

The Changing Landscapes of Ankara: A Critical Ground for Integrative Urban and Landscape Development¹

Selin Çavdar Sert¹, Funda Bas Bütüner²

¹*OSTİM Technical University, Turkey*

²*Middle East Technical University, Turkey*

Abstract

This article offers a critical reading of the changing landscapes of Ankara, exposing the still existing potential for framing integrative urban strategy-making. Ankara has undergone intense urban expansion since the 1950s, and like other cities, it is still dealing with large scale construction/destruction engendering dramatic landscape loss in various contexts and scales. Although change in the landscape is typical of urbanization, nature and landscape were largely undervalued in the implementation of urban development strategies in Ankara. Contradicting per capita green space policies, the well-structured urban landscape, including both natural and planned/designed landscapes from the Republican Period were fragmented and reduced. Valleys creating corridors for fresh air and offering a reserve for agriculture were engulfed by squatter houses, then by new housing projects; streams, defining a blue infrastructure accompanied by fertile lands were partially covered over or canalized. Furthermore, the landscape heritage of the early Republican Period, which played a key role in the modernization of societal and urban life, was also undervalued, while the urban park system has been diminished. This article identifies representative examples of fragmentation and loss of the landscape fabric, as well as the latent potential of the landscape to articulate a sustainability agenda for Ankara.

Introduction

Sustainability challenges in natural resources, infrastructure and communities have undoubtedly necessitated a shift in the conception of urbanization, design thinking and strategies. Cities, which have heretofore been seen as one of the sources of environmental problems, have now emerged as resilient grounds for coping with environmental degradation and climate change (UN, 2017; Mostafavi, 2010). By giving definition to the urgent agendas of cities, these challenges have introduced an expanded problem area that requires well-structured strategies on various topics, including education, production, urbanization, and others. However, one critical point that becomes apparent is the necessity of framing strategies which prevent "...unnecessary land-use change and the loss of productive land and fragile and important ecosystems." (UN, 2017, p. 19). This statement once again highlights the critical role of integrated land use development and landscape strategies, and points to the necessity of an integrated mind-set amongst architecture, planning and landscape architecture for a new conception of urbanization.

A new conception of urbanization comes along with a new conception of landscape. Developing and sustaining landscape fabric that operates as infrastructure has become part of the agenda in many cities worldwide. Continuity, network quality and generative nature enforce infrastructure's prominent role in integrated urban strategies. However, for a large number of cities, the topic is still dormant, or quite blurry and distant, as in the case

of Ankara. Conflicting with the remarkable increase in the amount of the per capita green space in the city over past decades, Ankara has suffered greatly and is still suffering from the fragmentation and homogenization of its landscape. Although changes in the landscape fabric might be interpreted as the inevitable outcome of the evolving relationship between human culture and nature, and also as a typical outcome of urban expansion, the case is quite drastic in Ankara. The well-structured green system generated by designed/planned landscapes and existing natural assets at the time when the city was planned as the capital of Turkish Republic have been greatly undervalued over time. The diversified landscape fabric of the city, operating on different scales, in different contexts and for different purposes, have either been lost, fragmented or shrunken. Especially after the 1960s, similar to many other cities, Ankara started to experience intense urban expansion and transformation, mainly caused by squatter housing developments, the construction of inner city expressways and the pollution of its natural resources. Yet today, the city is still witnessing large scale construction/destruction and urban transformation projects that impose a restricted frame on landscape, that is, mainly for the purpose of beautification.

This article intends to frame the dramatic loss of Ankara's landscape fabric and bring forward the necessity for an integrative landscape in the city. It dwells on three cases – undervalued heritage landscapes, deformed urban parks and razed nature – each typically representing a transformation of the characteristic former landscape of the city. Although each instance manifests through

¹ An earlier version of this article was presented by Funda Baş Bütüner at IFLA World Congress 2019 "Common Ground", Oslo.

numerous cases in Ankara, this discussion concentrates particularly on those that have defined the city over time. Atatürk Forest Farm (AFF), being a unique cultural landscape of the Republican Period, undoubtedly qualifies as an “undervalued heritage landscape”; the integrated parks system and inclusive landscape section along Atatürk Boulevard characteristically represents “deformed urban parks”; and the contiguous rural landscape of the east, filigreed with topography, streams and productive lands, equates to “razed urban nature” in Ankara. By narrating landscape loss in different contexts and on different scales, the main motivation of this paper is not only to criticize the massive destruction of landscape, but also to point out the still-existing potential for an integrative landscape fabric which might operate as infrastructure for future sustainable land-use strategies in Ankara.

Grounding Landscape through Infrastructure in Cities

“If well-planned and well-managed, urbanization can be a powerful tool for sustainable development for both developing and developed countries.”

(UN New Urban Agenda, 2017, p. iv)

The terms “well-planned” or “well-managed” might refer to an expanded field that necessitates various strategies for environmentally sustainable and resilient urban development in different domains: architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, planning, economy, sociology, etc. Landscape, particularly with the rise of Landscape Urbanism in the 1990s, has proclaimed its critical position in the field and has been propounded as a model for urban strategies. The major focus introduced by landscape urbanism has been not only on increasing the amount of green surface in cities, but also mainly on generating an infrastructural landscape that operates for improving the condition of the community and the environment, and also for mediating urban development (Meyer, 1997; Allen, 2001; Bélanger, 2012; Waldheim, 2016).

Dwelling on the infrastructural quality of landscape provides the necessary ground for a sustainable urban development agenda in today’s cities. Taking into consideration the etymology of the term, “the installations that form the basis for any operation or system”, infrastructure can mainly be understood as a system. On the other hand, the generic dictionary definition explains the term in a more limited way by grounding it on a built environment: “The basic facilities, services, and installations needed for the functioning of a community or society, such as transportation and communications systems, water and power lines, and public institutions including schools, post offices, and prisons.” However, both definitions refer to a system, and this underscores infrastructure’s prominent position in modern cities for sustaining landscape fabric, particularly when the substructures which enable and regulate the flow and exchange in the system are considered (Allen, 1999). Landscapes, whether located in urban areas (parks, gardens, cultivated areas, urban forests, or vacant lots) or urban peripheral zones (agricultural zones, forests, natural conservation areas, etc.) operate as parts of a whole – a

system – comprising various layers and deep sections of different qualities, from earth to air and from surface level to ground reserves: “It [landscape] is one of the components of a “megastructure”, namely the nature” (Jackson, 1976). Various typologies of landscape conjoin each other through earth and form a network with other natural systems (groundwater, the water basin, and geomorphological outlines). However, this network operates not only with natural systems; it also runs with engineered systems, indicating hybrid infrastructure. Currently, the homogenized and fragmented landscapes of modern cities have obscured the perception of such a system, and landscape and city are mostly considered polar opposites. The city is portrayed as a place of high density, pollution and tension, while landscape – parks, gardens and tree-lined streets and boulevards – is depicted as moderating the unhealthy impacts of the urban milieu (Corner, 2006).

In this context, the intermingled relationship between landscape and infrastructure might frame the new conception of landscape. Landscape, serving as the original dwelling of humans, can be defined as the earliest infrastructural milieu where various flows – energy, resources, people and animals – and interaction among them were operating before the development of built environment and engineered infrastructure (Whiston Spirn, 1998; Carlson, 2013). The infrastructural quality of landscape can also be highlighted by J.B. Jackson’s definition of landscape: Jackson (1984), while criticizing the restrictive perception of civil engineering and landscape architecture as two unrelated disciplines and searching for common points between them, delineated a definition which interpreted landscape as infrastructure: “a composition of man-made or man-modified spaces to serve as infrastructure or background for our collective existence” (Jackson, 1984, p. 8).

In view of this, interpreting landscape through infrastructure emphasizes certain points that elucidate the critical position of landscape for sustainable urban development. First, the network quality of infrastructure, generating a link between and interaction among diverse components, reveals certain invisible or undervalued landscapes of various qualities and on various scales. Yet this system is not self-contained: it not only affects components that are directly linked to it, but it also shapes the surrounding environment. This expansive stance might formulate the lens needed to recover lost diversity in the urban landscape fabric, and might also contribute to the development of a spatially, socially and ecologically integrated environment (Nijhuis & Jauslin, 2015).

Thus, one critical task is to discover latent landscape fragments in the city. Searching for landscapes that have changed from a system into fragments might reveal formerly existing diversity in the landscape fabric. As argued by Antrop (2005), landscape changes, triggered by natural events or human action, appear in various ways, either gradual or sudden; and urbanization is one of the main reasons behind these changes. Although each city has its own development pattern with certain differences – chronologic, geographic, cultural, morphologic, and aesthetic – landscape change has been reflected as a common concern in the history of urbanization: “Traditional landscapes with their ecological and cultural values become highly fragmented and gradually lose their

identity. Regional landscape diversity decreases and a new diversity emerges with land use designed for urbanites.” (Antrop, 2004, p. 24). Urban expansion that has not been integrated with landscape development and conservation strategies has inevitably resulted in landscape loss and transformation in various contexts and scales. Thus, understanding this change might form a basis for a new conception of landscape for framing strategies of an integrated landscape and urban development.

Grounded on this theoretical basis, the following part of the study concentrates on Ankara’s changing landscapes to search for latent components of urban landscape fabric. After briefly revisiting Ankara’s landscape, instances of changing landscape will be discussed to delineate the need for a new conception of urban landscape – infrastructural landscape – in Ankara.

Revisiting Ankara’s Landscapes over Time

Ankara is located in the habitable zone between Central Anatolia and the mountain series which demarcates Ankara plain on its north, south and east, while lowland extends openly toward the west (Akçura, 1971). Valleys and the hydrological system comprising various creeks accompanied by fertile lands form the topography of the city. These geomorphologic properties also shaped the urban form and landscape of Ankara when the city began to grow, first around the Ankara Citadel on the east, and later expanding west toward the lowland. In the last quarter of the 19th century, Ankara was made up of wooden dwellings and lacked infrastructure. The wetlands had not yet been reclaimed, and agricultural techniques were quite primitive. After the declaration of Ankara as the new capital city of the Turkish Republic, an intensive urban planning and development agenda was started. The early planning studies prepared by Carl C. Lörcher between 1924 and 1925 (Cengizkan, 2006) and later by Hermann Jansen between 1928 and 1937 shaped the modern urban core and urban landscape fabric of the city. At that time, Anatolian steppe was the primary vegetation dominating the urban scenery, and the eastern lands were demarcated by vineyards, orchards, and truck gardens accompanied by water sources (Bütüner et al., 2017). The western lowland was dominated by marshlands, which were seen as a threat to public health and also to the modern image of the new capital (Atay, 1968). Thus, at the end of the 1920s, modern farms (Atatürk Forest Farm and Etimesgut Village and Farm) were established in order to replace the marshlands with a productive and modern landscape and also to continue the urban and agricultural revolutions (DZİK, 1939).

By keeping to the main statements of Lörcher’s plan on the articulation of the old and new town, the master plan, dated 1932, proposed a compact macro-form and expanded the city towards the northern-southern and eastern directions. Topography was one of the main references in determining the locations of new neighborhoods, public areas and transportation routes. As one of the main statements of the plan, the green network had a sophisticated outline. Contrary to the beaux-arts school tradition, 19th century planning approaches interpreted green elements and landscapes as continual-structural components of planning scenarios (Choay, 1969). Keeping to the 19th century planning culture, Jansen’s plan classified landscape components according to their scales, functions and natural contexts. Designed landscapes (parks, small

gardens, green strips, modern farms, and open spaces) and existing natural assets (valleys, creeks, and hills) were the main features of the green network (see Figure 1). Typically, green areas were recognized as functional components of urban plans, expected to be accessible to all and offered in every neighborhood. Similar to Lörcher’s approach, Jansen (1937) also underscored the significance of contiguous green strips, since the skeleton of the city, for him, should be composed of continual and linear elements (main arteries, railway lines and green strips). In this way, linear elements would contribute to the articulation of the existing landscapes and the urban core (Jansen, 1937). The approach towards the hydrological structure was also promising, in the sense that those features were counted as natural assets in addition to being functional entities (recreation grounds) of the plan. The creeks were recognized as essential components of the urban green network and infrastructure.

For the founders of the Republic, green areas (sports arenas, parks and gardens) were seen as one of the most significant elements of societal modernization (Atay, 1968). Varied in scale, they adjoined the main arteries. Besides the parks and gardens offered on urban and neighborhood scales, the public institutions and embassy quarters had enclosed green areas that also contributed to the emerging landscape fabric of the capital city. Along Atatürk Boulevard and the Kayaş-Sincan commuter line, the continual landscape fabric was notably legible. In brief, the green scenario of the plan and the modest expectations of the state could intermingle on the basis of the creation of self-sufficient and modern urban environments: various scales of landscape (parks, gardens and farms) were offered to the public. The plan provided a green layout for further planning studies.

Together with the establishment of Atatürk Forest Farm (AFF), the western side of the city needed new road connections that had not been foreseen in the 1932 plan. In addition, continual changes such as density increases and speculative pressures begun to be made to the plan by coactions of the local administration (Tankut, 1993; Günay, 1988). For these reasons, the existing plan was renewed by Jansen between 1934 and 1937. After Jansen’s resignation in 1938, land speculation and emerging squatter-belts started to shape the urban form, and Ankara was faced with an unplanned development process (Günay, 2006). In the 1950s, the single-family houses with small gardens in the city center had already been replaced by apartment blocks with commercial enterprises on the ground floors (Göksu, 1994). These developments also altered the green silhouette of the city: squatter areas began to cover the hills and valleys. A later planning study, dated 1956, could not offer a solution for these spontaneous growth dynamics since it was utilized as a tool for approving speculative decisions rather than controlling urban development (Günay, 1988). Setting aside land speculation, the landscape fabric dominated by the AFF land and the eastern landscape was not ascribed any value at all in the 1956 Master Plan. AFF land was designated vacant land for transferring certain industrial and service areas from the city center and for new construction uses, such as an Olympic Village and new factories (Çavdar Sert, 2017a). Uncontrolled urban growth and the planners’ ignorance of the previous connected green network wrought certain consequences upon the former landscape fabric of the city. Starting in the 1960s, the landscape

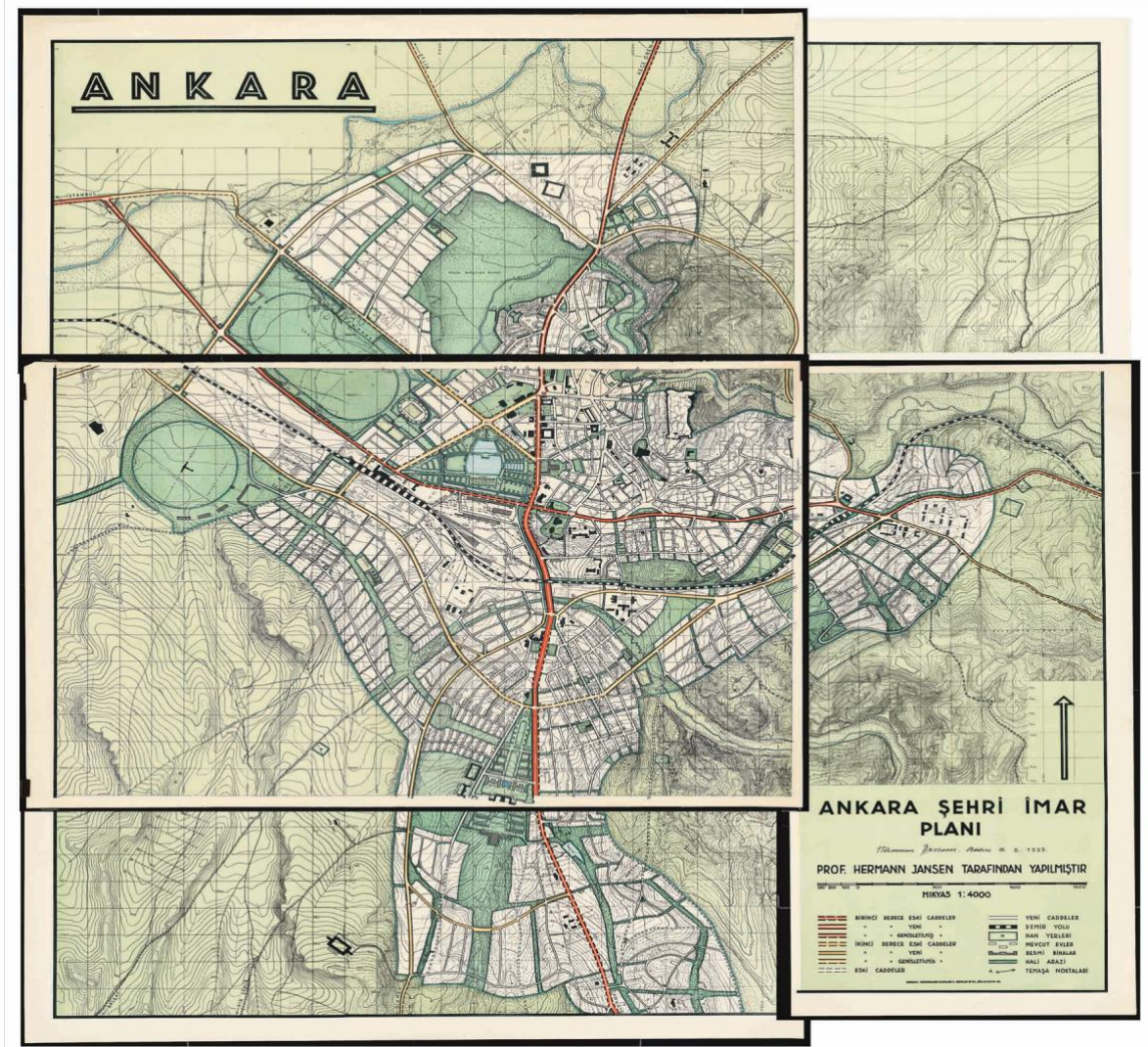


Figure 1: Ankara Master Plan, 1932, by Jansen, H. (Source: TU Berlin Architekturmuseum archive)

fabric of the east also began to change, and the orchards, vineyards and Hatip Creek, which had constituted the recreational field of the city until that time, started to be occupied by squatter houses. The urban development of Ankara continued through piecemeal plans until the 1970s. Moreover, the density increase in parcels became apparent in the urban core in the 1960s: the city was divided into zones, each assigned different building heights (Göksu, 1994). However, in spite of this transformation, the urban parks at the city center still remained untouched and new green fill-ins were also planned along the main arteries. This rapid development period triggered the expansion of the city beyond the geographical limits of Ankara basin. Accordingly, landscape change became visible when the large components of the landscape fabric (heritage landscapes and cultivated lands) began to shrink; this would further exacerbate air and water pollution.

The next planning study, dated 1980, incorporated the features of a structural plan approach and became a milestone for its removal of the former master plan approaches. By suggesting long-term strategies and proposing a realistic growth scenario for Ankara, it mainly aimed to control squatter development. New service areas were designated and new lands for urban development

were opened up. A linear development scenario towards the west – without supplying north-south road connections – was adopted by recognizing Ankara Creek, AFF and the commuter line as ‘planning thresholds, barriers and macroform generators’ for preserving AFF land (Çavdar Sert, 2017b). However, this linear development resulted in the stratification of new boulevards parallel to the commuter line, the fragmentation of landscape infrastructure by later north-south road connections, and the visual and physical isolation of the Ankara Creek (Bütüner et al., 2020). Despite these problems, local authorities and central governments adopted a disruptive approach in the following years. In the 2010s, the larger size AFF lands were transferred to the central government, and, conflicting with site conservation decisions and the AFF Establishment Law, certain historic buildings were demolished. Currently, the AFF lands have lost more than half of their size, with more than 14% of the total loss realized between 2013 and 2017. Consequently, the interplay between the continual elements of Ankara’s landscape fabric and its creeks was diminished.

Starting in the 1990s, urban regeneration and transformation projects initiated a new phase in Ankara’s urban landscape by introducing residential blocks in place

of the squatter settlements. Natural reserve areas – valleys, hills and slopes – which once were favorable grounds for the construction of squatter settlements, have now been covered by state-owned and high-density residential areas or luxury compounds developed through private sector investment. Although these changes introduced an improved infrastructure and environment, the newly developed quarters have not given value to the once existing urban nature (Sargin, 2012). Furthermore, on another scale, the parks and open spaces that once operated as a system within the city along Atatürk Boulevard have become deformed and shrunken. Thus, Ankara's urban core was transformed into a monotonous, high-rise, high density environment lacking diversity in landscape fabric.

Needless to say landscape change and loss in Ankara is substantially effected by urban politics and the economy, but one may also question the role of the lack of cross-disciplinary and integrated frameworks. In Turkey, landscape planning and management was undervalued until the 2000s as if it were an invisible layer within the planning agenda and plan hierarchy. Turkey evidently has also long underestimated the disciplinary framework of urban planning, while landscape and planning theories have been restructured and evolved together and systematically integrated in many European contexts. In Turkey, the concept of landscape was reduced into restricted functional categories (parks, natural and cultural preservation areas, and agricultural lands) without paying attention to evolving landscape theory, which emphasizes the infrastructural nature of landscape in recovering the urban milieu. Distinctive large-scale landscapes have become more vulnerable to threats, mainly due to the absence of sufficient value identification and character-definition studies. There is neither sufficient landscape data that clearly depicts, maps and categorizes what values have been lost until now, nor a future agenda that aims to bring out what would be the scales of change in the future. By taking into consideration the multi-faceted reasons for landscape change and loss, this paper departs from the stance that the city of Ankara cannot grow with its distinctive landscape fabric. The former landscape fabric, which once operated as infrastructure, was fragmented at a rampant pace. After reconsidering Ankara's landscape in relation to the city's development timeline, three instances – heritage landscapes, urban parks and urban nature – which clearly narrate the changing landscape, will be discussed concerning their latent potential for Ankara's future urban agenda.

Instances of Ankara's Changing Landscape

Revisiting Ankara's landscape clearly shows that the urban landscape fabric conveys heritage and natural values consisting of certain scales and typologies of landscapes. Once a continual and well-structured network, the components of its landscape fabric have been interrupted at a greater pace. To widen the critical perspective on Ankara's landscapes, this section dwells on particular manifestations and scales of landscape change in the urban core through three instances – undervalued heritage landscapes, deformed urban parks, and razed nature – which expressively form a necessary discussion ground toward creating an integrated and sustainable urban landscape infrastructure in Ankara. These instances indicate that landscape change and loss may occur regardless of scale, function and context. Dating back to

the establishment of the city, the selected cases are constructive elements of Ankara's urban identity. Each of them has its own particular historical significance and landscape character defined by natural and built properties. Atatürk Forest Farm has a unique heritage, having been established by the founder of the Republic, and is a national brand that symbolizes the agro-industrial revolution and food safety. On another scale, the study's selected parks are the very first parks of Ankara, representing societal modernization. The cultivated lands of eastern Ankara, on the other hand, are a long forgotten case, since they have never been part of a landscape planning scenario or the subject of any academic work. All these cases frame a promising lens for reviving and sustaining a continual landscape fabric which will operate as an infrastructural landscape within the city.

Undervalued Heritage Landscapes

Landscape change doubtlessly raises critical discussions on heritage landscape studies in Turkey since many landscapes, regardless of their broad range of values, are under the threat of transformation and loss. In that sense, heritage landscape conservation is a challenging matter in Turkey, from the individual to the institutional level. Strategic integration of urban development, landscape management and conservation have always raised a challenge within the framework of the Turkish planning system and policies. Thus, the heritage landscapes of Ankara have been greatly undervalued, not only in the cultural sense, but also in terms of management and policy implementation, and their potential has been never recovered.

The majority of Ankara's heritage landscapes date back to the early Republican period. AFF and Etimesgut Farm are canonical examples of early Republican period heritage, representing the success of the young Republic on the basis of the agricultural revolution and societal modernization (Keskinok, 2019). Giving an identity to the western peri-urban zone, these two farms were established during the same period. Both had a mixed-use character: cultivation areas, agricultural industry, forests, parks, gardens and social areas for farm workers were all planned together. In this way, production and recreation grounds were interrelated and the interaction between nature and human beings could be improved compared to the possibilities available in the small- and medium-sized landscapes in the urban core. The designed landscapes of these peri-urban areas embraced installed green surfaces (cultivated areas, forests, and plantation areas) in harmony with the low-density settlement pattern of the farms. This multifarious landscape enfolding Ankara Stream dominated the silhouette of the area until the 1970s, the time when the city began to grow toward the west.

Covering 52,000,000 sqm and established in 1925, AFF offered recreation grounds, agricultural education facilities, and modern agricultural and agro-industrial production. Envisioned by Jansen in 1937, the historic core of the farm was a planned environment. In addition to cultivation areas, poultry coops and barns, the Farm was also formed by its built components: administrative buildings, a brewery, a wine factory, a Turkish bath, a museum, housing compounds with their social facilities, restaurants and swimming pools and the private mansion of Atatürk (see Figure 2). This large-scale farm project, together with the railway line, attracted industrial development such as the cement factory (1926), the cartridge factory (1955) and the sugar factory (1962) along Ankara's western lowlands.

new estates and sports facilities (an Olympic Village) (Çavdar Sert, 2017a). After the 1970s, planning activities left AFF exposed as a planning tool and threshold for shaping the urban macroform. Land transfers and rental giveaways have continued, even though AFF was pronounced a conservation site in 1993. Although the Farm has its own managerial cadres and establishment law, a landscape conservation and management plan were never worked out. There were not even a value identification or an assessment study undertaken by the management, and eventually the farm land, landscape and its built assets became highly vulnerable. The current state authorities have not only designated the farm land as void, available for the construction of highways parallel to Ankara Creek, large-scale governmental estates and

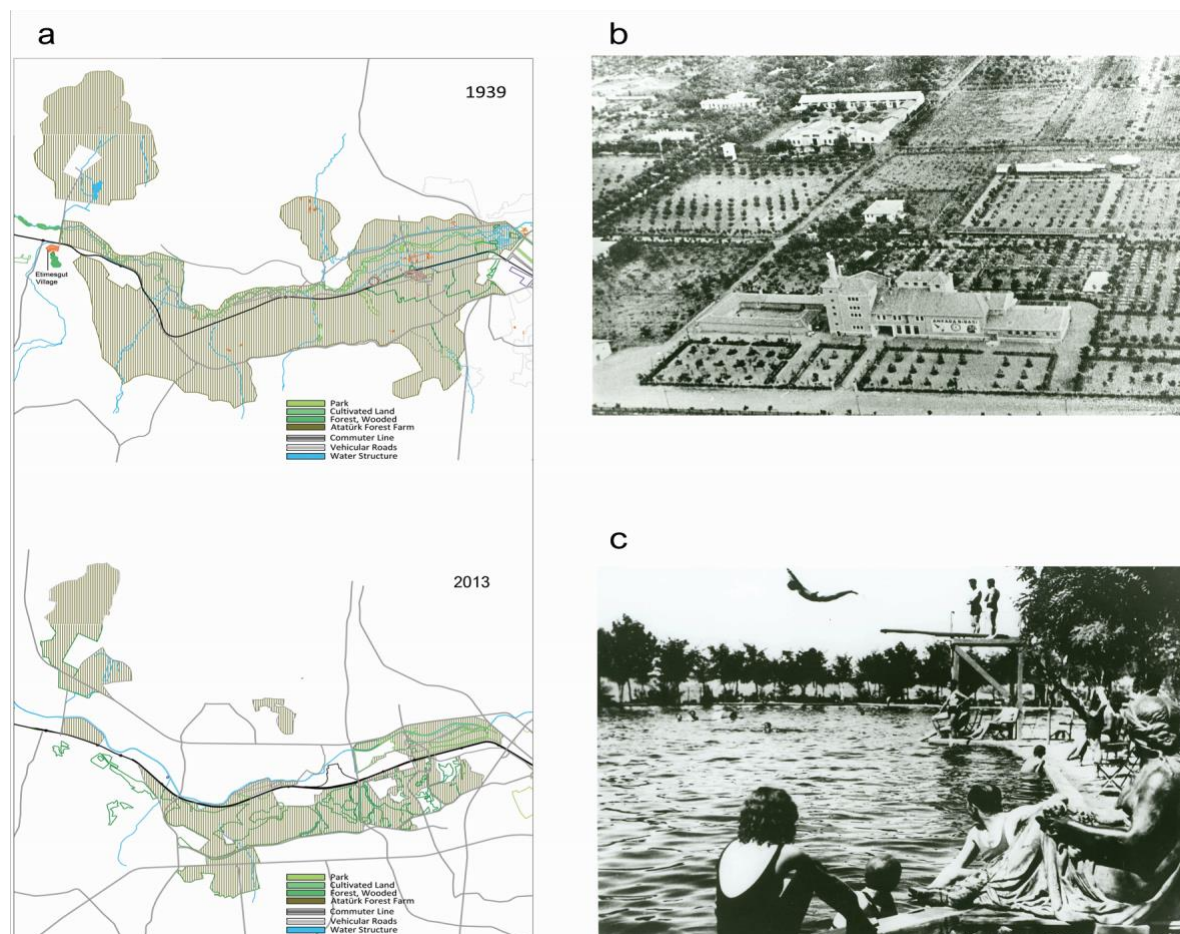


Figure 2: The changing boundaries and land use of AFF (a). Atatürk Forest Farm, aerial view of the Brewery, 1930 (Source: VEKAM Library and Archive: Ankara Photograph, Postcard and Engraving Collection) (b). Atatürk Forest Farm, Karadeniz Swimming Pool, 1936. (Source: VEKAM Library and Archive: Ankara Photograph, Postcard and Engraving Collection) (c).

After the donation of the Farm to the National Treasury, AFF began to lose its landscape and built assets. Land transfers and rental giveaways, particularly triggered by governmental decisions and master plans made after the 1950s had started, and the value and potential of AFF were greatly underestimated. The 1956 Ankara Master Plan – the first plan interrelating urban uses and the farm – poorly defined its cultivated lands as a ‘buffer zone’ and a void, and suggested the transfer of industrial facilities from the city to the lowland of AFF as well as the construction of

privately owned projects, they have also propagated their political identity and discourse by demolishing invaluable modern farm buildings and compounds dating back to the establishment period of the Farm. Consequently, the land totality and manifold landscape pattern of AFF have been lost (see Figure 2).

Currently, AFF is being fragmented at a greater and greater pace. The standing architectural assets are under threat of demolition, and the cultivated lands and food gardens have not been sustained. The tight relationship between the

Farm and Ankara Creek has been disrupted by the bold canalization of the creek. Nevertheless, despite its land losses the Farm still has significant potential for reformulating the human-nature relationship in a natural setting, eliminating Ankara's air pollution, re-assembling its water and green features, and consolidating its urban green by offering a mixed-use landscape.

Deformed Urban Parks

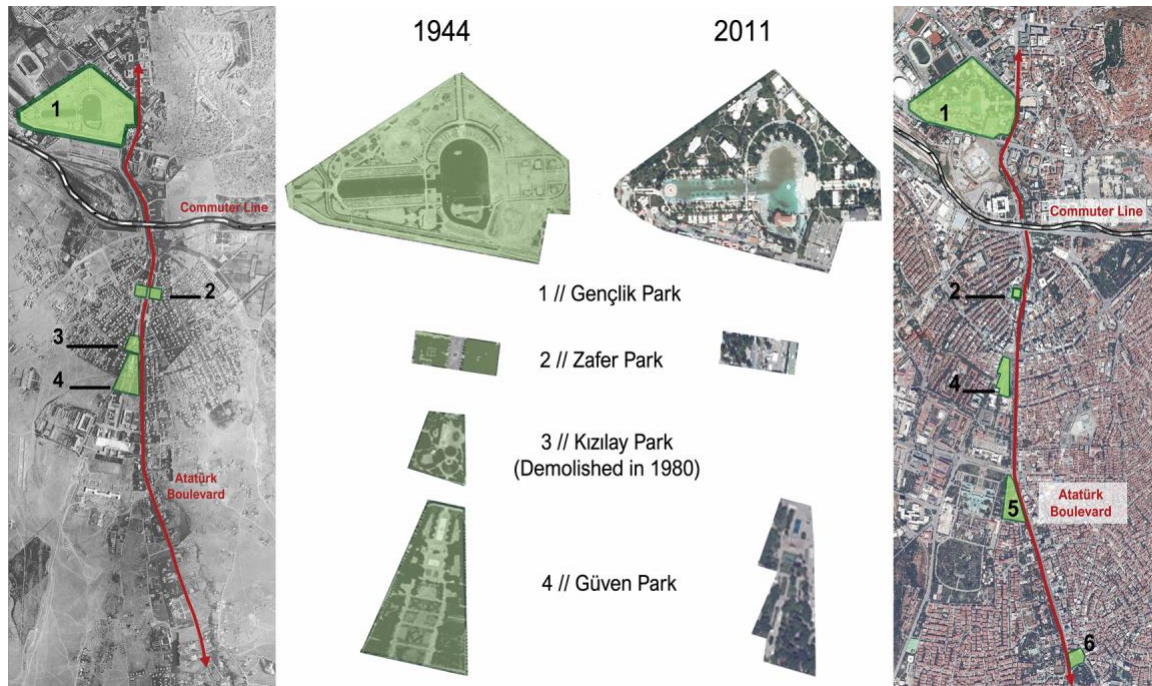


Figure 3: The parks of Atatürk Boulevard in 1944 and 2011 (Rendered by the author)

The Republican Period parks have always been essential parts of Ankara's urban identity. The majority of these parks in the urban core were planned along Atatürk Boulevard. Lying between Hakimiyet-Milliyet Square in Ulus and the Presidential Mansion in Çankaya, the boulevard has been the main axis not only for structuring the urban form in the 1930s, but also in the decentralization process of the central business district from Ulus to Yenışehir by the 1950s (Göksu, 1994). Starting in the 1970s, the expansion of commercial use (predominantly textile and electronic shops, passages and office buildings) in Yenışehir-Kızılay dramatically resulted in the elimination of certain cultural uses (e.g. cinemas and theatres) and recreation activities in Yenışehir from the 1990s onwards. The shift in the city-center doubtlessly resulted from the influence of broader social, cultural, and economic contexts; however, with reference to the paper's main focus on grounding landscape as continual infrastructure, this section concentrates on the changing parks of the boulevard.

In the 1930s, parks were an unfamiliar milieu for Turkish society in certain senses: the spatial experience, the spatial design, the participation of women in everyday life, and the recognition of green open spaces as a democratic right. In this respect, the presence of green areas was equated with the modernization of cities and urban cultural life by the Republican cadres. Indeed, the 1930s was a headstone in the recognition of new public life and societal values. Accordingly, the construction of parks as central

community areas started even before the construction of public buildings (see Figure 3) (Keskinok, 2009). The very first parks in Ankara's urban core, namely Gençlik Park, Zafer Park and Square, Kızılay Park, and Güven Park were constructed between the 1920s and the 1940s as the patches of a green network designed by Jansen. These parks, aligned with Atatürk Boulevard, manifested a linear landscape in the city. In the 1940s, the parks and the boulevard identified Ankara's cultural life. Experiencing this new urban milieu, walking along the boulevard and

enjoying the parks were distinctive experiences for all citizens. The boulevard, with its inclusive section covering wide, tree-lined sidewalks, monuments, and public buildings, was not only the main artery connecting the new and old city, but it also identified a continuous system of space – landscape infrastructure (see Figure 4).

As a noteworthy patch of the boulevard, Gençlik Park – dedicated to the young generations of the Republic – has always been a niche in the cultural life of Ankara. Gençlik Park first appeared in the 1924 Master Plan, and later in Jansen's plan with certain locational changes. The master plan of the park was finalized by French architect Theo Leveau in 1936, and construction started in 1938 (Memlük, 2009). Covering 28 hectares, the main components of the park were a pool, a casino and gardens. After its opening on 19 May 1943, sports (1944) and amusement grounds (1951) were installed in the park. Another patch of the boulevard, namely Zafer Park, was located at the mid-point of the boulevard where Ulus District met with Yenışehir District. The park with its poplar trees, pool, and Atatürk Monument posed as a welcoming area of Yenışehir District. Defining the two parallel edges of the Boulevard, Zafer Park was organized into two venues in the late 1920s. These square-shaped twin parks were favorite spots for those who wanted to take the air during their walks. Covering the western portions of Kızılay junction, Güven and Kızılay Parks were designed to provide a link between the ministry and

residential quarters in the late 1920s (Vardar, 1989). With their geometric orders defined by hardscape and softscape components, they manifested a bold continuous green in the 1940s.

Together with the end of the decade and further into the 1960s, a shift from state-driven to market-driven planning policies occurred that had evident impacts on Ankara's urban core (Günay, 2006). Importation of private consumer goods increased, investors gained strength, and eventually the urban core started to become a hub for commercial activities. As a result, the density of the Yenışehir-Kızılay District increased, low rise apartment

original softscape and hardscape design was replaced by new ones, and eventually, the park lost its characteristic spatiality. The trees in the eastern part of Zafer Park were removed, and the park was transformed to a haunted open space identified by new commercial buildings. Together with the demolition of Kızılay Park in the 1980s, the integrated landscape of Kızılay junction and the boulevard was interrupted. Moreover, conflicting with the conservation decisions, the western portion of Güven Park was transformed into a transport interchange area, and is still an unorganized node both for vehicles and pedestrians.



Figure 4: Atatürk Boulevard, 1954 (a); Gençlik Park, 1953 (b); Zafer Park, 1953 (c); Kızılay Park and Güven Park, 1930 (d); (Source: VEKAM Library and Archive: Ankara Photograph, Postcard and Engraving Collection).

blocks were replaced by higher ones in piecemeal plans within the cycle of the make-and-sell process, and the district was demolished and reconstructed (Göksu, 1994). Due to the increasing number of stores, the boulevard, the tributary roads and eventually the whole district was transformed from a residential to a commercial area consisting of high-rise shopping and office buildings. This transformation process drastically affected the legibility, function and spatial features of these parks from the 1980s onwards. The insertion of commercial uses and transport interchange points into the parks accelerated their deformation process. Until the decentralization of the Ulus and Kızılay Districts in the 1980s, Gençlik Park was a well-to-do park and famous leisure place for Ankara. Since then, the park has undergone several reconstructions: the

Starting from the 1990s, the lanes of Atatürk Boulevard were expanded, the sidewalks were narrowed, new transport options and routes were offered, the integrated park system was interrupted and the old and new parks and open spaces attached to the boulevard continued to be deformed and shrunken (see Figures 3 and 4). The inclusive section of the boulevard transformed into a monotonous one, with high-rise buildings and lacking sufficient green areas.



Figure 5: Hatip Creek and social life, 1925 (a) (*Source:* VEKAM Library and Archive: Ankara Photograph, Postcard and Engraving Collection); Canalized Hatip Creek and the deserted landscape in the Mamak vicinity (b), 2016 (*Source:* METU BAP-08-11-2015-035 Scientific Research Project archive)

Razed Nature

The natural assets shaping the urban form also guided landscape strategies during the establishment period of Ankara. The built and green fabrics were harmonized with the topography. The streams, enfolded by gardens, parks, vineyards, and orchards, operated as parts of an integrated landscape fabric. Six streams dominated the hydrological structure of Ankara basin: Çubuk Creek coming from the north-east, Hatip Creek from the east, and İncesu from the south-east met at the western lowland of the city and formed Ankara Creek, and there were also Macun and Kutugun Creeks. Demarcated by these creeks and later aligned with the Kayaş-Sincan commuter line, the cultivated lands were characteristic constituents of the

lowlands. The western peri-urban area was delineated by AFF and Etimesgut Farm, whereas the east side was identified by spontaneous green areas and cultivated lands strictly following the creek. The landscape of the east enabled the urbanites' interaction with nature, differing from the formal gardens and parks of the urban core and the densely cultivated farms of the west side (see Figure 5). The recreational life in the eastern area and its rich habitat were narrated in various literature sources and periodicals of the 1930s. According to the Ankara City Guide, dated 1934, the Kayaş vicinity was called the 'garden of the city', and people enjoyed the rural landscape (Mamboury, 1934) (see Figure 5). In the early 1950s, the area still served as the garden of the city with continuous

green – vineyards, orchards and truck gardens – between Demirlibahçe and Kayaş districts.

Unfortunately, the potent role of the eastern creeks and landscape continuity in consolidating the landscape fabric of the city were not noticed at all – like the heritage lands on its western side – and they began to diminish when the city started to expand in the mid-20th century (Bütüner et al., 2020). The rural landscape along Hatip Creek became fragmented, particularly with the development of squatter housing in the 1960s. In the following decades, the unregistered housing developments in the Mamak vicinity were made permanent by the enactment of squatter amnesty laws, new residential areas were developed, and a waste disposal site was established. The orchards and gardens were replaced with industrial and residential uses; the creek was boldly canalized and isolated, similar to the other creeks within the city. The landscape assets of eastern Ankara have never been considered a potential landscape planning tool, mainly due to the lack of planning strategies and conservation decisions. Eventually, this long forgotten landscape was grossly ruined.

Today, despite the densely built scenery of the east, the majority of landscape fragments following Hatip Creek remain as unoccupied areas. Varying in scale, these grounds hold promise for the expansion of a landscape fabric and the designation of an infrastructural landscape in Ankara.

Envisioning a Landscape Agenda in Ankara

The three instances elaborated on in this paper – undervalued heritage landscapes, deformed urban parks, and razed nature – represent certain facets of landscape change and loss. Occurring on different scales and in different contexts, they clearly reveal the need for an integrated urban and landscape development strategy. Multi-scale landscape identification and assessment would be one immediate step toward staging a landscape agenda for Ankara, and maintaining the significance and recovering the potential of landscapes would be the other. The cases discussed are not just remnants of earlier planning legacies, but also potent components of a possible integrated landscape fabric that might operate as infrastructure. Therefore, despite their fragmented and illegible stance in today's urban scenery, the bold traces and fragments of the former landscape fabric still existing in the city hold a latent promise to make landscape an inclusive ground in Ankara's urban development.

The urban park system of the former central business district (CBD) along the boulevard is vital for the social, cultural, spatial and natural revitalization of the district as well as for the city. With its linear character, the boulevard and its parks might operate as a critical link for a city-wide landscape system, and taking the commuter line as a unifying reference, it might reach the AFF lands in the west and fragments of the razed urban nature in the east.

Remaining at the geometric center of the city, AFF, owing to its scale and function, is still able to intermingle various forms of spatial continuity and interactions. The farm land with its accompanying landscapes formed by the green areas of the ex-military zone, universities, and industrial

heritage sites, as well as Ankara Creek, offer great potential for reviving and sustaining urban nature and the contiguous landscape fabric of the city. These areas might be identified as a rural extension penetrating into the city to provide an experience of nature and sustain the natural assets of the city. On the other hand, the current disrupted image of the eastern landscape fabric does not represent its former continuity, but instead has a deserted and vacant appearance at particular segments. However, it is still possible to identify and articulate these fragments in the development of an integrated landscape fabric. Consequently, all three instances recall and uncover a once well-structured landscape fabric and its traces, which may aid in programming a landscape infrastructure and integrated landscape agenda for Ankara.

Conclusion

The dramatic loss of Ankara's former landscape fabric has uncovered a need for an integrated urban development and landscape strategy accompanied by a landscape policy and management framework. As mentioned in the UN New Urban Agenda (2017), the problems that cities face today necessitate a new conception of urbanization: a shift from seeing cities as sources of problems to remedies for problems. This new outlook, once again, points to the critical role of landscape policy-making and recent landscape theory in repositioning against urban challenges. Thus, development of coherent land use and landscape strategies, which is in opposition to the destructive impacts of urban policies on landscape fabric, is raised as a noteworthy matter. This new understanding also entails the inclusion of recent landscape theory in cross-disciplinary frameworks, ranging from urban planning to conservation mainstream, to draw the future roles of urban landscapes.

In this way, the changing landscapes of Ankara, mainly discussed through three cases in this paper, clearly outline a necessity for a new conception of urban landscape: infrastructural landscape. Regarding the diversity in scale and context, each case presents a characteristic fragment which operated as a part of Ankara's landscape infrastructure in the past, and which still houses latent potential for generating a well-connected and well-distributed network of landscape. The generation of such landscape infrastructure will undoubtedly form a basis for solving not only apparent problems – flooding, air and basin pollution, etc. – but also unnoticed challenges – climate change, preservation of endemic species, livability etc. – in Ankara.

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Keywords

Landscape change, landscape infrastructure, landscape fabric, Ankara