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CASE STUDY ON HOW ACTIVITIES DIFFER BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN IN AN URBAN OUTDOOR SPACE

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Abstract

Debates on the status of Turkish women generally focus on private spheres, but constraints and inequality in using urban outdoor spaces are generally neglected. The aim of this study is to understand how women use open public spaces in Turkey. To this end, gender differences in spatial and activity patterns were considered and accepted as a reflection of inequality and negative attitude towards women. Observation and behavior mappings were used to determine the gender attributes of space, such as whether men and women have equal control on behavior settings and whether both genders show any differences in their activities.

Keywords: Turkish Women, Gender Roles, Open Public Space, Behavior Setting, Activity Pattern.

1. Introduction

Because of the increasing amount of violence against women, their social status is being debated in Turkey nowadays. One major problem is how to overcome inequity for women and improve their social status. Approaches have mostly focused on women in the private sphere, domestic life, and a social status point of view, but women's social life has been neglected, especially activities in open public spaces.

Society's oppression resulting from the social construction of gender roles (traditional, religious, or ideological) have made open spaces restricted for access and use for women in Turkey, and they do not have the same degree of freedom as men. Koskela (1997: 302) claimed that women's confidence in using public space is a reflection of gender equality. Day (2000: 103-104) explained how women's use of public space is constrained through the association of women with low status and stated that theoretical advances are needed to better understand contemporary women's experiences of public spaces.

2. Gender Construction and Place Relationship

The connection between male-female and public-private dichotomies is cited very often in the literature, and they reflect patriarchy, subordination of women, separation of male and female activities, the idea of women as endangered in public space, and the association of public space (the workplace) with men and private domestic space (the household) with women (Akin and Demirel, 2003: 73; Buckingham-Hatfield, 2000: 2; Day, 2000: 103, 2001: 109; Kansız and Akin Acuner, 2009: 30; Krenichyn, 2004: 118; Mehta, 1999: 79; Reid, 2008: 489-490; Rendell, 1999: 101). Men's and women's experiences of the same place can be quite different, and these differences are regarded as a part of social construction and a reflection of culture (Massey, 1999: 129; Sewell, 2003: 238). The research aimed at explaining these differences generally focuses on two ideas. These differences can be the outcome of both physical attributes of space and/or social construction of the society to which the users belong.

The first group of research focuses on women's fear of crime and tries to explain the physical attributes of open spaces that evoke fear of harassment and violence and/or coping strategies of women (Blöbaum and Hunecke, 2005: 467-482; Burgess, 1998: 126-128; Fisher and Nasar, 1992: 35-65; Wesely and Gaarder, 2004: 647-649). The studies in this group emphasize that women feel more fear of crime than men. The latter group of research generally focuses on how cultural or social factors affect and produce gendered space, the social or cultural reasons behind the difference in women's and men's experiences, and conception of the space or the relationships between the social construction of gender and the production of gendered space (Day, 2001: 109;

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Mehta,1999: 67; Starkweather, 2007: 356; Rendell, 1999: 101). These studies address the gender roles attributed by societies to women and men. How these roles are reflected on the use of urban public spaces was explained, especially inequality of access to public spaces for men and women, such as how women's place is the private sphere of the home or shopping centers, and men's place is the office or city center and open public spaces (Ardener, 1999: 115-116; Buckingham-Hatfield, 2000: 5-6; Günindi Ersöz, 2015: 80; Massey, 1999: 129-130; Sewell, 2003: 239).

Researchers have seen gender constructions as the reason for women being discouraged from using public spaces and a major obstacle for women's engagement in outdoor recreation (Wesely and Gaarder, 2004: 646). Sewell (2003: 253) concluded that sharing public space with members of the other gender helped make shared participation in public life more conceivable. Similarly, Day (2000: 110) claims that women's use of public space may challenge restrictive gender and race norms and involvement in public spaces. Preferred public spaces accommodate interaction with friends, family, and strangers (Day, 2000: 110). By examining gendered urban open spaces, a built environment and its role in social change and gender construction can be understood. Successful planning decisions can be made in order to prevent the occurrence of gendered public spaces and unequal access for women.

3. Gender Construction in Turkey and Women in Urban Open Spaces

Western studies commonly indicate the reason for gender equality as gender roles, but the factors that produce oppression of women are more diverse and intense in Turkey. Like women in Western countries, Turkish women are also restricted by patriarchal gender roles, but at the same time, oppression based on religion and ideology also surrounds them.

Even though there is no legal arrangement that restricts women's access to open public spaces, women do not have the same freedom as men like in other public areas. The possible reasons are as follows:

- Women feel more fear of crime than men (Kansız and Akin Acuner, 2009: 67; Koskela, 1999: 111; Fisher and Nasar, 1992:51)
- Women are expected to behave more carefully in social life because of the oppression resulted from traditional, religious, and ideological gender roles (Demir, 1999: 12; Ereş, 2006: 47-49; Gökariksel and Secor, 2010: 131-145, Kansız and Akin Acuner, 2009: 86; KSGM, 2008a: 27; KSGM, 2008b: 9; Üstün, 2009: 362). A recent debate in Turkey is a good example of this. In a morality speech, Turkey's deputy prime minister said, 'Women should not laugh in public,' to which women from all around the world as well as Turkey reacted sharply.
- Women are responsible from housekeeping and childcare (KSGM, 2008b: 36; KSGM; 2012: 26; Yılmaz, 2006: 102) so they generally do not have enough time to go out (Day, 2000: 107; Kansız and Akin Acuner, 2009: 79; Yılmaz, 2006: 100).
- Most women do not have enough money to spend for themselves and are economically dependent on their husband or family (Akin and Demirel, 2003: 73; Day, 2000: 107; Ereş, 2006: 47-49; Kansız and Akin Acuner, 2009: 86; KSGM, 2008b: 35,44; Üstün, 2009: 387; Yılmaz, 2006: 100).

The reflections of these factors can be easily observed in urban open spaces. Women and girls are the user groups that benefit least from cities' cultural and recreational facilities (Kansız and Akin Acuner, 2009: 29). This study assumes that urban public spaces are the best areas for observing oppression and inequality that women have to endure and the reality that women are equal with men by law but not in practice. The differences between the percentages of genders, the activities they engage in, and their distribution in a place can provide spatial insights into inequity. This study therefore considered that the most striking image for understanding the social construction of gender roles in Turkey can be observed in urban public spaces.

Studies on women's relationships with open space are quite common in other countries but are lacking in Turkey. The studies focusing on the public life of women generally refer to the visibility of women in education, media, fashion, health, and other public spheres. The public sphere is generally cited with examples of headscarf bans in places such as universities and other educational places, politics, and the labor market. Activities in urban public spaces are neglected.

Answers to the following questions are essential for landscape architects since they are responsible for designing equally accessible public spaces for the whole society.

- What do women do outside their home?
- Do urban public spaces make women free or make them feel more oppression brought by social norms and hierarchies? It is stated that public spheres can be both inclusive by giving visibility and freedom, or exclusive by being made subject to oppression by becoming part of society (Çınar, 2005: 37). Which of these can be said for Turkish women?

- What are the differences between women and men in using open public spaces?

It is not only the duty of the law and social organizations but also the duty of landscape architects to find the reasons for issues and develop solutions to make public spaces more accessible and usable for women and make them feel freer there. Landscape architects share important responsibilities, and it is important for them to know gender roles and their impact on life in open public spaces.

In the government's report on 'National Action Plan Gender Equality 2008–2013,' the current status of women was discussed in regard to education, economy, power and decision-making mechanisms, poverty, health, media, environment, human rights, and violence (KSGM, 2008b: 63,67). The environment was taken as only a physical-ecological concept, and social, cultural, and perceptual dimensions were completely neglected. There have also been constructive developments for Turkish women. To increase the benefit levels from city services and visibility of women in cities, various works and strategic plans were developed in six cities as part of 'The United Nations Joint Program to Protect and Promote the Human Rights of Women and Girls (UNJP) – Women-Friendly Cities'. Within this program, studies produced concrete results about how to improve the physical attributes of cities. According to these works, 'gender issues to consider during the design of recreation areas' include security, privacy, accessibility, adequacy, and related equipment. Actions such as producing lively, long-lasting, and sustainable spaces, increasing mobility in spaces, arranging spaces as perceivable and legible, landscape arrangements that do not limit the view, good lighting, clear and easily understandable signs and boards on the streets and other areas, and increasing surveillance. These were suggested to increase the quality of the physical environment (BMOP, 2010: 49).

There are also some studies that looked at the relationship between urban public space and gender. Recent research was conducted on the relationship between open public space and gender in Turkey in Trabzon. This study showed that women's access to public spaces was limited due to social oppression and economic status (Yılmaz, 2006: 107-108). Also, it was found that women stated that the biggest problem was safety, and some physical features in particular were cited as evoking fear of crime. Similarly, another study about women's social status in Trabzon stated that women's use of spaces outside home and opportunities for sharing social life are restricted by social constructions (Üstün, 2009:386). Even though there are new opportunities afforded by urbanization, they are not usable for women.

Üstün (2009: 386) also determined that in order to access public spaces, women's paths must cross the domain of masculinity (by wearing men's clothes or behaving like men). Another finding is that cafes, parks, and waterfronts can be used by women in only the day time. At night time, these places become inappropriate for women. The most frequent reason for being outside home is shopping, which is why the most used outdoor spaces are shopping centers.

The behavior observations, conducted in Balıkesir city centre, revealed that men are high in number compared to women; the men/women ratio is different than the ratio of İstanbul on behalf of men. This study in which visual analysis of streets were compared to pedestrian movement in terms of gender showed that women tend to use the street with high number of shops and the preferences of users were differentiated in terms of visual properties (İnce Güney, 2014: 166-168). Tiftik and Turan (2015: 243-252) discussed the women in urban open spaces in terms of safety and fear of crime and considered the design principles of safe spaces for women.

Çınar (2005: 41) stated that gender identities are not only reflected through how women appear in public but also through activities in which they engage and what they do there. This study aims to reveal women's gender roles by determining how women use urban open spaces and which activities they engage in. By showing the reflections of these elements on a space, reliable debates can be made about how to design more democratic open public spaces for women.

4. Methodology

4.1. Behavior Setting Approach

Studies that try to explain the interaction between gender and space mostly used questionnaires, interviews, and random observations. Findings based on women's experiences according to their own statements are common (Burgess, 1998: 118-126; Day, 2001: 100-111; Koskela, 1997: 304-315, 1999: 115-121; Wesely and Gaarder, 2004: 649; Wattis et al., 2011: 753). However, discussion on how women actually use those places, which spatial elements afforded what kind of activities, and comparisons with men's activities were mostly lacking. In this study, gender differences in outdoor spaces were analyzed using activity patterns and visualized by means of a behavior setting approach.

Barker (1968: 4) created behavior setting theory as a method for analyzing the relationship between naturally occurring behavior and the ecological environment. It was stated that behavior and the environment

have a structure and parts with stable relations between them. He also emphasized that this structure cannot be discovered by observing a single part or considering the parts separately as in psychological experiments (Barker, 1968: 5-17; Schoggen, 1989: 6-29). Behavior setting theory was developed in order to introduce an efficient tool for analyzing an ecological environment.

4.2. Study Area

The study was conducted in Trabzon city, which was one of the six cities in the 'Women-Friendly Cities' project. 49.4% of the city population is men and 50.6% is women, and 52.2% of the population lives in city center. The literacy rates are 97.5% for men and 83.8% for women, while the labor force participation rate is 74.5% for men and 48.2% for women (BMOP, 2010: 151). The education and labor market rates show the inequity between the status of women and men in Trabzon.

Four behavior settings were chosen with different spatial attributes in an urban park that is easy to reach and used frequently in Trabzon's center (figure 1). These behavior settings were determined by using cognitive mapping and questionnaire techniques in a previous study (Mumcu et al., 2007; Mumcu, 2009). Behavior settings A and D are in the center of the park and used often. These two settings were found to be the safest areas in the park (Mumcu et al., 2007). Behavior settings B and C are located far away from the center of the park, and because of the topography changes there, visual access to central parts of the park is partly or completely blocked.

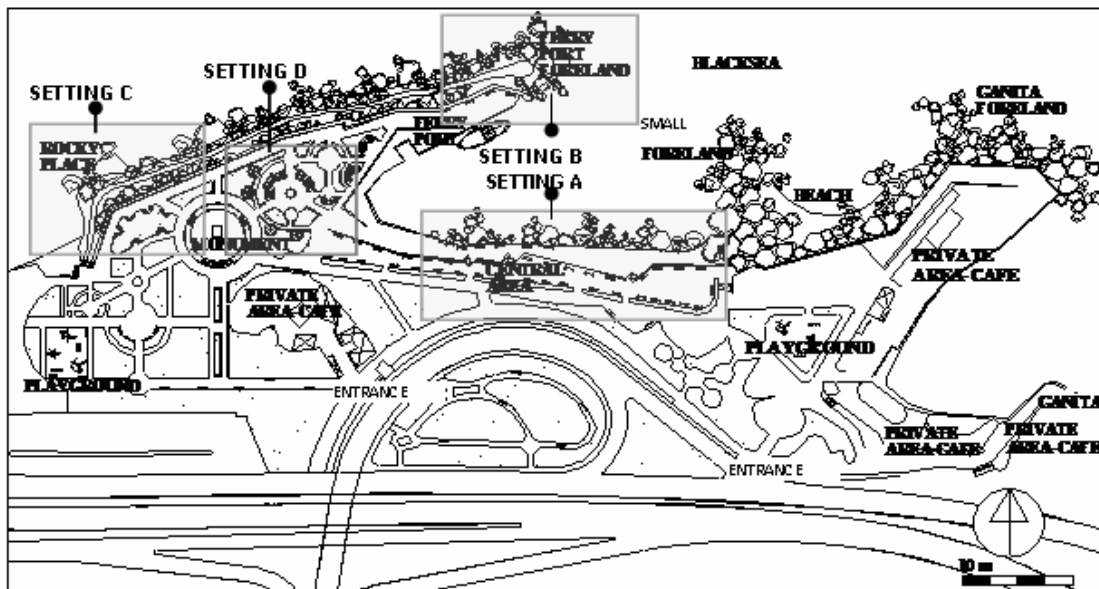


Figure 1. Behavior settings chosen for observation

4.3. Data Collection

Structured observation and questionnaire techniques were used to collect data. In the first phase, each of the settings was recorded with a video camera for a week (weekdays and weekends) in July between 5 pm and 7 pm. The period of the day when working hours ended were chosen with the belief that there would be more people to observe. In the second phase, the videos were coded on the plan of each setting. Each user's location, gender, accompanying social groups, type of activities done, and location were noted. In this way, behavior maps of the settings were produced, and attributes of gendered space were determined, such as whether men and women have equal control on behavior settings, gender differences in activities, and social gender constructions of these settings.

In the third phase, a questionnaire was conducted with 86 women. They were asked if there is any place in the park they avoid using. If the answer was yes, they were asked to specify why. In the last phase, the data gathered from behavior mappings were analyzed statistically using software, and the differences observed between genders were tested.

5. Results

5.1. The Reasons for Avoiding A Setting

The reasons mentioned by women for avoiding a setting in the park were diverse. The answers can be classified into three groups: environmental features (60.46%), users and their activities (23.26%), and personal

reasons (16.28%). Mostly, environmental features were mentioned, such as limited view of surroundings ('I can't see around,' 'This place is like out of the park and I can't see any place,' 'The viewpoint is too narrow,' 'It feels like it is not physically related to the park,' 'Enclosed'), or traffic noise ('Too close to traffic,' 'Noisy, cars'). Other rarely mentioned environmental features were uncomfortable seating ('The seating there is not comfortable,' 'It's not easy to sit on a rock,' 'There isn't any suitable equipment for sitting') or unpleasant smell ('The sea smells bad there,' 'There is a drain'). Limited view of the surroundings reflects the need to see and control what is going on in one's environment and can be desired for both safety needs and recreation.

Unwanted users or uses were also mentioned heavily, but surprisingly, only two of the users mentioned drinking alcohol directly ('They are drinking alcohol there, there are drunken people,' 'Drinking people'). Some other answers refer to drinking alcohol implicitly ('That place is dangerous,' 'There are people that can harm me,' 'Disturbing users,' 'Morally bad behaviors'). Avoiding places where people are drinking alcohol reflects a fear of crime and safety needs and reveals the fact that drinking alcohol means restriction of women's freedom in outdoor spaces. Some users mentioned fishermen, fishing activities, and equipment, as well as young users and their activities and ownerless dogs. While a few users mentioned crowded places to be avoided, a small group of respondents mentioned being in a desolate place as a reason. The answers for the last group were least frequent and reflect personal dislikes ('I don't like the view,' 'I don't like that place,' 'Uninviting,' 'The view is not good enough,' 'Bad view').

5.2. The Frequency of Genders and the Distribution Between/Within the Behavior Settings

In total, 4 195 users were observed in the four settings. 55.5% of users were man, 37.3% were women, and 7.6% were child ($\chi^2=1452.573$, 2 df, $p<0.01$). This result reveals inequity in women's and men's access and men's dominance in the park. Crosstab analysis and chi-square tests were conducted to see the distribution of genders between and inside the settings (table 1).

Women were observed the most in settings A (55.6% of total women) and D (20.6% of total women), which were places where drinking alcohol was never displayed, and they were least observed in setting B. The only setting where women users were observed more than men was setting D and was determined to be the safest place in the park. The results of the chi-square test ($\chi^2=130.458$, 6 df, $p<0.01$) showed that settings' physical attributes have an effect on gender distribution between settings. This reflects the fact that gender is a directing factor when make decisions about entering a setting.

Table 1: The distribution of genders between/inside different settings

Behavior Setting		Gender			Total
		Women	Men	Child	
Behavior Setting A	Count	870	1169	167	2206
	% within setting	39.4%	53.0%	7.6%	100.0%
	% within gender	55.6%	50.5%	52.5%	52.6%
	% of Total	20.7%	27.9%	4.0%	52.6%
Behavior Setting B	Count	107	432	41	580
	% within setting	18.4%	74.5%	7.1%	100.0%
	% within gender	6.8%	18.7%	12.9%	13.8%
	% of Total	2.6%	10.3%	1.0%	13.8%
Behavior Setting C	Count	265	405	54	724
	% within setting	36.6%	55.9%	7.5%	100.0%
	% within gender	16.9%	17.5%	17.0%	17.3%
	% of Total	6.3%	9.7%	1.3%	17.3%
Behavior Setting D	Count	322	307	56	685
	% within setting	47.0%	44.8%	8.2%	100.0%
	% within gender	20.6%	13.3%	17.6%	16.3%
	% of Total	7.7%	7.3%	1.3%	16.3%
Total	Count	1564	2313	318	4195
	% within setting	37.3%	55.1%	7.6%	100.0%
	% within gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	37.3%	55.1%	7.6%	100.0%



Figure 2. Setting A

Behavior maps of each setting helped to understand the relationship between activity types (behavior patterns), frequencies, locations, and genders inside settings. In behavior setting A (figure 2), women and men were distributed homogenously. In other settings, women and men preferred different locations within the settings, depending on different spatial components and attributes, so gendered places were determined.

Setting B, which had the fewest women, is a rocky bay with a rough slope that is partially blocked visually by the topography so it cannot be seen by the rest of the park. The rough rock surface does not afford walking or running and thus hinders easy access, escape, or receiving help in case of emergency (figure 3). Women in this setting were located at the closest places to the pedestrian way and to the higher parts of the slope, which can be seen easily from the rest of the park. They were never located in lower parts that were visually blocked or difficult to run away from (figure 4).

Setting C includes two spatially different spaces in elevation: lower rocky seaside parts and higher plain seating places in behind from where surveillance of the lower parts is afforded easily (figure 5). Women were observed most at the seating places and other places close to these equipped and easily walkable parts. In the places that were far away from the seating and not easily accessible, only men were observed. Since these places are another drinking location, women never went there (figure 6).

Setting D is located at the center of the park where all the pedestrian routes intersect (figure 7) and affords visual, locomotional, and auditory access. The formation of seating is circular, which affords sitting in groups and communication. Where the seating was dense, women and men were homogenous, but at the front part where there are only edge walls, men were observed frequently (figure 8).



Figure 3. Setting B



Figure 4. The distribution of users in setting B (a) and the gendered places (b)



Figure 5. Setting C



Figure 6. The distribution of users in setting C (a) and the gendered places (b)



Figure 7. Setting D

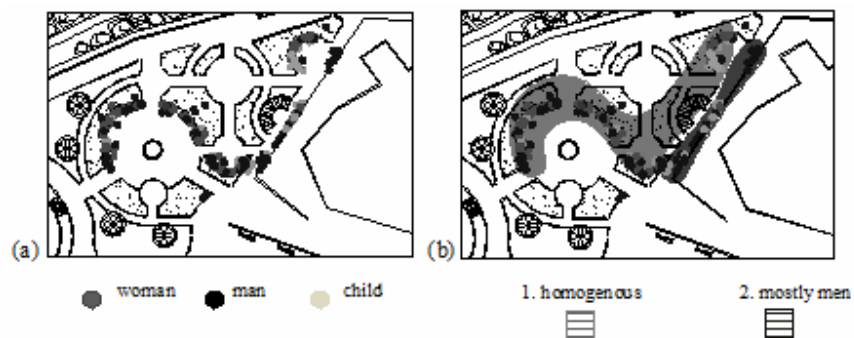


Figure 8. The distribution of users in setting D (a) and the gendered places (b)

5.3. Behavioral Characteristics (Behavior Patterns) of Genders

Table 2 shows the 25 types of behavior patterns that were identified. The most frequent behavior pattern was conversation of women (14.9%) and looking around for men (18.3%). The most frequent behavior patterns

in general were looking around, talking, and snacking. Men displayed all of the behavior patterns except knitting, but some of the behavior patterns were never displayed by women (drinking alcohol, lying down/sleeping, fishing, conversing with fishermen, singing, sitting and stretching feet on a wall, sun bathing, napping, and praying, as shown in figure 9). This result again reveals social oppression for women and men's freedom in outdoor public spaces. The chi-square test showed that the differences in the behavior patterns of women and men are statistically important ($\chi^2=533.186$, 48 df, $p<0.01$).

Table 2. Types and percentages of behavior patterns

Behavior pattern	Gender			Total
	women	Men	Child	
Watching around	8.6%	18.3%	2.8%	29.6%
Cell phone conversation	.3%	1.1%	.0%	1.5%
Fishing	.0%	.9%	.0%	.9%
Conversing	14.9%	17.4%	1.9%	34.3%
Picnic	.6%	.8%	.0%	1.5%
Conserving with fishers	.0%	.4%	.0%	.5%
Lying	.0%	.3%	.0%	.3%
Snacking	7.1%	7.3%	1.5%	15.9%
Smoking	.4%	.6%	.0%	1.0%
Playing with water (sea)	.2%	.3%	.3%	.7%
Drinking alcohol	.0%	1.9%	.0%	1.9%
Romanticism	2.8%	2.8%	.0%	5.5%
Reading	.2%	.4%	.0%	.6%
Taking photograph	.4%	.5%	.1%	1.0%
Singing	.0%	.1%	.0%	.1%
Listening to music	.3%	.0%	.0%	.4%
Sitting (and stretching foots on wall)	.0%	.5%	.0%	.5%
Observing sea	.7%	1.0%	.4%	2.1%
Feeding birds	.3%	.3%	.0%	.5%
Sun bathing	.0%	.0%	.3%	.3%
Knitting	.1%	.0%	.0%	.1%
Baby care	.2%	.0%	.2%	.5%
Napping	.0%	.1%	.0%	.0%
Praying	.0%	.1%	.0%	.0%
Celebration	.2%	.1%	.0%	.2%
Total	37.3%	55.1%	7.6%	100.0%



Figure 9. The behavior patterns that women never displayed: a) sitting and stretching foots on the wall, b) drinking alcohol, c) lying

In order to examine the relationship between the setting attributes and activities, behavior maps of settings were analyzed. It was found that in the central parts of the park (settings A and D), drinking alcohol was never displayed, and the places where the rest of the park cannot be seen were appropriate places for drinking alcohol. When behavior maps of setting B for genders and behavior patterns were compared, it was

found that women never entered the zone of drinking alcohol and these places were strongly avoided by women. The other setting where drinking alcohol was displayed showed the same tendency.

5.4. Gender Interaction with Spatial Components

The way women and men interact with components of the settings and differences in the ways they use them were determined by recording the location of each user and type of spatial component at that location (table 3). The crosstab analyses revealed that most of the women preferred using seating (74%), and rocks close to pedestrian ways were also used by women (17%). The results are similar for men, but the percentages are quite different ($\chi^2=215,281$, 10 df, $p<0.01$) (table 3). Men used seating less than women (74% of women, 58.5% of men), but they used other components more. This can be a reflection of the comfort expectations of women.

Table 3. The distribution of genders and the spatial components they interact with

		SPATIAL COMPONENTS						Total
		Seating	Rock	Steps	Walls	Standing	Ground-grass	
Women	Count	1157	266	10	85	46	0	1564
	% within gender	74.0%	17.0%	.6%	5.4%	2.9%	.0%	100.0%
Men	Count	1353	603	3	141	202	11	2313
	% within gender	58.5%	26.1%	.1%	6.1%	8.7%	.5%	100.0%
Child	Count	170	72	3	40	22	11	318
	% within gender	53.5%	22.6%	.9%	12.6%	6.9%	3.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	2680	941	16	266	270	22	4195
	% within gender	63.9%	22.4%	.4%	6.3%	6.4%	.5%	100.0%

The answers from the questionnaire support this finding. Some women mentioned uncomfortable places for sitting to be avoided. Women's lower use of other spatial components compared to men could result from two facts: women's comfort expectations from outdoor equipment and men's freedom and social constraints on women in outdoor spaces. Women users in mixed groups (women, men, and children) showed more tendencies to use other spatial components, revealing that women can be more relaxed when with men in outdoor spaces.

Table 4. Gender distribution in groups

		GROUP					Total
		Alone	Couple	Only M.	Only W.	Mixed	
Women	Count	68	370	0	593	533	1564
	% within gender	4.3%	23.7%	.0%	37.9%	34.1%	100.0%
Men	Count	451	370	1197	0	295	2313
	% within gender	19.5%	16.0%	51.8%	.0%	12.8%	100.0%
Child	Count	2	0	0	0	316	318
	% within gender	.6%	.0%	.0%	.0%	99.4%	100.0%
Total	Count	521	740	1197	593	1144	4195
	% within gender	12.4%	17.6%	28.5%	14.1%	27.3%	100.0%

5.5. Social Groups of Genders

Users were coded according to whom they came to the park with as follows: alone, couple, only women (two or more), only men (two or more), mixed (two or more women, men, or children). These data were analyzed by means of cross tabulation analyses in order to clarify the tendencies of women and men regarding whom they used public spaces with. Table 4 shows the distribution of gender groups. There is a salient difference between women and men going alone. Only 4.3% of women came to the park alone, in contrast to 19.5% for men. Sometimes, women and men showed similar tendencies: both genders mostly came with their fellows, but in second place, women were observed in mixed groups (figure 10) and men came alone. These results show that women have a tendency to go to the outdoor public space in groups consisting of only women or both women and men, while men's tendency was going with fellow men or alone. The chi-square test showed that this distribution is important ($\chi^2=3085.735$, 8 df, $p<0.01$).



Figure 10. Women in mixed user groups

6. Discussion

The results of this study reflect the adverse status of Turkish women in outdoor public spaces. In general, the inequality problem for women also exists for accessing and using outdoor public spaces. The salient difference between the number of women and men users reflects this problem, which was mentioned by previous studies (Bayazitođu and Ayyıldız Potur, 2013: 545; İnce Güney, 2014: 357; Üstün, 2009: 386). But the reasons for women avoiding some settings varies, and the most frequently mentioned reasons such as limited view of the surroundings and alcohol drinkers indicate their sensitivity to the need for safety, which is rooted in gender roles. On the other hand, avoiding a setting can be the outcome of high comfort expectations by women, such as avoiding places that are poorly equipped, have unpleasant smells, or are close to noise.

The findings also showed that men and women do not have equal control of behavior settings; some of them were territories of men, and women tended to avoid these places. This is a typical reflection of women's low status in society and also fear of violent behavior by men against women. The places with blocked visual access were especially avoided by women. The same tendency of women was mentioned by other researchers like Burgess (1998: 120), Wesely and Gaarder (2004: 655-657), Starkweather (2007: 363-365), and Koskela (1999: 113) and explained as a coping strategy for fear of crime. Apparently, women stay away from the places where effective surveillance cannot be achieved and it is difficult to receive or call for help in case of emergency, which supports the findings by Mehta (1999: 77), as women reported being close to 'help' from others as another means of guarding their safety. Starkweather (2007: 357) defined this kind of behavior as 'Avoidance strategies,' which involve people isolating themselves from places or situations that they perceive to be unsafe. Therefore, when people engage in avoidance strategies, they are by definition accepting some degree of limitation on their access to space.

Alcohol consumers are also another factor that contributes women's fear of crime. In the park, it was observed that women never used places where alcohol is consumed, which reveals that drinking alcohol is a restriction of the freedom of women in outdoor spaces. Burgess (1998: 128) explained this avoidance strategy as resulting from male ideology that men can lose control of themselves through excessive sexual desire or alcohol and are therefore not responsible for their actions. Any women who have the temerity to use these places are 'asking for trouble' (Burgess, 1998: 123), so avoidance was often portrayed by women as not a serious constraint but as a normal, rational, and even necessary part of life (Koskela, 1999: 121; Starkweather, 2007: 367).

Another coping strategy mentioned in the literature and observed in the study area is women's tendency for not being alone in open public spaces. The general tendency of women coming in groups and mostly going to the safest places also reflects women's fear of crime. The same tendency of women was determined by other researches (Bayazitođu and Ayyıldız Potur, 2013: 545; Demirbař 2012: 86). According to Starkweather (2007: 357), this is a 'precautionary strategy,' which is used to compensate when one ventures into a space or situation that makes one feel unsafe. Some common precautions are traveling with one or more companions, carrying a weapon or a cell phone, and learning self-defense moves.

Examining behavior patterns by women and men again revealed the restricted freedom of women in public spaces. Some behavior patterns were never displayed by women while nearly all were displayed by men (drinking alcohol, lying-sleeping, fishing, conversing with fishers, singing, sitting and stretching foos on wall, sun bathing, napping and praying). This may be the outcome of either coping strategies or social oppression caused by the social construction of gender. Women in Turkey are encouraged to enter the public domain but are restricted by moral and behavioral codes considered essential to the preservation of their families' respectability and honor. Similarly Müftüler-Bac (1999: 307) expands the same condition to the early years of Republic, when the integration of women into public spheres was possible only if women concealed their

femininity and displayed modesty in their attire and behavior. The ideal woman is portrayed as pure, honorable, unreachable, and serving the higher cause of modernization in Turkey.

Men behave more relaxed and have more freedom in an outdoor public space. Another finding revealing men's freedom is the percentages of interactions with spatial components by each gender. These findings reveal two facts about gender roles. The first one can be explained in relation to physical attributes of space. In outdoor spaces, men can use places with different spatial attributes, but women are more sensitive to their environment and prefer equipped places. The second one can be explained in relation to gender roles and the research questions. The differences in the richness and contents of the behavior patterns of each gender show that open public spaces do not mean freedom for Turkish women, who have to be careful about their behavior in public. Open public spaces are thus areas where women feel society's oppression more intensely.

7. Conclusion

In this study, we tried to clarify the social status of Turkish women in an outdoor public space, which is a neglected research subject in the field of environmental design and planning in Turkey. Explanations were proposed for the relationships between the social construction of gender and women's status in outdoor spaces. The spatial constraints in women's lives are a reflection of gendered power relations (Koskela, 1999: 111), and the results of this study showed that inequality between women and men also exists in the social life of open public spaces in Turkey. Particularly, oppression based on gender roles is quite concrete in user and behavior patterns of each gender. The factors affecting women's engagements in other areas of public spheres are also efficient for urban open public spaces (fear of crime, housekeeping and childcare duties, economic and moral restrictions).

In summary, all the findings address the same social fact that although there has been some improvement in gender inequality in the last decades, there are still important problems that women have to overcome. Together with social oppression, inappropriate environmental attributes of outdoor public spaces add to the adverse social status of women. But by creating equally shared public spaces, as Sewell (2003: 238) emphasized, the idea of sharing power and responsibility can become more conceivable, and this shared experience of public space will help to change society's conception of the landscape and of appropriate gender roles.

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