

84 years in urban memory: The relationship of Izmir Atatürk High School-Kültürpark

Su Kardelen ERDOĞAN^{1*}, Hikmet ELDEK GÜNER²

¹ suartan@gmail.com • Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, Izmir Democracy University, Izmir, Turkey

² hikmetelde@gmail.com • Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, Izmir Democracy University, Izmir, Turkey

**Corresponding author*

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Abstract

The 1922 Great Izmir Fire points to an important historical rupture in urban memory of Izmir by erasing the past and transforming the urban space. After this demolition, Kültürpark was constructed on the fire debris and accepted as the construction of modern Izmir of newly established Turkish Republic. This change has created new spatial relationships and experiences. One of them is Izmir Atatürk High School-Kültürpark relationship which was constantly produced with the help of user practices, created a collective memory about Kültürpark. The physical neighborhood of the park and high school in the city has created a compulsory interaction between high school students and Kültürpark. Daily life in the park was more easily experienced by students than random teenagers. Thus, this defined user group has created their own memory of Kültürpark over the years. In the study, “What is the memory of Kültürpark in Izmir Atatürk High School students?” is considered as the main problem. It is aimed to explore different historical, social, spatial layers of Kültürpark and remind the importance of the park once again. A survey was conducted among 302 graduates between 1951 and 2020 to determine the “different Kültürparks” in the memories of Izmir Atatürk High School students. A mixed set of questions was prepared, and a qualitative analysis was carried out. As a result, the various Kültürpark experiences were determined by the help of these dynamic user profiles. Spatial and social changes in both city and country have been discussed in the context of collective memory.

Keywords

Collective memory, Urban memory, Izmir, Kültürpark, Izmir Atatürk High School.

1. Introduction

While many devastating events, such as wars and natural disasters, which destroy important parts of cities in the spatial context, cause a big gap in urban memory, it also gives cities the opportunity to rebuild a new urban memory as if they had no past. The 1922 Izmir Great Fire is one of these crucial historical ruptures. After this destruction, the debris field was accepted as an opportunity for a new urban planning process and the appearance of modern Izmir. At the end of the difficult planning process (Karpas, 2009, 49-554; Maruflu, 2019, 29), the idea of K lt rpark created on the area between the survived schools Izmir Atat rk High School (1888) and Namık Kemal High School (1853) came into sight to build an international stage in Izmir and provide new public space to the modern Turkish citizens.

K lt rpark, which was opened in 1936, has been one of the most important living spaces in Izmir because of the natural, social, cultural, and architectural opportunities shaped by the ideological background of the park. Additionally, the park has become a focal point in the city because of the chance to host the Izmir International Fair since it was constructed. K lt rpark became a stage of modern Turkey and Izmir with the features of providing green areas needed in the city, giving

chances to join social activities, and witnessing global developments with the help of international fair. However, this area has reached today with the effect of different physical additions-extractions, functional transitions, construction-demolition interferences and thus identity changes (Kılın  et al., 2015, 10). In particular, because of the decision to move the international fair to the new fairground, the construction of which started in 2013, created a new argument. Today, K lt rpark is still an important topic of urban discussions. While these discussions remind once again the importance of K lt rpark for citizens, uncovering the place of the park in urban memory has gained importance. As Benjamin (1968) defines cities as topographies of collective memory, the traces in the memory of the citizens allow us to observe these transformations and changes that K lt rpark has experienced in the historical process, as in many urban spaces. Therefore, reading this “multi-layered memory space” (Kayın, 2015, 35) through collective memory provides new discoveries about K lt rpark. Considering the collective memory is produced by the experiences of the citizens, the user of K lt rpark will be the main actor in a recent memory reading about Izmir. An important part of these users is students at Izmir Atat rk High School which is next-door neigh-

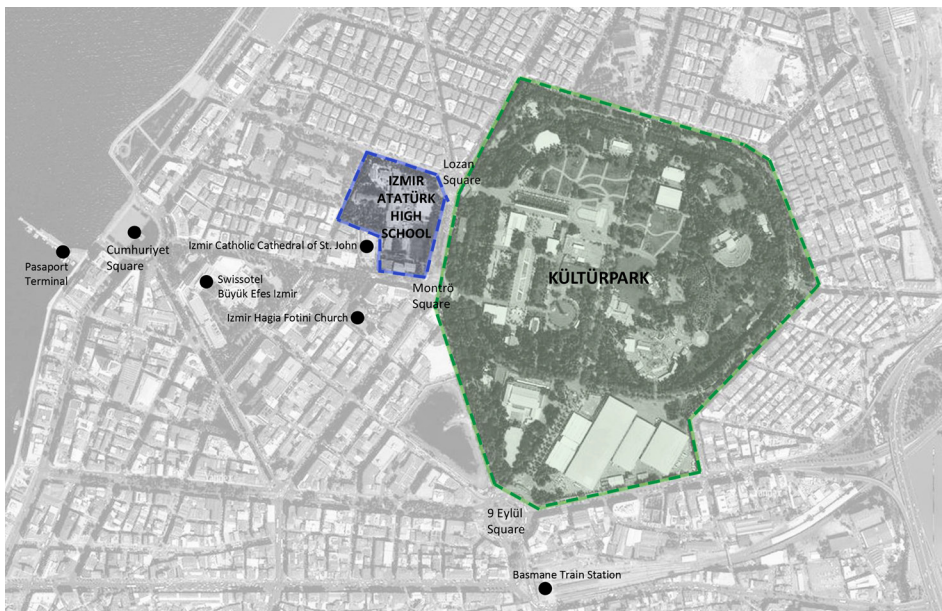


Figure 1. Izmir Atat rk High School and K lt rpark in the urban context (The aerial photo is taken from Google Earth and has been edited by authors).

bor in the urban space (Figure 1). As a result of the physical articulation of park to the high school, a new experience space has also been created for the students. In this way, the study makes discovering Kültürpark possible through the nearby building and finds the meanings of park by neighbor-user experience.

Izmir Atatürk High School, which was founded as a Greek school in Izmir and was nationalized during the Republican Period as a boys' high school, is one of the witnesses of the city's rise from the ashes. Kültürpark and its next-door neighbor Izmir Atatürk High School have a remarkable relationship in the urban space through their missions with the newly established Republic of Turkey. This relationship has provided Kültürpark with a defined user group with different purposes over the years and has made the park a part of the daily life of high school students. The park, which is the closest public open space to the high school, has been experienced for years as not one of the many spatial choices for students, but often the only and permanent option. Particularly, from 1930s to 1950s, then until the 1980s, Kültürpark was the only alternative as a socializing place for the citizens who had just introduced western practices into their lives. Following the reduction of political pressure in the country in the 1980s, people increased their activities in public places, and Kültürpark became the primary venue for these daily practices again. In addition, the introduction of the technological developments from the world at the Izmir International Fair was very attractive to catch up with the global developments. In other words, over these years, this relationship was established as a relatively compulsory state of action. This interaction led to Kültürpark being used for sports or painting classes, or a flyer collection competition among students. It is possible to say that both in-school and out-of-school uses arise from this necessity of physical proximity. However, in the 2000s, the increase in urban public space alternatives, the acquisition of new consumption habits, and most importantly, the change

in the understanding of socialization with digital age moved Kültürpark away from daily life. Hence, each student studying at Izmir Atatürk High School has experienced the Kültürpark of their educational period and graduated from high school with a different Kültürpark in their memory. Each student added a different layer belonging to their own period to the collective memory as a user of Kültürpark. Therefore, this defined user profile has more sustainable data about the park than the random students at other high schools or the young population in the city.

A main discussion of this study is the image of Kültürpark in the memory of Izmir Atatürk High School students (as well as the users of Kültürpark), how this image has changed over the years, what memories have survived, and how collective memories are layered in this direction. The aim of the study was to reveal how the perception of Kültürpark changed over time by Izmir Atatürk High School students during this 84-year period, and to show the different aspects of the park that took its place in the memories. The study tries to read the political, economic, and cultural change of the country and the city through the Kültürpark layers, and Kültürpark experiences of these students. Thus, a survey study was carried out with students who graduated from Izmir Atatürk High School between 1951-2020 and was examined how different users passing through a physical-static structure carry and change the symbolic meaning over time (Amygdalou, 2015, 80). Beyond the urban memory studies in terms of historical, social, and economic perspectives, the study will make an important contribution to the literature in the context of creating a layer of experience and discovering hidden values of collective memory. On the other hand, from a general perspective, it is significant to reintegrate the urban space, which underwent a traumatic change after the war and fire, into the city and to interpret what this transformation represents in the light of experiences.

2. Historical background

2.1. From Greek Girls' School to Izmir Atatürk High School

According to Augustinos, Izmir became a developing education center in the second half of the 19th century and many schools were founded (as cited by Şenocak, 2003, 111). Due to the cosmopolitan nature of the city, each ethnic group established its own educational system. Compared to the schools of non-Muslims and Levantine groups, the educational opportunities of Turkish and Muslim groups in Izmir were inadequate, but improvements were started after the Tanzimat Period (Kerimoğlu, 2013, 87). Evangeliki School (1733), Greek Girls' School (1840), Saint Joseph French School (1881), Cordelio School (1889), American Girls' College (1887), American Boys' College (1891) were examples to the foreign schools, while *Izmir Rüştüyesi* (1859), *Izmir Mekteb-i İdadisi* (*Izmir Mekteb-i Sultanisi*) (1888) and *Hamidiye Mekteb-i Sanayii* (1891) were the examples for Turkish-Muslim institutions that started education in Izmir in this period (Şenocak, 2003, 11-125). Today, it is seen that some of these examples continue their education in their existing structures or by moving to another structure, some of them are closed and their buildings are used for different functions or school buildings are demolished and erased from the urban space. Izmir Atatürk High School (formerly *Izmir Mekteb-i Sultanisi*) is one of the educational buildings that have survived to the present day by using the building of the Greek Girls' School.

Izmir Mekteb-i İdadisi (Izmir Boys' High School, now Izmir Atatürk High

School), one of the first schools of Turkish-Muslim groups in Izmir, was opened in 1888 as a 5-year primary school in the building where the old Izmir Courthouse is located, then it was closed in 1919 due to the Greek occupation (Tinal, 2008, 129). The school building was converted into a courthouse during the Greek occupation and became unusable following a fire in 1922¹. A large stone building saved from the fire was accepted as suitable for use to continue education (Seğmen, n.d.). Thus, the school was renamed as Izmir Boys' High School after the war and moved to its "new" structure in the 1922-1923 academic year (Tinal, 2008, 130).

The stone building that physically hosted the high school after 1922 was the Greek Girls' School. Greek Girls' School (*Kentrikon Parthenagogeion*) was opened in 1840 with the help of Hagia Fotini Church and used the physical facilities of the church (Papachrysou, n.d.). Because of the increased number of students in 1908, the Girls' School was unable to meet its physical needs, so it searched for a building in the city center to be used permanently (Papachrysou, n.d.). According to this need, the building designed by the Athenian architect P. Karathanasopoulos was built between 1909-1912 at current location (Amygdalou, 2015, 91; Vassiadis, 2007) (Figure 2).

From an architectural point of view, the Greek Girls' School building was designed in Greek Revivalist style defined by Amygdalou (2015, 92) as an architectural style that was frequently used (especially on educational buildings) in the process of Greek na-



Figure 2. Left: Greek Girls' School and its students (Izmir Provincial Education History Museum (İzmir İl Eğitim Tarihi Müzesi) Archive), Right: Main entrance of the school ([Photograph of Ahmet Gürel], n.d.).

tion-identity construction in the last period of the Ottoman Empire. The school building was located between similar neighbors and became one of the institutions expected to lead the Greek nation aimed for independence by educating Greek students (Şenocak, 2003, 112). In addition to the ideological meaning it reflects, the building presents a monumental effect with the gallery space carried by the columns in the entrance hall. With these features, this hall is described as a “columned courtyard that continues to exist like an ancient temple” and refers to Ancient Greek architecture (Papachrysou, n.d.).

Even though the school building survived the 1922 Izmir Great Fire, it was faced with a pile of debris. Then, the school was closed after the Turkish army regained Izmir. As Uçman Altınışık (2012, 140) states, any architectural product cannot remain the same without transforming within the ambiguous boundaries of time-space relationships, and physical spaces conceived in time can have different meanings. At this point, it is possible to say that the school building, which is alienated from its environment, needs a new meaning to exist. This meaning, which will recreate the building ideologically, has been the Turkish nation-identity construction. The school became one of the spatial responses of

another national claim after 1922. After the liberation of Izmir from the Greek occupation, the school was transferred to Izmir Boys' High School² to educate the modern Turkish youth of the period. Hence, the building, whose educational function was preserved, became a Turkish school within the Greek Revivalist style (Figure 3).

In this period, the problem of the relation of the school with the urban space and with the gap and ruins, could not be solved. Except for a small garden at the back, the open space arrangement of the school was severely damaged, and the only way in and out was through the front door, which was surrounded by debris (İ. Tutum, personal interview, January 13, 2021).

The relation between Izmir Atatürk High School and the built environment was ensured in 1936 when Behçet Uz (one of the graduates of Izmir Atatürk High School) put the idea of Kültürpark into practice. Urban destruction, which is emphasized once again by A. Gürel's (personal interview, January 13, 2021) sentence when describing his student years, “The foundation remains of old demolished houses were seen from the dormitory of the school”, started to gain a new meaning. Moreover, the planning movements near the park caused the school to build a new context with its nearby environment.

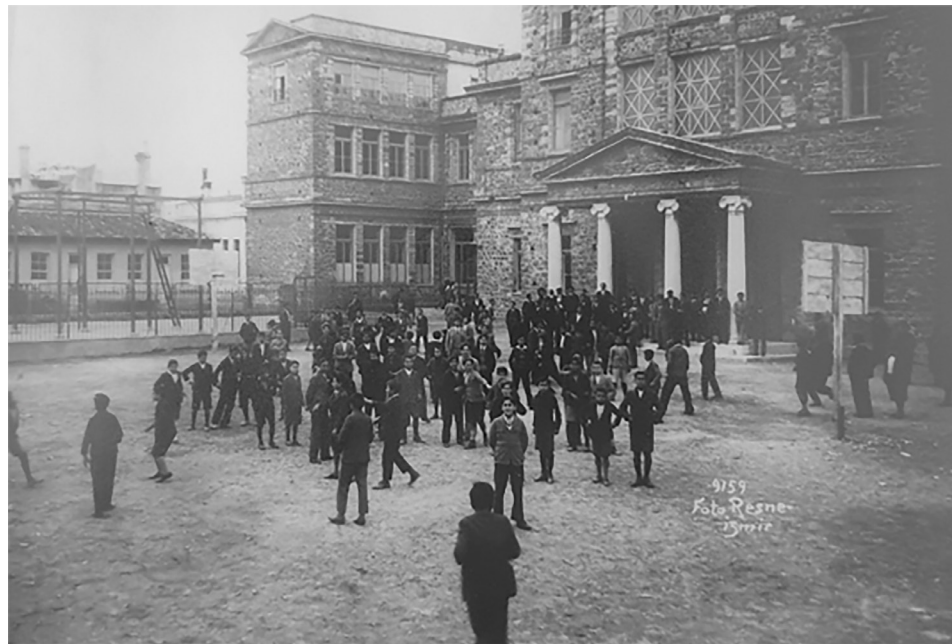


Figure 3. *Izmir Boys' School with students, 1925 (Izmir Provincial Education History Museum (İzmir İl Eğitim Tarihi Müzesi) Archive).*

2.2. Rising of Kültürpark

In the 19th century, the multicultural structure and commercial identity of Izmir where was the one of the most important port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean, was damaged due to the Greek occupation at the end of the 1st World War, the War of Independence, the 1922 Izmir Great Fire, and the population exchanges (Bilsel, 1996, 15). In particular, the fire affected the area where non-Muslim neighborhoods located including I. Kordon and II. Kordon and it erased many traces of the past. Unfortunately, only a small area survived consisted of Izmir St. John's Catholic Church, Hagia Fotini Greek Orthodox Church and today's Izmir Atatürk High School, Namık Kemal High School and Turkish neighborhood (Yılmaz & Yetkin, 2002, 69).

In the Early Republican Period, it became increasingly important to rebuild the destroyed city both physically-spatially and economically-socially. In this context, the first spatial intervention for the reconstruction of the fire area was carried out in 1924 with the Rene-Raymond Danger brothers and Henri Prost. This plan outlined

Izmir's planning process, including decisions regarding the port, industry, transportation, and residential areas, along with proposed green axes. On the other hand, the Izmir Economy Congress and Economy Exhibition, which was held on February 17, 1923, has been organized in the city in order to introduce a fully independent country and economic development plan with domestic products and local values (Sönmezdağ, 2013, 123). The congress was an effective place where developments in agriculture, industry and trade were discussed. After this event, which was successfully completed and was met with great interest, Mustafa Kemal's instruction for Izmir as "Establish fairs and open exhibitions in this city" (Kaya, 2016, 11) marked the beginning of a culture of exhibitions that turned into international fairs in the next few years and is still happening today (Altan, 2015, 166-167). This attempt, which aims to promote a new and modern country in the international arena, was supported by the organisations named Izmir 9th September Exhibition and Izmir 9th September Fair until 1935 (Sönmezdağ, 2013, 123-125).

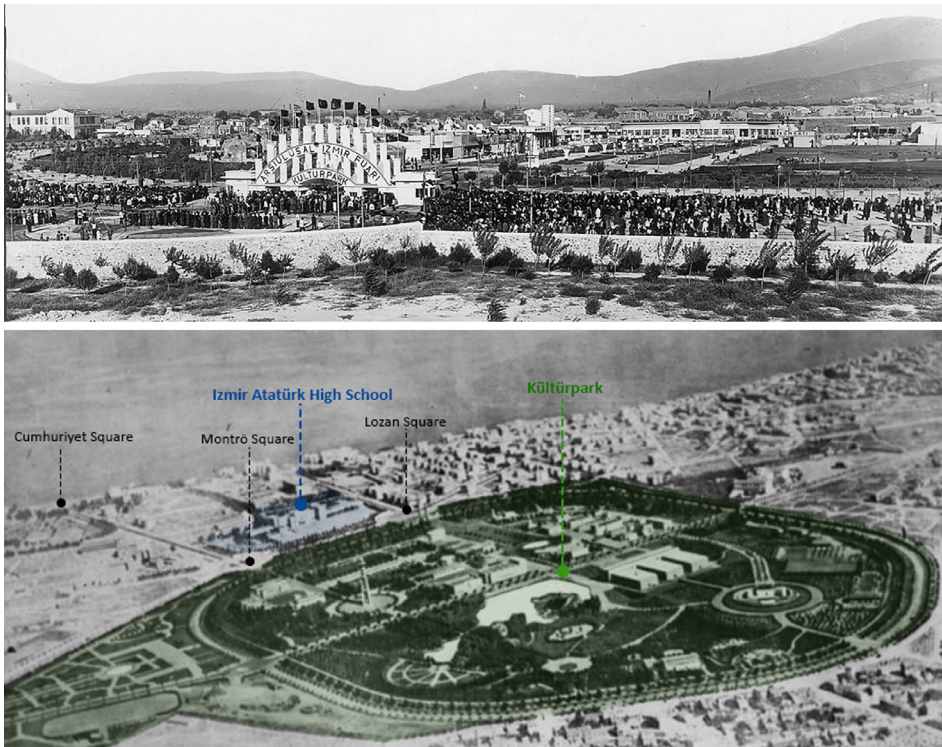


Figure 4. Above: 1936, opening ceremony of Kültürpark (looking at Lozan Gate from Izmir Atatürk High School) (Fotoğraflarla_İZMİR, 2016), Below: Early years of Kültürpark (Mangır, 2021).

In the process, the need for a permanent exhibition space came to the fore to ensure the continuity of the fair. The green axis proposal in the city center by Danger-Prost plan is reserved as a 60,000 square meter park in the fire area. The proposal was carried forward with Suad Yurdkoru's idea of creating a Kültürpark³ (Altan, 2015, 173). The projected green area of 60,000 square meters was increased to 360,000 square meters, and the foundations of the park, which will both host an international fair and have public space facilities for the citizens, were created. By visiting European countries, Behçet Uz collected data about how a city park should be organized and Suad Yurdkoru produced a project report about Kültürpark (Karpas, 2009, 109-111). As a result of the rubble removal works, the surrounding of the area with a wall, the opening of the boulevards connecting the area to the seaside, the landscaping and the completion of the infrastructure works Kültürpark was opened to the public for the first time on September 1, 1936 (Altan, 2015, 174) (Figure 4).

At the project stage, Behçet Uz emphasized that Kültürpark will be a public university where various playgrounds, summer and winter swimming pools, parachute tower, amphitheater, Aegean Products Museum, Health Museum, Atatürk Revolution Museum, and an attractive urban space where everyone can go (Feyzioğlu, 2011). In the first years of the establishment of Kültürpark, places such as tea gardens, amusement park, zoo, children's playgrounds, casinos/clubs, tennis club, and botanical garden (Bozdoğan, 2015, 95) were arranged in the landscape. In this way, Kültürpark has become an important destination in the daily life of the citizens with its opportunities. Hosting the İzmir International Fair by Kültürpark reflected İzmir's cosmopolitan identity before 1922 and created a shared platform for following and incorporating global economy and technology.

When İzmir was destroyed by fire, the Ottoman traces were erased, and the chance to build a modern city was created (Bugatti, 2010, 55). Kültürpark, built on the debris field, has become

one of the important urban spaces that will form the new memory of the young Republic by rising on the traces of the past. In this sense, Kültürpark has had an important place in the urban memory and has become a "multi-layered memory place" with the transformations it has experienced since 1936 (Kayın, 2015, 35). When looking at this multi-layered memory space, it is seen that the park has different spatial-experiential qualities that reflect the changing economic, political, and socio-cultural past of the country. Until the 1950s, Kültürpark had hosted spaces built in a modern style and an urban life suitable for the ideal of modern life (Altan, 2015, 181). The park has also become a face of İzmir and Turkey, opening to the world, and making an impression on the international scene. Visiting the foreign pavilions and following new developments has become an event that is awaited every year (Durgun, 2015, 138). From the 1950s to the 1980s, Kültürpark had stood out with its entertainment facilities of Kültürpark became important as well as the educational mission brought by the ideology of modernization (Kaya, 2016, 33-38). With the establishment of casino and disco culture in urban life, Kültürpark has become the place of a new practice that did not exist before for the citizens of the city. In the 1980s, Kültürpark provided entertainment to the citizens with its fair organization, zoo, amusement park, casinos/clubs, and tea gardens (Kaya, 2016, 39). After the International İzmir Fair Organization and Architectural Project competition opened in 1990 and the arrangements made in the area until 2000s, such as the construction of New Fair Buildings (hangarlar) and the demolition of some tea gardens and casinos, changed the spatial organization of the park (Karpas, 2009, 171-175, Durmaz Drinkwater & Can, 2015, 343). During the 2000s, this situation continued with the loss of functions such as the transfer of the zoo to Sasalı, the construction of an underground car park, the damage done to clubs, the establishment of the İzmir International Fair in its new area in Gazimir. These interventions have damaged the ideological, symbolic, and authentic

features of the Kültürpark by removing the original structures and landscape arrangements. In this process, the relationship of the citizens with Kültürpark was damaged, as many of the elements that took a place in the memory of the city no longer belong to the park.

3. The relation between İzmir Atatürk High School and Kültürpark

Architecture as a cultural production, shows itself within different forms and meanings by affecting the social and physical conditions. This production is not a time-independent phenomenon that can be repeated in the same ways everywhere and in every period (Uçman Altınışık, 2012, 131). Space and time are interrelated in a mutual transformation; thus, static-physical space is conceptualized by experiences in time. Having these experiences in mind after a while makes memory a part of daily life, and the physical environment in which we live creates the context for individual and collective memories. (Özaloğlu, 2017, 13).

According to Confino (1997), memory defines the feelings that people build for their past experiences. Similarly, Al (2011, 23) describes memory as the emergence of past moments that gain meaning and are wrapped up. With this feature, memory is associated with the physical and social environment of the individual, as well as is contributed by the individual experiences. Therefore, memory is not just an individual phenomenon, it is shaped as a result of interaction with social life. This situation points to the concept of collective memory. The memory, which exists with the temporal and spatial experiences of the individual in the society, is defined by Halbwachs (2019) as a collective memory. Through this approach, memory has been placed

within social and cultural boundaries by removing it from individual boundaries, creating a research area focused on the relationship between memory and people-built environments. (Mutlu et al., 2019, 43).

Having experienced the space, a person reconstructs it with life and makes it part of his/her own memory by moving it beyond being temporal (Kaymaz Koca & Hale, 2017), as well as constructing an active time by connecting to the space throughout the experience (Merleau-Ponty, 2005). As a result of this production, space becomes a suitable environment for the preservation of memories, the formation of memory and the representation of collective thought (Özaloğlu, 2017).

In short, spaces carry the fragments of social events and common experiences gathered in the memories (Mutlu et al., 2019), the built environment records our experiences in our minds and provides the finding a physical correspondence of our memories. The data of collective memory is also transforming with the changes in the urban space, and people forming the collective memory changes over time according to the individual's role and position in society. Similarly, it is impossible to consider a memory apart from its temporal and spatial context when studying the relationship between İzmir Atatürk High School and Kültürpark (Figure 5). It is important to discover the hidden values of the memory in this relation, in other words, to reach the collective memory. At this point, hidden memory between İzmir Atatürk High School and Kültürpark was examined in the context of the question of Amygdalou (2015, 80), "how does the symbolic meaning change while the built forms disappear, reappear or remain the same in the liv-



Figure 5. From left to right: Between 1912-1922, Greek Girls' School and non-Muslim neighborhood; 1922 Great İzmir Fire, unused school and fire debris; Between 1922-1936, İzmir Atatürk High School disconnected with the city; 1936, Location of Kültürpark; From 1936 to today, relation between the school and the park (The figures prepared by the authors).

ing socio-political context that consist of different audiences?”, with the help of collective memory reading. The symbols of Kültürpark that remain in the memories of users are revealed, and the hidden memory is reached through the experience of Kültürpark.

3.1. Kültürpark in the memory of İzmir Atatürk High School Students

The time-space shift created by the 1922 İzmir Great Fire on urban memory triggered the spatial formations of İzmir Atatürk High School and Kültürpark. This relationship, the foundations of which were founded by such an external force, created a dynamic experience environment within a rigid physical unity. In this part of the study, the rewriting of İzmir Atatürk High School-Kültürpark neighborhood by users in different periods, in other words layers of the collective memory will be made visible. For this purpose, the survey method was used as a data collection tool. The survey was conducted digitally with the graduates of İzmir Atatürk High School. Here, it was aimed that this defined user group, which is necessarily associated with Kültürpark every day, would reveal the changing spatial, social, cultural, and physical characteristics of the park. (Figure 6)

The questionnaire was prepared under these three headings: Kültürpark-city relationship, Kültürpark-user relationship, and Kültürpark-memory relationship. The introduction part of the questionnaire form consists of information such as graduation year,

duration of education at school, and studentship type (stayed at dormitory/stayed at family house) to determine the participant's profile. The first part of the questionnaire seeks to answer the question of how Kültürpark is involved in the daily life of students in the urban context. The second part tries to reveal which actions are associated with Kültürpark, how it is used and perceived by the students. The last section focuses on finding out what is remembered about Kültürpark. As a result, it aims to determine the place of Kültürpark within the urban environment, the changing functions of Kültürpark, and how these changes affect the user, to obtain information about the memorable Kültürpark, and to monitor how Kültürpark is changing in terms of its physical and social environment.

The questionnaire contains multiple-choice, multiple-selection and open-ended questions. Rather than an analytical analysis with numerical values, the data collected through these mixed questions was used for a qualitative analysis to reach social dimension. The questions asked in all three headings were divided into subgroups, then combined according to similarity of answers. The grouping is organised as “Kültürpark activities” and “Kültürpark gates” in Kültürpark-city relationship scale, “Kültürpark spaces” and “Symbols of Kültürpark” in Kültürpark-user scale, “Meaning of Kültürpark”, “Feelings in Kültürpark” and “Kültürpark memories” in Kültürpark-memory scale (Table 1).



Figure 6. A view from Kültürpark to today's Lozan Gate and İzmir Atatürk High School (Kaya, 2016).

Table 1. Questionnaire and grouping of the questions.

GROUPING	QUESTIONS	ANSWER TYPE
CITY	Kültürpark activities	Where would you spend your free time after school?
		Where would you take your guests from different cities first?
		How often did you go to Kültürpark?
		How long would you spend in Kültürpark?
		What were the purposes of going to Kültürpark?
	Kültürpark gates	Which gate did you use when entering Kültürpark?
		Which gate did you use when leaving Kültürpark?
USER	Kültürpark spaces	For you, what are the structures/spaces that symbolize Kültürpark?
		Where would you spend most of your time in Kültürpark?
		If the pavilions, which one?
		If the casinos/clubs, which one?
		If the tea gardens, which one?
	Symbols of Kültürpark	What would you show first when you take your guests to Kültürpark?
		What comes to mind first when you think of Kültürpark?
MEMORY		Is there a subject that you identify with Kültürpark?
	Meaning of Kültürpark	What did Kültürpark mean to you?
	Feelings in Kültürpark	How did you feel at Kültürpark?
	Kültürpark memories	Tell us which word comes to mind first when you think of Kültürpark.
		Tell us which place comes to mind first when you think of Kültürpark.
		Tell us which subject comes to mind first when you think of Kültürpark.

3.2. Findings and discussion

The survey was conducted with the participation of 302 Izmir Atatürk High School graduates, whose age range was between 19 and 81. According to the data collected from the introduction part of the questionnaire, between the participants, 2 in 1951-1960 (the oldest graduates who were reached during the survey), 11 in 1961-1970, 59 in 1971- 1980, 98 in 1981-1990, 47 in 1991- 2000, 33 in 2001-2010, 52 in 2011-2020 graduated from the school. 162 people said 3 years, 120 people said 4 years, 11 people said 5 years, 5 people said 2 years, 2 people said 1 year and more than five years as answer to the question of the duration of education at the school. Lastly, 57 people reported that they stayed at the school's dormitory, while 245 people reported that they stayed at family house during their education. At this point, it is possible to say that the diversity of the participant profile will make it easier to reach different layers of Kültürpark. In line with these data, the participants were divided into three groups according to graduation date as "Period 1" 1951-1980, "Period 2" 1981-2000 and "Period 3" 2001-2020. This periodization is made through the reflection of the political and socio-economic changes in the country and the city on the spatial experiences of Kültürpark in the temporal context.

Users between 1951-1980 are those who can relate to the founding ideology of Kültürpark and experience modern practices. The users between 1981-2000, who witnessed the changes in Turkey because of the 1980 coup, experienced Kültürpark with the effect of relief, entertainment practices and new consumption habits. In addition, they strived to follow the technological developments in the world and adapted to the era. Finally, users between 2001-2020 differ from other periods both in terms of accessing information and in daily life practices. Benefiting from the opportunities of the digital age, this group has many alternative socialization tools and alternative spaces to Kültürpark. From this point of perspective, it is also possible to say that these periods match the historical thresholds of Kültürpark⁴.

To reach the collective memory of these periods, the first three answers given to the classified question groups were evaluated. It is accepted that the results will not only reveal the historical layers of Kültürpark but will also create an important main source for interpreting the value of the park on both the city and country scales.

While evaluating the results, primarily, the first part, which explores the way Kültürpark accompanies daily life in the urban context, is focused on. First, when the results of the usage

rate of Kültürpark are compared, it has been determined that the rate of preferring the park for urban activities has decreased since 1951. While Period 1 and Period 2 visited Kültürpark almost every week, it is seen that this rate changed to once a year in Period 3. Similarly, although there was a majority from Periods 1 and 2 stating that they spent 3-4 hours a day in Kültürpark, this time was limited to 1-2 hours a day in Period 3. Therefore, it was concluded that the habit of going to Kültürpark was abandoned with the emergence of various urban public spaces over time. Afterwards, in order to question the location of the park in the urban space, the gates were investigated. The results are listed as Lozan Gate, Montrö Gate and 9 Eylül Gate according to frequency of use. The reasons for this accumulation are two important points, including the entrance to İzmir Atatürk High School from Lozan Square, where the Lozan Gate opens, and the location of another boundary on Montrö Square, where the Montrö gate opens. At the same time, the connection of the Lozan Gate with Vasıf Çınar Boulevard, the Montrö Gate with Şehit Nevres Boulevard, and 9 September Gate with Basmane Train Station, made these gates more visible. Moreover, it is possible to say that the Cumhuriyet Gate and the 26 Augustos Gate did not find a place in

the results due to being service doors of the park (Figure 7).

In the second part of the questionnaire, firstly, the Kültürpark-user relationship was examined. It was determined that the actions of “spending time with friends”, “going to the amusement park”, “visiting the pavilions”, “watching concerts-shows” became prominent. Then, the places and symbols of Kültürpark associated with these actions were analyzed. At this point, it was determined that Period 1 and Period 2 focused on the “Parachute Tower” and “Pavilions”. The Parachute Tower described as “İzmir’s new aviation monument” in *Arkitekt Journal* (Tümay et al., 1938, 40) took its place in Kültürpark due to the importance given to Turkish Aeronautical Association by the Republic administration (Kayın, 2015, 50) (Figure 8a). As can be understood from the results, the act of flying and Parachute Tower, which are important symbols of Republican ideology, have received a great deal of attention from the public because of their architectural and innovative qualities. Also, the tower has been a part of the memories of young people who have not experienced flying before and have tried it for the first time with this tower. On the other hand, when air travel became widespread in Period 3, the Parachute Tower was not used as flying was not a new practice. Thus, it could not



Figure 7. Gates of Kültürpark (The aerial photo is taken from Google Earth and has been edited by authors).

take a place in the collective memory of this period. The Parachute Tower, which has an important place in memory, has become a cultural heritage that needs to be preserved for today. As well as welcoming and following pavilions built to keep up with innovations in fields such as industry, trade, art, and fashion in the international arena, visitors also expressed a great deal of interest in the developments at the national level, which was also supported by the survey results (Figure 8b). During the second half of the 20th century, these temporary structures became a permanent part of the collective memory. For instance, USA and USSR pavilions, which “turned the Izmir International Fair into an arena in which the opposing ideologies of the Cold War clashed (Gönlügür, 2015, 101)” drew great attention. Apart from that, Pakistan Pavilion with its eclectic elements and orientalist style, was distinguished from other buildings in Kültürpark and excited the citizens (Kayın, 2015, 48), so as one of the rare examples of pavilions that have survived to the present day, it has remained in the memory of all three periods. Unlike Period 1 and

Period 2, which follow the worldwide technological developments through pavilions, Period 3 accesses information much more easily with the possibilities of the internet age. Therefore, it has been determined that the pavilions for Period 3 have no symbolic value but are only seen as an architectural structure.

When Kültürpark is evaluated in the context of entertainment, it is possible to say that the casino culture and famous artists remain in the memories for Period 2 (Figure 8c). The casinos/clubs, which are seen as a culturally important part of modern life, have also been embraced by the citizens and their experience has almost turned into a ritual. Therefore, it has been clearly seen from the survey results that the casinos are one of the haunts of modern Izmir citizens (M. Gürel, 2015), especially the Göl Casino and the Ada Casino.

On the other hand, it is clearly seen that the modern places of its time, such as country pavilions, casinos, or the Parachute Tower, did not have the same value for Period 3. The results demonstrate that the amusement park, which

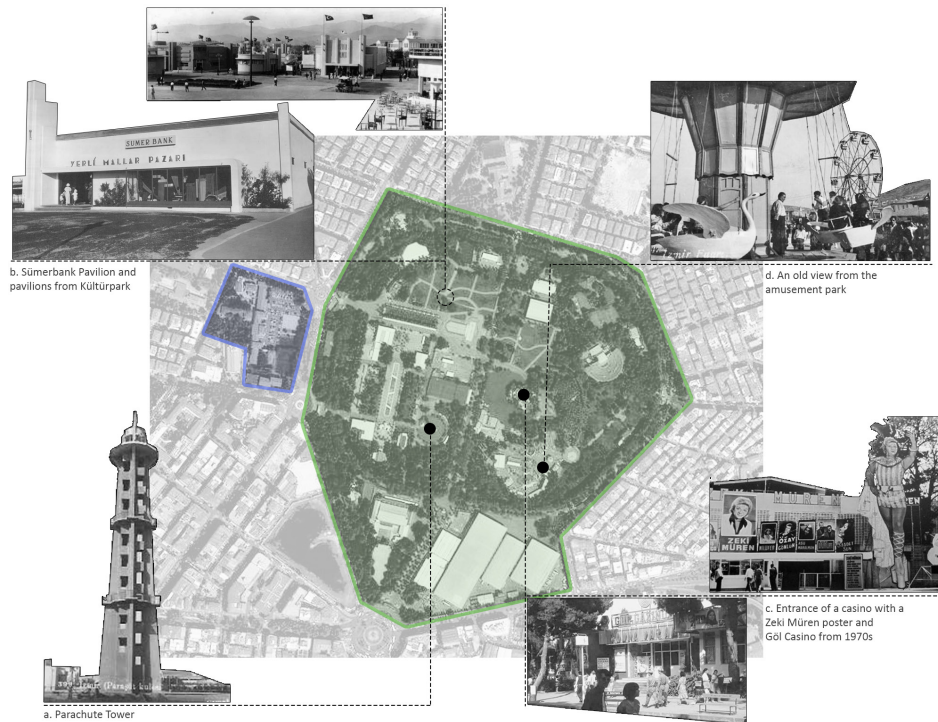


Figure 8. a. Parachute Tower (Tümay et al., 1938), b. Sümerbank Pavilion (APİKAM Archive) and pavilions from Kültürpark (A. Gürel, 2019, 14) c. Entrance of a casino with a Zeki Müren poster (Akay, 2017) and Göl Casino from 1970s (Eski İzmir, 2017), d. An old view from the amusement park (Akçura, 2017, 20). (The aerial photo is taken from Google Earth and has been edited by authors).

is a different way of having fun, is one of the most important elements for Period 3 (Figure 8d). In addition, seeing Lozan and Montrö Gates as the symbols of Kültürpark, unlike the previous periods, shows that Period 3 perceived the boundaries rather than park's public facilities and found interest outside rather than the inside.

Finally, the results of the Kültürpark-memory section were examined. First of all, the meanings of Kültürpark took a place in the memories, and were found out as “green space”, “fair” and “fresh air” for all three periods. At this point, having green space and hosting international fairs both come to the fore at similar rates. Continuity of public features offered within the scope of the fair is equally important as preserving a green area that breathes in the city for the user. Similarly, happiness, peace and comfort are expressions that reflect the common feelings about Kültürpark of the three periods. In addition, the fact that there are people who feel “insecure” in Kültürpark among the Period 3, once again emphasizes the qualities lost over time

and the park's changing role in daily life for the citizens.

When focusing on the Kültürpark memories, it is possible to find the unique Kültürpark meaning of each period. Here, mini golf came to the fore as one of the important Kültürpark memories of Period 1. This result was also an indication that the youth of the period were interested in new, modern, and different activities. Furthermore, Period 1 was the group that spent the most time in tea gardens such as Akasyalar and Menekşe indicated as memory places. Kaskatlı Havuz, which was often used as a drawing figure in the art class or was used as a background of souvenir photographs taken (İ. Tutum, personal interview, January 13, 2021), is also an important memory element for Period 1. Kaskatlı Havuz (Figure 9a), an example of the original landscaping practices applied with “geometrically shaped pools with fountains in the middle, neat flower beds, regularly planted trees (Bozdoğan, 2015, 94)” in the Republican Period, created a visual richness for the public and as an educational tool. In addition

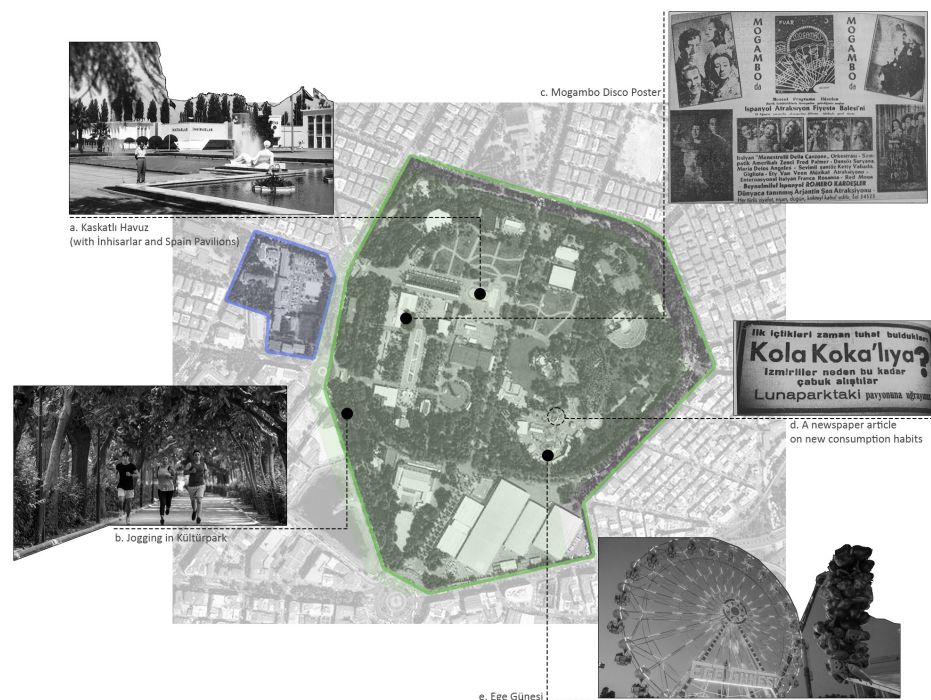


Figure 9. a. Kaskatlı Havuz (with Inhisarlar and Spain Pavilions) (Akay, 2017), b. Jogging in Kültürpark (<https://www.kulturparkizmir.org/tr/Spor/15/79>) c. Mogambo Disco Poster (Yeni Asır, 1956 as cited by M. Gürel, 2015), d. A newspaper article on new consumption habits (Yeni Asır, 1955 as cited by Durgun, 2015) e. Ege Güneşi (Daştan, 2022) (The aerial photo is taken from Google Earth and has been edited by authors).

values this platform represents locally and globally. Also, these findings became a mirror on which Kültürpark's nearly 84-years-old story is reflected (Figure 10). Looking at this mirror, Kültürpark between 1950-2000 as described by Period 1 and Period 2; has regained the cosmopolitan city identity that Izmir lost; has undertaken the task of not only seeing and learning from the world, but also showing and proving oneself; has been a meeting platform for the modern youth of the modern country; has allowed western entertainment practices with discos; has provided a teenager with experiences beyond time with parachute tower; has supported the country's goal of raising healthy young generations by facilitating sports activities; has enabled its users to have modern practices such as playing mini golf like their peers around the world; brochures collected from the pavilions have brought many young people to the global information provided by television and the internet today; has allowed new consumption opportunities triggered by liberal economic policies with the help of casino culture and discos, and introduced young people to global brands; has made it possible for young people to reach many artists and performance art activities; created the stage for the relaxation and entertainment practices of the society after the martial law of 1980s. On the other hand, between 2001-2020 defined by Period 3, Kültürpark has been perceived not as a socializing place but as an urban void; has become a place that feels unsafe in daily life; has fallen behind many public spaces within the urban space; mostly has been visited during special occasions such as Book Fairs or concerts; and has named not as Kültürpark but according to the functions in it, such as "going to the amusement park".

4. Conclusion

The great fire of 1922 ruptured urban memory in Izmir, and the neighborhood of Atatürk High School-Kültürpark, which was shaped on that break, has hosted a dynamic network of spatial experiences and relationships. As Tanju's (2005) said that production

continues as long as life lasts, in a sense, life is exactly this production, the relationship between Izmir Atatürk High School and Kültürpark creates a collective memory by constantly being produced with user practices. The study on the place, meaning, and layers of Kültürpark in social life, based on the notion that space produces new syntheses by deriving from context and constructing new relationships over time (Kaymaz Koca & Hale, 2017, 489). The purpose of this study is to open a new door to all the discussions about Kültürpark in recent years through the perspectives of the users at Izmir Atatürk High School.

Socio-cultural practices (Tanju, 2005) as productions added later to nature are produced repeatedly with historical differences, continuities or breaks, change depending on time and rewrite the space. Thus, the space-time relationship, as an effective concept in giving meaning of social practices, is important for explaining the changes, crises and revolutions experienced by the society (Giddens, 1996, Kern, 1983; Mumford, 1934; Simpson, 1995 as cited by Uçman Altınışık, 2012, 9). At this point, the research on the collective memory of Kültürpark allowed us to explore the meanings of the new historical-spatial context written on the space-time shift created by destructive factors such as fire, war, and population exchange. Every clue that was discovered in this context has proved the importance of the park in terms of urban history once again. Kültürpark whose future is often discussed, again revealed its place in the urban memory by making the user experience visible.

Kültürpark has been the leading actor and venue of all political, economic, and social changes since the day it was built. Until the 1980s, as almost the only public open space in the city, it became the socializing place of the citizens and witnessed many experiences. The original spatial features of the Kültürpark made this experience unique. However, the developments experienced in the 2000s greatly affected the place of Kültürpark in daily life. Since the 1990s, shopping centers have provided citizens with a variety of activity opportunities and a new platform for

meeting (Sayar & Süer, 2002). Aside from that, the organisation of Alsancak Kordon as a green area in 2000 has generated a great deal of publicity in Izmir and people have accepted this area as a gathering, meeting, and recreational area. Over time, these urban facilities have damaged the popularity of Kültürpark, which was the only equivalent of spending time in the public space for citizens until the 2000s. Parallel to this, it can be observed that the park is no longer preferred by the users caused by developments such as the reorganization of Kültürpark and the loss of its functions such as the casino, tea garden, Zoo, Izmir International Fair. Over the years, the feeling of spending time in Kültürpark has started to be described as unsafe, indicating that the park has moved away from being a socializing place like in previous years and has become desolate. At the same time, the hope of the past to be modern and to catch up with the age has been lost by the speed of accessing the information provided by digitalization. By changing daily practices and interventions towards the park, Kültürpark has lost many meanings, so that it has become something quite different from what it was in the past. Despite these changes, the recent Covid-19 pandemic has once again highlighted the importance of using Kültürpark as the largest open-green space in the city (Gülber, 2022, 59).

As a result, the article demonstrates that the students at Izmir Atatürk High School have carried different Kültürparks shaped in their memories by witnessing the history of the park, and Kültürpark has become a part of the collective memory by going beyond its temporal context with user experience. Thus, this study opens a new discussion topic for a collective memory reading process with the park's past and daily users. As a result, the relationship between Izmir Atatürk High School and Kültürpark makes it possible to interpret the park's significance in the city's memory, to explore its recent past, and to read the park's layers of history.

Endnotes

¹ In line with the information of Izmir Governor Izzet Bey on May 14, 1919,

that the Greeks would land soldiers in Izmir, the intellectuals of Izmir met at the Corps Headquarters, Sarı Kışla and Provincial Hall in Konak Square to decide the steps to be taken against the occupation. Later, upon the invitation of Mustafa Necati, one of the teachers of *Izmir Mekteb-i Sultanisi*, they used the school building as a meeting place (Tinal, 2008, 24). However, when the occupation began on the morning of May 15, 1919, the Greek Flag was raised in *Izmir Mekteb-i Sultanisi* like in other public buildings (Turan, 1992, 142, as cited by Tinal, 2008, 24). After the occupation forces left Izmir, the building was used as a courthouse by the Turkish government (Seğmen, n.d.). The Courthouse, the Government House and the building were badly damaged by the fire that broke out on July 31, 1970, and the building was demolished a few years later.

² The building, which was put into use by Izmir Boys' School, was repaired by Behçet Uz and made suitable for education (A. Gürel & İ. Tutum, personal interview, January 13, 2021). It was renamed Izmir Atatürk High School in 1942 and continued its education life in the campus where this building is located (Tinal, 2008, 131).

³ Suad Yurdkoru, who was sent to Moscow as the head of the group for a sports competition, was very impressed by the Maksim Gorki Park and the public opportunities it offered to the citizens during the city tour. During his stay in Moscow, he received information about the projects of the park and took photographs. When he returned to Izmir, he told Behçet Uz, "This park suits us." He introduced Gorky Park and put forward the idea of Kültürpark. (Maruflu, 2019, 31)

⁴ Kayın (2015), in the article titled "Representations of Remembering and Forgetting: Izmir International Fair and Culture Park's Memory Layers", categorizes the layers of Kültürpark in four topics; from the 1940s to the 1950s (an ideal stage for the modernization of the Republic), from the 1950s to the 1980s (frayed out ideal, settled habit), from the 1980s to the 2000s (Popular culture and "consumer" consumption) and from the 2000s to the present (Searches for representation of the past and build of the future).

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