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Exploring lost spaces towards regaining them for urban life: The case of Konya historical city center

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Abstract

The functions, values, and meanings of cities, which have been in constant change and transformation throughout history, are changing in response to rapidly changing conditions, particularly in recent times. The areas where this change can be observed most concretely are generally urban spaces. Some places in the city, which cannot keep up with this speed, may lose their structural or functional use over time and remain idle when they are not fed or equipped with suitable activities that will integrate with the environmental character and bring vitality. Therefore, within the very valuable urban land, they may become lost spaces for the city. It seems very important to regain such spaces in the rhythm of daily urban life, considering that they have strong economic, social, and physical potential, as well as being lost. From this point of view, the aim of the study is to identify the lost spaces in the historical city center of Konya, which was chosen as the sample area, and to identify the urban space(s) that should be intervened in with priority among the identified lost spaces. The Trancik method was used to find the lost spaces in the area using detailed analysis. With the help of figure-ground, linkage, and place theories in Roger Trancik's book titled "Finding Lost Space: Theories of Urban Design" (1986), both morphological analyses (figure-ground and linkage analyses) and questionnaires and cognitive maps were used to understand "place" and measure its perceptibility. The research to understand the "place" was carried out with a total of 50 people using the random sampling technique. Then, within the scope of the study, all the findings obtained from figure-ground, linkage, and place analyses were synthesized, and all lost spaces within the sample area were determined. Among these identified lost spaces, Kılıçarslan Square and its environs were determined to be the most undetected, unused, disliked, and first intervention requested by the participants. This result underlines the necessity of saving an important public space in the heart of the city from its current transition space and using it more effectively through scientific evidence. This result underlines the necessity of saving an important public space in the heart of the city from its current transition space and using it more effectively through scientific evidence. With its effective use, the area will be reintroduced to the city.

Keywords: lost space, figure-ground theory, linkage theory, place theory, Konya historical city center

1. Introduction

'Thirty sticks meet in the middle of the wheel. The small gap between them turns the wheel. The mud bowl performs its function in the void it surrounds. Doors and windows are made on the walls of a room, but the main thing that works is the void of the room. All components have benefits, but it is the void that functions.' Based on Tzu's (6th century BC) explanation of the importance of the

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****This study is prepared from the thesis titled "Kentsel Tasarım Bağlamında Kayıp Mekânların İrdelenmesi ve Kent Yaşamına Yeniden Kazandırılması, Konya Kenti Örneği" which was accepted as the Master Thesis of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Konya Technical University Graduate Education Institute in 2022.*

void, Kuban (2013) expresses it as the simplest functional definition of physical space and states that movement or life is in the void.

The void, which has such an important function, is also a very valuable urban component for cities with a common living space. Namely, cities consist of urban voids and solids with the most general and abstract classification. These two urban components, as opposed to each other, are actually two complementary basic elements that enable each other to exist.

The presence and the ratio of one affect the other. Therefore, the completion of urban solids and voids, their being in balance, and the effective and continuous use of the relationship between them will increase the success of urban outer space and urban life and make it possible for a rich urban organization to emerge (Akarsu, 2001; Kuloğlu, 2013). Roger Trancik underlines that the relationship system creates urban spaces and gives the feeling of being surrounded by these spaces. This system is between urban voids and solids. According to him, if this relationship is provided correctly, the time-space construction can be better perceived (Trancik, 1986).

When voids and solids are considered on an urban scale, the man-made environment created by the combination of structures describes the solids, and the remaining areas describe the voids. These voids may be designed as squares, streets, courtyards, or recreation areas, or they may appear as undesigned, unplanned, and idle (Akı and Erdönmez, 2005). If these areas have emerged accidentally or unintentionally as a result of any urban change and transformation process, in some cases, it may become difficult to define them as spaces, and they may appear dysfunctional. This situation does not valid to every undesigned area. If the area has exceeded the human scale, remained undefined and dysfunctional, it has a high potential to become a lost place for the city. Furthermore, a space is considered "lost" if it lacks any meaning or belonging to its users and has not entered social memory. In other words, lost spaces are those in which people do not feel a sense of belonging or are not desired by their users.

Such areas, which have lost their effectiveness or have not been able to form at all, can be perceived as unsafe and undesirable problem areas, but they also contain potential that can be discovered and brought back to the city. In this way, they will be able to contribute to the general health, vitality, and security of cities and reveal their hidden resources. In other words, despite their negative effects on the city, such spaces have the potential to improve society's quality of life in environmental, social, economic, cultural, and visual contexts (Trancik, 1986; Bowman and Pagano, 2004; Smith, 2008; Girolamo, 2012; De Sola-Morales, 2013; Lee and Hwang, 2015). As a matter of fact, it is obvious how strong the economic, social, functional, and aesthetic benefits of such a recovery on a national and international scale are. In such cases, even the smallest improvement to the area has resulted in a significant advancement for the city. Therefore, identifying such potential areas and regaining them for the city is of great importance for future urban life. This is also important in terms of the proper and beneficial use of valuable urban land.

In this context, the main purpose of the study is to determine the areas that can be described as lost spaces in the Konya Historical City Center, which was selected as the case area in the city, and to determine the urban spaces that need to be intervened in primarily among the lost spaces. Although there are various practices on regaining to the city, there is no study in the relevant literature, especially in the national literature, on how to identify such spaces. This increases the originality of the study.

The hypotheses of the study for the determined main purpose are as follows;

- Hypothesis 1: Undefined areas where urban solid-void balance has not been formally established are at the same time devoid of perceptibility and the like, and therefore, they are lost spaces.
- Hypothesis 2: Areas that are not linked to other functional areas of the city in terms of accessibility turn into lost spaces over time.
- Hypothesis 3: Spaces that are not remembered or perceived in the city are lost spaces.

- Hypothesis 4: Spaces that are not liked, desired, or create a sense of “place” become lost spaces as a result of not being used and experienced.

Based on the determined purpose and hypotheses, the method used in the case study area was the Trancik (1986) method, the details of which are given in the section below. While the two theories of the method (figure-ground and linkage theories) were examined by morphological analyses, the third (place theory) was conducted with a total of 50 people using the random sampling technique through questionnaires and cognitive maps.

2. Urban void- Lost Space Relationship

There are numerous definitions of the subject in the research on urban voids. There are studies that define urban voids as unsafe buffer zones without any functions or borders that can host illegal activities (Jonas and Rahmann, 2015). However, there are also studies emphasizing that such areas, especially those located in residential areas, are significant potential areas for the city because they have the potential for regaining (De Sola-Morales, 2013). As a counterweight to the rigid boundaries of the artificial environment, urban voids are more flexible and offer the potential for innovation and creativity at various time periods (Smith, 2008). Therefore, the potential of the voids in the urban space, which are considered as a whole by people living in the city, where individuals interact and perform any physical action, is undeniable. Besides this, the voids in the urban environment are also important as they basically provide the opportunity for the fluid movement of people and animals, sounds and smells, as well as goods and services.

Kevin Lynch (1960) states in his book *'The Image of the City'* that there should be urban voids in terms of urban image and wayfinding, and that individuals should be able to define and fill these voids themselves. According to Lynch (1960), although urban voids are seen as disadvantaged areas, they are also urban components that give the city an identity. According to Ebner (1999), solids around urban voids are an integral part of the built environment because of the existence of urban activities and because they are a part of the urban space production process.

When the changes and transformations of urban spaces in the historical process are examined, it is seen that the movements of modernism and postmodernism have left their marks on the physical development and formation of the city. These have been quite effective in urban spaces, especially since the 1950s. According to Tibbalds (1988), while 'building' was the most important element of urban design in the modern era, 'voids between buildings' became more important than 'buildings' in the postmodern period. Therefore, it is seen that the dysfunctional and idle urban voids in the city, which were not discussed adequately in the modernism period, became more important with the understanding of "living things live in the void" that emerged in the subsequent postmodern period, and the necessity of designing such spaces in a livable way was underlined. Urban voids *(i.e., open, abandoned spaces, areas without buildings, or in-between spaces*) have been researched more extensively in the field of urban design in the postmodernist period. In this period, the conceptualization of "lost space" has been discussed more in the related literature. Trancik (1986, p.225) states at this point that *'maybe we should finally understand that history and environment are two sides of architecture, that no building stands alone, and that architectural solutions, no matter how brilliant they are, cannot overcome the limitations of the urban fabric in which they are placed*'.

The figure below shows both the processes that are thought to be effective in the change of urban space and the definitions of 'lost space' that found their place in the relevant literature in the process (Figure 1). As can be seen from Figure 1, definitions related to the concept have increased and diversified, especially after the 1970s (dead zone, empty land, residual space, lost area, unused area, void, border area, abandoned sites, dead space, abandoned area, lost space, etc.). Since each city has its own unique dynamics, it is natural that the concept is referred to using different terms (Özeren, 2012). 'Lost spaces', first put forward by Trancik in 1986 to define random areas that do not make a positive contribution to the user in terms of content, that need redesign, and are considered the current problems of cities, can be thought of as neglected areas with little

contribution to their surroundings. According to Montgomery (1998), such areas emerge as a result of insufficient use of space in an urban area isolated from the walking flow. These kinds of areas generally disrupt the continuity of the city and are not included in the mental maps of people (Nelischer, 2015, cited in Lek, 2015). Based on the definitions of many researchers, such spaces can be briefly defined as spaces that do not contribute to the people living in the city and their environment, can be of various sizes, have not been improved for many reasons, have been neglected, have not been regained to the city, are useless, empty, obscure, and residual spaces.

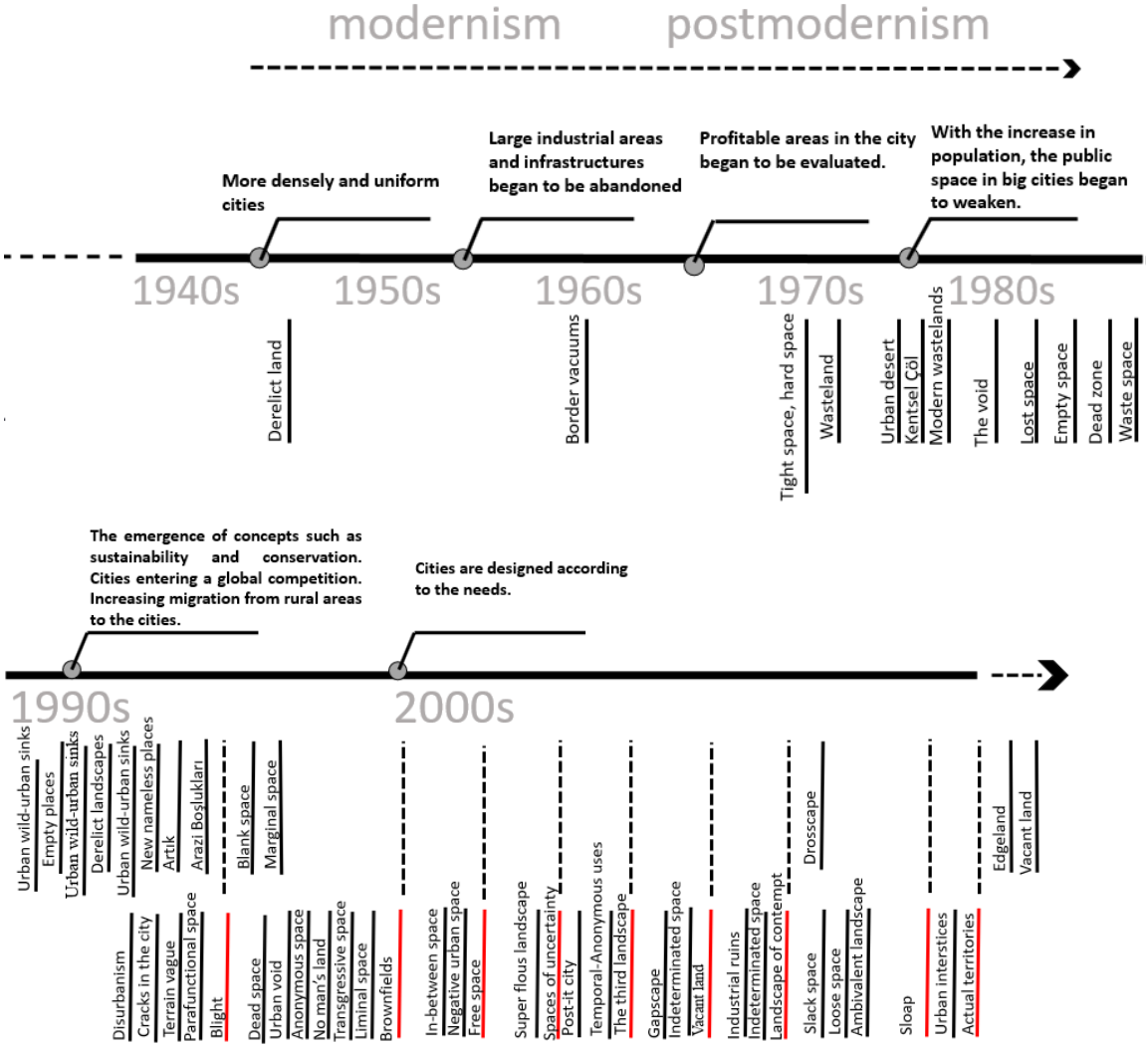


Figure 1 The stages of formation of lost spaces in the historical process and the terms used for such spaces (created by the authors based on Doron, 2007; Girolama, 2012; Boz, 2016)

Such spaces can indicate an area or a single building in the city. In some cases, however, they can also be encountered in a socio-cultural manner. For example; in public spaces where social life should be felt strongly, sometimes the loss of such feelings can also be considered a lost space for the city. For a city dweller or a tourist coming to the city for the first time, this will naturally cause different perceptions. An area that cannot be considered a loss for a tourist coming to the city for the first time can be seen as a loss for the city dweller, as it brings with it their own memories, stories, social memory, and a sense of 'place'. Therefore, it can be said that the perception of the city is also effective in the definition of "lost space" (Zarebidaki et al., 2013). In order to experience a space, it must first be perceived, and then an awareness of it should be created. Otherwise, the space will become idle over time as it is far from being experienced (Topçu and Topçu, 2012).

The lost spaces in question can also be produced in a planned manner with the gradual changes in the values, meanings, identities, and functions of the cities, which have been undergoing social and spatial change and transformation recently. The spaces that cannot keep up with the pace of

this process of change and transformation in the city gradually lose their structure and function or become unused and lost spaces and find themselves removed from urban life (Akaslan, 2006). Trancik (1986) indicates abandoned beaches, shipyards, evacuated military areas, industrial complexes, neglected parks, and marginal mass housing projects as examples of these areas. Apart from these, many other types of lost space can also be listed. These spaces can be huge parking lots in the city; areas under bridges; unused railway lines; unused courtyards in residential areas; squares that have exceeded human scale; bazaars used only on certain days of the week; seasonally used areas; unused traffic intersections, and undefined voids between buildings. In some cases, geography can also cause the formation of lost space, such as the limiting features of geographical features like rivers and hills, or the lost spaces that arise due to geographical voids created by ruggedness (Narayanan, 2012).

Roger Trancik (1986) collects the causes of lost space in 5 main groups in his study; (1) increasing dependence on the automobile, (2) the attitude of the modern movement towards urban voids, (3) the land use policies of zoning studies, (4) the reluctance of institutions to take responsibility for the public urban environment, (5) abandonment of the industrial, military or transportation places within the inner core of the city.

According to the researches, such urban voids tend to maintain their derelict status. This is mostly due to the property problems, not being able to be categorized in the common planning system, and physical conditions that cannot be improved. Such reasons also discourage new developments and lead to further abandonment. This effect may spread to the environ of the neighborhoods and cause a decrease in property values and tax revenues. Since they are lack of basic services, they can become places that threaten social security and cause significant social problems (Greenberg et al., 2000).

3. Method: Finding Lost Spaces via Trancik Theories

3.1. Description of the Design Theories of Roger Trancik (1986)

In his book titled 'Finding Lost Spaces; Theories of Urban Design', Roger Trancik (1986) cites three basic urban design theories for finding lost spaces and explains them in detail. These are (1) figure-ground theory, (2) linkage theory, and (3) place theory (Figure 2). When these theories are considered separately, it is important to indicate why the lost spaces have emerged and how to find them.

Figure-ground theory, which constitutes the first theory, means the harmonious interaction and organization of urban solids and voids. If this interaction between urban solids and voids is perceptible, defined, and complete, the spatial sequence can function successfully, and the character of the urban space is formed by establishing a spatial setup. In contrast, when the dual relationship between solids and voids is disorganized and weak, fragmented developments that are not discernible in urban space can be observed. In this case, the pieces can be separated and turned into lost spaces, and urban voids can become undefined. Therefore, Trancik (1986) emphasizes the necessity of considering the design of the object in connection with the structuring of the void and the importance of the relationship between solids and voids in the legibility of the urban space. He states that this relationship is associated with the shape and location of buildings, the design of urban equipment, and the different forms of orientation (grid, angular, linear, radial concentric, axial, and organic layout).

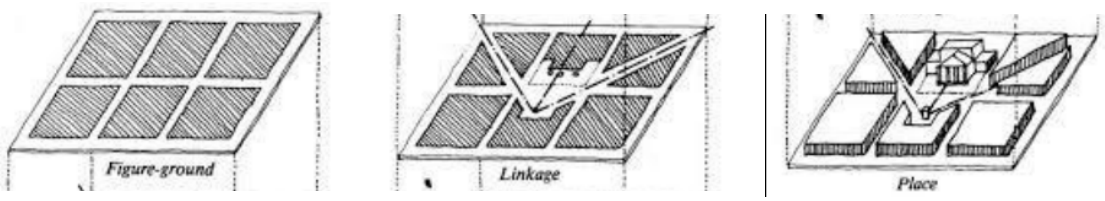


Figure 2 Diagram of urban design theories (Trancik, 1986)

One of the best-known examples of figure-ground maps is Giambattista Nolli's “Pianta Grande di Roma” of 1748 (Figure 3). This new cartographic approach by Nolli is eye-opening, instead of the old maps that show the symbols of the city, which are more art-oriented and depicted with illustrated maps. Namely, these maps are important for observing and interpreting the development of the city, especially the relationship between open space and built form. However, it also has certain limitations, as it ignores all information beyond two-dimensionality, such as topography and building height. In this theory, a figure-ground relationship is established by evaluating solid masses (buildings) as figures (black) and voids (white) as grounds, and this relationship has its own characteristics in every urban space (Trancik, 1986).

Figure 3 Italian architect Nolli’s map of Rome (Trancik, 1986)

In his relevant book, Trancik (1986) refers to the types of solids-voids in urban space, which also differ in terms of their physical and functional characteristics. According to him, urban solids can be diversified as the central and symbolic public buildings, repetitive urban blocks zoned as living, working and commercial areas, and buildings defining boundaries. Urban voids, on the other hand, are arcades and passageways between private and public spaces, the voids within the blocks, the circulation areas between streets and squares, and parks and gardens and linear open-green spaces associated with waterways (Figure 4).

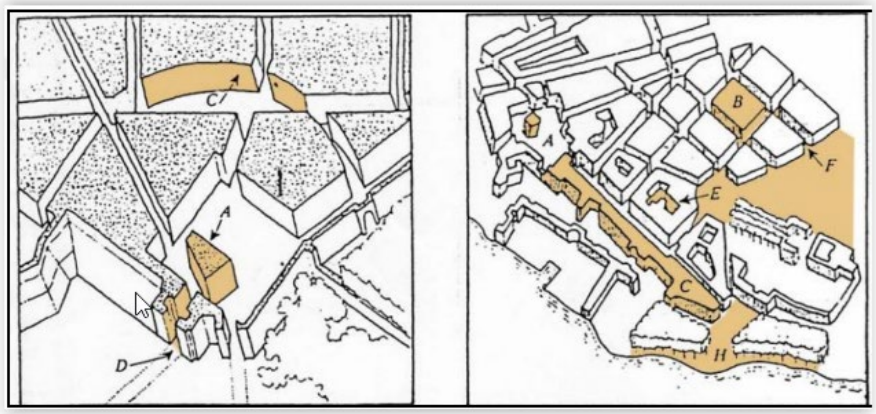


Figure 4 Distribution of urban solids and voids in urban space (A-Public buildings, B-Urban blocks, C-Boundary buildings, D-Passageways, E-Voids within the block, F- Pattern of boulevards and squares, H-Linear open spaces) (Trancik, 1986)

The second theory developed by Trancik is the linkage theory. This theory is based on the study of streets, pedestrian paths, linear open spaces, or other linking elements that physically connect parts of the city. He claims that the shape and location of buildings, as well as orientation movement in various forms, can establish the urban solid-void relationship. He suggests that six different

linkage models, namely grid, angular, curvilinear, radial concentric, axial, and organic, produce different urban fabrics and urban solid-void relationships in different combinations (Trancik 1986, Figure 5).

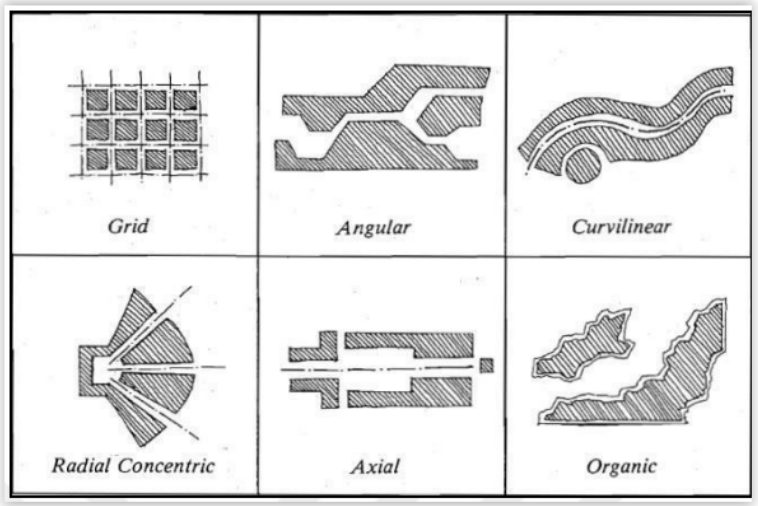


Figure 5 Linkage varieties in different typologies (Trancik, 1986)

According to Fumihiko Maki (1964), linkages mean gluing the elements of the city together. It is only through linkage that all layers of activity are integrated to achieve the final physical structure of the city (Maki, 1964). Maki (1964) cites 3 collective forms in terms of linkage; (1) the compositional form consisting of independent structures, in which the linkage is perceived indirectly, (2) the mega-form with a formally defined outer framework containing various hierarchical and interconnected functions and elements, and (3) the 'group form' which is derived from the increasing accumulation of spatially interconnected elements along an axis, and seen in the spatial organization of many historical settlements (Figure 6). All of these linkage types are important to understand the solid-void relationship in urban space.

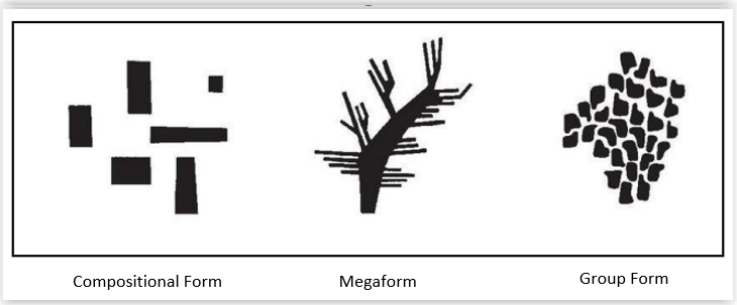


Figure 6 Fumihiko Maki's collective linkage forms (Maki, 1964)

The third urban space design theory that Trancik (1986) cites is the 'place theory'. While the concept of 'space' refers to a purely physical formation, the concept of 'place' refers to the meaningfulness of the space, because spaces are places that, beyond their physicality, consist of people's experiences and memories. In other words, a 'space' can be a 'place' if life experiences take place in it, if it causes people to experience, like, love, and feel as if they belong there. This is what is meant by definitions such as 'the spirit of the place, and ‘the sense of place' in the related literature. As Trancik emphasizes, 'people need a relatively stable place system in order to develop themselves, their social life and their culture. These needs provide the man-made domain with emotional content and a presence that is more than physical' (Trancik, 1986). Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that the spaces that are not associated with people, that are not liked, desired, and hence not used for these reasons, are also lost. According to Relph (2008), people protect and

own the places that they relate to and that have meaning. People want to protect these places, which are meaningful to them, and preserve them as they are in their memories.

Trancik's place theory is about understanding the cultural and human characteristics of physical space in spatial designs. If we think of space as a void bounded by the urban mass that has the potential to connect people and places, it will only become a place when it is given a contextual meaning derived from cultural or regional content. In addition to these, this theory also addresses user needs (Trancik, 1986).

Place theory emerges as a theory that completes the figure-ground and linkage theories. Areas with only a well-established physical structure, a balanced urban solid-void ratio, and clearly defined links will require a different approach to prevent the formation of lost spaces or find lost spaces in the city. Such approaches need to be supported by place theory, as Trancik (1986) states. In other words, a spatial pattern or an area/space that works in terms of figure-ground and linkage will emerge as a lost space if it does not contain any meaning for its users, if people do not feel they belong to that space/area, if it does not occupy a place in social memory, and if it is not used. As a result, it is important to evaluate these three theories together and consider them in relation to one another. Only with such a perspective will the designer succeed in strengthening the solids and voids of a city simultaneously, by organizing and linking, by responding to human needs, and by creating a successful urban pattern that can give the space an identity and character (Trancik, 1986).

In this context, Kevin Lynch (1960) cites three basic approaches for defining place, analyzing cities better, and implementing a more successful design: (1) *Legibility:* the parts of the city can be easily perceived and easily placed in the mind as a meaningful and organized whole; (2*) Identity:* masses and spaces are harmonious and comprehensible (3*) Imageability:* the city should be able to be experienced by people and have the perception of movement. Lynch (1960) identified 5 urban elements that were effective in the perception, reading, and imagining of urban space, thus 'making the city memorable': paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks (Figure 7). The organized existence of these urban elements in the city is important in order to feel the sense of place more comfortably compared to unorganized cities. According to Lynch (1960), the user begins to perceive the city as a whole as s/he experiences the spaces s/he is in. Without experience, it is impossible to feel the sense of the place.

Figure 7 Kevin Lynch's (1960) 5 main urban elements that make the city memorable (Lynch, 1960)

3.2. Adapting Trancik's Design Theories to the Method used in the Case Study

Figure-ground, linkage, and place theories, which constitute the basis of the method, were investigated with various analyses specific to the case area in the field research section. In this content, morphological analyses of the sample area were made with the aid of figure-ground and linkage theories. In order to make more detailed evaluations in the context of figure-ground, the study area was first divided into sub-districts that differ typologically. Analysis and field observations were carried out in these sub-districts with the help of the criteria determined. These criteria were; solid-void ratio, average number of storeys, building order, dominant function of the district, functional structure of the voids, and defining solids of the district. All interpretations in the context of figure-ground were guided by these criteria. For the analysis made with the help of linkage theory, all connections within the study area were mapped, and areas where there was no

physical permeability were determined. In this regard, areas that have a higher potential for being lost spaces have been identified.

As for the questioning of the quality of the area as a 'place', questionnaires and cognitive maps conducted using the random sampling technique with a total of 50 participants who used the area were instructive. In order to have at least 80% power in the study, at least 46 participants were determined to be in the study group if the effect size was 0.40 at the alpha=0.05 significance level. However, the number of participants was increased to 50 to account for possible sampling errors. The GPower 3.1.9.4 program was used while determining the sample number. It is also worth noting that the questionnaires were conducted under the conditions of the COVID pandemic.

The questionnaires to be held in December 2021 consist of three parts. In the first part of the questionnaire, inquiries were made regarding user profiles such as gender, age, education level, occupation, and income status. In the second section, how the users experienced the area was investigated by questioning how often they used it and for what purpose they came there. In addition to this, they were asked to cite the memorable places in this area, and it was intended to identify the places they liked most and least, the areas where they used to meet, memorable street-boulevard names, the landmarks, and the spaces in the area that were perceived as either not perceived, used or not used, and liked or disliked. The questions up to this point were open-ended and did not give any clues about the answers, so the participants were not directed, and consequently, expressing their opinions directly became prominent. In the third section, the participants were asked to draw a cognitive map, as far as they remembered, in order to introduce the area. All the data obtained from the cognitive maps was then classified according to Lynch's (1960) five basic urban elements that make the city *memorable (path, edge, district, node, and landmark).* Then, the cognitive maps drawn by 50 participants were combined into a single map according to this classification. Thus, a cumulative cognitive map of the area was created. The data obtained from the questionnaires was entered into the system through the SPSS program and evaluated with the help of frequency analysis.

Then, all the analyses *(figure-ground and linkage analyses, questionnaires, cognitive maps)* were evaluated and interpreted together, and potential lost spaces that were not experienced or perceived by the users in the case area and that were imbalanced in a morphological sense were revealed. In the next stage, the area that most urgently needed intervention among these potential lost spaces was determined.

4. Case Study Findings

4.1. Case Area: Konya Historical City Center

With its central location, Konya's historical city center is an urban area that serves the entire urban population in terms of accessibility, where economic and administrative services are concentrated, and which has a high historical-cultural value. By virtue of these features, it constitutes the vision point of the city. Therefore, it is significant to increase the quality of life in this region in every aspect, and to protect and develop the area. Since each lost space detected in the area will negatively affect the identity and image of the city, the regaining of these areas to the city and their qualitative transformation is an essential step for the city.

The historical city center of Konya was selected within the scope of the study because it is the most visited area by tourists, hosts many monuments, examples of civil architecture, commercial areas, residential areas, and administrative service buildings, and has the transportation route most frequently used by the inhabitants of the city. It is prominent that this transportation axis connects the most important landmarks of the city (*i.e., Alâeddin Hill and Mevlâna Tomb*) and is one of the main physical determinants of the historical development of the city.

Some environmental effects were considered while determining the boundaries of the historical city center research area. These boundaries can be listed as follows: The western part of the research area is surrounded by Alaeddin Hill and Kultur Park. The southern part is surrounded by

the Şükran Mahallesi Urban Transformation Project. The northern part is defined by the expropriation works in Şems Neighborhood, which is one of the special project areas; the urban transformation zone and Üçler Cemetery in the eastern part of the Mevlâna Tomb. All these boundaries are shown in Figure 8a. Important nodes within the research area are also shown in Figure 8b.

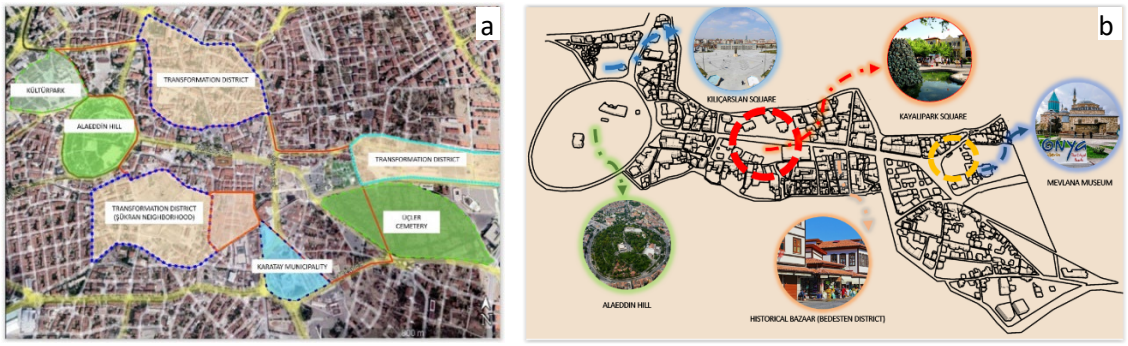


Figure 8 Boundaries of the research area (a), Important nodes in the research area (b) (Ünal, 2022)

4.2. Findings

4.2.1. Evaluations via Figure-Ground Theory

The preparation of the map for the figure-ground analysis constituted the first step of the examination of the urban fabric. Based on the classification of the urban elements that made up the urban solids and voids stated in Trancik's figure-ground theory, the urban solids and voids determined in the area were plotted on the map as seen in the figure below (Figure 9).

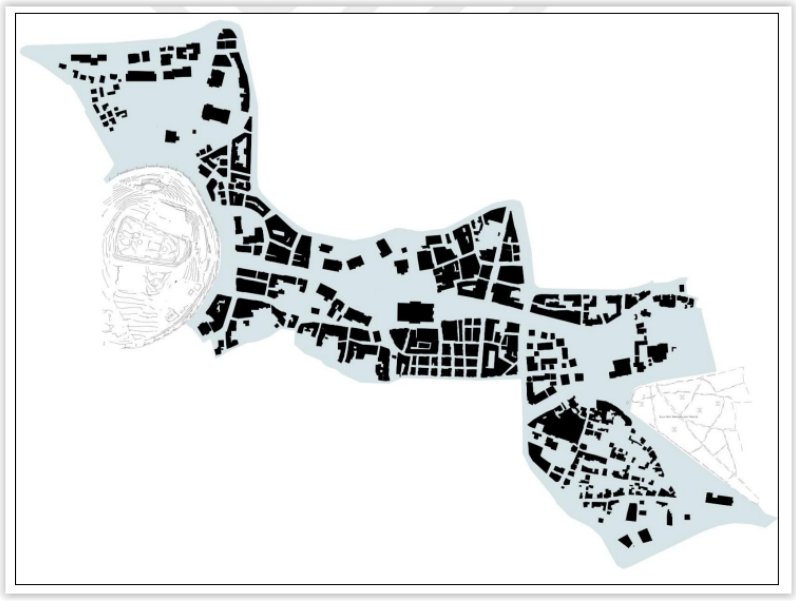


Figure 9 The figure-ground map of Konya historical city center research area (Ünal, 2022)

According to calculations made via the map, the total area of the research area is 56.7 ha. 18 ha (41%) of this consists of urban solids, and 28.5 ha (59%) of urban voids. The urban voids are mostly made up of squares, streets, parks, residential courtyards, and parking lots, while the urban solids are mostly made up of urban blocks and public buildings.When the entire research area is evaluated as a whole, it can be seen that the solids-to-voids ratio is evenly distributed. However, when the space is divided into parts, it appears difficult to talk about a solids-voids balance occurring at the same rate in each part; in other words, feeling the same balance in a fragmented spatial organization appears difficult.Therefore, in order to emphasize this situation and examine it in more detail, the case area was divided into 8 different sub-districts according to their morphological

structures. Among these districts, the C and F districts were divided into small parts to be examined in more detail as they also contain different patterns (Figure 10).

Apart from the solid-void ratio, as stated in the method section of the study, some criteria were used to evaluate the research area in detail in the context of this analysis. All of these criteria can also influence the perception of the space. In other words, the calculations made in two dimensions were evaluated in detail with the observations of the authors in the third dimension. Figure-ground analysis results are given in the figure below (Figure 11). Based on Figure 11 and the observation results, the evaluations of urban solids and voids for each morphological district are as follows;

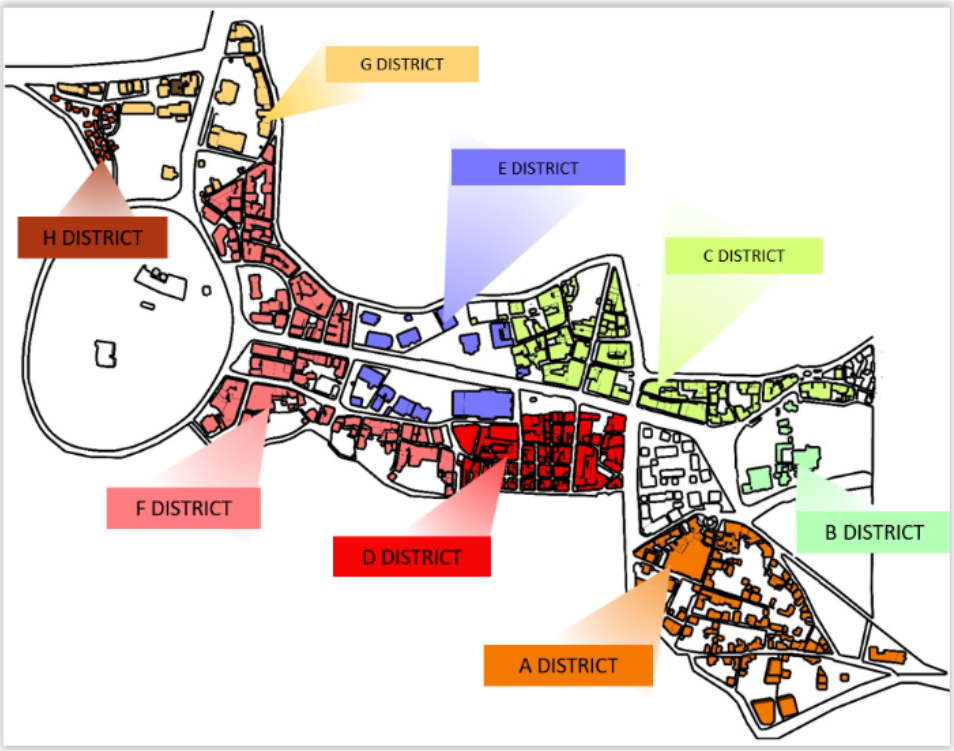
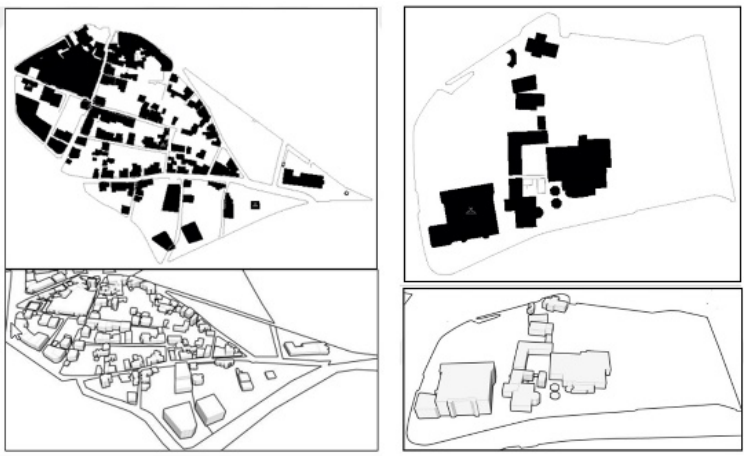


Figure 10 Districts with different morphological characteristics within the research area (Ünal, 2022)



District A District B

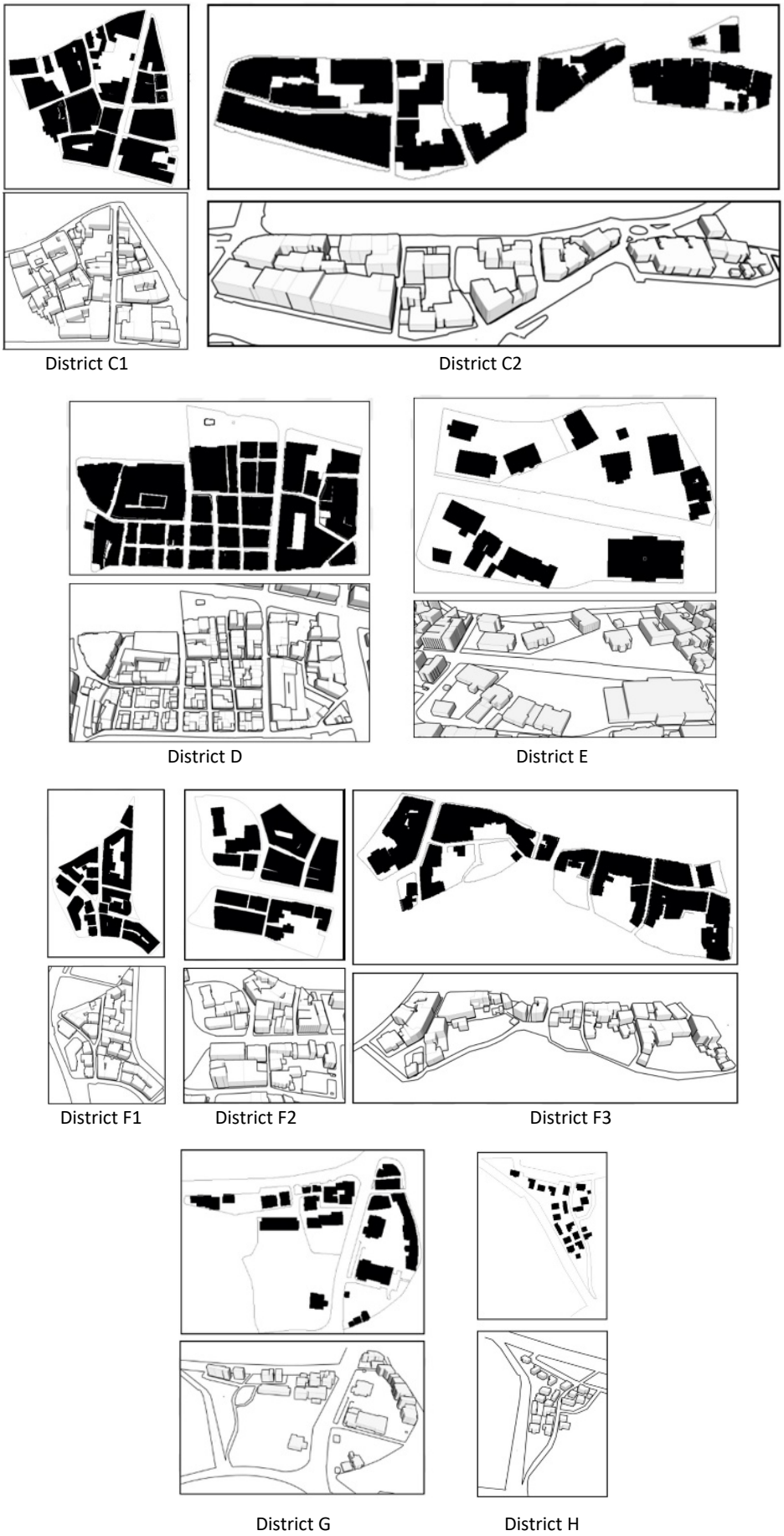


Figure 11 Figure-ground analyses of sub-districts with morphologically different characteristics (Ünal, 2022)

District A- South of the Mevlâna Tomb

- The district covers Piri Mehmet Pasha Bazaar, which is a significant commercial area, shopping arcades, historical buildings, residential areas, and public buildings. The buildings are in the form of 2-3-story detached houses, and they do not define the blocks.

- It is 9.1 ha in total, 28.5% of which consists of urban solids (2.6 ha), whereas 71.5% (6.5 ha) is composed of urban voids. Considering the solids-to-voids ratio, the district seems rather empty. While this causes the linkage between the buildings to be broken and lost spaces to be formed between the buildings, it also prevents the easy perception of the space.

-The area has become increasingly disconnected from one another as a result of the demolition of some buildings and the neglect of some sections.The neglected and undefined areas are in very bad condition in terms of environmental, social, and visual aspects and are generally used as parking lots. These areas, which are not linked to each other, are in a position that threatens social security.

- The car park next to the Üçler Cemetery is used for the buses of the tourists coming to the city and for those visiting the cemetery, and it remains idle for the rest of the days.

District B- The Mevlâna Tomb and its closer environment

- This district, which is the most visited by domestic and foreign tourists and has a high spiritual value for those living in the city, is 2.8 ha in total. 16.4% (0.4 ha) of the area is composed of solids, whereas 83.4% (2.3 ha) is void. These rates are an indication that the area does not have a solid-void balance.

- It contains very valuable urban solids such as the Mevlâna Museum, Selimiye Mosque, and Yusuf Ağa Library, as well as significant urban voids such as Gülbahçe and Mevlâna Square. The lack of sufficient landscape elements, trees to provide shade, and the absence of appropriate descriptive borders, despite the mosque and museum surrounding the square, cause the square to have a rather empty appearance. In this respect, it can be said that it is not on a human scale.

- On the other hand, the fact that the square in front of the Tomb is empty can be considered a significant asset in terms of seeing and perceiving the Kubbe-i Hadra (the Green Dome) and Selimiye Mosque from the other end of Alaeddin Street. Thus, it becomes easier to go to the Mevlâna Tomb and explore the area.

District C1 -The back sides of Fatih Market

-The area where the commercial and residential area is mostly in the form of 3- to 4-story detached buildings is solidly occupied by 44% (1.8 ha), whereas 56% (1.4 ha) is void, and in total, it covers a total area of 3.3 ha. It is seen that the solid-void ratio is balanced.

- The interfaces, courtyards of the building blocks, residential gardens, and parking lots constitute the voids.

- It is among the observations that the largest opening in the area and the voids between the buildings are used as parking lots.

- The fact that the buildings in the area are low-rise and that permeability has been allowed between semi-public, public, and private spaces has led to the formation of defined spaces.

District C2 – North Section of the Mevlâna Tomb

- 55.5% (1 ha) of the total area of 1.8 ha, where commercial areas are in the majority, consists of solids, whereas 44.5% (0.8 ha) are voids. Thus, it can be said that the solids-voids balance is good.

The area's solids are 3-4 storey adjacent urban blocks, mosques, and commercial areas, while the voids are courtyards of the building blocks, interfaces between buildings, parking lots, residential gardens, and streets.

- Since the roads linking the area are narrow, there are problems, especially regarding the access of vehicles.

- It is also among the observations that there are some abandoned buildings in the area that have become ruined over time.

- Buildings form the boundaries of urban blocks. The voids thus consist of the courtyards behind the buildings and the voids formed by the passages between the buildings. Most of these areas are used as parking lots.

District D- Historical Bedesten Bazaar

- While 58.9% (2.2 ha) of the area is occupied, 40.1% (1.5 ha) is empty and consists of a total area of 3.7 ha. The solids-to-voids ratio of the district formed in a grid texture is balanced.
- The solids consist of the shops in the bedesten, whereas the voids comprise the spaces between buildings, the streets, and the Jewellers' Underground Bazaar square.
- Most of these voids are defined with shop frontages, causing the space to be better perceived and to remain on a human scale.

District E- Kayalıpark and the surroundings of the Governor's Office

- District E, which is one of the most important focal points of the city, consists of a total area of 5.2 ha, of which 1.3 ha (25.6%) is solid and 3.8 ha (74.4%) is void.
- While the solids in this district are composed of public buildings such as Ziraat Bank, Post Office, Old Industry School, Şerafeddin Mosque, Governor's Office, İplikçi Mosque and the Central Bank, the voids comprise parks, squares, residential gardens and parking lots.
- The fact that the rate of urban voids in the area is higher than the rate of urban solids can be explained by the fact that it contains an important focal point for the city.

District F1 – Heavily residential + commercial areas

-The total area is 1.7 ha. While 1 ha (58%) consists of solids, 0.7 ha (42%) consists of voids. The solids-to-voids ratio is balanced and evenly distributed in the area. The buildings define the urban blocks.
- 3–4-story urban blocks and commercial areas in adjacent order constitute the solids, whereas the courtyards, the interfaces between buildings, and the streets form the voids.
- The transition between public, semi-public, and private spaces in the area has led to the formation of defined spaces.

District F2– Environs of Alaeddin Hill

-The total area is 3.2 ha. 1.5 ha of the area consists of solids (46.7%), whereas 1.7 ha (53.3%) consists of voids. The solids-to-voids ratio of the region is balanced.
- The building blocks are limited to three- to four-story adjacent buildings.
- The solids consist of residential and commercial areas, whereas the voids consist of parks, parking lots, residential backyards and gardens, streets, and avenues.
- The largest void in the area is actively used as a parking lot.
- The park, which is surrounded by buildings on three sides in the area, is an important meeting point for the people living in the city, as well as one of the most important transition places.

District F3- Rampalı Bazaar and its environs

- Due to its proximity to the Şükran Neighborhood urban transformation project, the F3 region is an active area that includes important structures such as the Rampalı Bazaar, as well as districts where some residential areas have been demolished and converted into parking lots, and dense commercial areas are located.
- Solids account for 45.4 percent of the total area (3.6 ha), while voids account for 2 percent (54.6%).The solids-to-voids ratio is balanced.
- 2-3-story residential areas, commercial buildings, mosques, public buildings such as the District Directorate of National Education, parking lots, residential gardens, and voids between buildings in the area constitute the voids.

- While the buildings define some of the urban blocks, the remaining voids are used as parking lots.
- The area has irregular streets due to its organic pattern.

District G- Kılıçarslan Square and its environs

- In a total area of 7.9 ha, 1.1 ha (14.4%) is solid, whereas 6.8 ha (85.6%) is void. The solids-to-voids ratio of the region is quite imbalanced.
- Karatay Madrasa, Kemaliye Madrasa, Payitaht Museum, commercial buildings, adjacent 4-5-story residential areas, the old University Rectory building, a hospital, and other public buildings constitute the solids, whereas the square, parking lots, parks, and residential gardens form voids.
- The area where the square, which constitutes the largest void in the area, is located, appears to be a meaningless big vacancy in the area because it lacks sufficient defining elements, is quite wide, and exceeds the human scale.
- Some other voids in the area are also used as parking lots.

District H – The northeast part of Kılıçarslan Square

-The area is 1.4 ha in total, of which 12% (0.4 ha) is solid and 88% (1 ha) is void. It is seen that a solid-void balance could not be reached in the district.
- Two-story detached buildings inspired by traditional Konya houses, public institutions, and a mosque constitute the solids, whereas the roads and parks form the voids.

All evaluations are summarized in the table below for easier understanding of the observation results and calculations (Table 1).

Table 1 Observation and calculation results of the figure-ground analysis

Districts	Criteria						
	Urban solid-void ratio		Average number of storeys	Building order	Dominant function of the district	Functional structure of the voids	Defining solids of the district
	Solids	Voids					
A	**28.5%**	**71.5%**	2 or 3	Detached	Mixed use	Parking lot	Piri Mehmet Paşa Mosque and Bazaar
B	**16.4%**	**83.4%**	-	Detached	Mixed use (heavily commercial and religious)	Square	Monumental buildings such as Mevlâna Museum, Selimiye Mosque, Yusuf Ağa Library
C1	44%	56%	3 or 4	Detached	Mixed use	Parking lots Voids between buildings Residential gardens	Residential buildings and shop frontages
C2	55.5%	44.5%	3 or 4	Adjacent	Commercial	Voids between buildings Parking lots Residential gardens	Shop frontages Mosques
D	58.9%	40.1%	2 or 3	Adjacent	Commercial	Voids between buildings The Jewellers' Underground Bazaar square	Shops in the historical bazaar
E	**25.6%**	**74.4%**	-	Detached	Commercial Administrative	Squares Parks Parking lots.	Ziraat Bank, Post Office, Old Industry School, Şerafeddin Mosque, Governor's Office, İplikçi Mosque
F1	58%	42%	3 or 4	Adjacent	Commercial Residential	The voids between buildings	Residential buildings, Shops
F2	46.7%	53.3%	3 or 4	Adjacent	Commercial Residential	Parking lots, Residential gardens, The voids between buildings	Residential buildings Shops
F3	45.4%	54.6%	3 or 4	Adjacent	Commercial	Parking lots Residential gardens Voids between buildings	Rampalı Bazaar District Directorate of National Education
G	**14.4%**	**85.6%**	4 or 5	Adjacent	Mixed use	The square Parking lots	Karatay Madrasa Kemaliye Madrasa Payitaht Museum,

						Parks Residential gardens	The old University Rectory building, Konya hospital
H	**12%**	**88%**	2	Detached	Commercial, Cultural	Voids between buildings	Commercial units (Konya houses)

According to the results, it was seen that A, B, E, G and H districts are imbalanced in terms of the solid-void ratio (Figure 12). However, when we look at the functional structure of the voids, it is seen that most of them have squares or large parking lots. In addition, the surrounding urban solids are usually monumental structures built in a discrete order. Photographs of some of these districts can be seen below (Figure 13).

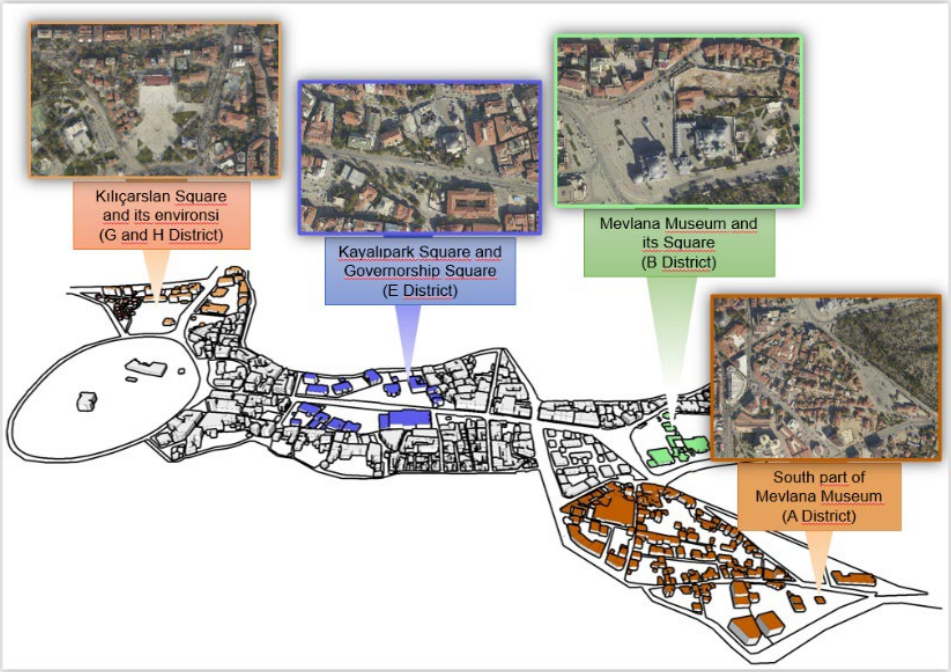


Figure 12 Districts that show imbalanced distribution in solid-void ratios according to the figure-ground analysis (Ünal, 2022)

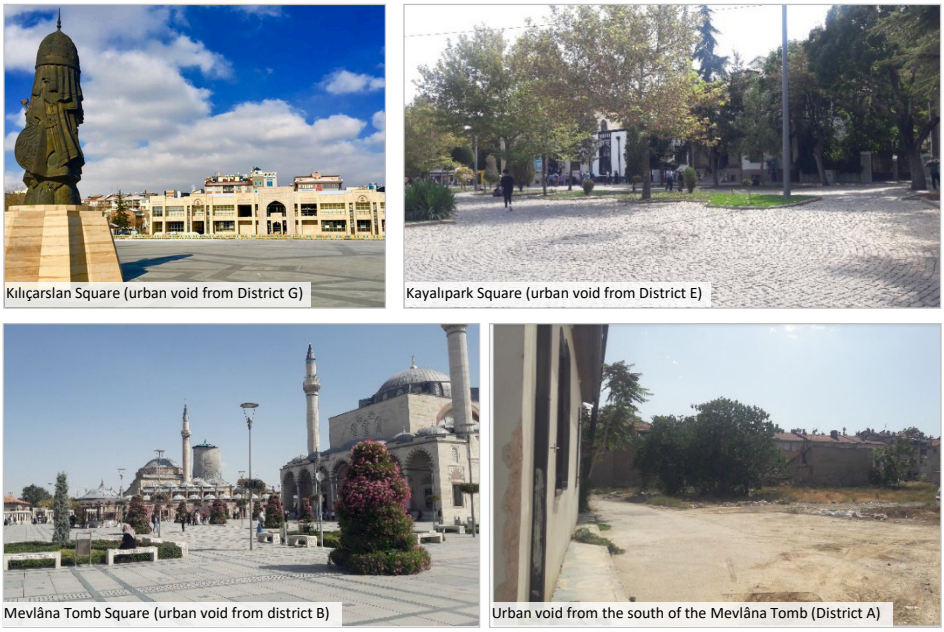


Figure 13 Photographs from the districts showing the functional structure of the urban voids (Ünal, 2020)

4.2.2. Evaluations via Linkage Theory

The streets, squares, avenues, mosque courtyards, parks, and pedestrian paths in the case area form a linkage network that connects different functions and spaces in the city. Access to public spaces, functions, and buildings is through these open spaces. The tram line serving the area reaches from Alaeddin Hill to Mevlâna Tomb and from there to the Courthouse. This line passing through the middle of the street also creates a strong border.

It can be said that the fabric of the case area complies, in terms of linkages, with Maki's (1964) group and mega form style mentioned in the previous sections. The group form is created as a result of the accumulations generated on a line in time by the elements consisting of common open spaces. As seen in the spatial organization of many historical settlements, the linkage in group form is organic and occurs as a result of a natural process. When the first stages of the formation of the historical city center of Konya are examined, it is seen that the public buildings have gradually accumulated on the Alâeddin-Mevlâna Street axis, which is the main access road through the city. The city's administrative and commercial areas are concentrated along this axis. It can be said that the sample area has an organic fabric and a group form linkage type because it was formed with the accumulations that occurred in a historical process. The reason why it also fits into the mega-form can be explained by the main determinant, i.e., Alaeddin Street, in the hierarchical order and the paths and nodes that connect to it (Figure 14a, Figure 14b).

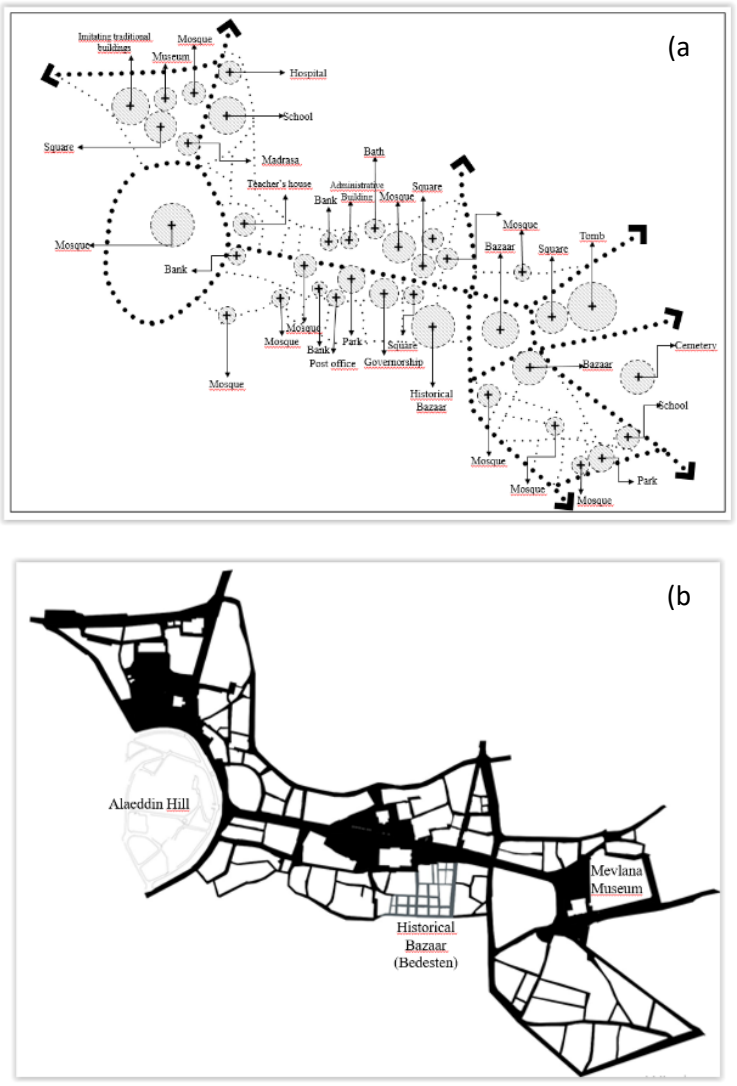


Figure 14 Representation of research area linkages in group form (a) and Linkage analysis of case area in mega form (b) (Ünal, 2022)

When the research area is evaluated according to Trancik's (1986) linkage theory, it is seen that almost all of the area poses no problems in terms of accessibility. All roads are connected with each other, and connections with parks and squares are further strengthened along the way. Due to its traditional and organic nature, some irregular streets and avenues are encountered, but they do not pose a problem in terms of accessibility. On the one hand, the tram line system on the main street increases pedestrian and vehicle circulation; on the other hand, it creates a border for pedestrians and reduces permeability. No area was found in the area where problems occurred in terms of linkage, which was inaccessible and obscure and therefore turned into a lost space.

4.2.3. Evaluations via Place Theory

After examining the textural and connectional features of the area, it is given in this section which parts of this area actually express a 'place' beyond mere 'space' to the users. In this context, the detection of districts with high or low levels of perception and appreciation provided the necessary clues for the ‘sense of place'. Understanding the city, especially in regard to the 'sense of place', will yield more realistic results through the eyes of the individuals who use and experience it. The findings obtained in this regard are extremely valuable and will ensure that the appropriate location in the city is intervened.

The results of the study in this section are evaluated in two stages. The first is the evaluation of the statistical data obtained as a result of the questionnaires, and the second is the evaluation of the cognitive map drawings in the survey questions.

Findings of The Questionnaire Conducted

According to the results of the first part of the questionnaire applied to the users in the research area, the user profiles of the people who participated in the study are given in the table below (Table 2). The fact that the majority of the respondents are from Konya (94%) is important in terms of the recognition of the area. This situation was specifically requested within the scope of the study in order to determine whether it gives the feeling of 'place' to people who knew this area. In the second part, the participants were asked about their purpose for coming to this area, the frequency of their use of it, and the types of access. As it can be understood from the table below, the purpose of the participants' visit to the area is mostly shopping and sightseeing. More than half of the participants use the area every day or once a week. The type of access to the area is usually by private vehicle or public transport (Table 3).

Table 2 User profiles of questionnaire application (Ünal, 2022)

Personal Information		Number	Percentage (%)
Age	0-18	2	4,0
	18-25	13	26,0
	26-35	18	36,0
	36-45	6	12,0
	46-55	4	8,0
	56+	7	14,0
Occupation	Employed in industrial sector	6	12,0
	Employed in education sector	9	18,0
	Employed in private sector	6	12,0
	Shopkeeper	8	16,0
	Employed in public sector	1	2,0
	Manager	1	2,0
	Security sector (Including police officers)	1	2,0
	Peasant-farmer	1	2,0
	Retired	2	4,0
	Student	8	16,0
	Housewife	7	14,0
Education	Elementary School	2	4,0
	Middle School	7	14,0
	High School	10	20,0
	Bachelor’s Degree	29	58,0
	Master’s Degree	2	4,0
Gender	Female	29	58

	Male	21	42
Income Level	0	13	26
	0-3000	15	30
	3000-5000	10	20
	5000-10000	10	20
	Higher than 10000	2	4
Residence	In Konya	47	94
	Not in Konya	3	6

Table 3 How the participants use the area (Ünal, 2022)

		Sayı	%
Purpose of coming to the area	Shopping	29	33,7
	Touring	20	23,2
	Walk	11	12,7
	Trade	4	4,6
	Education	10	11,6
	Work	12	13,9
Frequency of using the area	Every day	14	28
	Once a week	21	42
	Once a month	7	14
	Once every 3 to 4 months	7	14
	Once a year	1	2
Type of access	On foot	3	6
	Bicycle	1	2
	Private car	23	46
	Public transportation	23	46

Next, the participants were asked about the buildings/spaces that they remembered and perceived in the area. Since the question was left open-ended, a wide range of answers were received and then classified. According to the results, the places where the answers were most concentrated were Mevlâna Tomb, Historical Bedesten Bazaar, and Kayalıpark. The least perceived places were Fatih Shopping Mall and Araf Hotel. Although they were located within the boundaries of the area, the places that no one cited were Kılıçarslan Square and the Konya houses that were built recently in imitation of the traditional houses that bordered it. In addition, some small mosques and masjids were not among those mentioned (Table 4).

Following the question about perceived spaces, it was attempted to identify liked and disliked spaces and areas.The reason for this is that not every perceived area/space can instill in the user a sense of "place." Only when a person likes an area or a location can he or she assign meaning to it and feel a sense of belonging to it.The findings obtained from the answers given to this question are listed in the table below and shown in the figure (Table 5, Figure 15).

Table 4 Frequency of the participants' choice of the memorable places in the research area (Ünal, 2022)

Memorable Places	Number	Percentage (%)	Memorable Places	Number	Percentage (%)
Mevlâna Museum	48	8,1	General Directorate of Foundations	11	1,8
Historical Bedesten Bazaar	43	7,2	Old Industrial School	11	1,8
Kayalıpark	41	6,9	Souvenir Shops	11	1,8
Governor's Office	34	5,7	Kılınçarslan Square	9	1,5
Şerafeddin Mosque	30	5,0	Teachers' Lodge	7	1,1
İplikçi Mosque	29	4,9	Turkish Telekom	7	1,1
Post Office	25	4,2	Yusuf Ağa Library	7	1,1
Ziraat Bank	23	3,8	Gülbahçe	7	1,1
Üçler Cemetery	21	3,5	Banks	5	0,8
Piri Mehmet Paşa Bazaar	20	3,3	Hacı Hasan Mosque	4	0,6
Sultan Selim Mosque	19	3,2	Konya Hospital	4	0,6
Jewellers' Underground Arcade	19	3,2	Saray Shopping Mall	3	0,5
Sarraflar (Jewellers')	19	3,2	Mufti's Office	3	0,5
The Square in front of Sarraflar	18	3,0	Atatürk High School	3	0,5
Governorship Square	18	3,0	Akçeşme Elementary School	3	0,5
Mevlâna Shopping Mall	17	2,8	District Directorate of National Education	3	0,5
Karatay Madrasa	17	2,8	State Monopolies Building	2	0,3

Türkiye İş Bank	16	2,7	Araf Hotel	2	0,3
Central Bank	15	2,5	Payitaht Museum	2	0,3
Mengüç Avenue	14	2,3	Fatih Shopping Mall	2	0,3
Piri Mehmet Mosque	13	2,1	Parking Lots	2	0,3
Rectory Building	12	2,0			
Rampalı Shopping Mall	12	2,0			
			Total	**591**	**100,0**

Table 5 Places in the area the participants liked/disliked (Ünal, 2022)

		Number	%			Number	%
Places Liked	Mevlâna Museum	33	21.4	**Places Disliked**	None	14	16.3
	Sultan Selim Mosque	19	12.4		Kılınçarslan Square	9	14.5
	Historical Bedesten Bazaar	17	11.1		Environs of Piri Mehmet Bazaar	7	12.7
	Kayalıpark	15	9.8		Envirns of Şems	4	7.2
	Mevlâna Square	14	9.8		Alaeddin Hill and Its Environs	3	5.4
	İplikçi Mosque	11	7.1		Construction Sites	3	5.4
	Governorship Square	8	5.8		İstanbul Avenue	3	5.4
	Şerafeddin Mosque	8	5.8		Kayalıpark	2	3.6
	Üçler Cemetery	5	3.2		Back of Rampalı Shopping Mall	2	3.6
	Mengüç Street	4	2.6		Back of Post Office	2	3.6
	Rampalı Shopping Mall	4	2.6		Governor's Office	2	3.6
	Karatay Madrasa	3	1.9		Mevlâna Square	2	3.6
	Sarraflar Jewellers' Underground Arcade	3	1.9		Teksas Quarters	2	3.6
	Yusuf Ağa Library	2	1.3		Back of Karatay Madrasa	1	1.8
	İstanbul Avenue	2	1.3		Historical Bedestan Bazaar	1	1.8
	Gülbahçe (Rose Garden)	1	0.6		Saray Shopping Mall	1	1.8
	Teksas Bus Stop	1	0.6		Sarraflar Jewellers' Undeground Arcade Square	1	1.8
	Araf Hotel	1	0.6		Alaeddin Avenue	1	1.8
	Alaeddin Hill and Its Environs	1	0.6		Interiors of Mengüç Avenue	1	1.8

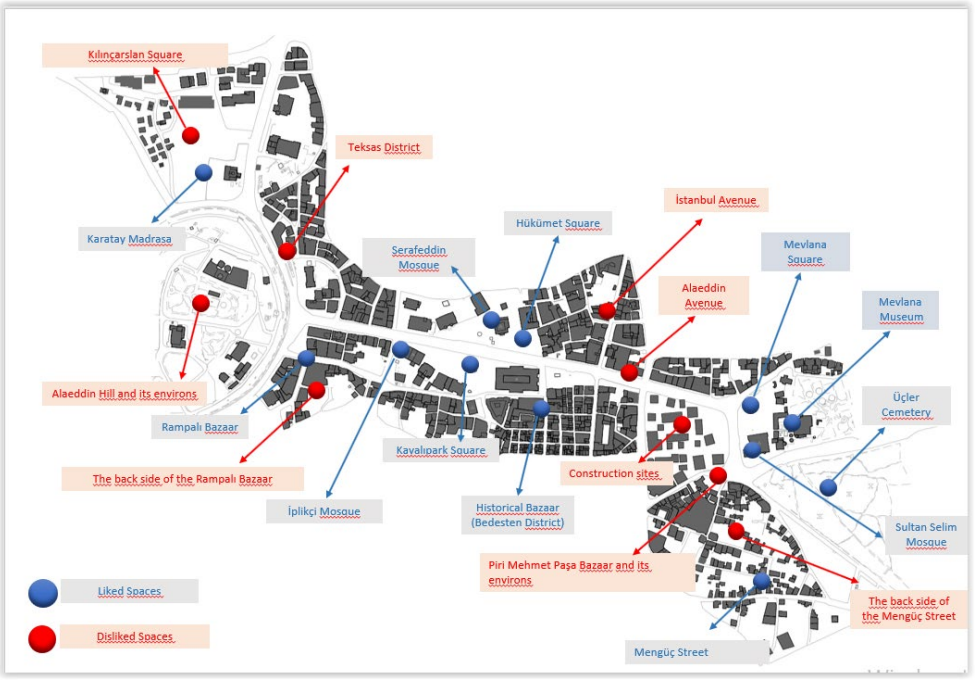


Figure 15 Places that the participants like/dislike in the case area (Ünal, 2022)

When the participants were asked about the meeting point they used the most, 32% responded that it was Kayalıpark. According to the participants, this is because the public transportation stops

are located there and it is surrounded by important public institutions. Kayalıpark is followed by the square in front of the Mevlâna Tomb (Figure 16).

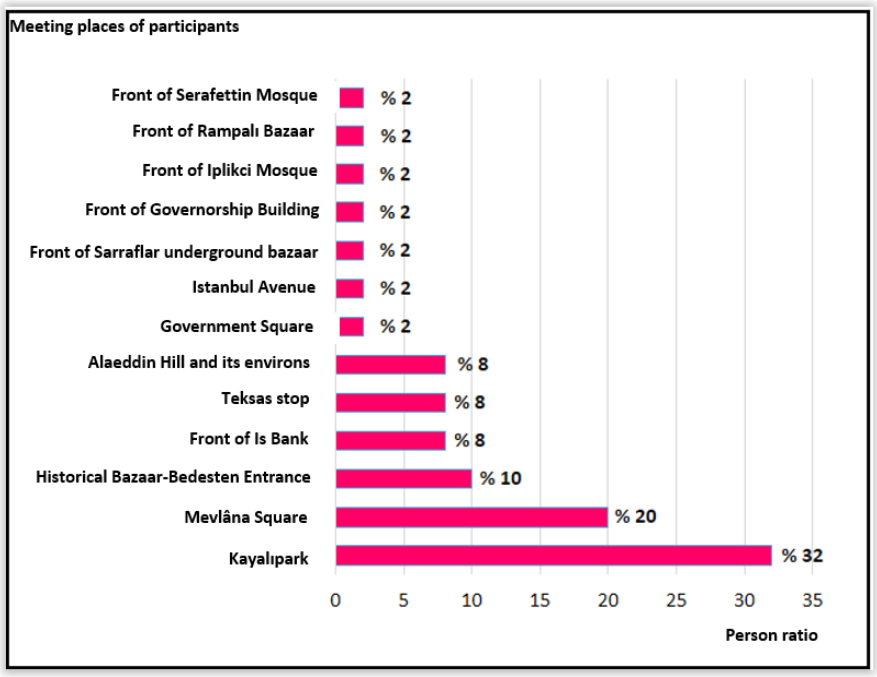


Figure 16 Meeting points frequently used by the participants in the area (Ünal, 2022)

The first landmark that comes to the minds of the participants is the Konya Governor's Office because it has a high historical value, is situated in a central location, and is also important because it is an area offering administrative services. It is followed by the Mevlâna Tomb and Kayalıpark (Figure 17).

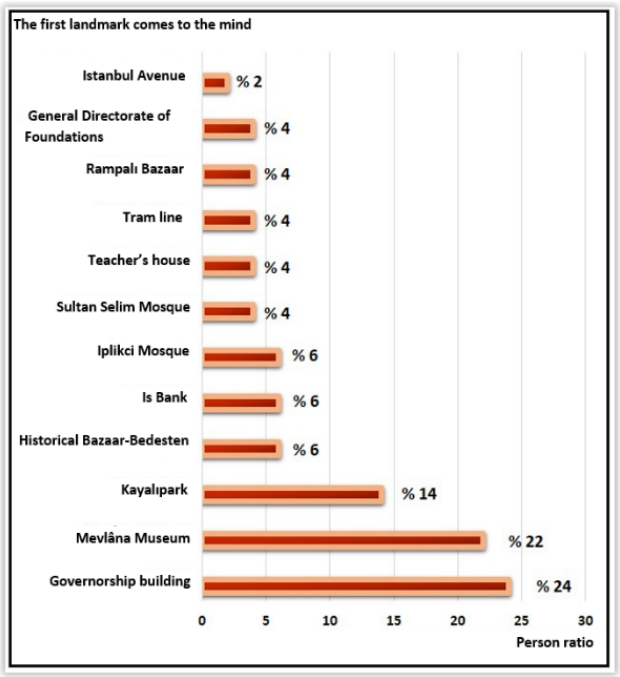


Figure 17 Landmarks primarily defining the area according to the participants (Ünal, 2022)

The respondents who participated in the questionnaire were then asked where and why they would take their guests first in this area. 70% of the participants preferred the Mevlâna Museum. They stated that the reason for this was that it represented the spirituality of Konya and that it was a place where everyone, local and foreign, wanted to go when they first came to Konya. 16% of the

participants cited the Historical Bedesten Bazaar because it was important for the city both architecturally and culturally and because it provided visitors with shopping opportunities. 8% of the participants stated that they would take them to the Şifa Restaurant first because they wanted their guests to taste the traditional dishes of Konya.

The participants stated that Kılıçarslan Square and its surroundings (32%) were the first problem spots that they would attempt to correct within the research area if they were given the authority to do so. They argued that they had difficulty perceiving this area and that the traffic was congested, especially when there was a rally. This was followed by the fact that Alaeddin-Mevlâna Street was problematic in terms of pedestrian access, and they could not walk comfortably there (16%). They stated that the tram line passing through the middle of the street caused great chaos, and the vehicle traffic while crossing the street created a disadvantage for those walking around the place. 16% of the participants responded that the excavations on Alaeddin Hill should be completed immediately, and that the newly built Alaeddin Chalet did not have a pleasant appearance. 8% of the participants stated that the Mevlâna Square should be changed because its former appearance was more beautiful, there were not enough seating elements and landscape elements, and therefore, there was no trace of its old spiritual atmosphere and spirit. 8% of the participants stated that the residences around the Mevlâna Museum were not suitable for the historical fabric, so they should be changed (Figure 18).

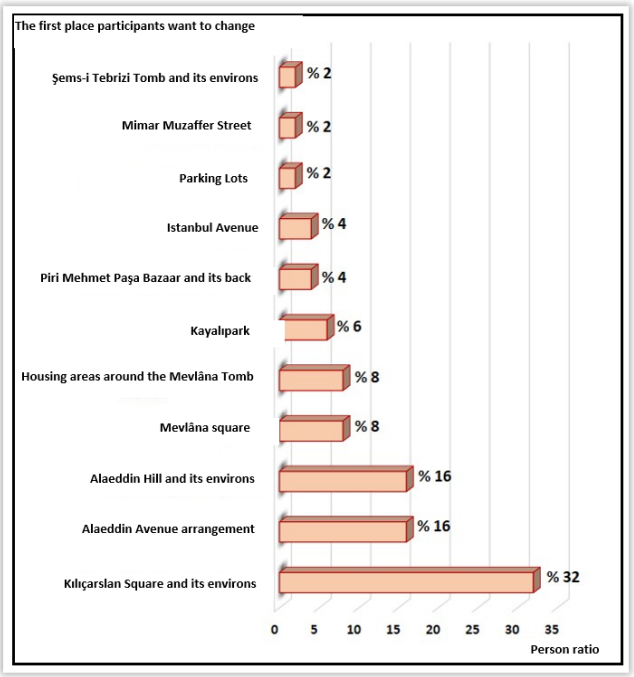


Figure 18 The first area that the participants would change if authorized (Ünal, 2022)

Findings of Cognitive Maps

It has been stated that each participant drew a cognitive map within the scope of the study to reach the places that were in their minds, apart from the verbal responses obtained from the questionnaire conducted in order to analyze the sense of "place" in the area. In making this analysis, Lynch's (1960) urban elements that 'make the city memorable', which were cited in the method section of the study, were used (Lynch, 1960). However, since some urban elements falling within the scope of "path" in the study area overlap with the "edge" elements, paths and edges are shown on a single cognitive map. Examples of cognitive maps drawn in the figure below are presented (Figure 19).

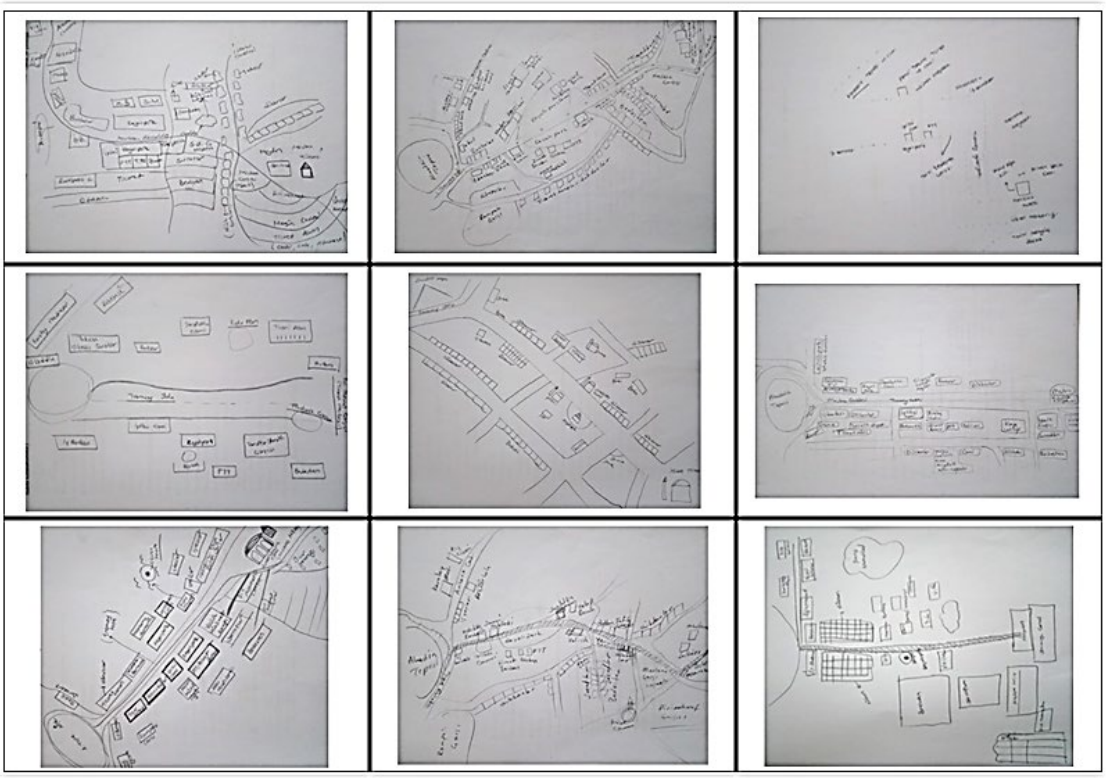


Figure 19 Cognitive map examples of the users (Ünal, 2022)

Each cognitive map was cumulatively combined into a single map in order to arrive at a collective cognitive map from the cognitive maps drawn by 50 participants.This map appears to be crucial because it indicates locations that are not perceived in the case area and are not imprinted on the memories. To obtain this map, separate cumulative maps were produced for each of Lynch's (1960) urban elements, and a holistic cognitive map was reached by combining these maps. While doing this, the percentages of the urban elements that the users pointed to in the cognitive maps they drew were used. Accordingly, the cognitive maps for each of the urban elements and the final, cumulative cognitive map covering each image element are given in the figure below (Figure 20).

According to the cumulative cognitive map obtained, Mevlâna Tomb Square and Kayalıpark are the two major landmarks in the research area. Most of the landmarks are gathered around these nodes. The landmarks outside these foci are generally located on Alaeddin Hill and its surroundings (e.g., Karatay Madrasa around Kılıçarslan Square). The basic paths indicated on the cognitive maps are Alaeddin Avenue, Ankara Street, and Istanbul Street. According to the oral responses of the participants, only Alaeddin Avenue can be considered an edge because of its weak permeability. It is also seen in Figure 18 that the area in the mind is divided into various districts.

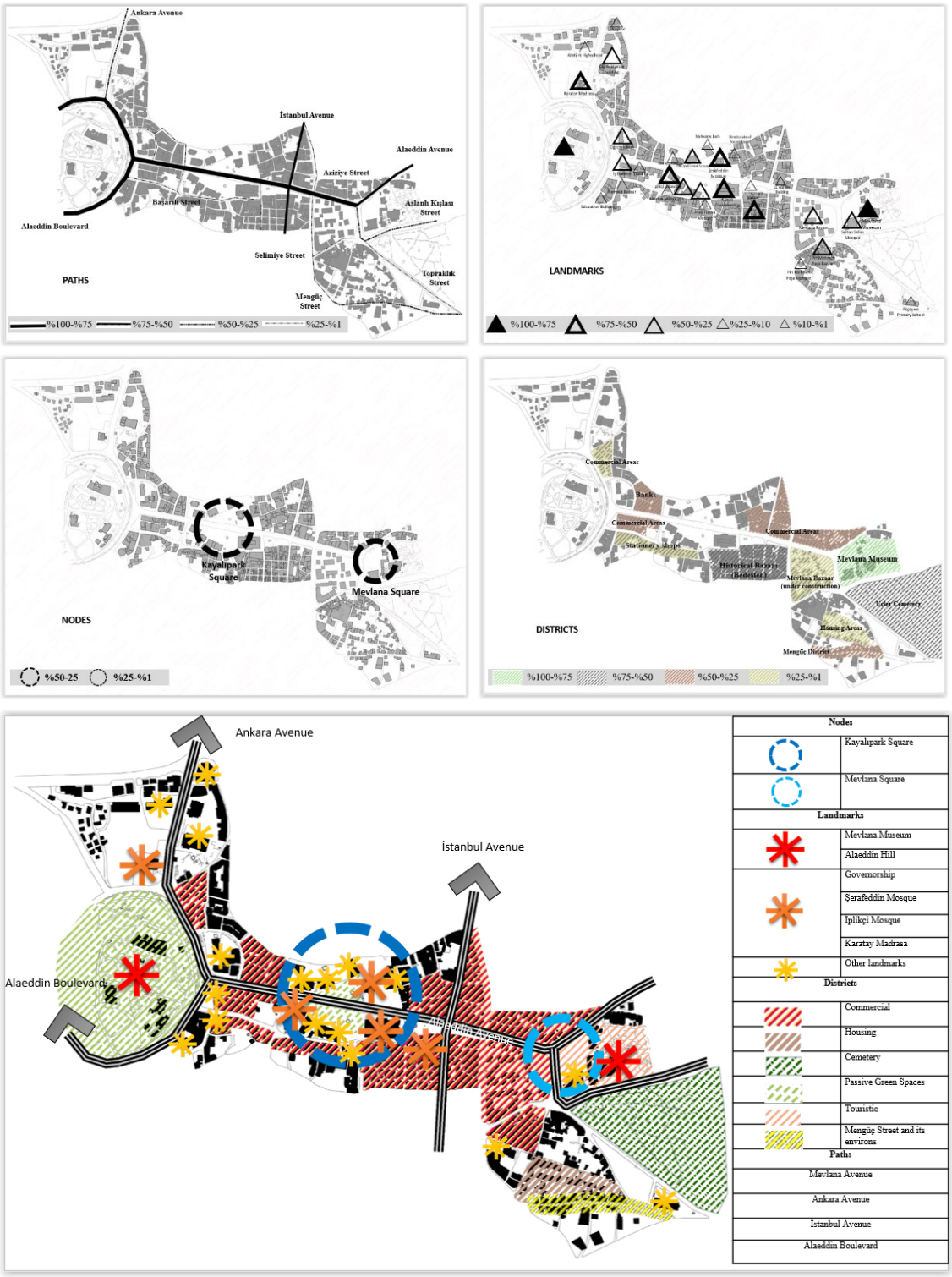


Figure 20 The cumulative cognitive map of all participants for the sample area (Ünal, 2022)

4.2.4. General Evaluation of the Findings

The findings obtained from the questionnaires and the cognitive maps drawn to evaluate the 'place' theory in the sample area were then interpreted in common with the figure-ground and linkage analyses obtained from the previous sections. Based on Trancik's (1986) figure-ground, linkage and place theory, the findings regarding the case area are given below;

The districts identified as problem areas, whose solid-void ratios and mass-ground relations were analyzed in detail by figure-ground analysis, are the A, B, E, G, and H regions in the case area. These districts generally correspond to the south of the Mevlâna Tomb and its immediate

surroundings, Kayalıpark and the Governor's Office, and Kılıçarslan Square and its immediate surroundings.

As a consequence of the linkage analysis made in the research area, it is seen that the area has an organic and a gridiron (Konya bazaar-bedesten region) feature. Due to its traditional structure, there are irregular streets at some points, but they do not pose a problem in terms of accessibility. The tram line system passing through the middle of the main street (Alaeddin Avenue) increases pedestrian and vehicle circulation in the area. On the other hand, it prevents pedestrians from moving freely as it creates a strong physical and perceptual boundary for pedestrians. In this respect, even if the main street is the most perceived and used axis, it may cause some problems in terms of accessibility. When the linkages within the study area are evaluated in general, it is seen that there is no problem in the area in terms of accessibility. All roads are interconnected, and the connections with parks and squares along the road are further strengthened.

According to the data obtained from the questionnaires and cognitive maps made in order to understand the areas/spaces that lent the quality of being a 'place' to the sample area, the Mevlâna Tomb, Historical Bedesten Bazaar and Kayalı Park stand out as the most perceived, liked, remembered, experienced, and used spaces. In particular, Kayalıpark is an area of high value with its civil architectural buildings that serve religious and administrative functions, with its position at the entrance of the Historical Bedesten Bazaar, incorporating important service areas for those living in the city, and being a center for public transportation. Therefore, its level of being experienced and perceived is also increasing. This allows users to remember and use this place more. When the figure-ground analysis of these areas is considered, it is seen that the ratios of the solids and voids and the relations between them are imbalanced. Despite this, these places are the most perceived, experienced, and easily remembered.

When evaluated in the context of figure-ground analysis, Kılınçarslan Square and its surroundings, where the rate of urban voids is quite high, are also the most unpopular places for the participants. This square, which had no place in the users' perceptions, was one of the first places that people in the city wanted to change if they were given the authority to do so.

The surroundings of the Piri Mehmet Pasha Bazaar, which is located to the south of the Mevlana Tomb, are among those that are not perceived or liked.This area, which has recently become neglected with the demolition of some residential buildings, also poses a security threat for users.

When the square in front of the Mevlâna Tomb is evaluated in the context of the figure-ground relationship, it is seen that the rate of urban voids is quite high. Despite this, it has been the most preferred meeting place. Although it may seem like a problematic area in the formal sense, users consider, perceive, and frequently experience this space as a 'place'. Therefore, it does not seem right to deem it a lost area for the city.

The urban voids left by the demolition of many buildings in the northern sections of the Şükran neighborhood urban transformation project are currently being used extensively as parking lots. Considering the density of the users coming to this area in private vehicles, one may wonder to what extent such areas could be considered a lost cause in the current situation. However, the fact that these urban spaces were not officially designated as parking lots, and the use of very large voids in the city center as car parks on extremely valuable land, is a loss for the city in terms of visual aesthetics, land use, and city quality.

The southern section of the Mevlâna Tomb and Kılıçarslan Square and its surroundings, which emerged as problematic areas in the figure-ground analysis, are also areas that are not perceived and used according to the questionnaires and cognitive maps drawn. Therefore, they should be the first areas to come to mind in the sample area in terms of reusing lost spaces. The predominance of residential areas in the southern parts of the Mevlâna Tomb and the fact that Kılıçarslan Square is an important public space serving the entire city at its most central point make Kılıçarslan Square even more prominent. It is also important at this point to note that the participants highlighted

Kılıçarslan Square and its surroundings as their least favorite place and the first place they wanted to change in the questionnaires.

Based on all these evaluations above, and if we go back to the hypotheses determined at the beginning of the study, we can test them as follows:

Hypothesis 1: *Undefined areas where urban solid-void balance has not been formally established are at the same time devoid of perceptibility and the like, and therefore, they are lost spaces*.

The findings obtained from the analyses do not confirm this hypothesis. (As with Mevlana Tomb Square and Kayalıpark).

Hypothesis 2: *Areas that are not linked to other functional areas of the city in terms of accessibility turn into lost spaces over time.*

This hypothesis could **not be confirmed**, since no problematic areas were encountered in terms of linkage-accessibility within the boundaries of the research area. The reason for this could be the fact that the area is located in a central and heavily used district. It seems likely that this hypothesis will be confirmed in other areas with accessibility problems or very poor physical permeability.

Hypothesis 3*: Spaces that are not remembered or perceived in the city are lost spaces.*

Findings from the analyses **confirm** this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4: *Spaces that are not liked, desired, or create a sense of "place" become lost spaces as a result of not being used and experienced.*

Findings from the analyses **confirm** this hypothesis.

5. Conclusion

This study provided a comprehensive meaning of urban voids and the detrimental impact of existing urban voids on city life, based on a review of literature studies about urban voids. Although there are various studies on this subject, there is no study in the relevant literature, especially in the national literature, on how to identify such spaces. Using the Trancik design theories for finding the lost spaces increases the originality of the study.

By applying these theories into a method, this study found that the ‘place’ theory has vital importance. Places are beyond the physicality, consist of people's experiences and memories. A 'space' can be a 'place' if life experiences take place in it, if it causes people to experience, like, love, and feel as if they belong there. This is what is meant by definitions such as 'the spirit of the place, or ‘the sense of place' in the related literature. As Trancik (1986) emphasizes, *'people need a relatively stable place system in order to develop themselves, their social lives, and their culture. These needs provide the man-made domain with an emotional content and a presence that is more than physical'* (Trancik, 1986). Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that the spaces that are not associated with people, that are not liked, desired, and hence not used for these reasons, are lost.

Also, the study presented lost urban voids as a potential for the city. Such areas, which have lost their effectiveness or have not been able to form at all, can be perceived as an unsafe and undesirable problem area, but they also contain potential that can be discovered and regain to the city. In this way, they will be able to contribute to the general health, vitality, and security of cities and to reveal their hidden resources. In other words, despite their negative effects on the city, such spaces also provide vital potential to increase the quality of life of society in the environmental, social, economic, cultural, and visual contexts.

Based on the confirmation of the hypotheses, the result obtained from this study is that the lost urban spaces are more related to mental, semantic, and emotional content than their formal/morphological contents. The solid-void rates and accessibility analysis alone cannot be used to conclude that the area is lost. In addition to this, the functional structure of the urban voids (such as being an important square), the function of the urban solids that surround and define the space,

or its importance for the citizens, is an undeniable fact. Even if some urban spaces are not designed, they are not considered lost if they make sense to the city dweller. In this context, Kılınçarslan Square is the most problematic, dysfunctional area in the study area and needs to be regained to the city.

This result is a finding specific to the place (Konya historical city center) and may vary depending on the differences in the social and cultural structures in other areas to be studied.

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Resume

Büşra Ünal, who graduated from Selcuk University, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, in 2018 with the third-highest rank in the department, completed her MSc degree at Konya Technical University, Faculty of Architecture and Design, City and Regional Planning Department, in 2021. She completed her thesis under the supervision of Assist. Prof. Kadriye (Deniz) Topçu with the thesis titled "Examination of lost spaces in the context of urban design and regaining them to urban the life: the case of Konya city." Since 2016, she has participated in various training programs (such as Netcad 7.6, Lumion 6, Infrowork 360, Autocad 2, and 3D visualization, diction, and body language) to improve her professional career and knowledge. In addition, she participated in the City Workshop, which was established within the Konya Metropolitan Municipality in 2021. She is currently an urban planner in the Provincial Directorate of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change in Bitlis.

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