




Urban parks in developing countries: Challenges and opportunities in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The scarcity of well-functioning green spaces in the rapidly growing urban centers of developing countries poses significant challenges, hindering the well-being and quality of life for urban populations. Urban parks, often referred to as the "lungs of the city," have the potential to alleviate these challenges, yet their benefits are not always evident. This study explores the challenges and opportunities faced by urban parks in developing countries through a comparative analysis of Janmeda Park and Entoto Park in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The research assesses key dimensions, including accessibility, sociability, comfort, image projection, and management/maintenance. These elements are vital for understanding how well urban parks serve their communities and contribute to urban development. While Janmeda Park, despite its historical importance, struggles with physical and operational challenges, Entoto Park's well-designed amenities, management, and safety provide a model for future park developments. The study offers recommendations to improve urban parks, such as enhancing accessibility, fostering sociability, ensuring user comfort and safety, strengthening image projection, integrating cultural and historical elements, and improving management and maintenance. It also highlights the importance of monitoring and evaluating park performance. These recommendations aim to guide urban planners and policymakers in enhancing urban parks, thereby supporting community well-being and promoting effective urban development. The insights provided are intended to inform better practices for urban park planning and management, contributing to more vibrant and functional green spaces in developing cities.

Keywords: developing countries, urbanization, urban parks

1. Introduction

Urbanization is a defining feature of the modern era, with a growing percentage of the global population residing in cities (United Nations, 2018). While urbanization brings about economic growth and opportunities, it also gives rise to challenges related to environmental degradation, congestion, and diminished green spaces (Glaeser et al., 2001). In this context, urban parks emerge as vital components in the urban landscape, providing relief from the pressures of urban living and contributing to the overall well-being of residents.

In developing countries, the significance of urban parks is particularly pronounced. As these nations undergo rapid urbanization, they often face issues of overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to basic amenities (World Bank 2018). Urban parks can serve as oases of tranquility and recreation, offering citizens a place to connect with nature, engage in physical activities, and foster a sense of community (Wolch et al., 2014). Furthermore, they can play a role in mitigating the negative impacts of urbanization, such as air and water pollution, by providing green areas that support ecological balance (Bolund & Hunhammar, 1999). Despite their potential benefits, urban parks in developing countries like Ethiopia are often hindered by a range of challenges, including limited resources, inadequate planning, and poor management (Roberts et al., 2012).

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This study seeks to explore the challenges and opportunities of urban parks in developing countries through a comparative analysis of two emblematic cases in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. By examining Janmeda Park and Entoto Park, this research aims to identify common challenges faced by urban parks in similar settings and provide insights that can inform strategies for enhancing their impact.

By understanding the challenges and opportunities presented by these cases, this research contributes to the broader discourse on urban park planning and management in developing countries. The lessons and recommendations derived from this study aim to guide policymakers, urban planners, and stakeholders in formulating more effective strategies for developing and enhancing urban parks that truly serve the needs of communities in developing countries.

1.1. Research Approach and Methodology

This study adopts a comparative case analysis approach to delve into the effectiveness of urban parks in developing countries. Janmeda Park and Entoto Park in Addis Ababa were selected due to their historical and functional significance (Figure 1). Janmeda, as the city's oldest park, contrasts with the newly developed Entoto Park, offering a rich comparison in terms of historical value and contemporary urban park design. Through an evaluation of these cases, it's intended to identify critical aspects that influence urban parks in developing countries. The analysis encompasses parameters such as, accessibility, sociability, comfort, image, Management and Maintenance.

Data collection involved site observations, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews with park managers and other relevant stakeholders. Site observations were systematically recorded, noting physical attributes, user behaviors, and environmental conditions. Document analysis included reviewing historical records, planning documents, and policy papers to understand the development context of each park.

These data sources were synthesized to provide a comprehensive understanding of each park's challenges and opportunities. A comparative analysis employing descriptive and qualitative methods, including photographs, illustrative figures, tables, and textual data, was applied to evaluate the findings across the five dimensions.

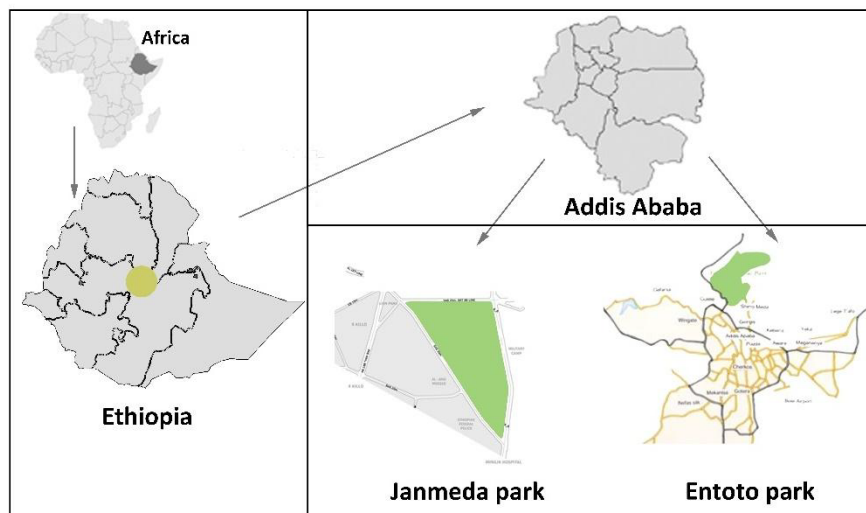


Figure 1 Geographic location of the selected cases for the study (Diagram by author)

In the following chapters, a detailed analyses of Janmeda Park and Entoto Park will be conducted, evaluating their performance within the parameters of the study. Through this examination, its aimed to identify common trends, challenges, and opportunities that illuminate the broader issues faced by urban parks in similar contexts, that can inform recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of urban parks in developing countries, benefiting both local communities and the cities they inhabit.

2. Urban Parks in Developing Countries: Challenges and Opportunities

The unprecedented pace of urbanization in developing countries presents a pressing need for urban planners to address various social, environmental, and health-related challenges (United Nations, 2018). Urban parks, often referred to as "lungs of the city," have the potential to mitigate these challenges and provide numerous benefits to urban populations.

Urban parks offer respite from the concrete jungle, serving as essential components of the urban landscape. They play a pivotal role in improving air quality, reducing noise pollution, and providing spaces for physical activity and relaxation (Nowak & Dwyer, 2000). In developing countries, where access to nature may be limited for many residents, urban parks become vital spaces for recreation, cultural activities, and community engagement (Wolch et al., 2014).

Urban parks in developing countries confront a myriad of challenges that impact their effectiveness. These include issues related to, Rapid urbanization, population growth, inadequate planning, inadequate resources, urban poverty, and competing land uses (Roberts et al., 2012). In Addis Ababa, as in many other cities in the Global South, these challenges are pronounced. The pressures of urban growth often result in encroachments on parkland, making it difficult to preserve and expand green spaces (Akhtar, 2018).

This section delves key characteristics for evaluating urban parks and examines their relevance and role within the urban context, setting the foundation for the subsequent analysis.

2.1. Characteristics for Evaluating Urban Parks

Urbanization is rapidly reshaping developing countries, and as cities grow, so does the need for accessible and functional urban parks. In these settings, the need of urban parks extends beyond traditional considerations and touches upon issues of economic development, social equity, and environmental sustainability. In Ethiopia, a country undergoing rapid urbanization, understanding and enhancing the effectiveness of urban parks is of paramount importance to foster livable and resilient cities.

In evaluating the development of urban parks, various characteristics have been proposed to gauge their success, each emphasizing distinct aspects of their effectiveness. The Project for Public Spaces (PPS) has identified four key indicators: Uses and Activities, Access and Linkage, Comfort and Image, and Sociability (Project for Public Spaces, 2016). These indicators have been adopted for this study, though with some modifications to better align with the specific context and goals.

Modified Characteristics for This Study:

- **Accessibility:** This indicator combines the ideas of Access and Linkage from the PPS framework, focusing on how easily people can reach and navigate through the park.
- **Sociability:** This aspect merges the concepts of Uses and Activities with Sociability. It assesses how the park facilitates social interactions and the range of activities available to users.
- **Comfort:** This characteristic stands alone, reflecting the park's physical and environmental comfort levels, including amenities and overall user satisfaction.
- **Image Projection:** While PPS combines this with Comfort, this study separates it to specifically address how the park's design and aesthetics contribute to its public image and perception.
- **Management and Maintenance:** An additional characteristic introduced in this study, focusing on the effectiveness of park upkeep and operational management, which is crucial for the park's long-term success.

These modifications refine the evaluation framework to better address the specific needs and objectives of urban park development, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of their effectiveness.

2.1.1. Accessibility

Accessibility is a major component of effective urban parks. Kellett (2009) defines accessibility as “a people's ability to get to a certain green space.” Moreover, it is the capacity to benefit from the activity that is conducted in the green space. Parks should be easily reachable by residents from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. According to Addas and Maghrabi (2020), urban parks within walking distance are more likely to be used. Urban parks should be designed to be responsive to potential users, the environment, and the needs of different groups of people. Despite this, Kellett (2009), recommends that a successful urban park should include a diverse range of activities rather than simply one. Equitable access will benefit the overall function, leisure, and safety of public spaces. In many developing countries, limited transportation options and spatial inequalities may hinder accessibility to green spaces (Roberts et al., 2012). Ensuring inclusivity is equally important, as parks should cater to the needs of all citizens, including people with disabilities (UN-Habitat, 2013). The accessibility of an urban park can be assessed by examining its connections to its surroundings, both visually and physically (City of Gold Coast, 2018).

2.1.2. Sociability

The social aspect of urban design refers to the relationships between space and society (Saikia, 2015). According to Whyte (1998), people wish to get away from the crowd and other people, but they really do the opposite. It's pretty clear that people naturally gravitate toward socially active and welcoming environments. However, many public settings nowadays appear to have been purposefully created to be watched but not touched. When an urban park is empty, it will be vandalized or used for undesirable functions. The relationship between individuals and their environment is best considered as a continuous mutual process in which people create spaces while simultaneously being influenced by those spaces. Empirical studies indicate that well-designed parks with spaces for gathering, events, and cultural activities encourage greater sociability (Carr et al., 1992). Furthermore, involving the local community in park planning and management can enhance community engagement and ownership (Lindhjem et al., 2014). This dimension may be assessed by the examination of the presence of various social groups, the establishment of social societies, and cohabitation at various times of the day (Project for Public Spaces, 2016).

2.1.3. Comfort

User comfort and safety are paramount to the effectiveness of urban parks. An inviting and secure environment encourages greater use. Factors such as shading, seating, cleanliness, lighting, and the presence of amenities like restrooms play a pivotal role in creating comfortable park experiences (Bedimo-Rung et al., 2005). Conversely, safety measures, such as visible security and surveillance, reduce the perception of risk and contribute to overall safety (Kuo et al., 1998). If the initiation of the urban park is to invite different types of users, then women, children, and the elderly need to feel welcome. Urban parks must be built to minimize the potential for crime and violence, as well as to provide public areas where people feel safe and secure.

2.1.4. Image Projection

The image projected by urban parks can influence their attractiveness and relevance to the community. It's associated with aesthetics and the uniqueness of urban parks (Project for Public Spaces, 2016). Aesthetics consider how the physical features of an urban park are laid out based on the aesthetic elements used. The presence of trees and bushes, flowers, grass, natural settings, and water features are all aesthetic aspects that impact the usage of urban parks (Ayala-Azcárraga et al., 2019). Other important design issues related to aesthetics include the size of an urban park, the layout, landscaping, and the balance between soft and hard landscape, topography, cleanliness, uniqueness, and visually appealing aesthetic elements that trigger the human senses (Ismail 2017).

Uniqueness of urban park is characterized by incorporating physical, historic, cultural, and natural features of the site into the design of the urban park together to create a unique sense of place (Bolund & Hunhammar, 1999). Each urban park should celebrate the special features that

provide its unique identity and help the community engage and learn. Highlighting these elements fosters community pride and a sense of ownership (Lindsey & Maraj, 2017).

Urban parks, by their very nature, need extensive management and maintenance. The maintenance of urban parks is among the most critical factors influencing their use. It should be applied to both hard (non-green) and soft (green) structures. Maintenance of soft structures deals with landscaping and vegetation in order to guarantee that they do not overgrow, resulting in invisibility in the park and along routes. On the other hand, hard structure maintenance deals with recreation equipment and amenities to ensure a high-quality, safe, and user-friendly park (Kellett, 2009).

2.1.5. Maintenance and Management

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Parks and their assets must be easy to manage and financially sustainable. In park design, an awareness of long-term financial sustainability is critical (City of Gold Coast, 2018). Actually, many of the most basic and significant features of parks are inexpensive to build and maintain. For instance, trees, paths, grass, and benches are simple park elements that can last for generations and have wide appeal. For the expensive facilities that are required, careful design and planning are needed in order to assure durability and low ongoing maintenance costs. The following are the main aspects of urban park management and maintenance (City of Gold Coast, 2018).

3. Urban Park Development in Addis Ababa and Analysis of Cases

Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, is emblematic of many developing cities experiencing rapid urbanization, with a population of 5,005,524 people (Addis Ababa Population, 2021). With growing urbanization, the city is facing multiple problems related to its spatial and physical development (Tsegaye, 2007). These city problems are well revealed by the poor quality of its urban parks. Although the city's physical and social infrastructure has improved in quantity over the last few decades, it still needs considerable distribution and quality improvements. The government's urban investment initiatives, which combine environmental improvements with economic prospects have shown promising results. However, policies and strategies must be assessed, improved, or changed in context of their contribution to resolving the city's ongoing challenges.

3.1. The Evolution of Urban Parks in Addis Ababa

Urban parks in Addis Ababa have evolved significantly over time, reflecting broader changes in urban planning and societal needs. Historically, the development of open spaces in Addis Ababa began with the natural landscape used for various purposes during different eras of the monarchy. These spaces were used for festivals, religious ceremonies, political events, and markets. For instance, Emperor Menelik II's era saw the use of open spaces for public gatherings such as horse races at Janmeda. Religious ceremonies like Meskel (the finding of the true cross) and Timiket (Epiphany) were also celebrated in large open areas. Additionally, these spaces served as marketplaces where people gathered for trade.

As the city expanded and foreign planners introduced new concepts, the approach to urban park planning transformed. The natural open spaces became more systematically organized and segregated according to their functions. The city saw the emergence of local, district, and city-level urban parks, each serving different purposes based on their location and context. The evolution of

urban parks is summarized in Figure 2, which illustrates the timeline of development from functional open spaces to more structured urban parks.

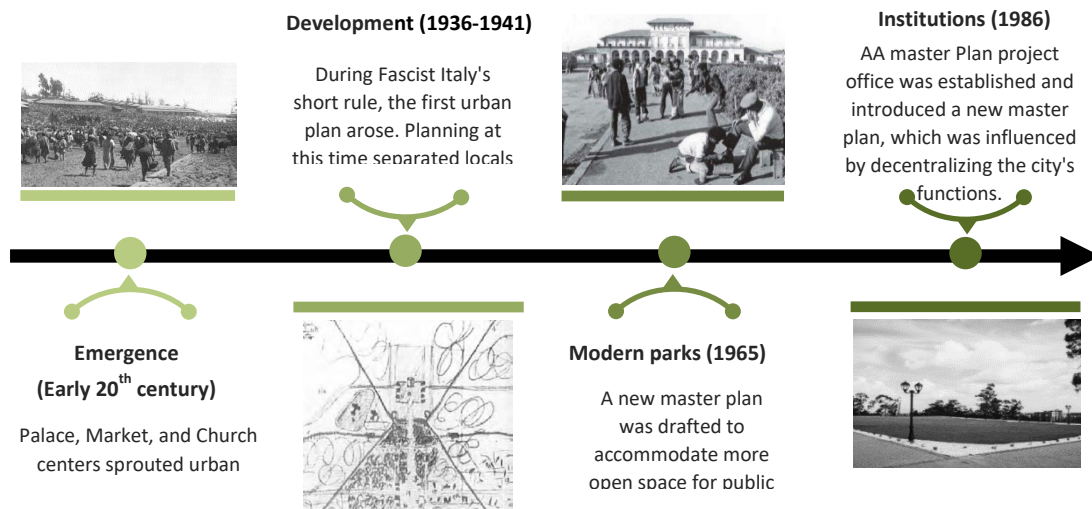





Figure 2 Historical development Addis Ababa's of urban park (Diagram by author)

3.2. Urban Parks Policies and Standards in Addis Ababa

There are three levels of government in Addis Ababa: one municipality, ten sub-cities, and 116 districts (or woredas). The city is the country's social, economic, and political center. Diverse urban park types may presently offer different services to a city, but their provision in terms of size, international standards, and demography doesn't seem to be satisfactory (Kassaye, 2017).

Therefore, additional in-depth investigation is necessary to identify the current state and constraints of these spaces. Generally, urban planning and design in Addis Ababa have not yet given proper attention to the importance of urban parks. Most of the parks in Addis Ababa were built in the 1970s, due to their long age they are deteriorated and no longer suit the interests of visitors reducing their capacity to perform their vital social, economic, and ecological functions. According to the 2003 master plan, around which the city is currently being developed, urban open spaces are classified as open spaces at the local, district, and city levels (Table 1).

Table 1 Classification of Urban Open Spaces in Addis Ababa (Table by Author)

	Local level	District level	City level
Picture and description	 These spaces are usually used by children for recreational activities in neighborhoods.	 Consist of street sides, parks & square. Most of this spaces are located in the center of the city.	 Are forest areas that are located on mountainous areas of the city which are being preserved.
Size	<0.3 hectare	0.3-10 hectare	> 10 hectares
Administrator	Woreda	Sub city	city

The structural plan is one of the plans that have been acknowledged under Proclamation No. 547/2008. Among the topics that the structural plan has to address, environmental issues have been recognized and recommendations have been set out. This environmental policy is the country's relevant policy regarding urban parks. Green infrastructure is one of the topics covered under environmental policy. The term "green infrastructure" is used to describe any kind of green space in Addis Ababa. It is a multifunctional open space network that includes parks, woods, gardens, green corridors, street greenery, open courtyards, and river banks.

Ethiopia has attempted to address environmental degradation in several ways since the 1992 Rio-Summit conference in Brazil. In 1995, the first and most important move was to add an article (Article 44) to the country's constitution, which states that Ethiopians have the right to live in a healthy environment (Birru, 2014).

Aside from that, a Greening and Beautification Office was set up. Following the aforementioned decisional action, a great effort was made on the master plan revision conducted in 2003, which is still the city the is currently being developed around. Among the surprising policies stated in this master plan was the allocation of 22,000 hectares (41%) of the city's 54,000 hectares for open space and greenery purposes, which, like the rest of the policies, is more on paper than in actual implementation.

The structural plan (2017-2027) outlines the expansion of current urban parks as well as the development of new parks. However, the structural plans do not provide a clear explanation of the purpose of these urban parks, the activities that should take place there, as well as their administration and upkeep; in general, the requirements stated in the structural plan are not precise.

3.3. Analysis of Cases

This study looked at the two city-wide parks in Addis Ababa - Janmeda and Entoto. Janmeda Park and Entoto Park stand as significant landmarks within Addis Ababa, embodying historical and cultural narratives that intertwine with the urban fabric. These two urban parks offer unique perspectives on how such spaces evolve over time, influence communities, and respond to changing needs.

3.3.1. Urban Case 1: Janmeda Park

Janmeda is a historic urban park established in the north east part of Addis Ababa, covering a total area of 2.5 hectares. Janmeda came to prominence during Emperor Minilik II time. It was one of the spots where the royal family and their entourage used to play horse racing and polo (Giorghis & Gérard, 2007). The Ethiopian nobility and foreign diplomats were also frequent visitors. Today, different city residents use urban parks for different reasons at different times of the year. In contrast to most of the city's parks, which demand a fee, this is a free public park.

3.3.1.1. Accessibility

Location: Janmeda Park is strategically located at the heart of Addis Ababa, within the city center. This prime location ensures its accessibility to a large urban population.

Entrances and Exits: The Park has multiple entrances, primarily along key city streets, ensuring convenient access for pedestrians. However, it is crucial to note that the park is encircled by high walls and fences, making it less visible from a distance.

Accessibility for All: Unfortunately, Janmeda Park lacks proper facilities to accommodate visitors with disabilities. There are no ramps, special pathways, or designated facilities that ensure inclusivity.

Traffic Flow: There is no controlled path within the park (Figure 3). Additionally, there are no walkways that connect the park with the adjacent areas. Vehicular traffic flow around the park can be challenging, especially during peak hours. The park's proximity to major roads often results in congestion, affecting accessibility.

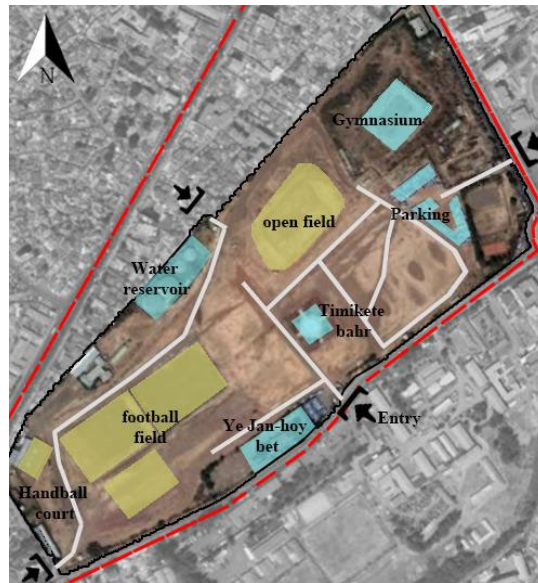


Figure 3 Map showing paths of Janmeda (Diagram by author)

3.3.1.2. Sociability

User Demographics: Visitors to Janmeda Park are primarily young adults and families. However, there is a noticeable absence of a balanced representation of different age groups, and limited diversity among users

Social Interaction: While the park attracts groups of visitors, social interaction among users is relatively limited. Visitors often define their own territories within the park, reducing opportunities for spontaneous socializing.

Events and Activities: Janmeda Park predominantly hosts sports activities, including football and athletics in line with some occasional social activities (Figure 4). While these events draw crowds, the activities are not well organized.

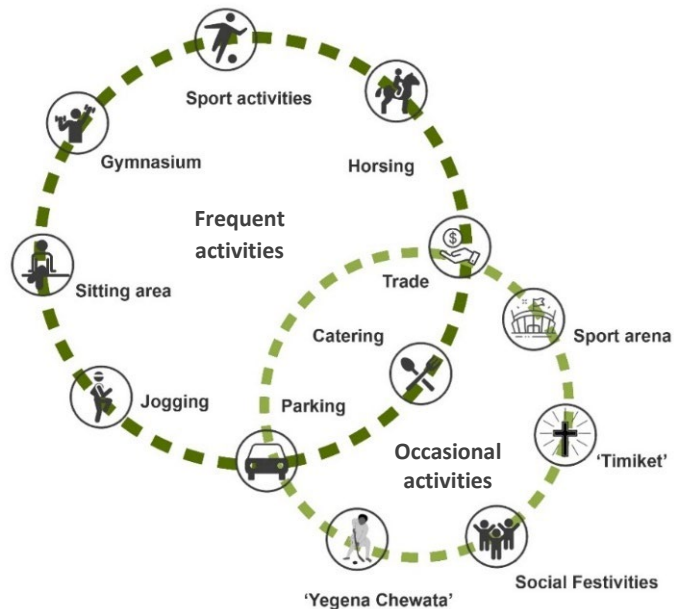


Figure 4 Frequent and occasional activities of Janmeda (Diagram by author)

3.3.1.3. Comfort

Safety and Security: The Park faces significant safety and security challenges. There is a lack of technological advancements in security measures, leading to concerns among visitors.

Shading and Seating: Janmeda Park lacks adequate shading structures, making it less comfortable during hot weather (Figure 5). Seating areas are minimal, and visitors often bring their own portable chairs.

Cleanliness: The Park’s cleanliness is a concern. There are limited waste bins and a lack of proper waste management, resulting in littering.

Facilities: Janmeda Park lacks essential facilities such as restrooms and drinking fountains. This impacts visitor comfort negatively.



Figure 5 Image showing the lack of comfort in Janmeda Park (Diagram by author)





3.3.1.4. Image Projection

Aesthetics: The Park’s visual appeal is modest at best. There are minimal landscaping efforts, and the park lacks artistic or architectural elements that could enhance its aesthetics.

Historic Integration: Janmeda Park has historical significance, but these elements are not effectively integrated into its facilities or design (Table 2). The historical aspects remain understated.

Uniqueness: The Park’s uniqueness is limited, as it primarily focuses on sports activities, lacking the diversity found in more successful urban parks.

Table 2 Historical Elements of Janmeda (Table by Author)

Ye Jan-hoy Bet	Starter’s Rostrum	EOTC Baptism Field (Timikete bahr	Bodyguard Band Rehearsal Building
			
Former museum, burned down due to neglect.	Abandoned structure built during Haile Selassie's reign.	Reserved for church ceremonies, open on special days	Historic building, now used as a residence

3.3.1.5. Management and Maintenance

Urban parks, by their very nature, need extensive management and maintenance. Like most urban parks in Addis Ababa, Janmeda is not well managed and maintained despite its importance throughout history. The hard (non-green) structures in the park are aged and deteriorated due to lack of attention, and also the soft (green) elements of the site are poorly managed. Few studies have examined the challenges and consequences of the multiplicity of ownership in Janmeda. The management of Janmeda has become problematic because of conflicting ownership. The ownership conflict is among the AA water and sewerage authority (which has built water tanks in the park), the Addis Ababa Sports Commission, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (which has fenced a few square meters for the Timiket procession), and the BPCDAA.

None of these stakeholders have access to a venue or platform to debate how Janmeda should be handled. The several parties involved in the administration of the park do not seem to have a well-defined division of work. There has been a clear deterioration in both the park's physical and aesthetic qualities as a direct result of the struggle that has been going on for some time. According to the city's environmental policy, the BPCDAA is in charge of the establishment and administration of urban parks in the city. Janmeda, on the other hand, has become a name without a legal owner. The majority of the hard structures in the park were constructed in the 1950s, but since then, no repairs or maintenance have been performed, which has led to deterioration. The park is not well vegetated and guarded, which led to its ineffectiveness.

3.3.2. Case 2: Entoto Park

The park is located on the southern slopes of Mount Entoto between Addis Ababa's northern and southern limits (at 2,600 m) with a total area of 1,300 ha. (Haile & Getaneh, 1989). Entoto Mountain formerly served as an imperial residence and court for Emperor Minilik in the 1800s. Then it was maintained as a natural park for almost 100 years. Later in 2020, Ethiopia's prime minister formally designated part of it as an urban park and it's now a fully functional park providing visitors with a broad variety of exciting indoor and outdoor recreational options. The relevance of Entoto Park in bolstering the city's service economy and radically altering the city's appearance and experience cannot be overstated.

3.3.2.1. Accessibility

Location: Entoto Park is situated in a historically and naturally significant area, part of the Entoto Mountain range. While it's not as centrally located as Janmeda, its unique setting offers a different type of accessibility.

Entrances and Exits: The Park features well-defined and welcoming entrances that connects the various sections in the park by sub-roads (Figure 6). These entrances contribute to a positive first impression.

Accessibility for All: Similar to Janmeda Park, Entoto Park also falls short in providing facilities for visitors with disabilities. It lacks ramps, specialized pathways, or facilities for inclusivity.

Traffic Flow: As the park is car-free, visitors must walk or use bicycles within the park. The absence of vehicular traffic contributes to a safer and more tranquil environment.



Figure 6 Map showing entrances of Entoto Park with their linking services (Diagram by author)

3.3.2.2. Sociability

User Demographics: Entoto Park attracts a diverse range of visitors, including families, individuals, and tourists. It accommodates a broader spectrum of age groups and social backgrounds compared to Janmeda.

Social Interaction: The Park’s layout, amenities, and open spaces encourage social interaction among visitors. It provides opportunities for diverse user groups to interact naturally.

Events and Activities: Entoto Park offers a wide variety of both indoor and outdoor activities, including a library, sports fields, dining options, and recreational facilities (Figure 7). This diversity of activities fosters social engagement.



Figure 7 Different activities in Entoto Park (Diagram by author)

3.3.2.3. Comfort

Safety and Security: Entoto Park's design promotes user visibility, reducing vulnerable settings. This contributes to a safer environment.

Shading and Seating: The Park features shaded areas and well-maintained seating, enhancing visitor comfort. Restrooms, rest areas, and shops are available at regular intervals, improving convenience.

Cleanliness: Entoto Park maintains a higher standard of cleanliness compared to Janmeda. Adequate waste management and clean facilities contribute to a more pleasant experience.

Facilities: The Park is well-facilitated with essential amenities, providing a wide range of services to visitors, enhancing their overall experience.

3.3.2.4. Image Projection

Aesthetics: Entoto Park's design incorporates natural elements and crafted statues, enhancing its visual appeal. It blends with the historic and natural environment effectively.

Historic Integration: While the park doesn't celebrate its historical features as a central design element, it harmoniously coexists with its historical surroundings (Table 3).

Uniqueness: Entoto Park is unique in its size, diverse amenities, and the variety of activities it offers. This diversity contributes to its uniqueness within Addis Ababa.

Table 3 Historical Elements of Entoto Park (Table by Author)

Menelik’s Palace	Saint Raguel Church	Entoto Mariam Church
		
Former royal residence, undergoing restoration.	Ethiopian Orthodox church with ornate paintings.	Ancient church and burial site of Emperor Menelik II.

3.3.2.5. Management and Maintenance

The management of the parks is held by the Addis Ababa city administration, and supportive services are managed by the contract owners of the facility. Common areas and activity areas are maintained by park staff, and security is maintained by the guards employed by the park and some federal police staff. Private services are managed and maintained entirely by themselves. This

makes them responsible. This responsibility gave the owner time to think about the quality of their service and customer care.

In the subsequent sections, discussion will center on the broader implications of these findings, extracting insights that can inform urban park policies and improvements in Addis Ababa and similar urban centers.

4. Discussion

Addis Ababa's open spaces were initially used for royal and religious purposes. As the city grew, parks were classified into local, district, and city levels based on size and administration. Local parks are under 0.3 hectares, managed by Woreda; district parks range from 0.3 to 10 hectares, managed by the Sub-City; and city parks exceed 10 hectares, managed by the city.

The city's 2017–2027 Environmental Policy and Structural Plan emphasize the need for improved parks but lack specific guidelines. The BPCDAA, responsible for park development and management, also lacks a clear policy and operational instructions.

Current existing parks suffer from poor management. Proposed Park areas are often repurposed, leading to safety concerns as social events spill into streets.

Management is fragmented among various agencies, with the BPCDAA facing institutional and administrative challenges. If trends continue, parks may be converted into built-up areas, leaving residents without adequate recreational options and worsening city-wide issues.

Case studies of Janmeda Park (old) and Entoto Park (new) reveal that many parks are outdated and fail to meet modern standards or community needs. There's a clear need for better standards and improved management.

In this chapter, a comprehensive discussion of the results obtained from the case analysis of Janmeda Park and Entoto Park in Addis Ababa will be undertaken. By comparing and contrasting these two cases, valuable insights are extracted that shed light on the broader implications for urban park development in developing countries. The comprehensive findings, are discussed in the context of five factors. It can be seen the general characteristics of selected cases in comparative approach in Table 3. The later Table (Table 4) shows the detailed comparative analysis of bored in five parameters.

Table 4 General Information on the Two Cases (Table by Author)

Aspects	Janmeda Park (Case 1)	Entoto Park (Case 2)
Scale	2.5 hectares	1,300 hectares
Site Context	City center	Historical & natural
Design Approach	Evolved over time	Economic renovation
Special Features	Sport arenas	Diverse activities
Spatial Relation	Unstructured paths	Gate-linked sections

Accessibility

Accessible urban parks are more likely to attract a diverse range of users. Janmeda Park, despite its central location within Addis Ababa, presents accessibility challenges. The absence of defined pathways and limited connectivity with neighboring buildings hinder its accessibility. This limitation highlights the importance of urban planning that seamlessly integrates parks into the surrounding urban fabric. In contrast, Entoto Park, although located farther from the city center, excels in terms of access and connectivity. Well-planned pathways, strategically positioned entrances, and interlinked sections create an environment that encourages inclusivity. The park's success in fostering sociability, despite its geographical distance, underscores the significance of thoughtful design and integration with transportation networks.

Sociability:

Urban parks are envisioned as vibrant spaces that facilitate social interaction among diverse user groups. However, both Janmeda Park and Entoto Park exhibit limitations in fostering meaningful sociability. In Janmeda Park, users tend to form territorial groups, hindering cross-interactions. This underscores the importance of park layouts and amenities that encourage communal gathering and interaction, allowing for the integration of various social backgrounds, ages, and genders. Entoto Park presents a more successful model in promoting sociability. Its variety of activities and clear pathways facilitate encounters among users with diverse interests. The strategic placement of seating areas, restrooms, and shops contributes to a comfortable environment for socializing. The comparison emphasizes the role of design and amenities in shaping user behavior and interaction patterns.

Comfort:

Comfort and safety are paramount to the success of urban parks. Janmeda Park faces challenges in this regard, with issues ranging from poor shading and seating to inadequate cleanliness. The absence of proper security measures and the presence of undesirable activities deter potential users from fully utilizing the park. These problems underscore the importance of regular maintenance and the implementation of safety features to create a welcoming environment. Janmeda Park's ineffective management, stemming from conflicting ownership and unclear division of responsibilities, negatively affects its physical condition and functionality.

In contrast, Entoto Park excels in providing a safe and comfortable space for visitors. Its well-maintained infrastructure, clear signage, and careful placement of seating areas contribute to an overall pleasant experience. The emphasis on safety through design demonstrates the potential of urban parks to serve as secure havens within the urban landscape.

Image Projection:

The image projected by urban parks plays a crucial role in attracting users and fostering a sense of pride in the community. Janmeda Park's historical significance is not effectively integrated into its design, leading to its underappreciation as a historical landmark. This illustrates the importance of highlighting and preserving historical elements within urban parks, contributing to their unique identity and cultural value.

In contrast, Entoto Park effectively integrates historical features, leveraging them to create a distinctive and memorable atmosphere. The incorporation of historic buildings and natural elements enhances the park's aesthetic appeal and cultural significance. This serves as a reminder of the potential of urban parks to serve as repositories of history and culture.

Management and Maintenance:

As the study indicates, the management and maintenance of Janmeda is very poor, like most urban parks in Addis Ababa, despite its importance throughout history. which is due to its conflicting ownership among the AA water and sewerage authority (which has built water tanks in the park), the Addis Ababa Sports Commission, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (which has fenced a few square meters for the Timiket procession), and the BPCDAA. However, the city's environmental policy clearly states that the BPCDAA is in charge of the establishment and administration of urban parks in the city. However, Janmeda has become a name without a legal owner.

The above-mentioned stakeholders need access to a venue or platform to debate how Janmeda should be handled and set up a well-defined division of work so as to make Janmeda as important as before. The majority of the hard structures in the park were constructed in the 1950s, but since then, no repairs or maintenance have been performed, which has led to deterioration, which has led to the park's ineffectiveness. Unlike Janmeda, the findings show that Entoto Parks' management

is way better. The management of the parks is held by the Addis Ababa city administration, and supportive services are managed by the contract owners of the facility.

Table 5, below offers a concise comparative evaluation of Entoto Park and Janmeda Park across key aspects related to park accessibility, sociability, comfort, image projection, and sustainability. The sub-aspects within each category highlight the parks' distinctive features and performance in these crucial dimensions. This comparison aids in understanding the strengths and areas for improvement of both urban parks, providing valuable insights for future urban park developments.

Table 5 Comparative Evaluation of Urban Parks (Table by Author)

Aspect	Sub-Aspect	Entoto Park	Janmeda Park
Accessibility	Location	Historically-natural area	Central city location
	Entrances and exits	Defined, welcoming	Uncontrolled access
	Accessibility for All	Limited facilities	Limited facilities
	Traffic Flow	Car-free, pedestrian	Unrestricted access
Sociability	User Demographics	Diverse visitor range	Segmented user groups
	Social Interaction	Encourages interaction	Limited communal areas
	Events and Activities	Diverse activities	Limited options
Comfort	Safety and Security	Promotes visibility	Safety issues, poor facilities
	Shading and Seating	Shaded areas, seating	Lack of shading, seating
	Cleanliness	Well-maintained	Inadequate cleanliness
	Facilities	Well-facilitated	Lacks amenities
Image Projection	Aesthetics	Natural elements, statues	Historical features underutilized
	Historic Integration	Harmonious coexistence	Historical features underutilized
	Uniqueness	Unique, diverse amenities	Historical significance underutilized
Maintenance/management	Ecological Impact	Positive ecological impact	Conflicting ownership
	Ownership Management actors	Conflicting ownership among different parties	The management is held by the city administration, and supportive services are managed by the contract owners.
	Maintenance	poorly maintained	well maintained
	Entrance fee	Free	Free

Implications for Developing Countries

The case analysis of Janmeda Park and Entoto Park provides valuable insights into the challenges and successes of urban parks in developing countries. By examining various aspects of urban park, holistic understanding of the factors that shape their impact on communities is gained. The lessons drawn from these cases can inform recommendations that extend beyond specific instances and contribute to the broader discourse on urban development in developing countries.

In the subsequent chapter, the study concludes by synthesizing the findings and proposing actionable recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of urban parks in developing countries. The lessons learned from the case studies can be applied to similar contexts, fostering the creation of vibrant and impactful urban green spaces.

5. Recommendations and Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, the findings from the case analysis of Janmeda Park and Entoto Park are synthesized to propose actionable recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of urban

parks in developing countries. These recommendations are framed within the broader context of urban development, with the goal of creating green spaces that truly contribute to the well-being of communities.

5.1. Recommendations for Enhancing Urban Park Effectiveness

5.1.1. Improve Accessibility

Enhance Physical Accessibility:

- **Pathways and Connectivity:** Urban parks should be seamlessly integrated into the surrounding urban fabric with well-designed pathways and clear signage to ensure easy access from various parts of the city. Parks like Janmeda, with accessibility challenges, should prioritize the development of defined pathways and better connectivity to neighboring areas.
- **Inclusivity:** Implementing facilities that cater to visitors with disabilities is crucial. Parks should include ramps, specialized pathways, and other accessible features to ensure inclusivity for all user groups.

Expand Public Transportation Links:

- **Transport Integration:** To improve accessibility to parks like Entoto, which are farther from the city center, expanding public transportation links, such as shuttle services or dedicated bus routes, can encourage more visitors to utilize these green spaces.

5.1.2. Foster Sociability

Design for Social Interaction:

- **Inclusive Layouts:** Urban parks should be designed to facilitate interaction among diverse user groups. This includes creating communal gathering spaces, multipurpose areas, and strategically placing seating and activity zones to encourage social engagement.
- **Diverse Programming:** Offering a variety of events and activities that appeal to different age groups and interests, similar to Entoto Park's model, can help foster a more socially vibrant environment.

Address Territorial Behavior:

- **Open-Layout Designs:** Parks like Janmeda, where users tend to form territorial groups, should adopt more open-layout designs that discourage exclusivity and promote integration among different social groups.

5.1.3. Enhance Comfort and Safety

Improve Safety Measures:

- **Visibility and Security:** Parks should prioritize designs that enhance visibility and reduce secluded areas to improve safety. Regular patrols, adequate lighting, and clear sightlines can make parks feel safer and more welcoming.
- **Security Infrastructure:** Establish a well-defined security infrastructure, including surveillance systems, trained personnel, and emergency response plans, to ensure the safety of park visitors.

Upgrade Amenities and Facilities:

- **Shading and Seating:** Parks should provide adequate shaded areas and seating to enhance comfort, especially in areas where climate conditions necessitate protection from the sun.
 - **Restrooms and Shops:** The availability of clean restrooms, refreshment stands, and shops at regular intervals within the park should be ensured, as seen in Entoto Park's successful model.
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Maintain Cleanliness:

- **Waste Management:** Effective waste management systems, including regular cleaning schedules and the provision of sufficient waste disposal bins, are essential to maintaining a clean and pleasant environment in urban parks.

5.1.4. Strengthen Image Projection

Highlight Historical and Cultural Significance:

- **Preserve Historical Features:** Urban parks with historical significance, like Janmeda Park, should incorporate and celebrate these elements in their design. Interpretative signage, guided tours, and historical markers can enhance the cultural value of these spaces.
- **Aesthetic Enhancements:** Parks should blend natural beauty with art installations, statues, and landscaping that reflect the cultural heritage and unique identity of the area.

Promote Unique Identities:

- **Distinctive Themes:** Each park should have a distinctive theme or character that sets it apart from others. This could be achieved through specialized landscaping, unique architectural features, or themed recreational areas.

5.1.5. Improve Management and Maintenance

Clarify Ownership and Responsibilities:

- **Unified Management:** To avoid conflicts and inefficiencies, clear ownership and management responsibilities should be established for each park. For instance, the conflicting ownership issues at Janmeda Park should be resolved by designating a single entity responsible for the park's overall management.
- **Collaborative Platforms:** Establishing platforms for stakeholders to discuss and coordinate the management of urban parks can lead to more effective and cohesive operations.

Ensure Regular Maintenance:

- **Routine Upkeep:** Parks should implement regular maintenance schedules to prevent deterioration of facilities and infrastructure. This includes the upkeep of pathways, seating, playgrounds, and natural areas.
- **Responsive Management:** A management approach that is responsive to user feedback and emerging needs can help maintain high standards of park quality and visitor satisfaction.
- **Community Involvement:** Encouraging community participation in park maintenance and activities can foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among local residents, leading to better long-term sustainability.

By embracing these recommendations, cities in developing countries can transform their urban parks into vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable spaces that enhance the quality of life for their residents and contribute to the overall well-being of the community. These actions will help urban parks fulfill their potential as valuable assets in the face of rapid urbanization and environmental challenges.

5.2. Concluding Remarks

The case analysis of Janmeda Park and Entoto Park underscores the importance of holistic urban park development in addressing the needs and aspirations of communities in developing countries. While Janmeda Park highlights the challenges that arise from inadequate planning and management, Entoto Park offers a model of success in terms of effective design, management, and user experience.

Urban parks hold immense potential as catalysts for community well-being, environmental sustainability, and economic growth. As urbanization continues to shape the landscapes of developing countries, the creation and enhancement of urban green spaces become increasingly critical. By embracing the recommendations outlined in this study, urban planners, policymakers, and community stakeholders can collaborate to create vibrant and effective urban parks that enrich the lives of residents and contribute to the overall development of cities.

In conclusion, urban parks shouldn't solely defined by their physical attributes but also by their ability to foster connections, celebrate culture, and provide safe havens for recreation. As developing countries navigate the complexities of urbanization, urban parks offer a canvas on which to paint a more sustainable and harmonious future. Through careful planning, inclusive design, and collaborative management, urban parks can become true symbols of progress, community, and vitality.

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