Article

Evading Time and Place in Ankara: A Reading of Contemporary Urban Collective Memory Through Recent Transformations

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Abstract

Based on precedent theories on collective memory and urban studies, this article develops a framework of approach to contemporary urban collective memory. Understanding urban collective memory by handling people and urban space as a system provides a sociospatial perspective for critical approaches to cities. The study initially provides overviews of theoretical approaches to collective memory and city, and then puts forth constituents of urban collective memory. Based on these constituents, contemporary urban collective memory is discussed, and a framework for analyzing contemporary cities in terms of urban space and urban experience is introduced. For a clear portrayal of urban issues within the context, the introduced framework is devised through the case of Ankara, the capital city of Turkey and the inspiring force behind this study. This framework aims to present a ground to assess people's relation to urban spaces in the contemporary era.

Memory and place are bilaterally associated. Memory, as a dynamic phenomenon, is almost always constructed and articulated in relation to places. Pierre Nora (1989) emphasizes this relation while explaining the difference between history and memory as "memory attaches itself to sites, whereas history attaches itself to events" (p. 22). On the other hand, places are not spaces but *places* because memories are created in relation to them. No place appears suddenly and with no reason. Places are always produced, experienced and perceived through historicity. Most fundamentally, they need to be socially produced—in the sense Henri Lefebvre (1974/2007) explains—as they will be left in inertia otherwise. The experience of a place through time by its residents or guests adds to or takes away from that place either physically or semantically.[1] Therefore, placeness of constructed spaces depends on people's experiences of it more than anything; a space needs to become loaded with memories and traces of experience to become *a place*

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(Tuan, 1977/2001). Consequently, while a study of any space requires considering it within a historical context, study of a place (whether private or public) requires handling it in relation to *memory* (whether individual or collective).

Here, the notion of *urban collective memory* rather than *collective urban memory* is used. The choice of wording seizes upon "the power of place—the power of ordinary urban landscapes to nurture citizens' public memory" (Hayden, 1996, p. 40). In parallel, equal importance is attributed to how the urban space is experienced and what the urban space is, and to collective memories formed in the urban context and the collective memories *of* urban space. The quality of the shared experience within a specific urban location may not match the structural or architectural quality of that space; yet, experience, in any case, facilitates attachment of meanings to urban space to create a *place* as a *locus* for both collective memory and urban history.

It is important to urge upon urban collective memory for both our presence in and our work on cities. City is a *place* extracted from within an infinite space. Neither its production nor its experience is sudden. It is a weaving of space and time realized by man. Lewis Mumford (1937) defines city as "a geographic plexus, an economic organization, an institutional process, a theater of social action, and an aesthetic symbol of collective unity" (p. 8). Manuel Castells (1983) identifies cities as "living systems, made, transformed and experienced by people" (p. xv). Cities can also be seen as a set of relations (Lefebvre, 1974/2007), and so are to be handled as a temporal system of people and places in the context of urban collective memory enabling studies to be conducted on the city and the memories it triggers such as in Espinoza (2015), Lavrence (2005), Casalegno (2004).

This article presents a framework of critical approach to urban collective memory to further provide a ground to work on and understand people's relation to their urban space in the contemporary era. For a better explanation of urban issues in question, the case of Ankara, the capital of Turkey, the city which has inspired this work depending on its rapid construction and transformation, is discussed to exemplify contemporary urban conditions. Rather than concentrating on specific practices of remembering and sites of memory, the focus of the article is city itself—as a system of people and places, as "the *locus* of collective memory" (Rossi, 1992), as "the locus as a site of cultural memory" (Connerton, 2009). Here, urban experience itself is handled as the primary means of articulation of urban collective memory, and urban space itself is considered to be the subject of this articulation.

Collective Memory: A Brief Overview

Considering the influence of politics, culture, and society on individual memory, Halbwachs (1925/1992) proposed a definition of collective memory, arguing that memories are reconstructed under the influence of the society. An emphasis on the variations of the concept of *collective memory* has been put especially by studies on postcolonial and Holocaust memories. Concurrently, mass media becoming widespread has triggered infiltration of the subject into many areas of research. The concept has found its reflections mostly in political, sociological, and cultural studies.

Halbwachs (1925/1992) initiated consideration of the context in the formation of individual memory. Where a context generates patterns in individual memories leading to shared remembrances, *collective memory* refers to remembrances shaped by societies and cultures in which they occur (Rossington, 2007). Presupposition of shared memory by participants in any social order is an implicit rule as otherwise neither experiences for the present nor assumptions for the future can be shared (Connerton, 1989). Collective memory, then, is *useful*,[2] for the presence of social groups and of individuals within social groups.

Individual memory realizes itself continually recollecting its *images*, by *remembering* and *forgetting*, and therefore reconstructing the past through the mediation of present stimuli. Remembering makes finite occurrence infinite (Benjamin, 2007), provides a sense of continuity,

and therefore of presence. Likewise, collective remembering provides a sense of belonging to a group or a locality that provides an opportunity for self-identification (Brockmeier, 2002). It gives the social groups a sense of continuity, of being rooted and of having a future. Collective remembering is almost always argued to be crucial for a meaningful presence in the present and future for that it provides consciousness of what should be kept or left behind for a progressive continuity. Collective forgetting, on the other hand, is related either to *traditions* left behind as they do not correspond to the necessities and desires of the contemporary era (Brockmeier, 2002), or to diminished cultural artifacts—whether they are structures, texts, names, or acts. Whereas it may be the consequence of a natural selection progress, collective forgetting is sometimes an imposition realized through interventions to various aspects of a collective being.

Since many actors and acts are involved, for a critical reading, it is essential to examine collective memory in a systematic manner, especially when it is in relation to the urban realm. Wulf Kansteiner (2002), in this regard, offers a deconstruction of the notion, and defines three types of historical factors that interact and form collective memory: "the intellectual and cultural traditions that frame all our representations of the past," "the memory makers who selectively adopt and manipulate these traditions," and "the memory consumers who use, ignore, or transform such artefacts according to their own interests" (p. 180). Memory makers and consumers provide the required continuity in the articulation of traditions and representations. These factors are not sharply separated but are interwoven as can be traced in the following arguments. In the context of this reading, Kansteiner's trilogy helps us identify clearly the actors and acts involved in the formation of urban collective memory.

Constituents of Urban Collective Memory

Memory requires ongoing articulation. Nora (1989) explains that memory is a dynamic operational phenomenon, which is always in relation to present. His viewpoint coincides with the approach of Halbwachs (1925/1992) who states that "general history starts only when tradition ends and social memory is fading or breaking up" (p. 139). In the context of urban collective memory, articulation is realized through the construction and experience of urban space. For cities, those practices are the primary means of remembering—*the intellectual and cultural traditions* (Kansteiner, 2002)—that form urban collective memory.

Kevin Lynch (1960) associates urban memory with environmental images. He defines environmental images as the "generalized mental picture of the exterior physical world that is held by an individual" (p. 4). This image is produced through immediate sensation and past experience. Mental image of the city corresponds to what we remember of urban spaces and is dependent on both the physical urban space and people's experience of this space. Construction of the city is performed by architects, planners, and other decision makers, who, together, are the *memory makers* of the urban collective memory. Yet there is more to *memory makers*, as space is socially produced through experiences. The *residents* or the *visitor*s of the city also act as memory makers. *Memory consumers*, on the other hand, are again, most of the time, *memory makers. Memory makers* and *consumers* are the ones who attach meanings to the city through their experiences of and in those urban spaces. The interplay between the entity of the urban environment and people is what mainly constitutes the urban collective memory.

Urban Space

Physical urban space, in its structuring, provides people with mental maps of the city. Mental maps support synchronous movement within the urban space by helping the individual locate himself within his environment, recall the origin of his movement, estimate his destination, and therefore define his route. Presence and well organization of urban elements are thought to have

positive effect on the experience of the city. On the other hand, natural and built elements of urban space define a city's identity. The architectural qualities of the built elements enable recognition of structures as separate entities (Lynch, 1960) mostly by implying the origin of those structures—whether it be its architect, the period in which it was constructed, the region that it is located in or any other cultural factor that influenced the way it was built. Architecture, then, provides internal information about the past and future experiences of urban space. Just as Boyer (1994) states, "addressed to the eye of vision and to the soul of memory, a city's streets, monuments, and architectural forms often contain grand discourses on history" (p. 31).

Temporal dimension of cities is explicitly integrated into the definition of city by Lynch (1960): "the city is a construction in space, but one of vast scale, a thing perceived only in long spans of time" (p. 1). Similarly, Elizabeth Wilson (2005) defines city as "a process, an unique, ongoing time/space event" (p. 126). Thinkers such as Aldo Rossi (1992), Andreas Huyssen (2003) and James Donald (2005) describe the historical entity of the city as *palimpsest*. Henri Lefebvre (1974/2007), from the same point of view, explains that "what happened at a particular spot or place and thereby changed it—all of this becomes inscribed in space. The past leaves its traces; time has its own script" (p. 37). These theories set light on the intimate relationship between time and city, and emphasize the importance of temporal continuity in the city.

Urban Experience

Mental images of a city are always constructed under the influence of people's feelings, thoughts and memories *of* and *in* those cities that are created through the experience of the urban space. On the other hand, the mental images influence people's perceptions and interpretations of and their attitudes toward the urban space. People attach meanings to cities depending on their experiences and the consequent mental images. Those meanings affect their concurrent or future experiences. People develop images of the city combining all, and they remember cities through those images. Memory, consequently, can be considered as "an extension of experience" (Bloomer & Moore, 1977, p. x). Presence in the city is both a mental and physical experience (Donald, 2005). As a public space, city is collectively experienced, and therefore produced. There is a reciprocal relationship between people and their places (Lefebvre, 1974/2007). Collective experience of urban space can be considered as the practice of social production that is realized through relations among people and between people and their environment. Both individual and shared experiences lead to attribution of meanings to the lived space and therefore to construction of individual and collective urban memories.

Where collective memory is taken as an always mediated phenomenon, the influence of representations of cities on people's relation to the urban space cannot be left out of discussion. Representations of cities are reflections of the relation between man and urban space, and also are mediators in the constitution of the mental images. Cities are represented in various forms. Maps and guides offer information about cities which facilitate people's movement within the city, or their perception of it as a whole. Photographs or documentaries help people visualize sections of cities which the spectator may not otherwise be able to access because of spatial or temporal limitations. These representations communicate what is there—or what will be or should be there—in the urban space and provide a support for what we know and a precise knowledge about what we don't know about cities. Beyond them, there are literal and artistic compositions that mostly represent the viewpoint of their creators.

Despite the fact that it may be subjective, "representation does powerful cultural work in a wide variety of forms to produce and maintain (but also to challenge and question) common notions of urban existence" (Balshaw & Kennedy, 2000, p. 4). The creators of those representations are memory makers, on the one hand, as the people who construct their own images of city and urban memory, and on the other, as the people who transmit their representations to the

others. They are also memory consumers for urban collective memory. Eventually, representations of urban spaces mediate our relation to cities in experiencing the urban space or in mental approach.

Contemporary Urban Collective Memory

City is not a static entity; its structure, its practices, the experience, and perception of people of their environment inherently change through time. The built environment is transformed by and for the changing actors with respect to the changing practices. These changes are usually not sudden ones, so that urban space embraces spatial, temporal, and social continuities. Contemporary culture, however, is identified with the penetration of different forms of technologies and of production into everyday life leading to significant formations and reformations regarding cities.[3] The urban space that corresponds to contemporary era is physically versatile and consequently transitory in means of function, perception, and experience. Everything required for a conscious presence in time and place deserves a place in the urban collective memory; yet this place is not always reserved. In the broadest sense, oscillation of urban collective memory is related to temporal and spatial and also to social discontinuities. Connerton (2009) argues that, modernity forgets, and this forgetting is associated with "superhuman speed, megacities that are so enormous as to be unmemorable, consumerism disconnected from the labor process, the short lifespan of urban architecture, the disappearance of walkable cities" (p. 5).

To better understand the contemporary conditions of urban collective memory, it is important to define the related urban issues that change people's relation to the urban space. This relation mainly has two sides to it, first being the contemporary urban space itself, second being people's experiences of and in those urban spaces. Urban space and urban practices are what is to be *articulated*, therefore *remembered* for urban collective memory, whereas people constitute the memory makers and memory consumers that somehow establish relations with everything to be remembered. From another viewpoint, it can be asserted that, the conditions of urban space determine the identity and structure of urban spaces, and their experiences determine the meanings attached to those spaces. Consequently, the image of the contemporary city depends on the dramatic ruptures or condensations in contemporary urban space and in contemporary practices as well as in people's experiences of them.

Ankara has witnessed various interventions to its spatiality since it was determined as the capital of the Turkish Republic in 1923. The city, which owes its presence to such declamatory construction, has witnessed both formation and implicit loss of spatial, social, and temporal continuity in the past 90 years synchronous to contemporary formations. The haze in these formations nourished by the demolishment of urban and architectural assets, which would obviously have been preserved with a more restrained approach, such as the Saraçoğlu neighborhood (1944) by Paul Bonatz and Marmara Köşkü (1928) by Ernst Egli, both in the process of destruction by the municipality in 2017. Even recently in the beginning of this year, the hasty demolition of Havagazı Fabrikası (the Gas Factory), built in 1929 and an industrial heritage of the Republic, not only added up to the demolishment haywire but also brought along the controversies of releasing hazardous asbestos to the air. In this framework, Ankara constitutes an incisive case for a discussion on many dimensions of contemporary urban collective memory, comprising how the decision-making process may lead to the evasion of time and place.

Analysis of a Contemporary Urban Space

The contemporary urban space and its practices are exposed to rapid and sharp transformations where urban collective memory is disturbed. Such transformations cause people's unconsciousness about what is left behind and what is new (Virilio, 2007), and ruptures spatial, temporal, and

Figure 1. A view from Grbavica, a neighborhood of Sarajevo in 1996, by L. T. Stacey Wyzkowski.
Source. Wikimedia Commons. Available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Sarajevo

social continuities regarding urban life. For the contemporary culture, "change, or 'progress', now takes place so fast that it has become impossible tolerate to it sensibly" (Eriksen, 2001, p. 48). The indulgence in the past of the urban space depends on such common unease of change. A consolation can be found in the fact that never changing places are always criticized because of their inertia, and that change is what facilitates memory (Wilson, 2005).[4] The vicious pace of the change cannot be omitted, yet, belated mourning can be overlooked.

Urban space loses its means of continuity due to interventions in various forms and Ankara is a strong case demonstrating these interventions and their consequences. Based on the consequences that are observed in the case of Ankara, in this study, loss of continuity in urban space is described through four dimensions: *destruction, regeneration, fragmentation*, and *duplication*.

Destruction. The most extreme case of change in urban space is "destruction of the urban space." Through destructions, a part of urban space or the whole urban space is demolished. As a result of destruction, the structures of the city and even information about its history do not exist anymore or lose legibility. As in the case of Sarajevo that is expressed by Catovic-Hughes (2006), destruction may be related to attacks in times of war (e.g., see Figure 1). Certainly, war does not care about memory, and therefore rupture in any means of continuity of the urban space in this case is inescapable. Similar urban situations may occur as a result of natural disasters. Such cases are not controllable and render people helpless where the concern is not the survival of memory but rather of people.

In a war-free case, in Ankara, destructions have been realized for the sake of planning projects, and therefore have almost always been followed by reconstructions. However, these reconstructions were mostly conspicuous in means of the changes in both architectural and functional qualities. Figures 2, 3, and 4 show the visuals of Kizilay Square, one of the fundamental nodes in the city (Batuman, 2003), in three different years since the construction of the capital. Even without making any assessments on the qualities of the urban space, it is apparent that, such reconstructions override the previous entity and experience of the urban space causing ruptures in temporal continuity.

Regeneration. Breaking up of temporal continuity through regeneration is a common subject matter for even for opponent thoughts on contemporary urban issues. Krier (1984), from a traditionalist point of view, refers to ignorance of historical and cultural continuity in the designing of urban space as a characteristic of modern world. Massey (1996), from a Marxist point of view, mentions politics which alter spaces and places and accordingly filters specific layers of memory.

Figure 2. Ankara, Kızılay Square in 1940s, postcard.
Source. Sagdic (1994).

Figure 3. Ankara, Kızılay Square in 1960s, postcard.

Figure 4. Ankara, Kızılay Square in 2010s.
Source. Hurriyet Arsiv. Available from http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/18529438.asp

Soja (2000), from a closer position to Massey, explains that "there are growing signs of a shift from . . . a period of crisis-generated restructuring . . . to what might now be called a *restructuring-generated crisis*" (p. 21).

Ankara has been a stage to many regeneration projects especially in the past 10 years. These projects are created either to define new uses to old areas of the city or to reconstruct the shanty areas. In realization of projects, however, the urban space encounters breaking up of temporal

Figure 5. Aerial views from Altindag in north Ankara in 2002 and 2016, respectively.
Source. Google Earth. June 23, 2017.

Figure 6. View from Altindag in north Ankara.
Source. Google Earth Street View. June 21, 2017.

continuity as well as a loss of a well-established sociospatial texture. In Figure 5, aerial views of Altindag, one of the most favorite areas of regeneration projects in North Ankara, taken in 2002 and 2016 show the distorted texture of the urban space. The area displayed in Figure 6, is an example of areas where the slums are demolished to construct new multistory housing blocks, and the current dwellers are relocated into the new blocks. Such shifts mean not only a sudden break in the temporal continuity for the texture of the area but also an unfamiliar spatiality for the dwellers. Furthermore, the relocated dwellers and the new occupiers of the space do not always socially merge, and there appear problems in the social continuity within many neighborhoods.

One of the recent breaks emerged in relation to the naming of the urban spaces of Ankara as well as of other large cities of the country. After the coup attempt on 15 July 2016, which was unsuccessful by nature, the government announced the overturn of the stroke as a "victory of the national will" and rewarded the exponent public by naming prominent nodes of the city after this victory. Along with many other places, "Kızılay Meydanı" (Kizilay Square) was regenerated as "15
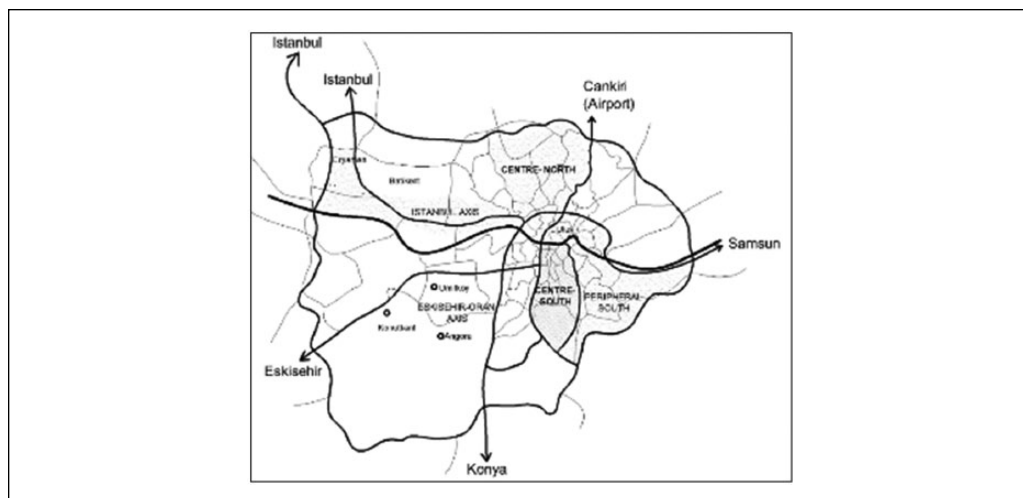
Figure 7. Axes of growth in Ankara.
Source. Adapted by the author from Senyapili (2005).

Temmuz Kızılay Milli İrade Meydanı" (15th July Kizilay National Will Square"). Consequently, the Square, which was strongly associated with the construction of a modern capital, has been utilized by the state as a symbol of the success of the current sociopolitical formation. The cases of renaming, although not having a sudden affect, puts emphasis on the power of the government as well as of other *memory makers*, and, altering the common meanings attached, causes a break in the understanding of the urban space within its temporality.

Fragmentation. Urban space witnesses different forms of decomposition where mostly the urban space is functionally fragmented and spread out. Soja (2000) refers to *exopolis*, and explain that while most of the contemporary metropolises portray an outward growth, their functioning occurs in the other direction. With the formation of suburbs, inhabitants of the city move outside city center, and incomers inhabit those centers, which otherwise would be left idle. People who produce spaces shift to produce new ones, leaving their produced spaces for the ones who will need to appropriate those spaces yet with their own urban practices. The city is then constituted by multiple urban spaces, which function within themselves and therefore making for one the others idle. Krier (1984) associates this with "the emphasis on the historic centre by means of peripheral growth" and explains that such deconstruction of the urban structure is confirmed by the mechanical means of transport leading to "the dissolution of the city as a complex spatial continuum" (p. 20).

Ankara has been portraying a growth outward. In the previous years, two major axes, outstretching from Ankara in the direction of two other cities (İstanbul and Eskisehir) have been developed. Senyapili (2005) shows that the growth on the axis toward Istanbul has been populated mostly by people who previously lived in Center-North, whereas the axis toward Eskisehir has been mostly populated by those who formerly lived in Center-South (Figure 7). As the capital of the country, the city accommodates many governmental and military areas as well as university lands, which eventually divide the whole land into distinctively separate areas. The highways and underpasses built within the city to provide an uninterrupted flow of vehicles support this dissolution causing ruptures in the spatial continuity of the city. The consequent fragmentation of the urban space leads to moves between everyday destinations without a continuous and clear experience and perception of the city. Furthermore, this results in social segregation, where
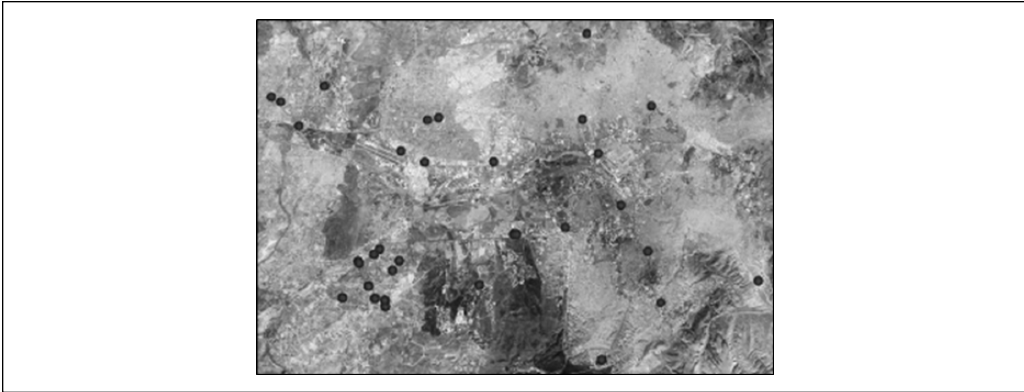
Figure 8. Shopping malls in Ankara.
Source. Created by the author through Google Earth.

different groups of the society meet only in passing rather than actually being in the urban space together. There, the urban memory is more or less individualized as a collective and holistic experience and perception of the city is not likely to be maintained.

Duplication. Another dimension of contemporary formations is the mechanical production of structures. Together with the simulation of historical structures, it relates to the deformation of the identity of the city. Lefebvre (1974/2007) mentions *repetition* as the driving force of the contemporary urban and architectural structures. *Duplication* is what seems to be a more suitable word, as repetition to a point is desirable for construction of urban identity. Especially in the less developed countries or regions, duplication is frequently observed as it is an economical means of construction. It certainly favors quantity over quality and results in loss of identity of urban space. Duplication is a destructive intervention in the identity of urban space and causes temporal discontinuity—maybe in a more dramatic way it distorts temporal continuity.

   Not only architectural duplication but also functional duplication can be considered to be a problem of the contemporary cities. In the past 15 years, there has been a substantial increase in the number of shopping malls in Ankara (see Figure 8), and the malls have become the fundamental spaces of recreational activity for the residents of the city. Such emphasis on the shopping malls resulted in search for new architectural forms, however within the constraints of the function of which the experience is almost always a duplication of the formers. The experience of *a mall* indispensably indicates a weak relation of people to the space compared with the experience of *the place.* Furthermore, the inevitability and ease of encounter with the shopping malls have drawn the public from urban spaces to shopping malls preventing maintenance of a collective urban life in the urban space and potentially adding to segregation in the urban environment. Eventually, formation of urban collective memory became more or less irrelevant for Ankara, and certainly for many more cities which are stages of similar formations.

Analysis of a Contemporary Urban Experience

Urban collective memory, as a dynamic phenomenon, requires means of continuity in relevant experiences. Contemporary conditions cause different forms of ruptures in the urban experience. Not only conditions of contemporary urban spaces but also information and communication technologies, new media (Lagerkvist, 2010), and forms of transportation change the means people experience the cities. Elizabeth Wilson (2005) writes about the *absent city* and associates it with

"the remembered but lost experience" (p. 131). Though, lost experience eventually creates forgetfulness—through breaking up of continuity, the experience is always historicized rather than being articulated collectively to pursue the urban collective memory. In the context of breaking up of spatial, temporal, and social continuity, contemporary urban experience can be explained depending on the following formations, again, based on the case of Ankara: *segregation, transition and acceleration, detachment*, and *mediation*.

Segregation. Fragmentation of urban space, as explained previously, causes segregation which can be explained as the breaking down of social continuity. Sennett (2010) explains this state being "of the races who live segregated lives close together, and of social classes, who mix but do not socialize" (269). Although facilitated by the structure of urban space, such segregation is also related to the way people choose to experience urban space. Jane Jacobs (2010) explores the sidewalks in the city where most of the encountering takes place and explains the feeling of safety and security as the primary concern of people. Especially in the metropolises, a stranger is almost always perceived as a potential threat to one's security. This feeling of threat has roots in the past stories; thus, people tend to use their safe places in the city which adds to social segregation. The result is social production of specific places by specific groups of people, and also is, as the level of social interaction and therefore of production is low, sole consumption of public space.

Ankara metropolitan area presents an explicit case of segregation as being divided into neighborhoods which are, most of the time, occupied by discrete social groups. Inhabitation of established neighborhoods by specific groups usually happens in a historical process. New settlements, yet, presume accommodation of specific groups in their construction. Target groups are implicitly defined for those constructions to market settlements as objects of consumption. As a result, the social continuity within the city is destructed.

Transition and Acceleration. The experience of urban space in the movements of transition is what generates *nonplaces*. The notion is proposed by Marc Augé (2008) and refers to spaces "which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity" (p. 63). Augé (2008) already mentions airports, motorways, or supermarkets as nonplaces but observes a potential of extension of *nonplaceness* to the places of what he calls supermodernity. Virilio (2007) makes a narration of this transitional presence of people in the urban space: "the population was indeed there, but it had always either just arrived, or was just about to depart" (p. 93). Construction of contemporary urban space already assumes formations regarding the "embodied practices of driving and 'passengering'" (Thrift, 2010, p. 152). Experience of the urban space in transition is inherently a result of the speed in which we live in the contemporary world. Along with many others, Virilio's (2007) claim is that, "the pre-eminence of Time replaces that of Space" (p. 95), and the people of contemporary urban spaces are "less 'inhabitant' now than survivor, less 'a member of society' than a temporary resident" (p. 94). If there is no production of space, then there is consumption of place; as Scott McQuire (1998) explains, traditional mechanisms of social reproduction are destroyed by the invasion of accelerated social rhythms of the city. Such approaches certainly emphasize the dark sides of transition and acceleration, yet reveal what absence of social production from the urban space results in.

Quasi-encounters of the residents of Ankara are realized almost only in transitional public areas which are constituted by mainly shopping malls/areas, and by the city center that is the node of transportation routes. High density especially at the peak hours in the city center of the capital with a population of four million makes it unpleasant, if not impossible, to actually stay in place. In addition, the transportation infrastructure, which is the product of a municipal approach that focuses on nothing besides constructing highways and underpasses, emphasizes the transitional facet of the city. Where the city is experienced in rapid movement, urban space is consumed rather than being socially produced, and spatial continuity becomes irrelevant to perception.

Figure 9. A view from Kızılay, Ankara.
Source. Google Earth Street View. June 20, 2017.

Detachment. The speed through people move not only makes them passengers in transition but also proposes a different type of observation of the environment. Boyer (1994) explains that "acceleration of time seemed to open up a void, closing off any meaningful access to the past", and she argues that, this sort of "panoramic flow of unstable visions" (p. 24) causes memory disturbances. From the same point of view, De Certeau (1984/2011) says, "the panorama-city is a 'theoretical' (that is, visual) simulacrum, in short a picture, whose condition of possibility is an oblivion and a misunderstanding of practices: (p. 93). Benjamin's (2005) *flâneur*, the wanderer in the modern urban space passes through the street doing nothing but watching shop windows. The contemporary *flâneur* is rather different: He is the one who transits the urban space and realizes all urban practices through the screen of the computer. In a response to this addiction to the visual, urban space adopts itself to the visual culture. Virilio (2007) states that "the city is reduced to nothing more than a shop window" (p. 96). As people already inherit a visual culture which most of the urban spaces are products of, the image of the city is always fragmented in "metonymic images and fleeting events" (Donald, 2005, p. 179).

As mentioned earlier, Ankara has become a bearing of retail oriented public spaces. Due to reformation of the city almost always in relation to consumption, the urban space comprise a dense aggregation of visual media is comprised by the urban space (see Figure 9). The intensity of both human and vehicle traffic in the urban space add to distracted perception of the urban environment. As a result, the experience of urban space is exposed to an overload of visual stimuli, where the image of the city is fragmented.

Mediation. Official records, representations provided by *history*, constitute the initial form of mediation.[5] Architectural and urban history mostly focus on urban spaces that accommodated significant events, had specific styles, constructed with certain technologies or built with ideological or economical intentions. However, human experience and thought in the social production of the urban space is left out of focus for places where architectural or urban quality is not coherent with collective experience. That is to say, urban places, which are mainly products of the social, are not always considered to be significant in the writing of architectural or urban history. It influences the meanings attached to cities, yet, cannot presume collective memory as it is perceived as a representation rather than as a part of continuous experience.

Historical research about Ankara mostly focus on its construction as the capital in the early years of the Republic, and contemporary research provide critique of its restructuring by the current municipality which has been in power for the past 20 years. Whereas such research provides thorough information about the architectural and urban formations, it is possible to state that, they lack emic perspective regarding the experience of the city.

As digital media constitutes one of the fundamental dynamics of contemporary culture, digital representations became essential to contemporary experience of the urban space (Casalegno, 2004). Digital maps and guides along with mobile application software (apps) have a direct influence on the experience of urban space. Uses of mobile apps is extensive including transmitting simultaneous information on public transportation or sharing experiences with the social milieu through location-based social media (e.g., Foursquare app). Apps provide many forms of representations of urban space while defining the means, time, and place of people's presence in the urban space. People also come across many representations of urban space through search engines, social media, or advertisements. Digital media, in general, raises residents' involvement in the representation of the urban experience, and merges *memory makers* and *memory consumers* of the urban collective memory. Yet people are now exposed to numerous images, and our memory of the urban space is mostly an unconscious assembly of randomly selected images. Furthermore, city becomes a background while in communication and in access to information during the experience of the city. Consequently, no contemporary city, and not Ankara is experienced in a spatial continuity.

Conclusion

Memory, as stated by Nora (1989), is a "dynamic operational phenomenon" (p. 8). Operation of urban collective memory implies social, spatial, and temporal continuum in the urban environment. The argument of this work is that urban collective memory is vulnerable due to the ruptures in social, spatial, and temporal continuities in the entity and the experience of the contemporary cities.

The interaction of the factors that form collective memory, which Kansteiner (2002) defines as the *intellectual and cultural traditions*, the *memory makers* and the *memory consumers*, is manifested in the system of the cities. Handling the city as a system of people and places, the fundamental components of urban collective memory are defined here as *urban space* and *experience of the urban space*. Within the context of urban collective memory, these two components also function as the mediators.

In this work, the contemporary conditions regarding the urban space and the experience of the urban space have been investigated and incorporated in a framework to allow for reading the current conditions of the contemporary cities. In this aspect, *destruction, regeneration, fragmentation*, and *duplication* in the urban space are elaborated based on their influence on the social, spatial, and temporal continuities of the urban space. The contemporary city is argued to be inconsistent (spatially and temporally) to let us grasp the entity of the city to be able to form images for our urban memories. For a critical look at the continuities regarding contemporary urban experience, issues of *segregation, transition, acceleration, detachment*, and *mediation* are set forth. These are mostly related to external factors, such as technological developments in transportation or communication, which are already integrated in the contemporary culture. Although are open to any critique, these issues are harder to intervene in, compared with issues related to the urban space itself. Consequently, the responsibility of acknowledging urban collective memory is mainly of people who actually build or who has effective power to intervene in the process of building the city.

Critique of the urban structure with broken spatial, temporal, and social continuity inherently implies courtesy to memory.[6] In architectural profession, "importance of memory as a part of our existence in the environment" has been denied, referred to as "nostalgia" and dismissed (Bloomer & Moore, 1977, p. x). As Fisher (2004) argues, "architecture deals with time as well as space, with memory as well as form, and the more expansive we are with the former, the better the latter will become" (p. 291). The consciousness of cities' social, spatial, and temporal continuum makes possible "inventing the past to fit the present, or, equally, the present to fit the past" (Fentress & Wickham, 1992, p. 201). Without regarding memory, it is not likely to interpret and

evaluate the present urban and social conditions, and it is not possible to make predictions and improvements for the future. In this respect, as Hayden (1996) asserts, "a politically conscious approach to urban preservation . . . must emphasize public processes and public memory" (p. 49). Only then, urban collective memory can operate for meaningful urban experiences in Ankara and other contemporary cities which portray similar formations.

Authors' Note

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Notes

1. Urban practices bring along new needs and formations regarding urban space. According to needs, elements of built environment are added to or subtracted from the entity of the city. On the other hand, it is possible to observe shifts in uses and users of urban space. Changes in physical environment along with the collective experiences imply different meanings attached to places. Through time, entity and/or meaning of urban space portray changes in relation to its experience.
2. According to Bergson (1912/2004), memory's fundamental function is "to evoke all those past perceptions which are analogous to the present perception, to recall to us what preceded and followed them, and so to suggest to us that decision which is the most useful" (p. 303).
3. Sassen (2005) proposes *the global city* as a concept related to the urban formations of the contemporary world. Castells (1983) provides a thorough study on the *space of flows*, the new urban structure which is dependent on *flows* rather than on *places*. Soja (2000) defines six variations of contemporary formations. These works provide viewpoints about multiple dimensions of contemporary formations.
4. Wilson's (2005) argument is that, "something old and familiar, something which now exists only or almost only in memory, is endowed with a beauty it maybe never possessed at the time" (p. 134).
5. *Mediation* is indicated as an indispensable factor in the formation of collective memory. Burke (2004) defines five means of social organization of transmission and employed media: "oral traditions," "memoirs and written records," "pictorial or photographic, still or moving images," "actions and rituals such as commemoration," and "space." It is possible to state that mediation for collective memory is provided by external representations, by experiences and acts internal to groups, and by places constitutive of groups
6. Donald (2005) makes an explanation of this approach: "The living space of the city exists as representation and projection and experience as much as it exists as bricks and mortar or concrete and steel" (p. 180).

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