certain level of knowledge. Sometimes, a religious concept, doctrine, situation, or event is represented through symbols, and a common language consisting of symbols is developed among people by establishing associations and similarities. Events, information, or facts related to the history of religion are concretized with symbols.

Sacred spaces and settlements that emerge with the desire to communicate with the sacred are already symbols of their mission. However, in addition to these features, the location of the sacred space within the city or the position of the sections within the building relative to each other, the geometric form of the space, the size and colors of the architectural elements, the use of light, and each of the objects within the space have symbolic meanings. In Islamic belief, every element of space is used for a functional or symbolic purpose.

When we consider the general structure of Islamic settlements, we see that they consist of neighborhoods, which are small units, that the phenomenon of privacy is the most important factor in shaping the settlement, that introverted and courtyard housing types are common based on privacy, that the road system in a radial form from the city center to the neighborhoods turns into narrow and dead-end streets in residential areas, and that there is a sacred building in the center of each settlement that can be easily reached by everyone and creates a visual focus. Center symbolism is decisive in the orientation of uses in the settlement.

Mecca, where the Islamic faith emerged, developed, and today is the religious center, has developed in the focus of the sacred building Kaaba and has been both a center and a symbol with sacred symbols and religious functions-rituals since the 7th century. The settlement, which was shaped by the natural sacred areas where historical and religious events took place and the sacred buildings built during the development of the Islamic faith, today both allows religious functions and plays a guiding role in the development of all buildings and settlements belonging to the Islamic faith with the sacred symbols it carries. The Kaaba, which is accepted as the first house and masjid, is in a protected and untouchable area and has become a religious complex today with the additions made, is the symbol and iconic structure of Islamic architecture. Although it does not have an interior function, it is important with its form and the uses surrounding the space. With its four-pointed form, it is associated with concepts such as robustness and reliability. The fact that all the shrines and worships in the world are directed towards the Kaaba shows the importance of the symbolism of the center.

While discussing sacred spaces of different scales in Islamic architecture, the space should be analyzed as a whole through tangible and intangible values. Analyzing the meanings behind the physical characteristics of sacred spaces and settlements is important in understanding their spiritual, religious, and historical values and transferring them to the future, beyond seeing them only as an architectural structure or heritage.

Giriş

İnsanlığın varoluşuna eş zamanlı olarak din ve inanç sistemlerinin etkisiyle mekânlar kutsal olarak nitelendirilmiş ve dini gereksinimler doğrultusunda kutsal yapılar inşa edilmiş, kutsal kentler kurulmuştur. Kutsallık; saygı konusu olan, tanrısal olan, değişmezliği, dokunulmazlığı, sonsuzluğu, kesinliği çağrıştıran (Hançerlioğlu, 2018, s.230), sıradışı ve olağanüstü olmayı, diğer şeylerden farklı

bir değer taşımayı (Gündüz, 2016, s.19) ifade eden bir kavram olup gizemli olanla bağdaştırılmakta, yaratılmışlık duygusu ile ilişkilendirilmektedir (Otto, 2014, s.12).

Kutsallık; mekânı, insan veya nesneyi farklı kılmakta, sıradan olandan ayrıştırmaktadır (Meriç, 2005, s.143). Kimi zaman doğal nitelikli mekânlara kutsallık atfedilmekte, kimi zaman ise insan eliyle inşa edilen yapılar kutsal olarak nitelendirilmektedir. Açık veya kapalı, doğal veya kültürel nitelikli, ölçeği-büyüklüğü farketmeksizin çeşitli mekânlara din ve kutsallık ile ilişkili anlamlar yüklenmiş, mekân aracılığı ile kutsallık olgusu mimari özellikler ve kentsel form üzerinden somutlaştırılmıştır. Kutsal kitaplarda bir mekânın ayrıcalıklı olmasına referans verilmesi, din tarihini etkileyen önemli bir olayın yaşanması, din tarihi açısından önemli bir kişi ile bağlantısı olması veya kutsalın kendini açığa çıkardığı sıra dışı bir durumun görülmesi gibi nedenler mekânın kutsallaştırılmasında etkili olmuştur.

Mekânlar görünen ve algılanan nesnel formundan ibaret olmayıp; kültürel, sosyal, ekonomik, politik, tarihi, dini yaşama dair bileşenler ile anlamlı hale gelmektedir. Kutsallık ile ilişkilendirilen mekânlar aracılığıyla kutsallık kavramı görünür kılınmaktadır. Kutsal olan ile iletişime geçilen, günlük yaşam pratiklerinin ve dini ritüellerin bir parçası olan, inanç ve dini duyguların yoğun olarak ortaya çıktığı bu mekânlar inanç mensupları açısından hem dini- manevi değere sahiptir hem de dini ritüellerin gerçekleştirilmesi nedeniyle işlevsel mekânlardır. Ayrıca günümüzde kültürün ve tarihin aktarımını sağlamaları nedeniyle kültürel öneme sahip miras alanlarıdır.

Kutsal mekânlar aynı din-inanç sistemi içerisinde dahî kültür, inşa edildiği zaman ve coğrafya, toplumsal ve sosyal yapının özelliklerine göre farklılıklar göstermektedir. Bu farklılıklar kimi zaman mekânın konumuna dair özellikler, büyüklük, geometrik form kimi zaman ise mekânın kullanım biçimi ve mekânda gerçekleştirilen ritüellerde görülebilir.

Bu çalışmada İslam inancına dayalı olarak gelişen İslam mimarisindeki kutsal yapıların kutsal bir sembol olarak bulunduğu yerleşimde nasıl konumlandırıldığı, hangi anlamlara geldiği, ilettiği mesajlar ve çevresini biçimlendirmedeki rolü İslam mimarisinin arketipi ve ikonik yapısı olan Kâbe üzerinden örneklendirilmiştir. 7. Yüzyıldan günümüze İslam inancının ortaya çıktığı, geliştiği ve yayıldığı, hac ibadetinin ve diğer dini eylemlerin gerçekleştirildiği bir merkez konumunda olan Mekke'deki Kâbe hem din tarihi hem de dini işlevler açısından önem taşımaktadır. Yapı olarak kutsal bir sembol olan Kâbe; yapı içerisindeki bölümler, nesneler, kullanımlar ve ritüellere göre biçimlenmekte, sembollerin işaret ettiği olaylar-durumlar dini ritüeller ile yeniden canlandırılarak mekân sürekli biçimde kutsanmaktadır. Kâbe'deki kutsal semboller, farklı coğrafyalarda yer alan İslam inancına ait kutsal yapıların biçimlenmesinde de yönlendirici konumdadır. Bu nedenle bu çalışmada sembol kavramından hareketle İslam yerleşimlerini biçimlendiren dini-kutsal sembol niteliğindeki yapılar ele alınarak Kâbe örneği üzerinden mekânsal bir okuma yapılmıştır.

İmge, Simge, Sembol

Zihinde tasarlanan, duyuların bilinçteki izi olarak tanımlanan imgenin bir form taşıyarak görselleştirilmesi ile simgeler veya semboller oluşmaktadır. İmge gerçeğin, anlamın yerini alan; sembol onu görünür kılandır. İmge anlatılmak istenen şey, içerik, soyut bir anlamdır. Sembol ise onu somutlaştıran, biçimlendirendir (Küçüköner, 2010, s.76-79). Bu çalışmada, kimi zaman birbirleri yerine kullanan simge ve sembol kavramlarından ilgili literatürde dini sembolizm olarak ele alınması nedeniyle sembol kavramı kullanılmıştır.

Semboller ile bir kavram, durum veya olay yansıtılabilir veya temsil edilebilir. Belli bir bilgi seviyesine sahip insanlar için semboller, o kavram veya durumun yeniden üretimi veya canlandırılması, temsil edilmesidir (Arpacıoğlu, 2006, s.28; Bobaroğlu, 2014). Sembol; Yunanca symbolon, Latince symbolom, batı dillerinde symbole şeklinde ifade edilmekte, kök anlamı ile misal, temsil, işaret, alâmet anlamlarına gelmektedir. Türkçede ise somut olarak karşımızda olmayan, idrak edilmesi zor olan bir şeyin zihne taşınmasında aracı olan somut bir işaret anlamındadır (Tokat, 2004'den aktaran Güllük, 2016, s.189). Semboller ile zihinde yer alan bir düşünce veya duygu görünür hale getirilir, çağrışım veya benzerlik yoluyla bir şeye, duruma, olaya işaret edilir (Kızıl, 2018, s.330-331).

İnsanoğlu yaşadığı çevre ile iletişim halinde olan bir varlıktır. Duyguların, düşüncelerin, öğretilerin, bilgilerin aktarılmasında iletişim araçlarından biri sembollerdir. Semboller ile başka yolla iletilmesi mümkün olmayan gerçekler aktarılmaktadır. Sembolleri üreten ve anlayan, hayatın her alanında sembolleri kullanan insan; semboller aracılığı ile ortak bir dil oluşturmaktadır. Dini bilgilerin ve öğretilerin aktarımında kullanılan dini semboller; karmaşık yapıdaki kimi gerçekleri dolaylı yollar ile anlatmakta, olayları hatırlamamıza veya anmamıza yardımcı olmaktadır. Bu şekilde kutsallık somutlaştırılmakta ve temsil edilmekte, bilgi ve anlamlandırma düzeyine göre dini öğretiler aktarılmaktadır. Sembollerin anlamlarını keşfetmek ve sembolize edici ögeyi anlamlandırmak için neyi tamamladığını ve temsil ettiğini bilmek, bağ ve ilişki kurma aracı olarak okuyabilmek gerekir (Kızıl, 2018, s.329-330).

İslam Yerleşimlerini Biçimlendiren Dini-Kutsal Nitelikteki Sembol Yapılar

Din ve inanç sistemlerinde duyuların ötesinde bir gerçekliği deneyimlemek, kutsal olan ile iletişime veya temasa geçmek isteğiyle mekânlara anlamlar yüklenmiştir. Kutsal ve kutsallık kavramları, dine ait öğretiler, bilgiler, mesajlar, dinin tarihi ve gelişimi mimari yapılar ile somutlaştırılmıştır. Bu yaklaşımla kutsal mekânlar; inşa edilme amaçları, yüklendiği dini işlevler, kültürü yansıtmaları, kent içerisindeki konumları ve yönelimleri ile zaten sembol konumundadırlar. Bu özelliklerin yanı sıra kutsal yapıların geometrik biçimleri, mekândaki mimari formların ve elemanların büyüklükleri, renkleri, biçimsel özellikleri, kutsal yapı içerisindeki bölüm veya nesnelerin hem mekân içerisinde hem de birbirlerine göre konumlandırılması, ışığın kullanımı sembolik anlamlar taşımaktadır. Bu yönleri ile kutsal yapılar bir inanç sisteminin sadece fiziksel olarak temsilcisi olmamakta, mekânın taşıdığı semboller ile dini öğreti ve mesajların aktarıcısı konumundadırlar. Bu sembolik anlatı kentte doğan, Tanrı'ya itaat anlamına gelen, Hz. Muhammed'e vahiy edilen, kutsal kitabı Kur'an-ı Kerim olan, tek tanrılı İslam inancında farklı amaçlarla inşa edilen kutsal mekânlarda görülmektedir. Vahiy edildiği 7.yüzyıldan günümüze mahalle düzeyinde mescitler, kent merkezlerinde (Ulu) camiler veya külliyeler, türbeler, medreseler gibi farklı mimari yapılar ile İslami semboller fethedilen kentlerde yer edinmiştir (Sourdel, 2008, s.6; Çınar, 2019, s.100). Hatta İslamiyet ile özdeşleştirilen, İslam kenti olarak gelişen yerleşimler ortaya çıkmıştır.

İnşa edildiği coğrafya, zaman ve kültürel yapı içerisinde özgün niteliklere sahip olmakla birlikte İslam mimarisinin ortak bir dili bulunmaktadır. Dine dair aktarılmak istenenlerin dışavurumunda kutsal mekânlar sembolik bir dil oluşturmaktadır. İslam mimarisine, biçimlerin ardında yatan anlamlar ile yaklaşan Turgut Cansever'e göre İslam mekânında asıl ilgilenilmesi gereken mekânın biçimi değil, mimari unsurların özellikleri, mesafe ve yönler, insanın bunları nasıl algıladığıdır (Şişman, 2021, s.134). Bu yaklaşımla, kutsal semboller İslam mimarisini ve yerleşimlerini biçimlendiren bir öge olarak bu çalışmada ele alınmıştır.

İslam yerleşimleri düşünüldüğünde zihinde ilk olarak canlanan, yerleşim ile özdeşleştirilen, İslam din geleneği ekseninde kent kimliğinin inşasına katkıda bulunan yapılar ve kullanımlar bulunmaktadır. Bu yapılar İslam inancında günlük yaşam pratiklerinin bir parçasıdırlar. Ancak bu yapıların günümüzdeki formlarının oluşmasında yönlendirici olan, İslam inancı için dini ve tarihi öneme sahip yerleşimlere de kısaca değinilmelidir. İslam inancının ilk ortaya çıktığı ve bugün merkezi olan Mekke, Hz. Muhammed'in hicreti sonucu İslam dininin gelişim ve yayılım göstererek kurumsal hale geldiği Medine, Müslümanlar için belirli bir süre kıble görevi gören, Hz. Muhammed'in İsrâ yolculuğunun ve miracın gerçekleştiği Kudüs günümüzdeki kutsal yapıları ve kentleri biçimlendirmede ilk arketiplerdir. Bu kentlerde yaşanan dini-tarihi olaylar ile ilişkili olarak ortaya çıkan kutsal mekânlar, semboller veya olgular, kavramlar İslam mimarisi ve İslam yerleşimlerinin gelişiminde yönlendirici konumdadır.

İslam yerleşimleri küçük birimler olan mahallelerden oluşur. Yaşam alanlarını biçimlendiren temel unsur mahremiyet olgusudur. Bu nedenle içeriye dönük ve avlulu konut tiplerine sıkça rastlanmaktadır. Evler doğrudan sokağa değil avlulara açılmakta, özel hayatın gizliliği ve güvenliğine dikkat edilmektedir. Kent merkezindeki kutsal yapı(lar)dan ışınsal biçimde dağılan yol sisteminin konut alanlarına doğru dar ve çıkmaz sokaklara dönüşmesi, sokaktaki evlerin kapılarının birbirine bakmaması da mahremiyet ile ilişkilidir. Cadde ve sokaklar, avlu cepheleri ile sınırlandırılmaktadır (Can, 2014, s.116-121).

İslam yerleşimlerinde yer seçimi, konum ve yönelişin önemli simgesel anlamları vardır. Özellikle kutsal yapılar şehrin her yerinden görülebilecek ve rahatlıkla herkesin ulaşabileceği noktalara, geometrik açıdan en adil ve toplanmaya uygun yerlere inşa edilmektedir. Allah'ın evi olarak kabul edilen camiler, yerleşimlerdeki konumu ile kimi zaman bir mahallenin kimi zaman ise tüm kentin dini, sosyal, toplumsal, kültürel yaşamının merkezi ve odağındadır. Çevresinde gelişen yapılar ile cami İslam yerleşimlerinin merkezi, toplumun buluşma noktasıdır (Can, 2014, s.102-108). Özellikle Ulu (Cuma) Camiiler cuma namazı, bayram namazı, cenaze namazı gibi özel günlere ait dini merasimlerde tüm cemaati bir araya getirmekte, toplu ibadete olanak sağlamakta, anıtsal mimarisi ile sadece işlevsel değil görsel bir odak ve dini merkez olarak ön plana çıkmaktadır. Bu yönleri ile bir olmanın ve cemaat olmanın, İslam kent kültürünün, kente aidiyetin sembolüdürler (Çınar, 2019, s.102). İslam mimarisi tasarımında toplanmak, bir ve bütün olmak, yani tevhid ilkesi merkez sembolizmi ile anlatılmaktadır. Kâbe ile başlayan merkez sembolizmi tüm kentlerin ve yapıların inşasında temel unsurdur. Dünyadaki tüm İslam mabetlerinde namaz sırasında yönelim birliğinin olması, hem ibadetlerde hem yapılarda her şeyin bir noktaya dönük olması ile Yaratıcının iradesi ve düzeni temsil edilmektedir. Camiler, tevhit ilkesinin en somut göstergesidir. Belirli bir eksen üzerinde inşa edilen camilerin tek bir noktaya dönük olması, Kâbe etrafında sembolik bir bütünleşmeye işaret eder (Sağlam, 2020, s.261-262). Camilerde taban alanı yeryüzünü-dünyayı, kubbe ise gökyüzünü simgelemektedir (Mülayim, 2002). Cami ve külliyelerde kullanılan renkli mozaik ve pencereler ile ışık kutsal mekân içerisinde yoğun bir biçimde kullanılarak aydınlık ve ferah bir ibadet alanı oluşturulmakta, bu ışık aynı zamanda Allah'ın ışığını ve bilgeliğini

yansıtmaktadır. Allah'ın tinsel varlığını ifade eden ışık metaforundan dolayı camilerin içinde kandil ve lamba kullanımı ile de aydınlık bir mekân kullanımı oluşturulmaktadır (Salan ve Gürani, 2019, s.25).

Külliyeler caminin etrafında gelişen medrese, türbe(ler), ticari birimler ile ibadetin yanı sıra eğitim ve sosyal hizmet gibi fonksiyonları da barındıran dini komplekslerdir. Mescitler ise küçük ibadet yerlerini, mahalle camilerini ifade etmek için kullanılan bir tabirdir. Çeşitli büyüklükteki tüm kutsal yapılar bir merkez görevi görmektedir. Her mahallenin merkezinde bir mescit olması veya her kentin merkezinde bir ulu cami veya külliyenin olması bu duruma örnektir. Merkez sembolizmine göre tasarlanan İslam kentlerinde, sokak ve caddelerin yöneliminde de bu ilkeler benimsenmektedir. Şehirlerde külliyeler, külliyelerde camiler, mahallelerde mescitler, türbelerde sandukalar, evlerde sofalar merkezi ifade etmekte, tasarım aşamasında belirleyici olmaktadır. Mimaride sadelik esas olduğundan sokakların doğal eğriliklerine bile müdahale edilmemiştir. Şehrin merkezine doğru bir kademelenme oluşturularak merkez sembolizmi güçlendirilmiştir (Sağlam, 2020, s.260-261).

İslam yerleşimlerinde karşılaştığımız namazgahlar ise belirli coğrafyalarda açık havada namaz kılmak için ayrılmış alanlardır. İbadetin yoğun olarak gerçekleştiği İslam için özel günlerde kullanılan üstü açık mescitler olarak da tanımlanabilir. İslam tarihine bakıldığında ilk mescitlerin çoğunun coğrafi şartlardan dolayı açık havada ibadete uygun biçimde inşa edildiği görülmektedir (Bozkurt, 2006, s.357).

Anıtsal mezar olarak kümbet ve türbelerde İslam dininde sıkça karşılaşılan, genellikle din tarihi açısından önemli şahsiyetlere ait yapılardır. Özellikle Büyük Selçuklu Devleti'nin (1037-1194)'nin kuruluşundan sonra hızla yayılan kümbetler Türklerin etkisi ile ortaya çıkmıştır. Bir mumyalık katı üstünde silindir ya da çokgenli gövdeli, içten kubbeli, dıştan konik çatı ile örtülü mezarlardır. Türbeler ise ölünün doğrudan toprağa verildiği, kare veya çokgen gövdeye sahip, üzerin kubbeyle örtülü anıt mezarlardır. Özellikle tanınmış kişiler (dini açıdan önemli kişiler, kahramanlar, devlet büyükleri vb.) için inşa edilen türbelerin mimari farkları kişinin makamı, ait olduğu sosyal sınıf gibi konularda bilgiler vermektedir. Bu yönü ile İslam inancında mezar mimarisinin zengin olduğunu söylemek mümkündür (Doğan, 2002, s.547-550; Orman, 2012, s.464-466).

İslam yapı sanatında işlevsel özellikleri ile ön plana çıkan, hizmete yönelik inşa edilen kervansaraylar yolcular için bir güven kaynağı olup devletin güç ve kuvvetini sembolize etmiştir. Medreseler ve darüşşifalar ise bilim ve hikmetin sembolleri olmuşlardır. Saray yapıları ise idari yapının ve beşeriyetin merkezi konumundadır (Sağlam, 2020, s.263-264). İslam inancının temizlik anlayışı ve ibadetlerin temizlik kuralları ile ilişkili olmasından dolayı kent merkezlerinden hatta mahallelerde bile yer alan hamamlar da İslam yerleşimlerini tanımlayan mimari formlardandır. Sembol olarak su ve buna bağlı olarak gelişen ritüellerin etkisiyle, su ile ilişkili mekân veya mekân içerisinde bölümler (camilerde şadırvan gibi) inşa edilmiştir. Su sembol olarak ele alındığında hem hayatın hem de insanın yaratılmasının kaynağı, cennet tasvirlerinin belirgin bir parçası, bereketin ifadesi, bedensel ve ruhsal hastalıkların şifası, maddi ve manevi arınmanın aracıdır (Fidan, 2021).

Sembol Niteliğinde Kutsal Yapılara Dair Mekânsal Bir Okuma: Kâbe Örneği

İslam dini Arap Yarımadası'nda, Hicaz Bölgesi'nde, Kızıldeniz kıyısındaki Cidde kentinin 100 km kadar doğusunda yer alan bir vadide kurulan Mekke'de ortaya çıkmıştır. Mekke yerleşimi doğusunda Safâ ve Merve tepelerinin olduğu Ebu Kubeys Dağı, batısında Kuaykıân Dağı, güneybatısında Sevr Dağı, kuzeydoğusunda Hira (Nur) Dağı ve Sebir Dağı, doğusunda ise Arafat Dağı ile çevrelenmektedir. Çöl karakterli arazi yapısına, sıcak ve kurak iklime sahiptir.

Şekil 1. Mekke'nin Konumu

Kaynak: https://maps.google.com

Hz. Muhammed'e ilk vahyin 610 yılında Hira Mağarası'nda gelmesi ile başlayan süreç içerisinde Mekke İslam inancının ilk ortaya çıktığı kent olmuştur. İslam tarihindeki en önemli olaylardan biri olan 630 yılında Mekke'nin Kureyş kabilesinden alınarak fethedilmesi ile tam bir İslam kenti haline gelmeye başladığını söylemek mümkündür. M.S. 632 yılında Hz. Muhammed'in vefatı sonrasında sırasıyla Halifeler Dönemi (632-661), Emeviler Dönemi (661-750), Abbasiler Dönemi (750-1258), Memlükler Dönemi (1259-1517), Osmanlı Dönemi (1517-1916), 1924'ten günümüze kadar ise Suudi Devleti tarafından yönetilmiştir.

Yerleşimin odağındaki Kâbe ve onu çevreleyen/sınırlayan Mescid-i Harem (Haram) Mekke'nin gelişimini yönlendirmiştir. İslam inancına dair önemli tarihi ve dini olaylara tanıklık eden doğal nitelikli kutsal alanlar ile İslam inancının yayılması sürecinde inşa edilen kutsal yapılarla şekillenen Mekke hem kutsal sembolleri hem de dini işlevlere olanak tanıyan bir merkez olarak günümüzde önemini korumaktadır. Bu özellikleri diğer İslam kentlerini ve yapılarını da etkilemiş, Kâbe'ye yönelen ve Kâbe odaklı bir İslam mimarisinin temelleri atılmıştır. Ayrıca bellek yüklü olan bu kutsal mekân toplumsal hafıza bağlamında değerlendirildiğinde, İslam inancının özellikle ortaya çıkış ve gelişim dönemi ile bağ kurulmasını sağlayan bir araç, sembol konumundadır (Tayanç ve Aktaş, 2024, s.69-73). Kâbe ve çevresindeki kutsal yapılar, kullanımlar, nesneler ve gerçekleştirilen dini ritüeller, ibadetler ile Kâbe sembolik bir dile sahiptir.

Kâbe'nin Mimari Formu, Anlamı ve Taşıdığı Semboller

Mekke'nin odağında yer alan kutsal alan, Kâbe ve onu çevreleyen Mescid-i Harem bölgesinden oluşmaktadır. Kâbe İslam inancında yeryüzündeki ilk ev ve mescit olarak kabul edilmektedir. Allah'ın evi Kâbe'nin, Hz. Muhammed tarafından sınırları çizilen kısmına Harem bölgesi denilmektedir. Harem kelimesi korunmuş, dokunulmaz, yasaklanmış anlamlarına gelmektedir. Bu bölgede canlıları öldürmek, zarar vermek gibi şeyler haram kılınmış, yasaklanmıştır. Bu şekilde alanın kutsallığına vurgu yapılmakta, diğer mekânlardan ayrıcalıklı olduğuna dikkat çekilmektedir. Sembolik dil ile kutsallığa dair anlatı Mescid-i Harem'deki kurallar ile başlamakta, İslam inancına dair kurallar ilk olarak bu bölge üzerinden aktarılmaktadır.

Mekke kenti, özellikle Kâbe merkezli Mescid-i Harem bölgesi; İslam inancının ortaya çıkışı, gelişimi ve yayılmasına, Hz. Muhammed'in ve din tarihi açısından önemli kişilerin hayatlarına, İslam din tarihi ile ilişkili önemli olaylara tanıklık etmesi, Müslümanlar için kıble olması, hac ibadetinin merkezi olması nedeniyle kutsal bir semboldür.

Günümüzde Mescid-i Harem, Kâbe ve revaklar arasındaki avlu görünümlü açık kısım ile metaf adlı tavaf yapılan kapalı koridor kısmından oluşan geniş bir kutsal kompleks biçimindedir. Yapılan genişletmeler sonucundan 13 minare, Metâf adlı tavaf alanına girişi sağlayan dört kapı (Melik Abdülaziz Kapısı, Melik Fehd Kapısı, Fetih Kapısı, Umre Kapısı), Kâbe, yer altında yer alan ancak çeşmeler ile verilen Zemzem Kuyusu, Safâ ve Merve tepeleri arasında sa'y ibadetinin yapılmasını sağlayan Mes'a koridorundan oluşmaktadır. Hz. Muhammed döneminde yaklaşık 2.100 m2 lik daire formunda bir meydan olan Kâbe günümüze kadar yapılan genişletmeler ile 320.00 m2 ye ulaşmıştır (Alfelali ve Garcia-Fuentes, 2020, s.71). İbadet edecek kişi sayısını artırmak için kullanım alanının genişletilmesine yönelik mekânsal müdahaleler sonucunda Kâbe'nin çevresindeki birçok tarihi yapı yok olmuş, yoğun bir yapılaşma ortaya çıkmış, mekânın kutsal değer ve sembollerine zarar verebilecek kullanımlar artmıştır.

Şekil 2. Kâbe ve Mescid-i Harem

Kaynak: www.islamiclandmarks.com

İslam mimarisinin simge yapısı olan Kâbe, iç mekâna dönük pratik bir işlevi olmamakla (Peker, 1996, s.114) geometrik formu ve anlamı açısından semboldür. Küp formundaki Kâbe, dört duvarı birbirine eşit, küp şeklinde, taş örme bir yapıda olup isminin kökeni ka'b kelimesine dayanmakta, dört köşeli veya küp şekli anlamlarına gelmektedir. Küp şeklinin Tanrı'nın mükemmelliğinin bir göstergesi olduğu düşünülmektedir (Şamlıoğlu, 2024, s.520). Kâbe'nin formu kutsal bir sembol olarak değerlendirilmektedir. İslam mimarisinde daire her yönden merkeze doğru bir hareketlilik ve aynı zamanda merkezden her yöne doğru sonsuz bir hareketlilik algısı yaratır. Kare ise eşit kenarları ve açıları, anti-dinamik biçimi ile sağlamlık, durgunluk, dinginlik, denge, güç, kararlılık, sabitlik, değişmezlik, güven algısı yaratır (Pilici, 2008, s. 11; Ebrahimi ve Şentürk, 2024, s.12-13). Kâbe'nin temelinin kare olması ve çevresindeki tavaf alanı ile dairesel bir form ile çevrelenmesi İslam mimari desenlerini de etkileyen bir biçim olmuştur. Kâbe'nin formu çeşitli biçimlerde yorumlanmakta; dört büyük melek ve dört peygamberi, kutsal yerleri koruyan dört veli, Allah'a ulaşmanın tasavvuftaki dört aşaması, dört ana coğrafi yönü temsil ettiğine dair yaklaşımlar söz konusudur.

Şekil 3. Kâbe'nin Kare Formu ve Çevresindeki Dairesel Hareket
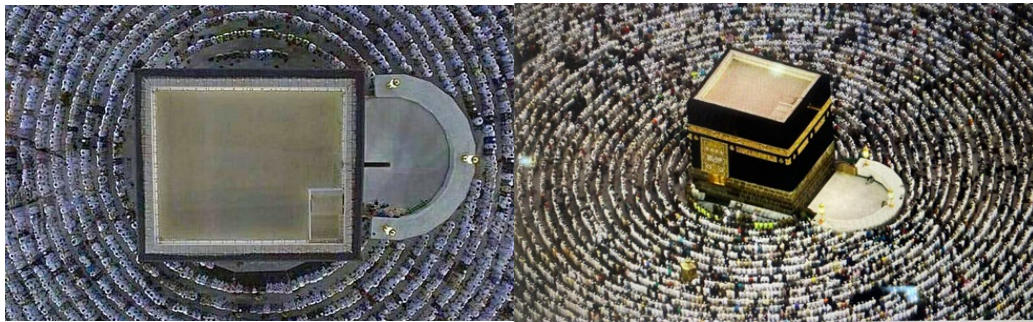
Kaynak: www.islamiclandmarks.com

Kâbe sadece fiziksel olarak bir merkez değil dünyanın merkezi veya inançların yöneldiği bir merkez alarak görülmektedir. Merkez sembolizminin ön plana çıktığı İslam mimarisinde Mutlak Varlığı temsil eden, ilk arketip olan Kâbe örnek alınarak inşa edilen kutsal yapılarda Allah'ın her şeyde görünmesi, bütün ve bir olma, tevhit anlayışı amaçlanmaktadır. Kâbe'de merkez sembolizmi, dünyada bütün mabetlerin kıbleye yönelimi ile kendini göstermektedir (Sağlam, 2020, s.258-259). İslam inancında günde beş kez gerçekleştirilen namaz ibadeti esnasında insanlar yüzlerini kıbleye yani Kâbe'ye çevirmektedir. Bu şekilde ibadetin gerçekleştirilmesinde belirli bir mekânsal yöneliş olmakta, Kâbe kutsal sembol olarak ön plana çıkmaktadır. Dünyanın farklı yerlerinde gerçekleştirilen bu ibadet ile devamlı ve kesintisiz biçimde gün boyu Kâbe'ye doğru bir yöneliş yakalanmakta, bu şekilde sürekli bir kutsanma gerçekleştirilmektedir.

Hac ibadetinin ve tavafın önemli bir ögesi olan ve başlama-bitiş işareti olarak kabul edilen, Kâbe'nin doğusunda yer alan, cennetten indirildiğine ve Kâbe'nin inşasında Hz. İbrahim tarafından bugünkü yerine yerleştirildiğine inanılan Hacer'ül Esved, Kâbe'nin kutsallığına işaret eden sembollerden biridir. Kâbe'nin örtüsü üzerinde ayetlerin yanı sıra hükümdar isimlerinin olması ile halifelik, dini ve siyasi otorite sembolize edilmektedir (Civelek, 2007, ss. 848-849).

Dini Ritüeller Bağlamında Kâbe'nin Kutsal-Sembolik Dili

Kur'an'da Ümmü'l-Kura olarak bahsedilen, "Şehirlerin Anası" olarak adlandırılan Mekke şehri; Dünyanın yaratılışıyla, semavi vahyin yayılışıyla, İslam inancının ortaya çıkması ve yayılması ile değişimin ve dönüşümün sembolü konumundadır (Güllük, 2016, s. 199). Dolayısıyla Kâbe'de yada Kâbe'ye yönelerek gerçekleştirilen tüm dini ritüeller sembolik anlamlara sahiptir.

Kâbe; kutsallık, güvenlik, saygı, tevhit, Allah ile buluşma, Allah'a yönelmenin sembolüdür (Güllük, 2016, s.198). İslam inancında namaz ibadetinin kıbleye yani Kâbe'ye yönelerek gerçekleştirilmesi, tüm ibadet mekânlarının burayı kıble alacak biçimde inşa edilmesi Kâbe'nin bulunduğu coğrafyayı aşan bir sembol olduğunu göstermektedir.

İslam inancındaki hac ibadeti Kâbe ve çevresinin şekillenmesinde belirleyici rol oynayan, gerçekleştirilme biçimi ve aşamaları ile başlı başına kutsal bir semboldür. Hac sırasında gerçekleştirilen dini ritüeller, ziyaretler din tarihindeki önemli olayların anılması ve tekrar edilerek kutsanması amacını taşır.

Hac sırasında Mikad denilen kent sınırlarına gelindiğinde ihram adı verilen kıyafetler giyilerek insanların Allah karşısında eşitliği, Kâbe'nin etrafındaki dönüş, tavaf ile dünyanın kendi etrafında dönüşü

sembolize edilmektedir (Bozkurt ve Küçükaşçı, 2003, s. 555). Hac ibadetinin bir parçası olan şeytan taşlama ile Hz. İbrahim'i, oğlu Hz. İsmail'i kurban etmekten vazgeçirmeye çalışan şeytanı taşlaması temsil edilmektedir.

Kâbe içerisinde gerçekleştirilen Sa'y ise Hz. İbrahim'in eşi Hz. Hacer'in oğlu Hz. İsmail için çölde su araması, Safâ ve merve tepeleri arasında koşarak zemzem suyunu bulması anılmakta ve tekrar edilmektedir. Mes'a adı verilen koridorda gerçekleştirilen bu eylemde 7 defa gidilip gelinerek sürekli ve tekrar eden bir kutsanma gerçekleştirilmektedir (Uğurluel, 2018, s. 49).

Kutsal yapılarda kullanılan sembollerden biri de sayılardır. Bu yapılardaki ibadetlerin, eylemlerin belirli sayıda gerçekleştirilmesi veya kutsal yapılardaki simgelerin belirli sayılarda olması veya tekrar eden formların olması sayı sembolizmi ile ilişkilidir. Kutsal sayılan üç ile cismani sayılan dört sayısının birleşimi ile yedi sayısının üstünlüğüne dair bir inanış olması, tavaf ve sa'y eylemlerinin yedi tekrardan oluşması İslam inancında sayıların sembolik önemine işaret eder (Öz, 2009, s. 241; Kılıç ve Eser, 2016, s. 95).

Tartışma ve Sonuç

Tarih boyunca insanlığı birçok yönden etkileyen din ve inanç sistemlerinin etkisi ile kutsal mimari yapılar ve yerleşimler oluşturulmuştur. İnanma veya yaratıcıya ulaşma isteği ile inanç sistemin gereklilikleri ve mekânsal ihtiyaçlar, inşa edildiği dönemin kültürel yapısı, mimari açıdan gelişmişlik düzeyi ve coğrafi şartlara göre tüm dinlerde farklı mimari form ve özelliklerde kutsal mekânlar görülmektedir. Diğer mekânlardan farklı olarak kutsallığa referans veren semboller ile kutsal mekânlar anlam ve önem kazanmaktadır.

İslam inancının ortaya çıkışından günümüze de, inanç sisteminin mekânsal olarak ihtiyaçları doğrultusunda, dinin öğreti ve mesajlarını aktaran kutsal yapılar inşa edilmiştir. Hatta kutsal yapıların varlığı ve birbirlerine göre fiziksel konumları ve ilişkileri, inşa edildikleri coğrafyanın dini, manevi, tarihi veya politik açıdan ayrıcalıklı konumuna bağlı olarak kimi kentler İslam yerleşimi olarak adlandırılmıştır. Her ne kadar çeşitli etkenler ile farklı mekânsal ve mimari özelliklere sahip kutsal mekânlar inşa edilmiş olsa da ortak dile sahip İslam mimarlığı kavramından bahsetmek mümkündür. Çeşitli ölçeklerde ve biçimlerde olabilen kutsal mekânları belirlemek, anlamak ve anlamlandırmak için ise kutsal semboller üzerinden mekânı okumak gerekir. Çünkü İslam inancında nesneden yapıya, yapıdan kent ölçeğine sembolik bir anlatım dili kullanılmaktadır.

Kutsal mekânın kendisi, mekânın yerleşim içindeki konumu, yapının bölümlerinin birbirlerine göre konumlandırılışı, mimari elemanların kullanımı ve büyükleri, ışığın ve rengin kullanımı, mekândaki geometrik formlar, dini işlevlerin yanı sıra mekâna yüklenen sosyal, toplumsal, eğitim ve ticaret ile ilişkili fonksiyonlar, mekânın bulunduğu yerleşim içerisinde dini-manevi, görsel bir odak olması, sosyal ve toplumsal hayatı yönlendiren bir bileşen olmasının sembolik bir anlamı bulunmaktadır. Temelde kutsal olan ile iletişime geçme isteği ile inşa edilen bu mekânlar, dine ait bilgi ve öğretileri günümüze taşımaktadır. Ancak bu bilginin anlaşılması için kutsal mekânları kutsal semboller ile düşünmek, kutsal sembolleri ise arka planlarında yer alan dini-tarihi bilgiler ile incelemek gerekir.

Hiç kuşkusuz ki ortaya çıkışından günümüze geniş bir coğrafyaya yayılan İslam dinine ait kutsal mekânları kendi bağlamları içerisinde değerlendirmek; kutsal sembolleri sadece İslam inancının temel öğretileri ile değil, ait olduğu coğrafyanın tarihi ve inşa edildiği dönemin özellikleri, dönemin toplumundaki önemli ve etkili dini şahsiyetler, inanç sisteminin doğuşundan o güne dek geçirdiği süreç ile ele almak gerekir.

Bu çalışmada ise kutsal semboller, İslam kutsal yapı ve yerleşimlerinin gelişimini yönlendiren arketip yapı Kâbe üzerinden örneklendirilmiştir. Mekke'nin dini, işlevsel ve görsel olarak odak noktası olan Kâbe taşıdığı semboller ve din tarihindeki önemi, fiziksel ve sembolik konumu ile sadece bulunduğu coğrafyayı etkilememiştir. İslam inancına ait farklı ölçeklerdeki tüm kutsal mekânlar için Kâbe hem mekânsal nitelikleri ile hem de taşıdığı kutsal semboller ile odak noktasıdır. Mimari özellikleri, gerçekleştirilen dini ritüeller / uygulamalar, din tarihine referans veren nesneler / kullanımlar ile Kâbe dini öğretilerin somutlaşmasında ve aktarımında etkili bir anlatım aracı, hatta İslam dininin sembolik dilinin önemli bir parçasıdır.

Bu yaklaşımla kutsal yapı ve yerleşimlerin oluşum ve gelişim dinamiklerini anlamak, günümüze aktarılmış bir değer olarak görebilmek ve koruyabilmek için sadece mimari özellikleri ile değil taşıdığı kutsal semboller, somut ve somut olmayan değerler üzerinden ele almak gerekmektedir. Mekânı anlamlandırmak belirli bir bilgi düzeyine sahip olmayı gerektirir. Bu nedenle kutsal sembollerin dayandığı tarihi ve dini olaylar, durumlar, öğretiler ve bilgiler ile neyi temsil ettikleri üzerinden mekânlar

incelenmelidir. Ancak bu yöntem ile kutsal mekânların manevi, dini, tarihsel değerleri gerçek anlamları ile anlaşılabilir ve geleceğe aktarılabilir.

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A biological prospect for the human population based on the views of Aristotle and Santayana in the context of the urban ecology discipline

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Abstract

Cities are large workplaces where people gather and share the cumulative value they produce. Since humans are biological organisms, it is the human animal himself who creates the city. Urban areas are the concrete products of human populations, and they are multifaceted: From microbiomes to technological developments, from climatic changes to economic and social activities, the concept of the city encompasses many elements. An understanding of the human population in the cities is dependent on the concept of the self. Although cities exist as the collective product of the members of human populations, it is the perceptions of the individuals in the population towards the environment, themselves, and each other that make the city a whole unit. These perceptions have evolved over an evolutionary process and can be unified under the concept of self. In this article, I would like to propose several approaches that can be useful in overcoming these limitations, and therefore, I have attempted to construct a holistic view of modern urbanization using Aristotle's and George Santayana's views on life and the self.

Keywords
Aristotle, Santayana, Biology, Urban Ecology, Human Population

Introduction

The world is on the verge of certain breaking points that have emerged from urbanization and climate change (Karl & Trenberth, 2003). Due to the changing climate, ecological relations are reoccurring; air and soil contents are changing, some keystone species are lost, and economic and sociological aspects of the human population[2] are being affected (Peñuelas et al., 2013; Tiedje et al., 2022; Baldwin, 2017; Karl & Trenberth, 2003; Satterthwaite, 2009; McCarthy et al., 2010). Urbanization and the increased size of the human population are impacting the biosphere by introducing some harmful chemicals to the air and water, destroying tropical forests for economic goals (Satterthwaite, 2009). Humans are influenced by these changes like other organisms (Baldwin, 2017). Various disciplines work on these circumstances, such as biology, ecology, chemistry, and sociology. In these circumstances, it is necessary to think about our approaches and treatments on these topics from the beginning, such as, what is the relationship between humans and the environment, what are the basic elements/principles of ecological thinking, etc. Urban ecology[3], which is a modern discipline, has emerged in a world that faces certain challenges under these circumstances (Ramalho & Hobbs, 2012). The main focus of this discipline is to describe the city and its ecological relations (Pickett, 2012). The differences between this field and the classical ecological approach are raised from two main ideas: *the human population has a great effect on the biosphere and the ecological relations,* and the *city is a concrete biological area that represents the activities of the human population* (Pickett et al., 1997; Pickett, 2012). As a result, urban ecology tries to connect human activities with ecological thinking (Grimm et al., 2000).

I suggest that there is a need to think of the fundamental concepts of urban ecology in order to construct field practices more effectively. These ways should be compatible with real-life circumstances. Scholars have tried to fill this gap by including human aspects of the urban ecology discipline and constructing the ecology for the city paradigm (Pickett et al., 2016). This paradigm conceives the city as a work of the human population and evaluates the city concept by introducing some fundamental dimensions of

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2 Human Population: The community of humans.
3 Urban Ecology: The study of the city, from an ecological perspective (Wilfried at all, 2007).

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human activities, like social and economic aspects, into the investigation mechanisms of the urban ecology discipline. This can be considered a divergence from the classical eco-biological view. In other words, with the new paradigms, cities are considered a kind of natural/biological entity that is formed by human organisms[4]. Moreover, cities are areas where some activities of the human population become concrete, like trading, culture, socializing, and ecological activities of humans (Ramalho & Hobbs, 2012). Therefore, these views are simply suggesting that the social-cultural and economic aspects of the city are also ecological aspects of the human population. There are many scientific efforts to bring to life these paradigms to construct human ecosystems in a broad range by realizing human components in the city ecosystem and the biosphere (Yang, 2020; Breuste & Qureshi, 2011; Breuste et al., 2013). Moreover, these efforts can be seen as changing the definitions of human organisms, the human population, and the city to construct a new urban-ecological perspective. Therefore, humans are seen as biological organisms that are capable of trading, socializing, producing, etc. They build cities as a form of these activities that become tangible, and all these activities directly affect the biosphere ecologically. Although these efforts are needed to make a comprehensive view of the cities, they lack fundamental thoughts about the connections between the city, humans, and the self, which is an umbrella term encompassing all human actions. To handle this problem, Aristotle's influential, practicable, and fertile ideas and approaches have a great potential to construct the preliminaries of both the urban ecology discipline and biological evaluations of the city ecosystem.

It can be said that studies on the place of human beings in the biosphere, including human factors, have found a place in the scientific arena, especially in disciplines such as urban ecology. Potential success could be achieved in this regard by applying Aristotle's remarks on the concept of life to understand the city within its ecosystem. The cities are concrete areas where human activities can be seen (Andersson et al., 2014). Moreover, due to human activities, cities ecologically affect the biosphere. If approaches change, it may affect the city both in form and shape, and the biosphere may also be affected by our city models. There are many efforts to construct a city that is compatible with the biosphere (Andersson et al., 2014). Aristotle, as a naturalist, emphasizes the issues of togetherness of life, trade between beings, and living as a community rather than living as an individual and intentionally life (Aristotle, 1994). To evaluate human creatures, he also stresses that this organism is a part of the entirety of life. Furthermore, the life of human organisms with human-related characteristics, which are different from other organisms, is handled by Aristotle on the topics of ethics, politics, and urbanization. I believe these thoughts can lighten our understanding of the problems that are emerging from modern world situations, like urbanization and climate change.

Aristotle and Urban Ecology

Aristotle sees the universe as a whole soul, and he suggests that the soul is the composite action of being alive. Also, he constructed a worldview mainly based on *life*[5] and life-related issues, and his studies can be generally seen as investigations on life, which we call natural sciences or, in a specific manner, *biology*. There are certain kinds of literature on Aristotle that suggest that all their works are a composite of human life[6]. He was investigating all life-related topics for human beings in the fields of philosophy, physics, rhetoric, poetics, and biology. All the topics in his works, such as existence, morality, animals, and plants, can be considered reflections that emerged from the idea of living (Romanes, 1891). From this point of view, it can be argued that Aristotle uses biology and the biological perspective as a founding manner for his thought in general (Grene, 1976). Therefore, the ideas that are related to the great questions of *what is good, how to be a good man, and what is soul* are not merely philosophical or ethical investigations for Aristotle. His ideas on human and human activity are basically and initially related *to life.*[7] Hence, they should be seen as reflections of human life with their biological eyes. His philosophical and ethical provisions mainly come from a natural investigation of Earth (Wild, 2020). Due to such extensive biological research, he did not create an intangible view of the world or impalpable thoughts on concepts of ethics, politics, soul, etc. Instead, he constituted an ethos/system of values that is touchable, discernable, accessible, and gainable from every human being who tends to think, i.e., the biotic act of human beings. In conclusion, Aristotle's worldview regards the human organism and human population from a biological perspective, and then, since his definition of life is an example of the togetherness of all beings on the meaning of having a soul, without excluding characteristics of varied species, the constructed principles of ecological relationships between humans

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4 Human Organism: An individual human.
5 Life (Soul): The cause of a living organism, by providing life motion to a body (Aristotle, 1994)
6 Human Life (Human Soul): The human with the body and soul, and this combination of body and soul can act like a human, which is living (Aristotle, 1994).
7 To live: Having actions as a body with the soul. Every life is specific to its organisms, like whale life, bird life, plant life, or human life (Aristotle, 1994).

and other beings. In this context, we can see that the paradigmatic transformation of human beings and cities as the products of human activity and life, which is currently being attempted to be formed by the discipline of urban ecology, has already been established by Aristotle. In this paper, human beings will be regarded as natural organisms and urban concepts will also be considered natural results of human activities. For this aim, initially, Aristotle's ideas, which are mostly presented in De Anima and are related to life in general and -in a specific manner- human life, will be mentioned. Then, the applications of these views on modern topics will be discussed in the context of urban ecological and biological approaches. Aristotle's standpoint, which deeply influenced the tradition of philosophy, also can help us to construct the redefinitions of ecological relations, human-ecological relations, and principles of urban ecology discipline. After establishing a general concept of *life* with Aristotle's views, a specific standpoint on human life and cities will be attempted by using the views of George Santayana. What I suggest at this point is that Aristotle's worldview can be read from an ecological, even urban ecological perspective, since his thoughts have emerged from these two main premises:

Life is a common sharing among all creatures,[8]

All human activities are due to *the human soul,* which provides human life.

The concept of life in *De Anima* provides a basis for understanding the well-established question of modern science: *What is life?* Aristotle's teachings in *De Anima* seem to be a solid study of life in a biological manner (Olshewsky, 1976). He uses the word of the soul to equalize the meaning of that word to live: The dimensions of the soul are also dimensions of life. To have a soul or to live, two things are needed: motion and perception, which are the fundamentals of a living biological entity. The soul is the first competence (*entelekheia*) of a natural existence; if there is life, therefore there is a soul, too (McGinnis & Wisnovsky, 2004). He says: *"The soul is the principle of living beings."* (Aristotle, 1994). Consequently, his questions, perceptions, evaluations, and classifications of the concept of the soul are strict investigations of life. When the question comes to *what is the soul*, he describes it with different analogies to explain that concept. For instance, he uses the similitude example of the eyes and says that if eyes were independent living things, the soul *was to see*. Therefore, the soul contains both the function and purpose of a living thing, which is the composite of the body and the soul. He also investigates the dimensions of the soul; in other words, he constructs a general scheme to describe life and life activities; only a body with a soul can perceive pain and pleasure; it can act to escape from pain and reach for pleasure. A body with a soul is capable of knowing, growing, feeding, imagining, reproducing, and dying.

Aristotle constructs a kind of trade between beings. He emphasizes that a living being needs other beings to exist; in other words, a naturally living entity needs other components of the universe to move and perceive, which are the main principles of having a soul - or having a life. He uses different kinds of examples to explain this principle; one of the examples is about hearing; there are two participants in that trade; one is hearing, and the other is noising. Thus, for the acts of a living entity, Aristotle made a two-dimensional conceptualization. Examples can be increased: organisms need objects and light to see, organisms need nutrients and water to feed, organisms need other organisms to communicate, etc. In short, organisms need other existences to be and to live. As a consequence, we can conclude that all beings, including human beings, rely on each other to exist, and therefore, all living things are dependent on other creatures - whether living or nonliving - to live. All these frameworks can be concerned in the area of evolutionary biology, which describes life under two parameters: survival[9] and fitness[10]. Therefore, all entities need others to survive and fit their generations into the future. In addition to these, in Aristotle's worldview, all organisms are regarded as different populations rather than individual organisms. Individuals exist, but this existence comes from the individual who belongs to a society/population. This sight of Aristotle pervades all the evaluations of him about life and specifically, human life.

When the topic comes to the question that *What is human life,* we have to look for the concept of the soul again. Aristotle describes the soul as all living organisms. Therefore, all aspects of the general soul also descriptions are valid for humans. Humans have similar aspects of the soul with other living creatures, as living beings have common soul characteristics, such as feeding, growing, reproducing, desiring, taking pleasure, suffering, etc. All these aspects are biological dimensions of a living organism, and they are found in animals, plants, and humans - which are a kind of animal. Besides the common sharing among living organisms, every living organism has its characteristics due to its specific soul; for

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8 Potential to live: Everything in the universe lives or has the potential to live or serves a function for life, therefore life is about all the universe, in a manner (Aristotle, 1994)
9 Survive: Continue to live or exist (Johnson et al., 2008).
10 Fitness: Reproductive success of the organisms (Johnson et al., 2008)

example, plants have plant souls, which makes them a plant. When the topic comes to the human soul, which is the aliveness of humans, he differentiates this organism through the aspects of human activities like politics and ethics. Just like plants are differentiated from other living creatures due to their morphologies, or to make photosynthesis, or other characteristics that are specific to the plants; human organisms are differentiated by ethics, politics, economy, culture, etc. The point is that: all activities of humans are natural and biological aspects of the homo sapiens. Therefore, every action and characteristic of the human being, including the abstract and non-physical aspects that differ from concrete and physical aspects, are involved in the human soul. For instance, abstract thinking, language, complex economic relations, social relations, cultural infrastructures, morals, and classifications on what is good for humans, etc., all are the different results of the actions of the human soul. In other words, they are about to live as human beings. They are biological aspects of the human organism, as neurological, behavioral, evolutionary, anatomical, morphological, and physiological aspects of the human organism. Therefore, they should be evaluated from a biological perspective. I think Aristotle's success in constructing a holistic view has come from this monolith view, which arises from life itself.

Aristotle explains the natural human organism in Nicomachean Ethics, which is a book different from *De Anima* that focuses only on the soul of the human being. In other words, he investigates the human soul/human life characteristics, which are different from other living beings as a different work. When talking about human organisms, Aristotle regards them as animals that can know things (Aristotle & Crisp, 2014). Therefore, one of the principles of the human soul is to be able to know. He begins *De Anima* with the justification of investigations on the concept of the soul, and that justification is based upon the nature of human beings' search for the truth via knowing things (Aristotle, 1994). Besides knowing, the human organism has different kinds of ethical aspects. For instance, happiness is considered an activity of the aliveness of humans (Aristotle, 1994) politics exists as an action of the vitality of the human population (Aristotle & Crisp, 2014; Aristotle, 1994). Aristotle concludes some points from these postulates; for instance, a politician must know the subject of the soul since the politician is laboring on top of city life, which handles all dimensions of human activities. In other words, a politician must know life itself, specifically human life.

Since all living organisms belong to societies/populations, as a living organism, humans should be primarily conceived as included in human populations. Every aspect/act of the human being, like ecological, political, and ethical actions, should be handled as a characteristic of the human organism, which should be conceived in the framework of the human population and the relations of humans within the population. Aristotle's approaches neutralize the meanings of ethical issues like good or bad or stingy; all these evaluations are linked with the biological existence of the human population. He searches for the nature of the human population by different aspects of human actions and characteristics; for instance, he deals with merit and investigates the phenomenons that are related to merit, like cowardice, bravery, beautifulness, stinginess, etc., to construct a life-related worldview. In conclusion, he constructs a teaching that *comprises all dimensions of the human population.*

Aristotle remarks that "Every city exists by nature" and "Man is by nature a political animal" (Ambler, 1985). The starting point of these remarks is based on the idea that cities are natural components of human existence because Aristotle conceives human activities as an entirety, and classifies these activities under the idea that human activities are made by a natural being-human. In other words, every aspect of human society and the human organism is in the framework of the idea that humans are biological organisms. Therefore, the acts and characteristics of the human population should be read from a biological/ecological viewpoint, as Aristotle does for the topics of ethics, politics, and the city. For instance, just as beavers make barrages or ants construct colonies, humans form cities. Moreover, this kind of view is ahead of modern-day efforts to construct interdisciplinary studies, since the starting point of Aristotle's worldview includes all human-made disciplines with their relations since all is about being human; but current interdisciplinary efforts try to associate different entities of human activities, seems like, human activities are separate from each other.

Since the city is a complex output of the actions of the human organism, and since in cities, human life and human activities become tangible, there is a need to evaluate a city from a biological starting point. But the problem is coming from the complementary efforts to integrate different activities of humans. Whenever we integrate human activity or human characteristics into a city ecosystem, as Picket and his friends do, another dimension of the human population will be missing (Pickett, 2012; Pickett et al., 2016; 1997). The solution lies in the human descriptions and the city descriptions, and I suggest Aristotle made these descriptions in a way that they can be practicable. By changing our definitions and approaches from reductive and inductive ways to holistic ways, as Aristotle did, and accepting the city as a unit of the biological human population, we can handle the problems that come from changing

biospheres like urbanization or climate change. These biological perspectives of human and city concepts are prone to evolve through ecological perspectives, too. Aristotle's standpoint has real solutions between organismal trading and ecological relations that are based on this trade between creatures. If we want to introduce the human component into the ecosystem, as it has been tried in the various human ecosystem models (Machlis et al., 1997; Borer et al., 2000), I think this would be a problematic way to spend our effort due to our lack of definitions in this area. A more proper way can be proposed as follows: There is no need to introduce human components to the biosphere/ecosystem because humans are a part of this system both for existence and to live. And so, if we want to create cities that are compatible with the biosphere, we should conceive all human activities as natural activities, and we must realize that every aspect of the human being is naturally occurring and exists in ecological relations. For instance, Aristotle explains whether to do good or bad due to human nature, and these moral definitions are not separated from the biological human. These activities are also related to a real purpose: we might say that they serve to survive and fitness of the human population, which are biological descriptions of life. In other words, doing and intending good or bad should be considered biological acts, and since we are living in an environment, our acts are affecting others, and others' acts affect us biologically.

We can give an example of climate change to make concrete these ideas in a modern situation. In the climate change example, the world is changing faster than our adaptation to climate change (Orlove, 2005). Even though there are many regulations, new laws, and international agreements among countries, there is no general solution or adaptation of the human population to these changing climate circumstances (Dunn, 2002). The results show that the climate is changing, the ice on the poles is melting, the atmospheric C and CH4 concentrations are increasing, the global temperatures are increasing, the coastal settlements are prone to submerge, the species are lost, the agricultural activities of the human population are affected negatively, the countries that live on with agriculture -like Bangladesh- are facing huge economic loss, the plant morphologies and anatomies are changed, the air and soil contents are evolving, etc. examples can be (Hanna et al., 2013; Schuur et al., 2015; Huq, 2001; Schneider, 2001). Lewontin says that under these circumstances, we should be positioned in a way that human organisms will not be harmed by these changes and stop useless concerns about protecting all living beings (Lewontin, 1992). But even if we try to do this, we have to know the whole working process of the biosphere to locate ourselves in the protection of these climate changes. At that point, Aristotle's starting point clears up this problem. As Aristotle stressed, all lives are everyday in the meaning of having a soul, namely, have a life, and to live; we should be in a trade with other beings. Without knowing the rules of trading, in modern words, without knowing the ecological relations and ecological components that we live together with, we cannot have a true position in a changing world.

The urban ecology discipline has great potential to construct the cities of the future. However, constructing a city has the same meaning as constructing human activities since cities are physical entities of human activities. Aristotle realized this fact. He equals the city with the humans (Aristotle & Crisp, 2014). For him, what is good for humans is good for the city, too (Aristotle & Crisp, 2014). Therefore, we need to think about human activities and try to revise human-environment relations. Aristotle provides great insight for evaluating human activities from a biological perspective. Therefore, his thoughts and ideas could be considered a starting point for the urban ecology discipline, which needs new definitions and principles on the topics of human, city, and city-human-environment relations. In the urban ecology discipline, there are some efforts to unify human activities ecologically. But the efforts in this area are not satisfactory. There is a need for a life-view in urban ecology to build a methodology and practical applications of the discipline. This view can be constructed only by seeing the ecosystem as a whole, and only after that, separating ecological components for our use. If we start from life itself, we can construct a view that helps our practical applications on urban ecology. Otherwise, proceeding with small steps and spending lots of effort on this type of progression, like trying to integrate human aspects one by one, can result in the generalized insolvency of modern-day problems such as climate change. Aristotle constructed a life view that meets these needs.

Santayana and the Self

With Santayana's approach to the matter, it was possible to make a completely biological interpretation of the world, moreover still has a great appreciation of poetry, art, imagination, and religion, and they have not a minor place in his conceptualization of the human life but take up a significantly large space (Poetry Foundation, n.d.). Although Santayana starts from a skeptical point, as in Descartes' skepticism, his skepticism does not come to the point such as *I can even deny my existence*, as in Descartes (Flamm, n.d.); on the contrary, Santayana comes up with the *essence*, in that, the imagination is free, that was a moment of a great liberation to realize one can comprehend something that does not exist and still looks at it, entertain it and find what it means and what it says about human life in general

(Saatkamp & Coleman, 2002). By saying, *"The origin of beliefs and ideas, as of all events, is natural"*, Santayana emphasizes that everything that is categorized as abstract or concrete in human life has a common ground. On this common unifying ground, he argues, *"Belief in substance, I have seen, is inevitable."* (Santayana, 2003) and establishes nodes that will provide unity between all existence, including the human himself, his thoughts, existence, and the *self* (Cronan, 2004).

First of all, it should be said that Santayana followed a skeptical point in this methodology. He begins by doubting almost everything, but still, the implications of his skepticism are tangible, experiential, and observable. This situation is caused by his pragmatic attitude toward the world - his skepticism is blended with a pragmatist perspective, therefore, this pragmatic attitude also decides to what extent the convictions he arrives at as a result of doubts are included in human life and helping the maintenance of the human population. Because basically, humankind has existed through the ages thanks to this pragmatic attitude; with this attitude, humans have survived, left offspring, and continued their lineage. Therefore, distinctions that are made with a pragmatist attitude among the choices are essential for human life and its continuation. Santayana applies the same pragmatic attitude to innate things that people do not logically acquire by thinking. For example, humans, by nature, exist to believe, although this act of believing is not a logical orientation, humans need to continue their life as animal species, because according to Santayana, "The origin of beliefs and ideas, as of all events, is natural." (Santayana, 2003). Moreover, for Santayana, the abstract extensions of humans - knowledge, ideas, belief- and even immaterial things, also lie in the realm of matter, like everything that exists: *"Belief in substance, I have seen, is inevitable"* (Santayana, 2003).

Santayana also deals with *the experience* in its natural context and also tells how the experience is embodied in the living thing. For Santayana, experience is not just a simple recollection of the memories, rather, it is an active and dynamic collection that the living thing constantly resorts to survive. Organisms use their experiences to grasp and tend to what is beneficial for them and to avoid what is useless and harmful (Santayana, 2003). Experiences are remembered and have an impact on the decision-making mechanisms of the organism to survive and fit future conditions. In this context, Santayana also raises the issue that knowledge is a belief mediated by symbols (G. Santayana 2003). In other words, according to Santayana, the rational thinking of humans is essentially a feature of the human-animal. Therefore, experience and knowledge impose a belief in a self, from which more experiences and knowledge can be accumulated in it. Moreover, the self is not a necessary emotional priority for any intuition, rather, it offers a nurturing ground from experience. That is, the self, or person, is an inference, a belief, and an unprovable dogma and this notion is a conclusion that has emerged from the experiences that are concrete processes that have active roles in the life of the organism.

However, it should be noted at this point that, according to Santayana, although there is an individual self, since everything is in integrity, the self is connected to its environment. There is a constant connection, flow, and unity between the interior and the exterior, between the organism and the environment. In this situation, although a deduction of selfness -which is a dogma- has been made, it makes it necessary to consider everything that exists as a whole. *Everything that exists is natural.* Because of this unity, the relationships of the parts of the universe, including each self in the universe, are as natural as life itself. This situation makes it both necessary and possible to consider humans as animals. There is constant communication and interaction within each singularity that exists in this unity. Naturally, the subject can know the object to which the subject is directed and can master the dimensions of the object. The things that enable this act of knowing are the essences of matter.

Santayana embodies these two dogmas that can shed light on the entire realm of being: *"...two additional dogmas which I have accepted: first, the dogma that I am a being far deeper than my substantial discourse, a psyche or self; and second, the dogma that this substantial being is in dynamic interplay with a whole environing system of substances on the same plane with itself."* (Santayana, 2003). Thus, while constructing a concept of self, Santayana also draws the boundaries of the self and due to keeping everything that happens between a dynamic interplay outside the self, so that Santayana can deal with the self and environment as a whole. Santayana, instead of establishing an intricately complex system of metaphysical thinking to define the concept of self; defines the self as an active subject who is natural, comes from nature, can act individually, can be aware of the essences of the objects and events around it and can be in a relationship with its environment. However, Santayana uses self and psyche interchangeably, for him to be a self is to have a psyche (G. Santayana 2003). Therefore, by not making a deep distinction between these two concepts, he points out that the psyche can be handled in a very concrete and naturalistic way. In this way, it allows the psyche to have a biological basis as well, to be handled in a way that is included in the relation of matter, although it may seem like a very unnatural and non-material concept.

When we look at all this methodology, what Santayana put forward can also be seen in science: Even if various theories and laws are reached with the scientific method, all the propositions of science are far from being certain (George Santayana 2021). Moreover, all scientific endeavors are based on an animal faith at its core: humans, as an animal, have to survive, so they have an initial belief that they can know the environment and can act on it. When this belief is combined with experience, it also creates a belief that people can shape natural phenomena and their environment by manipulating them. Therefore, one can talk about scientific action by giving a systematic state to all these beliefs and processes that have been going on since the beginning of humanity. The basis of all this confidence is animal faith (G. Santayana 2003) For Santayana's propositions from a biological perspective, it can be also said that he has a very accurate view in describing the functioning of natural processes. Every living thing works to create the next generation by reproducing and the basis of evolution is based on the continuation of life as a result of variations (Arber 2000). In other words, every living thing, that is, every self, must communicate with other matters while maintaining its integrity. Every living thing is naturally included in the unity, it must survive and produce generations in this unity. It can be seen that each of these processes naturally exists in the self with more than one animal faith: the living organism must, first of all, feel a grudge against the environment so that it can find food and reproduce.

Vitality gives different individualities and unity as context changes. For instance, there are contextual differences between treating the cell as a singular agent and a human being as a singular organism. Definitions and namings change as going from the small universe to the big universe. However, speaking on a human scale, the source of all these denominations is the self itself. The human self actively gives names to its environment, categorizes the beings and matter around it, defines it, observes its properties, and disposes of the matter. He also dreams, thinks, produces abstract concepts, develops language, and makes art. All these processes are natural features of the human self that belong to humans. The human organism's sensory inputs limit its perception of its environment, and it tries to keep the population of the human organism alive with the thinking and technology opportunities it has developed within its borders.

Santayana's approach to vitality is in certain respects similar to Aristotle's approach to the soul. Aristotle's teaching is a vitality-based approach. In the texts of Santayana, similarly, he argues that all human aspects are related to animal origin. Thus, not only the self has an animal origin, but all the extensions of the self are directly related to this animal origin, and as a result, the self is also an animal. Santayana, while treating the self as psyche, presented a framework of meaning that would explain the whole existence, matter, and self rather than going into the details of the self and making it a science of psychology. Although he dealt with the science of psychology separately in his book *Skepticism and Animal Faith* (G. Santayana 2003), he still did not grapple with any useless detail that one cannot make sense of life as a whole. All this pragmatic reasoning has given him a concept that one can observe its actions, even if it is accepted as a dogma after all: the self. Naturally, any human action is based on an animal's faith. Technology can also be seen as a reflection of a form of action produced by the human self (Allen 2008). Human, by his nature, has to survive and continue their lineage, just like every other living organism. The emergence of technology in the evolutionary process can be seen as natural for a human being, who has lost its feathers in the evolutionary process, can stand on two legs, and has developed neurophysiological coordination (Allen 2008). Using Santayana's approach, one can also take a look at the holistic nature of technology by discovering the essence of other beings around them. It can be said that technology is not just a tool-using skill. Because technology is an extension of a human population that includes many historical aspects, and it is sometimes cumulative, and it sometimes jumps. Technological developments cannot be considered in isolation, because they have serious links with different extensions of human life (Su and Moaniba 2017). Many humanities such as economy, politics, environment, human relations, medicine, chemistry, and education are closely related to technology (Boekholt 2010; Su and Moaniba 2017). Naturally, the experiences that people have gained in all these different fields must be combined and embodied as an instrumentalization and culture. At this point, it can be said that the human self collects the different experiences of life as an integrating ground, and produces technology with the help of the essences, discovers its relations with matter and phenomena. It can be said that it is possible to see natural human action in all processes of technology since the instincts of protecting the population, surviving, and producing generations are supported by technology. In other words, it may be possible to see the movement areas of the human self in the natural environment by analyzing technological developments.

Although the discussions of very fundamental concepts such as self, psyche, and individuality go back to ancient times in the philosophy of biology, it can be said that the discovery of a heritable genetic material and the concepts of microbiota have a serious place in modern discussions for these concepts (Turnbaugh et al., 2007). The concept of microbiota has long been a cornerstone in the biological

discussion of individuality and self (Rees et al., 2018). Before it was known that the microbiota was so effective on organisms, the concept of self was discussed with the discovery of DNA as genetic material. However, the fact that genetic material does not conflict with the cell theory and does not disrupt the integrity of the cell, on the contrary, is meaningful within the cell, which may lead DNA to a somewhat less problematic position when compared to the microbiota (Gimbert & Lapointe, 2015). Likewise, since microbiota is a description of other living cells – fungi, bacteria, and viruses – living in an organism, the concepts related to microbiota and how it affects the integrity of the organism have been the subject of serious curiosity. Experiments on this subject have found that other microbes living in the body have many functions: for example, in synthesizing various vitamins, in immune responses, in obesity, in many diseases, and even in mood (Manor et al. 2020). Therefore, the fact that these living things, which we consider as a single organism, affect the organism to such a degree, reveals the idea of how accurate it is to consider the organism as a singular self. This also makes it an ambiguous area where the boundaries of the self - or organism - end and begin, because every organism is in constant interaction with its environment, so it constantly receives and introduces microbes from the environment (Kundu et al. 2017). In this continuous and dynamic environment, it is difficult to draw a boundary to define the self and to describe its interaction with the environment (Rees, Bosch, and Douglas 2018). Santayana's approach, on the other hand, may reveal a biological self-perception that could not be created despite the big data of the modern world and the results of numerous experiments. Because, in Santayana's view, the concept of Self appears as a deduction where skeptical and pragmatic thinking methods are blended, rather than a concept of self that is tried to be formed based on empirical data. However, the great thing here is that this dogma is not an inference that has no counterpart in substance but remains in pure thought. Because the self is an integrating factor that is in an active relationship with its environment, therefore it can be aware of the essences in the environment and can reach the knowledge of existence with these essences. But most importantly, although all these processes involve all the complexity of life, they do not have a super-material nature, they exist due to matter, and also they are extensions of matter. All abstractions that can be described such as doubting, making inferences, thinking abstractly, knowledge, etc., actually belong to human beings, they are processes arising from the fact that the human-animal has an animal basis. The acceptance of the self as a dogma by the human mind is also progress presented as a natural process for the human animal's mind to survive and perpetuate the generation. The human-animal, as an animal, must rely on nature, its environment, and its existence and also the concept of so that it can live.

Conclusion: Merging The Two Views into One to Comprehend Modern Cities

I suggest that there is a concrete connection between the city and the self. Our concept of self is the main thing that determines the urban area, the basic energy of action, and the worldview that determines all the other elements (Figure 1). If we want to understand cities, we need to understand the self.

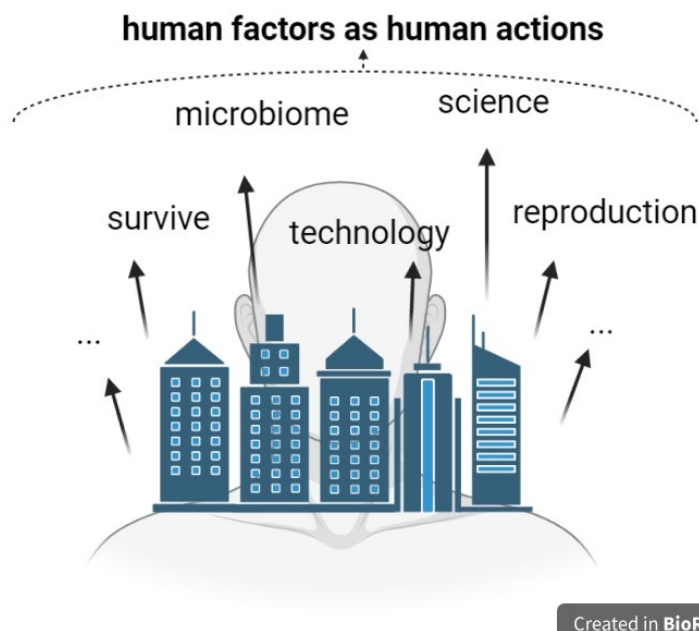*Figure 1.* The evolutionary outcome of the self as cities.
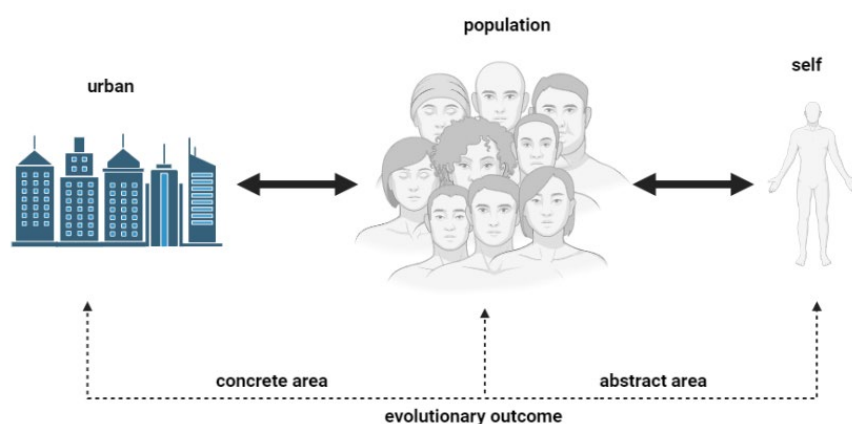
One example involves developing policies based on the shared perspectives of Aristotle and Santayana, which emphasize understanding humans not as separate entities from nature but as beings existing within and arising from it. Actions taken by humans, like those of other living and non-living entities, should be recognized as leading to natural outcomes. For instance, while sustainability typically considers criteria such as biodegradability, permanence, and the use of natural materials, the human factor must also be integrated into the concept of sustainability. Human existence, actions, and interactions with other living beings must be assessed within this framework because humans are not separate from nature but, like all others, an integral part of the ecosystem. Therefore, future planning and designs must account for all known living and non-living components of the ecosystem. For example, when using a chemical substance, its benefits to humans and its known effects on certain organisms should be analyzed through more holistic combinations. This would enable future predictions that are more inclusive and foster methods that incorporate human actions as part of the ecosystem rather than excluding humans from the equation. Such an approach would result in comprehensive strategies that embrace both the human and non-human aspects of the natural world.

The interplay between Aristotle's idea of the human being as an integral part of the natural world and Santayana's focus on the self provides a profound foundation for rethinking urban planning and policy development. Aristotle's perspective emphasizes the interconnectedness of human actions with the broader ecological system, suggesting that humans, like other living and non-living entities, are inseparable from the natural processes they influence. This aligns seamlessly with Santayana's view of the self, which considers human identity as deeply rooted in its surroundings and shaped by cultural and environmental contexts. Together, these ideas offer a framework for urban planning that not only acknowledges the ecological and social dimensions of human existence but also prioritizes designs that foster a deeper connection between individuals and their environments. For instance, policies informed by this synthesis could advocate for urban spaces that support both ecological sustainability and personal well-being, such as green areas designed to enhance community interaction and individual reflection, while maintaining ecological balance. The concept of the "self" as a measurable unit in urban ecology offers intriguing possibilities for bridging philosophical theory and practical application. Drawing from Santayana's emphasis on the self as intertwined with cultural and environmental contexts, this idea can be translated into urban ecosystems by recognizing individuals as dynamic components of the ecological fabric, whose behaviors and interactions influence and are influenced by their surroundings. For instance, integrating the "self" into urban ecological studies could involve analyzing human interactions with green spaces, their impact on local biodiversity, or the psychological benefits derived from urban design.

That is to say, as a starting point, we should evaluate the human aspects in a holistic view, rather than trying to integrate them. But before this, we have to shape our worldview based on the fact of living. Since modern-day problems like urbanization, climate change, poverty, and crimes are occurring in this life, we have to know *what is life*, its components, and aspects of life. All urban-related factors can be considered as a whole only if the self of each individual within the human population is accepted as the starting point. However, for us to take the self out of the abstract realm and bring it to a concrete reality, we must first decide on the parameters by which the self is to be evaluated. For this, the shortest and most measurable method is to construct the self-concept based on actions (Figure 2). The relevance of the various factors that we observe in cities to the self can be taken out of the philosophical ground and into the scientific ground of action only if the self is defined in terms of actions. Therefore, the multi-component structure of cities exists in a measurable unity thanks to the unifying nature of the self.

Figure 2. Human factors in the cities are the outcomes of the actions of the human population, which is created by the sum of individual selves. Therefore, the self becomes a basic definition to represent humans as a whole dynamic entity in the environment and urban areas.

human factors as human actions

microbiome   science

survive   technology   reproduction

...   ...

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The combination of Aristotle's ability to treat life as a whole and the concepts of self pointed out by Santayana can form an integral basis for understanding city systems. Many other similar views can be integrated into this system, but the choice of cities as the main field of observation also means defining a real field for the practical application of these views. Of course, whether or not this proposal can be realized depends on disciplines working together, but the more important fiction that will determine the outcome is the unification and mobilization of intellectual grounds on a common denominator. In summary, the main point I am trying to reach is that the understanding of human mobility and the dynamic positioning of this mobility within the ecosystem integrity depends, first of all, on rebuilding our definition of the self. The unity provided by Aristotle's views on life, cities, and human beings, when combined with Santayana's views that unify human actions, can provide a solid paradigmatic basis for understanding urban systems and by this, a realistic intellectual ground can be created to find solutions to modern-day problems related with cities.

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