



# The Relationship Between Urban Furniture and Urban Identity in Open Spaces: Sazova Park, Kent Park, Hamamyolu Urban Deck

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## Abstract

Urban open spaces, where social and cultural needs are met, offer many opportunities for individuals' daily lives. At the same time, urban open spaces are an important component in the formation of urban identity. Urban open spaces have an impact on the city's image and help in the recognition of the city. Urban furniture within urban open spaces, defined as parks, squares, streets, etc., is designed to meet users' needs for rest, entertainment, transportation, and so on. Urban furniture integrates with the spaces they are located in and becomes a part of the city. Urban furniture also emphasizes the urban identity. Starting from the relationship between urban furniture and urban identity, an attempt has been made to determine the relationship between urban furniture in Sazova, Hamamyolu Urban Desk, and Kent Park and urban identity. In this context, evaluation headings have been determined for the evaluation of urban furniture in the selected areas within the context of urban identity. Through on-site observations, photographs of urban furniture in these areas were obtained and categorized. The evaluation headings identified as symbolic value, design, functionality and location, social cohesion were used to assess the urban furniture in these areas in terms of city identity. The study concluded that the urban furniture in Kent Park, Sazova, Hamamyolu Urban Desk has a positive impact on city identity.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The city can be defined as a constantly evolving settlement unit that responds to the needs of society and has fewer agricultural activities compared to trade, industry, and other related occupations [1]. In this settlement unit, various urban open spaces be found such as parks, streets, pedestrian paths, neighborhood parks, and so on. Urban open spaces are defined as the 'third place' where individuals gather regularly and daily outside of their home and work lives. Urban open spaces defined as the third place provide many opportunities and benefits for individuals' daily lives in the cities [2], [3]. Urban open spaces are publicly accessible and always available areas that are designed to meet the desires, needs, and activities of individuals. Urban open spaces are areas where social life and cultural exchange take place [4].

Urban spaces are a reflection of individuals. They reflect local culture and the period. They provide information about individuals' social and economic conditions. Urban public spaces are also an important component of local identity [5]. That can be argued that in urban public spaces, which are one of the urban common spaces, local identity emerges as a component of these spaces.

In the literature, urban open spaces are seen to be associated with various concepts such as accessible, inaccessible, public, and private spaces [6], [7]. Urban open spaces have a significant place in urban life beyond the concepts they are associated with. Urban open spaces have an impact on the image of the city in which they are located and contribute to the city's popularity and fame. For effective use of urban open space, it is important that it is comfortable, has sufficient seating areas, is protected from external factors such as sun and rain, and has spaces that meet needs such as food and drink [8].

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In this context, the urban furniture of Hamamyolu Avenue Urban Deck, Sazova Park, and Kent Park, which serve as urban open spaces in Eskişehir, will be examined in the context of urban identity in the study. To approach the designated urban open spaces in this context, previous studies focusing on these areas have been reviewed. Gündüz and Yılmaz [9], the factors affecting the usage preference of Kent Park have been investigated. In this regard, a survey was conducted among park users to examine the demographic characteristics of users and their attitude statements that affect their recreational visits to Kent Park in terms of frequency and percentages. Büyükbayraktar [10], the study aimed to measure the spatial qualities of Kent Park and Sazova Park. For this purpose, a survey was conducted with park users based on the identified spatial quality criteria. Karakaya [11], the study aims to investigate the effects of Kent Park, which is an important part of the green area network in Kent Park and Sazova, on the quality of life. Şahin and Tavşan [12], in this study, Hamamyolu Urban Deck has been evaluated in the context of urban identity based on the five basic elements (pathway, edge, district, node, landmark) defined by Kevin Lynch. Kasapoğlu and İnceoğlu [13], Hamamyolu Urban Deck was evaluated in the context of accessibility, based on the accessibility parameters determined. When looking at the previous studies on the study areas, it can be seen that the concepts of accessibility and quality were mainly focused on. However, in this study, a comparative approach is taken to evaluate the urban identity concept of these areas, which highlights the importance of this study in the literature. The obtained results are thought to shed light on the improvement of urban open spaces and the ability of new urban furniture in other open spaces to reflect urban identity. To can be evaluated the identified urban areas correctly in terms of urban identity, studies on the Eskişehir urban identity are examined, and the situations affecting the Eskişehir urban identity are identified. This study emphasizes the importance of considering the urban identity concept in the evaluation and design of urban open spaces and urban furniture, which could contribute to the development of more livable and identity-rich cities.

In the study conducted by İlgar [14], the dimension of urban identity and urban change in Eskişehir is investigated. The study examined the urban identity elements and their changes over time from the perspective of architects and architecture students. The factors determining the change in urban identity in Eskişehir are categorized under socio-cultural, socio-economic, physical environmental, urban image elements, and urban design projects. It is determined that the preservation of factories, railways, universities, the Porsuk River, and historic areas had an impact on urban identity under these categories.

Hakyemez [15], identify five different groups, including physical, historical, social, functional, and spatial structures, to examine the characteristic features of Eskişehir. As a result of the study, it is determined that the railway and factories had an impact on the city's identity, and the railway helped Eskişehir become known as a working city and an industrial city. Additionally, it is found that the establishment of universities had an effect on the city's identity, and the city is recognized as a student city and a university city. Moreover, with new activities and festivals, the city has become a center of attraction, and it was observed that there are efforts to develop the city as a "tourism city" in the tourism master plan, which has an impact on the city's identity.

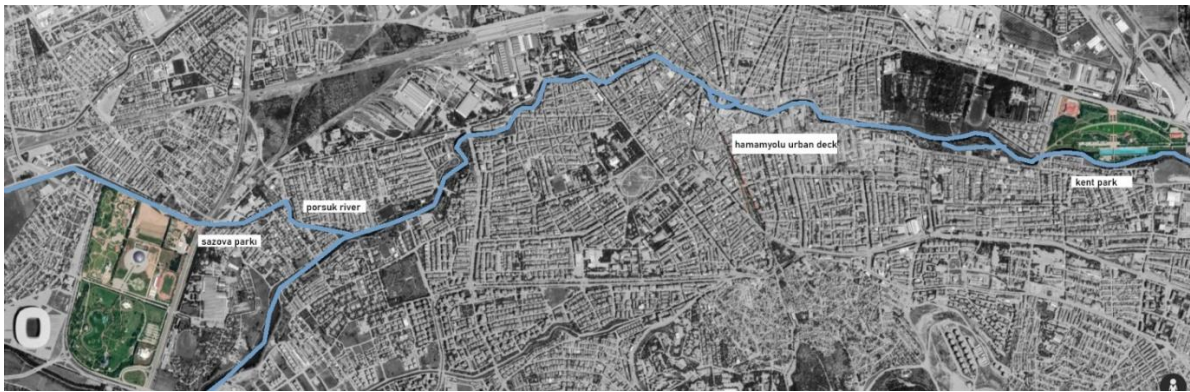
According to the study conducted by [16], the oldest buildings in the city center, which are the factories, are an important element of urban memory, and the industrial heritage created by these factories also reflects the city's identity. It has been determined that the Eskişehir factories area is an important structure for the city's identity. Therefore, it can be concluded that factories are among the elements that make up the city's identity.

According to [17], study, the industrial zone, campus areas, some cemeteries, and military sites in the city have survived as large reserve areas due to witnessing different periods in the city's history. These areas have shaped the city's physical form and growth. In recent times, the revival of these areas within the spatial formation has contributed to the interpretation of the city's identity. The study provides examples of artifacts that affect the city's identity, such as the railway, the industrial zone, universities, and the Odunpazarı district.

When examining the studies conducted in the literature, it can be argued that elements such as the industrial district, universities, festivals, and the Porsuk River play a significant role in the formation of the urban identity of Eskişehir. This study aims to analyze the relationship between urban furniture elements in designated urban open spaces and urban identity, with the objective of obtaining data regarding their association with urban identity.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

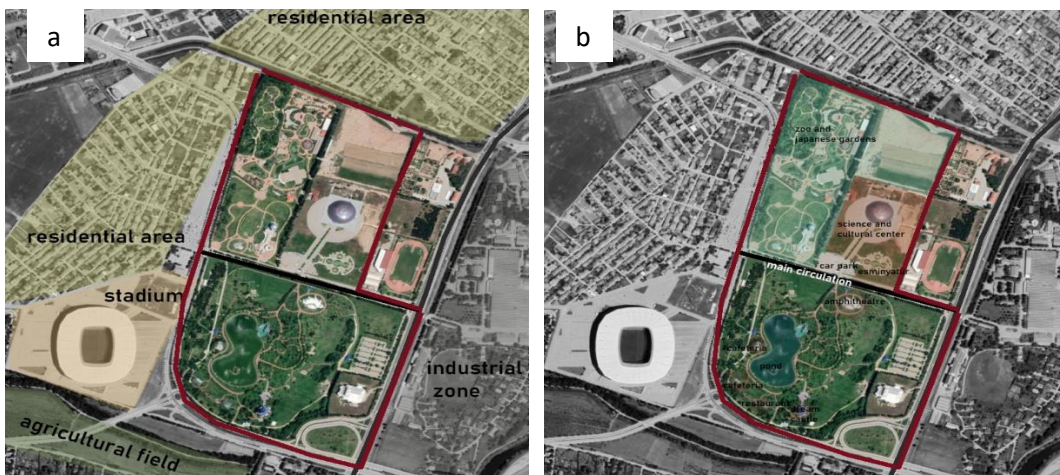
The main materials of this study are determined as Kent Park, Sazova Park, and Hamamyolu Urban Deck in Eskişehir. These urban open spaces are social and physical areas that meet the various needs of individuals. Kent Park is a large park located in the center of the city and has many amenities such as walking paths, bike lanes, playgrounds, picnic areas, sports fields, and a pond. Sazova Park, on the other hand, is a large recreational area located in the south of the city and hosts many activities such as a zoo, open-air theater, amphitheater, amusement park, and botanical garden. Hamamyolu Urban Deck is an open space project located in the historic Hamamyolu district of the city and has many social amenities such as restaurants, cafes, and outdoor exhibition areas. This section provides information about the identified urban open space [Figure 1].



**Figure 1.** Study Areas and Surroundings [Research: Prepared on Google Earth Satellite Image]

### 2.1. Sazova Park

Sazova Park is located in the Tepebaşı District of Eskişehir and was opened in 2008. The park is equipped with various amenities and urban furniture elements such as the Fairytale Castle, Sabancı Space House, Eskişehir Science Experiment Center, Eskişehir Zoo, an artificial pond, and children's play areas [Figure 2a ve b].

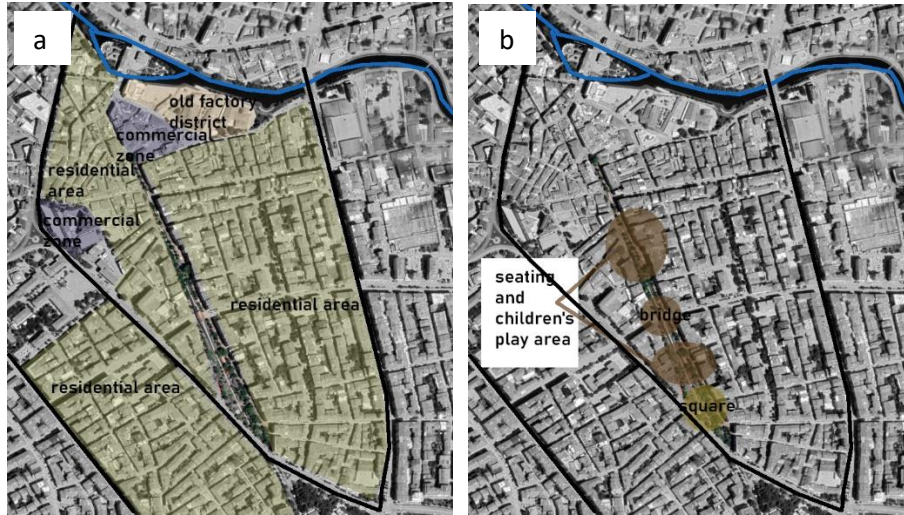


**Figure 2a ve b.** The Sazova Park and Its Surroundings [Research: Prepared on Google Earth Satellite Imagery]

There are various facilities located around an axis connecting the stadium and the main road in the parking area. The buildings in the parking area, such as the Fairy Tale Castle, are inspired by other important towers and minarets in Turkey, but the design resembles that of Disneyland [10], [18].

## 2.2. Hamamyolu Urban Deck

The Hamamyolu Urban Deck Square was constructed on Hamamyolu Street, a historic area of Eskişehir named after the hot springs and historic baths in the region [19]. The street where the renovation was carried out was previously known as the Akar Stream until the 1990s, which flows into the Porsuk River.

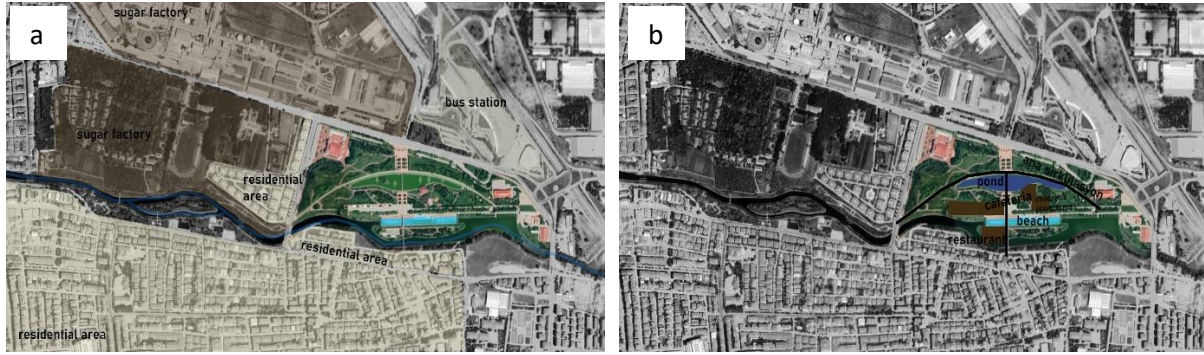


*Figure 3a and b. Hamamyolu Urban Deck and Its Surroundings [Research: Prepared on Google Earth Satellite Imagery]*

The 1990s witnessed the integration of Akar Stream with increasing residential and commercial buildings, transforming it into a park with recreational, swimming, and playing areas. However, due to pollution and becoming a swamp, the stream was covered with concrete in the 1990s, resulting in the disappearance of historical water and flour mills that had a significant impact on the stream's historic urban identity [20], [15]. After these events, the "Hamamyolu Park and Square" project, prepared by Yazgan Architecture, was implemented on the street. The project was carried out between 2016 and 2018. With the implemented project, there are children's playgrounds, cafes, seating areas, and ornamental pools inside the street [Figure 3a and b].

## 2.3. Kent Park

Kent Park, located in the Tepebaşı district of Eskişehir, was designed by Dalokay Design Studio in 2005 [21]. The land used for the design was owned by Eskişehir Sugar Factory and leased to the municipality for a certain period [22].



**Figure 4a and b.** Kent Park and Its Surroundings [Research: Prepared on Google Earth Satellite Imagery]

Dalokay Design Studio aimed to ensure continuity with the textures facing the Porsuk River in the design of Kent Park. Accordingly, dining, sports, and recreational areas were placed in these areas. Towards the beach area, a bridge connection was provided to cross to the opposite side of the beach [Figure 4a and b]. The active use of the Porsuk River and the inclusion of cultural and artistic venues resulted in the project being awarded in the "Implemented Project" category at the 2nd National Landscape Architecture Awards in 2010. This led to the project being referred to as the "project bringing the sea to Eskişehir." [23], [24].

The study focusing on Kent Park, Sazova, and Hamamyolu Urban Desk was conducted in three stages: literature review, site analysis, and data analysis. The literature review initially explored the relationship between urban identity and urban furniture. Based on the findings of the literature review, urban furniture was identified to be evaluated in terms of symbolic value, design and style, functionality and usability, location and arrangement, and social connection. In the second stage, data about the urban identity of Eskişehir was collected to identify the elements that define the city's identity. This stage helped to identify that the selected open spaces were not considered in terms of urban identity. The third stage focused on obtaining data regarding how the selected open spaces should be approached in terms of urban identity. In this stage, studies focusing on Kent Park, Sazova, and Hamamyolu Urban Desk are examined. The fact that the urban furniture in the selected areas is not considered in terms of urban identity in previous studies helped shape the main objective of the current study. During the field analysis phase, on-site observations are conducted to obtain visuals of the urban furniture within Kent Park, Sazova, and Hamamyolu Urban Desk, and the urban furniture was categorized. The categorization included seating units, water elements, waste bins, plastic elements (statues, etc.), lighting elements, and advertising panels. In the data analysis and evaluation stage, the relationship between urban furniture and urban identity is analyzed using the data obtained from the literature review and field analysis. This stage involved evaluating the urban furniture under the headings of symbolic value, design, functionality and location, and social connection [Table 1].

**Table 1.** The Methodology of Study (Prepared by the authors)

Stages	Conceptual Framework	Obtained Results
1.Stage: Literature Review	Urban Identity- Urban Furniture	The Relationship between Urban Identity and Urban Furniture: Symbolic Value, Design, Functionality and Location, Social Connection
	Eskisehir- Urban Identity	Industrial Zone, Universities, Porsuk River, Festivals, Lületaşı are Elements Determining the Urban Identity.
	Kent Park, Sazova, Hamamyolu Urban Desk	The absence of studies evaluating the urban furniture in these areas in terms of urban identity has been identified.
2.Stage: Site Analysis	On-site observation	Photographing the urban furniture in the selected areas

3.Stage: Data Analysis and Evaluation	The association of urban furniture with urban identity based on evaluation headings derived from the literature.	What are the positive/negative contributions of urban furniture in the selected areas to the city identity?
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Urban furniture and activities found in urban open spaces such as Kent Park, Sazova Park, and Hamamyolu Urban Deck are essential in meeting individuals' social needs. In this study, data was collected through on-site observations in three different urban open spaces to determine the relationship between urban furniture and the city's identity. The collected data were evaluated from the perspective of the city's identity.

### 3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN URBAN FURNITURE AND URBAN IDENTITY

According to the definition provided by the [25], urban identity components are the features that are associated with and represent a city in its definition. Through these features, a city becomes representative of its socio-cultural, socio-economic, and physical formations, carrying both local and global characteristics. Urban identity elements encompass all the physical and social characteristics that distinguish a city from others.

Urban identity can generally be defined as the totality of characteristics that enable the definition of a city. These characteristics can include architectural structures, traditions, or cultural features, as well as geographical features, which can be a significant factor in forming the identity of a city. All of these elements, together with events, spaces, buildings, etc., which make up the city, contribute to the formation of its identity [26]. Urban identity is not limited to these factors alone but is also influenced by natural factors such as geographical content, local traditions, and lifestyle [27]. Environmental and social components are also present in the formation of urban identity. Each of these components is a part of the city's identity [28].

Urban open spaces, which are a part of urban identity, are environments that include urban furniture related to these spaces, depending on individuals' social, cultural, and physical needs. Urban furniture elements are designed to meet users' needs such as rest, entertainment, and transportation in any public or urban space, and are placed in a way that is suitable for the space. These elements also emphasize the urban identity [29].

Urban open spaces are areas that contribute to the richness of urban life, bringing people together and providing opportunities for unique experiences within a specific place. These spaces accommodate shared activities of the community and are utilized by every individual residing in the city, forming an integral part of the urban structure. The equipment and structures with specific functions that do not belong to a particular user within these spaces are referred to as urban furniture. Urban furniture is an important element that offers various services to individuals in urban open spaces [40]. Urban furniture plays a significant role in shaping the identity of the city, which is crucial for urban open spaces. By integrating with the surrounding environment, urban furniture becomes an integral part of the city and contributes to its identity [41].

Urban furniture is important for cities as they are elements that define and customize the space they are in. Urban furniture integrates into the environment and becomes a part of the city. Therefore, urban furniture shapes the city's identity as a result of their relationships with each other [30]. Urban furniture is an element that adds visuality and identity to the city. Restrictive walls, sculptures, ropes, benches, and other urban furniture elements are what make a city strong and create a rich urban phenomenon. Urban furniture, which is a fundamental component of city identity, should have continuity both visually and technically [31]. Urban furniture symbolizes the city in which it is located and sometimes provides information about the city. Planning and design of urban open spaces are crucial in creating spaces with identity. From this perspective, urban furniture plays a significant role in enhancing individuals' sense of belonging to the environment they live in [38]. The relationship between urban identity and urban furniture can be evaluated based on the identified categories obtained from the literature review [Table 2].

**Table 2.** Evaluation of Urban Furniture in the Context of Urban Identity (Prepared by the authors)

Defined Title	Definition	References
Symbolic Value	Urban furniture can reflect significant symbolic values associated with a city.	Karaca, etc. (2020); Tel, (2021); Akın and Kavasoglu (2022)
Desing	Urban furniture should reflect the aesthetic identity of the city. Unique designs and local motifs should embody the character of the city and appeal to the preferences of users. Being design-oriented products, urban furniture contributes to their appreciation, more conscious utilization, and preservation by users.	Bayraktar, etc. (2008); Başal, (2002); Tel, (2021)
Functionality and Location	Urban furniture should facilitate individuals' lives and enable the comfortable use of the spaces they occupy. Urban furniture should possess legible, directional, and informative characteristics within the space they are situated in.	Bayraktar, etc (2008); Akın and Kavasoglu (2022); Akyol (2006)
Social Connection	By enabling individuals to use the space, urban furniture encourages people to come together and enhances social interaction.	Karaca, etc. (2020); Akın and Kavasoglu (2022)

It can be observed that urban furniture, which has an important value for urban identity, is classified in various ways in the literature. Şişman and Yetim [32], classified urban furniture according to their functions in usage as protection, information, signage, decoration, shelter, entertainment, play, listening, sales, or shopping purposes. Göncü [33], established categories for urban furniture classification as shelter and environment-creating purposes [lighting, stops, waste, and recycling units, communication units, etc.], entertainment purposes [children's play areas, play elements, cover elements, etc.], information purposes [directional signs, gratings, water channels, advertising panels, etc.], decoration purposes [pool, sculptures, etc.], sales or shopping purposes [ATM, sales units, ticket vending machines, etc.], and protection purposes. Yücel [34], classified urban furniture as restricting elements [walls and fences]; seating elements; trash cans; signage; sculptures; and water elements. In this study, urban furniture has been classified as sculptures, seating elements, trash cans, lighting, signs, and water features.

#### 4. FINDINGS

The urban open spaces that are the focus of this study are Sazova Park, Hamamyolu Urban Deck, and Kent Park. Sazova Park is located in the west of the city, while Kent Park is situated in the east. Hamamyolu Urban Deck, on the other hand, is located in the city center.

##### 4.1. Seating Elements

The dimensions, design, and materials of skating elements directly affect individuals' physical comfort [34]. The seating elements are located in Sazova Park, Hamamyolu Urban Deck, and Kent Park urban open spaces [Figure 5].



**Figure 5.** Seating Elements In Urban Open Space [Research: Personal archive and [35]

It can be observed that different designs of seating elements are present in Sazova Park, Hamamyolu Urban Deck, and Kent Park. Seating elements designed with wood composite material are present in Hamamyolu Urban Deck urban open space while seating elements made with different materials and designs are present in Kent Park and Sazova Park. Hamamyolu Urban Deck is designed on a street located among residential buildings. Designing seating areas that are proportionate to residential buildings in the street can negatively affect the street section.

#### 4.2. Water Element

Water elements such as fountains and pools are present in Sazova Park, Kent Park, and Hamamyolu Urban Deck as urban furniture [Figure 6].



**Figure 6.** Water Elements In Urban Open Space [Research: Personal archive]

In Kent Park, it can be observed that the water elements are connected to the Porsuk River. The interaction between individuals and the river through water elements, such as artificial beaches and docks, is quite high. The presence of water elements in Hamamyolu Urban Deck allows for a reference to the presence of Akar Dere, a tributary of the Porsuk River, and provides various designs for the user to interact with the water traces. In Sazova Park, the water element is designed as an artificial lake, and interaction with the lake is provided through docks.

#### 4.3. Waste Bins

Waste bins are designed as different types of furnishing elements in terms of material and form to prevent littering in urban open spaces. They need to be located considering their functionality in other furnishing



elements and pedestrian circulation [29].



**Figure 7.** Waste Bins In Urban Open Space [Research: Personal archive]

There are design differences among the wash bins within the working areas. While similarities exist between the trash bins in Sazova and Kent Park, they differ from those in Hamamyolu Urban Deck. In Hamamyolu Urban Deck, trash bins with different designs can be found as well. This situation harms the integrity of both the street and other urban open spaces [Figure 7].

#### 4.4. Plastic elements [Sculptures, Monuments, etc.]

Sculptures, which are among the plastic elements, help to create individual and social images related to space and the city, along with the events, experiences, and perceptions that take place in the spaces, with their unique and defining characteristics [36].



**Figure 8.** Plastic Elements In Urban Open Space [Research: Personal archive]

When looking at the plastic elements such as sculptures and monuments in Sazova, Kent Park, and Hamamyolu Urban Deck, it can be observed that Sazova reflects images of the city with its sculptures of important figures for Eskişehir and the presence of a train and train tracks. Additionally, it is reported that the castle structure in the park carries traces of important towers and minarets in Turkey. An example of another plastic element is the ship located in the artificial pond. Among the plastic elements in Kent Park are sculptures such as the city woman figures. The plastic products such as sculptures and monuments in Hamamyolu Urban Deck are made up of sculptures brought from the Cultural and Artistic Heritage and Odunpazarı International Sculpture Festival. These sculptures are exhibited on the bridge located on İbrahim Karaoğlanoğlu Street, which was designed in Hamamyolu Urban Deck [Figure 8] Cultural and Artistic Heritage is designed by transforming a dried arbor [tree] [37].

#### 4.5. Lighting Elements

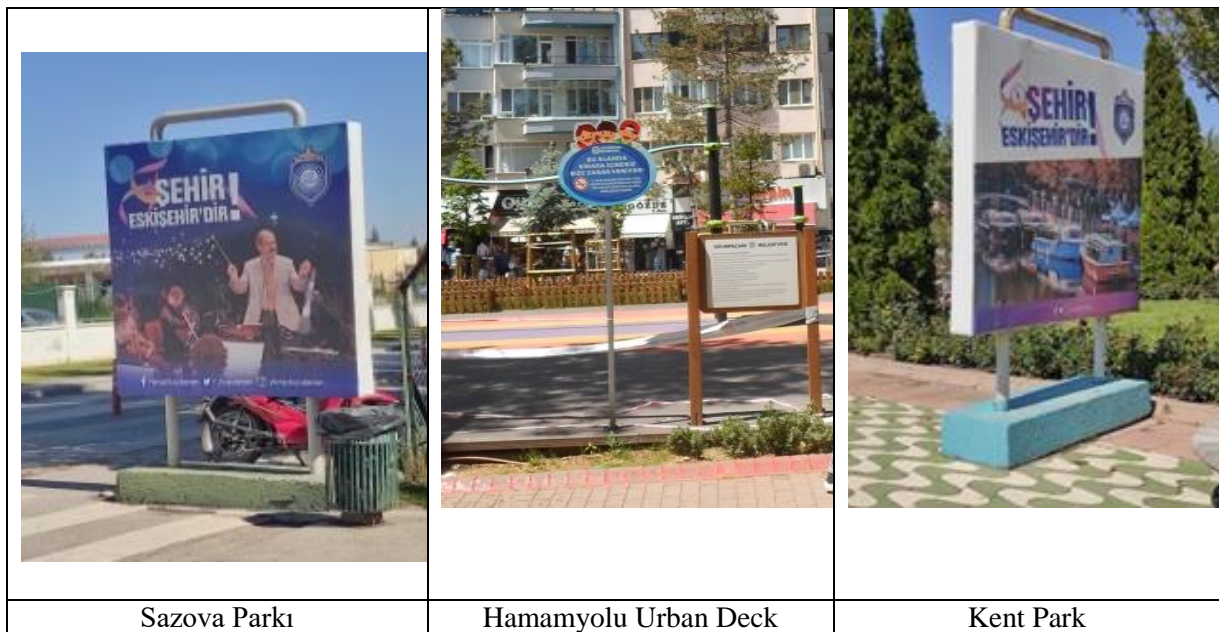
When examining the lighting elements, it has been observed that there are similar designs in Kent Park and Sazova Park, as in other urban furniture, while this is not the case in Hamamyolu Urban Deck [Figure 9].



*Figure 9. Lighting In Urban Open Space [Research: Personal archive]*

#### 4.6. Signage and Advertising Boards

According to [34], directional and informational signs in urban open spaces should be positioned in a way that can be easily seen by individuals and provide information to help people move around easily.



*Figure 10. Signage and Advertising Boards In Urban Open Space [Research: Personal archive]*

In Sazova and Kent Park, coherence can be observed among the informative and advertising signs, while in Hamamyolu Urban Deck, the signs deviate from this coherence. There are a sufficient number of directions and signboards in Sazova, Kent Park, and Hamamyolu Urban Deck [Figure 10].

#### 5. CONCLUSION

Urban furniture, which is among the basic components of urban identity, is classified under various headings such as constraints, information, entertainment, and signboards in the literature. In this study, urban furniture has been classified as sculpture, seating elements, trash cans, lighting, signage, and water

features. With this classification, the relationship between urban furniture in Sazova Park, Kent Park, and Hamamyolu Urban Deck and urban identity has been discussed.

To evaluate the garden furniture in the designated urban areas in terms of urban identity, studies on the Eskişehir urban identity were first examined. As a result of these studies, it was determined that the elements determining the city's urban identity were the railway, factories, universities, and the Porsuk River. Based on this, in the present study, inferences were made on whether the urban elements of the urban open spaces considered in the study refer to the elements that determine the urban identity.

Based on the evaluation of urban furniture within the designated area using the data obtained in the study, Table 3 has been prepared to assess their relation to urban identity.

**Table 3.** Evaluation of Urban Furniture in Kent Park, Sazova, and Hamamyolu Urban Desk in the Context of Urban Identity (Prepared by the Authors)

	Kent Park	Sazova	Hamamyolu Urban Desk
Symbolic Value	The use of the Porsuk River, which is a component of urban identity, can be said to carry symbolic value.	Although it is not directly connected to the Porsuk River, the park incorporates a designed pond that introduces a water element, as well as includes trains and railway tracks.	Although not directly connected to the Porsuk River, the park incorporates designed water pools and glass structures to introduce a water element within the park.
Desing	The presence of sculptures and the inclusion of various designs in urban furniture elements.	The presence of sculptures and the inclusion of various designs in urban furniture elements.	The incorporation of various glass designs in the design of diverse urban furniture elements that have become part of the urban identity.
Functionality and Location	Directional signs, an adequate number of seating areas, lighting fixtures, etc. are present.	Directional signs, an adequate number of seating areas, lighting fixtures, etc. are present.	Directional signs, an adequate number of seating areas, lighting fixtures, etc. are present.
Social Connection	The utilization of urban furniture by individuals, thereby meeting their social needs by providing a space for their use.	The utilization of urban furniture by individuals, thereby meeting their social needs by providing a space for their use.	The utilization of urban furniture by individuals, thereby meeting their social needs by providing a space for their use.

The study concludes that the urban furniture in the selected urban open spaces is in harmony with the city's identity. In Sazova Park, the interaction between the water element and the docks, the presence of information boards containing information about Eskişehir, the presence of trains and train tracks, and the statues of important figures for Eskişehir such as Nasreddin Hoca, all refer to elements that define the city identity, which make the urban furniture in the park compatible with the city identity. In Kent Park, the use of the Porsuk River, interaction with the water element through docks, and the similarity of the furniture such as a statue, seating elements, trash cans, and bridge with those in Sazova Park and the city, create a sense of belongingness to the city. Finally, the existence of water trails in Hamamyolu Urban Deck, which refers to the existence of Akar Dere, a branch of the Porsuk River, and the interaction of the user with these trails through various designs, is a positive aspect. The presence of glass channels and statues also reflects the city's identity. In this study, it has been determined that the urban furniture located within Kent Park, Sazova, and Hamamyolu Urban Desk positively contributes to urban identity according to the designated evaluation parameters.

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