Integrating Urban and Natural Landscapes: Reimagining the Riverside Urbanity through Porsuk River of Eskişehir

Rivers have historically played a fundamental role in shaping human settlements, particularly in the context of agriculture, transportation and industrialization. However, with rapid urban and population growth, many river systems, including Porsuk River in Eskişehir, have faced environmental degradation. In the context of urban sprawl, Eskişehir's historical and spatial bond with the Porsuk River was strained, and the river came to be seen as a backdrop to the city, rather than an integral, active and public component of urban life. On the other hand, recent urban design interventions have sought to reintroduce the river into the city's fabric, focusing on ecological regeneration, sustainable water resource management, and spatial integration of the riverscape into the urban fabric. This study aims to explore the "riverside urbanity" concept, proposing alternative urban development models based on the integration of the Porsuk River and Eskişehir's urban settlement. The paper will first outline a theoretical framework interwoven with the historical and spatial relationship between rivers and cities, synthesizing literature from urban design, ecological regeneration and spatial integration. It will then detail the study's methodological frame, which includes qualitative spatial analysis, case study evaluation, and urban modeling, focusing on Eskişehir as a suitable and unique example due to its historical reliance on the river and contemporary urban challenges. These dual aspects provide an exceptional opportunity to examine how human-made and natural environments can be integrated to reinvigorate public spaces and promote sustainable and balanced urban development. The research will also contribute new insights to the literature by developing an innovative framework for integrating rivers into urban environments within the context of urban design. Through the Eskişehir case, this study provides a real-world example of how rivers can be treated not as passive geographical but as dynamic and active elements of cities. By offering alternative models based on ecological regeneration, spatial integration, and social equity, the study aims to present new pathways for future urban development that integrate natural ecosystems and foster cohesive cities. Therefore, the paper will contribute to the discourse on integration, by providing a thorough examination of the ways in which urban and natural systems can be reconnected to create a unifying, forward-thinking approach to urban design.

Keywords:

riverside urbanity, urban design, regeneration

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