

# AOÇ, The Open Space of Ankara

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More than 50% of the world's population lives in cities. This statistic implies that the well-being of city residents is essential on a global scale and will only become more important. For many cities in Europe, a place where >70% of the population already lives in urban areas, a further increase in the number of people living in urban areas is expected to rise to almost 82% by 2050 (United Nations, 2012). Moreover, this trend is accompanied by an increase in urban land cover.

Studies on change in urban land use suggest that the substitution of land cover particularly for an impervious surface is detrimental to both the environment and the quality of life of residents. Environmental impacts include the infill of fragile wetlands, the fragmentation of ecosystems, the changes in the net primary productivity, which impacts the carbon cycle and the reduction of urban green spaces (Pauleit, Ennos, & Golding, 2005). Regarding the latter issue, urban green spaces – broadly defined as any vegetation found in the urban environment, including parks, open spaces, residential gardens, or street trees – provide important environmental benefits. These spaces help to preserve and enhance biodiversity within urban ecosystems by means of species or habitats (Tzoulas, 2007). In light of climate change and the threats posed by urban heat waves, urban green spaces provide fresh air, reduce noise and counteract high air temperatures through their cooling capabilities. In addition, urban green spaces provide important social benefits. Such spaces have a positive influence on psychological and mental health via stress reduction and relaxation. Within a broader social view, urban green spaces act as meeting places in neighborhoods and play an important role in the interactions of residents with others in their community (Kim & Kaplan, 2004). Finally, urban green spaces often provide the primary contact with biodiversity and the natural environment for urban residents.<sup>1</sup>

## Urban open space and green space

In land use planning, urban open space is open space areas for "parks", "green spaces", and other open areas. The landscape of urban open spaces can range from playing fields to highly maintained environments to relatively natural landscapes. They are commonly open to public access, however, urban open spaces may be privately owned. Areas outside of city boundaries, such as state and national parks as well as open space in the countryside, are not considered urban open space. Streets, piazzas, plazas and urban squares are not always defined as urban open space in land use planning.<sup>2</sup>

The term "urban open space" can describe many types of open areas. One definition holds that, "As the counterpart of development, urban open space is a natural and cultural resource, synonymous with neither 'unused land' nor 'park and recreation areas.'" Another is "Open space is land and/or water area with its surface open to the sky, consciously acquired or publicly regulated to serve conservation and

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<sup>1</sup> Kabisch, Nadja. Haase, Dagmar. 2012. Green spaces of European cities revisited for 1990–2006. Elsevier. P1.

<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban\\_open\\_space](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_open_space)

urban shaping function in addition to providing recreational opportunities." <sup>3</sup> In almost all instances, the space referred to by the term is, in fact, green space. However, there are examples of urban green space which, though not publicly owned/regulated, are still considered urban open space.

From another standpoint public space in general is defined as the meeting or gathering places that exist outside the home and workplace that are generally accessible by members of the public, and which foster resident interaction and opportunities for contact and proximity.<sup>4</sup> This definition implies a higher level of community interaction and places a focus on public involvement rather than public ownership or stewardship.

Green space is an area of protected or conserved land or water on which development is indefinitely set aside. The purpose of an open space reserve may include the preservation or conservation of a community or region's rural natural or historic character; the conservation or preservation of a land or water area for the sake of recreational, ecological, environmental, aesthetic, or agricultural interests; or the management of a community or region's growth in terms of development, industry, or natural resources extraction. Open space reserves may be urban, suburban, or rural; they may be actual designated areas of land or water, or they may be zoning districts or overlays where development is limited or controlled to create undeveloped areas of land or water within a community or region. They may be publicly owned or owned by non-profit or private interests.<sup>5</sup>

## **The case of Ankara**

The development of urban green spaces and urban areas, population size and the number of households have dramatically changed over time. As recent research on urbanization in Europe suggests, the urbanization process and the shaping of urban areas have become increasingly more divergent in terms of overall dynamics. In particular, changes in land-use patterns and land-use intensity are predominantly consistent with economic and population growth and decline (Kroll & Haase, 2010). However, regarding the development of urban green spaces, results suggest that there is no significant correlation between changes in population number and the area of urban green spaces. Based on the analysis of 202 European cities, we can find a significant increase in the urban green spaces in the period from 2000 to 2006, in Western and Southern Europe cities. It was found that the residential area continued to increase regardless of population growth or decline. The significant increase in the number of households and the number of smaller households demanding higher living spaces, in particular, was discussed as one highly relevant explanation for this development.<sup>6</sup> The city of Ankara is also a city with increase in population.

In the last decade, Ankara city has been subject to the development of large-scale urban green areas. Though these parks are presented as "urban parks", they are located at the periphery of the city where

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<sup>3</sup> Marilyn. "Decision Making in Allocating Metropolitan Open Space: State of the Art." Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science 1975. pp 149–153.

<sup>4</sup> Jacinta Francis, Billie Giles-Corti, Lisa Wood, Matthew Knuiman, Creating sense of community: The role of public space, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Volume 32, Issue 4, December 2012, Pages 401-409

<sup>5</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open\\_space\\_reserve](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_space_reserve)

<sup>6</sup> Kabisch, Nadja. Haase, Dagmar. 2012. Green spaces of European cities revisited for 1990–2006. Elsevier. P8.

undeveloped public land is abundant.<sup>7</sup> Even though these parks have increased the amount of green spaces in Ankara, the green spaces available at the city core are still below the needs, a situation which limits the access of the urban populace to green areas. The lack of green spaces at the core of the city has also resulted in the loss of daily practices related with the open green spaces. Yet, there have been repeated attempts, to alter and even destroy the existing green spaces in the city center.

From the planning point of view, criticizing the present condition of the public green spaces and the structure they form necessitates the understanding of the development history of the city. The development plans define the development and change of the physical structure of cities, and set the rules of the character of the development. They determine the road network, the land use, the sizes and forms of urban blocks and plots, the development type/character and the distribution of public uses. In theory, formation and transformation of the urban green space structure of a city is among these plan decisions. The distribution, location and sizes of the components of green space structure are determined by development plans and still there is not any other instrument serving for this purpose.

The development laws and regulations set the rules of plan making and development. The amount, types and distribution of land uses and services, and the conditions of plan modifications are also defined by development laws and regulations. The types, amount and the standards of the green spaces are determined by these laws and regulations as well.<sup>8</sup>

The city of Ankara, which was proclaimed as the capital of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, was to be constructed as a planned city in the same period, i.e. after the First World War. Ankara is the first city in Turkey which has developed according to a comprehensive development plan in the early years of the Republican era. Since then, six development plans were made to guide and control the urban development of Ankara city. The most significant aspect of these plans is that they reflect the urban planning approaches of their times.

The first development plan of Ankara was prepared by Carl Lörcher in 1924 and 1925 and the second by Hermann Jansen in 1932. These two planners prepared their plans in concordance with the planning approaches developed in Germany in the early 1900s. Both of the plans prepared by these German planners were aimed to solve the development problems of Ankara, the new capital of the Turkish Republic which was facing the shortage of housing, government buildings and social services that a modern capital needed. Especially the production of housing was an urgent necessity due to the high rates of migration that Ankara received from other cities of the country. The organizational and legal aspects of urban planning and development were just being set up by Ankara Sehremaneti which was established in 1924 and by the Municipality of Ankara which was established in 1930. With the Expropriation Law (law no.583), 400 hectares of land was expropriated by the Government to provide the land for the development of both the governmental buildings and residential areas. Ankara City Development Directorate (law no.1351) was established in 1928. The Development Directorate was established directly under the authority of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, not under Sehremaneti. The

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<sup>7</sup> Gökusu Park (508.000 m<sup>2</sup>) and Harikalar Diyarı (1.300.000 m<sup>2</sup>) are opened in 2003, and Mogan Park (601.879 m<sup>2</sup>) is opened in 2005.

<sup>8</sup> BURAT, SINAN. 2008. THE CHANGING MORPHOLOGY OF URBAN GREENWAYS, ANKARA, 1923-1960. METU. P1-2.

members of the Development Executive Committee that consisted of 3 to 5 members and the Director of Development, was chosen directly by the Cabinet.

In 1920s, as a town of 20.000, Ankara had a city park, Millet Bahçesi in Ulus Square, and the Hacettepe as an excursion place. The stream banks and the gardens, vineyards and orchards surrounding the city were also used for excursions. Gençlik Parkı – the Youth Park, the Hippodrome and May 19 Sports Complex, Cebeci Stadium, the Golf Field (Altınpark today), Emniyet Park (Güven Park today), Castle Park and some other parks were realized according to the Jansen plan. Though each development plan had their own proposals for urban green spaces, the amount of green spaces decreased in years, from 5.1 m<sup>2</sup> per person in 1950, to 2.8 m<sup>2</sup> in 1965, to 1.8 m<sup>2</sup> in 1979 and to 1.4 in 1985. The uneven distribution of green spaces and the lack of different scales of green spaces was also another problem, decreasing the access of the people to the green spaces and opportunities of recreation.

It can be conferred that, from the points of provision of various types of green spaces and equal distribution over the urban space, the situation today is not much different than it was in the 1960s in term of the daily needs of the urban population. However, the population of Ankara and hence the number of people using the central city has increased more than three times since then. Numerous parks of various sizes and types were provided in the last two decades. The area built according to the development plans of Lörcher and ansen still lack the sufficient amount and even distribution of green spaces for the provided parks are located at the periphery of Ankara metropolitan area and not in the densely built central area.<sup>9</sup>

As a significant consequence of not having lived the industrialization and industrial urbanization, the Turkish society did have neither a bourgeoisie, nor industrialists or social reformists (as Fourier, Lever, Saint Simon, Krupps or Siemens) who sought to ameliorate the living conditions in the cities by proposing solutions and by criticizing and intervening on the actions of the local governments. In the case of Ankara the bourgeoisie was the speculator and the bureaucrat at the same time, or the two were in very close relation.

In the urban development process of Ankara, the dynamics such as population increase, land speculation and the like resulted with many plan modifications and developments contrary to Jansen's plan principles. One of the main reasons of the plan modifications and source of direct transformation of the green spaces is the attitude of the public authority, namely the Development Executive Committee and the Development Directorate, towards the provision of and modifications on urban green spaces. Green spaces were perceived as reserve development areas in disposal of the Development Directorate and the Development Executive Committee. Additionally, the green space structure was not taken into account as one continuous body in itself that is in relation with social services and other green spaces. In return, with short sighted and pragmatic handling, the green space structure has been broken into smaller parts making it easier to allocate other functions. The other reasons that have made the modifications easier are the legal status of green spaces and the plan modifications.

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<sup>9</sup> BURAT, SINAN. 2008. THE CHANGING MORPHOLOGY OF URBAN GREENWAYS, ANKARA, 1923-1960. METU. P35-40.

By focusing specifically on the urban green structure concept of Jansen Plan, displaying the modifications of a part of Jansen's green space structure proposal in sequence. Further studies of production and modification history of green spaces from morphological perspective would reveal the dynamics acting upon and attitudes towards the green spaces. Such studies would reveal valuable information that would be used to develop the needed and insufficient articles in the urban development laws and regulations in Turkey, even today, including plan making, land acquisition for green spaces, implementation, plan modification and green space provision.<sup>10</sup>

## **The case of AOÇ**

In a city, quality of life depends, first of all, on the conditions over which urban life develops. In fact, a great amount of it passes through the city's public spaces. Its quality generally tells us much about the city's overall quality of life and, therefore, much of the urban design and planning literature stresses the importance of public space (Carmona, 2003).

Although individual buildings, and thus architecture, are important to the quality of towns, it is the "whole ensemble of buildings and spaces in a town, including its parks and gardens, which govern how we experience it" (Taylor 2004, p. vii).

Even though cities are composed of both public and private spaces, the first ones are responsible to envelop it with identity and meaning. Public spaces provide vital functions to the operation of the urban system. By providing linkage between the city's different spaces, by functioning as traffic corridors, or by simply providing areas for leisure, contemplation and socialization, the availability of public spaces became fundamental to the well-being of the contemporary urban population. Generally speaking, public space includes "all those parts of the built and natural environment where the public have free access. It encompasses: all the streets, squares and other rights of way, whether predominantly in residential, commercial or community/civic uses; the open spaces and parks; and the 'public/private' spaces where public access is unrestricted (at least during daylight hours)" (OPDM 2004, p. 10).

Across history, public space formed the backdrop for public life, for commercial transactions, social exchange, entertainment, protest and contemplation. Now, as Western society becomes more introverted and private, such spaces are under threat, even though there is still a need to provide amenities for public life to take place. Public space defines the urban structure and sets the framework for the majority or the urban dynamics, being therefore a major factor in the definition of urban vitality and quality of life.<sup>11</sup>

Among all types of public and open urban spaces, the ones which provide a greater number of benefits, mainly to its users, are the ones integrated in the city's green structure, i.e., its parks and gardens. As cities grow larger and larger, and with population densities following the same trend, it is usual for urban inhabitants to live in increasingly smaller apartments with no private outdoor space, leaving to

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p142-144

<sup>11</sup> Nogueira Lopes, M. Camanho, A. 2012. Public Green Space Use and Consequences on Urban Vitality: An Assessment of European Cities. Springer. P1-2.

public space the role of functioning as an extension of the private household realm. Therefore, when easily reachable by the population, the role of green spaces in the quality of urban life, and in the urban economy, is widely recognized. In fact, many authors refer to the social benefits of urban public space (Carmona, 2003). In fact, space and society are clearly related as it is difficult to envisage 'space' without social content and, in an opposite interpretation, to imagine society without a spatial component (Carmona, 2003, p. 106). Public space does, in fact, provide for the basic human needs.

First up, it has both an existence value, because people know it is there, and a use value for a wide range of different activities. It provides neutral ground available to all sectors of society and can become the focus of community spirit through the many and varied opportunities provided for social interaction. The authors regard public space as the "common ground" where people, whether in their everyday life or in special occasions or festivities, carry out the activities that make part of the community. In fact, public spaces are understood as places for "inter-subjective communication, to strengthen the arenas in which a civil society can develop" (Madanipour 1996, p. 220). Also, it can contribute to child development through its capacity for outdoor, energetic and imaginative play and may positively influence the behavior of both individuals and the wider society (ibid.). The recreational aspects of these public spaces, with possibilities to play and rest, are perhaps its highest valued service provided to the city. From urban green space stems both the opportunity to engage in healthy outdoor exercise and the psychological effects arising from the way that they allow escape to a less stressful and more relaxing environment (Swanwick, 2003). Also, the urban green structure can contribute to a better urban design, by "giving the city an understandable structure, connecting different scales and parts of the urban landscape".

One can also identify economic benefits resulting from the existence of these areas including both on-site benefits, such as direct employment and revenue generation, and less tangible off-site benefits, including effects on nearby property prices, contributions to attract or retaining business in an area and also an important role in attracting tourists (Swanwick, 2003), if these areas remain properly maintained. And if more people use public space, the more attractive the city becomes, not only to residents but also to people from afar, who might be tempted to visit or relocate close by. Also, the promotion of sustainable transport modes encouraged by increased public space usage can have a say in the reduction of pollution and traffic levels.

Public space is made to be used by people. If people start to reduce public space usage, then there is less incentive to provide new spaces and maintain existing ones. With a subsequent decline in their maintenance and quality, public spaces are less likely to be used, amplifying a vicious spiral of decline (Carmona, 2003). Hence, the peopling of public space is key to creating safer areas, maintaining that the presence of others reassures users that there are always an adequate number of "eyes on the street" to deter criminals and maintain a safe environment. This presence can be due to several factors, ranging from the mere use of public space for recreational activities, to foster social relations or simply to get from one place to another. Therefore, public space usage, although depending on a large number of

factors, can bring substantial benefits to the operation of society and the overall urban system, requiring therefore a complex method of analysis.<sup>12</sup>

Ankara, the capital city of Turkey, has been established, developed and basically created with the ideology and point of view of the newly established republic and its leader Atatürk. So the city charged the responsibility of being a good example of a planned, regular, sanitary and contemporary city.

In accordance with this ideology, Atatürk established Gazi Forest Farm (Atatürk Forest Farm after 1950 [AOÇ]), in order to improve the agricultural production and search for technological methods and aimed to create a big recreational area to the people living in Ankara. The State Farm then became the symbol of the modernization project of the new Republic. The area choice for the farm was very interesting, because the area was the most futile and marshy land of Ankara. The reason for this choice was to create a farm, by applying necessary scientific and technological developments. The main purpose was to show and encourage people about the future of the city and to prove the success of the new technology.

The most important objective of the farm was to improve the agricultural and industrial production, increase the productivity in agriculture and train students and producers by using new technologies by using new technologies. The farm was aimed to be the place where these objectives would take place in.

In 1937, in accordance with Atatürk's will, the State Farm was granted to the nation. He clearly determined his wishes in order to endure and develop the objectives of the State Farm in the future. However; this institution disappointed everybody strongly in the end. Objectives and principals of the State Farm were all disappeared as the time passes.<sup>13</sup>

The establishment purposes of the farm can be summarized as follows:

- To develop modern methods of cultivation and to introduce innovations in agriculture to farmers in order to improve the agricultural development,
- To investigate and develop new species of grain and varieties of animals appropriate for the regional habitat,
- To produce and investigate native and/or foreign fruit varieties and try to make them widespread in the region,
- To evaluate the agricultural products by processing the yields,
- To establish many factories and/or workshops for developing agricultural production and to introduce to nation,
- To work with the villagers around by the help of cooperatives or likely institutions,

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<sup>12</sup> Nogueira Lopes, M. Camanho, A. 2012. Public Green Space Use and Consequences on Urban Vitality: An Assessment of European Cities. Springer. P5-6.

<sup>13</sup> Yıldırım, Derya. 2004. Design Problems of AOÇ as a Public Property. METU. P1-2.

- To develop viticulture,
- To establish atelier for the production and repairs of agricultural machinery to improve mechanization in agriculture,
- To develop the operations of the State Farm to meet the internal and external market demands,
- To provide sale stores for the citizens for selling pure and excellent foodstuffs produced in the foundations of the Farm,
- To improve and arrange the farmland to provide open and green areas for walking, resting and entertainment necessities of the people in Ankara,
- To educate and organize courses for training people especially students and farmers,
- To cooperate with scientific foundations in order to improve the production, research and experiments in the State Farm.<sup>14</sup>

## **Production in AOÇ**

As a land with agriculture production, there are vineyards and gardens along forests and parks in AOÇ. Approximately 8.900.000 square meters of AOÇ lands were assigned to agricultural production. In the lands of AOÇ, irrigation system is not sufficient. So raining condition gains an importance in an effective production, because of this cereal production and fallowing land was preferred as the agricultural production method. It is a traditional method, which does not require any engineering maintenance exempt from planting techniques. In 2001 activity period according to the data given in Supervising Committee Report the Directorate lost money in agricultural production. The total area portions of the products share are as follows: 2.000.000 m<sup>2</sup> Wheat, 5.210.000 m<sup>2</sup> barley, 1.100.000 m<sup>2</sup> clover and the rest is feed plants.

The first fruit garden was established in 1930's. In those days because of the location of the farm environmental problems were not as big as it is now. Farmlands are now situated nearer to city center because of the rapid urbanization. So, climatic and environmental conditions have changed, in addition to these, increasing pollution affected the fruit gardens of the Farm. Seedling and ornament production take the place of fruit gardens. Total area of gardens in the AOÇ Land is 762.000 m<sup>2</sup>. In 1998, trees covered 3.600.000 m<sup>2</sup> of the land. In 1999 this size was increased to 6.976.000 m<sup>2</sup> because, some public and private institutions tried to support afforestation project of the State Farm. As being the most important potential for the open and green area system of Ankara forests and parks are so crucial for AOÇ. However, afforestation activities need serious financial resources and scientific studies in order to determine the suitable varieties for the climatic conditions. The Lands assigned to some institutions for afforestation were not determined according to an overall policy or plan.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Yıldırım, Derya. 2004. Design Problems of AOÇ as a Public Property. METU. P15-16.

<sup>15</sup> Yıldırım, Derya. 2004. Design Problems of AOÇ as a Public Property. METU. P19-20.



## **PROBLEMS of AOÇ**

In her thesis, Derya Yıldırım categorized the problems of AOÇ into three branches, the problems of the establishment law 5659, the land problems, the 1st Degree Natural and Historical Site District decision. The foundation law of the State Farm caused serious problems during 53 years; because of the inadequate content of the State Farm law it was decided that selling, renting and/or assigning the farmland to other people or institutions must be accepted in the Great National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) by a special law. However, land allocations for different functional uses and sale of the Farm Lands could not be prevented. Secondly, the establishment purposes of the State Farm were not determined in the Law 5659. This issue is as important as protecting the totality of the Farmland. As a matter of fact that protection of the farmland against some interventions and occupations can only be achieved by realizing the objectives of the foundation. So these two problems are related to each other, disturbing one inevitably affects the other.

The third problem of the establishment law of the State Farm is the unsatisfactory respond of the existing organization body to the changing needs of the management. The responsibilities of the Directorates were not described clearly in the law. Because of this deficiency some organizational problems have occurred. There are some conflicts about the distribution of duties. Especially real estate management was not given under a strict authority in the organization body. Although property management is a fundamental problem since the farm was established, none of the Directorates were determined as the related authority. Due to the lack of authority problems cannot be solved according to predetermined principles and discussed in time. As a summary, the organization structure of the AOÇ Directorate is inefficient to develop plans and policies to realize the establishment objectives and in using the existing potentials of the State Farm.

The fourth is the financial problems started to become a huge problem, since according to the Law 5659 could not create sufficient fiscal resources and methods to meet the changing current requirements. The farm Director cannot raise financial resources to cover the financial requirements increasing year by year. The sale of Beer Factory and lack of investment opportunities lead the institution to work under capacity. These made AOÇ, an institution that cannot benefit and hardly sustain its existence.<sup>16</sup>

## **AOÇ as an Open Space**

Among the open space resources in the metropolitan city of Ankara, AOÇ have a great significance, that it has the greatest potential for recreation and utilization for other open space purposes. Such that, not only its location in the city is suitable for creating connections among different districts by means of open green axis, but also Farmland have a higher accessibility from the center and sub-centers of the city and densely populated districts.

Moreover, the Farmland have a huge potential to serve as open space buffers and wedges in the capital city guiding the urban development. Furthermore, Farmlands as being a wide-open green space creates a break up and changes the monotony of urban development and this leads to a healthy environment. It

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<sup>16</sup> Yıldırım, Derya. 2004. Design Problems of AOÇ as a Public Property. METU. P21-22.

is obvious that breaking up the urban sprawl with open green spaces is a need for a healthy development. Open spaces must be planned effectively in order to provide a contiguous pattern of open spaces as an urban form determinant.

Methods and techniques for preserving open space for recreation and other purposes are grouped under 3 major governmental powers in Northeastern Illinois, in USA in 1960's. First one is the power to acquire property, second one is the police power and the third one is the taxing power. The first one, which is acquiring land for public purposes, is the most important tool in preserving open spaces. Some of these areas functioning for public purposes are; state forests, conservation areas, preserves along public waters, cemeteries etc. In order to acquire land for these purposes some various acts were enacted in USA.

Urbanization pressure over the State Farmland has been minimizing the control effect of such a big open space area over uncontrolled urban development that is mainly directed by land speculations. Open green area system of Ankara was mainly created by Jansen Plans and before Jansen plans affected by the principles of Lörcher Plans which were made in 1924, has been an important tool in urban development plans of Ankara. Using such open spaces as wedges, separators and green belts around or adjacent to urban centers is a good opportunity of Ankara.

Space requirements, location and accessibility are some of the major determinants in evaluating the standards of recreation areas in the city. In addition being an open space recreation area, the State Farm also contains much more facilities in addition to active recreational functions that can be regarded as non-recreational open space functions such as agricultural land use, large educational institutions, airports, etc.

There are some important issues to concern in order to achieve a sufficient utilization of open spaces. First of all the functions in the open green spaces should be determined clearly and the needed total area for those functions should be big enough according to the standards determined.

The functions of open spaces that are even active or passive recreation, educational or agricultural activities they should reach every age or income groups of people in the city. Secondly the accessibility of the open space is very important in order to reach and serve for public functions. The location of the open green areas and a system between the existing or proposed open spaces compromise an important design tool for the urban environment.

In order to create a balance between the natural environment and urban areas, the necessary open space areas for the population of the city can be determinant for designing those spaces.

The ecological realities confirm that instead of continues mass development of cities, especially metropolitan areas, urban development through development corridors with big open spaces and an urban macro form composed of open and built up areas should be preferred in order to sustain the ecological balance and healthy environment. In addition to ecological benefits such kind of a development pattern also has other advantage. First of all, it increases the quality of public transportation along by the development corridors. The most easy and short way to reach the city

center is the line of the development corridor, so accessibility in the city increases and public transportation is preferred and become beneficial. Secondly, technical infrastructure planned under the main axis as galleries causes economical benefits then spreading links to surrounding areas. Third opportunity of development corridors and big open green spaces can be examined as the high level of relation between nature and urban areas. Due to these advantages, planning authorities in different countries such as Netherlands and England have been trying to purchase land in the development corridor of the cities in order to direct the urban development. Of course because of the land speculation these lands cost expensive expropriation prices to public authorities. Thereupon, public authorities prefer to develop other control mechanisms upon big open green areas that are privately owned.

High taxation systems and strict legal regulations are used in order to preserve open space functions and prevent those areas from construction. Whereas, in the case of Ankara Metropolitan city, such kind of a public land, that is the determinant of the west development corridor of the city exists. AOÇ Lands and public institutions having wide open space functions constitutes such kind of an open green areas system in the west side of the city as the determinant of the west development corridor. Moreover AOÇ Lands are now become near to the city center and have a high accessibility because of its location.

Furthermore, preserving AOÇ lands according to the planning policies that are reflecting the basic objectives of the State farm has two basic importance; first one is, this area will guarantee the future open space and recreation needs of Ankara city against a monotonous urban development and densely constructed urban areas. Because in our country if the land speculation in metropolitan areas continuous to increase and planning tolls still stay at the back of higher urbanization speed then it will continue that open spaces of the cities will turn into built up areas in order to face the needs of increasing population. So, in that case existing open space potentials of the cities should gain priority as a planning tool in order to create healthy and livable urban environments in the future. Second important aspect is, the location of AOÇ Lands settling in the middle of the expansion direction of the city, it still has the opportunity to reshape the urban landscape by establishing related management policies and functions that will make the area open to public purposes and restructuring the institution in order to fully recognized by the citizens as the early years of the republic and shaping future developments. In order to pace with the changing situation and expanding needs, the State Farm should contain more facilities and renew its vision and the Directorate should determine the future expectations of such a vital institution that gets its origin from production, recreation and research. So the future locations of the activities that are going to take place in the Farmland area, whether public, private and semi-public, should be considered carefully since their contribution to farmland is very important. Services such as restaurants, büfe's either publicly or privately operated under renting arrangements are the basic recreational activities of AOÇ on the main axis connecting Söğütözü to Yenimahalle districts. According to the determined vision and future development plan of AOÇ such kind of functions should be discussed.

Moreover the adjoining municipalities need cooperation and coordination in sustaining the recreation needs of the metropolitan area population. Therefore, Yenimahalle, Çankaya Municipalities and the

Greater Municipality of Ankara should give priority in protecting the Farmland and work together in developing the State Farm according to its objectives coming from its establishment purposes.<sup>17</sup>

## **AOÇ Today**

So far, Atatürk State Farm is analyzed as a public property, since it was established. During the evaluation of the story of the farm it is discovered that AOÇ is now standing at a point far away from its establishment objectives. The Farm was the symbol of the new ideology and identified with the modernism project of the newly established republic. However, during 78 years, the main establishment purposes and land totality of AOÇ have lost due to unsatisfactory establishment law; managerial and financial deficiencies and bureaucratic pressures over AOÇ Lands.

AOÇ is a unique institute established in the early years of the Republic. The establishment purposes, the ideology behind its establishment and the characteristics of the State Farm makes AOÇ a unique application, different from any institutions in Ankara and also in Turkey. One of the basic characteristics of the State Farm is providing huge open green areas for the city. It is luck for the capital to have approximately 33.000.000.000 m<sup>2</sup> open space in the middle of the urban areas and development pattern of the city. Secondly another important issue is that, AOÇ is a public property which has played an important role in the development pattern of

Ankara. Farmlands are publicly owned lands locating in the expansion corridor of the city and providing many opportunities to shape the urban macro-form and to direct the urban expansion. Thirdly the ideology behind the establishment purpose is another special characteristic of the State Farm. The ideology of AOÇ mainly reflects the ideology of the modernization project of the newly established Republic. The great leader Atatürk aimed a progress both in agricultural production and in the social life of the citizens of the young Republic, while establishing such a farm.

AOÇ is a model State Farm which was created according to the objectives of the newly established Republic. State Farm is a leading institution for the rest of the country due to its basic principles of production, application and recreation. The major role of the farm is production. We cannot think of it without this basic fact. So production in agriculture, scientific researches and educative functions of the farm are so crucial in analyzing the structure of the farm and developing strategies for the future development of AOÇ with public interest and without disturbing its natural and historical values. Whereas, in the case of AOÇ, the basic principles of the State Farm could not be carried on and the land totality of AOÇ have been damaged seriously since it was established.

AOÇ is at the basic expansion corridor of the city. Therefore, farmlands have been an attractive location for the various public and private institutions to settle on the west development corridor of the capital. AOÇ Lands could not resist the pressures arise from land speculations, therefore the wholeness and continuity of the area was interrupted because of the rented, sold and transferred lands to different usages. In this manner, because, AOÇ is an important part of the open green system of the metropolitan city, the fragmentation of the farmlands is threatening the continuity of this system. The inefficient legal

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<sup>17</sup> Yıldırım, Derya. 2004. Design Problems of AOÇ as a Public Property. METU. P57-61.

framework of the Directorate played an important role in this fragmentation. Moreover, the size of the area, the diversity of the functions and the fiscal deficiencies caused an authority loss over the farmlands.

Today AOÇ is standing at a different situation than before. It was understood that the establishment purposes, totality of farmlands and the basic components of the State Farm was destroyed. Especially the agricultural production and scientific researches, investigations in the varieties of animals were left to related scientific foundations and faculties of the universities. The AOÇ Farm could not adopt its structural body and investments to the improving scientific researches easily. Therefore, such kind of investigations left behind the duties of the Farm. In addition, production of the agricultural machinery was left to public and private sector industries, which have been improving lately.

Moreover, AOÇ Lands have been fragmented since Atatürk granted the State Farm to Treasury. As examined in this thesis the farmlands have been sold or rented to various institutions without any plan regulations. Therefore, today the land totality and continuity of the State Farm was interrupted and it became a “lost space” composed of various fragmented lands which are hard to manage. Therefore, the place and role of AOÇ in the metropolitan area of Ankara was evaluated in this thesis. In this manner, it is very important to reinterpret the basic establishment purposes of the State Farm according to the current situation of AOÇ.

In today’s world, changing rate of technologies, social, political and cultural aspects of cities make it impossible to solve the problems with fragmented solutions. Whereas, solutions must be developed according to the basic establishment purposes. To gain back the totality of the farmlands is a very difficult process because of its complexity. So determining the problem areas and current owner of the properties is taking a long time. Such that, the time spent while waiting the courts to decide and determine the property ownership and rights of the Directorate over disputed areas is slowing down the process seriously. At this point, the organization body of the Farm Directorate is not sufficient enough to accelerate the decision process. In addition the responsibilities and duties of the directorates are not sufficient and exactly defined in order to control the illegal occupations of the farmlands. So organizing an appropriate and sufficient land management system which is widely acceptable and less reliant on political decisions is very significant. In doing so participation, negotiation and public awareness is very important in order to prevent the land transfers of the Farm. Being the gift of Republic and Atatürk to next generations, AOÇ have to sustain its public identity.

To sum up, Atatürk Orman Çiftliği is a complex structure composed of different functions and objectives. The reorganization of the Farm and continuation of its basic functions as determined in its establishment objectives could be possible only if the unity of the farmlands is secured. In doing so, a land policy should be clarified about the lost spaces of the Farm. To preserve the totality of the State Farm; design principles and basic objectives about AOÇ must be determined clearly in order to eliminate the political pressures aiming to share and open the AOÇ Lands to construction rather than preserving it as an open green space on the contrary to monotonous, concrete urban area.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Yıldırım, Derya. 2004. Design Problems of AOÇ as a Public Property. METU. P95-98.

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