

Bursa Kültür park as a Space of Memory: Memory, Space, and Urban Identity

Bir Hafıza Mekânı Olarak Bursa Kültür Park: Bellek, Mekân ve Kent Kimliği

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Öz: Kentsel yeşil alanlar, yalnızca çevresel sürdürülebilirliği, dirençli şehirleri ve insan refahını teşvik etmek için değil, aynı zamanda günlük sosyal etkileşimler ve kültürel faaliyetler yoluyla kentsel hafızayı korumak ve güçlendirmek için de önemlidir. Kolektif hafıza, bireylerin sosyal gruplarıyla ve yaşadıkları fiziksel ortamlarla etkileşimleri yoluyla sosyal olarak üretilir ve sürdürülür. Bu nedenle kentsel ortamlar, nesiller arasında paylaşılan anıların korunması ve aktarılması için maddi çerçeveler olarak işlev görür. Kentsel yeşil alanlar, kültürel değerleri, sosyal etkileşimleri ve tarihsel sürekliliği günlük hayata entegre ederek, topluluk deneyimlerinin yaşayan arşivleri olarak hizmet eder. Kentsel hafıza, şehirlerin fiziksel ve sosyal dokusuna yerleşmiş ve nesiller boyunca aktarılan tarihsel, kültürel, sosyal ve mekânsal deneyimleri ifade eder. Kent kimliğinin temel bileşenleri, tarihi binalar, anıtlar, kamusal ve yeşil alanlar gibi somut varlıkları, gelenekler, kolektif anlamlar, yer bağlılığı ve günlük sosyal davranışlar gibi soyut unsurlarla birleştirir. Bu çalışma, Bursa'nın tarihi karakterini, kimliğini ve kentsel hafızasını geliştirmek amacıyla, Bursa Kültür Parkı ve çevresini kapsamlı bir kentsel planlama çerçevesinde incelemektedir. Bu çalışma, Bursa Kültür Park, tarihi bir kentsel yeşil alan olarak ve kültürel kimliğe ve kentsel hafızaya katkısını incelemek için nitel bir betimleyici yaklaşım benimsemektedir. Araştırma, parkın tarihsel evrimini, fiziksel özelliklerini ve hafıza taşıyan unsurlarını değerlendirmek için literatür taraması, tarihi ve arşivsel belge analizi Lörcher ve Prost Planları üzerinde, saha gözlemleri ve fotoğrafik dokümantasyonu bir araya getirmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kentsel Bellek, Kolektif Bellek, Kentsel Kimlik, Kentsel İmge, Bursa.

Abstract: Urban green spaces are important not just for promoting environmental sustainability, resilient cities, and human well-being, but also for conserving and reinforcing urban memory via everyday social interactions and cultural activities. Collective memory is socially produced and sustained by individuals' interactions with their social groupings and the physical settings in which they live. Urban settings thus function as material frameworks for the maintenance and transmission of shared memories between generations. Urban green areas serve as living archives of community experiences, incorporating cultural values, social interactions, and historical continuity into daily life. Urban memory refers to the historical, cultural, social, and spatial experiences embedded in the physical and social fabric of cities and passed down through generations. As an essential component of metropolitan identity, it combines tangible assets, such as historic buildings, monuments, public and green spaces, with intangible elements such as traditions, collective meanings, place attachment, and everyday social behaviors. This study investigates Bursa Kültür Park and its surrounding setting within a comprehensive urban planning framework, in order to improve Bursa's historical character, identity and urban memory. This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to examine Bursa Kültür Park

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as a historic urban green space and its contribution to cultural identity and urban memory. The research combines a literature review, historical and archival document analysis (including the Lörcher and Prost Plans), field observations, and photographic documentation to assess the park's historical evolution, physical characteristics, and memory-bearing elements.

Keywords: Urban Memory, Collective Memory, Urban Identity, Urban Image, Bursa.

Introduction

Urban green spaces play a critical role not only in supporting environmental sustainability and human well-being but also in preserving and reinforcing urban memory through everyday social interactions and cultural practices. Urban green spaces are critical components of sustainable and resilient cities due to their ecological, environmental, and social benefits. Urban green areas increase ecological connectedness in increasingly congested urban areas, as well as city quality overall.

A prominent theme in the literature is the city as a palimpsest, a multilayered narrative in which new layers are constantly added while older ones remain partially visible. The city is conceived as a planned memory archive, with buildings, streets, monuments, and ordinary areas representing different historical periods at the same time.

Urban memory is the accumulation of historical, cultural, social, and spatial experiences embedded in the physical fabric of cities and transmitted collectively from generation to generation. It is an active part of the urban identity, comprising tangible heritage (historic buildings, monuments, public spaces, and historic green spaces) and intangible values (traditions, collective meanings, place attachment, and daily social practices). The ongoing interaction between people and place reinforces urban memory, consolidating cultural identity and sense of belonging, while maintaining continuity in historical narratives over time (Jaff & Alkan Bala, 2017: 462; Yanmaz & Cengiz, 2019: 332).

Urban memory is the collection of collective memories that are embedded in places, buildings, monuments, and other features of the urban environment. These "memory anchor points" tie people to the city's past, reinforce identification and belonging, and are constantly reconstructed in response to changing social conditions (Jayo, 2022: 8).

From an urban memory perspective, urban green spaces are living archives of community experiences, where cultural values, social interactions, and historical continuity are embedded in everyday life. Residents' perceptions, repeated use, and emotional attachment to these landscapes strengthen a shared sense of place while supporting intergenerational memory and local identity (Kabisch, et al., 2015: 28). However, rapid urbanization, unequal access to green spaces, and growing development pressures are major threats to landscapes with collective memories, particularly in fast-growing cities. The transformation of historic green spaces into built environments,

coupled with poor conservation policies and fragmented planning practices, may disturb the continuity of collective memory and gradually erode the cultural identity inscribed in urban landscapes. The loss of these spaces has consequences for the ecological and social functions of urban green infrastructure and for the symbolic relations that they forge between communities and their shared past. Protecting memory-bearing landscapes is therefore essential to keeping a sense of place, cultural continuity and belonging in the changing urban environment.

The urban memory extends beyond preserving historical facts; it functions as a dynamic process that reinforces cultural identity, fosters social cohesion, and transmits collective experiences to future generations (Jaff & Alkan Bala, 2017: 464). Within this framework, historic green spaces represent more than ecological or recreational resources; they function as memory-bearing landscapes where cultural identity, historical continuity, and community memory are embedded and sustained. Their significance lies not only in their physical characteristics but also in their capacity to preserve symbolic meanings and collective experiences associated with urban life. Consequently, urban memory should be recognized as a fundamental consideration in sustainable urban planning. Protecting historic green spaces as interconnected green heritage landscapes enhances cultural resilience, reinforces local identity, and preserves the historical narratives embedded within urban environments. Integrating these memory-bearing landscapes into contemporary green infrastructure strategies not only safeguards tangible heritage but also sustains the intangible cultural values necessary for creating more inclusive, resilient, and historically conscious cities (Swensen, 2018: 60).

The urban memory is not simply the preservation of the past but a process of interpretation and selection. According to Kevin Lynch (1960), cities construct their identities through the ways they remember and represent their histories. Urban memory, therefore, plays a crucial role in shaping collective image and the meaning of urban environments.

Halbwachs's 1950 book "The Collective Memory" openly analyzes the relationship between memory, space, and spatial representations. He contends that the physical architecture and spatial arrangements of cities play a significant role in the establishment and retention of collective memory among social groups. According to Halbwachs (1992), collective memory is socially constructed and maintained through the interaction of individuals with their social groups and the physical environments they inhabit. Urban spaces, therefore, serve as material frameworks that support the preservation and transmission of shared memories across generations.

Historic streets, squares, landmarks, religious buildings and public open spaces are repositories of collective memory, fostering citizens' sense of place and belonging, and contributing to the city's unique identity. The protection of historic urban environments is not only a matter of maintaining the architectural heritage but also of preserving the social and cultural narratives embedded in urban space. Consequently, the preservation and adaptive reuse of heritage assets play a vital role in maintaining urban identity, supporting cultural sustainability, and ensuring the transmission of collective memory to future generations (Yanmaz & Cengiz, 2019: 340).

Collective memory is sustained through the physical environment, where urban spaces become repositories of shared historical and cultural experiences. In this context, Lynch's (1960) concept of the urban image provides a spatial framework for understanding how these memories are perceived and recalled. According to Lynch (1960), urban image is the mental representation of a city that develops through people's experiences and perceptions of the urban environment. It helps individuals understand, navigate, and emotionally connect with the city. Urban image has two main dimensions:

- Physical dimension: The spatial elements of the city, such as paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks.
- Semantic dimension: The meanings, memories, historical values, and cultural associations that people attach to urban spaces.

By enhancing the legibility of the urban environment, these elements enable memory-bearing landscapes to function as recognizable reference points that strengthen urban identity and sustain collective memory. Lynch (1960), Warr and Knapper (1968), Rapoport (1977), and Lang (1987) further emphasized that these differences are shaped by culture and collective memory, resulting in variations in the meanings attributed to the environment and, consequently, in people's mental images of the city.

Urban image is the cognitive and emotional representation of a city that is formed in individuals' minds through processes of experiencing, perceiving, and remembering the urban environment. A strong urban image enhances a city's legibility and perceptibility while reinforcing residents' sense of place and belonging. Considering the interaction between people and the urban environment, each resident develops a personal image of the city based on their own experiences and evaluations. According to Lynch (1960), this personal image is inherently subjective because it depends on individual criteria of assessment. At the city level, however, the overlap of personal images forms a collective image shaped by shared needs, ideas, historical experiences, and cultural values (Lynch, 1960; Pocock & Hudson, 1978).

The concept of collective image explores the relationship between urban space and memory, emphasizing how cities preserve traces of the past within their present form. Cities are described as layered entities by scholars of urban studies, architecture, psychology, and cultural theory, with historical events, social practices, and collective experiences ingrained in the urban landscape (Busà, 2009: 159).

Many researches indicate that a strong collective memory is primarily formed through historical continuity, public spaces, and everyday urban experiences. Conversely, interventions that lack connections to the city's identity and fail to resonate with collective memory are generally insufficient to create a lasting urban image. The collective memory, or urban memory, plays a significant role in everyday life, as it allows residents to situate themselves within the city and reinforces their sense of place and belonging (Eraydın, 2016: 835). Urban collective memory refers to a shared mental representation that arises from the intersection of individual urban images. It is shaped by the historical experiences, cultural values, and collective memory shared by urban residents. The collective image encompasses the common references and symbols that constitute a city's identity and reflects not only the physical environment but also the meanings that people attach to it.

In contemporary cities, memory has become a key element of urban development and identity-making. Historic preservation movements, commemorative practices, museums, and memory-oriented urban projects reflect a growing societal interest in reconnecting cities with their past. However, it is important to note that these processes can sometimes produce simplified or commercialized versions of history.

Urban memory is the collective memory that emerges from shared experiences, historical processes, and cultural exchanges among city dwellers. It protects the city's history and identity; strengthens people's sense of belonging and commitment to their surroundings; and ensures the continuity of collective and cultural identity. Relationship Between Urban Image and Urban Memory: Urban image is based on urban memory. Places with historical, cultural, and symbolic value become strongly ingrained in people's mental maps of the city. An urban image is a physical and metaphorical depiction of a city in people's thoughts. Urban memory is the collective accumulation of historical events and cultural meanings that shape this image. A strong urban image can only be built on a strong urban memory that values the city's history, identity, and public life.

The study aims to examine the significance of Bursa Kültür Park as a historic urban green space and its contribution to urban memory and identity. A descriptive and observational research methodology was adopted. The research began with a comprehensive review of the literature on urban memory and collective memory, followed by an examination of the development and significance of cultural parks established

during the early Republican period in Türkiye. It then investigated the historical evolution of Bursa Kültür Park and its role in the city's urban development. Finally, field observations and photographic documentation were conducted to evaluate the park's current physical characteristics, historical features, and memory-bearing elements.

Method and Material

This study uses a qualitative descriptive research approach to investigate the importance of Bursa Kültür Park as a historic urban green space and to examine how this area contributes to cultural identity and urban memory. The research employs a combination of literature examination, historical document analysis, field observation, and photographic documentation to gain a comprehensive understanding of the park's historical evolution, physical attributes, and memory-bearing properties.

Four interrelated stages of study served as the framework for the system. The study began by reviewing the theoretical literature on place identification, urban memory, collective memory, and historic urban green spaces. The development of cultural parks established in Türkiye during the early Republican era was examined to situate Bursa Kültür Park within its broader historical and urban context. Third, the history of Bursa Kültür Park and its evolving role in Bursa's urban development were traced using secondary and archival sources. In order to do this, the Lörcher and Prost Plans of Bursa, which were created before the Kültürpark's construction, are used to analyze the park's current configuration. Lastly, to evaluate the park's current physical attributes and pinpoint components that support its historical and cultural memory, field observations and photographic documentation were conducted.

The History of Cultural Parks in Türkiye

Before addressing the subject, it's necessary to explain the semantic difference between cultural parks in the World and in Türkiye. At a global level, ideals of the world cultural park differ from those that have shaped the development of cultural parks in Türkiye. In today's life, cultural parks preserve and promote historical and cultural heritage through interactive experiences.

As stated by Gök and Bingöl (2017:133), cultural parks contribute to tourism and economic development, as well as cultural memory, education, and recreation. Cultural parks originated as pleasure gardens in medieval Europe and have evolved alongside modern theme parks, becoming major places for cultural preservation, particularly in Asia and Europe. Modern cultural parks emerged alongside the development of theme parks in the twentieth century, particularly after the opening of Disneyland in 1955. Later, parks with a cultural theme evolved into places that recreate the history, traditions, architecture,

and lifestyle of different civilizations. Today, these parks are predominantly located in Asia and Europe and are important centers for cultural preservation, education, and tourism.

However, during the early years of the Republic period of Türkiye, cultural parks were established to support urban reconstruction, promote modern and cultural values, and provide public spaces for education, recreation, and social interaction. They also aim to preserve cultural memory, enhance the national and international visibility of cities, and offer multifunctional green spaces that support cultural, artistic, and recreational activities (Çakır & Eldek Güner, 2026: 160).

As cornerstones of social life, culture parks are designed to serve functions deemed appropriate and beneficial for urban residents, in line with dominant political and cultural objectives. Urban green spaces are essential components of cities and have been built since the Republic of Türkiye's founding in 1923 in accordance with the principles of constructing current and civilized urban settings, and many cities have adopted this framework. Republican-era parks, planned in relation to the reconfigured dynamics of social life, became one of the key modernization projects, aiming to enable both recreation and education for urban residents like a public university through their structures, newly created public spaces, and modern landscaped green areas (Topçuoğlu & Gürel, 2020: 1490).

In the early years of the Republic, particularly between 1923 and 1939, the strong tourism potential quickly brought this issue onto the national agenda, supported by forward-thinking leaders and the government of the time. During this period, tourism-related activities in cities such as Ankara, Istanbul, Bursa, and İzmir developed through collaboration between public and civil institutions and were implemented in various ways. Alongside efforts to improve urban infrastructure and superstructure, initiatives were also made to promote cultural, health, event, and cruise tourism. Besides the other activities, for the development of tourism, in 1934, the tourism plan prepared by the Türkiye Touring and Automobile Club for submission to the government proposed dividing Türkiye into three tourism regions (Kayış & Avcı, 2023:430):

- 1- Central Anatolia, including Ankara, Konya, and nearby areas
- 2- Istanbul, Yalova, İzmit, Bursa, and Çanakkale
- 3- İzmir and the surrounding cities

İzmir Kültür Park, created in 1936, is one of the first multifunctional cultural parks and fairgrounds in Türkiye. It serves as the main venue for the İzmir International Fair and a major urban green area. Other notable example includes Bursa Reşat Oyal Kültür Park, which opened in 1955 as the city's first comprehensively planned recreational park,

combining extensive green areas with social and cultural facilities, and Konya Kültür Park (1970), which was designed as a contemporary multifunctional public space that supports recreation, cultural activities, and urban social life.

Cultural parks established during the early Republican period in Türkiye shared a common mission of promoting modernization, public education, and social transformation. Conceived as multifunctional public spaces, these parks integrated green areas, fairgrounds, sports facilities, botanical gardens, and cultural and artistic venues within a unified framework, serving as people's universities or public universities that fostered contemporary lifestyles and enlightened citizenship values through both education and recreation. Many of these parks were developed by reclaiming fire-damaged urban areas, playing a significant role in reshaping cities into modern, civilized metropolises in line with the national aspirations of the Republican era. The most prominent examples are located in İzmir and Bursa. Beyond their social and educational functions, these initiatives were also conceived as multifunctional spaces that accommodated recreational activities alongside cultural events and exhibitions, thereby contributing to the diversification and expansion of tourism at the national level. As a result, the increased significance and growth of the tourism sector were mirrored in urban planning during this time, which progressively integrated tourism-oriented goals into larger frameworks of urban development. (Topçuoğlu & Gürel, 2020: 1491; Şahin, 2022; İzmir Kalkınma Ajansı, 2026)¹. The main purpose of establishing culture parks during the Republican era was to create modern, contemporary, and nationally oriented cities that reflected the ideals of the newly founded Republic of Türkiye. Culture parks were founded as part of the Republic's modernization project to develop planned cities, provide recreational and cultural spaces, promote economic growth, and reflect the ideals of progress and contemporary society (Babaoğlu, 2023:158).

In Türkiye, the culture park (kültür park) concept developed as a key modernization and enlightenment initiative during the Early Republican period. These parks were intended to promote modern lifestyles, new forms of social interaction, and broader cultural reforms among the public. A culture park refers to a multifunctional public open space that addresses the recreational, entertainment, and educational needs of society.

¹ URL-1: "İzmir Kalkınma Ajansı".

<https://kalkinmaguncesi.izka.org.tr/index.php/2021/02/01/bir-kent-parki-olarak-kulturparkin-donusumu-bir-gelecek-hayali/> (Erişim Tarihi: 07.07.2026).

Unlike conventional parks that primarily emphasize natural scenery, culture parks function as active centers for social engagement, artistic activities, and community-oriented development (Topçuoğlu & Gürel, 2020: 1493). Key features and functions for cultural parks are:

- Multifunctional design: Combines green areas, entertainment, culture, sports, and educational facilities.
- Cultural infrastructure: Houses open-air theaters, museums, exhibition halls, libraries, and art centers.
- Social integration: Brings diverse social groups together to foster civic consciousness and community bonds.
- Educational value: Hosts trade fairs, festivals, scientific exhibitions, and botanical displays.

Economic impact: Boosts the local economy by hosting national and international events.

Target Area: Bursa Kültür Park and Historical Development

Kültür Park, inaugurated on 6 July 1955 under the leadership of Mayor Reşat Oyal, represents the first comprehensively planned and redesigned urban green space in Bursa. Its architecture and spatial organization were influenced by the planning ideas found in the master plans for Istanbul and Bursa created by the French urban planner Henri Prost, rather than by a single architect. Accordingly, Kültür Park embodies Prost's landscape and environmental planning approach, translating his broader urban planning vision into a large-scale public green space that integrates recreation, ecological functions, and civic life. Later became the venue of the Bursa Festival, which was first held in 1963 (Türkiye Kültür Portalı, 2026)². Bursa's cultural and ecological center is now Kültür Park, often known as the city's lungs. It is the largest urban park, spanning around 40 hectares, 393,000 square metres of green space. In 1999, Reşat Oyal's name was given to Kültürpark. Kültürpark underwent a major renovation in 2006, during which its green space was expanded from 143,000 square meters to 179,000 square meters, thereby providing a substantially larger green area. Kültür Park is home to over 6,000 trees, 61 species, and endemic plant species, including a single Silla tree and three Ginkgo trees, as well as other specimens that are formally registered as Natural Monuments (Kuter, 2014)³. Historic trees such as Ginkgo

² URL-2: "Türkiye Kültür Portalı".

https://www.kulturportalı.gov.tr/turkiye/bursa/gezilecekyer/kulturpark?utm_source=chatgpt.com (Erişim Tarihi: 07.07.2026).

³ URL-3: Kuter, M., (2014). "Kültürpark ve Reşat Oyal".

<https://muratkuter.com.tr/kulturpark-ve-resat-oyal/> (Erişim Tarihi: 07.07.2026).

can be viewed as living aspects of cultural heritage, contributing to the continuity of place, ecological identity, and communal memory in Bursa Kültür Park. Kültür Park is located in Osmangazi district in the center of Bursa, which is one of the most vital and important areas

The current park features tea gardens, restaurants, bars, and recreational areas surrounding a lake where visitors can enjoy boating. Several cultural and public facilities, including the Archaeology Museum, the Municipal Conservatory, Judges' House a public social facility and guesthouse (reconstructed historic-style building), the open-air theatre, the marriage halls, and the amusement park, are located within the park. Since hosting the first festival in 1963, Kültür Park has served not only as a recreational landscape but also as a significant cultural venue and a repository of collective memory, owing to its long-standing association with the International Bursa Festival (Türkiye Kültür Portalı, 2026)⁴. Figure 1 shows the location of Kültürpark and its relationships with the surrounding roads, green areas, and other parts of the city.



Figure 1. The kültürpark boundries in Bursa city

According to Figure 1, Kültür Park is strategically located within the central area of Bursa, occupying a key position in the city's urban structure. The park is bounded to the north by the city's principal east-west transportation corridor, the Mudanya boulevard; on the northeast side lies Merinos Culture Park and Merinos Atatürk Congress and Culture Center, a historically significant post-industrial green space. This area is home to the Merinos Spinning Factory, which was established by Atatürk in 1938 as part of Türkiye's first industrialization initiatives, transforming Bursa into the textile center. The historical

⁴ URL-2: "Türkiye Kültür Portalı".

https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/bursa/gezilecekyer/kulturpark?utm_source=chatgpt.com (Erişim Tarihi: 07.07.2026).

thermal baths of Bursa are located in the northwest of the Kültür Park. Located between the center of Bursa and Çekirge, approximately 190 meters above sea level, the Kükürtlü Thermal Baths are one of the oldest representatives of the city's thermal heritage. Murad I built this structure in 1394 as a double bathhouse. However, the origin of these thermal baths dates back to the Roman Empire.

To the east are Stadium Street and the city's old stadium, while the historic urban core, including Tophane, Koza Han, and the Ulu Mosque, is situated to the southeast. Bursa's former stadium, also known as the ancient Bursa Atatürk Stadium, is located in this neighborhood and has hosted Bursaspor matches for years. Built in the 1930s, opened in 1950, and later demolished, the stadium has been replaced by a public park, Nation's Garden (Millet Bahçesi), which is situated adjacent to the Kültür Park. Bursa Kültürpark is an integrated urban landscape that combines ecological sustainability, immersive nature-based design, recreation, and planned urban development, maintaining Bursa's green identity and enhancing the connection between nature, culture, and city (Aydın et al. n.d.).

Along its southern edge, the park is bordered by Çekirge Street, one of Bursa's oldest and most historically important urban corridors. Çekirge street has historically constituted one of the principal urban axes of Bursa, providing the primary connection between the city center and the Çekirge district, renowned for its thermal springs. Çekirge Street is a historic street that connects Bursa's city center to the Çekirge thermal springs. Its growth accelerated during the late Ottoman and Republican periods, especially with the improvement of Bursa's road network in the 1930s and 1940s. During this time, the corridor became connected with residential developments, thermal tourism, hotels, and recreational areas. The route also played an essential part in Bursa's westward urban expansion, then linked to the establishment of Kültür Park. These interventions transformed Çekirge Street into a major urban corridor that integrated transportation, tourism, healthcare, and recreational functions within the expanding city. The Historical Hotel Çelik Palace and Atatürk House-Museum are located on the south side of Çekirge Street. Hotel Çelik Palace, erected in Bursa in 1935 and personally chosen by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, is one of Türkiye's earliest thermal spa hotels and a monument of the Republican era. During the early Republican era, the Çelik Palas Hotel played a significant role in Bursa's social, cultural, and economic development. Italian architect Giulio Mongeri created the hotel, which opened in 1934 as part of a drive to promote thermal tourism in Bursa. The hotel's thermal bath was completed in 1935. Between 1945 and 2011, the hotel was expanded, modernized, renovated, and eventually privatized. The Çelik Palas Hotel has played an important role in Bursa's urban memory throughout its history as a landmark where generations have experienced social, cultural, political, and ceremonial activities. The hotel has become a symbolic location that embodies Bursa's contemporary

identity and social memory because of its architecture, historical occurrences, notable guests, and shared experiences (Özdemir, n.d.). Figure 2 illustrates views of the old and new buildings of Hotel Çelik Palace.



Figure 2. The old and new buildings of Hotel Çelik Palace views

The Bursa Atatürk House Museum, located on Çekirge Street, is a significant historical building related to Bursa's Republican past. The home have been built in the late nineteenth century, approximately 1895, and it shows the influence of nineteenth-century French architecture, particularly in its wooden balconies, pediments, eaves, and ornamental components. Figure 3 illustrates view Atatürk House Museum.



Figure 3. Atatürk House Museum

In addition to the other amenities located inside the park, two structures are historically significant. The Bursa Archeology Museum and Judges' House. Bursa Judges' House is located within the boundaries of Kültürpark, on Çekirge Street. It is a certified historical residence with typical civil architecture that dates back 120-125 years to the early twentieth century. Today, it is allocated to the Ministry of Justice and operated as a social facility and guesthouse. Figure 4 illustrates a view of this building.



Figure 4. A view of the Bursa Judges' House

The Bursa Archaeology Museum, originally established in 1904 as a branch of the Istanbul Archaeology Museum, is the third-oldest museum in Türkiye. However, it moved to its current building, constructed in Bursa Culture Park in 1972 according to a project by architect Ertem Yücel. The building's position blends well with the natural surroundings and the green fabric of Bursa Kültür Park, and it was created in accordance with the contemporary architectural understanding of its time.

All monumental buildings inside or near Kültür Park have historical and cultural significance, and they contribute significantly to urban identity. Through their architectural character, historical associations, and continuity over time, these buildings function as tangible elements of the urban collective memory. Their presence, together with the historic environment, highlights Kültür Park's cultural value and promotes its position as a memory-bearing urban area where historical narratives, place identity, and modern urban life converge.

Between 1923 and 1950, during the Republican period, following the proclamation of the Republic, following the urban development initiatives undertaken by Ahmet Vefik Pasha and Governor Mümtaz Reşit Pasha, Western planners became actively involved in Bursa's urban planning processes. As a reflection of Atatürk's ideal of reaching the level of contemporary civilizations, owing to the absence of a formal planning school in Türkiye and the limited number of Turkish urban planners at the time, Western planners played a significant role in the redevelopment and planning of Turkish cities. The Western planners who prepared planning schemes for Bursa were Karl Lörcher (1924), Henri Prost (1938), and Luigi Piccinato (1960) (Vural, 2008: 83-84).

The 1924 Lörcher Plan for Bursa, like the 1924-1925 Lörcher Plan for Ankara, is among the first attempts to combine Garden City ideals and modern urban open-space

design into Republican Türkiye (Mikaeili, 2016). Bursa Lörcher Plan was influenced by the Garden City movement of the time; this plan adopted an approach that largely disregarded the existing urban fabric (Batkan, 1996). Inspired by Ebenezer Howard's Garden City concept, which sought to combine the positive attributes of both urban and rural environments, the plan possessed characteristics that could be suitable for cities experiencing relatively modest population growth (Çahantimur, 2022: 185). Bursa proposal envisaged a concentrated green-space structure surrounded by public, commercial, and residential functions. Figure 5 illustrates the Bursa Lörcher Plan.

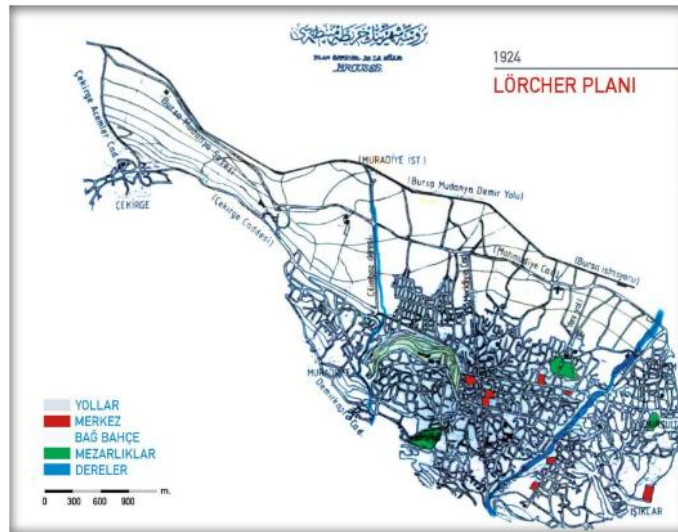


Figure 5. 1924 Bursa Lörcher Plan (Çahantimur, 2022:196)

However, the Lörcher plan could not be adapted to city plan, due to the unsuitable to the Bursa existing fabric, and unconsidering the city's deep-rooted history and traditional layout, rapidly increasing population, driven by both internal and external migration during this period. Furthermore, the necessary budget and administrative power for large-scale expropriations and infrastructure transformations were not available at that time (Vural, 2008: 84).

In the Lörcher Plan, the current Çeğirge route is shown as the main axis. Although the Lörcher Plan did not clearly specify the Kültür Park concept, Lörcher intended to open a transportation axis by maintaining a green area to the Çeğirge district in the west and Thermal Springs as a historical thermal spring and tourism development center. This idea prepared the geographical and mental infrastructure for the location of Bursa's first large urban park (Kültür Park) in the west of the city in the following decades.

Lörcher's plan remained largely unimplemented because of its incompatibility with the existing historical urban fabric and the city's socio-economic conditions

overlooked Bursa's existing urban fabric, making its implementation problematic. Consequently, Henri Prost was commissioned to prepare a new plan between 1938 and 1944 (Vural, 2008: 85). Figure 6 is depicted based on the current location of Kültür Park in Bursa and its overlap with the Bursa Lörcher Plan.

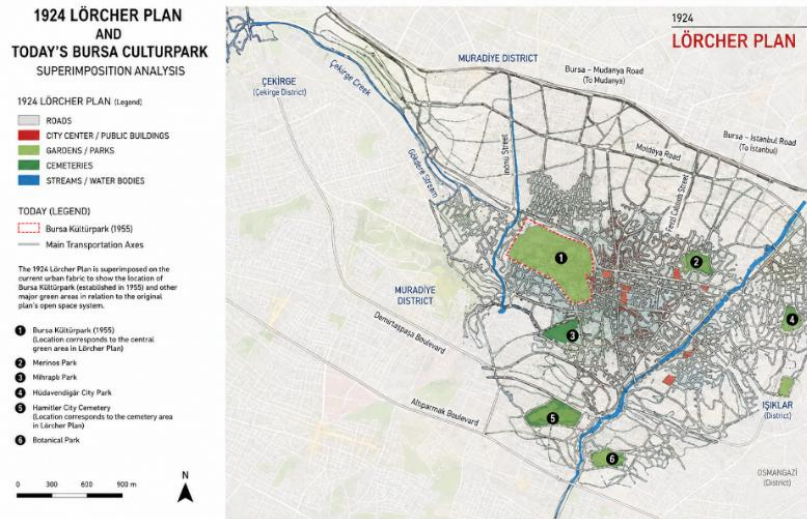


Figure 6. The overlap of the current location of Kültür Park in the Bursa Lörcher Plan.

According to Figure 3, the Lörcher Plan was applied to Bursa's existing urban fabric to compare the historical open-space system with modern green spaces. The investigation finds that it is located within or next to the primary green space suggested in the Lörcher Plan. This geographical relationship implies a continuity in the planning concept of urban green spaces and the long-term influence of early Republican planning ideas on the development of the city's public open-space system. The overlay also emphasizes the transformation of transportation networks, stream routes, and land-use patterns across time.

In 1940, the French architect Henri Prost created a plan for Bursa based on the axial planning concept of Baron Haussmann, the governor who played a significant role in Paris' modernization and reconstruction (Prost Plan Report, 1944: 4; Çahantimur, 2022: 194). The primary goal of adopting axial form is to create a city shape that is appropriate for car use as well as electric, sewerage, and water utilities within the city (Dostoğlu & Vural, 2004: 123). Figure 7 presents Bursa Prost Plan.

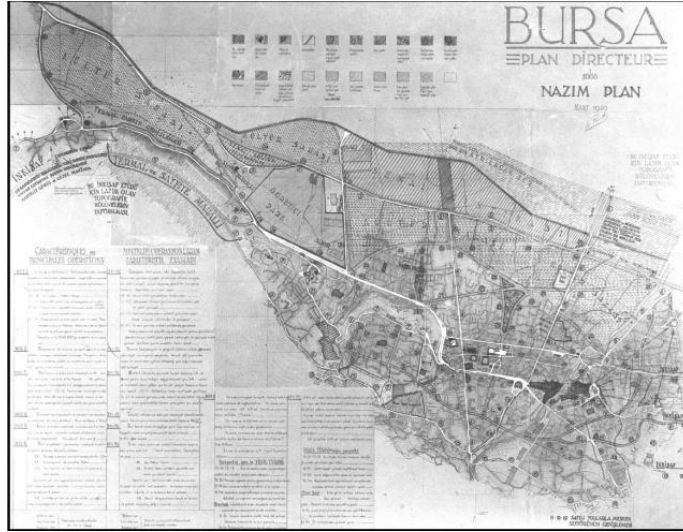


Figure 7. 1940 Bursa Prost Plan (Höçük, 2021:75)

Prost emphasized Bursa's reputation as a thermal city to turn it into a tourist attraction by building hotels, thermal amenities, and hot springs near Çeğirge. He also aimed to improve the city's transportation network to handle motorized traffic and to open up less productive areas of the Bursa Plain to migrant settlement. The natural assets of Bursa should be considered within the planning process. Additionally, he emphasized the necessity of establishing walking areas near the Çekirge and Gökdere neighborhoods in order to maintain Bursa's green beauty (Dostoğlu & Vural, 2004: 125).

Although the plan emphasized the preservation of Bursa's historic environment and the relocation of industrial activities outside the city center, its incompatibility with the city's topography and its proposals for street widening limited its implementation. This plan significantly shaped Bursa's urban structure, influencing major axes such as Darmstadt, Gazcılar, Fomara, and Atatürk Street, as well as the portico-lined street along Atatürk Street (Batkan, 1996). A clear north-south urban development axis emerged from this expansion, promoting the city's northward growth along the main thoroughfares of İnönü Street, Fomara Street, and Stadium Street. The city was characterized by significant industrial growth, which made it one of Türkiye's top provinces for industrial investment (Dostoğlu & Vural, 2001: 241). Merinos Factory is located in northern Bursa along the Mudanya road; it was one of the Republic's earliest industrial investments and a major contributor to urban expansion. Figure 8 is prepared based on the current location of Kültür Park in Bursa and its overlap with the Bursa Prost Plan.

Conclusion

Bursa Kültürpark is more than just a recreational green space in the city; it is an important part of Bursa's historical environment, urban identity, and shared memory. Established in 1955 as part of the early Republican period's modernization and urban planning projects, the park has remained significant for its spatial, cultural, social, and ecological characteristics. The examination of historical blueprints, archival documents, and the park's current physical form demonstrates that Kültürpark has undergone spatial and functional changes over time while retaining important aspects of its original identity.

The analysis of the Lörcher and Prost plans provides a vital foundation for understanding the historical environment in which Kültürpark was designed, as well as its relationship to Bursa's overall development. Although the park's current shape differs from previous design concepts, various historical routes, adjacent urban elements, major structures, and landscape features all contribute to its historical continuity. In this perspective, the park should not be considered as a stand-alone green space, but rather as part of a larger historical urban environment formed by the interaction of planning decisions, architectural history, landscape elements, and social practices.

The study also shows that the historical and cultural relevance of Kültürpark is significantly linked to its ability to promote communal memory. Monumental buildings and historic structures in and around the park, mature vegetation, circulation patterns, open spaces, and culturally significant sites serve as concrete carriers of historical memory. At the same time, everyday activities, social contacts, cultural events, and personal memories passed down through generations all contribute to the park's collective memory. The blend of concrete and intangible aspects encourages place attachment and helps to preserve Bursa's urban identity.

Kültürpark can thus be considered a memory-bearing historic urban green place where landscape, heritage, social experience, and urban growth intersect. Its significance originates not only from its ecological and recreational functions, but also from its ability to link different periods of Bursa's urban history and offer a sense of continuity between the past and present.

According to these findings, the restoration of Bursa Kültürpark should employ an integrated historic urban landscape strategy rather than focusing solely on the preservation of individual buildings or landscape elements. First, the park's historically significant spatial elements, such as its circulation structure, entrances, mature vegetation, important open spaces, and relationships with surrounding monumental buildings, should be thoroughly documented and incorporated into conservation and management plans.

Second, the connection between Kültürpark and the neighboring historical and cultural sites should be enhanced. Monumental structures, museums, historic streets, public spaces, and other heritage elements in the park should all be viewed as part of a cohesive cultural environment. Establishing visual, pedestrian, and explanatory links between these aspects could improve visitors' comprehension of the area's historical history and strengthen the park's place in Bursa's urban memory network.

Third, future conservation plans should take into account the park's collective memory and intangible assets. Interviews, archival research, and participatory methods could be used to record oral histories, historical photos, individual recollections, cultural events, and the experiences of long-term users. Meanings and memories that cannot be fully captured by physical study alone could be found with the aid of such documentation.

Finally, future interventions should balance conservation, environmental performance, recreation, and contemporary urban requirements. New developments or landscape modifications should respect the park's historical character while maintaining its dynamic and accessible public space. A long-term management strategy based on historical documentation, regular monitoring, community participation, and sensitive landscape interventions would help to ensure that Kültürpark remains both a modern urban green space and a significant repository of Bursa collective memory.

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