Urban parks in Islamic modern cities: Case studies in Ankara

Yehia Wazeri, Al Arish, Egypt

Abstract

Urban parks benefit urban communities environmentally, aesthetically, recreationally, psychologically and economically. The most significant feature that distinguishes city parks from other categories of parks, they serve the city as a whole. Studying the distribution and design approach of urban parks in cities is very significant. The requirements of citizens must be achieved by a suitable pattern of parks distribution and by the quality of services, and different activities are provided in parks design elements.

The aim of the present study is to investigate the major parks distribution in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, using Google Earth program. Another goal of the survey is to determine the similarities and differences in design concept and elements of six major parks, utilising field observations and analysis approach.

Keyword: Ankara, urban parks, modern cities, distribution.

Yehia Wazeri, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Architecture, High Institute of Engineering & Technology, Al Arish, Egypt. Egypt phone: 00201223041642, Email: drwazeri@yahoo.com
Introduction

In general, parks are classed as regional parks, city parks, neighbourhood parks, district parks and small parks. The most significant feature that distinguishes city parks from other categories of parks, they serve the city as a whole. The width of the park service area or domain area covering the entire city depend on several factors such as distance and accessibility of the park, variety of activities and quality of provided services in the park, the size, aesthetic qualities of the park, and so forth. (Oğuz, 1998). Urban parks are an important part of the complex urban ecosystem network and provide significant ecosystem services. It benefits urban communities environmentally, aesthetically, recreationally, psychologically and economically (Loures et al., 2007).

“Frederick Olmsted, the man who built New York’s Central Park, called it “the lungs of the city”. It helps keep the air pure, keeps us healthy. Trees do all kinds of positive things in the city. The forests, green areas, axes, water basins, valleys are “lungs of the city”, which means that most of our vital oxygen, fresh air, and fresh water come from those areas. (Kaplan & Tuncer, 2006).

The cooling effect of vegetation has been reported by many researchers comparing temperatures in urban parks with those recorded in street canyons. Santamouris et al. (2000) observed that temperatures recorded at the central Athens’ National Gardens were much closer to those of the suburban reference sites. Yuksel and Kuntay (2009) stated that the coldest areas of the city Ankara are large green sectors such as Ataturk’s Farm, Cebeci State Cemetery, and Middle East Technical University’s campus which is necessary for Ankara’s open space system. The effects of urban parks on temperature were investigated in the case of three urban parks of different sizes and supporting different plant densities and distributions in urban areas of Ankara City, Turkey (Bilgili et al., 2013).

Studying the distribution and design approach of urban parks in cities is very significant. The requirements of citizens must be achieved by a suitable pattern of parks distribution and by the quality of services, and different activities are provided in parks design concepts and elements.

Beler (1993, 1997) carried out a study of the distribution of urban public service (parks & recreational facilities) in Ankara. The parks and recreational facilities were evaluated regarding both service and users characteristics.

In another study, three urban parks in Konya Province identified and a survey conducted on urban park users by Ozdemir & Polat (2014). A comparative study of four urban parks in Turkey and Netherlands regarding design and planning concepts were carried out by Ak et al. (2014). The study focuses on parks areas, which can be seen as a reflection of two different characters.
The aim of the present study is to investigate the major parks distribution in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, using Google Earth program. Another goal of the survey is to determine the similarities and differences in design concept and elements of six major parks, utilising field observations and analysis approach.

**A historical review of parks emergence in Ankara**

The development of public parks in the West was an outcome of the transformation of the industrial city; the appearance of this public space for Turkish cities, on the other hand, dates back to the period of Ottoman rule and is said to have been initiated by Ottoman elites in an imitation of the westernized lifestyle (CAN, 2013).

Sources that describe the old gardens in Turkey are rare. However, some old palaces with their gardens survived for a longer period, and from these, some concepts may be gathered. These characteristics illustrated in the following points (Lehrman, 1980, Evyapan, 1986, Atasoy, 2004, 2007):

- The most critical of the Anatolian Turkish gardens was its function as a living space rather a thing only to be looked at. Therefore, choosing the location of a garden involved careful considerations of its terrain, the view it commanded, the quality of its air and its proximity to a water spring.
- Since the garden was to be lived in, terraces of sharply differing levels were avoided to facilitate foot traffic.
- Often, the garden would be laid before the architecture edifice, and for this reason, the majority of the Ottoman palaces in Istanbul were known as gardens rather than palaces, even though they included palaces buildings. The Tokad Garden, the Goksu Garden, and the Çırağan Garden are a few examples.
- Axes possibly less determined the traditional Turkish garden. The Ottoman garden was a part of nature; in planting them with flowers and trees, their concern was only to enrich and embellish upon what nature had already provided.
- There should be water elements in the gardens, but Turks considered still water impure and religiously unacceptable, only flowing water was used.
- One of the main design elements which characterised the Ottoman gardens is using pavilions, kiosks and tents.

Until the 19th century the main components of the green structure of pre-industrial town Ankara are private courtyards in the centre, and vineyards, orchards, creek promenades and meadows at the fringe, outside the city walls of the town. As parallel to the urban public garden movement in Europe, the first public garden, “Millet Bahcesi” (Nation Garden) was established in the 1880s (www.urban-landscape.net).
With the proclamation of Ankara as the capital of Turkey in 1923, the growth of the town accelerated, and the city gained an urban plan, which has a holistic plan for green structure, prepared by Professor Hermann Jansen. In this respect, Jansen’s efforts included supplying the public health and joy with physical surroundings, tendency to develop green areas inside and outside the city (Sarikulak, 2013).

The components of the green structure were a green belt, green wedge (Atatürk Experimental Farm) and stripped formed with creeks and valleys, and public gardens and central park (Youth Park) along the main boulevard of the city, Atatürk Boulevard.

During the period between proclamation of the city as capital and today, the population and the area of city extremely increased and the city gained new public parks. In the most recent decade, in particular, urban public parks are among the major spaces that have been most dramatically transformed, produced, and reproduced by Ankara metropolitan municipality.

The total number of parks in Ankara is 1.327 with the total area is 6590104 m² by 2003. They are in different sizes ranging from about 200m² to 1.180.000m² (Kaplan&Tuncer, 2006). A recent study also showed that the increasing in green areas proportion rose in the period from 1995-2005 by 9.8% (Yuksel & Kuntay, 2009).

The Ankara Municipality has already begun on a huge project that aims to development and establishment some parks and green areas in Kecioren District, which is located in the northern part of the capital (Urban Transformation Project of Northern Ankara Entrance, no date).

**Study area: Ankara city**

The study was carried out in the city of Ankara, the capital of Turkey and the country's second largest city after Istanbul. The city is located at 39°52'30" north, 32°52’ east, about 351 km (218 mi) to the south-east of Istanbul.

The city has a mean elevation of 850 meters above sea level. The city of Ankara is enclosed with hills and mountains; therefore the city is situated in a geomorphologic dish (Yuksel & Kuntay, 2009).

Centrally located in Anatolia, Ankara is an important commercial and industrial city. It is the centre of the Turkish Government, and houses all foreign embassies. It is an important crossroads of trade, strategically located at the heart of Turkey's highway and railway networks, and serves as the marketing centre for the surrounding agricultural area, figure 1.
Figure 1. Ankara centrally located in Anatolia Province.

In Ankara, the climate is cold and temperate. The winters are rainier than the summers in Ankara. The average annual temperature in Ankara is 11.6 °C. The rainfall here averages 383 mm.

The driest month is August, with 10 mm of rain. The greatest amount of precipitation occurs in May, with an average of 52 mm. The warmest month of the year is July, with an average temperature of 22.4 °C. The lowest average temperatures in the year occur in January when it is around 0.0 °C (www.en.climate-data.org).

Studying parks distribution:

Table 1. contains the basic data about the districts and suburbs of the Greater Ankara Municipality. As of 2014, Ankara had a population about of 4,500,000, which includes nine districts under the city's administration.

The metropolitan area territory occupies about 50 km diameter, figure 2, with a total area equals about 2642 km².

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>Total population (according to the year 2014)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cankaya</td>
<td>The central district</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>913,751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kecioren</td>
<td>North of Ankara</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>872,025</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is evident that the district of Cankaya (the central district) has the largest number of residents of the capital and the suburb of Golbasi, which is located in the south of the capital, is the largest districts of Ankara province with the fewest number of residents. The research was focused on the Mausoleum of "Ataturk", which is located in "Cankaya", the central administrative district of Ankara, as a reference point. Recent study results showed that this mausoleum is the most famous landmark of Ankara (Baris et al., 2009). So, the distances between the mausoleum and the major parks of Ankara were measured using Google Earth program, see Table 2. The chart also includes the basic data about ten major parks of Ankara, arranged in chronological order by date of construction or opening.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Directions</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>Population (Residents)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pursaklar</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>129.152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yenimahalle</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>608.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mamak</td>
<td>East of Ankara</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>587.565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altindag</td>
<td>North east</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>361.259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sincan</td>
<td>West of Ankara</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>497.516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etimesgut</td>
<td>West of Ankara</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>501.351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golbasi</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>118.346</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2 Main districts of the Greater Municipality of Ankara**
(Prepared by the researcher using Google Earth.)
Table 2. The basic data about some major parks of Ankara.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park name</th>
<th>District name</th>
<th>Date of construction or opening</th>
<th>Area (m²)</th>
<th>Distance from Ataturk Mausoleum (km)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guven</td>
<td>Cankaya</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>25.000</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genclic</td>
<td>Altnadg</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>270.000</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurtulus</td>
<td>Cankaya</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>110.000</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altinpark</td>
<td>Altnadg</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>640.000</td>
<td>5.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demetevler</td>
<td>Yenimahalle</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>76.000</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dikmen</td>
<td>Cankaya</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>378.000</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mogan</td>
<td>Golbasi</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td><strong>601.879</strong></td>
<td>16.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goksu</td>
<td>Etimesgut</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>550.000</td>
<td>17.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harikalar Diyari</td>
<td>Sincan</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1.300.000</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mavi Gol</td>
<td>Mamak</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>603.800</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1st and 2nd Stages)

Figure 3 represents a satellite photo which shows the locations of major parks in Ankara and the reference point (Mausoleum of Ataturk). The figure indicates that the major parks in Ankara are located on two main axes, as follows:

* The first: passing from south to north, from Mogan Park to Altinpark, led through Dikmen Valley Park, Guven park, Genclik Park, and Kurtulus Park. It is mean that this axe is passing through four major districts of Ankara, with a straight length equal to 20 km.
* The second: passing from east to west, from Mavi Gol Lake Park to Harikalar Diyari Park, led through Altinpark Park, Demetevler Park and Goksu Park. It is mean that this axe also is passing through four major districts of Ankara, with a straight length equal to 34 km.
By studying the satellite image of Ankara ring road (known as Ankara Cevre Yolu), figure 4, I found that there are five parks are located near or next to it, to facilitate access to those parks from any part of Ankara districts. These parks are:
- Mavi Gol Lake Park, located next to the Ring Road.
- Goksu Park, located less than 1 km from the ring road.
- Harikalar Diyari Park located about 3 km from the ring road.
- Mogan Lake Park located about 3 km from the ring road.
- Demetvler Park, located about 7 km from the ring road.
A comparative study of six major parks design

The previous studies conducted on parks of Ankara are few, among them the study which carried out on three parks in Ankara using the questionnaire system. The aim of that study is to find out the extent of users satisfaction and report the problems and requirements of them (Oguz, 2000).

In this part of the research, a comparative study between six major parks design was conducted. These parks are Dikmen, Altinpark, Mogan, Goksu, Harikalar Diyari and Mavi Gol. The purpose of that comparison is to determine the most important design features of these parks, the similarities and differences in their design concept and elements, and also find out the impact of traditional Anatolian Turkish parks characteristics on their designs.

It has been taken into consideration in selecting those parks to fulfil some features, illustrated in the following points:
- The parks have large areas.
- The parks distributed in different districts of Ankara.
- The parks recently established since 2000, except only one park (Altinpark) where it set up in 1980.

**Altinpark:**

*The Purpose of Construction*

The park is located in Altnadge district in the northern part of the city and overlooked by houses from their four sides. It is also used for the rest of the capital's citizens. Altinpark accommodates many of first occasions in Turkey besides being a modern park with its social establishment and facilities (Altinpark, 2006).

*The basic elements*

It is a large recreation area as water, green, flowers, entertainment, excursion, sports and the fair island of Ankara with 85% green field and pond arrangements, 15% covered by buildings and paved surfaces stand on 640000m² of land (Muderrisoglu et al., 2010).

You can find all the colors of life in Altinpark with the Science Center, congress centers with international standards, Olympic swimming pool with international standards, kiosks and restaurants, kindergarten and summer schools, musical and lightened water exhibitions, game and entertainment areas, amphitheatres next to the lake, crashing boats, electrical excursion cars, mini excursion train, horse carts and car parks.
Design analysis
The external borders of the park are close to the trapezoidal shape. Streets from four sides surround it, and it has four entrances. The main axes are not used in park design, but follow the free shape plan, figure 5.

Among the most important characteristic of the park is the presence of a large artificial lake in the middle, with an area of 59470 m$^2$. There is an island in the lake which occupies 19,000 m$^2$ of the total lake area.

Dikmen Valley Park
The purpose of construction
The Ankara Greater Municipality and the Municipality of Çankaya proposed the Dikmen Valley Project in the Master Plan of Ankara in 1989, as a housing and recreational project. This recreational corridor was not only for the Valley residents but the whole city (Dikmen Valley Urban Transformation Project, 2007).

By courtesy of this project, the illegal house area of Dikmen canyon which was not suitable for the modern country structure, has been provided to be converted to a modern and planned urban transformation.

There were three major targets in the project (Malusardi & Occhipinti, 2003):
- To create an open air corridor for the green belt and to reduce the air pollution;
- To develop an urban landmark with well planned cultural and recreational areas;
- To supply low-cost housing for the inhabitants.

The basic elements
Dikmen Valley 1st and 2nd Stages are located on 378,000 square meters area. The park contains green areas of over 260,000 square meters, and the pond occupies 31,000 square meters. A conference hall, exhibition hall, two swimming pools, and two sports centres exist.
also. There is an open theatre next to the artificial lake. This project was awarded the first prize by the Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities (Dikmen Valley Urban Transformation Project, 2007).

**Design analysis**
The external border of the park takes the natural shape of the winding valley, and its longitudinal axis extends nearly from north to south, parallel to the same central axis of the first Valley. The planned open-air corridor with cultural and recreational activities has brought a whole new idea to the city, figure 6.

**Figure 6 Arial view, photo of Dikmen Valley Park** (The researcher) and **plan** (www.ugurkentseldonusum.com.tr).

**Mogan Lake Park**

**The purpose of construction**
An environment recreation area, which is constructed by Ankara Metropolitan Municipality. Mogan Park is located in the Gölbaşı County in the southern part of the city on a 601000 m² of land next to the Mogan Lake coast.

In the 203.650 m² part of park area which is separated as the “Nature Park”, for the dying out birds to accommodate in their incubation and propagation periods. So, Bird Observation Houses are built in this area, and a wooden walkway with 130 m length is constructed from the highway to provide easy transport. (Walkway is closed in the propagation period). **Mogan Lake offers unique beauty to bird watchers** (Mogan Park, 2007).
The basic elements
Landscaping areas are approximately 22,000 m\(^2\) planted tree area, 27,500 m\(^2\) planted bush area, 196,500 m\(^2\) shrub and green area, 5000 m\(^2\) seasonal flower area and the total is 250,100 m\(^2\) (Mogan park, 2007).

In the landscaping structural arrangement areas, there are:
- Vehicle ways, coast ways, walkways,
- Cafeteria buildings, lake cafeterias, lake watching terrace and picnic areas,
- Outdoor sports areas, and child playing areas,
- Poultry house building for the domestic animals,
- Lighthouse (watching tower).

Design analysis
The park is overlooking Mogan Lake (an area of 2.50 km\(^2\) and an average depth of 2.8 m), so the park is parallel to part of the western lake shore, Figure. 7. There is a watching tower (Lighthouse) overlooking the lake directly. The right combination of waterfront landscape with the picnic activity makes Mogan park the most preferred green area in the park.

**Figure 7 a plan and photos of Mogan Lake Park** (Mogan Park, 2006).

Goksu Park
The purpose of construction
Goksu Park is located between Ankara – Istanbul Highway and Eryaman Collective Housing Site within borders of Etimesgut district. The park area was a neglected lake up to 2003 and in that year, the natural lake (called "Susuz Gol") was retrieved care by Municipality of Ankara and Municipality of Etimesgut for the development of the lake and the surrounding area. The park is considered one of the most important recreation areas of Ankara (Goksu Park, 2007).
The basic elements
The total area of usage is 550,000 m². The natural lake occupies 127,189 m² of the park area. There is a “Mississippi Ship” and there are boats for an excursion in the lake. There is also wooden walkway surrounds the lake with 1.6 km which can be used for social, cultural and sportive usages where the park, water and green are all together. The most famous of Park buildings are a theatre next to the lake and accommodate 1200 people, cafeterias, restaurants and the circular island restaurant. 600 picnic tables and barbeques are available within 18,250 m². The total green area is 250,200 m², and on this field, 98,700 units of trees, shrubs and bushes are implanted (Goksu Park, 2007).

Design analysis
The external border and shape of the park are irregular and mainly intended to simulate the nature. This is evident in designing the circular island, which created inside the lake as a circular mound and occupied 14,000 m². The main restaurant of the park exists on the top of this artificial island, Figure. 8.

Figure 8 plan and photos of Goksu Lake Park (Goksu Park, 2006).

Harikalar Diyari park
The purpose of construction
It is one of the biggest urban parks in Europe with its 1 million 300 thousand m² area, which services to the Capital and its near surroundings (Sincan district). Ankara Metropolitan Municipality established the park in 2003.
The basic elements
Harikalar Diyari (Wonderland) Park is a large park which the recreation areas include: Picnic areas, Sports Complex, Cultural areas, Green areas and Story Island, and so forth.

The “Story Island” which lies inside the lake, is set on 25000 m², designed especially for the children. It contains 178 statues of fable characters, famous in the world stories (like The Princess and the Seven Dwarfs, Aladdin, Gulliver). It also contains 12 small cinema hall. The park is planned to have (The recreational area of the world of wonders, 2007): 651 thousand m² green areas, 330 thousand m² ways and arenas, 40 thousand m² car park area, 67 thousand m² structure area, and 92 thousand m² water area.

Design analysis
The external borders of the park do not have a specific geometric shape, but free planning. It follows the natural forms design style without using major axes of design, Figure.9.

Figure 9 plan and photos of Harikalar Diyari Park (Harikalar Diyari Park, 2006).

There is an artificial lake (92000m² water areas) on one side of the garden, containing an island inside it. The park buildings scattered in almost all parts of the park and the main buildings (like an open lake amphitheatre for 4 thousand 500 people and coast tea garden) are overlooking the lake.

Mavi Gol Park:
The purpose of construction
As a result of intense efforts, "Bayındır Barrage" is transferred to Ankara Metropolitan Municipality and converted to a big recreation area, and it has got the name “Mavi Göl” (blue lake) inspiring by the blue colour of the 6.5 million m³ water in the barrage.
Mavi Göl project is made by Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, as a product of a major exertion, which is worth to see and put in service for all the Ankara citizens.

**The basic elements**

Mavi Göl Recreation Area is set up on a total of $2,120,694 \text{ m}^2$ with; $85,000 \text{ m}^2$ green areas, $180,000 \text{ m}^2$ Rough ground, $1,254,271 \text{ m}^2$ picnic area and $601,423 \text{ m}^2$ water area (Mavi Göl, 2006).

In the Recreation Area; there are Picnic areas, Riding school, Child playing fields, Sports areas, Marine and catwalks, Vehicle and walkways, Tea gardens and WC's.

**Design analysis**

The General design direction depends on the cultivation area overlooking the lake from all sides by trees and green spaces. To give that original spirit, it has been taking into account reducing the buildings to the minimum required buildings to serve visitors of the park, figure 10.

Mavi Göl, has a unique view both with its natural beauty and the environmental arrangements.

**Figure 10 plan and photos of Mavi Gol Park** (Mavi Gol Park, 2006).
Results and dissection
At present, the major parks of Ankara are located within the limits of a circle with an average diameter equal to 25 km. The satellite image showed that the major parks in Ankara are located on two main axes: the first one passing from south to north through four districts, with a straight line equal to 20 km, and the second one passing from east to west, like a crescent curved slightly to the north, through four districts, with a straight line equal to 34 km.

The major parks spread over the main districts of the city and the central district (Cankaya) contains the largest number of those parks.

The oldest parks of Ankara are located within the area around Ataturk Mausoleum. They represent at the same time the smallest parks area. These parks are Gençlik Park (1.50 km from the Mausoleum), Guven park (1.70 km from the Mausoleum) and Kurtulus Park (2.30 km from the Mausoleum).

The newest parks are the most distant from Ataturk Mausoleum. The distances are ranging from 4.25 km (Dikmen Valley Park) to 22 km (Harikalar Diyari Park). The newest parks represent at the same time the largest parks area, ranging from 378.000 m$^2$ (Dikmen Valley Park) to 1.300.000 m$^2$ (Harikalar Diyari Park).

There was increasing in the establishment of large parks in Ankara (five parks) in the period from 2000 to 2005, at a rate of approximately one garden every year. These parks are Dikmen Valley Park (erected 2000), Mogan Park (erected 2001), Goksu Park (erected 2003), Harikalar Diyari Park (erected 2003) and Mavi Gol Park (erected 2005). These show a growing interest of Ankara Municipality for the establishment of the major public parks that serve all citizens of Ankara. Beler (1997) stated that those from varying distances use larger parks owned by metropolitan municipalities and planned for the whole city. Users will travel more for better service or quality.

The satellite image of Ankara ring road showed that there are five parks are located near or next to it, to facilitate access to those parks from any part or district of Ankara. Four of them were erected between 2001 to 2005.

One of the important main reasons which influenced the choice of new parks locations and distributions is the existence of neglected natural lakes. These lakes are:
- Blue Lake (Mavi Gol) located in Mamak district, east of Ankara,
- Mogan Lake located in Golbasi district, south of Ankara,
- Goksu Lake (Susuz Gol) located in Etimesgut, west of Ankara.

That is main the choice of parks locations benefited from the natural resources of Ankara such as natural lakes or also natural valleys (in the case of Dikmen Valley). On the other
hand, those parks are utilised for upgrading those areas from environmental and urban aspects at the same time.

The comparative study of six large parks of Ankara showed that they affected by many of the design ideas which applied in the old Turkish and traditional Anatolian parks. They were intended as a living space rather a thing only to be looked at, so they accommodate a broad range of activities such as recreation areas, cultural buildings, sports centres, restaurants and picnic areas.

Parks and recreation areas that established in recent years offer many activity opportunities. A variety of activities is the principal attraction element and brings people together from the different regions of the city (Oğuz, 2000; Beler, 1993). As an example Mississippi Ship and go-cart in Göksu Park, fable characters in Harikalar Diyari, and roller skate in Altipark are the favourite activities of young people (Muderrisoglu et al., 2010).

The Major parks in Ankara have some common design features. The absence of specific geometric patterns in the overall design and the lack of the main axes is one of these functions. The presence of water bodies (natural or artificial) and often with significant areas in all parks that have been studied is another feature. It was observed that some lakes contain an island inside them, where the lake becomes the focus of visual attraction for the park visitors. Goksu Lake Island, Altipark Lake Island and Harikalar Diyari Lake Island are examples of them.

Another repeated design features are the pedestrian walkways and watching towers. For example, Goksu park has a wooden walkway surrounds the lake with 1.6 km which can be used for social, cultural and sportive usages and there is also a wooden walkway with 130 m length in Mogan park. Watching towers (lighthouses) also are another repeated design elements characterise the two former parks.

Ahmad (2011) confirmed that ‘to walk in the park” has the highest preference among the other parks activities. The result supports the findings of the study in Turkey which stated that walking along Park as the most preferred activities of the participants (Oguz, 2000). It is, of course, clear that people do not receive enough space for exercise and walking in a crowded city like Ankara, so they need to go to parks and public open spaces for walking and other similar activities.

Despite the obvious common design features of the selected parks, there is a distinctive design character of each park. Some parks design linked with nature as in the case of Mavi Gol Lake, Mogan Lake and Goksu Lake. In the case of Harikalar Diyari Park, Wonderland in the form of an artificial island identified the main design idea. Finally, Altipark and Dikmen Parks are in close link with the residential areas which overlooking them directly.
Conclusion

Amount and distribution of parks, green spaces and open areas in urban landscape are important in sustainability and livability.

The style of parks design and the multiplicity of activities contribute to increasing the number of visitors to those parks, from varying distances.

Ankara Great Municipality had a pioneer experience in taking advantage of the available natural resources and designing of large urban city parks. This experience can be repeated and inspired in other countries, on environmental and cultural features of each country.

References


Harikalara Diyari (wonderland) park 2006: Great Municipality of Ankara, Turkey.


