

## Post-growth Redefinition of Urban Textures: The Changing Faces of Human Scale through Eminonu and Maslak Central Business Areas in Istanbul

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### Abstract

As cities move beyond growth-driven models, the relationship between urban texture and human scale becomes essential for designing people-centered environments. Historically, economic expansion has produced dense, vehicle-oriented urban forms, often at the expense of spatial intimacy and human comfort. This paper explores how contrasting urban forms along Istanbul's Central Business District axis—Eminonu and Maslak—reveal the impacts of urban morphology on social experience. Through spatial analysis of building height, street width, and enclosure, the study highlights how Eminonu fosters walkability, social interaction, and a sense of place, while Maslak reflects the spatial fragmentation of growth-focused development. The paper proposes a post-growth urban framework grounded in human-scale design, advocating for inclusive, livable, and resilient cities shaped by morphological balance rather than expansion.

**Keywords:** post-growth urbanism, human scale, morphology, central business area, Istanbul

### Introduction

Urban growth has long been equated with progress, prosperity, and modernity (Harvey, 2005). However, this growth has also led to social alienation, spatial fragmentation, and environmental degradation, prompting increasing criticism of the traditional growth-driven urbanism model (Sachs, 2015). In response, post-growth urbanism has emerged as a critical framework that not only questions the relentless pursuit of growth but also calls for a fundamental reorientation of urban development priorities. Rather than focusing on quantitative metrics such as GDP, urban sprawl, and consumption, post-growth urbanism emphasizes spatial quality, ecological integrity, and the well-being of individuals and communities (Latouche, 2009; Raworth, 2017; D'Alisa, Demaria & Kallis, 2015). This shift invites a profound rethinking of urban design, with a focus on creating environments that are both sustainable and human-centered, fostering more inclusive, resilient, and livable cities (Sennett, 2018; Gehl, 2010).

Central to this rethinking is the concept of the human scale, which underscores the importance of designing urban spaces in alignment with human needs and experiences. It promotes environments that are accessible, navigable, and conducive to social interaction (Gehl, 2010; Sennett, 2018). Human scale extends beyond physical size and proportion; it embodies an experiential and social relationship between urban form and the human body, encouraging legibility, comfort, and inclusivity (Gehl, 2010). Scholars such as Lynch (1981) and Alexander (1977) argue that human-scale environments enhance coherence, orientation, and meaningful engagement among inhabitants. Within the post-growth paradigm, the human scale is not merely a design guideline but a vital lens for evaluating the inclusivity, accessibility, and resilience of urban life (Carmona et al., 2003; Sennett, 2018). Urban spaces shaped through this lens foster a deeper sense of connection, both to place and to community, thereby strengthening social cohesion and overall well-being.

The human-centered approach is also closely linked to urban texture, understood as the spatial arrangement of streets, buildings, and open spaces. Urban texture includes the voids and patterns that shape everyday urban experiences (Mehaffy, Porta & Romice, 2010). Dense and layered urban textures support walkability, spatial intimacy, and mixed land uses, thereby nurturing vibrant social life and a heightened sense of place (Jacobs, 1961; Gehl, 2010). In contrast, growth-oriented design often prioritizes car infrastructure and high-rise, functionally segregated development. These conditions disrupt the spatial continuity and social cohesion essential for livable environments and tend to alienate individuals from their surroundings (Gehl, 2010). The relevance of this discussion becomes particularly evident in metropolitan cities like Istanbul, which embodies both historical continuity and rapid modernization.

Istanbul's Central Business District (CBD) axis, stretching from the organically developed historic texture of Eminonu to the modern district of Maslak, presents a striking contrast in spatial and experiential perspective (Keyder, 1999; Aksoy & Robins, 2011). These two business districts, which differ physically and functionally, have been selected as case areas due to their distinctive urban forms. While Eminonu maintains a dense, fine-grained

structure that promotes pedestrian activity, visual coherence, and spontaneous social exchange, Maslak reflects the spatial consequences of late 20th-century neoliberal urbanism, characterized by fragmentation, vertical expansion, and a loss of public life (Erkip, 2000). The contrast between these two commercial districts highlights how different urban textures can significantly influence both physical space and social dynamics, particularly in terms of post-growth urbanism and human scale.

This paper investigates how the contrasting urban forms of Eminonu and Maslak shape not only the physical space but also the social experience and sense of place, qualities essential to post-growth urban environments (Carmona et al., 2003; Gehl, 2010). Adopting a comparative morphological approach, the study focuses on three key indicators: street width, building height, and street enclosure. These parameters are analyzed not only in formal terms but also as spatial conditions that influence human comfort, inclusivity, and the vitality of urban life. By bridging morphological analysis with post-growth theory, this paper aims to contribute to contemporary urban debates on how spatial form can support human-centered, sustainable, and socially inclusive futures (Latouche, 2009; Raworth, 2017).

### **Spatial Development of Istanbul's Central Business District (CBD) Axis**

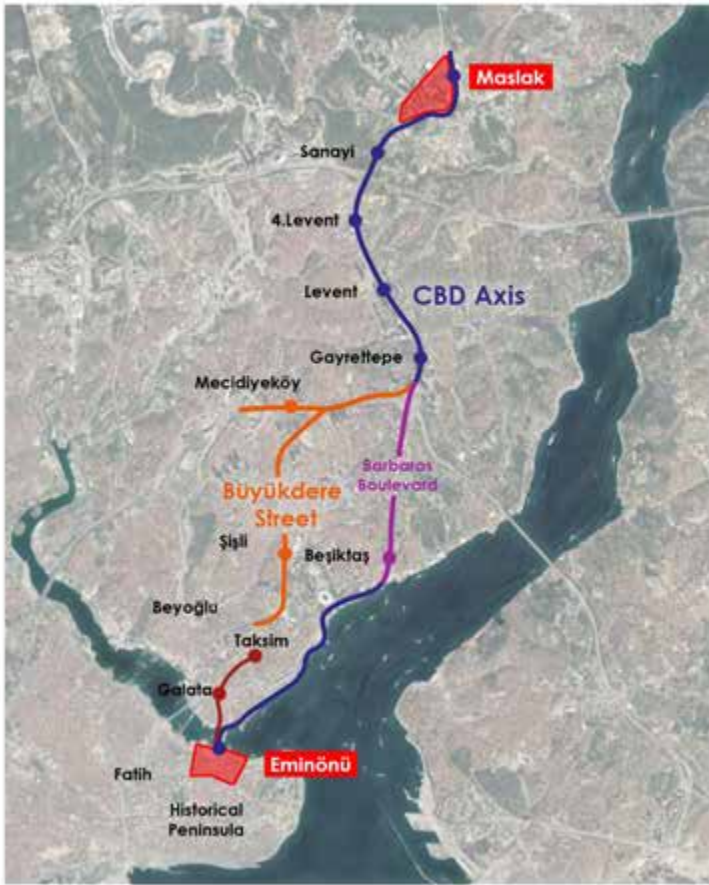
The urban development of Istanbul's CBD axis has been crucial to the city's history, characterized by changes influenced by urban planning and socio-economic conditions (Göksu & Pilehvarian, 2019). Understanding this formation is essential for contextualizing the historical background of the selected case areas, as the axis reflects significant changes from the city's traditional commercial core to its contemporary business districts.

In the 1950s, Istanbul's commercial center was the Eminonu area of the Historical Peninsula, functioning as the main trading location of the city for the import, export, and sale of many commodities (Göksu & Pilehvarian, 2019). From 1956 to 1958, a significant development in the city's planning was going on with the construction of Barbaros Boulevard, which connects Beşiktaş to Zincirlikuyu. This development served as a pivotal axis for the spread of the city's primary commercial centers into other regions. This shift marked the beginning of a new phase for Istanbul's CBD, which would later see the rise of modern commercial areas beyond the historical core (Çelik, 1993). In the late 1960s, the city subsidized skyscraper construction in Maslak, the city's development area. This development signaled a notable transition towards vertical development and modernity.

In the 1970s, the evolution of the city's commercial landscape continued to grow, as the merging of the Taksim-Şişli-Büyükdere axis and the Mecidiyeköy-Gayrettepe axis facilitated the northern region of Istanbul's development as an extension of the Historical Peninsula's commercial center (Kubat et al., 2012). The simultaneous reduction of military zones in the northern part of the city, especially in the Sarıyer district, resulted in a cluster of multi-storey projects in Maslak after the 1970s. These improvements positioned the area as a modern business district, highlighting vertical expansion. This period also experienced a notable transformation in commercial architecture, as enterprises progressively preferred contemporary office buildings to maintain market competitiveness (Kiray, 1998).

During the 1990s and early 2000s, the evolution of Maslak coincided with the expansion of the entire CBD axis, characterized by the establishment of industrial zones, business hubs, and upscale residential districts. In this period, initiatives were undertaken to maintain the identity of the 'Old City' in the Historical Peninsula, transforming it into a tourism and commerce-focused district (Aydemir, 2019) (Figure 1).

In the present day, Eminonu and Maslak represent two critical points along Istanbul's CBD axis, embodying different historical backgrounds, urban textures, and planning paradigms. While Eminonu, located in the Historical Peninsula, has served as the city's core commercial and cultural hub for centuries, its dense streets maintain a strong connection to human activities and daily life (Tüfekçi, 2017). In contrast, Maslak, which spatially developed in the second half of the 20th century, symbolizes Istanbul's modern expansion, characterized by vertical growth, office spaces, and infrastructural integration (Karaca, 2020). The comparison of these two business district areas illustrates the broader tension between preserving historical urban character and accommodating contemporary economic and spatial demands.



Maslak, 1990s



Barbaros Boulevard, 1958



Eminönü, 1950s

Figure 1. Development of Istanbul's Central Business District (CBD) Axis

## Morphological Comparison of Eminonu and Maslak Case Areas

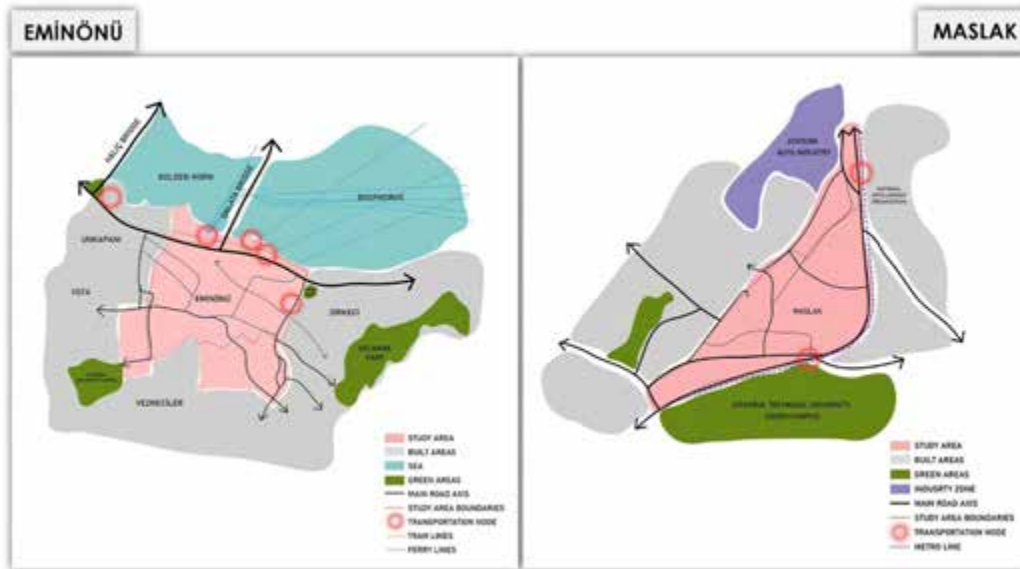
This section systematically analyzes the morphological characteristics of Eminonu and Maslak through essential spatial parameters, seeking to explain how distinct planning approaches, particularly those shaped by human scale and post-growth thinking, have influenced their urban forms. By contrasting these two areas, the analysis highlights the spatial implications of different urban development models, one based on historical continuity and social proximity, the other on modern economic imperatives, and raises critical thinking about how cities can transition to post-growth futures that prioritize human well-being over expansion.

## Environmental Relations

Eminönü serves as a highly connected urban node, influenced by its historical layers and dense transportation networks. Surrounded by significant areas including Golden Horn, Vezneciler, Sirkeci, and Unkapanı-Vefa, it acts as a central connection in Istanbul's urban texture. Three major streets and two iconic bridges (Galata and Haliç) provide strong east-west and trans-Golden Horn connectivity, connecting the district to both old and modern city regions. Eminönü's multimodal infrastructure, which includes the M2 metro, the T1 and T5 tram lines, and a rearranged bus network, improves its accessibility and spatial planning. Its maritime function strengthens both intercontinental and local links, with eight ferry lines anchored in Istanbul's water-based transportation. Green and cultural icons, including Gülhane Park and Istanbul University's Beyazit Campus, contribute to the city's environmental and historical identity. Overall, Eminönü illustrates environmental urban integration by combining natural, infrastructure, and socio-cultural systems into a multilayered urban network (Figure 2).

Maslak, on the other hand, is a vast northern district defined by its strategic placement along Büyükdere Street, a major urban axis that connects it to the surrounding districts. The M2 metro line connects Maslak directly to Eminönü, increasing its connectivity to Istanbul's transportation network. Istanbul Technical University's Ayazaga Campus is a significant educational and research construct in the region. The Atatürk Auto Industrial Zone reflects

the district's industrial background, however, it is currently facing issues as a result of urbanization. Maslak is a dynamic urban neighborhood where transportation, sectoral clusters, and changing land uses all contribute to its position in the city (Figure 2).



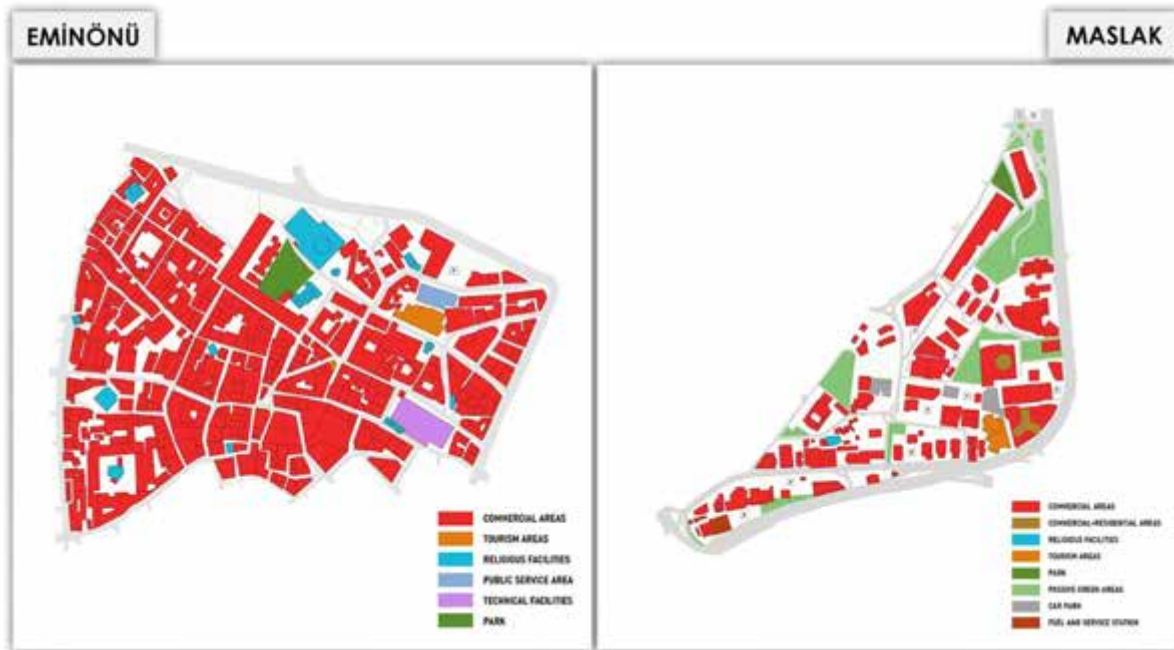
**Figure 2.** Environmental Relations Analyses of Eminonu and Maslak Areas

Eminonu demonstrates environmental integration through historical continuity and multimodal connectivity, whereas Maslak stands out with its vibrant and modern sector of commerce. Together, they represent distinct urban processes at various spatial scales.

### Land Use

Eminonu exhibits a more complicated and layered land use pattern within a smaller space. In addition to its primary commercial purpose, Eminonu incorporates a diverse range of uses, including tourism, religious facilities, public services, and technical infrastructure. This multifunctional structure is integrated into a historical urban texture, where dense building stock and fine-grained parcelization allow for the cohabitation of many activities within walking distance. In contrast to Maslak's single mosque, Eminonu has a high concentration of mosques and religious institutions (Figure 3).

Maslak is a large-scale, contemporary business district, with land use primarily monofunctional. Commercial activity is primarily centered in high-rise office buildings and luxury plazas, with little integration of different land use functions. While the region has designated green spaces and a single religious facility, the general land use composition is simplified to support business and corporate services, representing a planned and vertical urban structure common in modern development models (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Land Use Analyses of Eminonu and Maslak Areas

Eminonu represents a tight, historically evolved, and multipurpose urban center, whereas Maslak displays a planned, monofunctional, and geographically large business area because of modern commercial demands.

**Figure-Ground**

Eminonu is characterized by a dense and closely knit urban texture in which buildings are primarily linked, resulting in continuous street frontages and enclosed block constructions. This creates a figure-ground connection in which architectural forms dominate, leaving open spaces fragmented, small in scale, and irregularly distributed. The built environment’s compactness helps to create a readable and well-defined street network, with restricted yet coherent circulation paths that have evolved organically over time (Figure 4).

In contrast, Maslak’s figure-ground composition is more dispersed and broken. Buildings are typically independent, standing alone on larger building blocks and surrounded by open space. This division causes a lack of continuity of the urban texture, resulting in a less coherent streetscape. Maslak’s open spaces are larger in scale and more evenly distributed. The road network is also less prominent, with wider but more scattered roadways (Figure 4).

Eminonu and Maslak provide two distinct urban morphologies defined by spatial organization, construction patterns, and open space distribution. While both areas have open spaces, the scale, distribution, and connection of built and unbuilt environments differ significantly, reflecting the underlying urban logic.



Figure 4. Figure-Ground Analyses of Eminonu and Maslak Areas

#### Urban Elements

Eminonu offers a layered urban experience through Kevin Lynch's elements, which are paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. Its narrow, continuous streets create a dense pedestrian network shaped by the organic structure of the area. Districts in the area blend commerce, religion, tourism, and public services, forming micro-zones rooted in historical-commercial uses. Numerous nodes, such as squares and marketplaces, serve as vibrant social anchors. Historical landmarks such as mosques, bazaars, and monuments stand out in the area. The landscape in the area is concentrated in the middle parts of the building blocks (Figure 5).

Maslak reflects a modern, functionally pre-zoned urban model. Broad, vehicle-oriented streets form a legible but less human-scaled path system. Edges like Büyükdere Street act as rigid physical boundaries. Nodes are fewer and primarily serve functional roles, like plazas at business buildings' entries. Landmarks are mostly high-rise office buildings, offering visibility through scale rather than historical or cultural significance. The landscape is concentrated in the idle spaces (Figure 5).

Eminonu and Maslak represent two contrasting urban typologies. Eminonu's organic, fine-grained structure fosters a rich and immersive urban experience grounded in historical continuity and human-scale complexity. Maslak, in contrast, embodies a modern, planned environment focused on function, scale, and accessibility. Analyzing these two areas through Lynch's framework highlights the spatial, social, and experiential divides between traditional and contemporary urban forms.

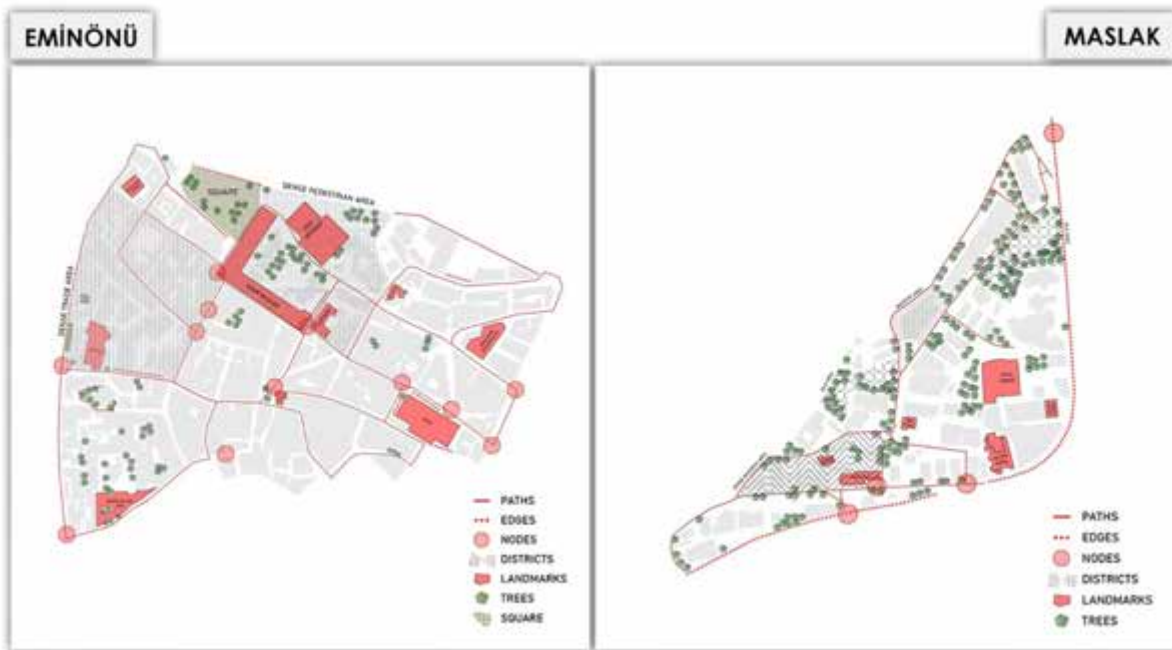


Figure 5. Urban Elements Analyses of Eminonu and Maslak Areas

### Street Width

Eminonu's historic urban texture creates a narrower and enclosed street network, which includes mostly streets measuring 2 to 3.9 meters. This compactness brings buildings closer together, making visible boundaries, and encouraging and prioritizing pedestrian activity. These narrow paths promote intimacy, social connection, and accessibility. The built environment encourages walking, with street life smoothly transitioning between commerce, culture, and daily activities (Figure 6).

In Maslak, the rarest street width range in the area is 2 to 3.9 meters. The area is defined by wider streets, primarily designed to accommodate vehicular traffic. The scale of streets and buildings reflects a modernist planning approach, prioritizing efficiency, car access, and the separation of functions. This leads to a spatial environment that often overwhelms the pedestrian, where distances are longer, street crossings are broader, and public life is more dispersed. The human scale in Maslak is diminished by the verticality of high-rise buildings and the vastness of road corridors, creating an experience that feels more formal, distant, and controlled (Figure 6).

Street width in both of these areas has a significant impact not only on physical accessibility but also on urban behavior, daily rhythms, and perceived relationships between human and place. Eminonu aligns with human-scaled, walkable characteristics, while Maslak represents a more vehicle-oriented, large-scale urban paradigm.

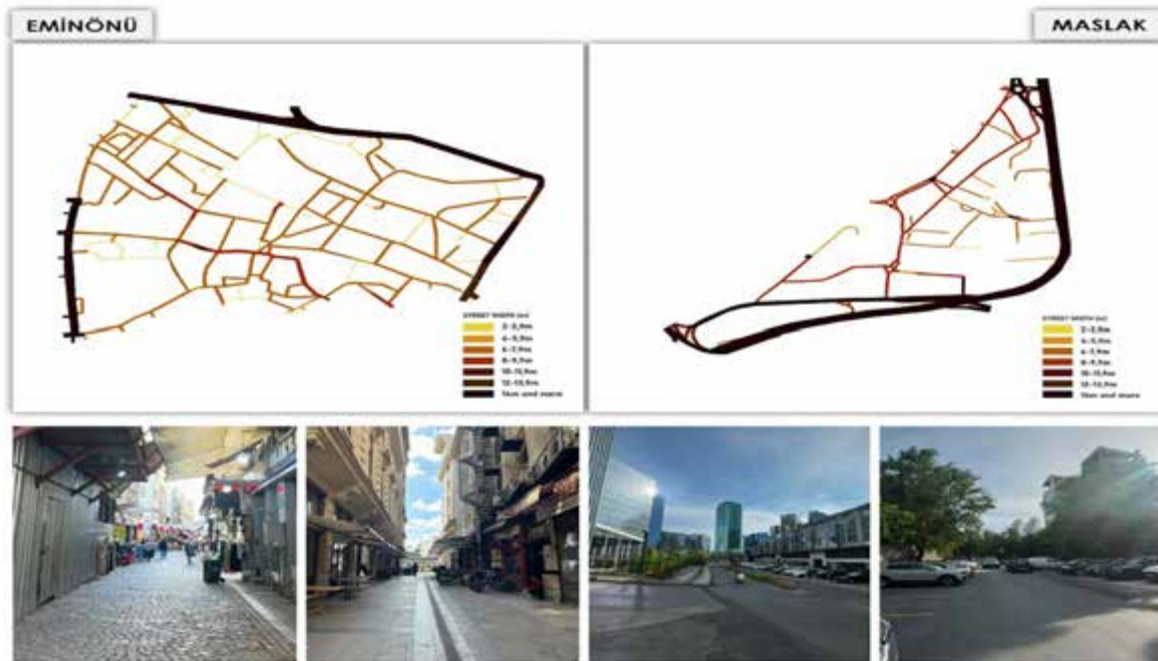


Figure 6. Street Width Analyses of Eminonu and Maslak Areas

### Building Height

Eminonu represents a historically evolved urban texture defined by human-scale interactions, walkability, and spatial intimacy. Its mid-rise building stock, typically 3 to 4 storeys, supports a consistent skyline aligned with a dense street network and enclosed blocks. The compact figure-ground relationship fosters direct connections between buildings and public space, creating a layered, legible environment. Streets, squares, and built forms transition organically, shaped by centuries of incremental development. The gradual east-west height transition enhances visual harmony. Eminonu's form prioritizes connectivity, enclosure, and architectural coherence rooted in tradition and urban memory (Figure 7).

Maslak, in contrast, illustrates a modern, planned business district defined by verticality and fragmented urban form. With a wide range of building heights, from low-rises to skyscrapers, often in isolated clusters, the skyline is less cohesive in the area. Buildings are typically separated and surrounded by open space, reducing spatial continuity and pedestrian permeability. The wide roads and scattered paths prioritize vehicles, while nodes and landmarks serve functional roles rather than creating social or spatial anchors. Maslak emphasizes visibility and economic identity, but often at the cost of accessibility and urban richness (Figure 7).

The contrast between Eminonu and Maslak reveals two opposing urban models—one shaped by organic growth and human-scale design, the other by modern planning and functional zoning. Eminonu offers a compact, coherent, and pedestrian-oriented space fostering interaction and place identity. Maslak reflects contemporary urbanism focused on visibility, zoning, and monumentality, often with limited cohesion. These differences impact how space is used and experienced. Future planning can draw from both approaches, combining the experiential richness of traditional districts with the flexibility and efficiency of modern development to create more inclusive and resilient urban environments.

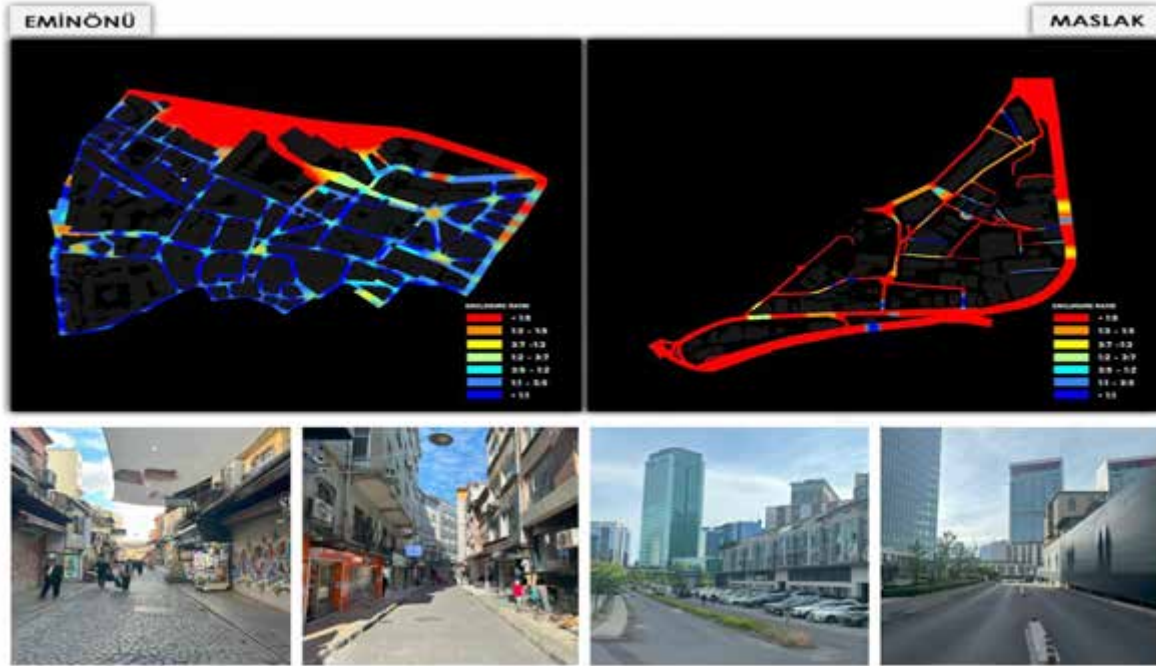


Figure 7. Building Height Analyses of Eminonu and Maslak Areas

### Street Enclosure

Street enclosure is crucial for defining the quality of pedestrian space and influencing how individuals perceive and navigate the urban landscape. This understanding is essential for creating pedestrian-friendly environments that promote walking and social engagement (Gehl, 2011). Moreover, studies on street enclosures may assist with decisions on street design, land use planning, and public space development, leading to more vibrant and livable urban environments (Whyte, 1988). The ratio of enclosure, defined as the spatial relationship between building height and street width (Ewing & Handy, 2009), varies notably between these areas, leading to different levels of urban intimacy and openness.

Eminonu is an example of a historically complex urban setting where street enclosure is a key factor in shaping the experience of pedestrians and the character of the space. Narrow streets with mid-rise buildings, which are usually three to four stories high, interact closely to produce the area's high enclosure ratio. The average ratio in the area is 1:1 and above. This implies the field has great and high placemaking potential. Because of the intimacy and continuity created by this spatial arrangement, pedestrians can fully immerse themselves in the constructed environment. Because of its distinct boundaries and well-defined paths, the enclosure at Eminonu helps people feel safe and oriented. However, in some areas, particularly where large and continuous facades are on the narrow streets, this intensity can become overwhelming, resulting in a sense of spatial compression or visual overload (Figure 8).



**Figure 8.** Street Enclosure Analyses of Eminonu and Maslak

Maslak, on the other hand, exemplifies a modern urban paradigm focusing on openness and visual permeability over its built environment. The area's street enclosure ratios are significantly lower, due to wide paths, large building setbacks, and a variety of building heights, which frequently range from low-rises to skyscrapers. As a result, many of Maslak's streets are large and exposed, which decreases the sense of place. It is observed that the prevailing ratio in the area is 1:5 and lower. This means that there is a weak and low placemaking potential in the field. Pedestrians feel disconnected from the surrounding built space, as large-scale shapes and dispersed layouts undermine the interaction between buildings and the streets. While certain parts of the area are pedestrian-centered and have more defined proportions, the area is predominantly car-oriented and fragmented (Figure 8).

Eminonu and Maslak demonstrate how street enclosure shapes urban atmosphere and user experience. Eminönü's narrow, well-defined streets foster pedestrian comfort, social interaction, and spatial coherence rooted in historical patterns. Maslak, shaped by zoning and large-scale planning, prioritizes openness and visibility but often lacks human-scale engagement. While both areas vary internally, Eminonu offers a more cohesive and emotionally resonant public realm. These contrasts highlight the role of proportion, enclosure, and building-street relationships in creating inclusive and walkable urban spaces.

### The Erosion of Human Scale in Vertical Growth

The shift from historical, human-scaled urban textures to vertically extended business districts in the case areas brings out the broader phenomenon of losing human proportions in modern cities. This phenomenon, exemplified by the different development patterns in Istanbul's Eminonu and Maslak districts, demonstrates the physical and social effects of promoting vertical growth above intimate proportions, which encourages human comfort and social interaction.

Historically, urban settings like Eminonu evolved organically, with thick urban textures, building heights, and street widths that strongly resemble human proportions. These types of areas encourage walking, stimulate spontaneous social interactions, and maintain a strong feeling of place (Gehl, 2010; Jacobs, 1961). The length of streets and buildings' heights creates an enclosure that visually and physically connects people to their surroundings, promoting direction and social cohesiveness (Lynch, 1981). These features, according to Lynch (1981), are critical for legibility and psychological comfort among urban dwellers.

Maslak, on the other hand, illustrates the late twentieth-century trend toward vertical expansion and sprawling office buildings, which has radically transformed urban shape and distorted human scale. High-rise skyscrapers on large building blocks can disrupt urban continuity and limit spatial intimacy (Erkip, 2000; Kiray, 1998). This type of growth emphasizes economic efficiency while excluding pedestrian experience and reducing potential for dynamic street life (Montgomery, 1998).

The vertical expansion concept, while representing modernization and economic advancement, frequently creates spatial conditions that are alienating human interactions. Higher structures cause microclimatic effects such as wind tunnels and large shadows, which reduce outdoor comfort (Solecki et al., 2004). Furthermore, greater scale and spacing between buildings reduce the intelligibility and cohesion of urban environments, complicating navigation and lowering the sense of safety (Carmona et al., 2003).

Modern central business districts around the world have followed a similar trajectory, with a focus on automobile-oriented infrastructure and high-density vertical building (Graham and Healey, 1999). The resulting urban surroundings frequently fail to support cities' social functions, such as communal activities and cultural expression (Whyte 1980). The challenge of post-growth urbanism is to balance the needs of economic progress with the preservation and restoration of human dimensions. This includes reconsidering zoning restrictions, promoting mid-rise, mixed-use complexes, and emphasizing pedestrian-friendly street networks (Dovey, 2016). Cities can establish environments that are not only economically productive but also socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable by focusing on morphological balance and spatial quality rather than just height and density (Alexander, 1977; Gehl, 2010).

### Pathways to Human-Centric Urbanism

In response to the alienating effects of vertical urban growth and the loss of human scale, urban theorists and practitioners have increasingly argued for a return to human-centric principles in urban planning. Human-centric urbanism focuses on spatial, social, and sensory elements that improve daily life. This strategy challenges growth-driven paradigms and instead promotes inclusivity, livability, and sustainability—core principles shared by post-growth urbanism (Latouche, 2009; D'Alisa et al., 2015).

Rescaling cities is an important step toward human-centric urbanism. This entails reactivating human-scale spatial proportions and ensuring that buildings, streets, and public spaces promote pedestrian mobility and interaction between individuals. According to Jan Gehl (2010), designing for “the human dimension” necessitates an awareness of people's physiological and psychological capabilities—how far we can see, walk, and gather comfortably. Mid-rise, mixed-use complexes, fine-grained urban blocks, and narrow streets with busy frontages are practical alternatives to the spatial fragmentation created by megastructures and superblocks (Carmona et al., 2003).

Another critical pathway is reclaiming and reactivating public space. The quality, accessibility, and programming of public spaces significantly shape the social life of cities. William H. Whyte (1980) famously demonstrated how small design choices, like movable chairs, sun exposure, or food kiosks, can foster spontaneous social engagement. In contemporary urban discourse, reclaiming public space also involves confronting its commodification and promoting spatial justice, ensuring that all social groups, especially those marginalized, have the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1996; Mitchell, 2003).

Another crucial approach is to reclaim and reactivate public spaces. The quality, accessibility, and management of public places all have significant effects on urban social life. William H. Whyte (1980) notably illustrated how minor design elements, such as movable seats, sun exposure, and food kiosks, can encourage spontaneous social contact. In modern urban discourse, reclaiming public space entails opposing its commodification and advocating spatial justice, ensuring that all social groups, particularly those oppressed, have the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1996; Mitchell, 2003).

Redefining the criteria for creating sustainable, safe, and pedestrian-friendly environments is required to promote human-scale concepts. Dominant planning paradigms frequently use growth measures like GDP or square meters of developed land to judge success. In contrast, post-growth urbanism emphasizes criteria like well-being, accessibility, ecological balance, and social equality (Raworth, 2017; Banister, 2008).

This paradigm change highlights the need for new planning tools and evaluative frameworks that value quality over quantity and focus on long-term resilience.

Human-centric urbanism is not a nostalgic return to pre-modern cities, but rather a forward-thinking synthesis of social, ecological, and morphological understanding. It acknowledges the city as a living organism that must be created with compassion, humility, and common sense. While the pressures of global capitalism and population expansion persist, rethinking cities at the human scale opens up new avenues for urban justice and sustainability.

### Conclusion

As urban societies face the limitations of growth-driven planning approaches, the demand for spatial strategies based on human scale and experiential enrichment becomes more essential. This study indicated that the contrasting morphological layouts of Eminonu and Maslak—two different commercial hubs along Istanbul's CBD axis—provide important insights into the effects of urban form on social life, environmental integration, and pedestrian experience.

Eminonu, with its organically evolved, fine-grained urban fabric, exemplifies the enduring value of human-scale environments. Its compact street network, moderate building heights, and dense land use pattern foster a spatial intimacy that supports walkability, spontaneous social interaction, and emotional attachment to place. These characteristics align with Gehl's (2010) advocacy for "life between buildings," as well as Lynch's (1981) argument that spatial legibility and coherence enhance urban dwellers' psychological comfort. Eminonu's success in maintaining a functional and inclusive urban landscape is also a testament to the resilience of historical urban textures, where the layering of functions and diversity of uses encourage multisensory engagement and community-oriented life (Jacobs, 1961; Pallasmaa, 2005).

In contrast, Maslak demonstrates the effects of vertical expansion patterns that favor economic efficiency over physical scale. Its spatial configuration, which includes large vehicle roadways, detached towers, and monofunctional zoning, shows a modernist planning tradition that frequently ignores the human scale (Erkip, 2000; Montgomery, 1998). Although Maslak represents Istanbul's global integration and neoliberal urban agenda (Aksoy & Robins, 2011), its fragmented urban texture, reduced pedestrian connectivity, and lack of social anchors highlight the limitations of a development model that prioritizes expansion over spatial quality (Graham & Healey, 1999; Fainstein, 2010).

This study's comparative morphological analysis focuses on street width, building height, figure-ground interactions, and street enclosure (Figure 9). Eminonu's high enclosure ratios and narrow streets generate a rhythm of spatial interaction and intimacy that encourages informal interactions and promotes a sense of place (Gehl, 2010; Carmona et al., 2003). In contrast, Maslak's low enclosure ratios and building setbacks add to spatial alienation and weaken the cognitive connection with the built environment (Alexander, 1977; Whyte, 1980).











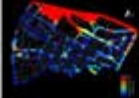
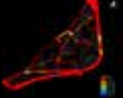
	Eminönü	Maslak	Comparison of Two Case Areas
Land Use			Eminönü shows a dense, multifunctional land use pattern embedded in a historical context, supporting diverse urban functions within a compact area. Maslak is characterized by monofunctional land use focused on business, defined by large-scale zoning and limited integration of other uses. This contrast highlights the difference between organically evolved and planned urban models.
Figure-Ground			Eminönü's tightly knit figure-ground structure creates strong urban continuity with limited and fragmented open spaces. Maslak presents a dispersed urban form, where buildings are more isolated and surrounded by large open spaces. These differences reflect two opposing spatial organizations: compact urbanism vs. fragmented modern development.
Urban Elements			Eminönü provides a rich, human-scale urban experience through Lynch's elements such as narrow paths, historical landmarks, and vibrant nodes. Maslak follows a modern, function-driven layout with fewer, larger-scale urban elements primarily shaped by commercial needs. This emphasizes the experiential gap between traditional complexity and modern simplicity.
Street Width			Eminönü features narrow, pedestrian-oriented streets that support walkability, spatial intimacy, and social interaction. In contrast, Maslak's wide, car-oriented streets prioritize vehicular flow, resulting in a more formal and less accessible environment for pedestrians. Street width directly influences how each area is used and perceived on a daily basis.
Building Height			Eminönü maintains mid-rise buildings (3-4 storeys), reinforcing a cohesive skyline and human-scale urban fabric. Maslak displays a varied skyline with high-rise towers and dispersed building forms, prioritizing visibility over spatial continuity. The contrast highlights differing approaches to scale, accessibility, and identity.
Street Enclosure			Eminönü demonstrates high enclosure ratios (1:1 and above), promoting a strong sense of place, safety, and walkability. Maslak's low enclosure (1:5 and below) results in visual openness but reduced pedestrian engagement and placemaking. These conditions underscore how proportion and enclosure shape urban experience.

Figure 9. Comparison of Two Case Areas

From a post-growth urbanism viewpoint, these insights highlight the need to shift planning objectives away from verticality and toward ecological integrity, social inclusion, and spatial justice (Latouche, 2009; Raworth, 2017). The human scale is more than just a throwback to ancient urban forms; it is an essential design guideline for creating places that promote well-being, accessibility, and resilience. As Dovey (2016) points out, geographical complexity and morphological variation are critical for adaptive, habitable cities in a post-growth period.

The legislative consequences of this study suggest that future urban development in Istanbul and other metropolitan locations should not aim to imitate the vertical expansion of places like Maslak without critical thinking. Instead, a hybrid planning approach that draws on the morphological complexity of historical cores like Eminönü while adapting to modern infrastructure and economic needs could result in a more balanced and humane urban future. This would entail encouraging mid-rise, mixed-use projects, improving pedestrian infrastructure, preserving cultural assets, and implementing participatory design methods incorporating local knowledge (Sanoff, 2000; Healey, 1997).

Finally, reestablishing human scale in urban design entails redefining progress rather than opposing it. A city that is readable, inclusive, walkable, and emotionally engaging is more likely to be socially cohesive and environmentally responsible.

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