

## The relation of the urban centre (city) and movie theatres as public spaces in Ankara

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### Abstract

Centres, which are spaces of interaction in urban area where social, political and economic relations condensed, have importance with their publicity characteristic beyond being social. In the modernisation of cities, functional and structural elements supporting the publicity of space have been evaluated as a dimension of development. Especially throughout the twentieth century, movie and movie theatres became the important components of the urban centres with their publicity characteristic. The relation with the urban centre or structural-spatial properties of movie theatres are realised in the context of growth and development processes of urban. It is possible to read this synchronisation through the relationship between formation of urban centre and movie theatres in certain periods in Ankara, an Ottoman small town by beginning of the century, and then, had become the space of modernisation politics after 1923. Beyond the morphological, this positioning reflects the pressure of infrastructure factors that affect its formation.

Keywords: Modernisation, publicity, urban centre, movie theatres, Ankara.

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The foundation of the urban centre has defined the focal points of social relations within the urban as a whole. The 'centre' formation is generally regarded as an urban component oriented with spatial and functional planning rather than geometric positioning. For this reason, beyond being by itself, it has become a design that reflects the politics of areas such as space and society. Centres have continued to be the important elements of urban life, although they have changed through the pressure of urbanisation, politics and such effects in relation to urban growth and development processes. On one hand, the organisation which defines the centre and influences the urban practice is evaluated as an element which makes indicator of identity—the 'city' understandable but on the other hand, this interaction has led to the use of the words 'city' and 'centre' to replace each other on a daily basis (Akcura, 1971).

Apart from the common use and realisation of social and political actions in the historical process, 'publicity' has become another characteristic that determines the identity of city centres. Urban centres that developed on the basis of functions such as temples, squares and market places have also become the centre of social organisation; and since Ancient Greece, its public character in the context of citizenship has increased its importance in the urban texture. Being public (*koinon*) is associated with political life (*bios politikos*) and the spaces where they realised are defined as public (Habermas, 2009, pp. 60–61). In the Roman era, it gained its content as '*res publica*'. Agora in the Greek Polis or Forums in Roman period defined the characteristic space of public practice. And public characteristic has developed in relation to the functionality of the structures such as centre and square, which constitute both the city and the urban texture in the political life. The embodiment of political life in the mentioned spaces depends on the actions which include communication such as enlightenment, expression, discussion, and the spatialisation of social actions and the facilities of communication determine the conditions of publicity. Thus, communication, which defines the possibilities of information accessibility of individuals as 'citizens' constituted society at the simplest level, has gained a politicised content. From the nineteenth century, mass media which define the mass production of communication and its industrial form reflects the globalising resources and scales of access. Movie, vision-based technology of representation and mass access within the mass media, as a means of vision of modernisation, has also important efficiency in public communication. Movie, which was evaluated by its role in mass communication and re-production of masses (economy–politics), has undertaken urban functioning through both films and as a place of screening shortly after the discovery of it at the beginning of the twentieth century. With this relevancy, movie expanded its efficiency in cultural field and has become one of the centres of attraction within the urban area with large-scales buildings during certain periods and has shared the function of 'centres' with its publicity characteristic.

The entrance of the movie into Turkey's cultural life has coincided with the first screening in Europe (Ozon, 2010). The screening instruments took place among the global innovations such as telegraph and electricity which were the tools of modernisation in the late Ottoman period, in which the obligatory political and economic transformations were experienced (Ahmad, 2010). On the other hand, the reorganisation of local governments (provincial administration, 1864–1867) with the modernisation tendency of the central government opened the way for the relations of the cities with the outside world during this process of change. The limited investments made in the field of architecture together with the mentioned technologies have been the factors that transform the urban environment starting with the cities which have commercial relations with foreign countries.

In the early twentieth century, infrastructure investments, mainly railway, started a new process for Ankara which was one of the small cities of the period. By its contribution to economy, the railway connected the cities to the capitalist market network that has constituted the reference point of development starting with the infrastructure. Investments such as railways became a symbolic element of transformative pressure of imperialism especially in the context of 'Duyun-u Umumiye' after the 1878 Berlin Congress and capitalism with its effect to market relations on the Ottoman country (Kazgan, 2009). At the end of the century, the spatial organisation and formation have also changed in the city, where the mode of production and relations changed with the influence of the

Ottoman Trade Agreements signed at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Akcura, 1971). In some sources, these changes, which were experienced together with economic structure, are emphasised by the suburbanisation tendencies of class differences in ethnically homogeneous settlements and effects on modes of transportation (Tekeli, 1980). From another point of view, spatial distinction that existed traditionally in Ottoman cities and reflected ethnicity has disappeared in the newly produced environment.

The effects of the formation of the station, which establishes the railway connection of the city, as a focus outside the traditional core on the spatial structure of the city has created a dimension. With the construction of the station, urban area began to grow out of this core (castle and its surroundings) and Square–Station axle, which is based on the foreseen first planning studies, has been a determinant in the formation of centre (Cengizkan, 2004; Jansen, 1948). Tashan Square, which developed at the point where the station is connected to the existing texture with a linear axle, defines the ‘centre’ formation reflecting this change.

On the other hand, the trade of products entering the urban market via the new transportation network channel led to the birth of modern spaces such as ‘shops’ instead of workshops which are spaces of traditional production (Akture, 1992). While the effect of the railway on the urban economic structure has changed the space, changing consumption patterns in this way have brought a rapid increase in modern spaces. The castle and its surroundings, which were designated by inns containing temporary accommodation, trade and their service spaces, have gradually lost their functionality and modern trade spaces of the city have turned towards Anafartalar street and the square called Tashan. In this process, ‘the administrative centre’ and ‘the new trade centre’ have defined two focuses that emerged in the urban environment and transformed by the modernisation process (Akture, 1992).

Since the end of 1919,<sup>1</sup> with central position of Ankara in country politics, Tashan and the axles that reached it has become a political centre as well as economic and social life. The axles which connected Tashan Square and other centres such as Station, Samanpazari and Hamamonu to here came to the forefront. The Square—Station connection, on which the 1st and 2nd assemblies are located, has assumed a political identity and is a preference for social functions like the Millet Bahcesi<sup>2</sup> surrounding the square. Thus, this paradigm shift that has been experienced since the beginning of the twentieth century reflects on the space.

Modern forms of entertainment, such as movie which have increasingly become a part of cultural life, have preferred centre and surroundings with similar motivation. The movie has entered the cultural life of Ankara with mobile exhibition in the spaces on these axles. The screenings of movies were held in public spaces like the coffee houses and the ‘Karacabey Hamami’ (Turkish Bath) in Hamamonu (Aydin, 2005, p. 478). The screenings were again carried out in the gardens around these centres and wooden movie theatres in certain gardens (such as Sehir Bahcesi, Millet Bahcesi) (Ergir, 2009).

In the 1920s, Ankara undertook a political identity and its services as the capital of the Republican era, and rapid production of the buildings required by its position and the growing population has led to unplanned construction. At the end of the 1927, the planning of the urban developed under the influence of the various pressure groups and ‘the fear of that the capital cannot turn into a modern city with its urban functionality and image’ necessitate the control of public through planning (Tankut, 1990, p. 27). The criticism of the urban environment emphasised the necessity of planning for the modern city (Cengizkan, 2004, s. 51). ‘Modernisation’ thus constituted the intellectual basis of the view of the period in terms of urban environment production, and as a method of this, the development defined ‘Modern’ in the framework of a plan.

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<sup>1</sup> The population was approximately 18–20,000 in 1919 (Akture, 2001, p. 57).

<sup>2</sup> It sustained its function from 1920 to fire at the end of 1920s (Cengizkan, 2004, p. 63).

With the constitution of the nation–state (1923), the space politics developed in the context of modernity anticipate the design of a social–cultural model starting from the capital.<sup>3</sup> It was the architectural typology of the ‘bourgeoisie’ class in the urban space, which it was moved from the point of ‘being representative of the architecture of public buildings—in a similar way with the construction style of residences that represented the private life (Tankut, 1990). The motivation for westernisation and modernisation is reflected in the design of recreational areas like education and works of art buildings. The main artery (now Atatürk Boulevard), which links the southern region foreseen by Master plan (Jansen Plan), where the public institutions such as the Parliament, the Ministries are located, to Hakimiyet-i Milliye Square (Tashan) and the north of the city from here, constitutes the axle on which these buildings were lined. Especially the buildings and their functions on this axle, which constitute the spine of the city, are also reflected in society as the spine of the modernisation.

While Yenisehir is still in ‘silence’, which has developed with modern construction since the mid-1920s, the old parts of the city which preserved its ‘day and night’ life with its commercial, administrative and entertainment areas and Tashan Square in the name of Hakimiyet-i Milliye which is located here have maintained its centre position (1927). Ankara’s first permanent movie theatres have also put into service in this centre and its around (1928–1930) (Figure 1. 1920–1930 Period). Screenings have been realised in the building opened as Halkevi at the point of intersection of Boulevard and another axle connected the Station to the Cebeci and its garden has converted as an outdoor movie theatres. While the square preserves its urban centre position, Anafartalar Street, which connects the square to the development areas (Samanpazari, Hamamonu and Cebeci—Dikimevi), has formed the other axle which is predominantly the centre of attraction with its commercial function in traditional texture. In the middle of the 1930s, on these axes in the central position, two movie theatres were put into service (Figure 1. 1931–1940 Period). While the number of the permanent movie theatres in the centres increase, open-air movie theatres have also continued their screening (like Ismetpasa) (GDSA, Karagozoglu, 2004).

Kizilay and its surroundings constituted the urban centre of spatialisation of modernisation and multi-storey residential buildings for upper income groups in the increasing number since the mid-1930s have given the Boulevard and its surroundings a class character (Tankut, 1990). The Boulevard and its surroundings with its service spaces such as ‘cafe, patisserie’ reflect the model of modern urban life and these developments have determined the space preference of newly opened movie theatres. The movie theatres put into service in first Kizilay Square (part of the Boulevard combined with the Cebeci axle—1938) followed by Sihhiye Square (at the junction of the Boulevard with Necatibey Street 1944–1945) and again on the Boulevard (between the both two squares—1948) are concentrated in the developing part of the city as a new centre (Figure 1. 1941–1950 Period). In this period, Mesrutiyet, Necatibey which was located in Yenisehir and also Cebeci District have developed with public buildings such as hospitals and faculties, but square foot prices which have risen significantly due to the effects of this development, have interrupted the zoning plan by making the envisaged expropriation difficult (Tankut, 1990). With this acceleration, Cebeci as an attraction element has experienced the effect of squatting since the end of 1920s, and the increasing squatting has affected the centres of the growing urban area.

Ulus has maintained the central position of the residential areas, including the newly developed ones and the slums throughout the city. From the 1940s, however, the class characteristics of centres which include entertainment spaces such as movie have stood out and shaped accordingly. Except work, tendency like shopping and entertainment that determined the centre choice (Centre turnover) has changed with the identity of the centre (Akcura, 1971). While the centres and their functions were separated according to income groups, the movie theatres and the films shown in these centres were differentiated. In the city whose population increase rapidly, on the one hand, the increasing number of permanent and outdoor movie theatres, and on the other hand, practices such as ‘cheap session’

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<sup>3</sup> The population of Ankara was 1920: 20,000; 1924: 70,000.

and the arrangement of the screenings according to working hours have been effective in the spread of movie (Karagozoglu, 2004).

In the 1950s,<sup>4</sup> when the number of people living in non-zoned areas was significant,<sup>5</sup> the production of residential settlements such as ‘Yenimahalle’ (based on the 1940s design) was also inadequate<sup>6</sup> against rapid population growth (Altaban, 1998). The increase in transportation facilities has led to the rapid construction of relatively off-centred parts. In this process, some settlements such as Balgat, Dikmen which included the use of old vineyards and orchards or such as Ulus because of the relation to the urban centre and such as Altindag, Yenidogan because of ‘topographical reasons’ have become areas where unauthorised building construction intensified (Akcura, 1971).

After 1950, the global position of the country with its economic and political choice brought about foreign expansion with a variety of benevolent fund, and as a result, the economic recovery that has been experienced has become concrete in the production of urban environment. The integration of the country with global economic policies, defined as ‘the search for a new symbol of the new political system’, reflected in the design of the space and resulted in the construction of the first skyscraper in Kizilay (1957) (Tankut, 1990). Another reflection occurred in the form of westernisation of consumption patterns and changed the everyday life with its effects in the fields such as housing, trade, entertainment and transportation.

Yenisehir–Kizilay continued to develop as a second centre besides Ulus, with its service sector for the middle and upper income group and closeness to the political centre (Parliament, Ministries, etc.) whether functional or with its supporting architecture, being the ‘modern focus’ of the city has affected the development of the axes connecting here from every direction. The axes extending to Cankaya via Bakanliklar (Ministries) in the south and to Bahcelievler via Maltepe in the west and the parts near the Kizilay, such as Necatibey Street and Izmir Street, have developed by including changing forms of entertainment. This effect was also reflected in the movie and especially since the second half of the 1950s, the number of movie theatres has increased rapidly. The axes which are connected to the Boulevard (such as Maltepe–Bahcelievler, Cebeci–Kurtulus-Kolej directions) determine the space preference of the movie theatres (Figure 1. 1951–1960 Period). Cebeci along with Kizilay, which is formed according to middle and upper income group, has continued its development with close proximity to the Ulus and slums, the axes which link it (Cebeci) to both urban centres have become the attractiveness centre for the movie theatres. In the 1950s, outdoor movie theatres and gardens in this area became popular spaces.

Similarly, in the part from Ulus to the North, Diskapi (Yildirim Beyazit) neighbourhood has constituted an important haunt at the connection of centre and settlement areas such as Kedoren, Etlik, Altindag, which have become increasingly sub-centres and concentrated with squatter houses. In this region, the movie theatres, which attracts attention with its architecture, are put into service on Cankiri Street which connects Ulus to the north (like Nur Cinema). Altindag, which is connected with Ulus, has become a rapidly intensified region with a population increase of 6.5 times between 1950–1955 (Yavuz, 1957). Besides the indoor movie theatres in this region, where high-level non-zoned constructions and population growth have been experienced, especially the number of outdoor movie theatres has also increased (Tunc, 2011, pp. 124–125). In the intensifying sub-centres, ‘neighbourhood movie theatres’ which increased together with small commercial functions have contributed to the spread of the movie theatres with appropriate exhibitions in accordance with demographics of the surrounding area (Akis Dergisi, 1955/1985).

With the 1960s, the cultural and commercial services of Kizilay spread to Kavaklidere (Tunali). Especially from the 1960s, Bakanliklar (Ministries)–Kavaklidere, which is the development direction of the city since the 1950s, have become space of the modernisation with the signboards written in

<sup>4</sup> The population was 288,536 in these years ([www.ankara.bel.tr](http://www.ankara.bel.tr))

<sup>5</sup> According to census in 1950 half of the population lives in slums (Yavuz, 1957, p. 381).

<sup>6</sup> Between 1950 and 1955 the population increased from 2,000 to 30,000 (Yavuz, 1957, p. 381).

English reflecting in ‘development of prestige ... on the one side of the Boulevard’ and the various services, stores and coffeehouses (Akcura, 1971). In this period, the numbers of open-air and permanent movie theatres, which became an important part of everyday life, has increased significantly and had oriented towards new areas of development mentioned. While the movie, which have become widespread in parallel with the developments in the movie industry, have continued to be shown in permanent theatres in the regions where the upper income group lives (such as Kavaklıdere), outdoor movie theatres have become more intense in the parts such as Dikmen where the lower income groups live (Ozturkcan, 1977). In spite of this rate of increase, the inability to provide the expected return from commercial-focused investments disregarded the balance of supply and demand in the movie theatres; and problems related to the production in the movie industry have affected the spatial forms of the movie theatres. As a solution, besides the trends of minimisation–division of movie theatres, the first examples of designs as a part of the commercial complexes were given in this period (Senyapili, 1970). During 1960s, in Cebeci (6 movie theatre), which has an increasing population by migration in its hinterland, with its surrounding Tunali Street and Maltepe (five for each), Kizilay;4, Kucukesat;3 and in some of the developing settlement areas (such as Altindag, Aydinlik and Diskapi) one for each movie theatre has been opened. The movie theatres have followed the centres again and the areas where they intensified have reflected the demographics and differentiated consumption trends.

At the end of the 1960s, the profile of Ankara has taken the form of ‘a typical big city of underdeveloped country, which is stratified by large masses of people who live in the city but are not urbanised, and exhibit social and spatial structure’ (Bademli, 1990). Infrastructure and environmental problems of the growing city, which was extremely concentrated by migration and squatting, continued in the 1970s. Predicted new dwelling areas broke the links with existing centres in urban space that was formed by economy–politics.

In the rapidly developing centres, the number of movie theatres also increased rapidly and in the early 1970s, the number of movie theatres in Tunali has doubled compared to 1960s (Senyapili, 1970). The rapid increase of the movie theatres in the 1960s had continued in the early 1970s, after the second half of the 1960s the process of closure of movie theatres or functional change of them began. Towards 1980s, the number of movie theatres in the city decreased by two-thirds. While the movie theatres predominantly preferred Kizilay and its surroundings, followed by Maltepe;four, Tunali Street and its surroundings;three and Kecioren (including Etlik);three, in some regions one movie theatre hall for each came into service. In this period, new residential area such as the MESA (1), which articulated with the city, also determined the preference of the movie theatre formations (Figure 1. 1961–1980 period).

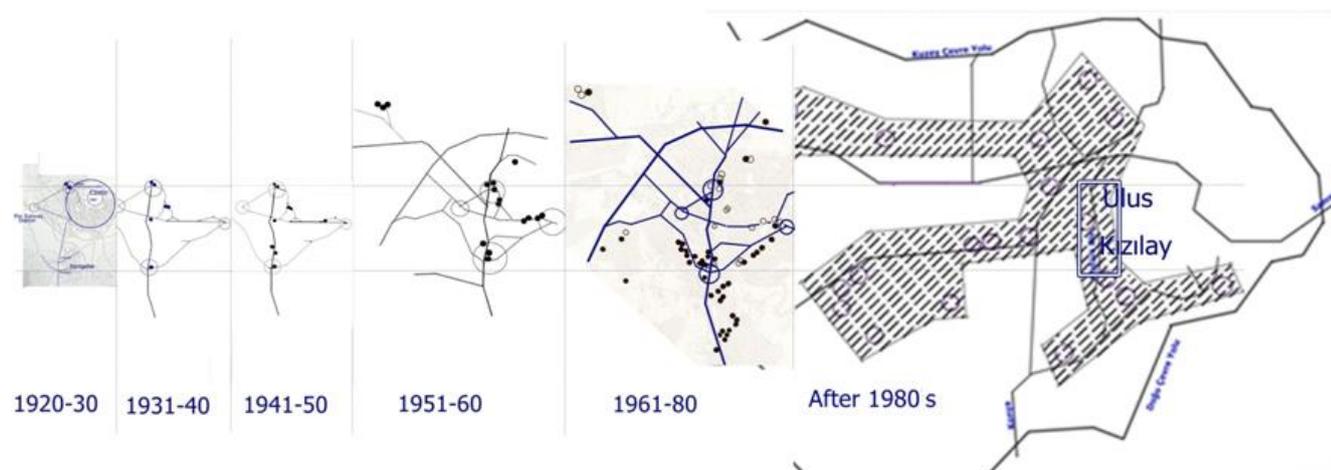
In the 1980s, globalisation affected the city, centres and movie theatres as well as every other area. The fact that the components of movie industry such as production, distribution and exhibition are largely dominated by global capital has produced tools which are pressure elements for traditional permanent movie theatres. The malls which symbolise globalisation, such as monopoly structures on the world scale and legal obligations, and multinational companies, are one of the tools embodying this process with architecture. Malls, on the one hand, create fantasy for the consumer and on the other hand ‘correspond to search for a common ground to socialise within a community that provides low level of opportunity for public interaction’ and these have led to the formation of the malls in the form of city centre (Gottdiener, 2005).

The first examples of malls in Ankara were built at the end of 1980s (Atakule, 1989; Karum, 1991). In the city with 70% level of non-zoned building, they have been served in the settlement like Cankaya, which includes the upper income group. From that date to now, number of malls has reached important levels (according to 2013 data). The malls have affected the centres, the movie theatres and the city due to the reasons for being located far away from the urban centres along with their wide space requirement over time (Figure 1. After 1980s). In relation to movie, malls with multi-screens they contain, which are suitable for requirements of the distribution and exhibition, are one of the

factors for the decrease of permanent movie theatres. With the effects of distribution system, the traditional movie theatres, whether reorganised as a multiscreen or closed for failure, compete with movie theatres in malls. Although the number of screens has increased in a short period of time due to the number of malls, the number of seats per screens has decreased gradually in Ankara (Figures 2 and 3). Movie screenings in the city have come until today by limited number of traditional centres in Kizilay and Bahcelievler, or organisation of local governments, or periodically outdoor cinemas, or screening in single rooms<sup>7</sup> as market creation. And the digitisation rate is 90% in the process of integration to global market (Turkish Competition Authority, 2017).

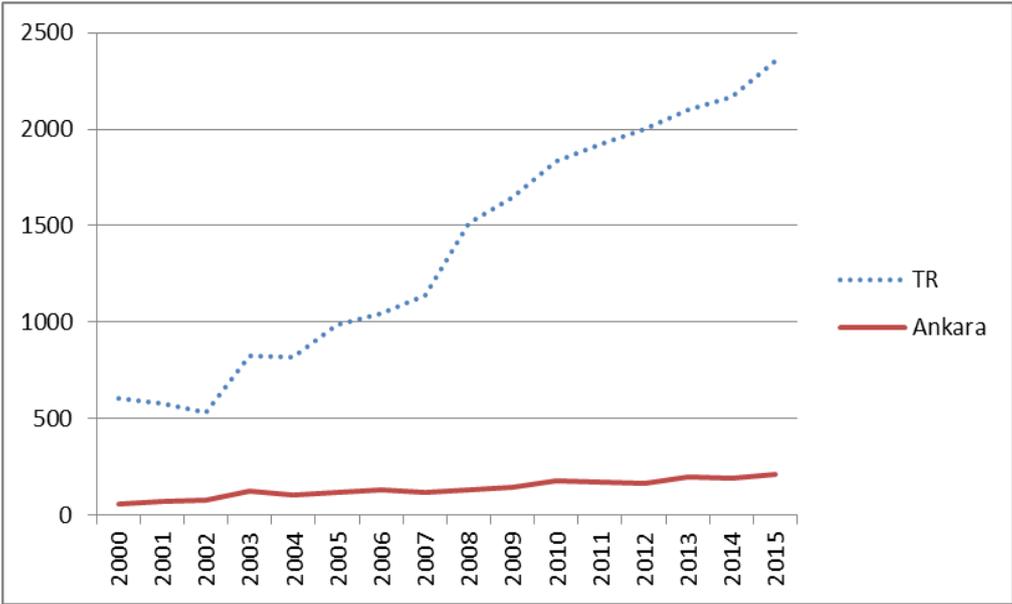
The transformation of urban centres and the movement of movie theatres in this process are in coordination in this period. The number of newly opened movie theatres has been a sign for the density of these centres and development direction dimension in urban area. The malls undertake the facilities of urban centre which is the public space at the same time and take the place of reality by producing the illusion of a centre in this expansion.

But on the other side of this spatial analysis, it is important that the effects of these evolutions on publicity functions of movie theatres as centres. It has caused the increasingly fragmented practices that define the centre as establishment of a partnership and the potentiality of traditional movie theatres. Besides of increasing movie theatres with minimisation, the possibilities of watching movies via Internet or CD have caused withdrawal of spectators, which are the important component of publicity, into private space. Instead of the functionality of centres which provide architectural environment for the association of urban mass, the fictional patterns offered by the malls have narrowed the public interaction area.

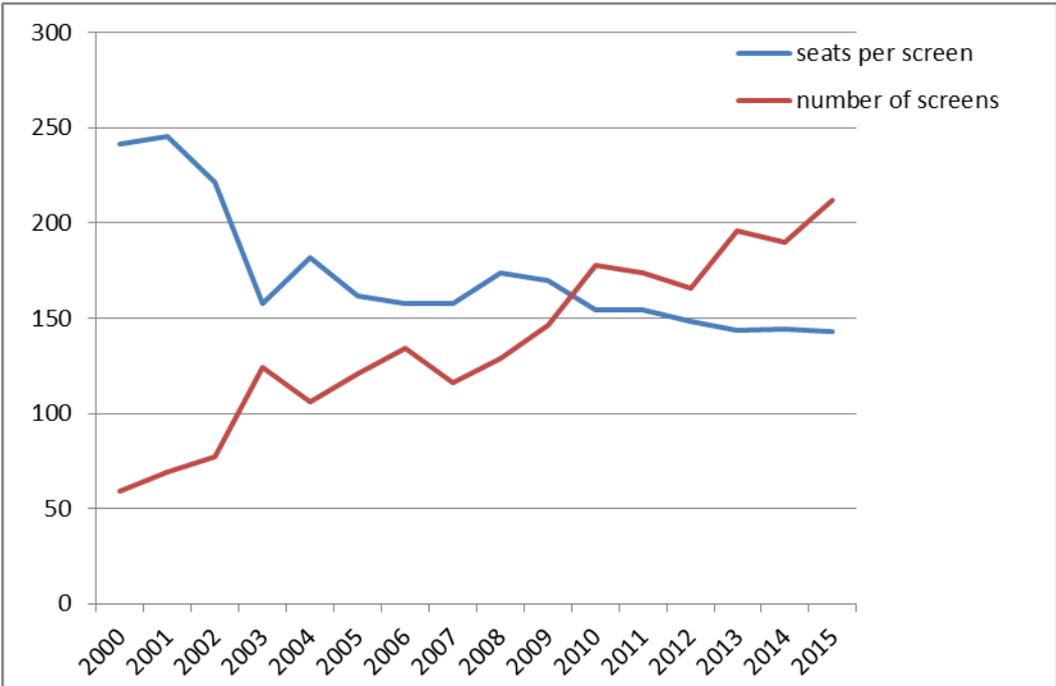


**Figure 1. From 1920s to now, the directions of urban development and the space choices of movie theatres** (Source for maps used for base: Akture, 2001, pp. 66–67, Uybadin City Pl. <https://www.pinterest.se/pin/510384570241025624/>, 22 May 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Sinema Ankara Aura vip' <http://www.sinemaankara.com/> (19 November 2015)



**Figure 2. The increase in number of screens in Turkey and Ankara**  
(Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, 2013, 2017)



**Figure 3. The decrease in number of seat per screen in relation to minimisation and increase of movie halls in Ankara**  
(Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, 2013, 2017)

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