

## URBAN IDENTITY IN THE AGE OF THE MOBILE PHONE

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**Keywords:** mobile phone; urban identity; meeting places; cognitive maps.

1. This paper is developed around on the basic findings of Şentürk (2010).

### INTRODUCTION

This essay is a summary of an extended survey conducted in Ankara, Turkey (1). It shows how wireless communication technologies, especially the mobile phone, have contributed to the development of an urban identity by enhancing the mental structuring of coherent urban images. The decision to conduct the survey was motivated by the ongoing debate into the loss of identity in general and urban identity in particular. Communication, of course, is one of the main components of identity in any sense, and it is this issue that most of the debates revolve around. One of the main arguments put forward is that transformations in modes of communication hinder the processes of socialization and impede the development of identity (Czarnowsky, 1978). An emphasis on the individualization and personalization of modes of communication leads to the basic argument that: the more the modes of communication become personalized, the greater the loss of interaction and socialization. Here, socialization, which also includes face-to-face interactions, stands as a prerequisite for urban identity; and from this perspective one can easily assume that the advent of wireless communication technologies will further degrade social life and thus identity.

Taking this assumption as a starting point, the survey searched for clues that would indicate such degradation. The main emphasis was on meeting places, which are deemed necessary for any kind of interpersonal relation, and thus socialization, to begin. It was expected that a decrease would be observed in the use of such urban components as nodes, landmarks and paths, which help develop an urban image, as meeting places. Such a finding would first, support the acknowledged, classical definition of urban identity; and second, show the level of atrophy. However, the survey yielded some surprising results, with the preliminary study indicating that mobile phone use may actually support behavioral patterns that boost the

urban image; and the subsequent extensive survey proving that it actually enhances it.

As much as space allows, the following text will give an idea of the theoretical background of this survey and its findings, keeping in mind that the issues and arguments in the body of the theory are open to debate.

### WHAT IS URBAN IDENTITY?

Urban identity, one of the holy grails of recent decades, has come under scrutiny for a number of reasons, with the most significant being its so-called atrophy. What makes up urban identity is of course a complicated issue in which one can easily challenge the elucidation of its components. Here, the aim is not to review or question how different scholars have understood and explained urban identity. Instead, we can simply start by relating urban identity to an amalgam of different types of communication, and its subsequent withering away in the absence of some or all of these types.

Webber (1963) suggested that new communication technologies would determine the future of society; that new technologies of the era would develop a sense of sophisticated and harmonious community by increasing the level, amount and speed of interactions and the flow of information, which also meant communications that were independent of real spaces and places. On the other hand, Goffman (1963, 1967, 1971) showed how and why proximity and public spaces are important in the structuring of a community. Development of the self and the society, he deemed, required face-to-face interactions, which, by definition, not only necessitate the proximity of individuals, but also the milieu, particularly the public spaces in which they can occur. Yet, the confinement of the individual to a home(base) in order to use new means of communication, coupled with the encroachment of the private realm into the public domain, inevitably resulted in a loss of meaning once attributed to the city and its social life (Sennett, 1974; Barlas, 2006).

Now that the communication technologies are mobile and even more personalized, one may think further that social life and the meanings attached to any kind of identity will totally disappear into oblivion. The reason for this being the reduction of inter-personal and social behavior to that of the individual, which in turn does not necessarily require the personal involvement of second parties and a public space. This whole train of thought may be nothing but speculation if one cannot provide a way of gauging just how much disarray urban identity is in. To achieve this end, a simplified schema exhibiting how urban identity comes into being will be sufficient (**Figure 1**). This is, of course, by no means an exhaustive schema, and some of its components, and perhaps the entire structuring, are open to question. However it may still be deemed plausible when one reviews the references to its components. In the first category of components one can easily observe the main tenets of the 1960s - nodes, paths etc., are terms that were raised by Lynch (1960), while serial vision, sudden jerk etc., were coined by Cullen (1961); and beginning, end, spine, heart etc., from a combination of scholars, including Rykwert (1982). All groups of components in this category can be relevant when used independently, or one may bring these various strands together to promote the identification of the category.

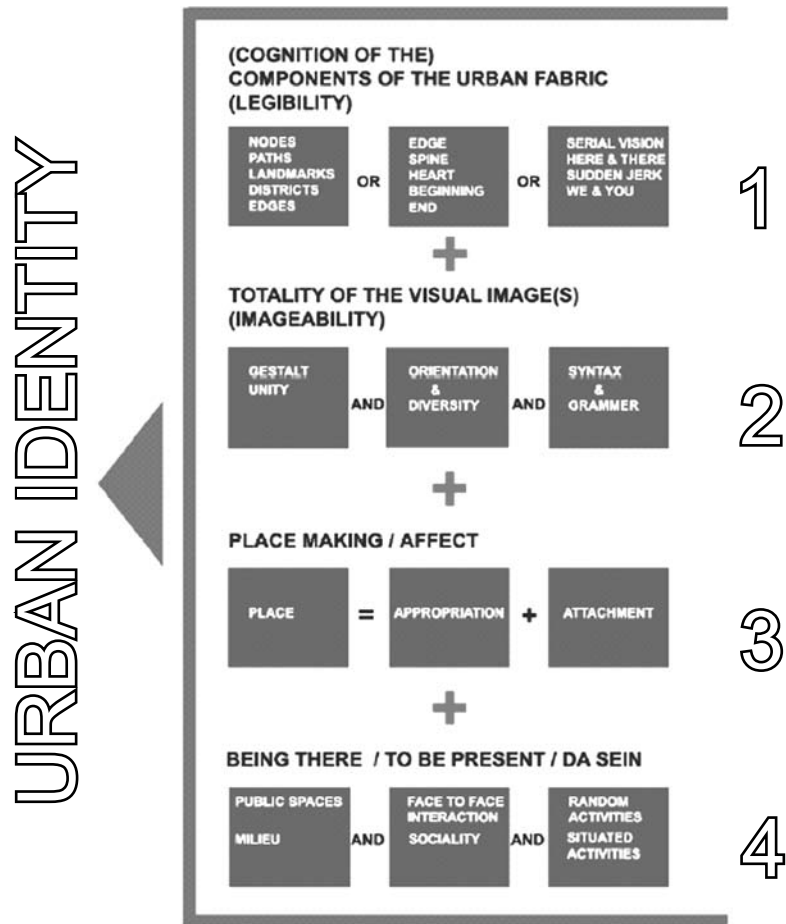
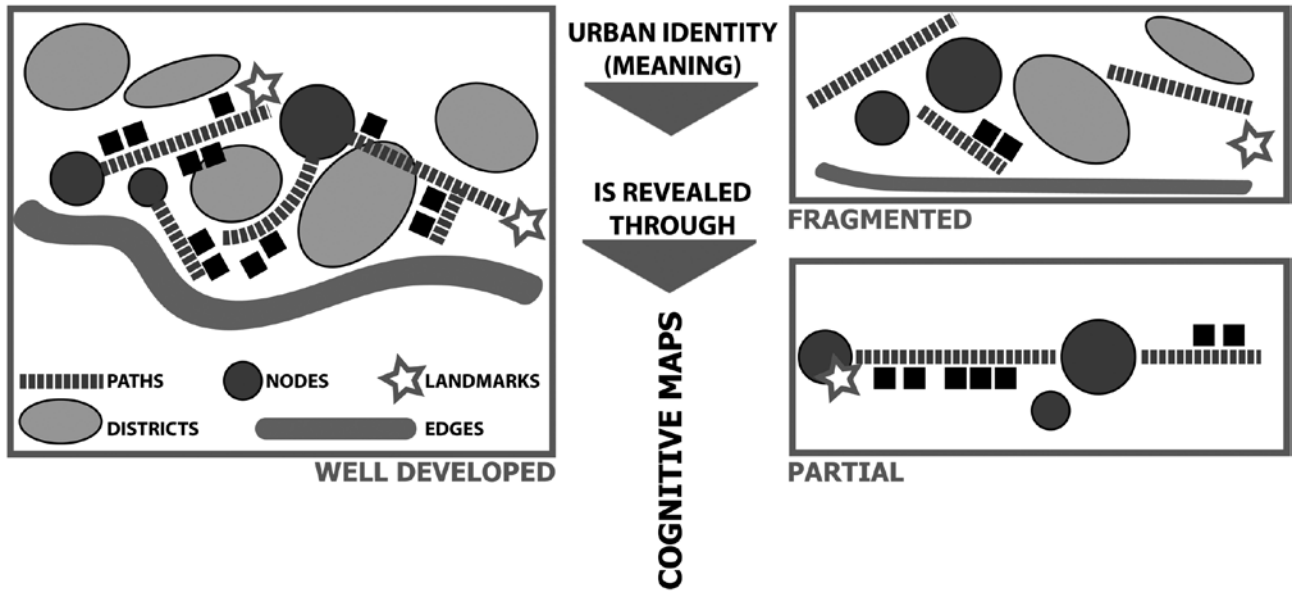


Figure 1. Components of urban identity.

While Gestalt Psychology forms the basis of the second category, the terms order and diversity may be borrowed from Lozano (1990) and syntax and grammar from Alexander (1977). One can relate place making, the subject matter of the third category, to the findings of environmental psychology (see Gifford, 1987), which is a field of interest that also covers processes pertaining to the space-place continuum.

The fourth category, in which Erving Goffman exists as a prominent figure, can be considered as the crux of the whole process of arriving at an urban identity. The experience and the sharing of the experience of space, particularly public space, with others not only endows individuals with personal images of the environment, but also helps to create consensus about the image, and thus the identity.

It is necessary to show how urban identity manifests itself in the individual or social psyches. To this end, cognitive mapping can be considered as an appropriate and relevant tool in that it provides a generalized conceptualization of images, and maps can be assumed to reflect a certain kind of meaning attached to the environment. Although only physical images, they are more than mere simple, physical reflections of the environment. Second, experience molds and social interactions modify these maps. In summary, cognitive maps can be perfect analytical tools for the forming of an opinion of urban identity.



**Figure 2.** Schematic representation of cognitive Maps (A well-developed urban identity is manifested in a well-developed cognitive map).

It is likely that Lynch (1960) was also attempting to understand the levels of urban identity when he first dealt with cognitive maps, yet his seminal work only revealed the urban components. This is evident from his later studies (Lynch, 1987), in which he painstakingly attempts to theorize the issue identity.

Nevertheless, the five urban components, being nodes, landmarks, edges, districts and paths, yield a great deal of explanation when combined with other approaches. Here, unity and wholeness are the major determining factors, in accordance with the formal laws of Gestalt Psychology. Thus, any cognitive map that displays the five components in a certain unity can be described as a well-developed cognitive map, in that it reflects an intact urban identity (Figure 2). In other words, in a well-developed cognitive map, not only are the components separately legible, but the map as a whole reveals a unique image. When, however, the components do not exhibit any kind of formal organization linking one component with another, or if only a portion of the environment is clearly legible, then this can only be considered as a fragmented or partial cognitive map, respectively.

One simple condition in developing a cognitive map is that it requires the presence of the individual or any other social group in the environment, and for that matter in public space. Borrowing from Goffman (1963), the predetermined scenario of presence is a situated activity, whereas uncalculated, undetermined types of presence can be defined as a random activity (Figure 1). Whatever the type of the activity, there is a purposefulness in being in the public, and that is socialization (Barlas, 2006).

Random or situated activities in a public space mostly depend on or end with some sort of meeting. While nodes and landmarks are more significant in terms of meetings, edges and districts may nevertheless serve the same purpose. Paths, on the other hand, are multi-functional in this sense, in that they enhance the bond between the other four categories, and yet can easily serve as meeting places. The focus on meeting places is rather important, because a meeting is the origin of any kind of interpersonal

relation, and is the basis of socialization. Moreover, these places embody recognizable physical and spatial qualities, convey a sense of safety, are usually in easy reach, and offer a form of shelter, assuring a comfortable milieu for waiting.

At this point, it should be clear to the reader that virtual meeting places are discarded, in that they only provide situated activities (Barlas and Çalışkan, 2006) in a limited scenario, hindering the free access of the public.

After this summary of the structuring of processes related to urban identity, it becomes easy to draw a conclusion about the impacts of communication technologies. Webber (1963) only mentioned the ordinary telephone, television, and at the most the facsimile, and so the development of personal computers, and later the internet, must have caused him some bewilderment, as this was likely more than he predicted. However, instead of supporting social life, these technologies, particularly the television, rather had adverse affects, causing a shift of social life from the public space to indoors. The personalization of communication technologies went further with the advent of the mobile phone, which developed a world of its own. This, one may easily suspect, will impinge more on social life, breaking an individual's bonds with others in the public space. The mobile phone allows the flow of information in an unprecedented way, and even works as a personal computer with visual options. As a result, the act of meeting may become unnecessary for countless types of interpersonal and face-to-face interactions.

### THE PRELIMINARY SURVEY

With these in mind, in early 2009, a simple preliminary cognitive mapping research was conducted, in which an insignificant number of participants (only 30) from different age groups were asked to draw images of the contemporary centre of Ankara: Kızılay (**Figure 3, 4**).

Accordingly, the prominent landmarks of the centre were deemed to be the YKM Store (**Figure 5**), the GİMA Building (aka Emek İşhanı Skyscraper) (**Figure 6**) and the Güven Monument in Güvenpark (**Figure 7**). As expected, the Kızılay junction, where the Atatürk and Gazi Mustafa Kemal Boulevards cross, was considered the primary node, with Atatürk Boulevard taking precedence.

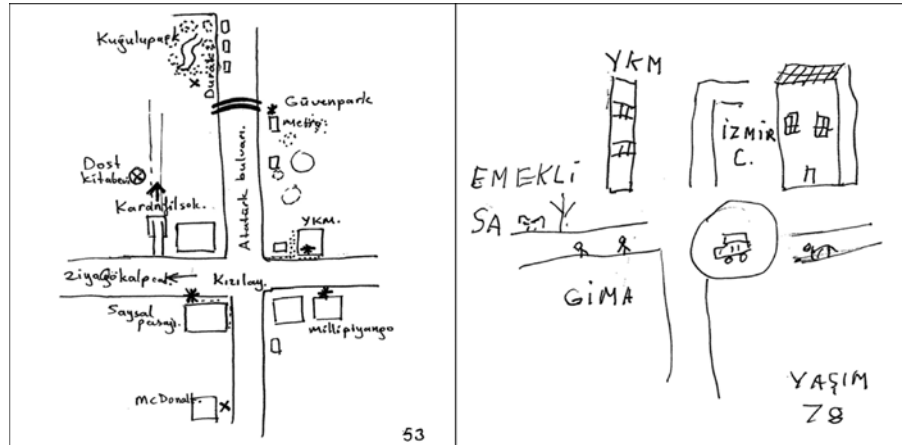
Other than these landmarks, the respondents depicted the bus stops in Güvenpark (just behind the monument, **Figure 7**), Karanfil Street and the Milli Piyango Building in their maps. There is a certain level of correlation between these landmarks and the meeting habits in Ankara, in that they are all well-known, common and legible meeting points.

Porteous (1977) states that such landmarks have other important functions, among which one can count way finding, which is actually the essence of orientation. The perceived marker of the environment shapes movement patterns, while also creating an image in the memory that is constructed during the experience. Furthermore, the preliminary survey showed that most of the respondents began by drawing these landmarks, and then linked other components to them. In other words, landmarks also helped the depictees of the maps to find their way on paper, as if somebody had asked them to go somewhere in the centre of the city. Sack (1980) suggests that this process is like imagining the route to a specific point in the city after being asked an address as if you never heard the question

**Figure 3.** Cognitive maps of the city centre in Ankara by a 19-year-old (left) and a 26-year-old (right).



**Figure 4.** Cognitive maps of the city centre in Ankara by a 53-year-old (left) and a 78-year-old (right).



**Figure 5.** The YKM building (Personal archive of Meltem Şentürk).

**Figure 6.** The GİMA building (Personal archive of Meltem Şentürk).

**Figure 7.** Güven monument (Personal archive of Meltem Şentürk).

before. Therefore, the assignment of a meeting place largely depends on a cognitive map. In accordance with Porteous (1977, 130), individual differences in the creation of such a map may be due to differences in gender, age, class and value systems. However, the fact that we can still obtain salient physical features with points of resemblance indicates the presence of a public urban image. Thus, while not being furnished with fragmented cognitive maps by the respondents, we had, at the very least, partial maps.

Again, in the second phase of the preliminary survey, we asked the participants to mark their favorite meeting places on the city map, this time



both in Kızılay and in a district centre to its south, Kavaklıdere (**Figure 8**). The maps that were handed out were supplemented with three directions to the respondents:

1. Mark your choice of meeting places or list them below, considering the time before you started using mobile phones.
2. Mark your choice of meeting places or list them below, considering the time after you started using mobile phones.
3. Do you usually change your decision for the place or time of meetings?

Our expectation was that we would see the landmarks depicted above as favored meeting places. While the marks related to the period before the use of mobile phone were indicative of the significant landmarks and nodes (**Table 1, Figure 9**), it drastically changed for the period after the advent of mobile phone use. It was seen that meeting places were scattered along the paths, rather than coinciding with specific, well-known landmark buildings and spaces (**Figure 10**).

The preliminary survey indicated that there had been a shift in meeting places within the same area in the past 10 to 15 years. There could be two reasons for this: 1) transformations in behavioral patterns due to mobile phone use, or 2) the transformation of the physical environment. In either case, the common landmarks and nodes that once functioned as meeting places for everyone appeared to have become partially defunct in this sense.

On the other hand, the cognitive maps revealed significant and dominant reference points in the central locations to which the respondents linked other urban elements. This was an unexpected outcome. The maps were at least partial if not fragmented, and there was a sensible structuring of the unity of the urban image. However, these visual landmarks did not match with the respondents' actual meeting places. On the one hand, we had urban images that were relatively intact, while on the other hand, these images did not seem to have been a result of actual use of the components per se. Meeting places were more in number when compared with the common landmarks and nodes of the pre-mobile era. They also had less physical clarity in terms of the well-known structures or spaces, and there was a significant dispersal in their locations. This was something out of the ordinary, providing a contrary argument to what the theory maintains. The meeting points appear to have turned into meeting paths (**Figure 11, 12**).

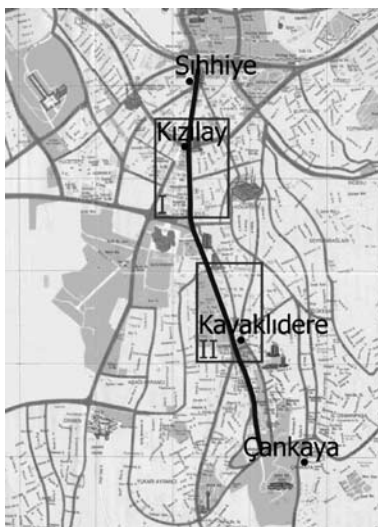
One plausible reason for this could be the ease in determining a meeting point when given access to a mobile phone, which provides a continuous opportunity to determine a meeting point, even when the user is on the move. For example, a meeting scenario before the mobile phone era might have been as follows:

**Mr. A.** (on an ordinary phone, or in a previous meeting): Mrs. M! How about meeting on Saturday?

**Mrs. M.:** That will be fine. Where and at what time?

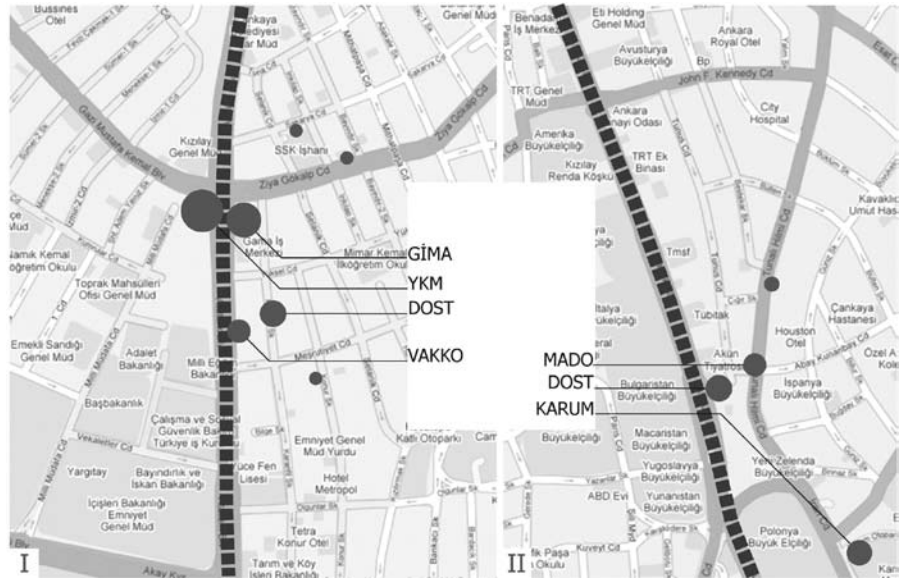
**Mr. A.:** In front of the YKM building, at 12:30.

This scenario includes a specific place and time, with both parties already aware of the location of the meeting point. A possible scenario in the mobile phone era can be like this:

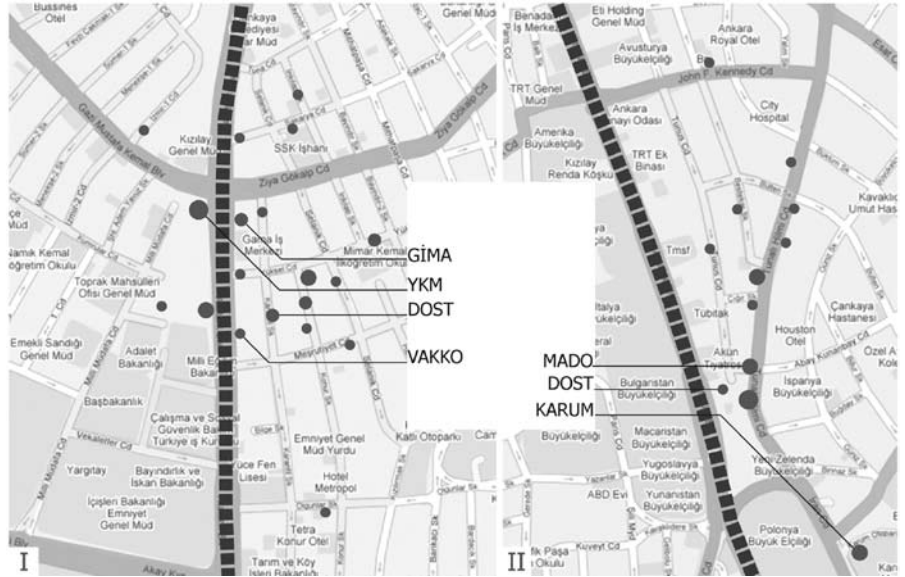


**Figure 8.** Preliminary survey, second phase areas. Source: Base map from Googlemaps.com.

**Figure 9.** Preliminary survey second phase. Markings of meeting places before mobile phone use. Radii denote frequency. Left: Kızılay Centre, Right: Kavaklıdere District Centre (Base map from Googlemaps.com.).



**Figure 10.** Preliminary survey second phase; Markings of meeting places after mobile phone use. Radii denote frequency. Left: Kızılay Centre, Right: Kavaklıdere District Centre (Base map from Googlemaps.com.).



Public Places Marked as Meeting Points Before Mobile Phone Use	Number of Marks
Entrance to YKM Building	22
Entrance to GİMA Shopping Centre	16
Entrance to DOST Bookstore (on Karanfil Street)	13
Front of VAKKO Building (Kimlik Store)	8
Entrance to DOST Bookstore (on Konur Street)	3
Front of MADO Café	2
Front of SSK Building	2
Kavaklıdere DOST Bookstore	13
Open space in front of KARUM Shopping Mall	12
Entrance to MADO Café in Kavaklıdere District	10
Front of Kavaklıdere Movie Theater.	4

**Table 1.** Results of the Preliminary Survey, 2nd Phase (Some of these points are real landmarks in the visual sense, such as YKM, GİMA, SSK and KARUM, whereas, in time, others have attained a nodal quality due to their location; includes frequencies for both Kızılay and Kavaklıdere Districts).

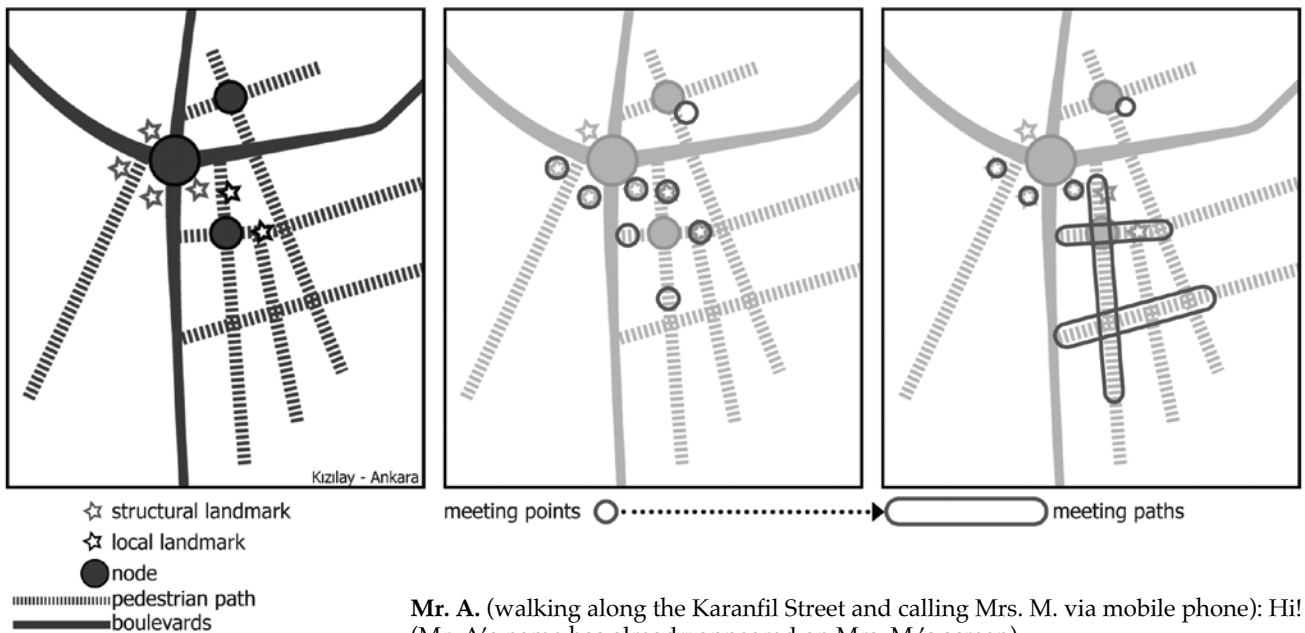




**Figure 11.** Significant urban elements, meeting points and meeting paths (Personal archive of Meltem Şentürk).



**Figure 12.** Proximity of meeting places, significant elements of the city and the transformation of meeting places.



**Mr. A.** (walking along the Karanfil Street and calling Mrs. M. via mobile phone): Hi! (Mr. A's name has already appeared on Mrs. M.'s screen).

**Mrs. M.:** Hi A.! How are you?

**Mr. A.:** Fine, thanks. I would like to meet with you. Do you have time?

**Mrs. M.:** Yes. Where are you right now?

**Mr. A.:** I am on Karanfil Street. You?

**Mrs. M.:** Nearby. Where exactly are you?

**Mr. A.:** Hmm! I don't know. Wait! I am in front of a stationary shop called 'The Copy House,' somewhere, in the middle of Karanfil Street. Do you know the place?

**Mrs. M.:** No, but I may be approaching it now. There is a kebab-house to my left, a barber's shop.... Oh! I see the stationary shop, and where are you? Wait! I can see you.

**Call ends.**

We can increase the number of such scenarios in which there is neither fixed place nor time, and the meeting occurs by chance. During this process, those who meet experience various other urban components, and most probably add these to their cognitive maps. There can be other scenarios in which both parties are mobile, as was witnessed while unobtrusively video recording people using their mobile phones. Moreover, the number of indoor meeting places also seemed to increase with the use of the mobile phone.

It needs to be said that these findings were very speculative, making it too early to jump to conclusions when connecting the coherency of cognitive maps or the transformation of meeting places to the presence of the mobile phone. First, the number of participants in the preliminary survey was only thirty, which is not significant. Second, the ongoing physical changes in the central locations may have affected behavioral patterns, such as the increase in the number of meeting places. Yet, these findings also fitted what others have already said. Townsend (2000) suggested that the mobile phone and other personalized tools of communication would change the way people see themselves and the world to such an extent that this psychic adaptation would lead to the construction of another kind of world.

#### THE EXTENDED SURVEY

In 2009 and 2010 another survey was prepared and carried out, this time including 630 participants from different age groups and backgrounds. The structure of the analysis was similar to that of the preliminary survey, making a before and after analysis of behavioral patterns in terms of meeting places. On this occasion, however, the respondents were not asked to produce cognitive maps. The rule in choosing the participants stemmed from their duration of residence in Ankara, which had to be sufficiently long to cover the pre-mobile phone era. Our baseline for this was at least 10 years.

Various districts in Ankara, such as Yenimahalle, Ümitköy, Bahçelievler and Yaşamkent, were selected for the conducting of the survey questionnaire so as to enrich the social-cultural basis of data; however the Kızılay and Kavaklıdere central locations were again the focus of attention. In all locations, individuals were approached directly on a random basis.

It was also important to add some data on the respondents, such as on State employees, whom we accepted as having routine lifestyles when compared to others that spend more time in the urban public area. In this way, the intention was to reduce the bias that may emerge from the differences in time that people spend in public spaces. Employees of the General Directorate of Turkish Coal Enterprises were thus included in the survey.

Also subjected to the questionnaire were 70 representatives from the student body of the Middle East Technical University to provide information on the younger age groups. This comprised a portion of the 20-25-year-old age group.

The questionnaire was made available on the internet, through which we received many responses. We used 322 of these to help cover an age group of 26 and above. Given that age is a determining factor in the construction of mental images, this elaboration in the age groups was rather important (**Table 2**).

Age Groups	# of Resp.
<19 & 19	125
20-25	150
26-30	135
31-39	120
40 & 40>	100

**Table 2.** Number of Respondents in Age Groups in the Extended Survey.

While a detailed account of data verification method will not be given here, however it included a mean value analysis of age groups, gender, duration of residence and duration of mobile phone use. The criteria for verification were as follows:

- A balanced distribution of respondents according to age group to ensure an analysis without bias.
- A balanced distribution of the number of male and female respondents, both as an aggregate and in the age groups, to help avoid fluctuations that might arise from gender differences.
- Duration of residence should be sufficiently long to enable the formation of images or familiarity with locations in the urban area (at least 10 years).
- Time span in using mobile phones should be suitably long to allow the analysis of the change in behavioral patterns (at least 5 years).

Through a frequency analysis it was observed that the data set complied with our criteria and fell within the accepted mean value ranges. The next step was to evaluate the results and mark the responses on a city map in order to understand the differences pertaining to before and after mobile phone use. First considering the entire Ankara urban area, and then the central locations, the responses were tabulated and mapped.

## FINDINGS

From an analysis of the entire Ankara (**Table 3; Figure 13, 14**) a shift can be observed from the exterior to interior spaces in terms of meeting places, with districts remaining the same, and cafés, pubs and restaurants being dominant as meeting points. Shopping malls are also significant in this respect.

A shift was also noted from physically significant spots to regular insignificant spaces and structures. For instance, a considerable amount of respondents did not specify a fixed spot, but rather an entire park, street or avenue. Street corners, and over and underpasses come next on the list in terms of popularity. Moreover, there is evidence to show that meeting places are now places of activity as well, thereby reducing the time-space friction. In the mobile phone era, it can be deduced that meeting places are no longer required, or meeting places actually refer to places of activity.

Meeting points, before the advent of the mobile phone, were concentrated in the Kızılay central district; and not surprisingly could be found close to landmark structures or predominant nodes that were well known by the denizens of the city. However, the mobile phone era has brought about somewhat of a dispersion of meeting points. People are less likely to use the central locations as before; while interior spaces, away from the centre, have seen an increase in this regard.

MEETING PLACES BEFORE AND AFTER MOBILE PHONE PRACTICES IN ANKARA PROPER (number of counts)					
	Bef.	Aft.		Bef.	Aft.
Metro Station: Tandoğan	0	3	Total Gas Station on Tunus Street	0	4
Metro Station: AŞTI	5	0	Belpa/Bahçelievler	0	2
Metro Station: Demirtepe	0	3	Bulka Café/Bahçelievler	12	4
Metro Station: Bahçelievler	15	12	Bit Pazarı Store on Seventh Street	12	3
Metro Station: Beşevler	26	17	BP Gas Station on Seventh Street	34 ▼	10
Metro Station: Dikimevi	0	1	Maltepe Mosque	8	0
Metro Station: Batıkent	2 ▲	25	Bilkent Sports Centre	0	3
Metro Station: Kurtuluş	0	2	Minasera Shopping mall	0	8
Keçiören Municipality Building	0	2	Amarillo Grill Restaurant	0	1
Migros Shopping Centre/Keçiören	0	4	Old Mariner Pub	0	3
Antares Shopping Mall	0 ▲	36	Cafés on Fourth Str./Bahçelievler	0 ▲	26
Real Shopping Mall/Bilkent	1	5	Pubs and Cafés on Iran Avenue	0	4
On Seventh Street/Bahçelievler	2 ▲	73	National Library	5	2
Cepa Shopping Mall	9 ▲	88	Galleria Shopping Mall	0 ▲	18
Ankamall Shopping Mall	28 ▲	204	Hobby Café/Bahçelievler	22 ▼	9
Pubs on Bestekar Street	0	12	Starbucks on Köroğlu Avenue	0	6
Ankuva Shopping Mall	0	21	Leman Café/Beşevler	0	11
Bilkent	0	3	Rollhouse Bowling Hall	0	6
Arcadium	0 ▲	38	Liva Patisserie/Çukurambar	0	12
Gordion	0	17	Manhattan Pub/Çankaya	2	13
Monopoli Café/Bahçelievler	1	6	Gima on Seventh Street (old)	45 ▼	1
Entry to Dikmen Valley Park	0	4	Gimsa Shopping Centre/Batıkent	0	14
Altınpark	0	5	Anılar Patisserie/Emek	5	0
Keçiören Waterfall Park	0	3	G.D. of Turkish Coal Enterprises	14	10
Armada Shopping Mall	5 ▲	112	Abdi İpekçi Park/Sihhiye	39	13
Starbucks/Bahçelievler	1	6	Cinema Kerem/Demirtepe	16 ▼	0
Burger King/Bahçelievler	13	8	In front of Banks/Seventh Str.	2	11
Tansaş Shopping Centre/100. Yıl	0	11	Cinema Ulus/Sihhiye	7	0
Bazaar/100. Yıl	0 ▲	15	Cinema Gölbaşı/Maltepe	5	0
On Güvenlik Street/Aşağı Ayrancı	0	4	Bonapetit Restaurant	4	0
Overall Pub	0	3	Funda Patisserie/Kavaklıdere	5	0
Best Music Store/Bahçelievler	4	0	Başkent Teachers' Assoc./Beşevler	11	2
Atakule Shopping Mall	32 ▼	6	Bilken Un. Bus Stop on Tunus Str.	8	0
Courthouse/Sihhiye	13	22	Piyano Patisserie/Yenimahalle	14	6
Panora Shopping Mall	2	45	Old Bus Station/Tandoğan	6	0
Optimum Outlet Centre	0	12	Cafés on Seventh Street	4 ▲	36
Last Stop Pub/Bahçelievler	0	16	Palet Patisserie/ORAN	0	3
Atatürk Monument/Ulus	87 ▼	23	Liva Patisserie/Ümitköy	0	2
Puzzle Café/Bahçelievler	0	8	Bazaar/Sihhiye	0	4
McDonald's/Bahçelievler	6	17	İş Bank on Eighth Avenue	0	8
Gençlik Park	14	6	Taşfırın Restaurant/Batıkent	0	2
Atatürk Orman Çiftliği	0	4	Serender Patisserie/Bahçelievler	2	6
Cafés on Third Street/Bahçelievler	0	4	Yenimahalle Municipality Bldg.	3	1
Mesa Plaza	0	9	Paşabahçe on Tunalı Hilmi Avenue	0	3
Metro Shopping Centre/Batıkent	0	12	Makromarket Shopping Centre	0	6
Park Street/Çayyolu	0 ▲	29	Seda Patisserie/Bahçelievler	0	7
Pubs on Park Street	0 ▲	15	Acity Shopping Mall	0	4
Tansaş Shopping Centre	0	9	Skor Café/Maltepe	0	3
Theater in Çayyolu	0	2			

**Table 3.** Meeting places before and after the advent of the mobile phone in Ankara Proper. (Highlighted locations show drastic decreases or increases, as well as indicating some open spaces).

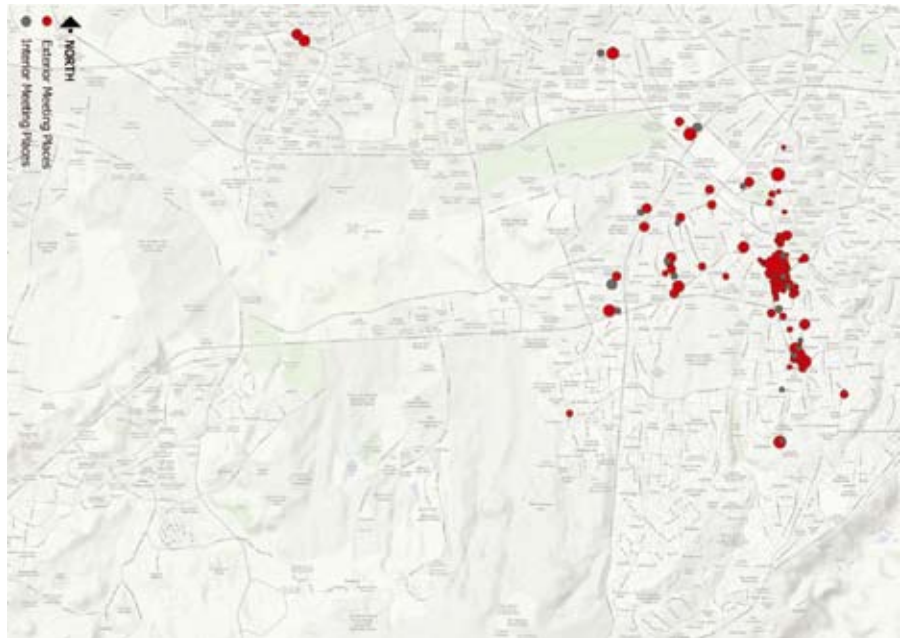
Central locations exhibit similar findings (**Table 4, Figure 15, 16**). Kızılay and some parts of the Çankaya districts, including Tunalı Hilmi Street, which are known as popular places of pedestrian activity have become attractive in terms of meeting places. The main meeting points are still in use, but their popularity has dropped dramatically, and the new meeting places that have emerged do not have eye-catching features. It is hard to describe bus stops, overpasses, street corners or entries to streets as landmarks, and their nodal qualities also seem to be somewhat haphazard.

MEETING PLACES BEFORE AND AFTER MOBILE PHONE PRACTICES IN CENTRAL LOCATIONS IN ANKARA (number of counts)					
	Bef.		Aft.		
				Bef.	Aft.
YKM Store	245 ▼		118	French Cultural Association (old)	14 ▼ 0
GİMA	149 ▼		56	Çarşı Store	37 6
Bus Stops in Güven Park	28 ▲		87	Park Bravo Store	1 9
Dost Bookstore on Karanfil Str.	144 ▼		103	Pizzarella Restaurant	6 0
Dost Bookstore on Konur Str.	43		32	Happy Days Café	12 1
Kimlik Store (old VAKKO Store)	110 ▼		29	Sculpture on Sakarya Street	14 2
Ziraat Bank Skyscraper	44 ▼		8	Güven Monument	26 ▼ 3
McDonalds on Atatürk Boulevard	39		25	Onur Office Block	7 3
Soysal Office Block	45 ▼		15	Güral Porcelain on Sakarya Str	5 0
İmge Bookstore	18		6	Alp Billuriye	14 6
Post Office (PTT)	66 ▼		11	Entry to Olgunlar Str.	11 24
Overpass to Güvenpark	25		9	Kocabeyoğlu Passage	9 8
SSK Office Block	36		9	Güvenpark Florists	2 1
Entry to Yüksel Street.	29		15	Kök Passage	1 3
Güvenpark	15 ▲		68	Leman Café	1 18
Overpass to İzmir Street.	20		5	Moda Shopping Centre on İzmir Str.	1 14
Humna Rights Sculpture	26		3	On Meşrutiyet Street	0 ▲ 36
Metro Station: Milli Müdafaa Str.	1		0	Entry to Meşrutiyet Street	6 0
Metro Station: Soysal Office Block	6		5	German Cultural Association	9 2
Metro Station: Yüksel Str.	5 ▲		41	Fantasyland	1 0
Metro Station: Karanfil Str.	9 ▲		49	Polo Store	6 0
Metro Station: Güvenpark	0 ▲		29	Sihhiye Overpass	2 26
Metro Station: Gama	0		8	Akman Café	2 7
Yapı Kredi Bank	2		5	Bus Stops on Atatürk Boulevard	2 ▲ 27
Chamber of Architects	6		0	Cinema/Theater Akün	1 3
Tenedos Café	18		12	Cinema Metropol	11 2
Metro Station: YKM	3		5	Overpass at Bakanlıklar	1 0
Metro Station: Sakarya	4 ▲		32	Corner of Kumrular Str.	2 4
Metro Station: Kolej	4		6	Cinema Batı	4 0
Ankara Univ. Campus/Cebeci	3		0	Ona On Café on Konur Street	2 0
Begendik Shopping Mall	3 ▲		38	Café Sting	1 0
Mimar Kemal High School/Kocatepe	1		0	Emek Office Block	1 0
TED College (old)	5		4	Net Picknick Pub	1 1
Mülkiyeliler Café	18		15	19 <sup>th</sup> May Stadium	1 0
Zara Store	9		2	Atatürk Sports Hall	1 0
On İzmir Street	1 ▲		32	Divan Patisserie	3 2
Hekimler Union on İzmir Street	0		1	Picknick Restaurant on Sakarya Str.	2 0
Florists on Sakarya Str.	8		24	Deniz Café on İzmir Street	2 0
Turhan-Bookstore	16		3	Uzungil Pub on sakarya Street	1 0
Tivoli in Gama Office Block	6		0	Hosta-Restaurant on Sakarya Street	1 2
Set Café	4		1	Cinema Kızılırmak	4 3
Corvus pub	0		13	Bus Stops on Necatibey Street	2 2
Sakal Café	0		12	Turkish Grand National Ass. Park	6 0
Circop on Karanfil Street	0		2	Akay Junction	0 14
Overpass on Mithatpaşa Street	0		7	Özsüt Café/ Kızılay	0 10
Çıtır Simit Café	0		5	Kumsal Café Sakarya	0 1
Bus Stops next to Kuşlupark	17		4	Ekin Theater on Menekşe Str.	0 1
Bilim-Bookstore on Selanik Street	1		2	Down Café	0 3

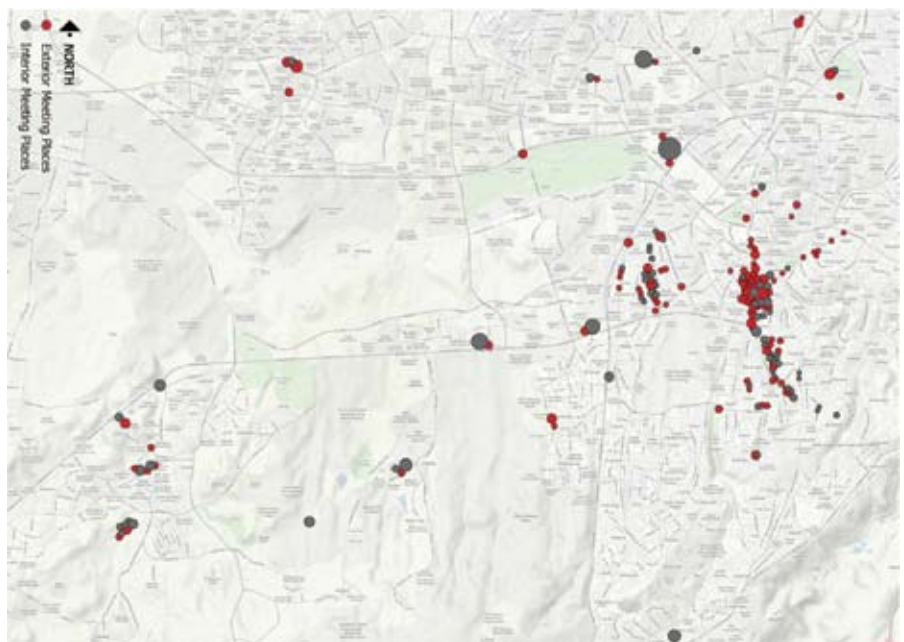
**Table 4.** Meeting places before and after the advent of the mobile phone in central locations in Ankara. (Highlighted locations show drastic decreases or increases, as well as indicating some open spaces).

MEETING PLACES BEFORE AND AFTER MOBILE PHONE PRACTICES IN CENTRAL LOCATIONS IN ANKARA (continued)						
(number of counts)						
	Bef.		Aft.			
Cafés on Karanfil Street	1	▲	37	Mısır Café	4	7
Flamingo Patisserie on Selanik Str.	1		0	Anywhere on Yüksel Street	0	▲
Denizati Patisserie on Sakarya Street	1		0	School on Yüksel Street	0	6
Ekin Café on Sakarya Street	1		0	Aba Picknick Restaurant	0	1
Blues Pub	1		0	Nefes Pub	0	2
Ülküalan Passage	13		0	Cafés on Konur Street	0	10
Papyon Burger on İzmir Street	2		0	Sakarya Square	0	5
Pond in Güvenpark	11		8	Atatürk Kültür Evi Café	0	1
Mum Café on Selanik Str.	0		3	Ormancı Café-Pub	0	1
Nedjima Pub	0		2	Sakarya Inn Bistro	0	1
Burger King	16		10	Çağ Hospital	0	1
Limon Bazaar	0		3	Kuğulupark	12	▲
Bus Stops in front of Vakko Store	2		12	Kıtır Pub	5	12
Orta Dünya Café	6		3	Mado Patisserie-Café/ Kavaklıdere	11	24
Maydonoz Café on Sakarya	0		1	Random Pub	0	9
Yörem Café on Mithatpaşa Str.	0		9	Karum Shopping Mall	16	18
Şaman Pub	0		1	Tunalı Hilmi Monument	0	4
Fikrim Café	0		1	On Bestekar Street	1	▲
Café Felsefe	0		1	Dost Bookstore/ Kavaklıdere	5	2
Banks on Atatürk Boulevard	0		13	McDonald's/ Kavaklıdere	0	6
On the Konur Street	0	▲	24	İş Bank on Tunalı Hilmi Str.	0	3
Bus Stops on Meşrutiyet Str.	0	▲	54	Cafés and Pubs on Tunalı Hilmi Str.	6	▲
Park Bulvar Café-Restaurant	2		19	D&R on Tunalı Hilmi Street	1	▲
Metro Station: İzmir Street	0		3	Golden Pub	0	9
Ardıç Café	0		2	Esat Crossroads	13	▲
Cafés on Meşrutiyet Street	0		16	Tadım Pizza/ kavaklıdere	1	8
Starbucks on Atatürk Boulevard	0		8	Ertuğ Passage	2	6
Kahve Evi Café	0		3	Nida Café-Pub/ Kavaklıdere	0	1
Eski Yeni Pub	0		7	Beer Station Pub	0	8
Taşfırın Café	0		1	Cafés on Iran Street	0	2
Ayakkabı Dünyası on İzmir Street	1		3	Cafés and Pubs on Arjantin Street	0	8
Cafés on Olgunlar Str.	0	▲	17	Ezgi Café on Konur Street	0	1
Benches on Yüksel Street	0	▲	6	Sihhiye Officers' Club	19	9
Mado Patisserie-Café/ Kızılay	4		8	Underpass of the Subway	0	▲
On Ziya Gökalp Boulevard	0		3	Simit Dünyası Café in Sakarya	0	1
On Sakarya Street	0		5	Deniz Bank on Atatürk Boulevard	0	1
Aylak Madam Café on Olgunlar Str.	0		2	Cinema Büyülfener	6	3
Anywhere on Karanfil Street	0	▲	18	IF Performance Hall	2	15
Ona On Café	0		1	312 Tömbeki Café on Konur Str.	0	1
Bus Stops at Bakanlıklar	0		5	Kuğulu Passage	3	5
Gölge Pub	0		4	Anywhere on Tunalı Street	0	▲
Arkhe Café on Meşrutiyet Str.	0		1	Kebap 49 Restaurant/ Kavaklıdere	1	1
Zerdali Patiss. in Subway Underpass	0		2	Sihhiye Square	4	0
Güral Poselen Store	0		3	Bus Stops at Sihhiye	0	14
Öykü Café	0		1	Cambo Restaurant	0	2
Penguen Patisserie	0		1	Rembetika Pub	0	7
LCW on Necatibey Street	0		1	On Arjantin Street	0	4
Zeynel Çilli Restaurant in Sakarya	0		1	Özsüt Café/ Kavaklıdere	0	6
Arı Training Centre on Yüksel Street	0		1	On Tunus Street	0	▲
Paşabahçe Store on Tunalı Street	0		2	Karanfil Passage/ Kızılay	13	2
Erzincan Dairy on Tunalı Street	0		1	Sekans Pub	0	13
Café Bien on Tunalı Street	0		1	Random Pub	0	▲
Laterna Café/ Kavaklıdere	0		6	James Cook Pub	1	6
Tapas Restaurant/Pub on Tunalı Str.	0		13			

**Table 4 (continued).** Meeting places before and after the advent of the mobile phone in central locations in Ankara. **Note:** Highlighted locations show drastic decreases or increases, as well as indicating some open spaces.



**Figure 13.** Meeting places in Ankara before the mobile phone era. (Indicates both exterior (gray) and interior (black) meeting places). Radii indicate density of use.



**Figure 14.** Meeting places in Ankara after the introduction of the mobile phone (Indicates both exterior (gray) and interior (black) meeting places). Radii indicate density of use.

This partially fits with what Carey (2004, 136) suggested, “By virtue of the cellular phone, meeting places have become indeterminate; fluid territories rather than precise spots.”

Perhaps one should not consider them as completely vague, as it would appear that they fit the occasion, and this has become a learned schema of infinite (*sic*) availabilities. Therefore, one should not mention uncertainties, because that would connote vagueness in the deeper sense; and it is rather the comfort of predetermined activity through which one enjoys freedom of choice. For meetings that are arranged somewhere on the streets, adjacent to a bus stop would be sufficiently precise. Fluidity, on the other hand, explains that mobility is not restricted, and space allows for it. Streets are such fluid paths. If this is a suitable clarification, one can start



**Figure 15.** Meeting places before the mobile phone era in Kızılay and Kavaklıdere, central locations in Ankara.

**Figure 16.** Meeting places after the introduction of the mobile phone, in Kızılay and Kavaklıdere, central locations in Ankara.

discussing the reclamation of paths, and for that matter, the streets, because exposition to the details of the urban environment is now possible. This has to do with the problems pertaining to urban identity.

Indeed, as Dear (1996) suggested, one significant characteristic of postmodern urbanism is fragmentation. The way fragmentation is manifested in cognitive maps differs depending on the occasion. For example, the extensive use of subways result in fragmented images (Kırsakal, 2003), because exposition to urban environment is limited. However, the dispersal of meeting places does not necessarily mean further fragmentation, and this is what has been attempted to be put forth in the preliminary survey. The inclusion of an increased number of paths in the urban picture will inevitably enhance the unity of the urban image, linking the other components. Whether this will immediately contribute to the improvement of urban identity in the social sense is doubtful under the prevailing economical-political circumstances, but it will nevertheless boost identity visually. This notion stands in opposition to what Townsend (2000, 101) says about Dear's discussion on fragmentation, "The mobile phone certainly reinforces these patterns: it substitutes chaotic decentralized networks for centralized ones." Evidently, Townsend is making social fragmentation an issue here, yet our findings imply that there is no chaos in the decentralized meeting activities. They are purposeful and oriented towards a social goal, and moreover, allow new centralized networks to emerge both in spatial and social structures. Spatially, the mobile phone enables the encompassing of the entire urban area with relative ease; while socially, it enhances meeting activities by facilitating social gatherings with little concern for time-space friction. In fact, it is a very economical gadget!

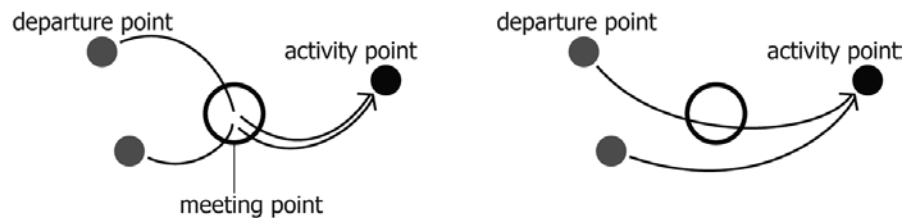




**Figure 17.** Meeting point, decision point and route segments. Decision point here is Güven Monument in Kızılay (Adapted from Richter, 2007).

**Figure 18.** Meeting point, decision point and route segments. Decision point here is Güven Monument in Kızılay (Adapted from Richter, 2007).

**Figure 19.** By-passing meeting points to reach activity points.



## FURTHER DISCUSSIONS

Although the findings reveal an increasing variety of meeting places, this cannot be interpreted as the vanishing of the identities of conventional ones. The ease in orienting ones' self to and from these points due to their physical, spatial and location characteristics is evident. Structures such as the YKM and GİMA buildings and the Güven Monument all face Kızılay Square, the hub of the city. They are still key elements in the formation of cognitive maps. Such structures are important in terms of way finding (Richter, 2007), yet do people use them to arrive at the meeting places or as places of activity? Before the advent of the mobile phone, the Güven Monument was a significant meeting point, but with the introduction of the mobile phone, interior places started to dominate. Borrowing from Richter (2007), two types of meeting scenarios can thus be constructed. In the first, the movement pattern is from different departure points to a meeting point, and then on to the place of activity (**Figure 17**); and in a second scenario, individuals possibly meet at the place of activity, or en route to the activity place while still on the move (**Figure 18**). Here, the significance of a specific meeting time diminishes due to the ease in communication, thereby reducing the state of meeting activities from a collective endeavor to an individual one, where meeting up with a group occurs at an uncertain time. In both scenarios the location of the landmark structure or node is relative to the decision point, and this is required to use the landmark as a reference point in relation to the routes. At this point it can be suggested that the once prominent landmarks that used to function as meeting places are now only points of reference following a considerable increase in meeting at activity places, most of which are interior. From this it can be concluded that conventional meeting points are usually by-passed nowadays due to the emergence of the mobile phone (**Figure 19**).

Of course, the effect of other transformations that might have affected the over all picture in terms of meeting points cannot be disregarded. For instance, rapid urbanization in Ankara has indeed been a factor in the dispersal of meeting points. Over the last 20 years there has been an ongoing sprawl towards the west of the city in the form of conurbations or suburbanization. A number of shopping malls, cafés, and restaurants have appeared since then, and this is reflected in the numbers. However, the population of the city has also increased respectively. That is, the number of people living in the city proper before the sprawl has not decreased, but rather has increased due to populist urban politics that allowed higher development rights, and the increase is not marginal at all. It may not sound plausible to the reader, but during the period of sprawl, the population of the city proper has increased by three quarters. In some districts, such as in the old squatter areas, this increase has been more than double. Thus, the urban sprawl did not absorb the centre city population, meaning that the cause of the diminishing numbers pertaining to prominent structures of the centre does not depend merely on the expansion of the city.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the survey point to several behavioral and spatial-physical changes within the realm of urban identity after the emergence of the mobile phone. These are manifested in terms of:

- Dispersal of meeting places;
- Increase in the variety of meeting places;
- Increase in the number of interior meeting places;
- Increase in the number of physically inconspicuous meeting places;
- Emergence of open spaces, especially streets, as meeting places.

If **Figure 1** is re-examined, one can conclude that the changes in which the mobile phone has played a part contributes to the urban identity. The dispersal of meeting places means that the entire urban physical area is now subject to use for social purposes such as gatherings. Fragmentation is of course still a problem in postmodern society, but the dispersal of social niches will nevertheless become a patch if not a total remedy.

Variety, by definition, is an integral part of space quality (Lozano, 1990), either in the perceived or the physical sense. A reasonable increase in the variety will surely contribute to the senses of belonging and attachment. These are basic processes that help establish a space-place continuum, which is an essential part of urban identity.

The use of interior spaces is evidently the most interesting finding. It is known that urban design theory does not focus on public or semi public interiors, and this will require a considerable review of the theoretical body. Nevertheless, social gatherings of small groups are much different from larger groups, and thus these findings do not negate the significance of public open spaces. On the other hand, the remarkable increase in numbers has shown that activity places have started to substitute meeting places, and therefore, meeting places which usually take the form of significant landmarks or nodes, are sometimes skipped. Nonetheless, this does not take away from the value of landmarks, as they are rather

assigned new meaning, becoming reference points for further activities; and this is another issue that requires re-examination in design theory.

Insignificance does not mean much when it comes to the use of urban elements. In other words, it does not matter whether elements have notable physical-spatial features as long as people are exposed to them and experience them, and the experience turns into a memory. When quantity is coupled with variety, this is even more enriching in terms of social behavior.

Perhaps the most interesting finding is that fluid meeting spaces which have no fixed location, and which are created while mobile and experienced during movement. This may be the lost key to the regeneration of coherent urban images, facilitating the formation of well-developed cognitive maps instead of fragmented ones in which the missing links are usually paths and nodes. The survey indicated that many people use streets, avenues, junctions, corners and large open spaces, such as parks, for meeting. Since mobile phone can help the user make a decision while he/she is on the move, these places inevitably become a part of the inventory of the cognitive processes. Hence, in terms of its overall physical structure, the meeting space has transformed from a meeting point to a meeting path, or even a meeting area. As such, the mobile phone is no burden at all; and the great ease that this device provides will help recreate the social network that was wiped out by the postmodern era. Contrary to this, some may still argue that new communication technologies have already established widespread social networks via internet availabilities. Yet, the prerequisite of socialization is, first, the presence of the individual in the physical space and second, the opportunities of face-to-face interactions that the space offers. Therefore, the search for and the generation of identity, and for that matter urban identity, cannot be possible within the situated realm of the virtual space. In this sense, identity is not merely a result of visual and virtual processes. The experiencing of space is necessary and the mobile phone enhances it.

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Anahtar Sözcükler: cep telefonu; kent kimliği; buluşma noktaları; bilişsel haritalar.

## CEP TELEFONU ÇAĞINDA KENT KİMLİĞİ

Cep telefonlarının yaşamın vazgeçilmez parçası haline geldiği günümüzde, uzunca bir zamandır süren kimlik yitimi tartışmaları da alevlendi. Hemen herşeyin bireyselleşti(rildiği), toplumsal yaşam, ortak yaşam gibi kavramların ve bunlarla beraber düşünülmesi gereken mekanların da yitirildiği, ya da kullanılmaz duruma geldikleri tartışmaların odak noktası oldu. Kişisellik, bireysellik gibi kavramların uç noktasını şimdilik oluşturan

cep telefonunun, kullanıcıya sağladığı kolaylıklar nedeni ile, kişilerarası ilişkileri giderek daha da olumsuz etkilediğini var saymak olasıdır. Kendi sanal dünyasını oluşturan internet gibi cep telefonu da kendine özgü bir dünya yaratmış olmalıdır. Bu dünyada yüz-yüze ilişkilere ve bunların yeşereceği ortak mekanlara gereksinme bulunmadığı kabulü toplumsal yaşamın giderek zayıfladığını söyleyenlerin de dayanak noktasıdır. Oysa, çok yeni bir araştırma cep telefonu kullanımının bunun tam tersine etkileri olduğunu ortaya koymakta, kullanımın yaygınlaşması ile kent mekanının daha anlamlı bir biçimde algılandığını göstermektedir. Kullanıcıların cep telefonu kullanmadan önce ve kullanmaya başladıktan sonraki buluşma mekanları tercihlerini irdeleyen bu araştırmanın bulguları, aygıtın son derece esnek bir karar verme yetisi geliştirmeye yaradığını, odaklar, nirengi noktaları gibi geleneksel kent bileşenlerinin yerine başka bileşenlerin buluşma noktaları olmasına yol açtığını göstermektedir. Yine, bu araştırmanın bulguları doğrultusunda, kentsel imgelerin ve bilişsel haritaların oluşmasına elveren bir kısım bileşenlerin, adı konulmamış, mekanda sabitlenmemiş, akıcı mekanlar olduğu, cep telefonunun hareketliliğe sağladığı katkı nedeni ile hareket halinde verilen kararların, saptanan buluşma mekanlarının bu biçimde oluşmasına yol açtığı görülmektedir. Neredeyse tümüyle görsel algılama üzerine oturtulmuş kentsel tasarım kuramlarının bu bulgular ile yeniden irdelenmesi gereği kaçınılmazdır.

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