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CULTURAL LANDSCAPES OF AVIATION PARK IN TERMS OF VISITORS' VIEWPOINT: CASE OF ESKISEHIR AVIATION PARK

Semra Günay Aktaş
Professor Doctor
Department of Tourism Management, Anadolu University
Eskisehir, Turkey
semragunay@anadolu.edu.tr

Önder Yayla
Research Assistant
Department of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts, Anadolu University
Eskisehir, Turkey
onder.yayla@gmail.com

Sema Ekincek
Research Assistant
Department of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts, Anadolu University
Eskisehir, Turkey
semaekincek@anadolu.edu.tr

Abstract

Aviation Park is a part of the cultural landscape of Eskisehir where historical and technological processes are exhibited. The aim of this study is to reveal the cultural landscape of the park by using thoughts of the visitors of Eskisehir Aviation Park. In this study, qualitative research method was conducted. Interviews were carried out in the park with 33 participants. Visitors' perceptions on the aviation park were analyzed with content analysis method. Findings were examined under four headings as the reasons to visit the aviation park, significant elements of the landscape of the park for visitors, feelings aroused by Aviation Park and objects, people or events that make them feel such intense feelings. In the result of the study, it was seen that the elements consisting of the park's cultural landscape were aircraft, airplane, historical background, garden, Vecihi Hürkuş and Cengiz Topel.

Key words: Cultural Landscape, Aviation Park, Eskisehir.

Introduction

Landscape can be defined as an appearance emerged as a result of the combination of natural and cultural environments. Landscapes are "areas of interaction, and action of natural and/or human agents as people perceive" (Çakcı and Çelem, 2009: 89). The natural landscape is the appearance of the areas where human being has no or little influence; therefore natural order is well preserved in those areas. A categorization can be made as mountain landscape, sea landscape, lake landscape and so on (Gül, 2000: 100). On the other hand, cultural landscape is the area in which natural landscape has been changed by people (Duran Gökalp and Yazgan, 2013: 26). Some places have embraced the minds of societies with their strong beliefs, artistic and aesthetic values and traditional attire to embody the extraordinary relationship between people and nature. In addition, it shows the human relations developed with the natural environment.

Cultural landscapes are linked to the characteristics of the natural environment in which human being lives. It is also the result of a special relationship between human and nature. Cultural landscapes are indicators of the natural environment, humanity, creativeness, social development, imagination, evolution of settlement, land usage technologies, economical structure and cultural powers. Accordingly, cultural landscapes are geographical areas having cultural and aesthetic values related to historical events, activities and people, and keep natural and cultural resources together. A cultural landscape occurs from physical elements such as roads, buildings, industrial site, park, garden, graveyard, campus and vegetation as well as non-physical elements reflecting tradition, custom, cultural values. It can be said that cultural landscapes have the three main components: natural structure, cultural life and historical process (Özsüle, 2005: 8-10).

UNESCO separates cultural landscapes into three groups. These are (https://whc.unesco.org/en/culturallandscape/):
a) The areas, which are clearly defined areas and deliberately designed and created by people, are the most easily identified geographic landscapes. These include parks, gardens, majority of religious buildings and monumental buildings built for aesthetic reasons.
b) Geographically evolved landscapes constitute the other class. Initially, they were formed as a result of social, economic, administrative and/or religious necessity, and developed in accordance with the natural environment. They are divided into two subcategories:
    i. Relict/fossil landscapes: although the evolutionary processes have ended, important distinctive features and materials are still visible.
    ii. It is the geographical view of contemporary societies that is related to the traditional way of life, and the evolutionary process is still going on.
c) The last category is the associative cultural landscape. The inclusion of such landscapes on the world heritage list is justifiable by virtue of the powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence that may be insignificant or even absent.

Cultural landscapes have different characteristics and cannot be reduced to a single origin or dimension. They may be related to a person or event, and may range from a small area to a region that covers thousands of acres. What is important is that the cultural landscape includes the narratives of culture and expresses the regional identity. Cultural landscape foundation defines four types of cultural landscapes. These are (https://tclf.org/places/about-cultural-landscapes):
- Designed landscapes: Areas designed in compliance with design principles in a recognized style or pursuant to a tradition.
- Ethnographic landscapes: Landscapes including various natural and cultural sources concerning ethnographic structure.
- Historical landscapes: Places that represent a historical phenomenon, event or person.
- Vernacular (local) landscapes: Landscapes reflecting social and cultural behaviors of individuals, families or communities as well as physical, biological and cultural features of daily life.

The cultural landscape has evolved by people who shaped it with their activities. The landscape reflects the physical, biological and cultural characteristics of everyday life with the social or cultural attitudes of an individual, a family or a community. Rapid population growth, development with increasing acceleration all around the world, urbanization, rural areas, expansion of industry, expansion of energy production areas, lack of sensitivity to preservation of cultural geographical appearance in legal regulations and spatial changes represent the roots of the past threatens views.

Cultural landscapes that help societies to understand themselves better and offer them natural, economic, ecological, social, entertainment and educational opportunities are heritage for all people. Cultural landscapes that provide natural, economic, ecological, social, entertainment and educational opportunities that help societies better understand themselves are heritage for all people (https://tclf.org/places/about-cultural-landscapes). Due to the fascinating interplay between people and the environment, the cultural heritage and the preservation of traditional cultures are maintained by the UNESCO in the world heritage sites (https://whc.unesco.org/en/culturallandscape/).

Anadolu University Aviation Park as a Part of Cultural Landscape

Aviation Park is located in Eskisehir, and has historical roots in Eskisehir. Eskisehir had a significant location for aviation both in independence war and in early years of Turkish republic, and has even today. All kinds of activities concerning aviation is settled in Eskisehir. Most distinguished engineer soldiers of air forces command work in air supply center localized in Eskisehir. Sportive aviation activities are performed. Anadolu University provides associate degree, bachelor's degree, postgraduate degree and doctoral programs concerning aviation. Even pilot trainings are provided. Anadolu University incorporates a civil airport. It provides a commercial air transportation training. There is a company producing parts for aviation. Aviation Park has been established by Eskisehir provincial environment protection foundation in 1997. It was assigned to air force command in 2006 and to Anadolu University in 2011. As Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of republic of Turkey, stated that "Future is in the sky", its mission was specified in 2012 as aviation science communication.

Eskisehir is a significant center of republic of Turkey in terms of aviation history. Selahattin Reşit Alan was sent to abroad by Atatürk, returned to Turkey after completion of his education and, started his career in Eskisehir. He was a pilot at the same time and has designed the second military aircraft of turkey However, he could not receive the necessary support. Later, he resigned from the public service and made first Turkish aircrafts with Nuri Demirağ who planned to establish national aviation industry. He was martyred in 1938 with the aircraft made by himself as result of his aircraft hit the ditch on the runway while landing on the acceptance facilities in Eskisehir. Selahattin Reşit Alan virtual reality hangar was built in Aviation Park in the memory of him.

The area where Aviation Park is located is classified in the city plan as green-field for land usage. Aircrafts constitute the main factors of the park and these aircrafts are exhibited outdoors. Aircrafts are exhibited in the park amongst trees, meadows, walking trails, pools and benches. Park is arranged very beautifully. There is a controlled gate and a security officer at the entrance of the park, the entrance to the park is free and free-of-charge. Park is centrally located in the city. The intercity tramway station is in front of the park and park's name was given to the tramway station. After Aviation Park adopts in 2012 by the central mission of science communication, a number of projects were applied. Aircrafts which are cults for aviation enthusiasts were moved to the park. An aircraft in the aviation park was painted in colors that children will appreciate in accordance with opinions of an expert. Two aircrafts were painted in their original colors with specialist teams in accordance with expert opinions.

An aircraft from Turkish stars acrobatics team has been one of the aircrafts with which people took the pictures the most. A virtual reality hangar was built in the memory of Selahattin Reşit Alan who is a very important figure for Turkish aviation history, and virtual flights were organized with Vecihi XIV aircraft and under piloting of Vecihi Hürkuş. It has been an important field of event for aviation enthusiasts and students. Vecihi XIV was characterized with 3D picture. This has been one of the areas on which people took pictures the most. It raises awareness on Vecihi Hürkuş and his aircrafts. Vecihi Hürkuş is a Turkish pilot who took the flight over Eskisehir, which changed the destiny of independence

war. He mentions in his memories that he was embraced by the aviation enthusiast residents of Eskisehir. 3D picture of Vecihi XIV, which is an aircraft designed and produced by him, was drawn in the entrance of the Aviation Park. Park also started attracting attention as a photo shooting area for brides and grooms. This situation may be considered as a proof of landscape beauty.

Method

Researcher visited the aviation park in order to specify the field of study and made an interview with the head of the aviation park. The audio records that were recorded during the interview were deciphered and a content analysis was performed thereafter. An observation was made in relation with the park, and the observations were supported with images. Two weeks later, Aviation Park was revisited for renewing observations. The findings obtained were recorded, and the research was supported with the images recorded by researches as well as the images obtained from archive of management of aviation park concerning the development of the park.

In this study, interview technique was used as a data collection tool. It is a data collection tool that tries to reveal the factors that direct people's feelings, attitudes and feelings and behaviors about a case (Ekiz, 2009). A semi-structured questionnaire was used in the study. While creating the questions of the interview form, the literature was used. Data for this study was collected on May 10, 2018. Interviews were carried out in Aviation Park with 33 participants. Descriptive analysis method, which is one of qualitative research methods, is used in analyzing interview data. The data obtained are summarized and interpreted according to the previously determined themes.

The voices recorded during the interviews were transferred from the audio recorder to the computer and deciphered. In order to ensure the reliability of the research, a variety of researchers were conducted and an expert review was conducted. Data analysis was carried out by three different experts in the field. The researchers evaluated the study together with a person who had general knowledge about the research subject and specialized in qualitative research methods.

Findings

The findings related to the demographic information of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

	Groups	f	%
Age	18-25 years old	14	42.42
	26-35 years old	6	18.18
	36-45 years old	6	18.18
	46 years old and above	7	21.21
Education Level	High school degree	14	42.42
	Associate's or Bachelor's degree	16	48.48
	Master's or Doctoral degree	3	9.09

As seen in Table 1, 42.42% of the participants are in the 18-25 age range; 21.21% of them are 46 years old and above. 18.18% of them are in the 26-35 age range, and 18.18% of them are in the 26-35 age range. According to the education level of the participants, 48.48% of them have Associate's or

Bachelor's degree, 42.42% of them have high school degree, and 9.09% of them have Master's or Doctoral degree. Majority of the participants are young and well educated persons.

The findings arising from the views of the participants about the aviation park were interpreted by making quotations directly from the participants' opinions under the related theme topics. The questions used in the study were taken as themes. These themes are examined under four headings as the reasons to visit the aviation park, significant elements of the landscape of the park for visitors, feelings aroused by Aviation Park and objects, people or events that make them feel such intense feelings.

Theme 1. Reasons for Visiting Aviation Park

The reason why the participants visited the aviation park was primarily to show their relatives around. Therefore, the participants visit the aviation park in order to show their wives, friends, children or friends around. It was also seen that participants generally wanted to show the planes to the people they went along with. When these findings are examined, it is seen that people who see Aviation Park usually want to show this area to their relatives and they want to share this area with their loved ones. In addition, the participants have such feelings like wonder and desire to visit the aviation park.

Theme 2. Significant Elements of the Landscape of Aviation Park for Visitors

In the research, it is found that the most significant elements of the landscape of aviation park are; aircrafts, location, planes, historical background and garden in it. As Aviation Park is also an aviation museum, it has been seen that the main elements that attract the attention of the visitors and reflected to the park are the aircrafts, airplanes and historical background. On the other hand, garden in the museum is seen as a significant element for the aviation park. When we consider all these elements in general, it is seen that geographical location is considered as a significant element. Visitors emphasized the fact that the airplanes are in the garden, in the open air, in the greens and being on the ring road as the location, being close to the main road and being seen from the tram. The fact that there are areas to relax and relax in the park is emphasized by the visitors. It was also considered as an interesting element of the placement of planes and the layout of the area. At the same time, the historical narrative of the airplanes was also mentioned by the visitors. It was said that airplanes and aircraft missiles were remarkable. Old warplanes and many different planes are the first elements getting attraction of visitors. For example, f104 is considered by many to be an interesting element. Detailed information about the aircraft is also mentioned as an attractive element. The fact that touching helicopters is a good experience has also been described as an interesting element by the visitors.

Theme 3. Feelings Aroused By Aviation Park

The emotions aroused by people in the aviation park are determined as proud, nationalism, happiness, thriller, excitement. National feelings of people come to the fore in the aviation park. The story of the old planes and their ancestors' heroic stories greatly affected the participants during their visit. For this theme, the visitors stated that they wanted to be the Turkish aircraft and that the feelings of nationalism were swelling. The fact that there are a lot of American airplanes made me sad. Most of the visitors were so proud of these sentiments that they aroused my national feelings.

They also stated that they were touched after they learned the history of airplanes. Touching the planes and watching them excited. They said that it made them happy to live the flight moment. Some visitors have stated that they have a sense of war. In addition to saying that national consciousness and knowledge have increased, many participants have emphasized that this visit adheres to happiness and good feelings. Many visitors emphasized the experience that he saw in the sky, seeing objects

close to him, even to ride into and even said that he liked the contact very much. Besides, they stated that they felt feelings like national consciousness and admiration.

Theme 4. Objects, People or Events That Make You Feel Such Intense Feelings

The factors that play an important role in feeling the emotions of the participants are respectively airplanes, aircrafts, Vecihi Hürkuş and Cengiz Topel. The most prominent expressions for this theme are also expressed as the factors causing people to find themselves in the history of aviation. Vecihi Hürkuş and Cengiz Topel have been mentioned especially since they have caused many emotions in Aviation Park due to their place and importance in aviation history. In addition to the airplane and the aircraft, the Turkish flags on the airplanes, the fact that the airplanes are real and the solo Turkish and Turkish stars are the points that are mentioned.

Conclusion and Discussion

Cultural landscapes cover urban or rural areas, including historic settlements (Mrda ve Bojanić Obad Šćitaroci, 2016). Aviation Park is a part of the cultural landscape of the Eskisehir urban area. Historical and technological processes are exhibited. Old aircrafts which are deemed as unique parts for aviation enthusiasts are exhibited in their original and most attractive forms in Anadolu University Aviation Park. Events are organized for students and parents in compliance with the science communication mission regarding aviation. Aviation is an important activity for Eskisehir. For this reason, Aviation Park is a well localized, well arranged and well managed area. Considering the roots of aviation history, it may be considered as a historic designed landscape. In addition to the historical roots of the city, it refers to important people and aircrafts and even to incidents available in the aviation history. For this reason, it is appropriate to define it as a historic vernacular landscape. It has a position of recreation area for the city residents. It also serves as a training area in terms of raising awareness in the aviation area. By means of this feature, it reflects the feelings of a daily life in the city, by communing with the departments, airports and even pilot trainings of Anadolu University faculty of civil aviation. Aviation Park can be considered as one of the important centers of attraction in Eskisehir by evaluating it in terms of cultural tourism.

Acknowledgements

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Biographical Notes

Semra Günay Aktaş is a Professor in the Department of Tourism Management, Anadolu University, Eskisehir, Turkey where she teaches courses on tourism development and tourism geography. Her research focuses on Geography, Tourism Geography, Geographic Information Systems.

Önder Yayla is a research assistant in the Department of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts, Anadolu University, Eskisehir, Turkey. His research focuses on Gastronomy Tourism and Food Geography.

Sema Ekincek is a research assistant in the Department of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts, Anadolu University, Eskisehir, Turkey. Her research focuses on Gastronomy and Culinary Arts.