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# REFLECTIONS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN TURKEY URBAN PARKS AND GREEN AREAS: İSTANBUL, TEKİRDAĞ, KIRKLARELİ EXAMPLES

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**ABSTRACT**

In our country, a large number of researches were done on the sufficiency of urban open-green areas, their distribution within the city, their facilities, and user demands etc., thus necessary precautions were determined in line with the demand. However, there is not enough research presenting; how "urban green area" concept is perceived by the citizens, what it means, and accordingly, what the people's attitudes are and how they benefit. The aim of this study is to determine the citizens' perception of urban green areas and their attitudes and recreational tendencies in terms of usage of these parks, through İstanbul, Tekirdag, and Kırklareli examples in Turkey. In İstanbul, a metropolis which reflects the mosaic of Turkey, districts with different demographic structures are also included in the research. In this context, one on one surveys are conducted with the citizens living in these provinces and the results are evaluated comparatively. The research findings contribute the determination of the social culture on "green areas" in Turkey, based on these three provinces different from each other.

**Keywords:** Culture, Landscape design, Turkey, Urban parks.

## *TÜRKİYE'DEKİ KENT PARKLARI VE YEŞİL ALANLARA KÜLTÜREL FARKLILIKLARIN YANSIMALARI: İSTANBUL, TEKİRDAĞ, KIRKLARELİ ÖRNEĞİ*

**ÖZET**

*Ülkemizde, kentsel açık ve yeşil alanların yeterliliği, kent içindeki dağılımları, ihtiva ettiği donatı elemanları, kullanıcı talepleri vb. konularında çok sayıda araştırma yapılmış, kullanıcı talepleri doğrultusunda alınması gereken önlemler belirlenmiştir. Ancak kentsel yeşil alan kavramının kentlilerce nasıl algılandığını, ne anlam ifade ettiğini ve buna bağlı olarak halkın tutumunu ve kullanım biçimini ortaya koyan yeterli sayıda araştırma yapılmamıştır. Bu çalışmada, İstanbul, Tekirdağ ve Kırklareli örneklerinde; kentlerde yaşayan halkın kentsel yeşil alan algısı ve bu parkların kullanımına yönelik tutumunu ve rekreasyonel eğilimlerini belirlemek amaçlanmıştır. Türkiye'nin mozaik yapısını yansıtan İstanbul metropolünde, demografik yapısı farklı ilçeler de araştırmaya dahil edilmiştir. Bu kapsamda, bu illerde yaşayan kent halkı ile birebir anket çalışması yapılmış, sonuçlar karşılaştırmalı olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırma bulguları, üç farklı yapıdaki kent örneğinden yola çıkılarak, toplumsal yeşil alan kültürümüzün belirlenmesine de katkı sağlamaktadır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler*:*** *Kültür, Peyzaj tasarım, Türkiye, Kent parkları.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

An urban area is a location characterized by high human population density and vast human-built features in comparison to the areas surrounding it. Urbanization, commonly defined as the migration of people from rural to urban areas, has been a major trend of the 20th and 21st centuries (United Nations, 2012). Urbanization plays a significant role in reduce open space areas. Actually, changes in green space have been found to be related to urbanization processes. Rapid urbanization has been reported to cause many environmental impacts associated with the reduction of green space (Ren et al., 2011; Zhou and Wang, 2011).

In developed countries, the quality and quantity of open-green areas are accepted as an indicator of life quality. In this context, many developed countries tend to plan and create urban spaces or ecology suitable for human life considering mental and physical needs of people (Gül and Küçük, 2001).

Urban open-green spaces–a term which includes open corridors (street, square, road etc.), parks, public and private gardens and wooded walking areas–constitute a key element of modern urban design (Bennett and Mulongoy, 2006; Lafortezza et al., 2013), providing a focus of interaction between human, environment and biodiversity (Li et al., 2005). These spaces define its landscape, and also serve as an indicator of the environmental quality of the urban ecosystem and the quality of life of its inhabitants. Because of these properties, green spaces are extremely playing a vital role in urban planning, in some cases providing a true and practicable green infrastructure in heavily built-up areas (Antrop, 2004; Lafortezza et al., 2013).

Many studies highlight the environmental and social-cultural benefits related to green space as being important to mitigating urbanization-induced environmental effects and increasing the quality of life of citizens. These specific benefits, mental and physical health benefits (Coley et al., 1997; Maas et al., 2006), economic benefits (Del Saz Salazar and Menéndez, 2007; Jim and Chen, 2006; Tajima, 2003), social benefits (supporting social interaction and communication) (Smith et al., 1997); environmental benefits; climate mitigation potential in the form of cooling through shade provision and moisture (Lafortezza et al., 2009; Spronken-Smith and Oke, 1998), noise reduction (Bolund and Hunhammar, 1999) and air filtration of pollutants (Escobedo and Nowak, 2009; Jim and Chen, 2008), such as trees and plants play a major role in atmospheric $CO_2$ sequestration (Hendrey et al.,1999; Calfapietra et al., 2009) and can also act as noise screens (Van Renterghem and Botteldooren, 2002). These both features have a positive effect on quality of life of local residents (Nowak and Dwyer, 2007; Roy et al., 2012) and access to urban parks and green spaces have been shown to increase physical activity levels in urban populations (Giles-Corti et al., 2005; Sugiyama and Thompson, 2008; Wendel-Vos et al., 2004). Studies have shown that urbanization and the associated loss of urban green space has been linked to poorer health and decreased quality of life for many city inhabitants (Byomkesh et al., 2012; Maller et al., 2008; The World Bank, 2011).

Urban green space is defined as a range of parks, urban agriculture, street trees, lawns, and roof gardens (Breuste et al., 2013). Urban parks and green spaces provide inhabitants with opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, escape, and enjoyment of nature (Townsend and Weerasuriya, 2010; Weber and Anderson, 2010; Wilhelm-Stanis et al., 2010) and to reconnect with the natural environment which is beneficial to people's health and

wellbeing (a number of studies have shown that the presence of parks and gardens or, in general, of green environments near homes and hospitals, contributes to improving the health of sick patients) (Pretty, 2004; Velande et al., 2007; Ward Thompson, 2011), and helps to reduce the stress that increasingly affects city-dwellers (Jackson, 2003).

The presence of green spaces in cities presents many advantages to citizens. Green spaces in a city play an important role in helping residents and visitors to escape temporarily from the crowded streets and buildings: it provides a place to relax (Bishop et al., 2001). Links between health and well-being and the presence of nature in urban green spaces are now well established (Chiesura, 2004; Hartig et al., 2003; Maller et al., 2006; Dean et al., 2011; Sijtsma et al., 2012; Takano et al., 2002; Tzoulas et al., 2007; Serret et al., 2014). At the same time urban parks also provide leisure, cultural activities, shop or work, aesthetic appeal, perceived safety and connectors between neighborhoods (More et al., 1988).

According to (Chiesura, 2004), beside positive effects, parks may play a negative role on people's perceptions. Some surveys have reported residents' feelings of insecurity associated with vandalism, and fear of crime in deserted places (Melbourne Parks, 1983; Grahn, 1985; Bixler and Floyd, 1997). The role of urban parks as provider of social services and their importance for city sustainability has been addressed (Figure 1).

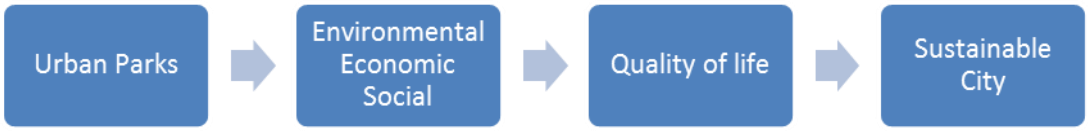


Figure 1. Effects of urban park.

City parks support procuring the communication between the individuals and the community as they are places and symbols which bring people close together. Being together with other people, watching them and being influenced by others provide more positive effects and experiences compared to staying alone and bring along the formation of desired urban identity (Özdemir, 2009). Thus, in our day, open and green areas are characterized as cultural focal points where people from different cultures and habits meet, face-to-face communication is established, socio-cultural sustainability and development is maintained, and social communication is realized. The environmental perspective and value judgement of the citizens from different cultures affect the use of green areas to a great extent. Especially in modern communities, the changes in urban culture and the remodeling of cities affect the perception and the use of open and green areas.

The studies made on open and green areas of the cities are mostly based upon the effects of green spaces on climate, urban ecosystem, participants' urban identity, urban life quality, green area needs and use of the community, and green area-user profile relationship (Baris et al., 2004; Bilgili, 2009; Ozdemir, 2009; Talay et al., 2010, Aksoy and Akpinar, 2011; Polat et al., 2012). However, there is not enough research on the influences of cultural differences on the use of urban parks and green areas. In Özgüner's (2011) study on two city parks in Isparta, it is manifested that, when compared to western culture, as well as distinguishing differences in the attitudes of people towards city parks there are also universal similarities. It is

determined that people live in Turkey use these places mostly for passive recreational activities such as picnic, resting, and relaxing, whereas in western countries, people use for walking, walking the dog, sports, and exercising.

This study aims to present the perspective of the people on green areas, living in İstanbul, Tekirdag, and Kırklareli provinces of Turkey. One on one interviews are made with the citizens, results are evaluated comparatively, and the green area perceptions of people in different habitats are set forth. Besides, in this study it is endeavoured to contribute to the determination of our green area culture in Turkey.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1. Materials

The people who live in certain districts of Tekirdag, Kırklareli, and İstanbul constitute the main resource of the study. Within this context; one on one surveys are conducted with the people living in Tekirdag (central and Çorlu districts), Kırklareli central district, and Bahçelievler, Avcılar, Bayrampaşa, Küçükçekmece, Beylikdüzü, Maltepe, Üsküdar, and Pendik districts of İstanbul.

İstanbul is the city which has held the title of capital city for three great civilizations with a deep culture of love and tolerance. The city of dialogue where religions, languages, and reces have lived side by side in the same streets in peace and harmony. İstanbul has been at the junction of great civilizations because of its geographic and strategic location and has hosted several beliefs and traditions of many people for ages. Being very unique from this angle, the city is a civilization on its own with its history, globally renowned historical artifacts, institutions, culture, and traditions. For this very reason alone, it is a city that had been the target of several sieges and which has been sacked and conquered. Hosting the capital city of Rome, the Byzantines, and the Ottomans for almost 16 centuries, it had become one of the centers of Christianity under Emperor Constantine. After its conquest in 1453 by the Ottomans, it was considered as one of the most important cities of the İslamic World.

During the reigns of these Empires, it was also the administrative center of each of its respective religions. It has held the Patriarchy of Eastern Christianity until today, erecting the first and largest church and monasteries of the Christian World on top of pagan temples İstanbul then assumed its is Islamic character with the decoration of artifacts, mosques, palaces, schools, baths, and other facilities under the Ottomans. The current ruins of churches have been repaired, restored and converted into mosques almost a century after its conquest.

İstanbul had a population of 1,078,000 in 1945. Internal immigration towards İstanbul increased after the 1950's due to its being the fastest growing industrial center. As such, the city's the population reached 1,533,000 in 1955. Its population continued to increase annually at an average rate of 0,040-0,050 percent in the following periods where it reached 7,309,000 in 1990 and 9,199,000.

In the last fifty years, 11 million people have migrated to İstanbul and people from the 81 different provinces of Turkey currently live there. The city has a population of 14.160,467 residents according to the latest count as 2013. İstanbul is a mosaic city where people have migrated from the various provinces of the county.

Tekirdağ is situated on the northern coast of the Sea of Marmara, 135 kilometres (84 miles) west of Istanbul. The picturesque bay of Tekirdağ is enclosed by the great promontory of the mountain which gives its name to the city, Tekir Dağı (ancient Combos), a spur about 2000 ft. that rises into the hilly plateau to the north. Between Tekirdağ and Şarköy is another mountain, Ganos Dağı. Tekirdağ was called Bisanthe or Bysanthe and also Rhaedestus in classical antiquity. The latter name was used till the Byzantine

era, transformed to *Rodosçuk* after it fell to the Ottomans in the 14th century (in western languages usually rendered as Rodosto). After the 18th century it was called *Tekfurdağı*, based on the Turkish word *tekfur*, meaning "Byzantine lord". In time, the name mutated into the Turkish *Tekirdağ*, and this became the official name under the Turkish Republic. The historical name "Rhaedestos" (transcribed also as Raidestos) was continuously used till today in Greek Orthodox ecclesiastical context (e.g. Bishop of Raidestos, Metropolitanate of Heraclia and Raidestos (18th-19th centuryes). In 1905, the city had a population of about 35,000; of whom half were Greeks who were exchanged with Muslims living in Greece under the 1923 agreement for Exchange of Greek Orthodox and Muslim Populations between the two countries. Tekirdağ was for many years a depot for the produce of the Edirne province, but its trade suffered when Alexandroupolis became the terminus of the railway up the river Maritsa.

The Tekirdağ area is the site of many holiday homes, as the city is only two hours drive from Istanbul via a new four-lane highway. The villages of Şarköy, Mürefte and Kumbağ are particularly popular with Turkish tourists. The city population as of 2014 was 906,732. Tekirdağ is strategically significant due to its geographical location and is the transit zone between Anatolia and the Balkans. So to its close proximity to Istanbul, Asian and European tribes passing through the straits have further joined Tekirdağ to Istanbul's history.

Kırklareli is a province in northwestern Turkey on the west coast of the Black Sea. The province neighbors Bulgaria to the north along a 180 kilometers long border. It borders the province of Edirne to the west and the province of Tekirdağ to the south and province of Istanbul to the southeast. Kırklareli is the capital city of the province. The province's and its central city's name means *"the land of the forties"* in Turkish and it may refer either to the forty Ottoman ghazis sent by the Sultan Murad I to conquer the city for the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century or to the forty churches reported to be situated in the region before the Ottoman conquest, as attested by the former name of Kırklareli (*Kırk Kilise* in Turkish; Σαράντα Εκκλησιές, *Saranta Eklesies* in Greek). There is a memorial on a hilltop in Kırklareli city, called "Kırklar Anıtı" (The Memorial of the Forties in Turkish) to honor the Ottoman conquerors. The city population as of 2014 was 343,723.

### 2.2. Methods

In the survey, the proportional sample size formula is used in determining the number of participants (Miran, 2002).

$$n = \frac{Np(1-p)}{(N-1)\sigma^2_{\hat{p}_x} + p(1-p)}$$

In this formula; n=sample size, N=population of the region covered by the research, $\sigma^2_{\hat{p}_x}$ = variance. The maximum sample volume is targeted in this study, therefore p is used as 0.50 in p(1-p) calculation as it is the optimum variable which will give the maximum value. According to TUIK data, the populations respectively are; 874.000 in Tekirdag, 340.000 in Kırklareli, and of the districts of İstanbul; 407.240 in Avcılar, 602.931 in Bahçelievler, 269.677 in Bayrampaşa, 244.760 in Beylikdüzü, 740.090 in Küçükçekmece, 471.059 in Maltepe, 534.566 in Üsküdar, and 646.375 in Pendik. For the N value, the population of each district is considered and the sample volume of each province and each district is calculated as 68 with 90% confidence interval and 5% error margin. Accordingly, 680 people are surveyed living in 10 districts of 3 provinces where the research is conducted. Surveys are evaluated by percentile. For this purpose, the relations between the users in the districts of İstanbul are demonstrated primarily. Then, the requests of the users in Tekirdag, Kırklareli, and İstanbul are compared to each other.

## 3. RESULTS

Among the 680 people surveyed in 8 districts of İstanbul, in Tekirdag (central and Çorlu districts), and in Kırklareli (central district), 345 are male and 335 are female. According to the survey results; the percentage of university graduate participants in İstanbul, Tekirdag, and Kırklareli are 35.84%, 47.05%, and 39.70% respectively. In respect to average age, the 34% of the participants from İstanbul and 35.29% of the participants from Tekirdag are in 20-29 age range, whereas 35.29% of the participants from Kırklareli are in 50-59 age range. It is observed that the majority of the participants of all three provinces live in the city (İstanbul - 95.95%, Tekirdag 89.70%, and Kırklareli 89.70%). (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic profile of participants.

| City | İstanbul | Tekirdağ | Kırklareli | İstanbul | Tekirdağ | Kırklareli |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Demographic variables** | **Frequency** | | | **Percent** | | |
| **Gender** | | | | | | |
| Male | 275 | 35 | 35 | 50.55 | 51.47 | 51.47 |
| Female | 269 | 33 | 33 | 49.44 | 48.52 | 48.52 |
| **Age** | | | | | | |
| Less than 20 | 64 | 11 | 3 | 11.76 | 16.17 | 4.411 |
| 20-29 | 185 | 24 | 15 | 34.00 | 35.29 | 22.05 |
| 30-39 | 132 | 13 | 9 | 24.26 | 19.11 | 13.23 |
| 40-49 | 78 | 9 | 11 | 14.33 | 13.23 | 16.17 |
| 50-59 | 57 | 7 | 24 | 10.47 | 10.29 | 35.29 |
| Over 60 | 28 | 4 | 6 | 5.14 | 5.882 | 8.823 |
| **Education** | | | | | | |
| Uneducated | 14 | 1 | 2 | 2.573 | 1.4705 | 2.941 |
| Primary school | 104 | 9 | 12 | 19.11 | 13.23 | 17.64 |
| High school | 146 | 25 | 22 | 26.83 | 36.76 | 32.35 |
| Bachelor's degree | 195 | 32 | 27 | 35.84 | 47.05 | 39.70 |
| Master' degree | 56 | 1 | 5 | 10.29 | 1.4705 | 7.352 |
| Doctorate degree | 29 | - | - | 5.330 | - | - |
| **Where they live** | | | | | | |
| Urban area | 522 | 61 | 61 | 95.95 | 89.70 | 89.70 |
| Suburban area | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0.183 | 1.4705 | 1.470 |
| Semi-rural area | 18 | 3 | 6 | 3.308 | 4.4117 | 8.823 |
| Rural area | 3 | 3 | - | 0.551 | 4.4117 | - |

In these three provinces, the majority of the participants made out "park and recreation areas" (İstanbul 23.15%, 20.54%, and 26.82%) and "picnic areas" (Istanbul 21.60%, Tekirdag 20.54%, and 21.95%) from the concept of "urban parks and green areas". The percentage of the people who perceives parks and green areas not only as picnic and recreation areas but also as agricultural land, cemetery, coastal band, playfield, square, refuge etc. is 23.57% in Kırklareli and it is the highest among these three provinces. It is 12.76% in İstanbul and 4.32% in Tekirdag. In terms of the contribution that parks and green areas make to the provinces, the percentage of "all" option differs by provinces, which include physical balance, recreation, light and clean air, micro-climate, visual effect, commune with nature etc. Accordingly, this percentage comes out highest in Kırklareli (38.23%), whereas it is 18.50% in Istanbul and 12.33% in Tekirdag. These findings show that the awareness in Kırklareli is higher compared to the other provinces (Table 2).

Table 2. How participants described green areas?

| City | İstanbul | Tekirdağ | Kırklareli | İstanbul | Tekirdağ | Kırklareli |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **How participants described urban park and green areas** | **Frequency** | | | **Percent** | | |
| Park and recreation grounds | 254 | 38 | 33 | 23.15 | 20.54 | 26.82 |
| Coast line | 77 | 17 | 4 | 7.019 | 9.189 | 3.252 |
| Picnic area | 237 | 38 | 27 | 21.60 | 20.54 | 21.95 |
| Agricultural area | 88 | 15 | 3 | 8.021 | 8.108 | 2.439 |
| Sport area | 148 | 31 | 10 | 13.49 | 16.75 | 8.130 |
| Square | 58 | 15 | 9 | 5.287 | 8.108 | 7.317 |
| Decorative greens | 69 | 20 | 7 | 6.289 | 10.81 | 5.691 |
| Cemetery | 26 | 3 | 1 | 2.370 | 1.621 | 0.813 |
| All of these areas | 140 | 8 | 29 | 12.76 | 4.324 | 23.57 |
| **It's contribution** | | | | | | |
| Physical stability | 89 | 15 | 5 | 9.518 | 9.740 | 4.901 |
| Clean air | 173 | 31 | 12 | 18.50 | 20.12 | 11.76 |
| Recreation | 142 | 29 | 15 | 15.18 | 18.83 | 14.70 |
| Microclimate | 35 | 3 | 1 | 3.743 | 1.948 | 0.980 |
| To reduce the impact concretization | 84 | 13 | 3 | 8.983 | 8.441 | 2.941 |
| Integrated with nature | 149 | 22 | 15 | 15.93 | 14.28 | 14.70 |
| Visual effect | 90 | 22 | 12 | 9.625 | 14.28 | 11.76 |
| All of them | 173 | 19 | 39 | 18.50 | 12.33 | 38.23 |

The primary reasons of going to parks and green areas are parallel for the participants in İstanbul, Tekirdag, and Kırklareli. "Resting" is the most preferred choice (İstanbul 23.40%, Tekirdag 24.24%, Kırklareli 29.10%) whereas it is followed by "walking" (İstanbul 19.60%, Tekirdag 21.21%, Kırklareli 18.65%). Among these provinces, Kırklareli is the one where "all" choice is marked most. It is observed that the participants usually go to these places 1-2 times per week (İstanbul 32.76%, Tekirdag 40%, Kırklareli 45.07%). Nonetheless, "going 1-2 times per month" (İstanbul 28.24%, Tekirdag 26.15%, Kırklareli 14.08%) and "going in spare times" options also stand out.

It is clearly seen that the participants prefer parks within walking distance and/or 15-45 minutes away. The percentages are; 80.65% in İstanbul, 95.22% in Tekirdag, and 81.68% in Kırklareli. The majority of the participants in all three provinces prefer weekends for their visits (İstanbul 40.20%, Tekirdag 47.14%, Kırklareli 47.88%). In all three provinces, it is seen that they prefer going parks and green areas on foot (Istanbul 48.09%, Tekirdag 47.14%, and Kırklareli 67.60%) (Table 3).

According to Table 4; the participants stated that they use their own gardens mostly for growing flower, growing plant and fruit, and resting. It is observed that the participants in İstanbul also pay regard to their cars, children, and pets while using their gardens. One of the important findings is that none of the participants in Kırklareli paid regard to their children in using their gardens.

According to Table 5; the primary characteristics which the participants like most in parks and green areas are naturality, clean air, and tranquility. Whereas cleanliness, disordinance, equipment and restrooms are the aspects they complain most. These rates are higher in Tekirdag and Kırklareli compared to İstanbul

Table 3. Reasons for visiting the urban park and green areas.

| City | İstanbul | Tekirdağ | Kırklareli | İstanbul | Tekirdağ | Kırklareli |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Reason for visiting the parks** | **Frequency** | | | **Percent** | | |
| Picnic | 158 | 25 | 25 | 13.06 | 12.62 | 18.65 |
| Children's playground | 117 | 16 | 7 | 9.677 | 8.08 | 5.223 |
| Resting | 283 | 48 | 39 | 23.40 | 24.24 | 29.10 |
| Walking | 237 | 42 | 25 | 19.60 | 21.21 | 18.65 |
| Scenery | 154 | 28 | 11 | 12.73 | 14.14 | 8.208 |
| Social facility | 144 | 29 | 13 | 11.91 | 14.64 | 9.701 |
| Pets | 35 | 2 | 1 | 2.894 | 1.010 | 0.746 |
| All of them | 81 | 8 | 13 | 6.699 | 4.040 | 9.701 |
| **Frequency of use** | | | | | | |
| Everyday | 50 | 6 | 9 | 9.416 | 9,230 | 12.67 |
| 1-2 times a week | 174 | 26 | 32 | 32.76 | 40.00 | 45.07 |
| 1-2 times a month | 150 | 17 | 10 | 28.24 | 26.15 | 14.08 |
| 1-2 times a year | 23 | 1 | 1 | 4.331 | 1,538 | 1.408 |
| In free/spare time | 134 | 15 | 19 | 25.23 | 23.07 | 26.76 |
| **Distance** | | | | | | |
| Distance of walking | 231 | 26 | 21 | 45.11 | 41.26 | 29.57 |
| 15-45 min. | 182 | 34 | 37 | 35.54 | 53.96 | 52.11 |
| 1-2 hour | 80 | 2 | 11 | 15.62 | 3.174 | 15.49 |
| More than 2 hours | 19 | 1 | 2 | 3.710 | 1.587 | 2.816 |
| **Preferred visit time** | | | | | | |
| Weekdays | 35 | 2 | 3 | 6.118 | 3.030 | 4.225 |
| Weekend | 230 | 27 | 34 | 40.20 | 40.90 | 47.88 |
| Evenings | 72 | 8 | 6 | 12.58 | 12.12 | 8.450 |
| In free/spare time | 200 | 27 | 21 | 34.96 | 40.90 | 29.57 |
| Everyday | 35 | 2 | 7 | 6.118 | 3.030 | 9.859 |
| **Come to site by** | | | | | | |
| Walking | 290 | 33 | 48 | 48.09 | 47.14 | 67.60 |
| Bicycle | 42 | 1 | 4 | 6.965 | 1.428 | 5.633 |
| Car | 198 | 28 | 16 | 32.83 | 40.00 | 22.53 |
| Bus | 71 | 8 | 2 | 11.77 | 11.42 | 2.816 |
| Motorcycle | 2 | - | 1 | 0.331 | - | 1.408 |

Table 4. Participants use their garden concept?

| City | İstanbul | Tekirdağ | Kırklareli | İstanbul | Tekirdağ | Kırklareli |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Use of your gardens** | | **Frequency** | | | **Percent** | |
| Growing vegetables and fruits | 89 | 18 | 15 | 15.42 | 22.50 | 25.86 |
| Growing flower, ornamental plants | 138 | 21 | 17 | 23.91 | 26.25 | 29.31 |
| Resting, relaxing | 137 | 18 | 17 | 23.74 | 22.50 | 29.31 |
| Car park | 85 | 6 | 1 | 14.73 | 7.500 | 1.72 |
| For animals | 22 | 3 | 2 | 3.812 | 3.750 | 3.44 |
| For children | 54 | 6 | - | 9.358 | 7.500 | - |
| To visual pleasure | 52 | 8 | 6 | 9.012 | 10.00 | 10.34 |

According to Table 6; the majority of the participants stated that they feel relaxation (30.0% in İstanbul, 37.32% in Tekidağ, and 30.50% in Kırklareli) and tranquility (26.29% in İstanbul, 23.94 in Tekirdag, and 25.42% in Kırklareli) in parks. "Commune with nature" option is selected almost evenly in all three provinces. Among the reasons of finding parks secure; "not being too crowded" is chosen most in Kırklareli (35.29%), "being preferred by everyone" is chosen most in Tekirdag (40.00%), and "families' coming to parks" is chosen most in İstanbul (35.71%). In all the provinces, the top reason of people's not finding parks secure is the stray animals. On the other hand, the lack of security officers also stands out as an important fact.

Table 5. Preferred features related to urban parks and green spaces.

| City | İstanbul | Tekirdağ | Kırklareli | İstanbul | Tekirdağ | Kırklareli |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **What participants like about the parks?** | **Frequency** | | | **Percent** | | |
| Naturalness and fresh air | 89 | 18 | 15 | 15.42 | 22.50 | 25.86 |
| Entertaining, social facilities, children playground | 138 | 21 | 17 | 23.91 | 26.25 | 29.31 |
| Picnic area | 137 | 18 | 17 | 23.74 | 22.50 | 29.31 |
| Resting, | 85 | 6 | 1 | 14.73 | 7.500 | 1.72 |
| Relaxing | 22 | 3 | 2 | 3.812 | 3.750 | 3.44 |
| Religious buildings | 54 | 6 | - | 9.358 | 7.500 | - |
| Other | | | | | | |
| **What participants would miss about the parks?** | | | | | | |
| Cleanliness, regularity | 222 | 43 | 41 | 16.85 | 24.29 | 30.37 |
| Car park | 153 | 13 | 6 | 11.61 | 7.344 | 4.444 |
| Crowded | 211 | 22 | 7 | 16.02 | 12.42 | 5.185 |
| Barbecue smells | 107 | 13 | 9 | 8.124 | 7.344 | 6.666 |
| Sitting, landscape equipment's | 161 | 27 | 27 | 12.22 | 15.25 | 20.00 |
| Toilets | 206 | 29 | 25 | 15.64 | 16.38 | 18.51 |
| Environmental adverse effects | 159 | 23 | 9 | 12.07 | 12.99 | 6.666 |
| Other | 98 | 7 | 11 | 7.441 | 3.954 | 8.148 |

## CONCLUSIONS

In our country, a large number of researches were done on the sufficiency of urban open-green areas, their distribution within the city, their facilities, and user demands etc., thus necessary precautions were determined in line with the demand. However, the previous studies were insufficient in terms of setting out how citizens perceive "parks and green areas", what they mean to them, and accordingly, their attitude and the way they benefit from these places. In recent years**,** much research exists on recreation and park preferences of diverse urban populations. For example, researchers have explored the impact of sociodemographic characteristics upon preferences for park opportunities and environments (Payne et al., 2002). In creating successful urban parks, the voice of the community in decision making process is very important (Shuib et al., 2015) Much findings seem to suggest that landscape preference and perception vary from culture to culture (Yu, 1995). In this study, it is aimed to determine how people perceive parks and green areas and their attitudes toward these places, through Tekirdag, Kırklareli, and İstanbul examples. With its cultural diversity İstanbul reflects the mosaic structure of Turkey best. In this context, one on one interviews are made with the citizens, results are evaluated comparatively, and the green area perceptions of people in different habitats are set forth. According to the evaluation results; for the people living in these provinces; parks and gardens, recreation areas, picnic areas and playfields are the ones which come to mind first. Although it is not sufficient, it is observed that people have some awareness that parks and green areas also include coastal bands, agricultural lands, squares, refuges, cemeteries, decorative greenery etc. This may be a result of the majority of the participants' being university and college graduates. It is observed that the participants are aware of the contributions that parks and green areas make to the cities, such as; physical balance, clean air and light, micro climate, recreation, visual effects, moderating the effect of concrete structures. In terms of positive impacts on clean air, especially the ratios in Tekirdag and Istanbul are higher compared to Kırklareli. This may be a result of the air pollution in these provinces. The top reasons of people's visiting parks and green areas are; resting, relaxation, entertainment, clean air, and walking. The ratio of the "picnic" choice is lower compared to the others. The citizens mostly visit these places a couple of times per week and they prefer

closer places within 15-45 minutes walking distance, without traffic, and the ones preferred by families. They prefer going on foot than going by car. Naturality, clean air, water, recreation and sitting areas appear as the "musts" of the participants. It is observed that, especially the ratio of people's expectations on naturality and clean air are higher in Kırklareli compared to the other provinces. Expectations on playgrounds and social activities are least in Kırklareli. The citizens mostly feel relaxation, tranquility, and peace in these areas. Problems in cleanliness and tidiness, lack of restrooms and equipment are the things the participants complain most. It appears that the main reason why parks and green areas are discredited is the street animals.

Consequently, it is aimed to contribute to the determination of our “social green area" culture with the help of the research results and based upon the examples of three provinces with different structures. It is clearly observed that the preferences on parks differ in places with different natural structures and socio-cultural features. Most particularly, the preferences of the people in Kırklareli and in İstanbul differ in regard to the social and cultural disparity of the participants and the natural structure, as Kırklareli is located close to rural settlement and İstanbul is one of the most important metropolises of the world.

## TEŞEKKÜR

Bu çalışma Namık Kemal Üniversitesi Bilimsel Araştırma Projeleri Komisyonu tarafından desteklenen “Kentsel Park ve Yeşil Alanlara Yönelik Kent Halkının Algısı ve Tutumu: İstanbul, Tekirdağ, Kırklareli Örneği” isimli araştırma projesinden üretilmiştir.

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