




Observing patterns for the urban fabric as a place shaping continuum on the waterfront of the Haliç area, Istanbul

Mehmet Aytekin Saygılı* 
Elmira Ayşe Gür** 

Abstract

This research paper details a part of a case study exploring placemaking activities and the outcomes of urban design issues in a waterfront area. The fine-grained urban fabric has played an important role in waterfront regeneration schemes globally. Governments try to encourage place-based regeneration activities such as design-led and culture-led strategies addressing social and physical issues in several waterfront areas. Acting towards environmental challenges to provide green spaces has increasingly become a favourable approach since the 2010s. An ideas competition was held in 2020 to address this issue on the waterfront of the Haliç area, which is a post-industrial site today. The seven semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the competing discourses on each project created by the teams who attempted to deal with the unsolved urban fabric. In this regard, this paper focuses on the examination of the placemaking activities in a situation where there is no urban fabric, by referring to the help of control variables together with semi-structured interviews with academic members of Istanbul Technical University and investigates the existence of the urban fabric as a place shaping continuum in the Haliç area.

Keywords: content analysis, pattern-matching, sense of place, streetscape, urban fabric, waterfront

1. Introduction

The Haliç area was deindustrialised through the enactment of the Haliç master plan of 1985, with its primary goal being the design of play areas, parks, and green spaces for recreational use, as well as the repurposing of heritage buildings.

A review of the literature has revealed that among the three categories of regeneration issues, place-based regeneration activities, which are culture-led and design-led, focus on social and physical issues. In the 1980s and 1990s, local governments opted for culture-led regeneration activities to encourage investment.

Culture-led regeneration is the “culture as a catalyst and engine of regeneration” (Evans, 2005). Culture and regeneration together with cultural regeneration are classified as a part of this approach. Culture and regeneration involve in small-scale schemes such as designing a museum or organising a public art programme. The similar approaches were adopted by repurposing heritage buildings to cultural facilities, such as the Koç Museum, Feshane and Santral Istanbul in the Haliç area.

Cultural regeneration focuses on the cultural aspects that deal with the regeneration of a city. For instance, the EU selects a European Capital of Culture every year and Istanbul was chosen in 2010 to celebrate its diverse culture. In the following years, regeneration activities continued with

*M.Sc., Architect, Istanbul Technical University, Türkiye, [✉ msaygili@itu.edu.tr](mailto:msaygili@itu.edu.tr)

**Prof. Dr., Istanbul Technical University, Türkiye, [✉ elmiragur@itu.edu.tr](mailto:elmiragur@itu.edu.tr)

Article history: Received 09 November 2023, Accepted 11 December 2023, Published 17 December 2023

Copyright: © The Author(s). Distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License



repurposing the heritage buildings and designing open-air exhibition spaces, parks, and pedestrian-friendly zones in the Haliç area.

Globally by the mid-1990s, the heritage buildings that made people have sense of place and a connection to the past became the focal point for establishing high-quality public spaces without compromising their culture, heritage, and identity in the form of entertainment. Design-led regeneration activities that focused on placemaking issues began to be seen as a viable solution for enhancing the vitality and viability of post-industrial areas adjacent to city centres. There is a connection between the environment in which we socialise and the economic factors that fund it.

The recent phenomenon aimed at enhancing the attractiveness of areas by regenerating degraded urban environments via creating green spaces or deploying climate-adaptive green infrastructure were taken seriously by European cities during the 2000s and 2010s. However, the spatial patterns of urban greening initiatives within each city can be considered in relation to the city's local context. There are reasons to believe that some common spatial patterns do exist. [Anguelovski et al. \(2022\)](#) stated that the processes occurring in places where new greening activities took place were often close to but generally not within the historic downtown areas of the city. This often indicates the redevelopment activities taking place in post-industrial or underused areas located in nearby city centres.

For example, Today, the Haliç area is viewed as an underutilised post-industrial waterfront area adjacent to the historic city centre. It appears that viability and vitality have not been improved solely through the regeneration activities that have focused on green spaces and parks since 1985.

The scholarly literature on post-industrial waterfront developments indicated that waterfront areas were in a state of constant transition and many post-industrial sites that are located around the waterfronts were involved cultural preservation, public outdoor activities, and parks. Critiques of such developments expressed their concerns regarding green gentrification at the expense of social equity and shared economic prosperity ([Evans et al., 2022](#)).

This paper aims to explore potential outcomes for making the waterfront more diverse, variable, and vital. It also tries to find an answer as to whether regenerating this area through placemaking schemes consisting of green spaces would be sufficient. In another aspect, it specifically examines the issues concerning placemaking schemes in a situation where there is no urban fabric by referring to the help of the control variables and the use of semi-structured interviews. Therefore, this effort aims to investigate the role played by the existence of the urban fabric as a place-shaping continuum in the Halic area.

2. Placemaking and Urban Design Issues

The term 'placemaking' has been defined as a reaction to the disappearance of community-focused places since the early 20th century, or it can be regarded as a complex concept within a specific process. This process involves the enhancement of physical spaces, along with the community framework and key actors playing vital roles ([Silberberg et al., 2013](#)).

Placemaking can be traced back to the 1960s, as a response to modern planning and its consequences, as well as other issues related to inhabitants, visitors, and employees in towns and cities. During this period, urban thinkers created a new way to describe public spaces that could be designed by communities, which became the focal point.

[Lynch \(1960\)](#) emphasised the importance of how individuals interacted with the urban fabric. [Jacobs \(1961\)](#) highlighted the significance of lively neighbourhoods together with attractive and welcoming public spaces. [Lefebvre \(1968\)](#) introduced the slogan 'right to the city,' which challenged societal relationships governed by top-down spatial management.

[Whyte \(1980\)](#) focused on social life in public places and other urban environments, exploring the connection between social interaction and design, while [Jacobs](#) analysed street spaces and

sidewalks. In the subsequent years, placemaking expanded its focus to include human-centred examples of urban transformations (Batty, 2013).

After the establishment of the PPS, the 'placemaking movement' spread around the world in the 1990s. Shneekloth and Shibley (1993) conducted a comprehensive investigation into 'placemaking,' using case studies from their research to illustrate the significance of integrating design activities and community participation in organising public and private spaces.

Nowadays, the term encompasses from daylong events to the transformation of neighbourhoods that may take several decades to achieve. Some governmental organisations are deeply involved in placemaking, and the field of placemaking has expanded to include public agencies, private sector entities, and non-profit foundations. Durmaz (2012) highlighted the relationship between creative industries and placemaking emphasising the role of creative industries as a catalyst for the transformation of urban areas in cities.

Industrial cities underwent redefinition in terms of their functional and economic aspects. Therefore, urban design became a crucial tool in the renewal, regeneration, and rehabilitation of historic districts, as well as the repurposing of heritage buildings. Urban design experienced significant changes worldwide in the 1990s. However, as the recession of 2008 took place, affecting every nation economically and socially, the results and impact of this approach began to be felt.

Urban design enhances the design and use of public spaces by providing various forms of public space via using mixed use, streetscape, street life, and small blocks 'Urbanism' is the relationship between public spaces. Urban culture is the outcome of the development of mankind, and urban conservation deals with the continuity of urban life. It is essential to assess buildings of historical significance and their locations within urban settings. To integrate what remains as heritage in urban fabric, there should be interrelated efforts to connect the fields of urban archaeology, urban conservation, and planning. Historic city centres comprise groups of buildings and road networks constructed in different periods, which collectively define the urban fabric that is now a part of an urban character and culture. According to Gehl (1989), the success of urban spaces is contingent on street life and the activities that occur within these spaces.

The balance of open space to built form has been a planning issue. The arrangement, appearance, and functions of our suburbs, towns, and cities have changed over the years and are still changing with the application of new design ideas to create localities in which people live.

It is a well-known fact that inequality in access to green spaces creates some downsides among neighbourhoods as people do need socialising. They do this by going to parks, open spaces, and jogging. However, the post-pandemic period has shown the experts that while people working from home or continuing shopping online, these attitudes will give rise to issues in terms of socialising in the future; therefore, shops, cafes, and buildings with active frontages that contribute to enhancing street life are still needed (Donahue, 2021). Designers should have the same concern for the waterfront of the Haliç area.

2.1. Fine-grained urban fabric

Urban grain is 'the degree of mixing of different physical elements in an urban area', sometimes referred to as horizontal subdivision, as it pertains to the role patterns of plots within a block (Lynch, 1981). This term also plays a crucial role in varieties of mixed uses together with the economic opportunities created by diversity.

It began to be used in planning together with urban design in the late 1990s and was defined as 'the pattern of the arrangement of street blocks, plots, and their buildings in a settlement' (DETR, 2000).

In any given area, there can be several categories of urban grain that contribute to the overall urban character. Lynch (1981) further divided urban grain into fine and coarse, describing it as 'the grain of a mix is fine when like elements, or small clusters of them, are widely dispersed among

unlike elements, and coarse when extensive areas of one thing are separated from extensive areas of another thing'. Recently, it can be said that cities are coarse-grained, and they are considerably rigid because the smallest units are considered as blocks of flats (Habraken, 2003). For instance, according to a study in Detroit, a serious change from a fine-grained city to a coarse-grained urban texture resulted in the city planners being unable to distinguish the potential of the historic fabric that had some economic vitality (Locke, 2019).

It has always been considered to be the term that describes the traditional pattern of plots; although, many contemporary urban fabrics include examples of small plots (Norton, 2016) and are closely associated with the most enchanting streets and spaces (Loci, 2010). The complexity of fine urban grain contributes to increased richness and variety (Campbell, 2012). When places have smaller plots, they are worth more, and the economic condition within an area is resilient enough to sustain the value of such smaller blocks. The block and its pattern continue to exist and reflect the ideologies of the time of its construction by creating patterns based on coherency and repetition. These forms of urban blocks are inclined to be comparatively stable over a period of time. Meanwhile, functional uses change faster. Therefore, the most resilient component of urban fabric is the block and its ground floor plan (Kropf, 1998).

2.2. The conceptual model and the theory of placemaking

Three categories of urban regeneration were found as a result of the literature search. First are the regeneration activities based on governance structures that are state-led (Miller & McTavish, 2013; Smalley 2015), property-led (Turok, 1991; Evans, 1997; Anders, 2004; Raco & Tunney, 2010; Tallon, 2013) and market-led regeneration (Tallon, 2009; Sagan & Grabkowska, 2012; Smith, 2014). Second are place-based regeneration activities addressing social and physical issues that design-led (Roberts & Sykes, 2000; Bell & Jayne, 2003; Garde, 2004) and culture-led (Evans, 2005; URBACT Culture members 2006; Jones & Evans, 2008; Ennis & Douglass, 2011) are classified as this type of regeneration activities. Last are the strategies that provide focus for an activity or event such as art-led (Bridge, 2006; Ewbank, 2011; McCormack, 2013), event-led (Garcia, 2005; Smith & Fox, 2007; Evans, 2011; Smith, 2012), housing-led (ODPM 2004; Rosemary et al. 2005), attraction-led (Amion 2010), retail-led (Pacione, 2005; Lowe, 2005; Tallon, 2009), and tourism-led (Williams & Shaw, 1991; Stead & Hoppenbrower, 2004) form this part of regeneration activities.

The literature review revealed that since 2008, some local municipalities have experienced difficulties during the global financial crisis, that weakened the structure of property-led urban regeneration strategies. This is how design-led schemes were established. These regeneration schemes focus on placemaking activities and are also involved in making use of fine urban grain issues (Garde, 2004; Holmes, 2016).

After completing the literature review, a conceptual model was developed. The interdependent variable is urban grain, which relates to fine and coarse-grained urban fabric. The dependent variables are the mixed use, street life, streetscape, and small blocks. The place dependence, place attachment, and place identity are considered control variables. Moreover, the sense of place was created by small urban blocks, mixed use, and streetscape, as this concept is strongly linked to the placemaking process. This strengthens the relationships between the independent and dependent variables and provides the contextual framework (Figure 1).

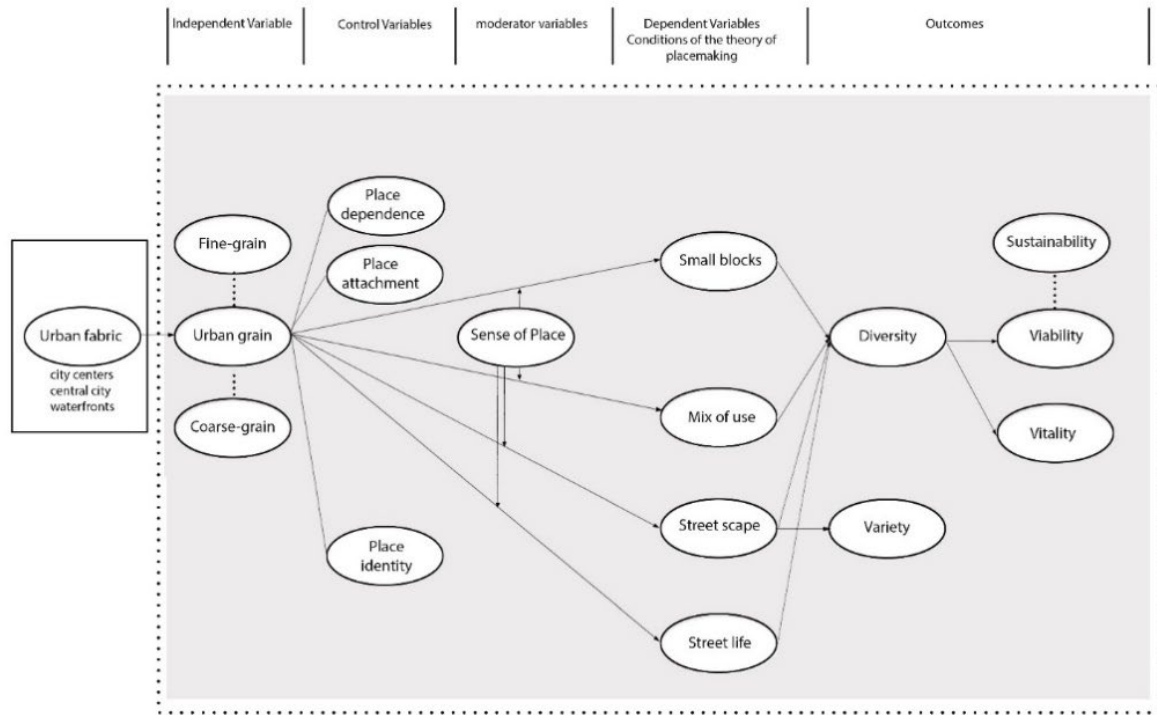


Figure 1 The conceptual model based on the literature review

3. Case Study: The Haliç Area

3.1. Methodology

In this case study concerning the Haliç area, the exploratory sequential design was chosen from the three core mixed methods designs. The three-phase exploratory sequential mixed method is a design that begins by exploring the qualitative data. It later sets up a feature that needs to be tested, then usually continues with a survey in the third phase to test the formulated hypothesis and draw a conclusion (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

A part of placemaking studies focuses on the examination of the urban grain by analysing historical maps. The first phase of this case study involved the analysis of the historical maps depicting the Haliç area.

The second phase investigated some of the maps by using the character area assessment and the historical-geographical approach to determine the feature to be tested, which was the urban fabric on the waterfront.

Given the sequential nature of such designs, the third phase focuses on collecting quantitative data to test a phenomenon. An alternative application of the third phase involves the use of interviews to explore what is grounded in the data by identifying themes and then clarify the findings before the testing. Therefore, it was designed to conduct semi-structured interviews to obtain experts' views as part of the research objectives. In this case, the data collection took place at two points: one of which was the gathering of initial qualitative data during the interviews and the other was the conducting of the questionnaire survey involving visitors and inhabitants in the study area.

3.2. The Study Area

The 8 km long Haliç (Golden Horn) is the estuary of the Alibeyköy and Kağıthane Rivers and serves as a primary inlet to the Bosphorus Strait. At its widest point, the Haliç estuary is about 700

m between the districts of Cibali in the south and Kasımpaşa in the north. A coastal strip of about 150 meters encircles the Haliç area, which is only a few meters above sea level.

There are four districts located on both banks of the Haliç area. The neighbourhoods of Fatih (Eminönü, Unkapanı, Cibali, Fener, Balat, Ayvansaray), and the district of Eyüp are located on the south bank; the district of Kağıthane together with the neighbourhoods of Beyoğlu (Sütlüce, Hasköy, Kasımpaşa, and Galata) are located on the north bank. The road by the sea that separates the waterfront from these neighbourhoods in the Haliç area defines the study area.

At the outset of the deindustrialisation efforts, to improve vitality, one of the solutions seemed to establish some parks; however, this was insufficient as the absence of mixed-use development projects did not support the public's use of this area more frequently.

In 2020, the architectural ideas competition entitled 'İstanbul Senin Haliç Kıyıları Tasarım Yarışması' was held. The competition focused on the creation of multifunctional green spaces in the Haliç area. The teams participating in this competition comprised a range of design disciplines, including planners, landscape architects, and architects who worked in collaboration as required. The competition site was divided into seven project sites, with six of them bordering the coastal road, a constant that was also mentioned in the character area analysis (Figure 2).

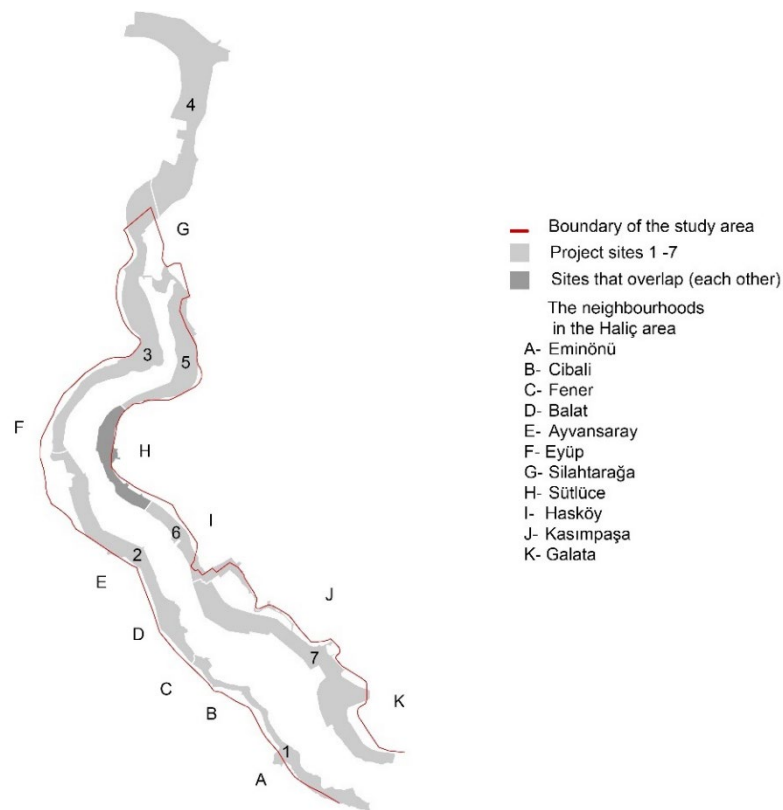


Figure 2 The neighborhoods, the study area (shown in red), and the competition sites of the architectural ideas competition (shown in grey with numbers from 1 to 7)

3.3. The Results of the Case Study

The character areas reflect different historical and current land use issues and physical characteristics of an area where a clear identity emerges instead of dealing with individual site-specific projects. The character areas in this case study provided a basis for the examination of the urban fabric issues relating to the Haliç area.

3.3.1. Determining the Character Areas in the Haliç Area

In order to record the connections between the character areas on the waterfront, some maps were short-listed from the historical maps studied. The six-character areas were chosen by

examining these maps chronologically (Table 1). These are the waterfront areas of the district of Eyüp, the Historic Peninsula, the square of Eminönü, Galata, and the shipyards together with the neighbourhoods of Halıcıoğlu, Sütlüce and Hasköy.

As urban grain is the independent variable, the streets, urban blocks, building types, mixed use and street life are dependent on the conditions of the urban fabric on the waterfront.

Table 1 Maps used for the Character Areas Study

TITLE OF MAP	DATE	AREAS COVERED
B. R. Davies	1840	the Historic Peninsula, Galata and Üsküdar
Moltke Map	1868	the city of Istanbul
C. Stople Map	1882	the Historic Peninsula, Galata, Üsküdar and Kadıköy
Alman Mavileri	1914	the Historic Peninsula; Eyüp, Beyoğlu, Beşiktaş, Kadıköy and Üsküdar
İstanbul Şehri Rehberi	1934	detailing Istanbul and the Bosphorus
İstanbul Şehir Rehberi	1971	A city guide of Istanbul

The Davies map of 1840 was the earliest record that provided sufficient information on the condition of the waterfront. The characteristics that were observed include the location of the coastal road along the sea in front of the city walls and some patches of urban fabric in other parts of the Haliç area.

The Stolpe map of 1882 was the second one where many industrial facilities were located on the waterfront. Over the years, this area became more industrialised and developed into an industrial district, with commercial activities taking place in a fine-grained urban fabric on the waterfront.

The urban fabric was well-established as seen in the map series of 1914 Alman Mavileri, the city guides of 1934 and 1971. The coastal road set off from the Square of Eminönü ran towards Eyüp, circled around the Silahtarağa Power Station, and continued running parallel to the coastline towards Galata, clearly separating the waterfront where the industrial activities were taking place. This road still exists today.

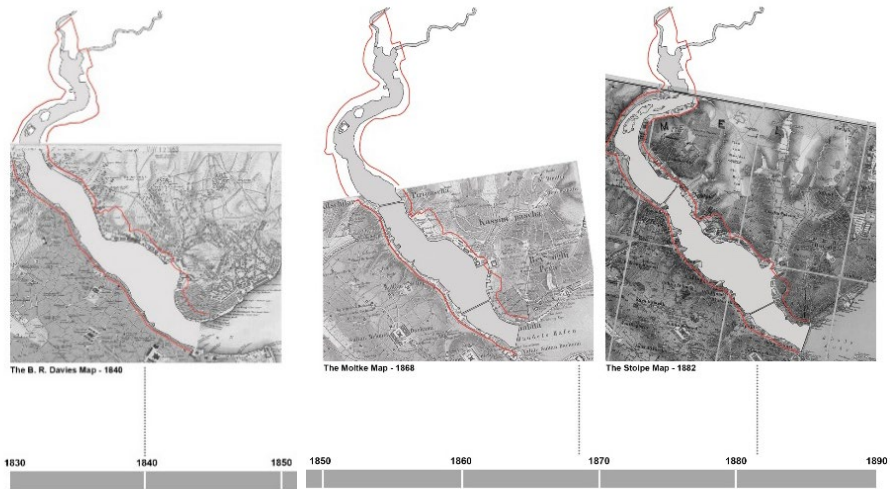
The results of the character area analysis indicated that the situation in the Haliç area was based on the cultural and historical conditions relating to the urban fabric on the waterfront as it was mostly fine grained in the vicinity of the former jetties. Placemaking activities should be taken more seriously in these areas to enhance the viability on the waterfront as well as the neighbours around it. The following map studies demonstrate the relationship between the coastal road and the urban fabric on the waterfront during different periods (Figure 3).

The study area, the period from the 1840s to the 1880s

Adjacent historic maps portray how the study area has transformed over the last 150 years.

The coastal road that sets out the Haliç area has developed during this time as it still separates the waterfront from the remaining urban fabric today.

The current location of the coastal road is shown in red



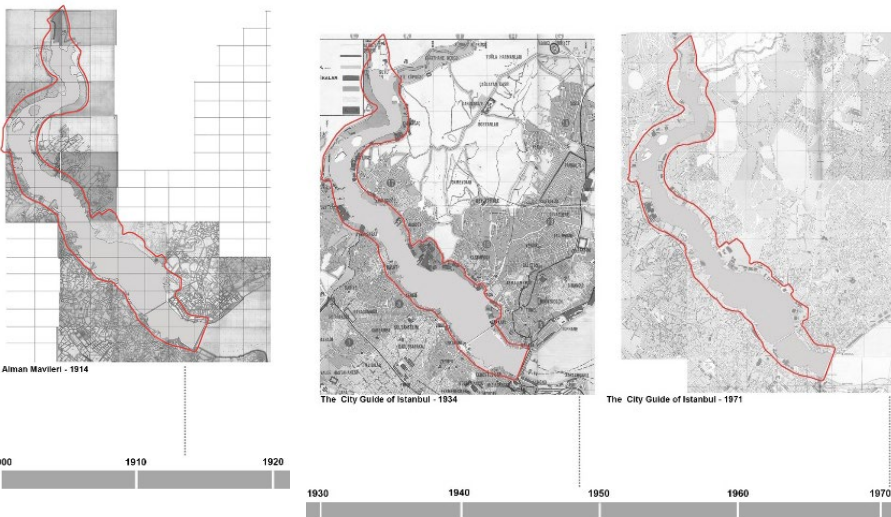
The westward expansion of the coastal road in the 19th Century
The waterfront area in front of the city walls was built out in some places while the Road from Aynalıkavak to Hasköy was not established yet.

Several small size buildings were established on the waterfront in front of the city walls.
Some industrial facilities were located on the premises of Aynalıkavak Palace while numerous urban blocks were set up in Piripaşa

On the waterfront along the coastal road numerous brick factories were located in Kağıthane.
The coastal road run through the urban blocks in Piripaşa while there were some large-scale buildings adjacent to the urban fabric in Halıcıoğlu and Sütlüce

The study area from 1910 to the present

In the subsequent years, the coastal route roughly followed the course of the road that encircles the Haliç area today.



In this series map, the coastal road was clearly marked from Unkapani to Kağıthane and run along the waterfront from Kağıthane to Galata

The coastal road separated the waterfront and the facilities established by the water from the rest of the urban fabric in the Haliç area.

The route of the coastal road today

Figure 3 Character areas study (maps depict the Haliç area in chronological order)

3.3.2. Analysing the features of the urban fabric in the Haliç area

In terms of urban fabric, three periods were identified: the first one is after the 1870s, the second one is between the years from the 1900s to the 1920s and the last one is the 1970s.

To analyse the maps for the earlier two periods, it was decided to adopt the historico-geographical approach that was described by Cozen (1960) that stems from the progressive growth of urban fabric and relates to the historical context by focusing from the present to the earlier periods. Nevertheless, there is no established methodology for this approach (Slater, 2009). Furthermore, the map analysis that reveals the conditions in the 1970s is presented as a dot distribution map.

3.3.3. The condition of the urban fabric

The study focused on the analysis of building types and the urban fabric (Levy 1999). Since this area was an industrial district, there was a confirmable relationship between the levels of urban grain and the degrees of land use in the three period maps. The patterns of finer urban grain formations varied depending on their locations on the waterfront. Nevertheless, there was a strong link between the intensity of finer urban grain and a considerable degree of mixed use in the study area (Table 2).

Table 2 Map series used for the analysis of the urban fabric in the Haliç area

TITLE OF MAP	SCALE	DATE	AREAS COVERED
maps covering the period from the 1900s to 1920s			
Goad	1/600	1904	Pera and Galata, Kadıköy.
Alman Mavileri	1/1000	1913-1914	the Historic Peninsula; Eyüp, Beyoğlu, Beşiktaş, Kadıköy and Üsküdar
Pervititch	1/2000	1922	Eminönü, Fatih, Beyazıt, Beyoğlu, Beşiktaş, Kadıköy, and Üsküdar.
map covering the period of the 1970s			
İstanbul Şehir Rehberi 1971	--	1971	-

The 1870s

As the maps of the 1870s do not reveal efficient information, the examination of urban plots and urban grain was not fully analysed. Some small urban blocks were built on the waterfront where the city walls were partially demolished. However, most military establishments and the restricted zone where the shipyards were located can be clearly seen.

The period from the 1900s to the 1920s

The spatial analysis of the industrial facilities in the Haliç area was carried out by using three map series due to data limitations. One of the two fire map series was prepared by Charles Edward Goad in 1904. The second map series was completed in 1914, and locally known as 'Alman Mavileri', these 1/1000 and 1/500 scale maps were used as a general plan of Istanbul covering the historic peninsula and Galata. The third set was the fire map series prepared for the years from the 1920s to the 1940s by Jacques Pervititch. Finally, the three maps analysed separately were superimposed to provide a piece of overall information about the spatial patterns and locations of the industrial buildings in the Haliç area (Figure 4).

Evaluation of the period from the 1900s to the 1920s. The superimposed map revealed that a mixture of fine and mixed-grained urban fabric was found adjacent to the city walls on the waterfront that was separated by the detached streets. The land near these streets was used for public spaces. The coastal road was intersected by the streets connecting the jetties through the gates to the inner parts of the Historic Peninsula. Streetscape wise, this area, where mostly warehouses were located, had an order unto itself, as the width of the warehouses resembled those of the buildings in the fine-grained grid of the city centre. There were several large buildings located on wide plots of land, mostly military warehouses in the inner parts of the Haliç area and the shipyards. The two bridges connected the waterfront areas of Eyüp and Galata, and the urban fabric was expanded on either side of the waterfront.

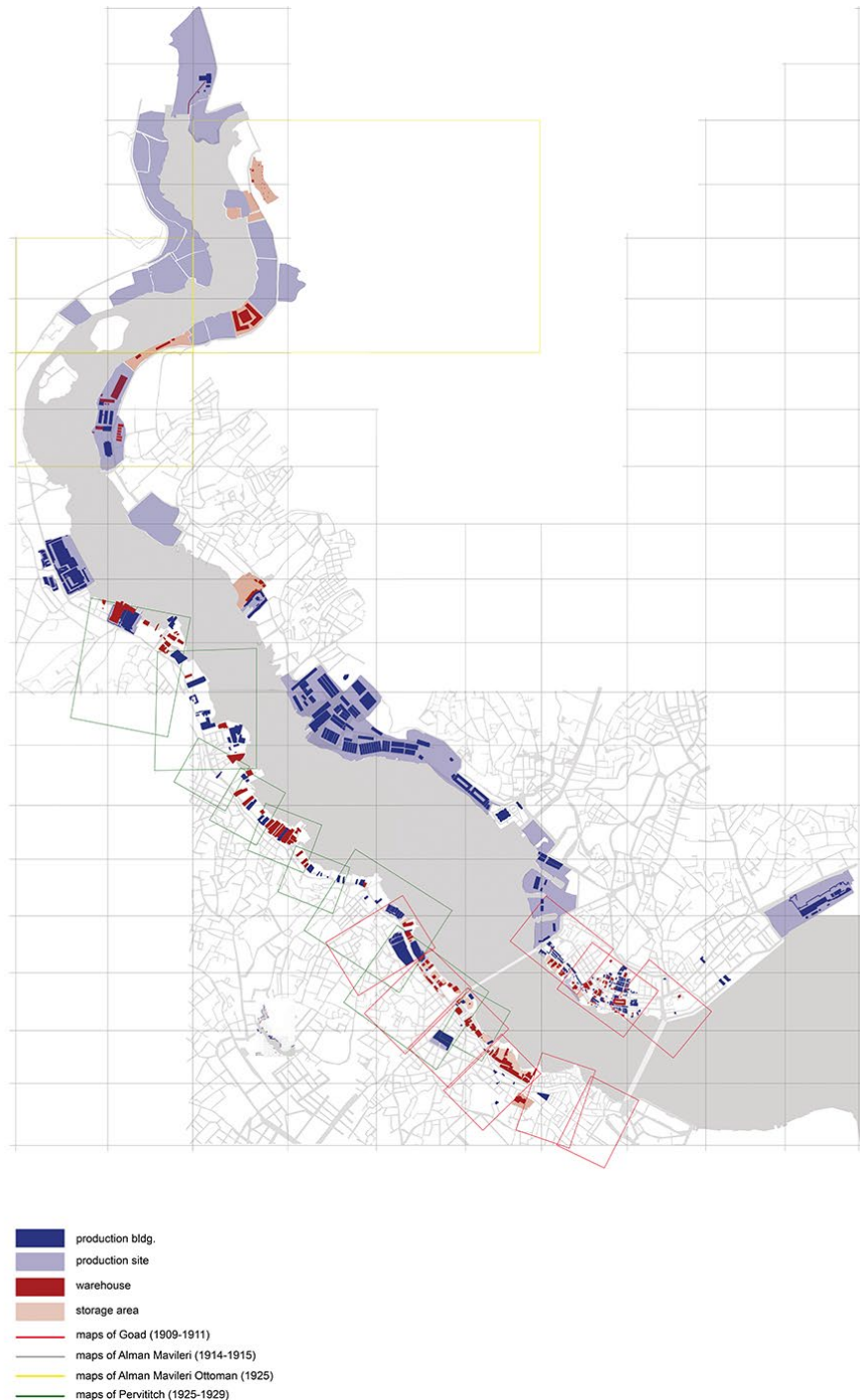


Figure 4 Map constructed to detail the urban fabric on the waterfront, the years from the 1900s to the 1920s

The Period of the Post-1970s

For the map of this period, the data were gathered from the documents published in the 1977 survey study in which the facilities were marked out per their manufacturing activities. Their address numbers were used to indicate their locations. However, determining the locations of these commercial and industrial establishments on the map presented some challenges. The cadastral maps did not include any records for address numbers, and some of the street names also changed over the years. Instead, the map published in the 1971 city guide of Istanbul was used as a base map to hypothetically locate the industrial buildings. Each industry outlined in the survey was assigned a colour, and each building was represented with a dot. This dot map serves as a record

of the final stage of industrial and business activities in the Haliç area just before deindustrialisation took place per the Haliç masterplan of 1985 (Figure 5).

Evaluation of the period of the post-1970s. The presence of a fine-grained urban fabric on the waterfront can be comprehended as the dots are a type of unit visualisation representing the actual locations of each facility and its relevant plot. Numerous small factories and warehouses that occupied a large proportion of the land on the waterfront area by the city walls were connected to the inner areas through the gates. The total area taken up by roads was very limited. This issue can be clearly seen in the studies of both maps constructed for the periods of the 1920s and the 1970s.

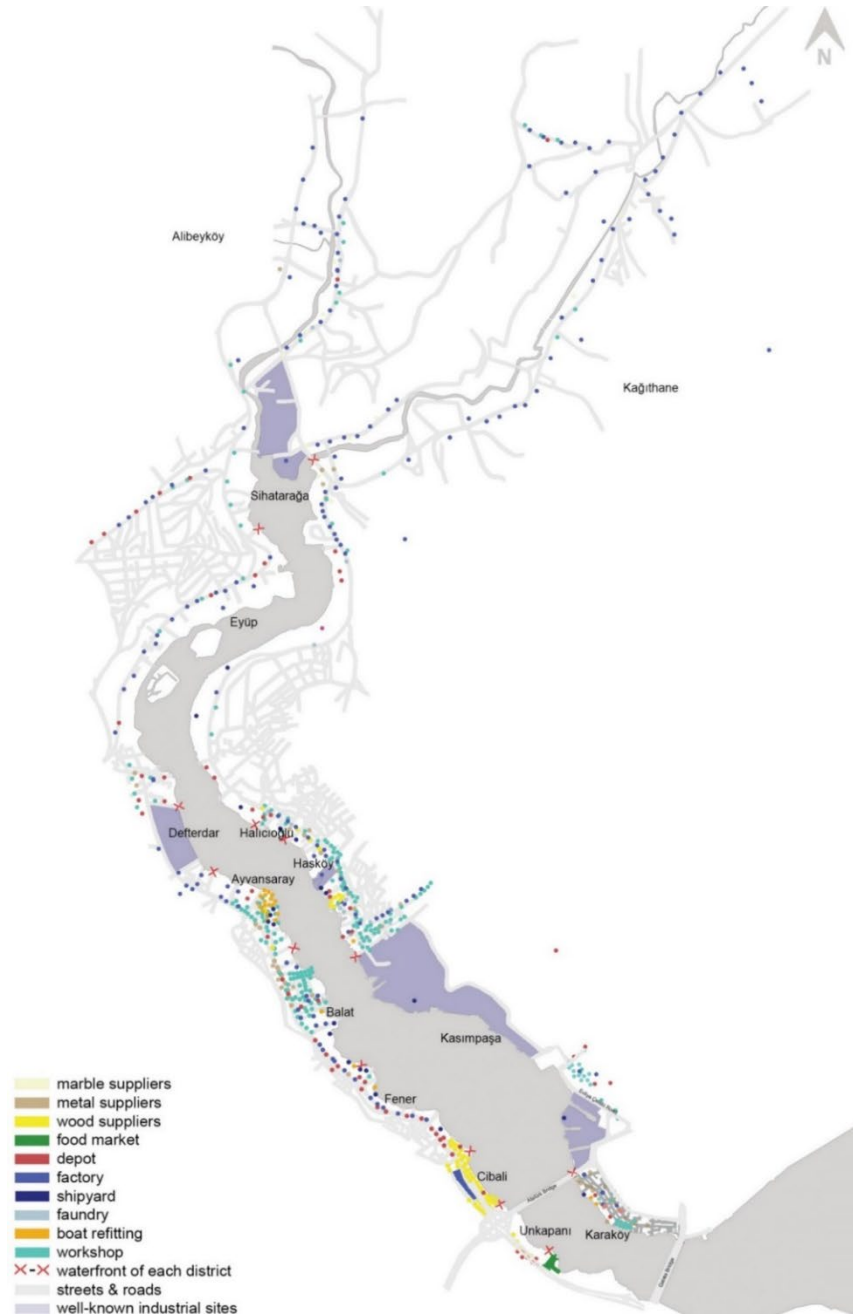


Figure 5 Commercial and industrial establishments in the Haliç area before the deindustrialisation

3.3.4. Identification of the Feature to be Tested in the Haliç Area

The waterfront area along the neighbourhoods of Unkapanı, Cibali, Fener, Balat, Avansaray, and Eyüp consisted of the three-character areas on the north-facing waterfront. Presently, this area is confronted with poor pedestrian facilities, as the newly established railway network does not

provide easy access to the walking and cycling areas on the waterfront. The period maps that were examined, illustrated that this area exhibited the characteristics of mixed-use and fine-grained urban fabric. This area was also vital for the well-being of the adjacent residential areas, where the characteristics of fine-grained urban fabric were most prominent. This situation described a pattern that could also be seen in other parts of the Haliç area.

As a result, the Haliç area needs to be revitalised, which can be achieved by establishing an urban fabric and integrating it with a high-quality streetscape environment to encourage people to engage in pedestrian-oriented activities. This can be achieved by understanding the cultural and heritage nature of the urban fabric and combining this with successful regeneration projects.

3.3.5. Pattern-matching logic

Methodologically, pattern-matching logic was applied in the third phase of this case study. This approach was first involved in exploring and then comparing the patterns evident in the primary data collected in the Haliç area with the expected pattern predicted by the theory of placemaking that embraces all the variables as shown in the conceptual model. In accordance with Yin (2014), if the empirically found patterns match the predicted ones, the findings can contribute to and strengthen the current situation in the study area.

3.3.6. Focusing on the semi-structured interviews in the third phase of the case study

The process of conducting semi-structured interviews marked the initial stage of the third phase of this research. As a first step, the pilot survey was carried out to gather some information that would aid in developing the interview questions as well as revising the contents, and the wording of the questionnaire survey prior to its implementation later on.

Consequently, the semi-structured interviews were decided to be carried out with some experts who were members of the design teams that participated in the ideas competition of 2020 and were awarded prizes. At the outset, a purposive sampling technique was selected, and five persons were interviewed from among the academic staff of Istanbul Technical University who participated in this competition. Later, these five respondents recommended two more academicians who participated in the same competition. Therefore, the semi-structured interviews were completed with seven academicians (Table 3).

Table 3 List of interviews

Respondents	Areas of Specialisation
Respondent 1	Landscape Architect
Respondent 2	Architect
Respondent 3	Landscape Architect
Respondent 4	Architect
Respondent 5	Landscape Architect
Respondent 6	Architect
Respondent 7	Planner

Each interview aimed to explore the viewpoints of the respondents, who worked on different projects, and the interviews consisted of three categories each with five questions. The first category focused on the respondents' personal opinions regarding the ideas competition and their chosen project sites. The second category involved a discussion on the responses of the pilot survey participants regarding the concepts of place. The last category was the discussion about the numerical issues presented in the relevant literature relating to the theory of placemaking.

3.3.6.1. Analysis of the Data Collected from the Interviews

The interviews were transcribed and entered into Nvivo; then the auto code wizard was used to generate the results. The most frequently occurring words were analysed, and the sub-themes that were identified as a result of auto-coding were sorted. The number of times an issue was raised (number of references) and the count of instances of the auto-coded themes within the interview data were used as indicators of the importance of these themes. These auto-coded themes were

then aggregated to form parent codes. Furthermore, the ongoing analysis of the interviews was completed by manually coding the data to some of the initial variables that were previously derived from the literature review (Figure 1 and Table 4).

Table 4 The coding structure including the first and second cycles of coding of data

AUTO CODED THEMES – THE HALIÇ AREA		
place attachment	6	21
place dependence	1	1
place identity	5	11
project sites (the Haliç area)	4	13
sense of place (*)	5	17
activities	5	17
urban fabric	6	80
mixed use	6	17
buildings	6	16
heritage buildings	5	8
low rise buildings	1	2
street life	1	1
streetscape - variety	3	3
public realm	6	55
areas	5	30
green areas	2	10
post-industrial regeneration site	1	1
public open spaces	5	14
urban plots	5	6
viability	2	3

(*) Carmona et al. (2003) stated the condition that conceptions of places vary. Montgomery (1998) specified that the three components that compose a sense of place that are the physical setting, activities and meaning can have proportionally different components in one place than those of another. When it comes to determining the conception of the sense of place in the Haliç area, it is possible to say activities have the greatest score.

As a result of the inclusion of these codes, as Bazeley and Jackson (2013) indicated, the matrix queries were constructed to obtain more reliable outcomes.

3.3.6.2. Cross-tabulation of the Data

The main research questions helped to refine this single-case study, one of which focused on the current state of the Haliç area. Therefore, it was decided to utilise the control variables to examine the state of the Haliç area where there are only green spaces currently, whether there was necessarily a need for the urban fabric.

Querying text is classified as one of the most common research methods (Bernard & Ryan, 1998). In Nvivo, matrix coding queries, which are a type of contingency tables used to compare two categorical variables, show patterns in the coded data with the coding interactions. It is widely accepted that placemaking activities deal with the creation of sense of place as well as the individuality of that place. Therefore, the sense of place and other concepts of place were compared with the first cycle coding of data to explore what the experts were thinking concerning the current situation in the Haliç area (Table 5).

Table 5 Matrix coding query results based on coding references (each row and column representing a different variable)

	A : place attachment	B : place dependence	C : place identity	D : sense of place
activities	0	1	0	18
urban fabric	0	0	3	16
heritage buildings	0	0	0	5
public realm	0	0	2	6
project sites	0	0	0	0
green areas	0	0	0	2

3.3.6.3. Final Themes and the Identification of the Overlaps in the Auto-coded Themes

Matrix coding queries were conducted to explore the relationships between the concepts of place and the auto-coded themes extracted via auto code wizard in NVivo. It was found that there were significant overlapping areas in the texts relating to the interviews. The codes and sub-codes were displayed as a matrix, and the relevant themes were linked together (Table 6). The final themes answered the relevant research questions concerning the current state of the Haliç area and the changes depicted in the heritage buildings in terms of sense of place.

Table 6 The list of the codes that were grouped together to create final themes

Themes (recurring in the data)	Codes and Sub-codes (existing and emergent codes)	Emergent Sub-codes
The grain of urban fabric	place identity /urban fabric place identity / public realm	public realm
Activities	place dependence / activities sense of place / activities	activities
Heritage buildings	sense of place / urban fabric sense of place / heritage buildings	heritage buildings low rise buildings
The post-industrial site	sense of place/ public realm sense of place / green areas	areas green areas post-industrial regeneration site public realm

Theme one - The grain of urban fabric

The overlapping in place identity and urban fabric. In their design briefs, the teams stated that they tried to deal with the unsolved urban fabric issue to develop the place identity. Overall, the establishment of some promenades on the waterfront was thought to be the most sensible solution (Respondent 4).

‘We recommended a promenade on the waterfront (...) These ideas can be seen in the proposals. The solutions seemed so comprehensive as the jury made comments which were similar to that (...) To deal with the unsolved urban fabric and try to establish the resilient urban fabric within the sustainable development in urban areas to support the public to have a place identity’ (Respondent 4).

The teams aimed to develop the place identity; however, establishing some urban fabric on the waterfront of the Haliç area was not considered an option. However, as required, the teams had to consider that this area needed to be turned into a green space and should provide easy access to the waterfront (Respondent 4).

‘However, the thing you already mentioned above was the urban fabric of the Haliç area and being able to establish an area where people have place identity’ (Respondent 4).

The overlapping in place identity and public realm. The respondents agreed that because of the predefined project sites of the competition, the proposals had to have their own merits and should be evaluated in terms of these areas’ characteristics (Respondent 5).

‘If the Haliç area is considered only as a waterfront area, this leads the participants to lose their place, identity which also leads us to the concept of non-place (...) it is not fair to define it only as a waterfront area and it would be a mistake to establish public spaces as parks and other green spaces without having any purpose’ (Respondent 5).

The Haliç area does not seem to have a public realm that can support the public to spend some time in this area. When considering this area as a whole, there is an enormous area of green spaces; however, when considering the quality and the distribution, it is insufficient (Respondent 3).

‘It is a waterfront area that is mostly demolished and does not consist of any facilities for people to socialise’ (Respondent 3).

'When considering this area as a whole, there is an enormous area of green spaces; however, when considering the quality and the distribution, it can be clearly said that there are not enough' (Respondent 3).

Theme two – Activities

The overlapping in place dependence and activities. There are two viewpoints regarding the Haliç area, one of which is seeing the area as an ongoing regeneration activity to be designed as green spaces in the end to establish place dependence that was an attachment based on function (Respondent 2 and Respondent 4).

'The daily activities may take more time than usual, such as cycling and jogging, therefore, the time spent on the waterfront can depend on the activities to be focused on' (Respondent 2).

'... if we try to establish some daily recreational activities for that place then we can achieve the place dependence' (Respondent 4).

The other one is that this area needed to be designed as a place consisting of various daily activities. Some stated that competitors should have focused on the quality of space rather than quantity, as more efficient usage with fewer green areas could be achieved (Respondent 1). It can be said that public spaces and green spaces are being defined by buildings and urban fabric (Respondent 4).

'What we need is quality of space rather than quantity as more efficient usage with less green areas can be achieved' (Respondent 1).

'We were not so into designing some outdoor sitting areas whereas we wanted to design something that was more suitable for the daily activities in the city' (Respondent 4).

The overlapping in sense of place and activities. The respondents confirmed that establishing various recreational activities can lead to place dependence that has functional relationships with a specific place and has a relationship with place attachment that is partly connected to sense of place (Respondent 5).

'When we consider the heritage buildings together with some other historic buildings, such as the fountains, they act as landmarks in the landscape and the area around them can be designed to have some recreational activities that have an edge with the urban fabric in the neighbourhoods' (Respondent 5).

Theme three - Heritage buildings

The overlapping in sense of place and urban fabric. Place identity and sense of place can support the surviving heritage buildings. Some respondents stated that although the waterfront of the Haliç area was designated for green spaces where the regeneration activities were still ongoing, the establishment of some urban fabric could well be considered (Respondent 1).

'(...) In other words, I can create a strip of land with a significant presence of vegetation to include some culture-led activities together with small businesses, that is a point of view. There should be some post-industrial heritage buildings that would create some area of interest within the urban fabric' (Respondent 1).

Nevertheless, the outcomes of repurposing surviving heritage buildings were referenced as one of the best solutions (Respondent 2 and Respondent 5).

'It would be a better idea to refurbish or repurpose the surviving heritage buildings in order to achieve viability and vitality' (Respondent 2).

'We also thought about this and focused on the repurposed heritage buildings' (Respondent 5).

The overlapping in sense of place and heritage buildings. Following the relevant literature, repurposing heritage buildings plays an essential role in creating the place identity in the urban fabric, and strengthening it if there are any previously repurposed ones. Repurposing helps set up quality public spaces that value community and enhance the city's cultural heritage as well as provide some sort of entertainment activities to give a unique competitive edge. Moreover, place dependence and place identity are classified as two important notions that refer to how people are attached to a particular place; therefore, these heritage buildings also help to establish a strong sense of place via placemaking activities (Respondent 3).

'Place identity can be felt better with the historical heritage buildings that offer much better visual perspective in the Haliç area' (Respondent 3).

Design-led regeneration activities mostly deal with the application of placemaking that is 'sense of place'. The respondents believed preserving the heritage buildings should offer viability and vitality. This could only be achieved if these buildings are easily accessible (Respondent 3).

'The heritage buildings that are preserved can offer vitality and viability; however, they should provide some access to the public' (Respondent 3).

Theme four - The post-industrial site

The overlapping in sense of place and public realm. It was understood that this area was a post-industrial site and quality public spaces were needed to encourage the public to spend more time in this area (Respondent 2).

'... the Haliç area was considered as a district for manufacturing industries and commercial activities in the past. however, today it consists of numerous industrial heritage buildings as well as some green areas and networks of connections' (Respondent 2).

As specified by the respondents, most design teams proposed certain recreational activities in the green areas, which made it difficult to establish place dependence and could lead to a weak sense of place. They agreed that it is the public realm that should give the Haliç area a strong sense of place (Respondent 1).

The overlapping in sense of place and green areas. The findings revealed that when participating in a design competition involving green space, the teams naturally aimed for achieving quality green areas (Respondent 1).

3.3.6.4. The Second Cycle of Coding

The second cycle of coding was manually conducted to focus on the concepts that could be coded to the variables of the theory of placemaking detailed in the conceptual model (Figure 1).

Firstly, the content as expected to be seen in the data that would have corresponded to the aspects of place dependence and place attachment were coded at them directly. The coding references and the number of files involved clearly indicated that place attachment was influential in the study area which was also pointed out by some of the respondents as follows.

'It takes a very long time to establish a place attachment with the Haliç area by the people who just visit this area sometimes (...) The concept of place attachment should be considered by focusing on the locals and people who live around here' (Respondent 6).

'(...) Therefore, the people who participated in this survey should have some form of place attachment' (Respondent 5).

Secondly, the relevant content was coded at the dependent variable streetscape, then with the auto-coded themes that were public realm and those lower down in the hierarchy such as areas, green areas, and public open spaces were established in a hierarchical order respectively. Consequently, at this stage; in the second cycle of coding, it was clearly seen that public realm was

one the emergent sub-codes due to the number of its coding references and respondents' files involved.

Finally, a hierarchy of codes was emerged as some content was coded to the dependent variable mixed use to which all code references were aggregated this time. This code hierarchy was regarded as the proof that indicated the importance of the urban fabric on the waterfront.

3.4. Reviewing the Themes and the Outcomes of Coding

The themes extracted from the interview data corresponded to the three components of sense of place described by [Montgomery \(1998\)](#) as the results of peoples' interaction with the physical space, the activities in that place, and lastly the ability to give identity to the place.

The theme that is the grain of urban fabric is the main issue in the Haliç area. Although all agreed that the quality of space should be offered rather than quantified as the more efficient usage with less green areas can be achieved, the respondents were still undecided whether to focus on the main stream approach that placemaking affords, which is to establish a sense of place in a fine grained urban fabric, or alternatively provide enough activities in green areas enhanced by repurposed heritage buildings, accepting the fact that this area is a post-industrial site. Therefore, informing the public about its sense of place would be a better solution.

The activities theme clearly establishes the fact that activities are needed to enhance the sense of place, which in return strengthens the relationships between facilities, mixed use, streetscape, and street life in places where permeability is enabled by short urban blocks in the urban fabric. The current state of the Haliç area is seen as a place that has no facilities for people to socialise. The urban fabric that consists of historical buildings is unsolvable; therefore, the respondents focused on the repurposed ones. While some of the respondents put forward the need to identify some activities that were suitable for daily routines, others agreed that activities together with small businesses can sufficiently provide what was needed for the area. On the whole, as the respondents were not given the option to offer creating some urban fabric on the waterfront, they conformed instead to the different acceptability criteria per the ideas competition requirements.

The heritage buildings theme clearly describes a similar pattern as above in terms of sense of place, according to the respondents. The Haliç area consists of some former industrial buildings that were repurposed. Moreover, this area does not have any facilities for people to socialise. Some recreational activities that are suitable for daily routine, such as restaurants and cafes, should be established here as well as designing walking paths that have connections with the inner areas to the waterfront.

The post-industrial site theme describes the current situation in most of waterfront areas as former industrial sites. The respondents mostly agreed on the fact that the ideas competition was aimed to achieve quality green areas and public open spaces in the Haliç area, where, instead, it led to a weak sense of place as a result of difficulties in even establishing place dependence. In successful regeneration schemes, this issue has been overcome by respecting the grain of urban fabric and focusing on fine urban grain.

4. Conclusion

This research paper details a part of a single-case study, that questioned the current state of the Haliç area as a waterfront regeneration scheme and examines specific aspects of the urban fabric with the help of the control variables.

It was aimed to use the results of the qualitative analyses of the semi-structured interviews. In this regard, the interview data were inductively and deductively analysed, and the themes were linked to the data. The coding intersections helped to identify the themes in the coded data, especially the effect of the place-based concepts, in order to explore and identify how current situations are influenced by the regeneration activities in the Haliç area.

The competition teams tried to strengthen the place identity by dealing with the unsolved urban fabric issue. When there is no urban fabric, there is less place identity, which also has a downside effect on the physical setting, activities, heritage buildings, and the post-industrial site, which are the overarching themes that create sense of place.

The pattern of the findings can be outlined as follows:

Based on the interview data, it can be clearly stated that the historical and cultural nature of the urban fabric in the Haliç area needs to be understood. Consequently, the regeneration activities in this area to make the waterfront more viable will be more effective, and the regeneration activities will be more effective.

Therefore, the observed results reflecting the experts' view matched the expected result as predicted above.

The results of the semi-structured interviews can be aimed to design a questionnaire survey that could obtain the opinions of the inhabitants and visitors in the Haliç area to test the theory of placemaking and come up with recommendations for the application of placemaking activities on the waterfront.

Note

This manuscript was produced from a doctoral dissertation, currently in progress. Graduate School, Istanbul Technical University

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the interviewees who participated in the architectural ideas competition.

References

- AMION Consulting Limited (2010). *English Heritage Impact of Historic Environment Regeneration - Final Report* 1st October 2010.
- Anders, M. (2004). Understanding and balancing mixed-use schemes: The key to creating successful communities, *Journal of Retail & Leisure Property*, 3(4), pp. 353-364.
- Anguelovski, I., Connolly, J. J. T., Cole, H., Garcia-Lamarca, M., Triguero-Mas, M., Baró, F., Martin, N. et al. (2022). *Green gentrification in European and North American cities*. Nature Communications, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-022-31572-1>
- Aravot, I. (2002). Back to Phenomenological Placemaking. *Journal of Urban Design*, 7(2), 201-212. London.
- Batty, M. (2013). *The New Science of Cities*. Cambridge MA, London: MIT Press.
- Bazeley, P., & Jackson, K. (2013). *Qualitative Data Analysis with NVivo* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications Ltd.
- Bell, D. & Jayne, M. (eds) (2003). *Small Cities: Urban Experience Beyond the Metropolis*, London: Routledge.
- Bernard, H. R., & Ryan, G. W. (1998). *Qualitative and quantitative methods of text analysis*.
- Bridge, G. (2006). 'It's Not Just a Question of Taste: Gentrification, the Neighbourhood, and Cultural Capital.' *Environment and Planning A* 38 (10): 1965–78.
- Campbell, B. (2012). *A brief history of urban planning*. <http://djcoregon.com/>.
- Carmona, M., Heath, T., Oc, T. & Tiesdell, T. (2003). *Public Places Urban Spaces: The Dimensions of Urban Design*. Oxford: Architectural Press.
- Conzen, M. R. G. (1960)1969. *Alnwick, Northumberland: A Study in Town Plan Analysis*. Publication No. 27, 2nd edition. London: Institute of British Geographers.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Sage Publications Ltd.
- Department of Environment, Transport, and the Regions. (2000). *By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice*. London: DETR and CABE.
- Donahue, T.(2021).Post pandemic placemaking: five trends shaping the future; <https://infiniteglobal.com/special-reports/post-pandemic-placemaking-five-trends-shaping-the-future/>.
- Dublin: Loci (2010). *Losing the Plot*. Practice Report.
- Durmaz, S. B. (2012). *Creative clusters and placemaking: analysing the quality of place in Soho and Beyoglu*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Nottingham.
- Ennis, N. & Douglass, G. (2011). *Culture and Regeneration – What Evidence is There of a Link and How Can it be Measured?* GLA, London.

- Evans, C., Harris, M. S., Taufen, A., Stephen, J., Crommelin, L. & L. (2022). What does it mean for a transitioning urban waterfront to “work” from a sustainability perspective? *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability*, <https://10.1080/17549175.2022.2142648>
- Evans, G. (2005). Measure for Measure: Evaluating the Evidence of Culture's Contribution to Regeneration. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 42, Nos. 5/6, 959–983 Routledge Publishing.
- Evans G. (2011). Cities of culture and the regeneration game. *London Journal of Tourism, Sport and Creative Industries* 5(6),5-18.
- Evans, R. (1997). *Regenerating town centres*, Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- Ewbank, N. (2011). *Adventures in Regeneration*, Folkestone: NEA Publishing, at <http://www.noku.no/files/3345/file/adventures-in-regeneration-by-nick-ewbank>.
- Garcia, B (2005). 'Deconstructing the city of culture: the long-term cultural legacies of Glasgow 1990', *Urban Studies*, vol. 42, no. 5/6, pp. 841–868.
- Garde, A. M. (2004). New urbanism as sustainable growth? A supply side story and its implications for public policy, *Journal of Education and Research* 24 pp154-170 Garrison Woods.net. (2000) Neighbourhood update
- Gehl, J. (1989). A changing street life in a changing society. *Places*, 6(1).
- Habraken, N. J. (2003). *Making Urban Fabric Fine Grained*, A Research Agenda Proceedings of Dense Living Urban Structures, International Conference on Open Buildings, Hong Kong, pp. 27-32.
- Harvey, D. (2008). *The Right to the City* New Left 53, pp. 23-40.
- Holmes, D. (2016). *LT Studio completes final phase of Bristol Harbourside Masterplan*. <https://worldlandscapearchitect.com/lt-studio-completes-final-phase-of-bristol-harbourside-masterplan/#.XUwo6OgzY2w>
- Jacobs, J. (1961). *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House Inc.
- Jones, P. & Evans, J. (2008). *Urban regeneration in the UK*, SAGE.
- Kropf, K. (1998). *Plot types and housing in nineteenth century Westminster*, in Petruccioli, A. (ed.) *Rethinking the XIXth century city* (Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA) 113- 19.
- Levy, A. (1999). Urban Morphology and the Problem of the Modern Urban Fabric: Some Questions for Research. *Urban Morphology*, 3, 79-85.
- Locke, R. (2019). *City Re-Making Approaches in Contemporary Urbanism: “Re-Urbanism” as a Strategy for the Revitalization of Detroit and Declining Cities* (Doctoral dissertation, KTH Royal Institute of Technology)..
- Lowe, M. (2005). The Regional Shopping Centre in the Inner City: A Study of Retail-led Urban Regeneration. *Urban Studies*, 42(3), 449–470.
- Lynch, K. (1960). *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Lynch, K. (1981). *A Theory of Good City Form*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- McCormack, A. (2013). Informing and forming practice: the imperative of urban morphology, *Urban Morphology* 17, 45-8.
- Miller, K. J. & McTavish, D. (2013). *Making and Managing Public Policy*, Routledge.
- Montgomery, J. (1998). Making A City: Urbanity, Vitality and Urban Design. *Journals of Urban Design*, 3(1), pp. 93-116.
- Norton, C. (2016). *The Role of Fine Urban Grain in Securing the Diversity of the Urban Centre*. Doctoral dissertation, University of the West of England.
- ODPM (2004). *Making it Happen: The Northern Way*. ODPM, London.
- Pacione, M. (2005). *Urban Geography: A global perspective* (2nd ed.) Routledge, London.
- Raco, M. & Tunney, E. (2010). Visibilities and Invisibilities in Urban Development: Small Business Communities and the London Olympics 2012. *Urban Studies* 47(10) 2069–2091.
- Roberts, P. & Sykes, H. (2000). *Urban Regeneration: A Handbook*, London.
- Rosemary D., Bromley, F., Tallon, A.R. & Thomas, T. J. (2005). City Centre Regeneration through Residential Development: Contributing to Sustainability. *Urban Studies*, 42(13), 2407–2429, Routledge.
- Sagan, I. & Grabowska, M. (2012). *Urban Regeneration in Gdańsk, Poland: local regimes and tensions between top-down strategies and endogenous renewal*, Department of Geography, University of Gdańsk, Poland.
- Shneekloth, L. & Shibley, R. (1993). The Practice of Placemaking. *Arch. And Comport* Vol. 9, No. I, pp. 121-144.
- Silberberg, S., Lorah, K., Disbrow, R.& Muessig, A. (2013). *Places in the Making: How placemaking builds places and communities*, the Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) at MIT.
- Smalley, P. (2015). *Housing, Memory and the Post-War State: Resident Experiences, Regeneration and the Council Estate in Manchester, 1945-2010*; PhD dissertation, the University of Manchester.
- Smith, A. & Fox, T. (2007). *From 'Event-led' to 'Event-themed' Regeneration: The 2002 Commonwealth Games Legacy Programme*, University of Westminster.

- Smith, A. (2012). *Events and urban regeneration: the strategic use of events to revitalise cities*. London Routledge.
- Smith, D.J. (2014). *The Challenge of Creating Sustainable Development Processes for Large Scale Urban Regeneration Projects: Exploring Different Experiences in Major European Cities* PhD thesis University of Birmingham.
- Tallon, A. (2009). *Urban Regeneration in the UK*, Routledge.
- Tallon, A. (2013). *Urban Regeneration in the UK*, Routledge.
- Turok, I. (1991). *Property-led urban regeneration: panacea or placebo?* Centre for Planning, University of Strathclyde.
- URBACT Culture members (2006). *The Role of Cultural Activities & Creative Industries in the Regeneration of European Cities*.
- Slater, T. R. (2009). *Historical Urban Morphologies* in R. Kitchin & R. Thrift (Eds.), *International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography* pp.59–65. UK: Elsevier.
- Stead, D. & Hoppenbrouwer, E. C. (2004). Promoting an urban renaissance in England and the Netherlands, *Cities*, 21(2), pp. 119–136.
- Whyte, W. H. (1980). *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, Washington, DC: The Conservation Foundation.
- Williams, A. & Shaw, G. (1991). *Tourism and Economic Development: Western European Experiences*. 2nd Edition, London, Belhaven Press.
- Yin, R. (2014). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (5th ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Resume

Mehmet Aytekin Saygılı gained his bachelor's degree in architecture at Yıldız Technical University (YTU), Istanbul; received a master's degree at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University (MSGSU), Istanbul and was a research assistant at Yeditepe University, Istanbul. He has been a PhD candidate at Istanbul Technical University (ITU), Istanbul for some time.

Prof. Dr. Elmira Gür received her undergraduate degree from Istanbul Technical University, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture in 1989. She received her master's degree from the Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, Yıldız Technical University in 1992. She received her doctorate from ITU, Institute of Science and Technology in 2001. Her doctoral thesis was titled "A Changeable/Transformable/Flexible Physical Environment Model for Pre-School Child Education Centres". She worked as a visiting researcher at North Carolina State University between 1998-99. She has participated in international symposiums, conferences and workshops in various countries and has received awards from architectural project competitions, national and international research projects, and publications. The professor has written various international articles, papers and books on affordable/accessible housing, slum settlements, Istanbul housing development and housing typology, design studio physical environment, architectural design education, pre-school child education centres, post-disaster shelters, urban transformation, and urban space identity. She has published chapters and edited various books. She has been working at the Faculty of Architecture, Istanbul Technical University since 1992 and as a full professor at ITU since 2020. Elmira Gür served as Deputy Head of the Department of Architecture and Architectural Design Project Coordinator between July 2015 and April 2017, and as Deputy Dean between October 2017 and March 2023.