



SPACEPOL PANEL

TURKOLOGENTAG CONFERENCE

VIENNA 21-23 SEPTEMBER 2023

A capital city still in the (un)making? Ankara in its centenary of becoming capital of modern Turkey

Ankara: The capital city of the Turkish Republic; historically known as Ancyra and Angora. The city, which became the symbol of National Struggle as being the administrative center of the War of Independence after 1919, became the capital city of Turkish Republic on October 13, 1923. Reasons of this choice was the physical and geographical position of Ankara, also the unique historical and cultural stance of the city as it is a door opening to Anatolia and some late-Ottoman debates about the transfer of the capital city to central Anatolia after wars with Russia. Our objective with this panel is to address the symbolic and political production of urban space in Ankara and its impact on the urbanisation and the morphology of the city as well as on the everyday life of inhabitants. We would like particularly to discuss two periods: early republican era and AKP era in terms of urbanisation models and power relations and struggle between various actors (public and private). We would like also to shed light on the current problems of the city related to the conflictual urbanisation models and to the absence of a consistent urbanisation programme. The final question to discuss will be the place and the role of inhabitants in this process. How do they deal with this chaotic scene of urbanisation? What are their survival strategies and tools to adapt and to create their own perceived space in the sense of Lefebvrian theory?

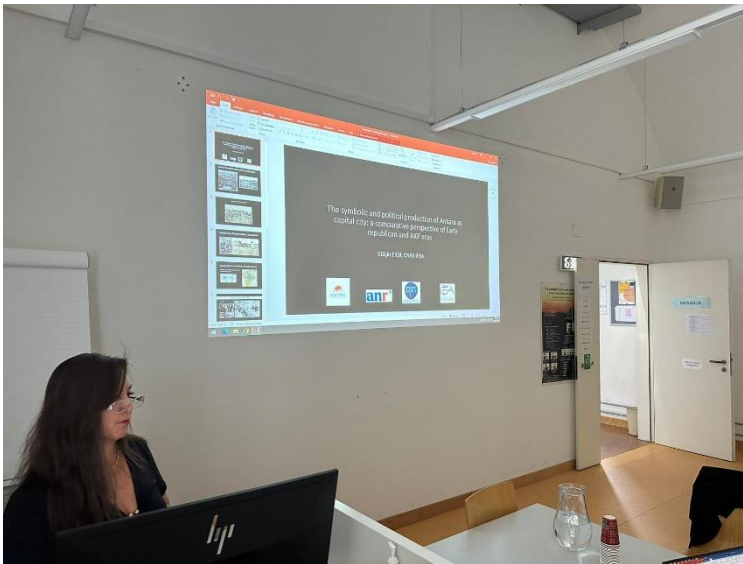


Spatial representation of Ankara through its emblem: from secular nationalism to Turkish-Islamic synthesis

Gülçin Erdi, CNRS/Ifea, Turkey

The symbolic and political production of Ankara as capital city: a comparative perspective of Early republican and AKP eras

In her presentation Professor Erdi explored the symbolic and political production of Ankara as the capital city of Turkey, with a comparative perspective on the Early Republican era and the AKP (Justice and Development Party) era. In the aftermath of the War of Independence (1919-1922), Ankara was declared the capital of the Turkish Republic in 1923. The leaders of the time, including Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, aimed to create a national identity and unity within the newly formed country, and they saw the selection of Ankara as the capital as a way to symbolize this unity. During the Early Republican period, Ankara underwent significant urban development under the guidance of German planner Hermann Jansen. The city was designed to reflect modernity and secularism, with the creation of wide boulevards, public spaces, and a distinct architectural style. The new Turkish state aimed to separate religion from the public sphere, and this was reflected in the absence of religious symbols in public spaces.



However, in the AKP era, marked by the rise of political Islam, Ankara experienced a transformation in its urban planning and symbolism. Mayor Melih Gökçek, who was initially elected with conservative Islamist views, played a pivotal role in reshaping the city. His approach focused on utilitarian urban planning, prioritizing roads and infrastructure over public spaces. This marked a

significant departure from the secular, modernist vision of the Early Republican period.

The presentation highlighted how public spaces in Ankara became battlegrounds for competing political ideologies. The AKP-led changes aimed to redefine the city's image and symbolism, incorporating elements of Islam, consumerism, and Turkish nationalism into the urban fabric. Examples include the renovation of the Youth Park and the demolition of the Bank of Cities to make way for a mosque.

Overall, in her presentation Professor Erdi illustrated how the symbolic and political production of Ankara's urban space has evolved over time, reflecting shifts in political ideologies and values. It underscored the complex relationship between urban planning, symbolism, and identity in the context of a capital city.

Savaş Zafer Şahin, University of Hacı Bayram Veli, Turkey

Who Plans the Capital City? Winners and Losers of 100 Years of Urban Planning in Ankara

Professor Şahin focused into the intricate history of urban planning in Ankara, with a focus on certain key questions: how urban planning has been instrumentalized in transforming Ankara from a medium-sized city into a modern metropolis. He also explored the contradictions and socio-spatial divergences that have emerged during this transformation and the implications for different sections of society. Additionally, his presentation scrutinized who holds the power in the planning process.

The presentation identified a vicious cycle in urban planning in the capital city, involving the identification of dominant planning paradigms by the state, the exploitation of urban land, and the subsequent shaping of urban space by various actors. This cycle raises questions about the legitimacy of existing land uses and their impact on urban development.

Professor Şahin then went on to discuss different periods of Ankara's urban planning history, from the early Republican period to the present day. Each era is characterized by unique influences, stakeholders, and consequences. For example, the early Republican period saw the institutionalization of urban planning and the emergence of a middle-class citizenry, while the liberalization period witnessed urban interventions by political figures and the emergence of a "dual" city.



Subsequent phases, such as central planning and neoliberalization, brought changes in land laws and urban development strategies, leading to the rise of housing cooperatives and the transformation of squatter settlements. The presentation also highlighted the impact of populist policies and authoritarian governance on the city's urban development in recent years.

In conclusion, the challenges faced by Ankara, including ecological, identity, and urban crises were discussed. Professor Şahin called for a new debate on the "right to the capital city" as the city grapples with these complex issues and the consequences of a century of urban planning decisions.

Emrah Söylemez, General Directorate of Spatial Planning, Turkey

From Estergon to Lofts: Clustering Analytics and the Detection of Sharp Boundaries of Fuzziness Produced by Gated Communities in Ankara



With his presentation titled "From Estergon to Lofts: Clustering Analytics and the Detection of Sharp Boundaries of Fuzziness Produced by Gated Communities in Ankara" Emrah Söylemez delved into the complex dynamics of spatial segregation and convergence/divergence between gated communities and their surrounding neighbourhoods in Ankara, with a specific focus on the districts of Çankaya and

Keçiören.

Despite their similar population sizes, Çankaya and Keçiören diverge significantly in terms of socio-economic characteristics, offering an intriguing context to investigate the intricate relationship between housing patterns and spatial segregation. A central aspect of this study is the exploration of the "fuzzy" dimension that characterizes the divergence between gated communities and their neighbouring areas.

The research seeks to answer several critical questions, such as whether the naming conventions of gated communities reflect ideological distinctions within Ankara's urban development history and how the identities of these gated communities differ. It also investigates whether gatedness exhibits uniformity in both spatial and social aspects. The historical evolution of housing production in Ankara, transitioning from state and cooperative efforts to the emergence of gated communities, was also examined.

Findings from Emrah Söylemez's research indicate that gated communities often embody elements of exclusion in the housing market, offering luxury, comfort, and security that create a privileged lifestyle for residents. Notably, Keçiören exhibits a denser and more homogeneous price distribution, suggesting similarities in housing prices among individuals with similar socio-cultural backgrounds. Security is a prominent concern in both districts, with differences in how it is emphasized in housing advertisements.

The transformation of Ankara was explored in the context of gated communities, which, despite appearing as isolated entities, encompass intricate patterns of socio-spatial differentiation influenced by the local context. In conclusion, this research shed light on the multifaceted nature of gated communities and their impact on the urban fabric of Ankara, addressing issues of exclusion, pricing, and security within the context of housing.

Pınar Cobanyılmaz, Gazi University, Turkey

In Which Dimensions the Right to City is Invaded in Ankara?

In her presentation, Dr Cobanyılmaz discussed how the right to the city in Ankara's Imrahor Valley faces consistent violations across various dimensions, marked by construction-oriented capital accumulation and an overproduction of the built environment, leading to antagonistic spatial interventions that disregard the city's republican memory and erode the right to the city. Non-participatory decision-making processes and the circumvention of legal procedures have established exceptional power mechanisms that suppress social opposition, accompanied by rent distribution privileges, consent, and coercive mechanisms that prioritize exploitation over liveability and memory. Imrahor Valley's significance stems from its unique ecological attributes as a hydrological, microclimatic, and air-cleansing system for Ankara, with potential implications for future food and water supplies. However, the valley's relative invisibility contributes to the lack of citizen voices against government interventions.



The planning history of Imrahor Valley until the 2000s portrayed it as an integral part of Ankara's green system, emphasizing the protection of natural areas. Yet, lax green system policies and unapproved plans led to squatter development, culminating in heightened urbanization pressures post-2000. This transformation into a focal investment area for urban projects resulted in high-density built environments and the instrumentalization of urban planning to legitimize projects like the Güneypark Urban Regeneration Project and Canal Ankara/Nation Garden Project, moving away from comprehensive planning to fragmented, project-oriented development.

The city planning chambers have played a pivotal role in defending the right to the city in Imrahor Valley, utilizing legal efforts to oppose projects and partial plans that threaten citizens' rights. Notably, a 2007 Metropolitan Municipality plan showed promise with its emphasis on continuous green corridors but later shifted toward inappropriate high-density housing, neglecting valley protection. The 2017 upper-scale plan further deviated from the Ankara 2023 Master Plan, aiming to maximize rent and gentrify the region, disregarding scientific data and obstructing air circulation, leading to increased disaster risks. An amendment to the Law of Metropolitan Municipalities in 2010 granted unilateral decision-making authority to metropolitan municipalities, undermining democratization and localization principles. Despite the chamber efforts and court rulings favouring cancellation, the pro-governmental metropolitan municipality continued unlawful implementation, further damaging the valley and

perpetuating institutional conflicts and inequality in urban services and access. Imrahor Valley remains a contested and unresolved part of the city, casting doubt on the unity and coherence of the capital.



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