






The Importance of 'Meaning' as a Component of Place Identity in Public/Urban Interiors: Kızlarağası Inn, İzmir

Kamusal/Kentsel İç Mekânda Yer Kimliğinin bir Bileşeni Olarak 'Anlam'ın Önemi: Kızlarağası Hanı, İzmir

Sahar Asadollahi Asl Zarkhah¹ , Zeynep Tuna Ultav² , Gülnur Ballice³ 

Öz

Kamusal erişim ve kullanım sahibi birçok iç mekân, kentin günlük yaşamına dahil oldukları için kamusal olarak kabul edilir. Kentsel bir çevrede yer kimliği, ortam elemanları, faaliyetler ve etkinliklerin yanı sıra anlamlarla karakterize edilir. Bu makalenin amacı, kamusal ve kentsel iç mekânı yer kimliğinin bir bileşeni olarak anlam açısından incelemek, anlam özelliklerinin ve unsurlarının iç mekânların kimliğini nasıl etkilediğini belirlemektir. Bu doğrultuda makale söz konusu mekânlardaki anlamın önemini ve yer kimliğinin sürekliliği üzerindeki yansımalarını açıklığa kavuşturmaktadır. Bir örnek olay incelemesi olarak bu araştırma, İzmir'in tarihi merkezi ve çarşı bölgesi olan Kemeraltı Çarşısı'ndaki Kızlarağası Hanı'nı yarı açık bir kamusal iç mekân ve yakın çevresini kentsel iç mekânlar olarak kabul etmektedir. Kamusal ve kentsel iç mekân göstergeleri ile anlamı arasındaki ilişkileri belirlemek için Kızlarağası Hanı ve yakın çevresine ait veriler analiz edilmiştir. Veriler; gözlem, fotoğraf çekimi, davranış haritaları gibi alan çalışmalarının yanı sıra anketler ve mülakatlar ile temin edilmiştir. Çalışmanın bulguları, kamusal ve kentsel iç mekânlardaki yer kimliği oluşumunun hem fiziksel hem de sosyal çevre ile ilişkisi olduğunu göstermektedir. Daha ayrıntılı tanımlamalar vermek gerekirse, mekân kimliğinin inşasında insanların duyuşal deneyimleri, bağlılıkları, katılımları, hatıraları ve yere ait niyetleri aracılığıyla oluşturulan bireysel ve grup anlamlarının tümü etkili olmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kamusal İç Mekân, Kentsel İç Mekân, Mekân Kimliği, Anlam, Kızlarağası Hanı

ABSTRACT

Many interior spaces in cities, freely available to all citizens, are classified as public because they belong to people. Interiors are a part of the public spaces where urban culture is formed, and socio-spatial change is observed, and they have an important place in the formation of the identity of the place. In an urban setting, meanings as well as spatial components, events, and activities, which are the values that make the identity of the place unique, are a distinctive feature. This research investigates the qualities and elements of meaning, which is a component of place identity, and its effects on interior identity in the context of public/urban interiors. Thus, the importance of meaning and its effects on spatial identity are explained in more detail. In the study, as a case analysis, the Kızlarağası Inn, located in İzmir Kemeraltı Bazaar, was determined as a semi-open public interior, and its immediate environs surroundings as an urban interior. Data obtained through fieldwork, surveys and interviews were analyzed to determine the combination of meanings and indicators of public/urban interiors. As a result of the study, it has been seen that physical and social environments are effective in the formation of place identity in public/urban interiors. In summary, people's sensory experiences that create individual and group meanings, attachments, place-related intentions, and memories are effective in the formation of place identity.

Keywords: Public Interior, Urban Interior, Place Identity, Meaning, Kızlarağası Inn

¹ Corresponding Author: Julianalaan 134, 2628 BL Delft, The Netherlands, S.AsadollahiAslZarkhah@tudelft.nl, 0000-0002-3683-7262

² Üniversite Cad. No: 37-39, 35100 Bornova, İzmir, Turkey, zeynep.tunaultav@yasar.edu.tr, 0000-0003-0478-7333

³ Üniversite Cad. No: 37-39, 35100 Bornova, İzmir, Turkey, gulnur.ballice@yasar.edu.tr, 0000-0002-8564-1821



INTRODUCTION:

There has been a great change in the traditional approach that divides public and private spaces in cities. Therefore, the number and proportion of public interior spaces has steadily increased in today's cities. As Harteveld notes, interior public space demonstrates how public space boundaries are not clearly identified every time (Harteveld, 2006). Harteveld defines public interiors in a broader framework, also discussing the interior and outside of buildings, public use, and public engagement. These public areas serve as crucial sites for socio-spatial transformation in urban daily life. The interior can cross the outside's boundaries and vice versa in an urban neighborhood's daily life. Consequently, the comprehension of these complementary entities, inside and outside as well as the essence of the boundary between within and outside gets increasingly blurred. The relationship and interaction between the urban spaces in the urban environment and the users is an important issue that emerges with the increasing convergence of the "public" and "interior" phenomena.

Harteveld claims that interior public space is not a recent phenomenon. Interior public spaces are essential to cities and their cultures, and they frequently contribute significantly to many social-spatial transformations that are a part of daily urban life (Harteveld, 2014). On the other hand, there is limited literature on combined concepts such as "public interior" and "urban interior". The importance of the concepts of "public/urban interiors" is investigated in detail throughout this study. This study explores public/urban interiors from the perspective of meaning as a component of place identity to create comprehensible insights into the socio-spatial order. Thus, the importance of meaning and its effects on space are understood. More specifically, the study examines spatial attachment perceptions and sensory experiences as the main approaches that determine meaning in public/urban interiors. In this study place attachment is mainly related to the affective connection between users and specific places (Relph, 1976). The establishment of place identity is aided by the place attachment of a public interior. Ultimately, one of the necessary components in establishing a place identity can be defined as place attachment. Indicators of place attachment include sense of belonging, level of attraction, frequency of visits, and level of familiarity. Identity of place sense of place definitions are intertwined and there is a strong connection between them. These two ideas are related, and the fundamental elements of one have an impact on the other (Low & Altman, 1992).

The sense of place that users encounter has been prioritized while studying the environmental perception. Personal feelings towards the environment have an effect on the perception of the environment. What determines these feelings is the meanings established between the person and the space elements. People develop a perception based on experience and individuality rather than being analytical, rational, or cerebral. Therefore, the emotions that individuals feel in the space at any time are not only caused by the space itself, but are also affected by the subjective experiences that people bring to the space (White, 1999). Sensory experiences explored to better understand environmental perception include the senses of sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste.

In the study, one of the important historical inns of the city of Izmir-Turkey, Kızlarağası Inn and the historical bazaar area around it were chosen as a case study. The historical district of the city, Kemeraltı Bazaar, is where this inn is located. For many years, the Kızlarağası Inn has been one of the important gathering places in the city of Izmir. It has been an important area as a center of social interaction in every age and has determined the social importance of its location. Along with its architectural merits, this feature distinguishes the Kızlarağası Inn as a special public interior that is important to the Kemeraltı area. In order to present a useful foundation on place identity and its components, literature was conducted. The necessary data to define the connections between the signifiers of public/urban interiors and meaning were obtained as a result of the studies carried out

in the case study area-Kızlarağası Inn and its surroundings. In order to collect data, surveys and interviews were carried out as well as field studies.

The findings revealed that public/urban interiors make important contributions to public life and these spaces are also of great importance in the social and spatial framework of urban living. These areas can be considered valuable elements of the public realm that improve urban livability and contributes to urban life. The study's findings show how the physical and social settings interact with place identity outcomes in public/urban interiors. In the formation of the effects of place identity in public interiors, the sensory experiences of people such as individual and group meanings, commitment, participation, memories and intentions towards the place are effective. This is true of the attributes and aspects of meaning in the Kızlarağası Inn. That is, they are all contributing to the development of place identity.

1. Public/Urban Interior

To explore public/urban interior notions with a wider perspective, first of all, it is important to examine the broader concept of public space. The segment of the physical environment connected to public functions and meanings is referred to as public space, according to Madanipour (Madanipour, 2003). The general consensus is that public space is where socio-spatial transformations manifest themselves and a city's culture develops. (Harteveld, 2014).

There are several definitions for the term "public place," yet the openness and accessibility of these areas to all members of a society is the common point of all. To rephrase it, public spaces are publicly used, publicly owned, and publicly known. However, Harteveld claims that no place in world is inhabited, maintained, and recognized by everyone, because public spaces have been as unique and subjective as the individuals who inhabit, maintain, and recognize them (Harteveld, 2014). Many interiors in any city are considered public because, in daily life, they belong to people being not related to the rules and regulations of the government. Many buildings in today's cities meet the criteria needed to be designated as public interiors. Architect Manuel de Solà-Morales, one of the first designers to question the value of public interiors by classifying them according to their ownership, argues that the public interior includes public spaces despite ownership. In his definition, in addition to uses such as public passages, arcades and inner courtyards, privately owned buildings such as libraries, hospitals, shopping centers are also public. In addition, collective outdoor public areas also take place in this concept (Sola-Morales, 1992). In a sense, the perennial dichotomy between public and private spaces is fundamentally changing (Harteveld, 2014). With this change, the boundaries of the public space cannot be defined precisely. Specifically, private buildings can be made public through their social meaning and value. Beyond the conventional definition of public spaces, the differentiation of built space (interior) and open public space blurred, and lead to the emerge of public interiors (Rădulescu, 2017).

Poot et al. claim that the term "public" in the context of public interior emphasizes ownership and accessibility. Their meanings in this context significantly overlap one another (Poot, Van Acker and De Vos, 2015). These places are "accessible," although there may be actual restrictions on the accessibility. In understanding accessibility, issues such as permeability or the ability to enter a space with ease or without concern should be considered. Although there are many public interior spaces in cities belonging to private enterprises or government institutions, it is rather about users' state of mind to perceive these places as public. This approach points to the relationship between public accessibility and ownership.

In this study, the idea of urban interior is examined with an emphasis on urban setting and outside public spaces. Scale and perception are important factors in the urban interior. To determine

whether the interior is possible in the urban sense, a research content related to the urban environment, human scale and perception has been created. If we can use a human scale when describing the interior, this shows that in a sense every component in the interior can be perceived directly. For studies on interior space in urban areas, body dimensions and their relationships with space are crucial (Başarı, 2015). Urban areas, according to White, are spaces between solidly shaped building masses. While creating an interior space impression in an urban area, the dimensions of this space are overstated according to the human scale (White, 1999). In conclusion, a public interior refers to all these settings for public engagement inside and outside of structures. Public usage and knowledge make these interiors available to the general public, but not always without limitations. In other words, public interiors become part of people in daily life, belonging to or relating to them. In addition, urban interiors are concentrated in the urban setting and open public spaces. These spaces contain boundless open spaces that can be seen as interior spaces through the dimensions of the human body and urban phenomena recognized by various feelings. From this angle, interiors can also concentrate on concerns of scale and perception in urban settings.

2. Meaning as a Component of Place Identity

In an urban setting, meanings are added to the setting's features, activities, and events to define place identity. To examine ideas of "place identity," one needs a deep grasp of place. In order to study place, it is crucial to look into how individuals perceive space. Understanding a place requires knowledge of its meaning, individuals, groups, and societies, as well as its integrity (Relph, 1976). Montgomery states that the components that form the place are physical form, activity, and meaning. As a result, location has both physical and psychological components (Montgomery, 1998). A place can identify tangible and intangible spatial experiences. That refers to experiences that are intellectual as well as bodily, immediate, and instinctive and ideal (Seamon and Sowers, 2008; Relph, 1976).

Perceptions of place attachment and sensory experiences come first in the primary approaches that define place identity (Fig. 2). For instance, Relph defines place identity through the experience of insideness, a person's involvement and interest in a particular place and the degree of attachment. Accordingly, identity occurs on the condition that a person perceives inside a place as safe, enclosed, and at ease rather than threatened, exposed, and stressed. The identity of a person with a place will be stronger if inside a place she or he feels profound (Relph, 1976; Seamon and Sowers, 2008).

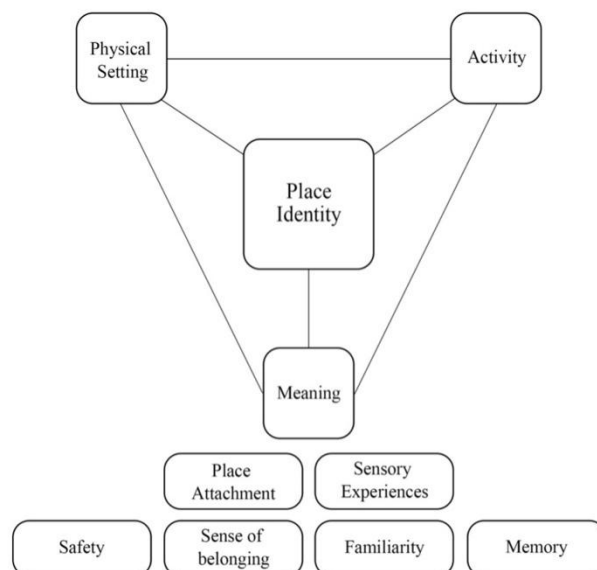


Figure 1. Characteristics and Components of Place Identity (Authors, 2022)

Place attachment to a public space is very effective in the development of place identity. Therefore, one of the indications of place identity can be referred to as place attachment. Indicators of place attachment include “a sense of belonging, level of attraction, frequency of visits, and level of familiarity” (Ujang and Zakariya, 2015). There is a connection between the emotional aspects of environmental meaning and the idea of place attachment. Place attachment is demonstrated by how people react to their surroundings in terms of their feelings, emotions, and behavior (Low & Altman, 1992). It lies in the functional and psychological realm of environmental practice. One of the primary features of place attachment is the desire to maintain proximity to attachment’s object that exhibits a certain feeling concerning a certain place (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). Several variables, such as socio-demographic traits and usage habits influence attachment’s form as well as its intensity. Effectual factors in place attachment can be related to collected experiences and feelings as well as the specification of the place like the distinction in the location or characteristics of the building (Gieryn, 2000).

When describing a place, it is important how people experience that place physically and psychologically. Place meaning, place memory, familiarity, and sense of place develop place identity. Place meanings influence the attitudes and behaviors of the users as they can be translated into emotional bonds. These meanings also determine the social and cultural values especially for the inhabitants. The meanings of place, which reflect the interrelationship between people and space, differ according to the personal and socio-cultural context (Ujang & Zakariya, 2015, Shamsuddin & Ujang, 2008). A sense of place in place attachment issue is studied in conjunction with a sense of belonging and rootedness concepts. When people attach importance to a place, it is important to feel rooted and to feel that they belong there. Rootedness is a term used for a sense of place that indicates people’s direct connection to a place (Arefi, 1999). It is possible to understand familiarity, one of the important factors in place attachment, through mentioning the places people are commonly attached to. Long-term residence, significant events, or frequent visits are the causes of places with high levels of experience (Gustafson, 2001). Therefore, frequently used or visited locations are the most familiar, and as a further observation, we should keep in mind that local and historical circumstances have an important effect on these locations. The main focus of the environmental perception of a place is the experiential sense of that place. Personal feelings regarding the environment have an impact on how people perceive it because of the connections people make with the environment’s elements. In other words, it is experienced rather than analytical, logical, or cerebral. It is also subjective, individual, and personal. As a result, the feelings one experiences in relation to a location at any one time are influenced by both the space itself and what individuals bring to it (White, 1999). The way a place makes you feel may be influenced by a variety of factors, including preferences, expectations, values, life experience, culture, background, and emotional state. People’s feelings about a place can vary due to various factors such as future plans, culture, background, emotional state, lifestyles, ideals and desires. The emotional content of a space is therefore, in White’s opinion, the environment’s most direct and palpable embodiment (White, 1999). Public settings are frequently lively, crowded, and humming with activity. Our senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch work together to give us an idea of the place.

Our body serves as a barrier between ourselves and the world outside. Humans and their surroundings are connected through the body in a way that involves both the visible and the sensuous. This has been described as a feeling of “alienation” that subconsciously translates ocular impressions into physical feelings as a result of losing peripheral vision (Pallasmaa, 2005). Although concentrated sight draws us within, peripheral views bind us to space, pull us forth, and turn us into spectators. The distinction in sensorial perception between architecture and other art forms that

appeal to our immediate sensory senses is described by Holl et al. (2006) as being more self-sufficient. In summation, it can be said that specific qualities and features may be used to study meaning as a part of place identity.

3. Kızlarağası Inn as A Case Study

3.1. Historical Background and Architecture of Kızlarağası Inn and Kemeraltı Bazaar

The city of İzmir (Turkey) has always been a commercial port city due to its location in connection with the sea (Fig. 2). It was the junction point of historical trade lines opening to the West in the 16th and 17th centuries. Historical Kemeraltı Bazaar is an important commercial area that has served the city for centuries as the center of the community economy. Kızlarağası Inn is situated in İzmir's Kemeraltı area, a historical center and market district built in the 17th century (Fig. 3). The Kızlarağası Inn was lively due to its proximity to the harbor and the district's size as it continues to be one of İzmir's liveliest areas (Özbek Sönmez, 2010).



Figure 2. The city of İzmir, location on Turkey's map. Adapted from Google Maps, 2015

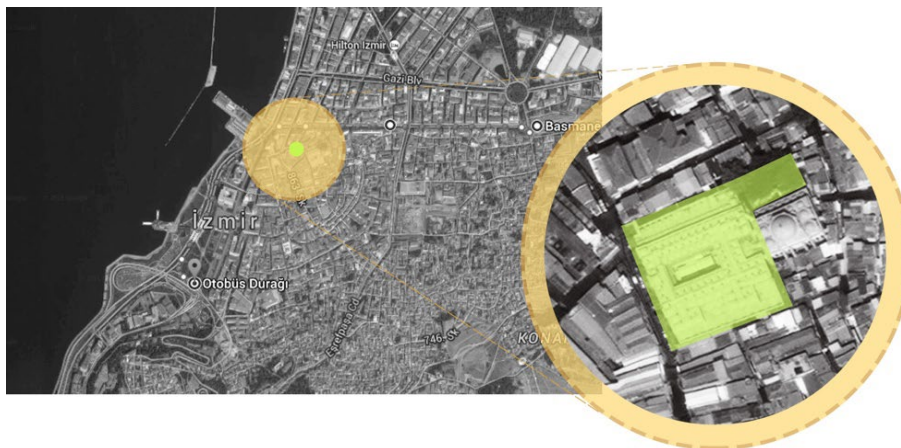


Figure 3. Location of Kızlarağası Inn in the city of İzmir. Adapted from Google Maps, 2015

The inns in İzmir, which were built during the Seljuk and Ottoman periods, played an important role in trade by serving as sales and storage centers as well as their different functions. These inns offered accommodation for visiting traders, and the traders' chariots or animals gave guests an assurance of safety. To explain, these one or two-story buildings with rooms surrounding a courtyard served as socially significant gathering places for the exchange of information and culture (Ersoy, 1991). The Kızlarağası Inn was built by Kızlarağası Hacı Beşir Ağa between 1744 and 1745. Like some other inns from the time, this one is square in shape. In the center of the inner courtyards of the inns were

fountains and pools that no longer exist (Atay, 2004). The Kızlarağası Inn has two levels. People stay and sleep in the upper rooms that open to the gallery. The quarters for the traders and their staff, the stores where the items were unloaded and marketed, and the negotiating participants were all located on the ground level (Atay, 2003). Kızlarağası Inn, however, began to lose its prominence throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, and finally turned into an abandoned location where items were unloaded and kept (Izmir Convention & Visitors Bureau, 2012). It was extensively restored between 1988 and 1993 by the General Director of Foundations, and it only started operating as a commercial tourist bazaar in 1994 (Şala, 2013).



Figure 4. Inner courtyard of Kızlarağası Inn (Authors' Archive, 2015)

3.2. Methodology

Field research, surveys, and interviews produced the information used in this study. The sample population of the questionnaire and interviews were made up of two groups: the first group consisted of laborers employed by the Kızlarağası Inn, while the second group was made up of academics with architectural expertise who reside in Izmir. Data were gathered as a result from two separate angles. The first set of people offer data from the viewpoint of regular visitors experiencing this location a part of their everyday lives. The following group was formed to learn the opinions of the experts who rarely visited the Kızlarağası Inn. Nine persons were included in the interviews. Four participants who were chosen at random from a variety of vocations were among the interviewees in the first group (tradesmen). Participants included musician Volkan Yıldız, antiquarian Gülten Güler, miniature artist Arya Kamali, and writer, researcher, and collector Aybala Yentürk, who runs antiquities shop at the Kızlarağası Inn. Dr. Halil İbrahim Alpaslan, an expert in the history of architecture, Dr. Deniz Güner, an expert in the history of modern architecture and the history of Izmir, Dr. Tayfun Taner, an expert in the history of Izmir and the Kemeraltı Bazaar, Birol Üzmez, a photographer who has produced a number of photographs in Kemeraltı, and Şerif Erdal Merter, an architect/photographer, were the five participants in the second group who were interviewed. The interviewees in the second group were selected based on their familiarity with Kızlarağası Inn and Kemeraltı neighborhood in their academic research or practice.

For each group, specific questionnaires with Likert scales were created, considering the level of interaction each group had with the inn. Place attachment principles (a sense of belonging, familiarity, satisfaction, place dependency and affection, degree of safety, and memories), as well as sensory experience variables, were mentioned in the questionnaires' statements. The major theoretical frameworks on which survey questions were built were those of Punter (1991), Relph (1976), and Montgomery (1998) (Table 1). Each remark was followed by a question asking participants to rate their agreement with it. For the first group, the authors received the answers by distributing printed questionnaires. 60 printed questionnaires were distributed to a total of 200 stores, which were dispersed at random to 60 of the 200 establishments. 200 stores totaled 44 tradespeople that answered to the questionnaires, or 22% of all respondents. Responses from the second group were gathered online by emailing a link to the survey. 118 of the 220 academics who were asked to participate did so. The statistical study was conducted using SPSS 22.0, and the Cronbach's Alpha score was 92.1%. Thus, the validity of the surveys was established. Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with both groups were done and consisted of seven questions. Open-ended questions were utilized to promote detailed, meaningful responses based on the participants' personal experiences and expertise. Nine interviews were performed with four people from the first group (the tradesmen), and five people from the second group (four academics and a photographer).

Table 1. Category of survey questions using Likert scales

	Questions
Place Attachment	I am satisfied with the comfort and physical sufficiency of my workplace.
	I am satisfied with working in this historical inn.
	I am not willing to move to other places due to my familiarity with Kızlarağası Inn and the people who work here.
	Kızlarağası Inn is one of my favorite places to be.
	I feel safe in Kızlarağası Inn.
	I have a sense of belonging to Kızlarağası Inn.
	I have a lot of fond memories about Kızlarağası Inn.
	If Kızlarağası Inn were under threat (demolition), I would defend it.
	I would miss it if I were away from Kızlarağası Inn for a long time.
	I get more satisfaction out of being at Kızlarağası Inn than any other similar places.
	When I have guests from other cities or countries, I take them to Kızlarağası Inn.
	I believe that Kızlarağası Inn as a historical place plays an important role in Kemeraltı Bazaar.
	The restoration of Kızlarağası Inn is a benefit for Kemeraltı.
	The restoration of Kızlarağası Inn is a benefit for İzmir.
Sensory Experiences	The atmosphere of Kızlarağası Inn attracts me.
	Kızlarağası Inn engages my visual sense.
	Kızlarağası Inn engages my auditory sense.
	It is pleasant being far from traffic noise in Kızlarağası Inn.
	Kızlarağası Inn engages my olfactory sense.
	Kızlarağası Inn engages my tactile sense.
	Kızlarağası Inn engages my gustatory sense.

Table 2. Category of interview questions

	Questions
Place Attachment	What do you think about the historical and cultural significance of Kızlarağası Inn for Kemeraltı and the city of İzmir?
	What was the most important and meaningful event in Kızlarağası Inn that you can remember? (Can you please mention the items/reasons that make it meaningful)
	What was your most important and meaningful experience at Kızlarağası Inn? (Physically and psychologically)
	Could you please describe your connection and feelings toward Kızlarağası Inn?
Sensory Experiences	Could you please talk about your sensory experiences in Kızlarağası Inn? (Could you please also mention your visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile and gustatory sensations)

3.3. Analysis and Findings

In the analysis of the findings, the relationship between the place identity indicators and the visitors of the inn was taken into consideration. Six key regions make up the Kızlarağası Inn and its surroundings in this research. Ground and first-floor corridors, the inner courtyard, and prior definitions of public/urban interiors are all considered public interiors. Urban interiors are considered as front yard and adjacent passages (Fig. 5-7).

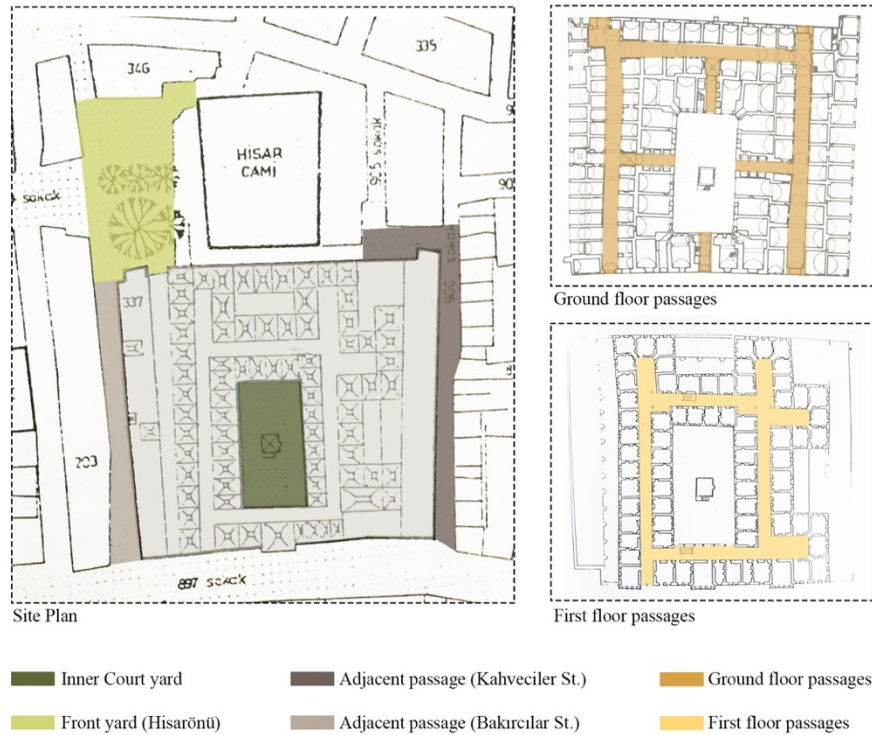


Figure 5. Different spatial formations in and around the Kızlarağası Inn (Authors, 2021)



Figure 6. The courtyard and corridors of Kızlarağası Inn (Authors' archive, 2016)



Figure 7. The immediate surroundings of the Kızlarağası Inn, the central courtyard in front and nearby passageways (Authors' archive, 2016)

The historic character of Kızlarağası Inn is an important feature of this place. İ. Alpaslan (interview, July 18, 2017), an architectural historian, indicated that Kızlarağası Inn is a remarkable landmark regarding its historical features and that it is among the critical locations of İzmir's trade history. He says that in addition to its cultural and historical importance, the Kızlarağası Inn, as among the most interesting Kemeraltı location, has a good effect on the city's culture and lifestyle. D. Güner (interview, July 24, 2017) said that Kemeraltı inns were inherited from the Great Fire of İzmir. He added that the Kızlarağası Inn is significant since it is the first Inn to open for tourists in Kemeraltı's historical zone, and that the people of İzmir frequently visit this building, which is one of the main references in Kemeraltı.

The analyses showed that Kızlarağası Inn plays a significant role in Kemeraltı Bazaar as a historical place (Fig. 8) and that restoration of this public interior benefits both Kemeraltı and İzmir (Fig. 9).

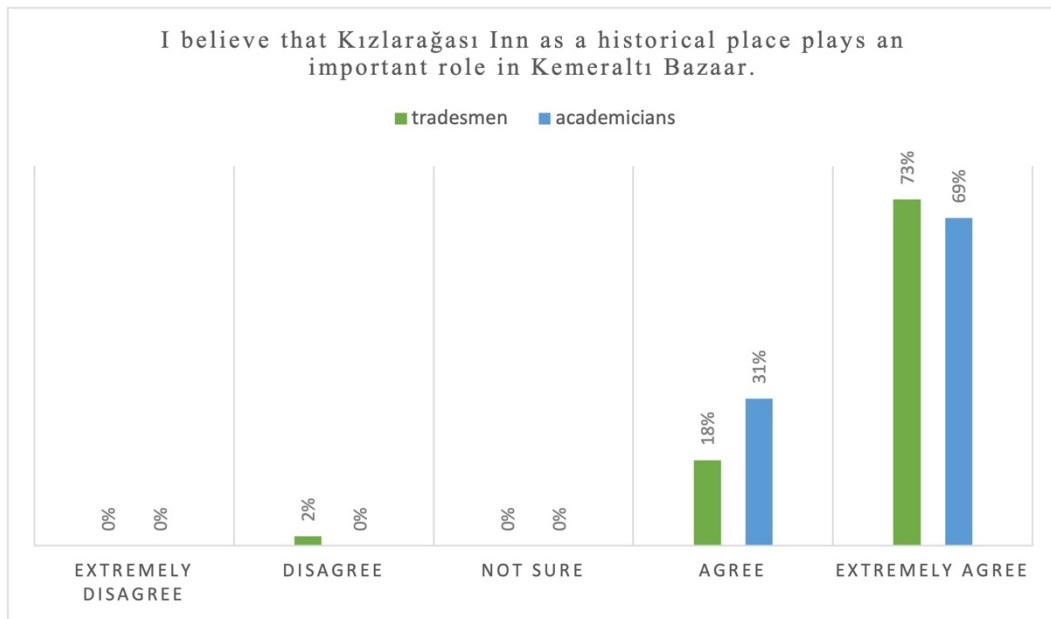


Figure 8. The historical role of Kızlarağası Inn

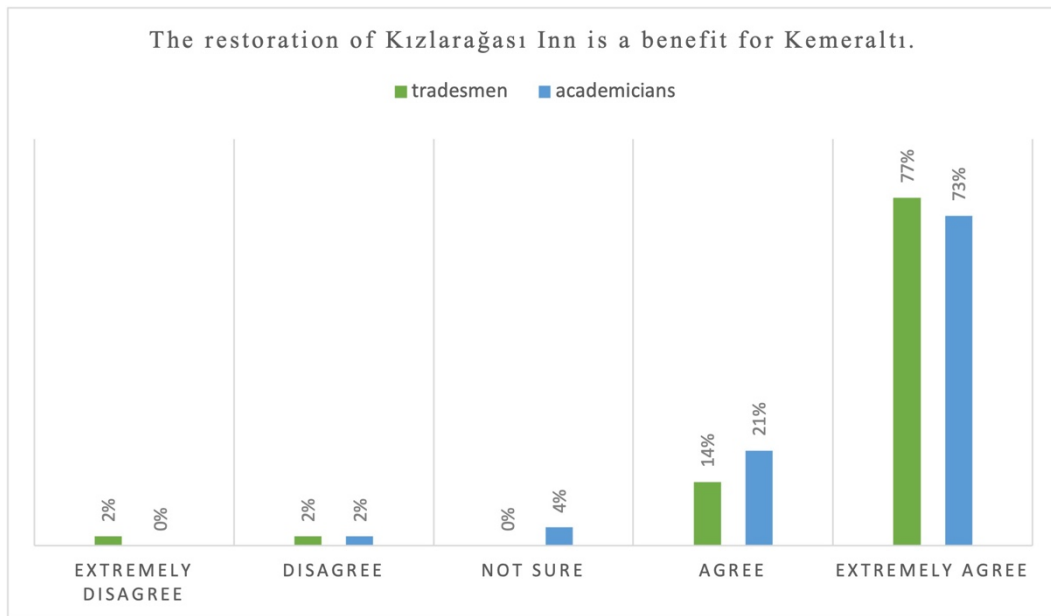


Figure 9a. The effects of the restoration of Kızlarağası Inn for Kemeraltı

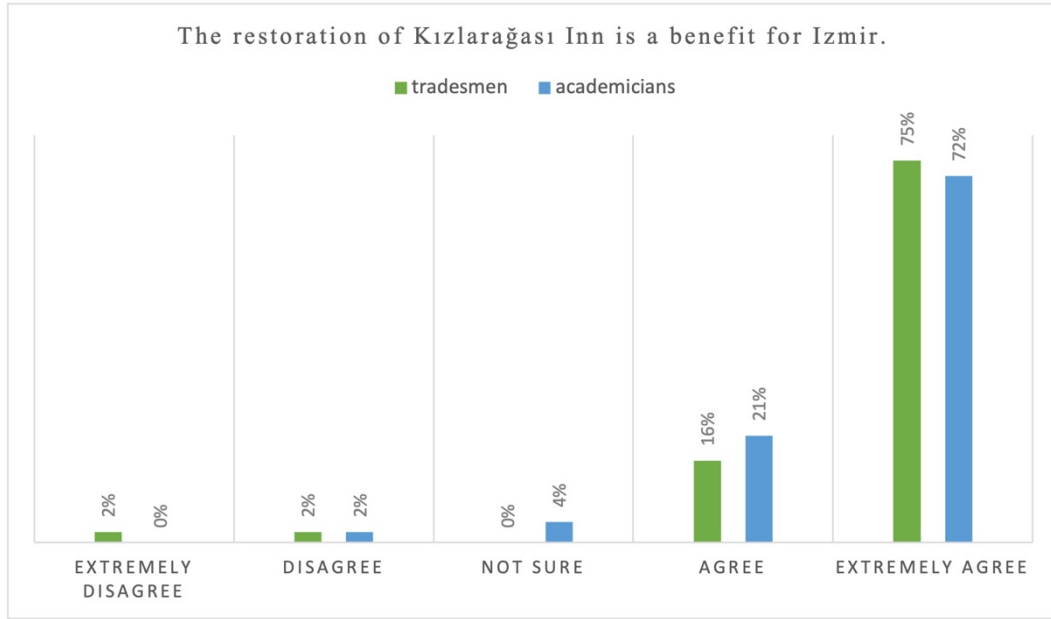


Figure 9b. The effects of the restoration of Kızlarağası Inn for İzmir

The interviewees commented on the significance of the Kızlarağası Inn for Kemeraltı Bazaar and İzmir:

“It is an important advantage that İzmir has Kızlarağası Inn. The inn’s restoration has made an important contribution to the town’s tourism development. Kızlarağası Inn is a charming place with several influences in the neighborhood” (B. Üzmez, interview, 13 July, 2017).

“For me, Kemeraltı can be defined as the heart of İzmir. Given that this location is one of the most significant gathering places of İzmir, it is socially important. Hisar Mosque and Kızlarağası Inn can be considered the heart of Kemeraltı for me. It is an important place that attracts many people incredibly. I can explain the source of this miraculous attraction as follows: Kemeraltı is a place that represents different aspects of İzmir, so it has something for everyone. I think the visitors use shopping as an excuse to experience this atmosphere” (Ş.E. Merter, interview, July 18, 2017).

As was noted above, the Kızlarağası Inn plays a significant role in the area and beyond, but its rehabilitation has been successful in drawing both visitors and residents. This location is interdependent with the environment in which it is situated. “Kızlarağası is not isolated from Kemeraltı,” says Alpaslan (interview, July 18, 2017). It is a resident of Kemeraltı. It is also not split from İzmir, similar to Kemeraltı. It is based in İzmir. Additionally, one factor contributing to the Kızlarağası Inn’s historical significance and background is the fact that more people are aware of it, which raises public awareness of it. As a result, Kızlarağası Inn serves as both a landmark and a common gathering spot. Aside from the good impact of the inn’s historical features, it should be noted that they also produced a number of restrictions in this public space, most of which have an impact on the comfort of its users. For instance, although the tradespeople of the Kızlarağası Inn expressed contentment with their employment there, they also raised a number of complaints about the coziness and physical suitability of their workplaces. According to A. Yentürk (collector at Kızlarağası Inn, researcher, and writer, interview, 24 July 2017), these include “water access issues, a shortage of restrooms, a fee for utilizing the facilities, and a lack of heating and cooling systems.”

The participants were emotionally linked to the location based on how they answered the attachment-based statements. The following statements received the highest ratings: “If this inn is

threatened, I will protect it.”; and “The Kızlarağası Inn is a place I often visit with my guests from Turkey and abroad.” (Fig. 10).

T. Taner (interview, July 17, 2017) supports this as: “I frequently took international visitors there when I had them, and as far as I remember, they all liked the Inn. They like the place because there is a unique place in Kemeraltı.” The interviewees also indicated a sense of attachment toward Kızlarağası Inn through their feelings, emotions, and behavior, such as “As Izmir dwellers, we can all associate Kızlarağası Inn with our memories” (D. Güner interview, July 24, 2017). Alpaslan (interview, July 18, 2017) commented that: “I like Kızlarağası very much. I am interested in searching the city’s history deeply because I am a historian. Kızlarağası is a significant historical building in Izmir that has preserved many aspects of the city’s past. I thus feel affection for a historical monument like a historian would feel.”

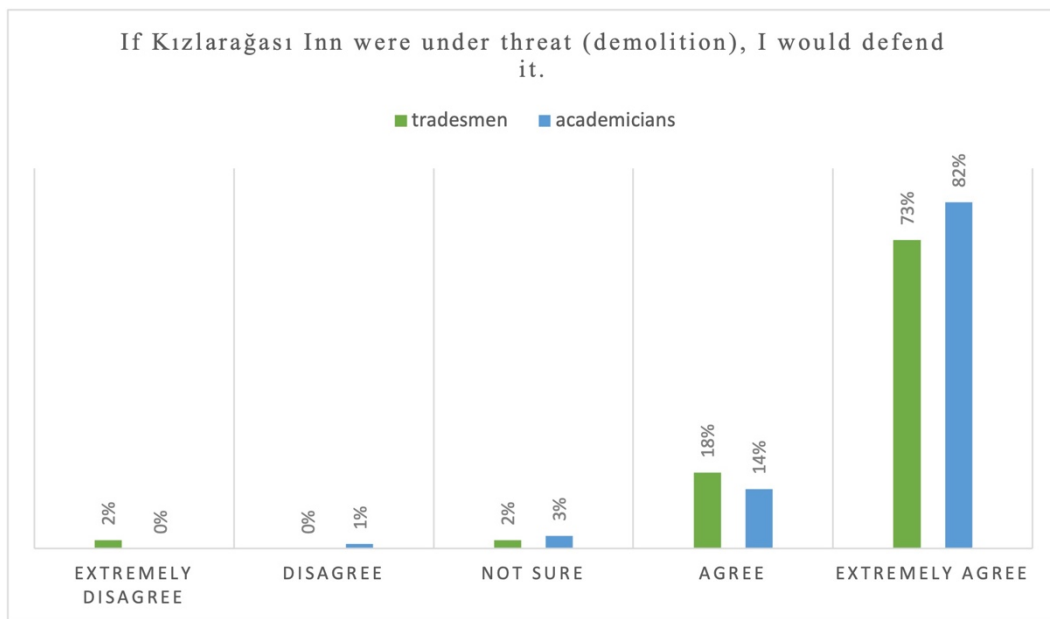


Figure 10a. Attachment of users to Kızlarağası Inn in terms of permanence

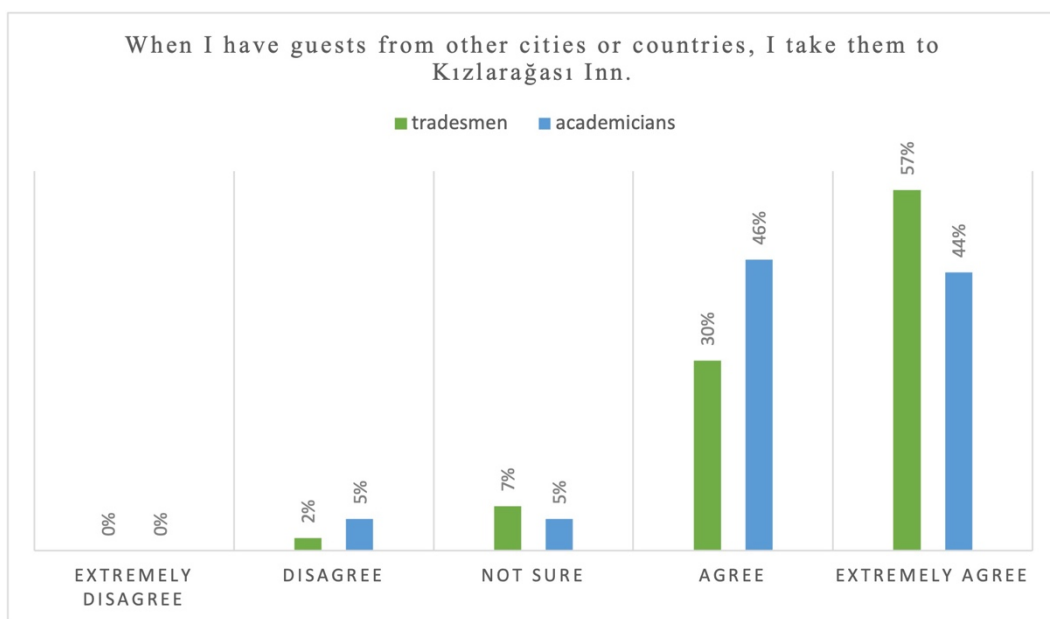


Figure 10b. Attachment of users to Kızlarağası Inn in terms of attraction point

It should be emphasized that since they have been here for a longer period of time and have greater experience, familiarity has made tradespeople more connected. The sense of community among the traders, who were regular visitors, was another important indicator (Fig. 11 and 12). The craftsmen gave diverse accounts of how they felt about the Kızlarağası Inn: "I am very delighted to be here" (G. Güler, interview, July 21, 2017). Or, more extensively:

"I'm glad to be here. I have been working here for the past five years, and I have become used to coming here frequently. That is how I became attached to this environment, and I am pleased to work in this vibrant inn. I feel tranquility when I come here. The life experience and energy from the past, despite its flaws, brings us happiness. I am therefore fond of working in this building here." (V. Yıldız, interview, July 31, 2017).

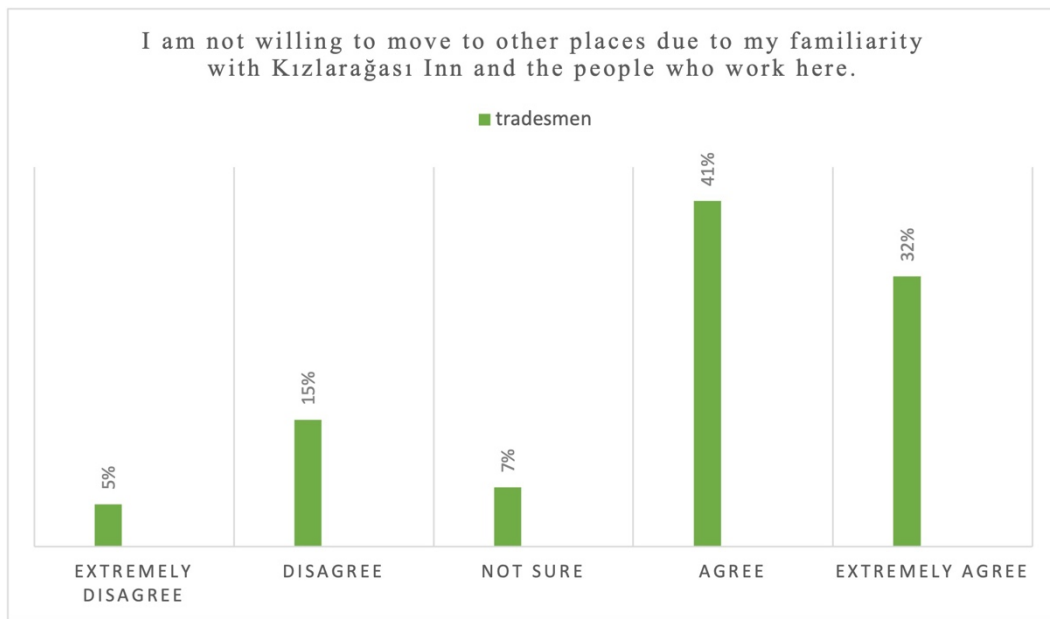


Figure 11. the strengthening of place attachment as a result of familiarity

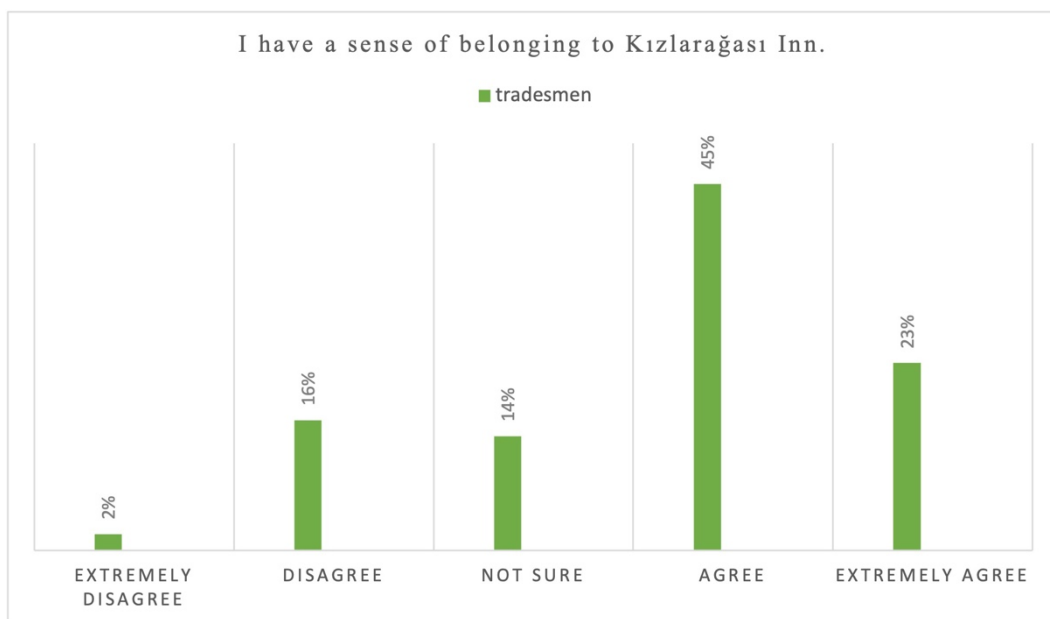


Figure 12. the strengthening of place attachment as a result of sense of belonging

Most tradespeople –more than 80% – felt comfortable in Kızlarağası Inn, compared to 60% in the other group, indicating that frequent users feel safer than visitors. The degree of familiarity among each group may help to explain this (Fig. 13).

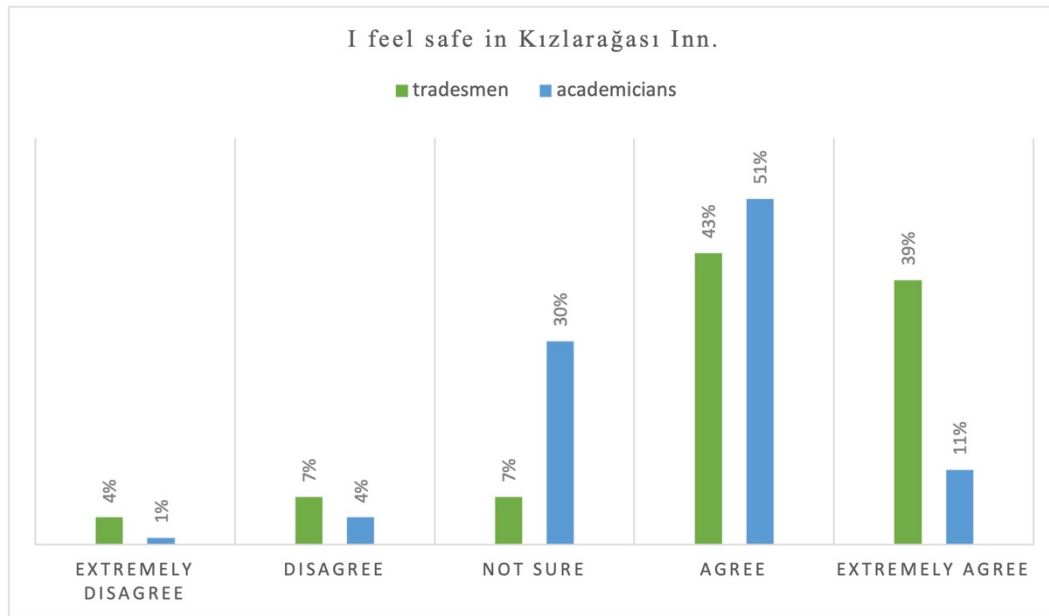


Figure 13. Safety in Kızlarağası Inn

This survey shows that the vast majority of guests have good memories of Kızlarağası Inn. This result explains their feelings about the place attachment and shows the importance of preserving the interior. Consequently, memories of a place help individuals form an identity for it (Fig. 14). Below are a few instances that interviewers described as their favorite Kızlarağası Inn memories: “During my internship in Kemeraltı, getting together there and having coffee was one of the most enjoyable experiences on hot days. The memorable moment of entering the inn’s cool interior is what I recall most about those hot summer days. I got similar experience each time I visited there. Although it would take longer, I can recall choosing to cross the inn.” (İ. Alpaslan, interview, July 18, 2017).

According to. Alpaslan (interview, July 18, 2017), Kızlarağası Inn promotes the enjoyment of being indoors by inviting its visitors to join in its events or just prefer to cross it as a passageway. “Considering that I am a photographer, capturing a picture there has long interested me. In Izmir, the Kızlarağası Inn and the way of life there provide for interesting photographic subjects. For instance, I snapped a shot of the flute musician there. I also captured images of phonograph makers’ workshops, antique stores, and record vendors. It was a memorable experience for me” (B. Üzmez, interview, 13 July, 2017).

“Right across the street is the Hisar Mosque. You may sense the vitality and history of the inn if the night azan [call to prayer] is repeated; in the summer, it is performed about 10 pm. This is because everything in the inn is closed at that time. You have a sense of being in the past when you close your eyes.” (V. Yıldız, interview, July 31, 2017).

All of these recollections demonstrated the Kızlarağası Inn’s excellent capacity to cater to different user groups and provide possibilities for each group to have a memorable experience there. They all have pleasant memories of this location and their interactions with its ambiance. The strong emotional attachments formed as a result of these users’ memories impact their relationships with the environment, which in turn influences the feeling of place and attachment as well as the environment’s social value. The identity of a place is directly influenced by the sense of place.

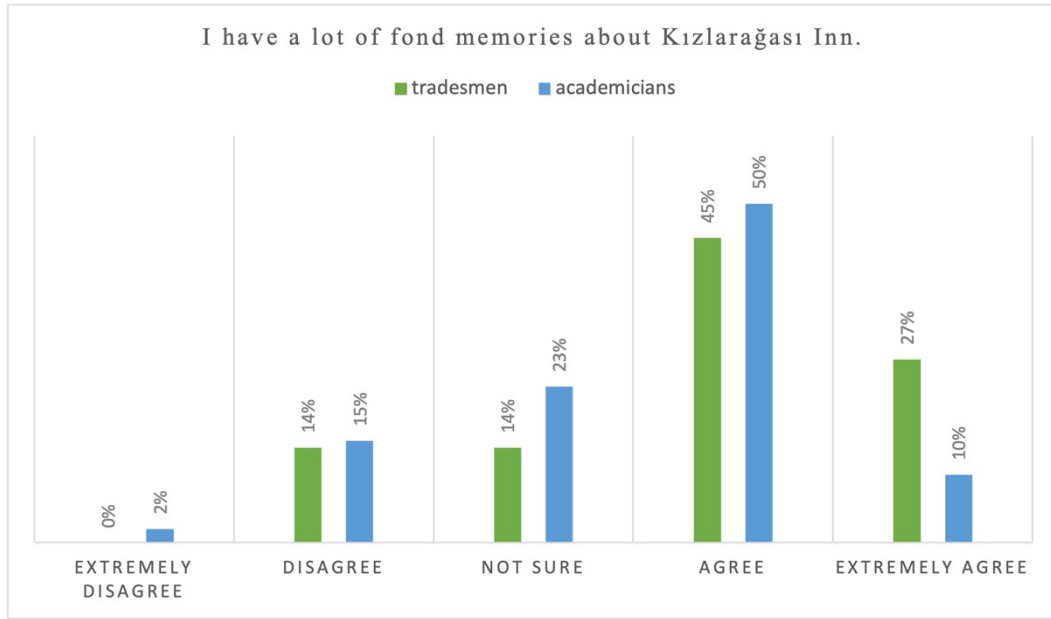


Figure 14. Place Memory of Kızlarağası Inn's users

Another conclusion is that a public interior's ambiance influences identification significantly, and more than 90% of participants responded this way about the Kızlarağası Inn. As was previously said, we experience a location via all of our senses, including sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Regarding the sensory experience indicators, there are several findings. Kızlarağası Inn first stimulates all of the senses, including the visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, and gustatory. (Fig. 15-20), despite the fact that visual and olfactory sensations had the utmost magnitude (Fig. 18-19). Kızlarağası Inn pleases five senses, as noted by Alpaslan (interview, July 18, 2017). "The Kızlarağası Inn is a place that activates all five senses. However, among these, it is a privileged area of Kemeraltı in terms of auditory experience. For instance, the acoustic quality completely shifts when one enters the inn. It is also smelling another way. The reason for this can be explained as there is only pedestrian circulation in the region". These comments show that the internality of the Kızlarağası Inn is an effective tool in the perception of the environment by the visitors. In other words, this place encourages the unique sensory context from the outside environment.

In order to effectively establish the place atmosphere and the sensory experience of the users of the inn, this interior alters the acoustic surroundings. Additional phrases that illustrate the sensory impressions of users include: "I like everything about this inn. I enjoy the tranquility and happiness I experience here, and I want to be here at every turn (E. Merter, interview, July 18, 2017).

"You occasionally want to touch something as you walk around the inn. This might be an antique door or an original inn brick. It makes sense that such a unique location would appeal to you" (V. Yıldız, interview, July 31, 2017).

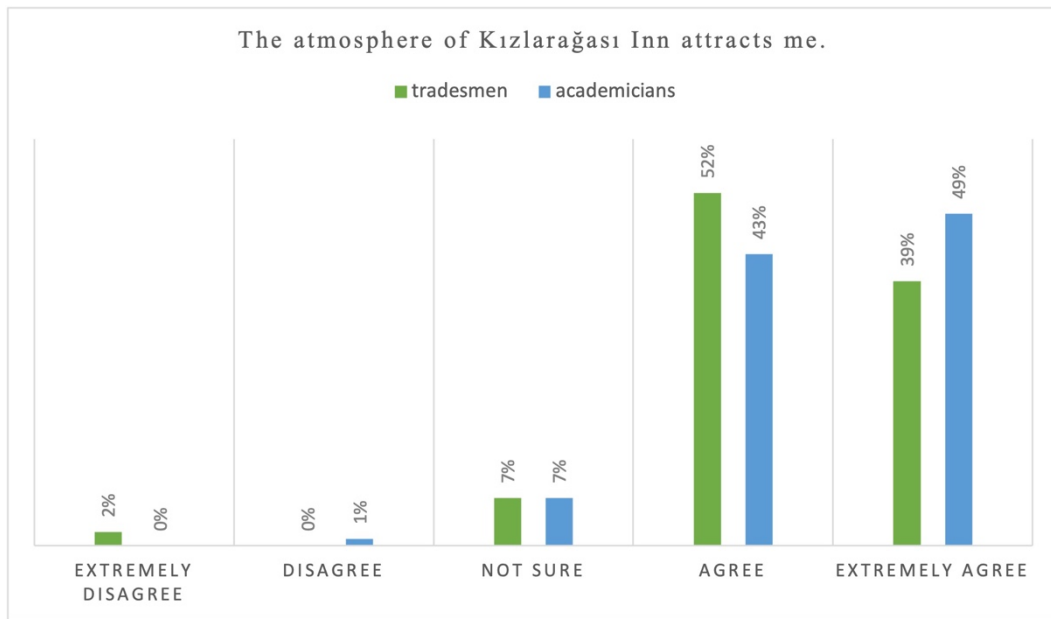


Figure 15. Users' sensory experiences at the Kızlarağası Inn

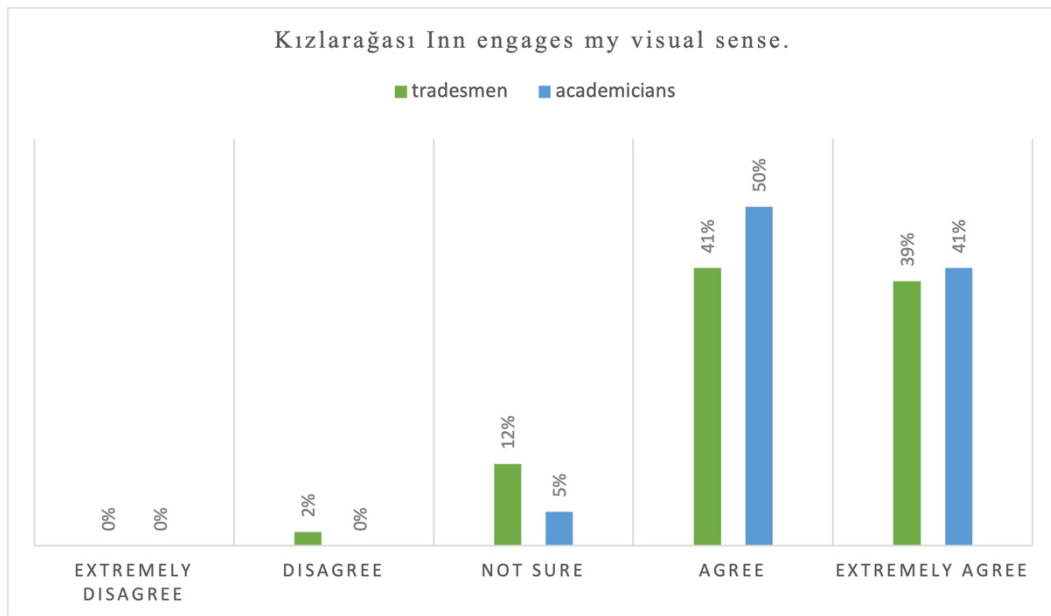


Figure 16. Users' visual sensory experiences at the Kızlarağası Inn

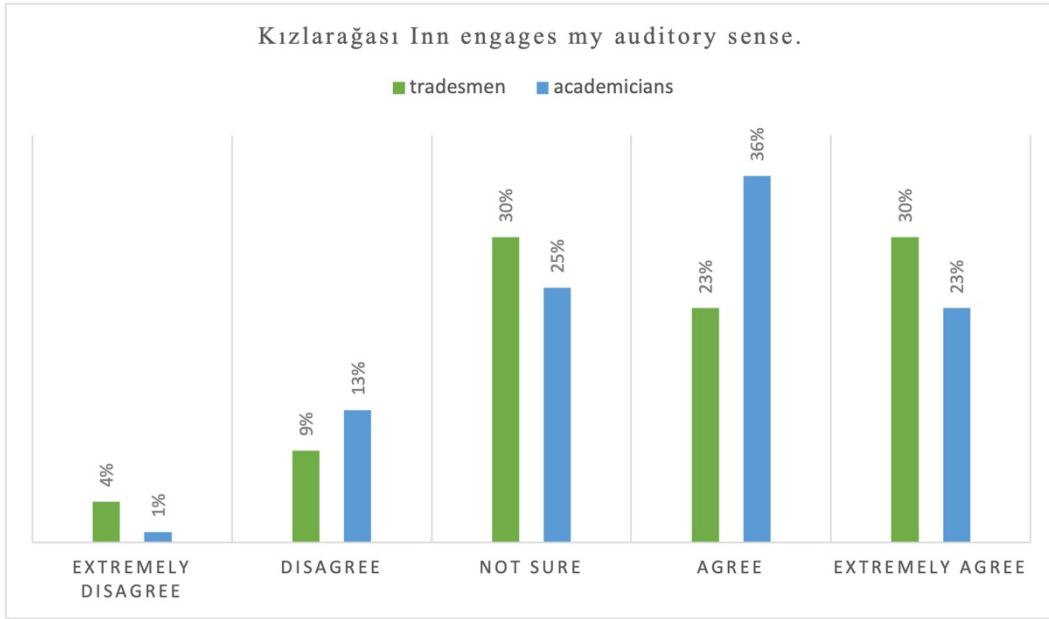


Figure 17.a. Users' auditory sensory experiences at the Kızlarağası Inn

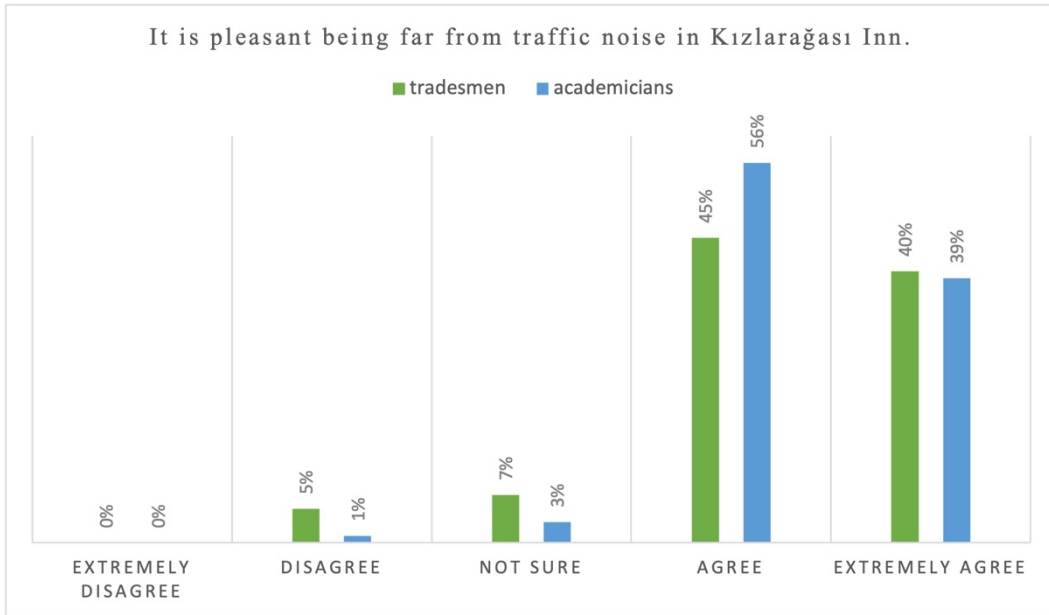


Figure 17.b. Users' auditory sensory experiences at the Kızlarağası Inn

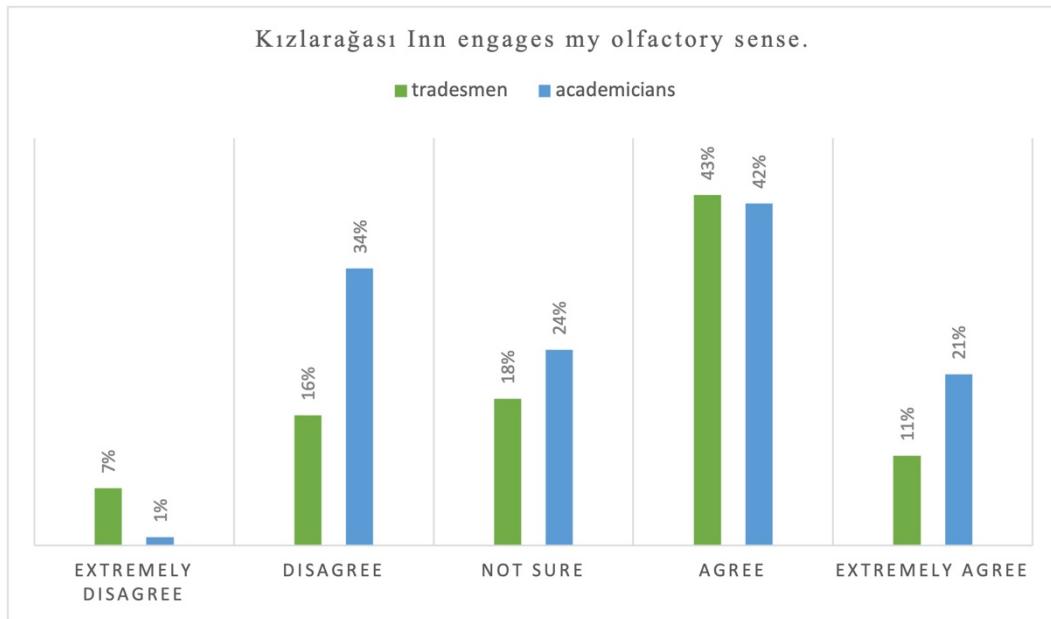


Figure 18. Users' olfactory sensory experiences at the Kızlarağası Inn

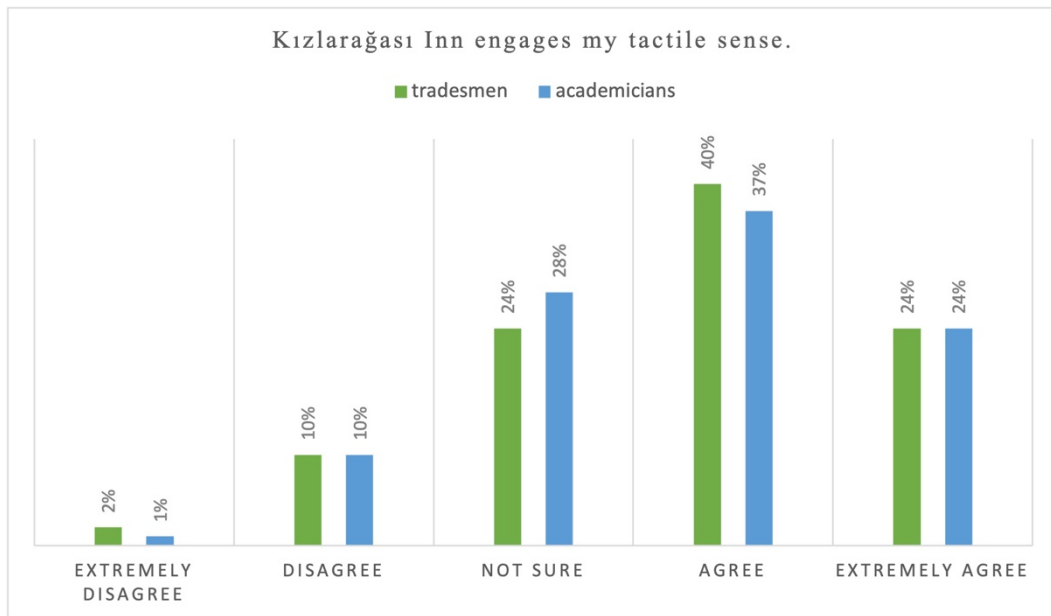


Figure 19. Users' tactile sensory experiences at the Kızlarağası Inn

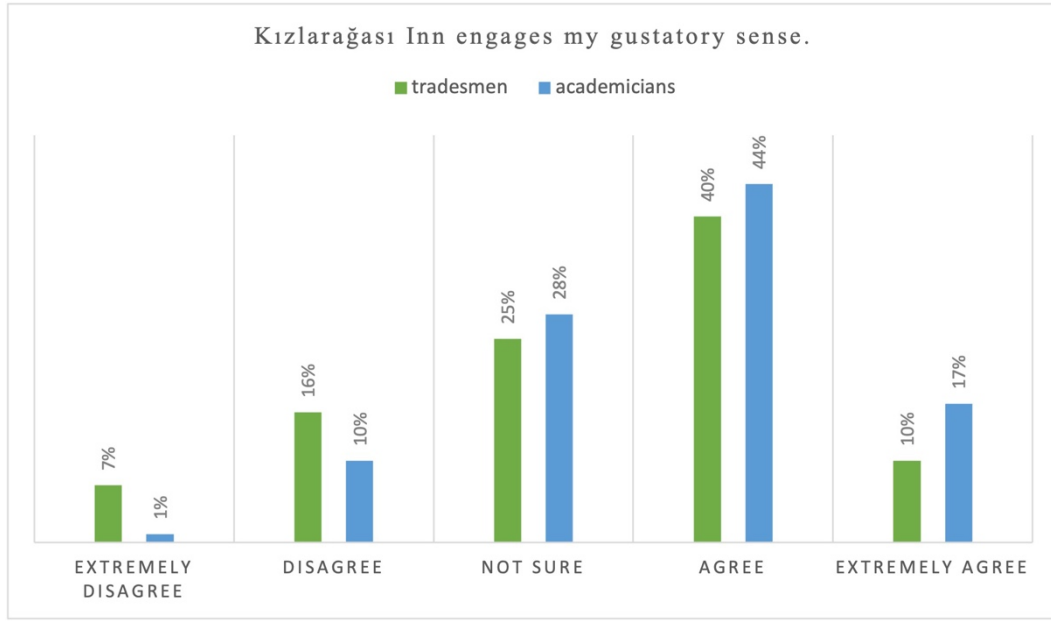


Figure 20. Users' gustatory sensory experience at the Kızlarağası Inn

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH:

To better comprehend the socio-spatial context, this study looked at meaning as a component of place identity in public/urban interiors. Moreover, this research aimed to determine the value of a place-based perspective in public interiors as well as its consequences for the persistence of place identity. It is crucial to keep in mind that public/urban interiors play a key role in sustaining public life as locations where people gather for social, as well as religious, civic, and economic purposes. They may be seen as an efficient component of the public realm that considerably improves urban life making urban areas more inhabitable in this way. The most significant meaning components in the Kızlarağası Inn place identification framework may be summed up as follows based on the findings in this study.

In accordance with the relevant literature, the historical character and spatial quality of a place increase its publicity, which means that the place is known, liked, and used by people. Importance of the specification of the place as effective factors in place attachment is emphasized in the article (Gieryn, 2000). Analysis demonstrates that one of the significant heritage places still in existence that may be used to identify Kemeraltı Bazaar is the Kızlarağası Inn. The Kızlarağası Inn contributes significantly to the magnitude of the neighborhood and influences public life in İzmir. One of the fundamental aspects of meaning that shapes how people interact with a place and contributes to place identity is place attachment. Users of the Kızlarağası Inn are devoted to it since it is both aesthetically pleasing and long-lasting. Familiarity and a sense of belonging are important elements in the development of attachment at the Kızlarağası Inn. The decor of the Kızlarağası Inn encourages a variety of sensory experiences. The Kızlarağası Inn has a great deal of potential to cater to different user groups and provide opportunity for each group to have an unforgettable experience here since place identity is established through people's memories. This evidence demonstrates the beneficial function that meaning has in the Kızlarağası Inn's place identity.

The research of the features of place identification in this public interior also revealed how, in contrast to public open space, the interiority of public places increases place identity. For instance, the internality of location contributes to the promotion of a particular sensory environment, one of Kızlarağası Inn's stated qualities. An innovative approach for urban designers working with public

space was also highlighted in this study, in contrast to the conventional emphasis on public spaces. This new understanding holds that public spaces within buildings contain both privately owned and publicly owned areas.

An evaluation of Kızlarağası as a restored inn serves as a foundation for the renovation of other ancient inns in Kemeraltı Bazaar and their conversion to public spaces. The factors outlined in this study for improving the performance of these locations can also be considered by the Historical Project of Izmir as it works to revive other abandoned inns. This data may be beneficial for designing physical programs (covering their roles and activities) as well as spaces to exhibit physical quality in this social setting. This study also emphasized the significance of the Kızlarağası Inn's historical traits in connection to place identity components, particularly the meaning component. Given the close connection between identity and historical meaning, this has ramifications for historians who want to show how history shapes place identification. The study has drawn attention to the significance of these public areas in the social and spatial framework of urban living. To ascertain the contributions of function, culture, and way of life to each element of identity, it is therefore possible to extend this research's investigation of public/urban interiors by choosing case studies from additional locales or typologies. The utilization of public interiors and their identity might then be compared between these case studies to see how these variations affect them.

Compliance with Ethical Standard

Conflict of Interests: *There is no conflict of interest between the authors or any third-party individuals or institutions.*

Ethics Committee Permission: *Ethics committee approval is required for this study.*

Funding Disclosure: *No financial support was required in this study.*

Acknowledgement: *We would like to express our gratitude to the academics and tradesmen/women of the Kızlarağası Inn who graciously agreed to take part in the survey. This research would not have been feasible without them. We would like to extend our gratitude to our interviewees for their time and cooperation. They generously shared information with us that was very helpful for the analysis.*

REFERENCES:

- Arefi, M. (1999). Non-place and placelessness as narratives of loss: Rethinking the notion of place. *Journal of Urban Design*, 4(2), 179-193.
- Atay, C. (2003). *Kapanan kapılar İzmir hanları*. İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kent Kitaplığı.
- Başarır, S. B. (2015). *Urban interior: Taksim square and Cumhuriyet Street underpass* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Istanbul Technical University.
- Brown, A. (2006). *Contested space: Street trading, public space, and livelihoods in developing cities*. ITDG.
- Department of Architecture TU Delft. (2016). *Architecture of the interior*. <https://www.tudelft.nl/en/architecture-and-the-built-environment/about-the-faculty/departments/architecture/organisation/groups/architecture-of-the-interior/>.
- Dokumen.tips (2021). *Izmir meeting planner's guide*. <https://dokumen.tips/documents/Izmir-meeting-planners-guide-2012.html>.
- Ersoy, B. (1991). *Izmir hanları*. Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları.
- Gieryan, T. F. (2000). A space for place in sociology. *Annual review of sociology*, 26(1), 463-496.
- Gustafson, P. (2001). Meanings of place: Everyday experience and theoretical conceptualizations. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21(1), 5-16.
- Harteveld, M. (2006). Viva Las Vegas. A search for the urban design task of interior public space. In V. D. Hoeven, and H.J. Rosemann (Eds.), *Urban Transformations and Sustainability. Progress of Research Issues in Urbanism 2005* (pp. 33–41). Delft University Press.
- Harteveld, M. (2014). *Interior public space. Human space*. <https://humanspace.weblog.tudelft.nl/interior-public-space/>
- Harteveld, M. (2014). *Interior public space on the mazes in the network of an urbanist* [Doctoral dissertation]. Delft University of Technology. <https://doi.org/10.4233/uuid:d594e36a-560b-4559-bc5b-85dc3b83be02>.
- Hidalgo, C., & Hernaendez, B. (2001). Place Attachment: Conceptual and Empirical Questions. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21(3), 273-281.
- Holl, S., Pallasmaa, J., & Gomez, A. P. (2006). *Questions of Perception: Phenomenology of Architecture*. William K Stout Pub.
- Low, S. M., & Altman, I. (1992). *Place attachment*. Springer.
- Madanipour, A. (2003). *Public and private spaces of the city*. Routledge.

- Montgomery, J. (1998). Making a city: Urbanity, vitality and urban design. *Journal of Urban Design*, 3(1), 93–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809808724418>
- Özbek Sönmez, I. (2010). The urban historical stratum of the Kemeraltı Bazaar. In A. E. Göksu, and Ş. Gökçen Dünder (Eds.), *Urban Historical Stratum: from Smyrna to Izmir* (pp. 120-128). Dokuz Eylül University.
- Pallasmaa, J. (2005). *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and The Senses*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Poot, T., Van Acker, M., and De Vos, E. (2015). The public interior: The meeting place for the urban and the interior. *Idea Journal*, 15, 44–55. <https://doi.org/10.37113/ideaj.vi0.52>.
- Punter, J. (1991). Participation in the Design of Urban Space. *Landscape Design*, 200, 24-27.
- Rădulescu, S. (2017). Interior Public Spaces. Addressing the Inside-Outside Interface. *sITA–studii de Istoria și Teoria Arhitecturii*, (5), 99-114.
- Relph, E. (1976). *Place and placelessness*. Pion.
- Seamon, D., Sowers, J. (2008). Place and placelessness (1976): Edward Relph. In P. Hubbard, R. Kitchin, and G. Valentin (Eds.), *Key texts in human geography* (pp. 43–52). Sage Publications.
- Shamsuddin, S., & Ujang, N. (2008). Making places: The role of attachment in creating the sense of place for traditional streets in Malaysia. *Habitat international*, 32(3), 399-409.
- Sola-Morales, M. (1992). Public and collective space: The urbanisation of the private domain as a new challenge, *La Vanguardia*, 12(5), 3-8.
- Şala, D. (2013). *Evaluation of urban design guidelines in the context of urban identity (Izmir- Kemeraltı Historical Center)* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University.
- Ujang, N., and Zakariya, K. (2015). The notion of place, place meaning and identity in urban regeneration. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 170, 709-717. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.073>.
- White, E. T. (1999). *Path, portal, place: Appreciating public space in urban environment*. Architectural Media Ltd.