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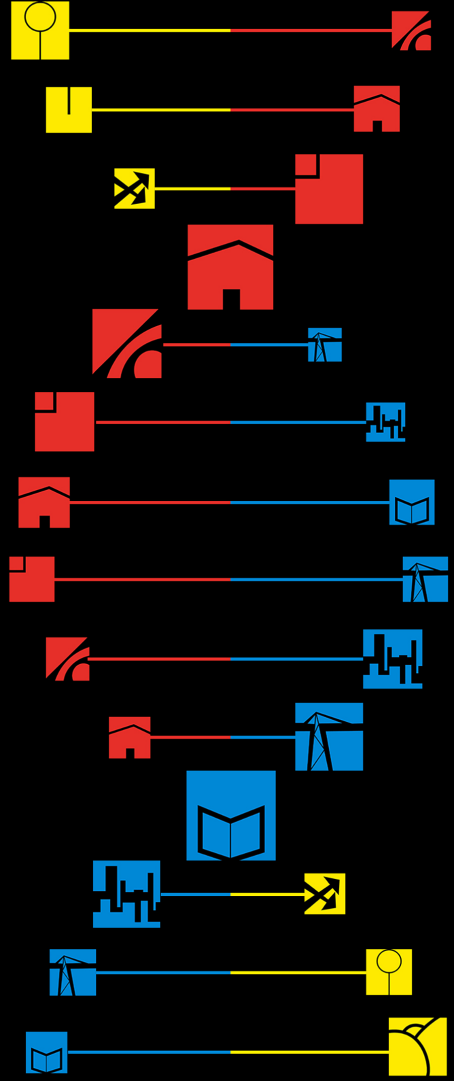
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8th International Congress

September 27-29 2023 Trabzon TÜRKİYE

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III

DEGENERATION IN TRADITIONAL URBAN TEXTURES: THE EXAMPLE OF KONYA "TÜRBE ÖNÜ"

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ABSTRACT

Memory, a process of remembering and forgetting, is inherently spatial, both individually and collectively. Throughout the ages, various understandings of memory have evolved, but all of them have found spatial representations. The urban space serves as the locus of collective memory, facilitating the formation and recollection of collective memories. Traumatic demolitions in the city cause the loss of certain elements of the urban space, leading to forgetfulness. In this study, an investigation has been conducted on the remnants of the disappearing memory pieces of Konya city through individual memories. The study aims to evaluate the elements of urban identity memory related to the space and its surroundings that have been etched in Konya's memory as "Türbe Önü".

Keywords: Degeneration, transformations, traditional urban textures, Konya, Mevlana.

URBAN/CITY/LANDSCAPE/RURAL

INTRODUCTION

Konya has been a settlement area since the Neolithic period. The philosophy of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi is intertwined with the urban space, leading to Konya being referred to as the "City of Mevlana." The area where the Mevlevi Lodge is located, known as "Türbe Önü" in urban memory, constitutes an essential part of Konya's urban identity. However, systematic development efforts in the area have defined a new "Türbe Önü" that is disconnected from Konya's city identity and urban memory, almost erasing the elements of identity and memory.

The study, which examines the remnants of the disappearing identity and memory fragments of the city through "Türbe Önü" and its surroundings, aims to shed light on the ongoing mistakes and practices that disregard memory in shaping the area from the past to the present. It also aims to evaluate the elements of urban identity and memory in the area and document the degeneration occurring in the traditional fabric. The aim is to assist the city in re-remembering through a review of visual, auditory, and literary literature related to urban memory and the collection of data through surveys from individuals who have resided in Konya for at least four years and aged eighteen. By doing so, the importance of a respectful approach to historical, natural, and cultural structures when it comes to urban development and change will be emphasized, moving away from a profit-centered perspective in favor of proper planning and a more considerate approach.

Urban Memory, Identity and Degeneration Thereof

Memory is a process of accumulating information, a mental representation referring to experience, with the purpose of learning and later using what has been learned (Spear and Riccio, 1994). Memory, one of the most hidden and central aspects of the mind, also plays a significant role in the formation of identity. Memory studies are, in a way, the systematic understanding of the "human spirit" (Radvansky, 2017).

Collective memory, which is the reflection of memory on urban space, is connected to places and objects, just like individual memory. Preserving old structures is similar to preserving individual memories. The city is seen as a space where memories are created and remembered, shaping the memory of its inhabitants. Since these memories continue to exist as a part of the city, they create a strong bond for the city's residents (Rossi, 1982).

Urban memory, which is an essential factor in shaping urban identity, affects all construction-destruction actions that constitute the urban development and is affected by them. The city, as a living entity, relies

on urban memory, which has a significant impact on its existence and the formation of its identity, while it continues to develop.

Urban identity is made up of characteristics that distinguish the city from other cities and is formed over time by unique elements (Lynch, 1983). The reshaping of the urban space and meaning through urban destruction and decay erodes the relationships and experiences of urban dwellers, thus eroding the urban identity. Kevin Lynch identifies five elements of the city image (paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks) and states that the city's perception is influenced by these elements.

Throughout history, there has been a mutually influential relationship between the paradigms of memory of the era and urban space, with changes in urban space becoming ingrained in the memories of city dwellers.

Halbwachs suggests that memory is socially constructed. Social discourses and cultural practices shape the collective aspect of memory, ensuring its transmission and keeping it current. In the process of remembering in collective memory, group dynamics such as families, social classes, communities, and friend groups play an active role. Through the memories of previous generations and relationships within the group, individuals explore the past.

Halbwachs focuses on the spatial dimension of collective memory. Memory is shaped around the phenomenon of social space, and space contains only certain details that are meaningful to the group members. Therefore, space reflects the organization and lifestyle of society. Spatial images help us recognize the past in the context of the present. Urban space is the repository of collective memory (Halbwachs, 1992).

The control of the past in the social realm is closely related to sovereignty, politics, and financial disputes (Till, 2003). Authorities glorify memory sites such as museums, sculptures, and monuments in some symbolic areas to impose a new ideological order, strengthen the sanctity perception of this order through the design and functions of these areas, and create mythic narratives and identity schemas (Anderson, 1991; Habswan, Ranger 1983; Edensor 1997; Johnson, 1985; 1995; Lowental, 1985; Azaryahu and Kelleman, 1999). Many memory sites are produced as highly significant material and symbolic efforts that legitimize existing authorities or create new ones.

Cities tend to carry a common essence that have been maintained over a certain period of time despite the changes. While they aim to remain faithful to this essence, they gradually deteriorate over time. Therefore,

preserving the elements that give meaning to a city and constitute its memory is important (Boyer, 1996). The problems of urban and social life caused by the loss of social elements that make up memory under political, ideological, religious, and philosophical influences can be solved by re-establishing urban integrity and identifying lost urban elements.

Materials and Methods

The city is an accumulation that constitutes the common memory of people. A collective memory, which includes the history, cultural elements, and experiences of communities, is a combination of oral traditions, folklore, and material culture. The memory of the city enriches itself with accumulated literary data, and these data gain meaning for the residents of the city.

In this study, urban memory was examined through visual, auditory, and literary data. Materials such as photographs, paintings, illustrations, sketches, videos, films, stories, novels, memoirs, stamps, newspaper articles, etc., were collected. In the second phase of the research, the Urban Identity and Memory Analysis survey of the Mevlana Museum Area was administered to participants who had lived in Konya for at least four years and were over the age of eighteen. This survey was conducted online with the aim of identifying places that have a significant presence in urban memory.

Within the scope of the survey, the focus was on the central area of Konya province. This area is bordered by Istanbul Street in the west, Piri Esat, Topraklık, Alaaddin Kap Street in the south, Fetih Street in the east, and Şeyhülema Recep Ağa and Köprübaşı Street in the north. At the beginning of the survey, information was requested to determine the characteristics of the participants, such as gender, age, education level, marital status, occupation, and economic status. In addition, participants were asked about the years in which they had lived in Konya and their thoughts on memory places.

Various questions were prepared to reveal different memory frames to access the collective memory of society. These questions were created with reference to Lynch's elements of urban image (paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks). In this way, accessing the images in memory and grouping the obtained places under these elements aimed to make memory, identity, and places more meaningfully readable.

CONCLUSION

Konya is a city with a history of continuous settlement dating back to the Neolithic period. The city's enduring importance can be attributed to a range of strategic factors, such as its central location in Anatolia, rich historical heritage, economic structure, geography, and fertile lands. As long as these attributes are effectively utilized, Konya's significance will persist.

During the period of the Anatolian Seljuks, Konya served as the capital and became an attractive center for many philosophers, artists, and scholars, including Mevlana, eventually gaining worldwide fame (Baykara, 1985). During this era, Mevlana's philosophy was referred to as "Mevlevism," and the city came to be known as the "City of Mevlana" (Önder, 1971). In this context, the vicinity of the Mevlana Tomb became a focal point and had a significant impact on the city's urban fabric. The new structures around the Tomb are indicative of the reflection of Mevlana's belief system onto the urban space. During this period, the architectural fabric of the Tomb and its surroundings acquired a character that reflected the cultural identity of that time (Alkan, 1994).

Figure 1.a. View of Mevlana Lodge from Mevlana Street and Figure 1.b. Buildings Adjacent to Mevlana Tomb

Figure 2.a. View of Mevlana Lodge from Mevlana Cultural Center and Figure 2.b. View of Mevlana Lodge from Aslanlı Kışla Street"

Under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, Konya retained its importance as a center where princes were raised. During the Ottoman era, the Mevlana Tomb and its surroundings became one of the most prestigious residential areas (Konyalı, 1964). However, until the 1970s, the historical character of the area was preserved as long as traditional buildings and textures were maintained without the need for special protection. Over time, the inability to preserve these textures in the region and the failure of the changing social structure to transform traditional buildings led the residents to move to new residential areas (Ulusoy, 1999). This situation resulted in the loss of the historical identity of Türbe Önü and the deterioration of its medieval character (Figure 1.a, b). New, modern residential complexes and tourist structures have taken the place of the historical fabric (Figure 2.a, b).

An approach emerged where monumental public structures were preserved or built individually. With projects such as The Mevlana Culture Valley Urban Regeneration and Transformation Project, Türbe Önü Square Arrangement Project, and Bedesten Rehabilitation Project, the city's fabric has changed, and a new definition of "Türbe Önü" has been created.

In the years following the completion of the Mevlana Square arrangement and road expansion works in 2011, the construction of the Independence War Martyrs Monument in 2008, the demolition of the Public Library and the construction of Hilton Garden Inn in 2009, the Bedesten urban rehabilitation work in 2010, the construction of the Adliye-Alaaddin Tram Line in 2014, the Panorama Konya Museum and the construction of the İrfan Civilization Research and Culture Center in 2015 and 2017, "Türbe Önü" has undergone significant changes.

Mevlana Square, once a space with green elements that provided human scale and climatic comfort, has been decongested from boundaries that turned it into a concrete space, and the Public Library has been removed, allowing the Mevlana Museum, Selimiye Mosque, and Yusuf Ağa Library to become independent and isolated elements (Figure 3.a, b).

Figure 3.a. Before the Renovation of Mevlana Square and Road
Widening Works and Figure 3.b. After the Renovation of Mevlana
Square and Road Widening Works

The Independence War Martyrs Monument, Hilton Garden Inn,
Panorama Konya Museum, and İrfan Civilization Research and
Culture Center have been produced with an approach that
separates them from the memory and identity elements in the area,
using historical reenactments, past forms, and motifs arbitrarily (Figure
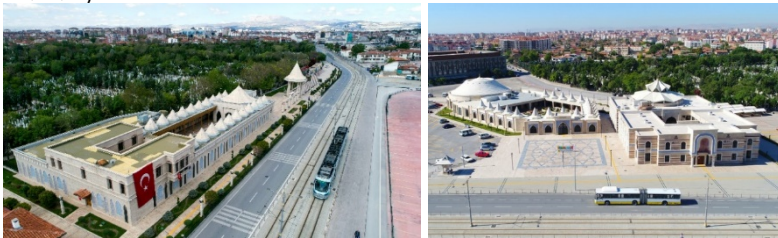4.a, b; 5).

Figure 4.a. Monument to the Independence War Martyrs Next to the
Üçler Cemetery and Figure 4.b. Panorama Konya Museum and İrfan
Civilization Research and Cultural Center

Figure 5. Hilton Garden Inn Built to the East of the Üçler Cemetery"

With the removal of the Üzüm Bazaar, the area was cleansed from the
veil of memory, and after the construction of Altın Bazaar and Mevlana
Bazaar with a modern architectural approach, it became a distorted
remembrance of a forgotten void (Figure 6.a, b). A similar approach was
followed in the construction of the Konya Culture and Tourism
Directorate. Instead of the original building, which is one of the unique
Republican Period works in Konya, a new building was constructed with
a nostalgic approach (Figure 7.a, b).

Figure 6.a. Üzüm Bazaar, Figure 6.b. Mevlana Bazaar Built in Place of
Üzüm Bazaar, and Figure 6.c. New Altın Bazaar Built in Place of
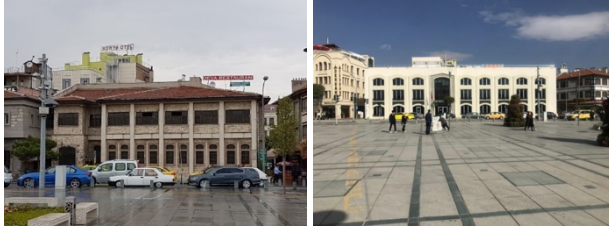Mevlana Market

Figure 7.a. Konya Culture and Tourism Directorate Building Before
Demolition and Figure 7.b. New State of the Konya Culture and
Tourism Directorate Building

The Mevlana Cultural Center (Figure 8), which was built without regard
for urban memory and identity elements in the area, along with the
Karatay Town Hall (Figure 9) and Melike Hatun Bazaar (Figure 10.a, b),
has led to the fragmentation of urban space and a state of urban
forgetfulness. These developments have adversely affected Konya's
urban identity and led to the disappearance of identity elements.

Figure 8. Karatay Town Hall Built in Place of Traditional Housing
Fabric

Figure 9. Mevlana Cultural Center Built in Place of the Aslanlı Kışla

Figure 10.a. Old State of the Women's Bazaar, Figure 10.b.
Construction Phase and New State of Melike Hatun Bazaar Built in
Place of the Women's Bazaar

To access different memory perspectives and increase diversity due to
individual characteristics, surveys were conducted with volunteer
participants of different genders, ages, educational backgrounds,
marital statuses, occupations, and lengths of residence in Konya (Figure
11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16). In order to uncover different memory frames,
various questions have been prepared, and thoughts related to memory
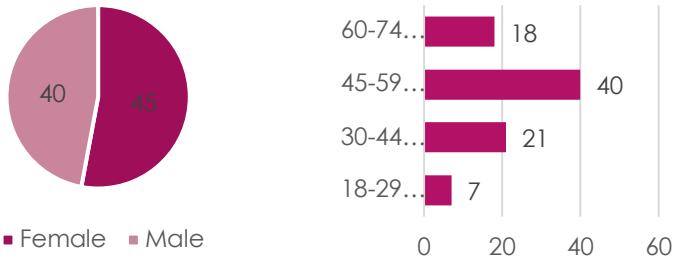spaces have also been inquired (Table 1).

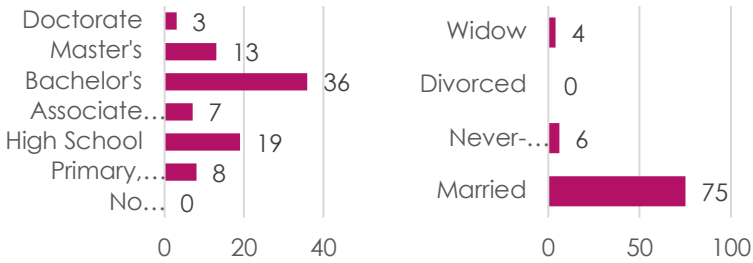Figure 11. Participants' Ages and Figure 12. Participants' Genders

Figure 13. Participants' Education Levels and Figure 14. Participants'
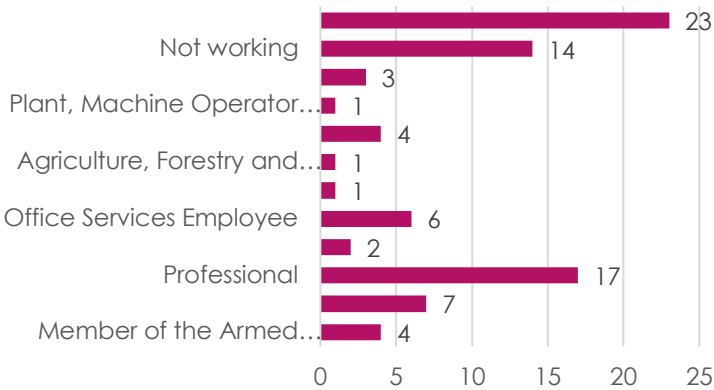Marital Status

Figure 15. Participants' Occupations
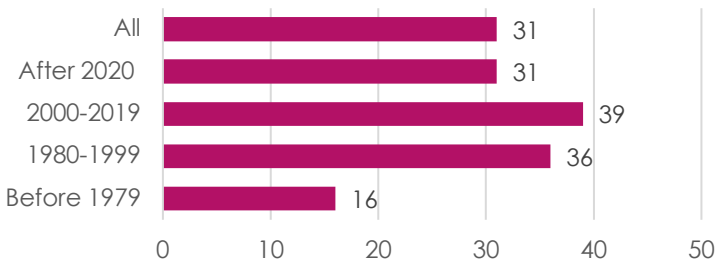
Figure 16. Years of Residency in Konya for Participants"

Table 1. Survey results

According to the answers given to the question "**How frequently do you use this area (before 1979, between 1980-1999, 2000-2019 and after 2020)?**" the frequency of use was determined to better understand the identity characteristics of the area, revealing that it has been a densely populated urban center from the past to the present.

According to the answers given to the question **"How do you access this area (before 1979, between 1980-1999, 2000-2019 and after 2020)?"** access to the area has changed over time. In the past, transportation was provided on foot or by public transport, but due to road expansion works, the use of private vehicles has increased in recent times.

According to the answers given to the question **"For what purpose do you use this area (before 1979, between 1980-1999, 2000-2019 and after**

2020)?" as part of its identity, the area's historical-to-present usage purposes have been determined. With the presence of the historical Bedesten, Women's Bazaar, the Mevlana Bazaar, and Altın Bazaar, and alongside the dominance of religious functions in the area with Mevlana Tomb, Üçler Cemetery, Aziziye Mosque, Sultan Selim Mosque maintaining their place and importance, the construction of Hilton Garden Inn, Panorama Konya Museum, İrfan Civilization Research and Culture Center, Independence War Martyrs Monument, Mevlana Cultural Center, and the arrangement of Mengüç Street over time have increased the area's capacity for tourism, socio-cultural activities, and entertainment. The removal of Aslanlı Kışla marked the end of its military function, while the demolition of the Public Library and the clearing of the traditional residential fabric resulted in a decline in its residential function. Over time, the significance of Mevlana Square diminished due to its reduced quality. The expansion of the road between Mevlana Museum and Üçler Cemetery, the narrowing of Üçler Cemetery, the arrangement of Mevlana Square, and road expansion works for the Adliye-Alaaddin Tram Line have highlighted the use of the area as a transit route.

According to the answers given to the question **"What is the most descriptive place/element in this area (before 1979, between 1980-1999, 2000-2019 and after 2020)?"** the elements that make up the identity of the area have retained their significance in urban memory over time. Aziziye Mosque, Women's Bazaar, Mevlana Bazaar, Mevlana Museum and Square, Sultan Selim Mosque, and Üçler Cemetery were identified as the most representative places/elements in the region. Although "Aslanlı Kışla", Public Library, and Üzüm Bazaar are no longer present in the area, they continue to exist in urban memory and remain part of the area's identity. Structures built after the 2000s, such as Independence War Martyrs Monument, Mengüç Street, Panorama Konya Museum, and Mevlana Cultural Center, have been embraced by the residents and have become part of the identity.

According to the answers given to the question **"How would you describe this area to someone who is not familiar with it, using specific places/elements (before 1979, between 1980-1999, 2000-2019 and after 2020)?"** structures that can be considered as landmarks in the area hold an important place in urban memory. Aziziye Mosque, Women's Bazaar, Mevlana Bazaar, Mevlana Museum and Square, Sultan Selim Mosque, and Üçler Cemetery are all significant elements in urban memory. Although "Aslanlı Kışla" and Public Library have been demolished, they continue to exist in urban memory as places used in describing the region. Despite being constructed in the 2000s, Mevlana Cultural Center has become a memory element for the residents and has been identified as a landmark.

According to the answers given to the question **"What is the central intersection and gathering points that you would define in this area (before 1979, between 1980-1999, 2000-2019 and after 2020)?"** the key focal points in the area are Aziziye Mosque, Women's Bazaar, Mevlana

Bazaar, Mevlana Square, Mevlana Museum, and Sultan Selim Mosque, which are embedded in the urban memory. Although the Public Library has been removed from the area, it continues to exist as a focal point in urban memory. Despite being located in the area since the 2000s, Mevlana Cultural Center has been accepted as a focal point by the city's residents,

According to the answers given to the question **"What is the central intersection and gathering points that you would define in this area (before 1979, between 1980-1999, 2000-2019 and after 2020)?"** in the past, Istanbul Avenue, followed by Aziziye Street and Alaaddin Hill, which was the historic administrative center, connected to Mevlana Lodge through Mevlana Street. After the 2000s, Fetih Street and Ali Ulvi Kurucu Street, which opened, have also become the most recognizable/busiest/most frequently used streets in urban memory.

According to the answers given to the question **"What places/elements do you consider as boundaries in this area (before 1979, between 1980-1999, 2000-2019 and after 2020)?"** the largest boundary element in the area throughout history has been Üçler Cemetery and has been present in urban memory.

According to the answers given to the question **"How do you find the changes made in the area?"** when changes made in the area from the 1950s to the present were evaluated by the participants, except for the removal of "Kayıklı Kahve" and the Public Library, the changes were positively received.

According to the answers given to the question "**How have the changes in the area affected you depends on the provided options (My memories have been lost. The area's needs have been met; The identity and character of the area have been damaged; The removal of structures that do not match the area's identity and character is pleasing; This change has led to new spatial needs in the area; I can no longer perform some actions that I used to do; There has been a positive aesthetic change; There has been a negative aesthetic change; The removal of a non-functional structure is pleasing; The quality of the space has improved; Thanks to this change I can now do some actions that I couldn't do before.)?"**:

- The removal of "Kayıklı Kahve" in 1950 resulted in the loss of memories and damage to the region's identity and character. In 1958, the widening of the road between Mevlana Museum and Üçler Cemetery and the narrowing of Üçler Cemetery met the region's needs but also damaged the area's identity and character. The construction of the Public Library in 1978 met the region's needs, improved the quality of the space, and led to aesthetic improvements.
- Although the removal of Üzüm Bazaar in 1980 resulted in the loss of memories, the construction of Altın Bazaar and Mevlana Bazaar

in the vacant area in 1986 and 1989 met the region's needs, improved the quality of the space, and enhanced urban aesthetics.

- The construction of Melike Hatun Bazaar in the former Women's Bazaar area in 1994 and the construction of Karatay Municipality in 2008 met the region's needs, improved the quality of the space, and allowed some actions that could not have been done in the region before when the Municipality moved to this area. The removal of Amele Bazaar in 2006 was positively received as an inappropriate structure for the region was removed, progress was made in meeting the region's needs, improving space quality, and enhancing urban aesthetics.

- Although the removal of "Aslanlı Kışla" in 1991 and the construction of Mevlana Cultural Center in its place in 2004 resulted in the loss of memories and damage to the region's identity and character, it met the need for a cultural center in the region, improved space quality, and aesthetics. The construction of the Independence War Martyrs Monument in 2008 met the region's needs and improved space quality and urban aesthetics.

- The demolition of the Public Library during the widening of Mevlana Avenue in 2009 resulted in the loss of memories and damage to the region's identity and character, but it also resulted in the improvement of space quality and urban aesthetics. The construction of Hilton Garden Inn in 2010 and the arrangement of Mengüç Street met the region's needs and improved space quality and urban aesthetics.

- The renovation of Mevlana Square and road expansion works in 2011, involving the cutting of trees, resulted in the loss of memories, damage to the region's identity and character, and an aesthetic decline. The restoration works of Bedesten and the construction of the Adliye-Alaaddin Tram Line in 2014 and 2015 met the region's needs and improved space quality and urban aesthetics.

- The cleaning of the traditional housing texture and the construction of new houses and gated housing communities, along with the renovation of the Konya Culture and Tourism Directorate building in 2017, met the region's needs and improved space quality and urban aesthetics.

- The demolition of Mevlana Bazaar and Altın Bazaar in 2020, removing an impractical structure that did not match the region's identity and character, was positively received. The construction of the New Mevlana Bazaar and Altın Bazaar in 2021 and 2022 met the region's needs and improved space quality and urban aesthetics.

According to the answers given to the question **"Have you observed any changes in the traditional housing fabric or in civil architectural examples/housing structure in the area during the removal of the traditional housing fabric and the construction of new housing and gated housing communities?"** the participants noted that the cleaning of the traditional housing texture, the construction of new houses and gated

housing communities, led to a decrease in neighborly relationships observed in civilian architectural examples/housing textures, an increase in floor heights, and a decrease in courtyard-garden usage in residences. Positive aspects included increased street width and density, advancements in construction techniques, changes in neighborhood counts, improvements and additions of social amenities (fountains, small mosques, larger mosques), residences being located within gated communities, increased security measures (security personnel, security cameras, etc.), and a reduction in dead-end streets and high courtyard walls.

The study has examined cases where past mistakes in urban changes have continued to the present in Konya "Türbe Önü" and its surroundings, addressing changes that overlook urban memory. It was found that residents were uncomfortable with the aging of places and buildings and the emergence of certain functional needs but also longed for the lost elements of memory. It is emphasized that such changes should not only represent demolition but should be carried out with respect for historical, natural, and cultural values. These approaches should encompass not only a profit-oriented perspective but also the aim of preserving the character and identity of the city.

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