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# WELCOME TO THE SIXTH INTERNATIONAL SPACE SYNTAX SYMPOSIUM - ISTANBUL

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## **Ayşe Sema Kubat**

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Dear Delegates,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you all to Istanbul, one of the most impressive and exciting Cities in the world, and to the campus of Istanbul Technical University, one of the oldest university within the Country, where we are gathered for the Sixth International Space Syntax Symposium. We are delighted and honored to have you all here today and I hope we will all have an enhancing and enchanting time here in Istanbul.

At the closing address for the first symposium in 1997, having found it "so vigorous and exciting", Philip Steadman suggested that it was only "the first of many." Today, after a decade since Steadman's comments, I am proud to officially declare the opening of the Sixth International Space Syntax Symposium in Istanbul.

We have been given a splendid opportunity to hold this meeting here in the historic and beautiful City of Istanbul. For that, I wish to express my warmest thanks to the International Steering Committee for entrusting us with the organization of this significant gathering. I would also like to thank the Faculty of Architecture at Istanbul Technical University, for making it possible for us all to enjoy the atmosphere of the historic Taşkısla building. In particular, I would like to extend a word of thanks for the continuous support and encouragement we received from the Dean of the Architectural Faculty, Cengiz Giritlioğlu, and the Rector of İTÜ, Faruk Karadoğan.

I would like firstly to share with you my experience relating to space syntax, which eventually led us all to meet here. It was around the early-90s when I started to become interested in space syntax

research after reading the seminal 'Social Logic of Space'. The mathematical approach that enabled the objective examination of settlements was especially interesting to me. I was also impressed by Julienne Hanson's comparative analysis of the London plans prepared after the Great Fire, and the paper by John Peponis that examined the Greek towns. Living in Anatolia, a country endowed with architectural artefacts from very different and distinct cultures, including but not limited to Frigia, Ancient Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman periods, I wanted to examine and compare the Anatolian fortified towns using this exciting approach.

It was a lonely process for me, as at the time, there was no one around who was able to answer my many questions; it was just me working alone at my office and at my home studying the Social Logic of Space inch by inch. After an enormous amount of effort and time spent, I managed to get my first paper on space syntax, Morphological Characteristics of Anatolian Fortified Towns, published at the Environment and Planning B. I was very excited and very proud.

A short period after that publication, when I was visiting London, I went to UCL to Professor Bill Hillier's office as I wanted to meet him. Bill was at his office with my article in front of him when I got there and he was quite surprised when I introduced myself. He was obviously impressed by the fact that I published my study without getting any help from him or his colleagues. I still remember how much I enjoyed him introducing me to his colleagues at the Bartlett's Syntax Lab saying "Ayşe is the one!"

During another occasion when Bill was visiting the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, he wanted to visit Istanbul as well. They called Mine İnceoğlu, the Dean of the Architectural Faculty of İTÜ at the time. Meanwhile, I was working to decipher the computer program PESH and I was desperate to have someone to answer my questions. It was then that I got an unexpected call from Mine asking if I could be the host for our visitor Bill Hillier from UCL. I could not believe my ears. After a number of hours of observing and examining the historical urban structure of Istanbul, I invited Bill to my own house. Because of all the open syntax related books and articles spread on the table and on the floor, Bill asked me if I consciously left them lying there. It was indeed hard for me too, to believe that Bill was standing in my home. I thanked God that finally I had someone to answer my questions, and that it was Bill Hillier himself.

Later, I was invited by Jeremy Whitehand to present my examination of Istanbul's urban morphology in a temporal perspective using space syntax methodology for the fourth International Seminar of Urban Form that was held in 1997 in Birmingham. That work was eventually published in the Urban Morphology journal as the first one to have incorporated syntactic analysis. During 1999, I visited Georgia Tech for a couple of months and met with John Peponis and Jean Wineman. The seeds of our study that we will be presenting later today, a syntactic evaluation of the effects of proposed bridges on the urban macroform of Istanbul, were planted during this visit to Atlanta.

Our international cooperation also includes Japanese researchers. Since 1995, I have been working with Professor Yasushi Asami from Tokyo University on various projects, some of which include the application of space syntax methodology. The study that we conducted together, three dimensional analysis of the street network in Istanbul, is especially significant as one of the first studies that attempted to incorporate topographical variables in space syntax methodology.

İTÜ has been the main center of space syntax research in Turkey. Professor Alper Ünlü, a colleague from the Department of Architecture, has been working with space syntax at the building level. Now, we have a growing number of second-generation researchers such as Dr. Pelin Dursun, who has examined morphology of the built environment in Trabzon under the supervision of Professor Gülsün Sağlamer.

In 2003, our research group finished the very first research in Turkey, which used space syntax for a real life project. It was a project that we conducted for the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality for the transformation and regeneration of the Galata region. Dr. Engin Eyüboğlu and Dr. Özhan Ertekin were the co-investigators in this project. Space Syntax Ltd. was also involved in the project as a Consultant, and we are thankful for their support, especially that of Kayvan Karimi, who traveled to Istanbul a couple of times to contribute to our study. Arising out of this research is Özlem Özer's master thesis that examined the pedestrian preferences in the analysis of walkability in Galata. Through these projects, Turkish administrators at the Municipality came to know about space syntax methodology for the very first time.

Recently, following my appointment as one of the founding professors for the Department of Landscape Architecture, I started working with my assistants Gülşen Güler and Bahar Başer, to incorporate space syntax theory into the examination of green areas in Turkey. Gülşen's thesis that she has just completed about the effects of a third bridge on the green system of Istanbul and Bahar's short paper that will be presented during the symposium are the very first fruits of these efforts.

We also have Turkish researchers who are studying or have recently completed their doctoral studies at key universities such as UCL, Georgia Tech and University of Michigan. Dr. Yasemin İnce Güney, a graduate from University of Michigan, has been especially helpful during the organization of this symposium. With increasing numbers of space syntax researchers, I believe Turkey has become one of the significant centers of International Space Syntax Research.

In this symposium, we will be witnessing once again the ever extending influence of the theory and method of space syntax on architecture and urban design as well as other various disciplines. Since the first symposium, the international research body, both in terms of researchers working under the umbrella of space syntax, and in terms of the research agenda that is studied by these researchers, has grown with an unprecedented speed to include representatives from 27 countries and over 65 universities and other organizations, academic and professional. At the time of going to press over a month ago, 151 delegates were registered for the symposium.

This year we have received a record number of abstracts, 213 for full and 32 for short papers. Out of 245 total abstracts submitted, 167 were accepted for full and 60 for short paper sessions. After the second review, the number of papers accepted for full papers were reduced to 106 and for short papers to 28.

The next three days will be spent on listening, presenting, exchanging ideas, and deliberating on the current status of space syntax research. We will start each day with plenary sessions where internationally acclaimed keynote speakers will enlighten us about their respective expertise. Today, we will have Bill Hillier and Jeremy Whitehand for the opening session. Bill Hillier will present results from their latest technique that they developed for inclusion of metric and topo-geometric properties of large scale urban street networks. Jeremy Whitehand's presentation will provide a brief overview of the origin of

urban morphology as a field of study concerned with the urban landscape and the role of the Conzenian School within this development.

Thursday morning, David Seamon will present his study that examines ways in which a phenomenological approach might contribute to space syntax research both conceptually and empirically, while Daniel Montello's address will examine the pros and cons of the space syntax theoretical framework in relation to a comprehensive theory of environmental psychology.

The last plenary session on Friday will feature John Peponis and Michael Batty. John Peponis will present their latest modelling technique for the co-variation of different aspects of the spatial structure of cities. Mike Batty will present new results from their work in progress about generating scaling and allometric relationships for the distribution of different sizes and geometries of the built form in Greater London. The very last session on Friday will be a panel discussion chaired by Alan Penn where we will have the opportunity to reflect upon the conference together.

The plenary sessions that will bring us all together in the mornings will be continued with parallel sessions that are divided into four themed sections. The themed sections will include presentations of the recent work in areas that include but are not limited to architectural theory, urban morphology, domestic space, workplace and museums, and computer applications. This year we have more presentations that tackle challenges put forward for space syntax researchers in earlier symposia such as the issue of including metric and topographic variables into the analysis of urban areas and addressing geometry of the built form in space syntax analysis. The papers related to computer applications include agent based simulations, crowd-flow simulations and the intention to use open source applications. The number of papers interested in having a phenomenological perspective in syntactic analysis has also increased this year. Meanwhile, we also have cognitive scientists working together with architects trying to incorporate spatial factors in studies of spatial cognition and wayfinding. These are exciting developments suggesting the extending interface between space syntax and other disciplines.

The short papers will be presented at the poster session on Thursday afternoon. The posters are already in their places for you to examine them before the poster session. This year we will have a best poster selected by the delegate's votes. You will find the necessary information in your programme booklet regarding the process involved in this selection.

In addition to an array of plenary, parallel and poster sessions, we also have three important workshops, which have become a tradition of space syntax symposiums. I would like to thank Julienne Hanson, Kayvan Karimi and Alasdair Turner, all from UCL, who have graciously accepted to organize and chair these workshops. Julienne Hanson led an educational workshop for the PhD Students informing them of the challenges and rewards of doctoral education and how to make the best use of space syntax for their doctoral research. Kayvan Karimi shared with us his expertise on how space syntax can be used as a diagnostic and prognostic tool to inform the design process via examples from real life projects of different sizes and different characteristics. Alasdair Turner chaired the workshop that introduced the latest generation of software applications. This year, for the first time, the computer applications workshop will have its own proceedings edited by Alasdair himself.

We will also have a number of social events that we hope will enhance your experience in Istanbul and İTÜ. The half day city tour that took place yesterday afternoon was a guided tour of the historic peninsula and included visits to the Hippodrome, Blue Mosque and Grand Bazaar. Last night we enjoyed the Welcome Reception that took place at the central courtyard of Taşkışla, the home for the Department of Architecture at İTÜ since the 1950s.

On Thursday afternoon we will visit Istanbul Modern Museum to see Turkish modern art work. Istanbul Modern, the City's first museum of contemporary art, was converted from neglected warehouses located on the banks of the Bosphorus Strait. Designed by Tabanlıoğlu Architecture and Consulting, Istanbul Modern has received one of the 2005 Cityscape Architectural Review Awards. The Museum is the first completed section of the important GalataPort project that aims to add a new value to the region. The Galataport project also received the 2005 Cityscape Award. Lastly, Friday night we will end the four day marathon with the Conference Dinner that will take place as a cruising Bosphorus Tour.

I wish to express my deep gratitude to everyone whose contribution will have made it possible for us to enjoy this symposium. I especially would like to thank to Dr. Engin Eyüboğlu, Dr. Özhan Ertekin and Dr. Yasemin İnce Güney for all their hard work. Engin has been the person for me to whom I asked each and every question relating to the organization of the symposium. Özhan and Yasemin spent hours of work to put the proceedings together. Bahar Başer and Özlem Özer acted as the conference secretariat and they were the faces of the symposium. I also would like to thank Pelin Dursun, H. Serdar Kaya, Gülşen Güler and Meltem Erdem for their valuable contributions that have helped to make this symposium a success. I also wish to mention the support that I have received from my husband Murat Kubat and my daughter Çağla Kubat.

A number of institutions have offered us financial and other kind of substantial, material support. I wish to thank to all these institutions for their generous contributions. In particular, I would like to mention the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

I would like to finish my welcome address with a word of thanks and appreciation to each and every one of you who has worked so hard to be here today. As Julienne said years ago, a symposium is only as good as its participants, and I am proud to be part of this international body of researchers who have come together under the umbrella of space syntax. I wish you all the best for the next three days and for your future endeavors.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Ayşe Sema KUBAT,  
Symposium Chairwoman