

A Square to Park: A History of the Spatial Transformation of Zafer Square, Ankara

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Abstract

In this study, the dynamics of the formation and transformation of Zafer Square, an essential urban space of Ankara, are examined in an attempt to draw attention to the square-park dilemma observed in its description as an urban open space. Accordingly, the historical process is chronologically divided into three periods while examining the causes of this dilemma. Initially, a theoretical discussion based on literature research is conducted to ascertain whether this area is a square or a park in the context of public spaces. In the first period, the Early Republican Period (1923–1945), the formation of Zafer Square was examined, while in the second period, which denotes the Democratic Party Period (1950–1960s), the change in its meaning and spatiality is questioned. The interventions on Zafer Square and Atatürk Boulevard are discussed as indicators of this political evolution and its reflection on urban space and Yenışehir. In the last section, the issues caused by its transformation to Zafer II Park on one side and an undefined space on the other side are scrutinised as it lost its meaning and characteristics as a boulevard square with the new structuring on the east side.

Keywords

Ankara, Zafer Square, urban open space, park

1 Introduction

Zafer Square is essentially an important social space for the daily life of Ankara. It has transformed physically, spatially and semantically since its construction. Designed as a square and remembered as such for a long time, why has it turned into a park? Starting from this question¹, this paper analyses Zafer Square's transformation within the historical and theoretical framework.

Zafer Square has become a part of Ankara's urban open space concurrently with the declaration of the Turkish Republic. It was one of the best examples of the modernisation efforts of the Republic, with its design as an ideal for open urban space. By acknowledging the idea of squares as "essential for the political space", it becomes evident that its fundamental position in the urban space is not incidental. Even though this paper does not go into a detailed historical or theoretical analysis of the urban

space; we can say that the concept of urban space finds its true meaning in the cities organised by the bourgeoisie, and in this respect, public space identifies with democracy and bourgeoisie (Sargin, 2002:p.9). The history of squares, which are one of the essential open urban spaces, is older than the history of the open spaces mentioned together with democracy and bourgeoisie.

Determination of open space as a square is not easy. For instance, can Atina Acropolis be described as a square even though it has large open spaces? Or can the courtyards of Early Period Islamic mosques be considered squares? It is not easy to answer these questions; a space must have permeable borders to be determined as a square. However, it should not be an individual space production because public space is also a collective production. Thus squares are collective places where public activities take place, and protests erupt. The etymological definition of the public square refers to both its community role and its square form. Beyond its shape, the Turkish expression is "piyasa yapmak" from the Italian "piazza", meaning coincidental meetings is relevant (Anonymous, 2014:p.54).

¹ For the potentials of an open urban space, the question "Is it a square or park" is an important component of architectural academic debates. "A Republican Debate: Square or Park?" Gurallar (2010), elaborates this question in this context.

Thus, by continually reproducing itself, the square is in a constant state of transformation. Similar to squares, other urban open spaces have been transforming "like a living organism"² throughout history (Anonymous, 2014: p.54).

Squares, along with streets, are the public spaces of the traditional city, where the boulevards and urban parks are the spaces of modernity (Korkmaz, 2016). In the traditional city, squares are sometimes organised with a plan and sometimes arise with the transformation of other open spaces. Rome's famous Piazza Navona was first a stadium outside of the city; Spain's Plaza Mayors were organised through the transformation of bazaar and festival areas (Atalay, 2011:p.83; Kostof, 1992). In medieval cities, squares are at the core of the city with the churches. On the other hand, in the Renaissance, the squares were designed with the rules of geometry and perspective. The change in the squares was not only formal but also social. The squares began to be used by the bourgeois class as well as aristocrats (Atalay, 2011:p.85). Throughout history, the dynamic essence of squares was also seen in Ottoman Cities. The courtyard of the Beyazıt Mosque in Istanbul transformed into a square (Gurallar, 2007:p.71). This illustrates that the city is a living organism and that transforming a square into a park is a common possibility.

Parks are open urban spaces of modern cities. However, they had a different meaning in earlier periods. Although parks seem to be the spaces of the modern period, their history can be traced back to ancient times (Önal and Sağır, 2018:pp.78). Before modern times, green areas were formed as closed and protected spaces with the interpretation of "heaven" based on religious beliefs; in the 19th century, they were transformed into urban parks of health and recreation (İlkay, 2016:p.9). Le Corbusier (1887–1965), in his text *Şehircilik* (The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning), explains what an industrial city should be like. He pragmatically discusses the modern city's relationship with nature in the text (Corbusier, 2014).

Nature is designed and added to, condensed and raised as an element that gives the city "human scale" (Le Corbusier, 2014:p.225). In this context, nature is a spatial element that reduces the density of the city horizontally and vertically. In other words, Le Corbusier interpreted nature as a functional element.

Le Corbusier's efforts were to build a "Contemporary City". According to him, nature represents a space

designed for the technocratic. In this sense, Lefebvre's question is significant: "Is natural park referring to natural or artificial?" (Lefebvre, 1991:p.83). We can suggest that "nature is political like space" as it is added to the modern city as part of conscious or unconscious strategies (Lefebvre, 1991:p.15). To give an example of the politics of the urban parks built in the dichotomy of nature/culture, it can be said that the Early Republican Period's parks functioned as "social engineering" factories. Youth Park (Gençlik Parkı), as the first urban park of Ankara, through giving society a new social context, new habits and new routines, changed the traditional daily life of its citizens (Uludağ, 1998:p.74) (Fig. 1).

The article's investigation into the question "Is it a square or a park?" began with an initial presumption that both descriptions were meaningful and necessary as a social production, and neither is preferred over the other. Both parks and squares as public places are environments where social processes occur and are also by-products of these processes.

Under the political and historical conditions it has lived through, Zafer Square is an important social space for Ankara as a stage for production and power relations; as Lefebvre states, "the form of social spaces is meeting, gathering, spontaneity" (Lefebvre, 1991:p.101). This research attempts to analyse the transformation of Zafer Square into a park in three steps. The first is the period when Zafer Square was analysed in the morphology of the city and with the plans of Early Republican Ankara. The second is the period after the 1950s when Ankara's urbanisation paradigms changed with the economy and politics. As a result, Ankara underwent a rapid transformation, and Atatürk Boulevard, the main vehicle axis, was restructured. The final part, the physical division of Atatürk Boulevard with fast and heavy traffic, will be examined through distinct and non-contextual extensions.

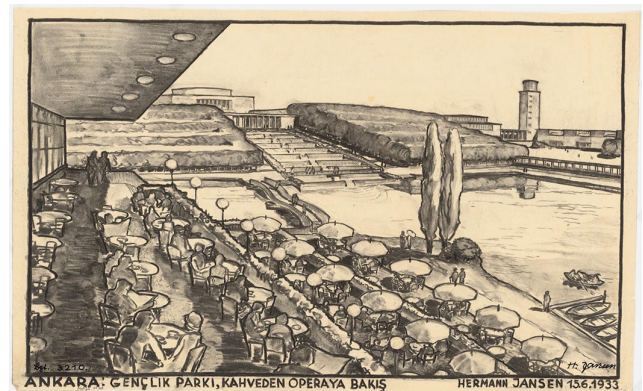


Fig. 1 Gençlik Parkı perspective drawing of the cafés around the pool by Jansen, 1933 (TU Berlin Architekturmuseum (a))

² The square is an alive organism and it does not exist or designed all at once, it reproduces itself, it is not a product of politicization of space, rather square is production of participation. In other words, urban open public spaces formation and transformation are like alive organisms, contingent (Anonymous, 2014: p.54).

2 The effects of Ankara plans: Yenişehir's boulevard square, Zafer Square

The creation of public space had an important role in the Early Republican Period (1923–1945). The discussion of urban space at this also includes the modernisation debates. According to Ali Cengizkan (1999), the modern urban spaces date back earlier than the Republican Period. Cengizkan gives importance to clock towers that gave Ottoman cities a modern soul and talks about their effect on urban area design and organisation. Unlike Cengizkan, Güven Arif Sargin (2002) characterises the new Republican's public perspective separately from the Ottoman tradition. According to Sargin (2002), the Ottoman city was based on a parochial community and a fragmented system. This fragmented structure was based on classifications of similar characteristics of the citizens such as gender and religious belief. However, in Kemalist city, this fragmented public aspect was regenerated; as a result, it created space for centre and peripheral relations to be rebuilt in a political matter. Gönül Tankut (1993), on the other hand, evaluates Ankara's declaration as capital and transformation from a small town to a modern city not only as structural but also as a space for producing a new public individual. Ankara became an essential part of the Turkish enlightenment and modernisation project as it is an urbanisation project (Tekeli, 1998:p.1). In this context, in the Early Republican period, the planning decisions of Ankara are not only an urban interference but also political decisions. In other words, it is not possible to think of the public spaces designed in this period as autonomous architectural products. As Tayfun Gürkaş argues, "like many other forms of the system, public green spaces and parks are also ideological practising areas" (Gürkaş, 2009). As these public spaces were shaped primarily in line with the state's need to appear in the public sphere, this visibility became the main motivation for producing public spaces (Gürkaş, 2009).

Ankara's first modern plan was the Lorcher Plan, designed in 1924 (Fig. 2). This plan's most significant contribution to Ankara was to connect the Eski Şehir (old city) and Yeni Şehir (new city) with Atatürk Boulevard and design open spaces as a part of the modern city. According to Sibel Bozdoğan and Esra Akcan, this intense use of open spaces in the plan reflected Lorcher's "modern city is a clean city" idea (Bozdoğan and Akcan, 2012:p.55). In this regard, Ankara has been envisioned as a "hygienic modern city" with its squares and parks, where society's physical and mental health is considered. In other words, it is planned as a "modern city" where public open spaces give the city its characteristic. One of the most striking points

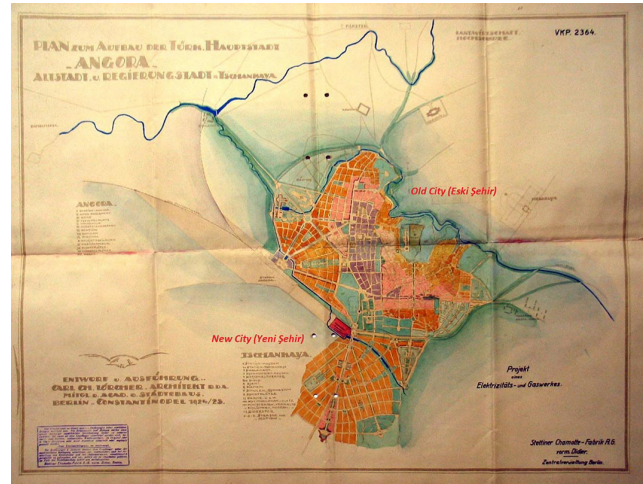


Fig. 2 Lorcher Ankara Plan for the Old City and the New City, 1924.
(METU: Department of City and Regional Planning)

of Lorcher's Yenişehir (New City) Plan³ was the design of Atatürk Boulevard, the backbone of Yenişehir, with public open spaces on both sides of the boulevard (Fig. 3) (Cengizkan, 2004:pp.70–83). These public open spaces, described as boulevard squares in the study, are located on a linear line where Atatürk Boulevard turns into a symmetry axis. As a result, the squares guaranteed intensive use by city dwellers and became open to the transformation that could come with any changes made on the boulevard. Along with Zafer Square, Millet (Ulus), Lausanne (Sıhhiye), and Cumhuriyet (Kızılay), boulevard squares are important public open spaces that give character to Yenişehir (Figs. 3 and 4).

We can clearly observe that the square was built as a "representation of space"⁴. The representation of the historical information of August 30, 1922 (Victory Day), which gave the name to the square and the monument in the centre of the Atatürk Boulevard (Fig. 5), draws attention as

3 After Ankara was declared a capital in 1923, a new plan was needed for the city. For this purpose, a member of İstanbul Zoning Board, Carl Christoph Lorcher (1884–1966) designed two plans for both the New and Old City of Ankara. These two plans were evaluated by a council from Ankara Municipality. The council was suspicious about the plan, and they rejected the Old City Plan. The plan for the New City was approved and applied to solve the housing problem that appeared with the rapid population growth in the city. A special law enacted in 1925 expropriated an area of 400 hectares and was developed according to the Yenişehir (New City) Lorcher Plan (Cengizkan, 2004:pp.70–83).

4 The term place is used with reference to Lefebvre. According to Henri Lefebvre, space representations are the spaces of planners, architects, geographers and similar professionals. These spaces are always designed by technocrats, integrated with ideology and power (Lefebvre, 1991:p.38).

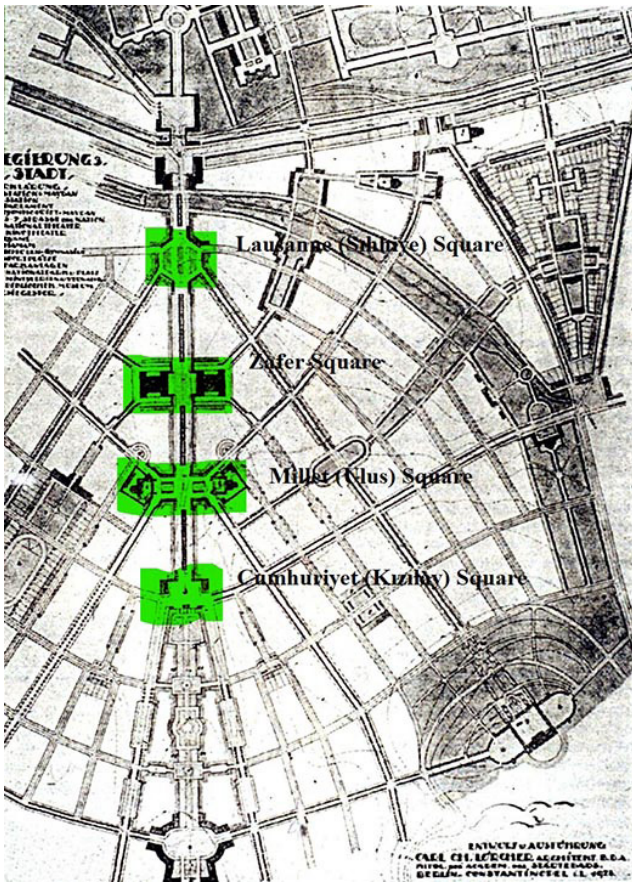


Fig. 3 Yenişehir's (New City's) Boulevard Square, 1924 Lorcher's Yenişehir (Newcity) Map (Cengizkan, 2004; Modified by the Author)

an important urban decision to keep this information alive by creating collective memory. Zafer (Victory) Monument was placed in the centre of the Boulevard with a ceremony in November 1927 (Fig. 6) (Keskinok, 2009).

As of this date, with the monument's presence and the political background represented by the square, this area settled into an important political position for the city of Ankara. As Lefebvre expresses, "Monumental space offers each member of a society an image of that membership, an image of his or her social visage... it is a collective mirror" (Lefebvre, 1991:p.220). These monumental spaces, the rituals and ceremonies associated with them, were used to form the identity of the social space and constituents in the construction of collective memory. In this context, Zafer Monument and through that Zafer Square reinforced its place in the collective memory by hosting the August 30 Zafer (Victory) Festival every year. Additionally, Zafer Square defines a cultural and social space in the Lorcher Plan where "theatre and cinema meet [...] bilaterally" (Cengizkan, 2002:p.231). Lorcher's design that brings cultural actions such as theatre and cinema together with the

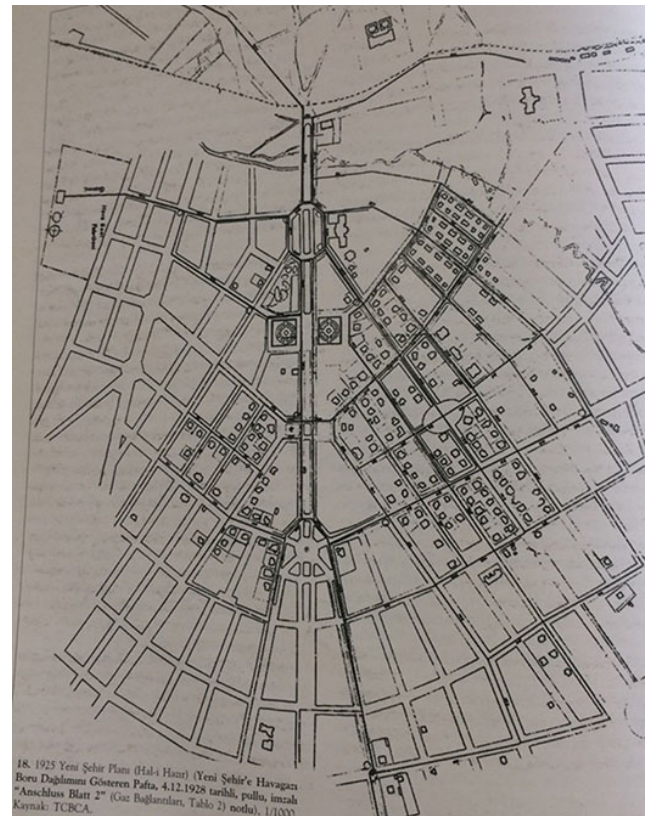


Fig. 4 Following the Lorcher Plan, it can be traced on the 1928 Air Gas Distribution Map where the New City was built (Cengizkan, 2004)



Fig. 5 Zafer Square and Atatürk Boulevard in the late 1920's (VEKAM (a))

square has been a move that strengthens the public aspect of the space and its meaning for Ankara. However, in practice, these social spaces did not always surround the square as planned and were replaced by important public buildings.

The political mission imposed on Zafer Square is not only due to the founding role of the social memory of the historical knowledge of August 30, 1922, and the Zafer Monument in the centre, but also the effect of public buildings surrounding the square. We can see this from Herman Jansen's 1/4000



Fig. 6 Zafer (Victory) Monument (Keskinok, 2009)

Ankara Reconstruction Plan⁵ designed in 1927 and applied in 1932 (Fig. 7), after Lorcher's. As seen in the plan, Zafer Square started to be surrounded by various public buildings. As seen in the Jansen Plan, the Army House (Orduevi) (Fig. 8) structure designed by Clemens Holzmeister (1886–1983), which was built between 1930–1931, has a vital role in the establishment of this identity. Another building surrounding the Square was Şur'a-yı Devlet, an important sign of modernisation in state bureaucracy. Apart from these public buildings, the residential texture, the main building stock of Yenışehir, surrounding the Zafer Square, stands out as another structuring element (Figs. 9 and 10).

In the Lorcher Plan, the housing needs of the new capital was shaped according to Garden City ideals and was continued in the Jansen Plan. In this plan, zoning was functional according to construction conditions (Fig. 11). Green belts separate residential, industrial areas, management centres and high school areas. In the Jansen Plan, residential areas were sorted into classes, and Yenışehir was considered for upper-income groups (Bilsel, 2010:p.34). Jansen ensured that pedestrian use was more effective than vehicle use in Atatürk Boulevard, which passes through the centre of this dense residential settlement of Yenışehir (Fig. 12).

⁵ In 1927, when Lorcher's Yenışehir plan continued to be implemented, it was decided to make a new plan for Ankara. For this purpose, an invited competition was organized. Urbanist and architect Léon Jaussely (1875–1932) from France, Joseph Brix (1859-1943) from Germany, Hermann Jansen (1869–1945) from the chair of the Berlin Technical High School for city construction (Städtebau) were invited. Lorcher's planning decisions were given to architects to form a basis for their designs (Bilsel, 2010:p.31). It can be stated that Jansen's Yenışehir Plan is in parallel with Lorcher's Yenışehir plan due to the fact that it has been used as a base and that the construction activities in Yenışehir have been continuing according to the Lorcher Plan for a while.

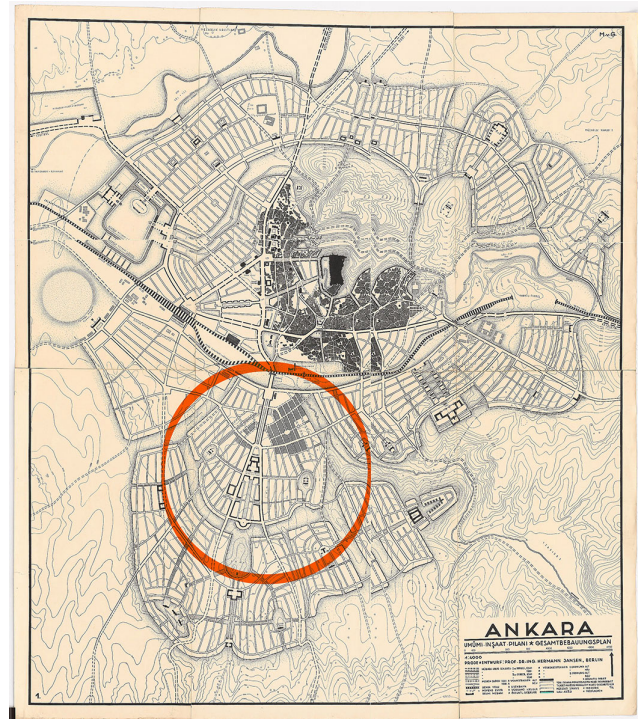


Fig. 7 1/4000 Scale plan proposal submitted by Herman Jansen to the Ankara Planning Competition, 1928. (TU Berlin Architekturmuseum (b), Modified by the Author)



Fig. 8 Zafer Monument and Army House in the Border of Zafer Square, 1938–39 (VEKAM (b))

The sidewalks on both sides of the street could not be made the same width as before; often, one side is wider. Typically, the sidewalk on the Garp side of Şimal-Cenup streets and Şimal side of Şarp-Garp streets are wider. One or two more trees were placed on sidewalks. Wide streets also have a bicycle path beside the sidewalk. On the streets, it is a fact that one side of the infantry sidewalk is preferred by the people [...]. The mostly shaded side where shops are located or the side where the sidewalk can be reached from many side streets is always preferred (Jansen, 1937:p.26).

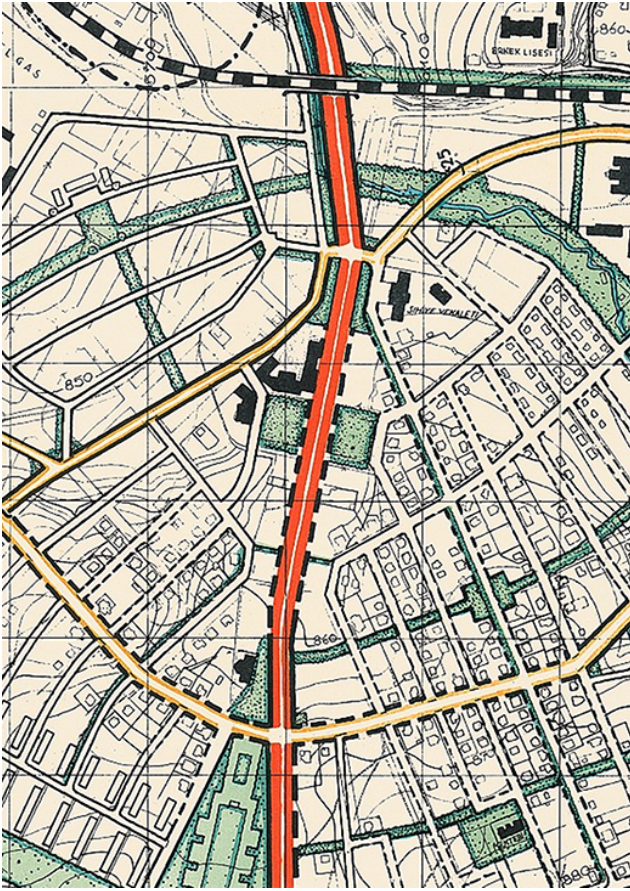


Fig. 9 Jansen's Yenışehir Map, 1932 (TU Berlin Architekturmuseum (c), Modified by the Author)

While Atatürk Boulevard was built with these ideals, situated between the residential areas, it became a walking route in the Early Republican Period, and urban spaces such as Güvenpark, Kızılay Park, Zafer Square and Lozan Square on the two sides of the Boulevard turned into rest stops of Atatürk Boulevard. The Boulevard was like a green belt (Fig. 12) “in 1933, with trees on the curbs and on both sides of the 11-meter-wide refuge in the middle of the boulevard.” According to Şenyapılı, this image reminds us of West’s green urban image (Şenyapılı, 1985:p.53). In this regard, Zafer Square has started to transform from an iconic venue as designed by the planning ideology to a recreational space defined by the user. This semantic change was the beginning of the transformation of Zafer Square from square to park in collective memory. The moment that initiated its physical transformation, following the semantic transformation for the city, were the development projects on Atatürk Boulevard, discussed later. In this regard, the boulevard axis that Zafer Square depends on and its use have also determined the structural transformation of Zafer Square.

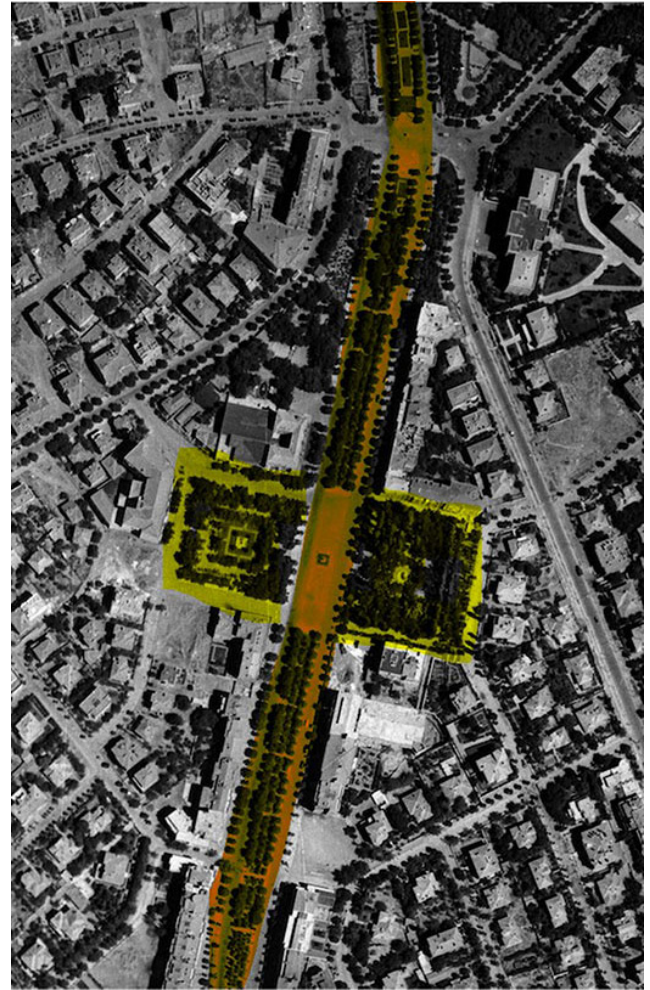


Fig. 10 Zafer Square and Atatürk Boulevard in Aerial Map, 1948. (General Directorate of Mapping (a), Modified by the Author)

2.1 The after effect of Atatürk boulevard's transformation: timid transformation steps of Yenışehir and Zafer Square

In the Early Republican Period, Zafer Square did not correspond to a static structure, both physically and in meaning, from the viewpoint of city dwellers. As we have witnessed, the transformation of landscape design and its built environment and its meaning for Ankara residents has also transformed. Although this physical and semantic transformation process continues today, the first significant breakdown was in the 1950s. The short-sightedness⁶ regarding the Capital

⁶ The unpredictability in the planning of the capital Ankara draws attention as an important factor that triggers the structural transformation of Zafer Square. In Jansen's Ankara Development Plan, Jansen himself describes his evaluation about the population of Ankara: "As a result of the determinations, Ankara's population seems to be appropriately between 200,000 to 300,000 [...]. Ankara's population should not exceed 300,000. For this purpose, unnecessary construction in the city



Fig. 11 Plan chart of Jansen's Zoning Decisions for Ankara and main transportation arteries, 1928. These decisions do not include a commercial zone (TU Berlin Architekturmuseum (d))



Fig. 12 Green Refuge on Atatürk Boulevard and Zafer Square, 1940's (Keskinok, 2009)

Ankara was not realised in the process prepared from the Republic's early years (Jansen and Lorcher Plans) until the Uybadin Yücel Plan (Uybadin and Yücel, 1957) (Fig. 13) which paved the way for the loss of spatial integrity of Zafer Square. Another planning decision that led to the transformation of Yenışehir in the Jansen Plan was that a trade zone was not defined in Yenışehir (Fig. 11). With these decisions, the problems of an uncontrollably growing population and density initiated irreversible damage on Atatürk Boulevard and Zafer Square.

In the Early Republic, Atatürk Boulevard had an important place in terms of the organisation of the new capital and the urban daily life. In other words, Ankara is the will of the founding cadres of the Republic to create a new life and a modern city. In this context, economic concerns are in the background for the political attitude that creates the city's aesthetic elements and public spaces. However, this situation changed completely when the Democrat Party came to power. International capitalist integration policies⁷ came into effect from the 1950s. The first reflection

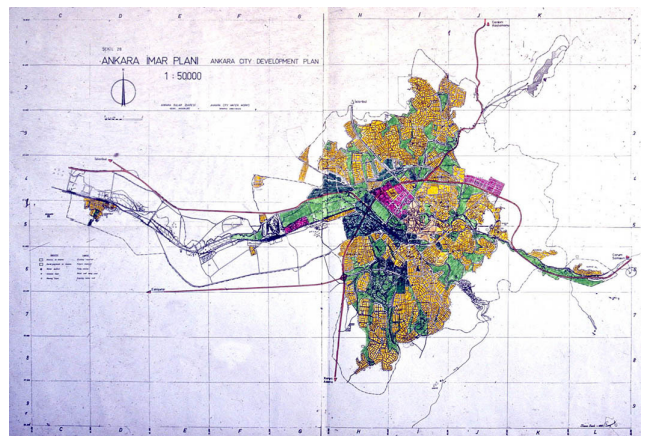


Fig. 13 Uybadin Yücel Ankara Plan, 1957 (Uybadin and Yücel, 1957)

of this political evolution on the city and Yenışehir was the adoption of Kızılay and its adjoining areas as the city's business centre, with a decision taken in 1952. With this

should be banned. Thus, Ankara becomes a city where you can literally live" (Jansen, 1937:p.45-46). Ankara has reached the population of 300,000, which Jansen predicted it to reach in fifty years, within ten years.

7 In 1950s the world is binary with the effect of the Cold War. Turkey in

this context preferred to align with the Western Block as a member of NATO. Turkey was allied with the United States against Soviet Russia. As a result of this preference, Turkey benefited from the support fund known as Marshall Aid as a "reward". Infrastructure and superstructure works required for the expansion of the capitalist system were expected as the cost of this.

decision, the ground and basement floors of the buildings could be arranged as passages, and the construction of adjacent apartment buildings would be allowed (Özden, 2014:p.56). In addition, the commercial activities on the Boulevard were encouraged, and the way for Kızılay to become a commercial centre was opened. The Democrat Party government's most important and symbolic intervention was the placement of Turkey's first skyscraper in the centre of Kızılay. The skyscraper, named Emek İş Hanı, with its international style – a design decision reminiscent of the UN Building in New York – has not only represented capital as a political product but repeatedly generated it with new spatial practices and a brand-new iconography (Batuman, 2002:p.56).

In the Early Republican Period, while the plan included a well-designed city and ideological representations in the city, economic realism took over by the 1950s. The building stock in the urban space mainly consisted of bureaucratic, educational and cultural structures and was replaced by hotels, shopping malls, offices and factory structures during the Democratic Party period (Bozdoğan and Akcan, 2012:p.115). From 1957, the Nihat Yücel and Raşit Uybadin Plan (Fig. 13) becomes the basis for regulating these economic trends and growth. With this plan, the two-storey garden residences of Yenışehir, constructed according to Garden City ideals, were replaced by five-six-storey apartments, while the four-storey buildings turned into nine-storey business inns. Following this plan, the transformation in building morphology accelerated with the 1968 Height Regulation Plan, which was made following the Property Ownership Law adopted in 1965 (Keskinok, 2009:p.53). As of 1950, Yenışehir lost its quality low-density housing areas, which were replaced by high-density commercial areas.

As a result of agricultural mechanisation, migration from rural areas after the 1950s also created movement in the neighbourhoods around the Yenışehir region, which became a business centre. All these developments led to revisions in Ankara's transportation network. In 1957, trees were cut and narrowed on the sidewalks of Atatürk Boulevard and the broad middle refuge, with the roads for vehicles widened. Thus, the traffic flow increased from four to eight lanes (Figs. 14, 15 and 16). Planning decisions limiting pedestrian movement and prioritising motor vehicle movement paved the way for Zafer Square and the conversion of other avenue squares into two independent parts. As Lefebvre emphasises: "The person in the car only sees what works for them, therefore, sees nothing but the route (materialised, mechanised, "technicalised") and sees it from a single point of view – functional utility: speed, legibility,

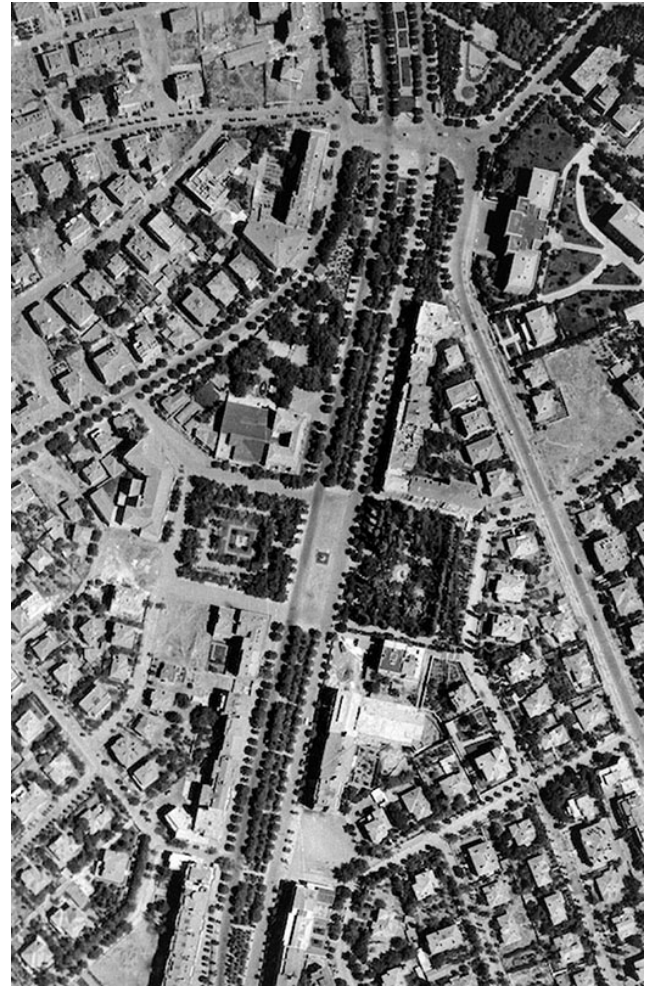


Fig. 14 Four lanes and wide refuge in Atatürk Boulevard, 1948 (General Directorate of Mapping (a))

convenience" (Lefebvre, 1991:p.313). In this context, Zafer Square has become an urban location where most users just pass at a fast pace amidst the heavy traffic flow.

The road expansion work along the Boulevard was initiated after the Uybadin Plan has changed the Boulevard's structure. The capital's number of vehicles and vehicle load increased with capitalist political positioning. Atatürk Boulevard and Zafer Square lost their former meaning and function as they evolved from a residential area to a business district. According to İlhan Tekeli (2018), connecting the city's all transportation network to Atatürk Boulevard is the most significant reason for transforming the built environment and public open spaces of the Boulevard. To sum up, in addition to the changes to building use since the 1950s, the Boulevard, which was a walking route between the residential areas in the Early Republican Period, and the avenues on the boulevard, have been redefined both spatially and semantically within the new scale that is formed by increased traffic, widened roads and narrowed sidewalks.



Fig. 15 Eight lanes in Atatürk Boulevard after Uybadin Yücel Plan, 1957 (General Directorate of Mapping (b))



Fig. 16 Four lanes and wide refuge in Atatürk Boulevard, 1950's (Keskinok, 2009)

2.2 Structural effects: the transformation of east side to an empty space

Zafer Square (Fig. 17) and other green public spaces on the boulevard were divided into two separate pieces with the heavy traffic lost their integrity and visibility between high-rise buildings. Zafer Square, formed by symmetrical green areas on both sides of Atatürk Boulevard coming together to create a rectangular shape, lost its original structure with



Fig. 17 Before the Gasino Building constructed in Zafer Square, 1960's (VEKAM (c))

the casino⁸ built on the east side in 1963⁹ (Figs. 18 and 19). In addition to the original trail (shape, landscape, pathway, surrounding buildings), the entire 30– year landscape has disappeared with this structure.

Along with the undefined space in front of the rectangular prism-shaped structure (Fig. 20), the full and empty balance of the square has changed, and it lost its former meaning and function. To give a new meaning to this undefined space, an underground passage was designed with the slogan "square on the outside passage underground". The construction of Zafer Passage was completed in 1967¹⁰ (Yüksel, 2000:p.235). Its plan was accepted on 27.03.1970 on the condition that the area on it be "dedicated to green space" as seen in the zoning report (Fig. 20) and was opened for use in the same year (Anonymous, 1970).

This underground passage became an art centre for the city in the '70s with its forty-five shops that mostly consisted of booksellers and bookshops and the State Fine

⁸ The coffee house, known as casino in the literature, designed by Emin Onat (1910–1961) in 1952 (Cengizkan, 2004). After the Democratic Party's coming to power, this intervention in Zafer Square, which is one of the symbolic places of the Republican ideology, is a manifestation of political reckoning in urban space, which is known by its proximity to the DP government, was designed by Emin Onat in the 1954 elections.

⁹ The building date of the casino structure belonging to Emin Onat is not exactly known. As a result of the studies carried out in the archive of the Map General Directorate, the building was in the process of construction in the aerial photograph dated 1963 (Fig. 19). In July 2018, in the studies carried out in Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, Directorate of Reconstruction, no plan or decision regarding the structure of the casino was found.

¹⁰ A source regarding the opening of the Victory Passage has not been found. However, the construction of the passage was completed in 1967 according to the testimony of the Ankara counterpart named "Kulüstür Turgut" in the interview conducted by Yüksel and Emiroğlu in *Kebikeç Magazine* (Yüksel, 2000:p.235).



Fig. 18 Zafer Square after Gasino Building and Zafer Passage was constructed, 1970's (Keskinok, 2009)

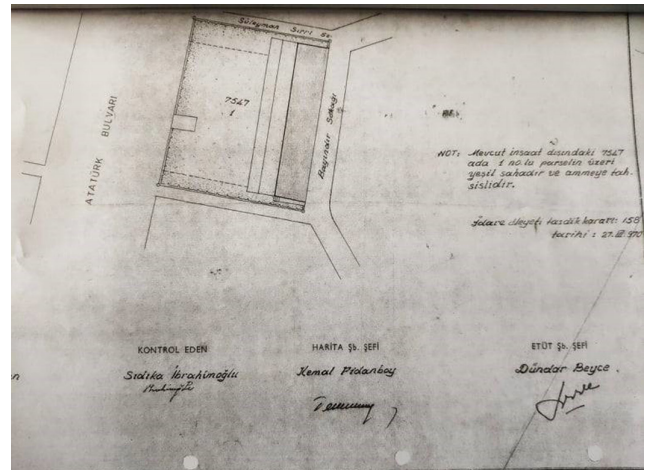


Fig. 20 Zoning Plan of Zafer Passage (Anonymous, 1970)

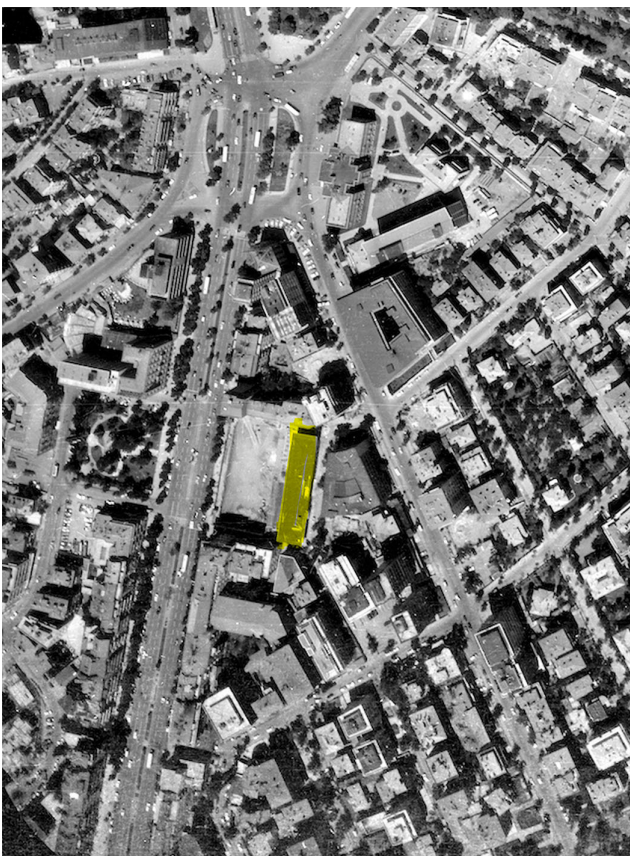


Fig. 19 Zafer Square after Gasino Building and Zafer Passage was constructed Aerial Map of Zafer Square, 1966 (General Directorate of Mapping (c))

Arts Gallery. Paintings, sculptures and ceramics exhibitions by both state and private enterprises were displayed in this gallery. The passage, with its location near university campuses, became a meeting point with its entrance on the road level and, in this context, became an important place in collective memory¹¹ (Fig. 21).

¹¹ These evaluations were derived from the framework of the information obtained from users who experienced the period.

There were efforts to keep the square feature of Zafer Square by pushing the casino structure to the border of the parcel, but this failed. Even though the Zafer Passage underground and the green space above was built with the same efforts and served as a place for different public and urban relations, it was insufficient to give meaning to this undefined void. It became ineffective as it lost its meaning as a city symbolising the Early Republican Ankara with this structure built on one of the pieces that formed the square. The Zafer Monument, which adds its meaning to the square, has disappeared from the heavy traffic and turned into a singular object that is obliged to remind the ideological message of a certain period (Fig. 22).

Another significant result of this process caused the spatial disintegration of Zafer Square and damaged the square identity; consequently, it is now known as Zafer Park. As a result of this loss of integrity and meaning, Zafer Park has become an instrumental element that provides the "human scale" feeling for the city centre, which intensifies and rises.

The loss of one of these green spaces, where everyday life in the city flourishes, has made the transformation of the other legitimate. In 1986, a similar underground passage was planned in the west wing of the park by the Metropolitan Municipality. Within the scope of the construction project with 125 shops and 450 vehicles, which runs 14 meters underground, it was required that the trees on Zafer Park should be cut down. After the municipality started cutting trees, the active users¹² of the park reacted to this intervention in the park and prevented the cutting process. This project, which was brought to

¹² Since Zafer Park is in the city centre, it does not have a homogeneous user. However, it has a more active daily use by the employees of the Council of State, located on the border of the park.



Fig. 21 Zafer Passage Entrance as a meeting point, 1970's (Antolojankara (a))



Fig. 22 Zafer Monument in Traffic, 2017 (Antolojankara (b))

court by members of the State Council, was cancelled by the District Administrative Court (Anonymous, 1986b). Even though Zafer Square lost its characteristic of being a square or its old meaning with the intervention in 1963, the public opposition that stopped the project planned to be implemented in 1986 prevented the erasure of its mark on the city. In an article published in Milliyet Newspaper the next day, this incident was seen as a social fight with the headline "People saved the plane

trees" (Fig. 23) (Anonymous, 1986a). On the other hand, Güneş Newspaper, which supported the municipality's tree cutting and construction activities, used the Mayor's expression "We've cut a few old trees" to legitimise the action (Anonymous, 1986b). In this case, as a reference to the theoretical discussion made at the beginning of this paper, we can reiterate that "nature is political as well as space."

Like the whole city, Zafer Square was affected by the context of city policies pursued by the municipal government after the administration changed with the local elections in the early 90s. The building on the west side of the square, which was operated first as a coffee house, later a casino and then as the terminal building of Turkish Airlines, was transformed into a department store by the conservative municipal administration with a neoliberal discourse (Figs. 24 and 25). In addition, the way citrus juice kiosks, that belonged to the municipality, were placed along the border of the park highlights further structures that prevent pedestrian flow to and from the bus stops aligned to the backbone of Atatürk Boulevard; which became the centre of public transportation in the 1950s (Fig. 26).

Thus, Zafer Square was one of the public spaces affected by the spatial transformation of historical processes that affected society and city space and its impact on Ankara and Atatürk Boulevard. Nowadays, the Metro station stop and exit construction in Zafer Park has started; although it has the potential to protect the park's existence, it is an indication that the transformation of Zafer square continues even today (Fig. 27).

3 Conclusion

Three factors were determinant in Zafer Square's formation and spatial transformation, one of the important



Fig. 23 Municipality's Tree Cutting in Zafer Park, 1986 (Anonymous, 1986a)



Fig. 24 Zafer Passage Entrance and Mall (Giyim Dünyası), 2000's (İnandım, 2017)



Fig. 25 Zafer Passage Entrance and Mall (Giyim Dünyası) (Akbulut, 2020)



Fig. 26 Buffets and bus stops of the Metropolitan Municipality (Ayçi, 2018)

open areas of the Early Republican Period. The first of these factors was the process that prepared the change



Fig. 27 Construction of the Metro Station in Zafer Park (Akbulut, 2020)

due to the formation of Zafer Square with urban plans of Ankara and the unpredictability in the plan decisions. The original positioning of Zafer Square is not considered as a boulevard square in Lorcher's plan decisions. Atatürk Boulevard, by connecting spaces of equal geometry on both sides, makes it possible to create a square. However, Lorcher's decision to design Zafer Square as a boulevard square made it unique but also open to changes in Atatürk Boulevard. In the plans prepared by Jansen after the Lorcher Plan, especially the envisioning of the 11-meter-wide median created on the axis of Atatürk Boulevard paved the way for the use of Zafer Square as a green area.

Zafer Square stands out with its prioritising of pedestrians and as a green boulevard square up until the 1950s, then entered the process that started its transformation. As a result of changes in the economic policies of Turkey that are compliant with global geography, Ankara's political and urban positioning has changed as with other Anatolian cities. As Ankara transformed into a populous city with rapid migration, Yenışehir, where Zafer Square is located, was the region where the change was felt most. The city's density has affected the vehicle traffic on Atatürk Boulevard and changed its character, and the green belt of the boulevard has been narrowed to make it a vehicle road. With this development, instead of being an element that completes Zafer, Atatürk Boulevard has become a distinctive element that cuts it in half like a knife. Thus, it made way for Zafer Square to be two different parks, Zafer I and Zafer II.

As Zafer Square started to exist as Zafer I and Zafer II parks in urban space, the third stage in its transformation was the structural additions and subtractions to its sides. The original mark and landscape of the eastern piece called

Zafer I had been lost with the casino construction, and the Zafer Passage, which opened in its place in 1967, added another meaning with its marquee at ground level and the sales and exhibition areas at the lower level. Even though the casino structure turned into a sales area known as "Clothing World" (Giyim Dünyası) in the 1990s, with neoliberal policies, public relations were redefined and produced together with the Zafer Passage enabled Zafer to maintain its claim to be a social space. On the other hand, Zafer II continues its existence as a public green space as planned in the early years of the Republic; although, its relationship with the boulevard was cut off by bus stops and municipal buffets. Today, it is possible to follow the traces of the structural, semantic and social transformation of Zafer as an urban public open space that finds itself new forms like a living organism and is reproduced with different relationships.

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