

Neoliberal Urbanism and Sustainability of Cultural Heritage

Introduction

Today's cities are categorized under popularity leagues; and cultural heritage, exploiting the distinctiveness of the cities, is the most profitable and powerful instrument for city governments in regeneration to acquire a competitive advantage in a world marked by globalisation. New urban policies that are structured through neoliberalism as a new governance mode of globalisation necessitate the use of cultural heritage as a tool to respond to the rapidly changing socio-economic conditions of the new economic order. This necessity has two dimensions. While cultural heritage is used as a tool for economic development; the acquired development, in turn, should ensure the sustainability and continuity of cultural heritage. However as in Turkey, the attempts to remove the obstacles fronting competitiveness can also have deteriorating effects on cities' cultural heritage and on the societies that have become part of this heritage. It is evident from the claims of conservationists, artists, historians, architects and planners that the promotion of cultural heritage has a key role in sustainability strategies that aim to respond to social and cultural needs, to resolve conflicts and to fulfil economic objectives through long-term visions. Despite the prominence of such claims in professional and policy discourse, the economical, social and political implications of heritage-led regeneration policies remain largely unexplored.

The aim of the paper, therefore, is to demonstrate how heritage can be used to create a positive impact on society and the economy in the neoliberal age. It explores how neo-liberal urban politics shape present debates over cultural heritage. Comparatively, it traces the workings of heritage-led regeneration politics in the attempts of adjusting to the global economy. In addition, it examines the diverse impacts of these politics on the provision of sustainable historic cities and it apprehends the ways in which heritage can create a positive impact on society and economy. The experience of Beypazari is highlighted as empirical evidence. The data required for the assessment is collected through documentary research, questionnaires and semi-structured open-ended interviews. Thirty questionnaires and interviews are conducted to bring forward the views of the different actor constructs as the primary data. In addition, supportive data is gathered through the document research to point out the existing knowledge. An extensive documentary research is undertaken through the academic and policy literature and also of the media documents such as newspapers and journals to reflect the diverse perceptions of individuals and associations that could not be interviewed. As a result, future challenges and key precautions are spelled out in enabling sustainable conservation within the context of 21st century development trends.

Heritage Conservation and Sustainable Development in the Neoliberal Age

There is a growing interest in urban research since the 1980s that 21st century cities are characterised by the very in-depth debates on the role of culture and cultural heritage in global discourse (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Zukin, 1995; Kearns and Philo, 1993; Bianchini, 1993; Rypkema, 2005). Being a part of man's lifetime since the first existence of humans, it is in the 20th century that culture has entered into daily life by technological, social and economic advances such as development of information technologies, freedom of expression, and spread of civil movements. The first formal definition of cultural heritage was clarified by 'The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage' in 1972 (UNESCO, 1972). According to the Convention (UNESCO, 1972, para.12), cultural heritage is defined as "*monuments, building groups and sites that have historical, aesthetic, archaeological, scientific, ethnological and anthropological values*". Through the

late 20th century, cultural heritage has gained a new meaning that it is not only an object or image, but a living evidence of past values, traditions, knowledge or lifestyles for future generations (Bucher, 1996, p.230). Furthermore, it is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expression and values. (ICOMOS, 2002, p.21)

But although there is a vital progress in constructing new ways of defining conservation and initiating new conservation strategies –as the shift from the museum-phenomenon to active conservation- throughout the history, some domains of conservation practice still remain problematic. Under the current circumstances of globalisation, it will be even more problematic especially in the developing countries which are under ambitious challenge of acquiring a competitive advantage in a world marked by globalisation. Because as Brenner and Theodore (2002, p.375) state “*cities have become the incubators for many of the major political and ideological strategies through which the dominance of neo-liberalism is being maintained*”. Additionally, “*the overarching goal of such neo-liberal urban policy experiments is to mobilise city space as an arena for market-oriented economic growth and for elite consumption practices*” (Brenner and Theodore, 2002, p. 368). Thus, the conservation should combat with wars, crisis, natural disasters before 1970s; today it should cope with rapidly changing urban development scenarios, foreign investment, uneven development, large-scale development, shopping malls etc.; in short, the real estate sector.

The cities are now competing in a global network beyond their countries’ boundaries, threatened by marginalization within the global economy and forced by market pressures (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Jessop, 2002). Within this eternal competition of popularity leagues, capitalized culture has become the new orthodoxy for city governments’ regeneration scenarios more than ever as an important catalyst for economic development and creative promises. This is the embracement of the role of culture and cultural heritage as an economic development tool rather than simply focusing on conservation as a ‘symbolic economy’ but as a response to those demands to regenerate the economic base of cities that have lost their ability to attract inward investment (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Zukin, 1995). Lipietz (1994, p.35) defines this process as a struggle between “*defenders of the old space*” and “*defenders of the new space*”. As Negussie (2006) states, this interaction results in the production of new territorial formation where old geographies eclectically combined with projected spaces, and where the local eclectically combined with the global. Regarding the discussions above, the implications of this new definition can be broken down into four including the shift from cultural assets to cultural heritage; the shift from regeneration-led conservation to conservation-led regeneration; the shift from state-governance to entrepreneurial governance and the shift from citizens to users.

From cultural assets to cultural heritage: The change in the concept of assets to be conserved resulted in the interpretation of history

Despite the evidence of existence of earlier heritage studies, the appearance of the heritage phenomenon is generally placed in the latter half of the 20th century (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996; Harvey, 2001). Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) define the reasons for this recent trend as the increasing proliferation of heritage studies and therefore the increasing high profile of heritage in the public mind. Different than registered historic assets by conservation reforms, heritage is part of the past which we select to put whether economic, cultural or social values. This “*value-loaded concept*” of heritage in Hardy’s (1988; cited in Harvey, 2001, p. 324) words, makes heritage relate to present circumstances. Thus, the selective definition can bring different interpretations. According to Orbasli (2000) heritage is an interpretation of history by a wide range of users. Hence, the interpretation not only changes the boundaries of culture, the owners of the history and culture; but also it affects the visions of conservation-oriented practices.

From regeneration-led conservation to conservation-led regeneration: The change in the reasons for conservation

New urban policies that are structured through neoliberalism as a new governance mode of globalisation necessitate first, the use of cultural heritage as a tool to respond to the rapidly changing socio-economic conditions of the new economic order; and secondly, the contribution of conservation to develop its regenerative potential through the more economical use of the historical environment. This necessity has two dimensions that while cultural heritage is used as a tool for economic development; the acquired development, in turn, should ensure the sustainability and continuity of cultural heritage. The concept of conservation –as a goal- has already shifted towards a broader understanding –namely integrated conservation / active conservation- that it is increasingly seen as a tool to facilitate social and economic development and as a progressive catalyst to urban regeneration (Strange and Whitney, 2003; Pearce, 1994). However, the regeneration trends tend to undervalue the real potential of cultural assets for producing short-term economic benefits (Zukin, 1995; Evans, 2003). The recent practices show that this relationship occurs only in one direction and cultural heritage is used as an instrument rather than a goal. This is the change of the reasons set for conservation.

From state-governance to entrepreneurial-governance: The change in the actors of governance, so as in the actors of conservation.

It is a common view that the state's capacity for governance has changed and neoliberalism gives responsibility to governments to actively create the conditions within which entrepreneurial and competitive conduct is possible (Negussie, 2006; Jessop, 2002). This shows itself in increased promotion of privatisation through the selling of public sector assets, reduced role of the state and the law. This is the 'symbolic politics': lack of real influence of local governments (Jessop, 2002). However, conservation is a social process that its management implies participation by various sectors relating to accountability, representation, resources, ownership and access to cultural heritage. The changing role of public institutions in heritage management results in debates on the long-term consequences of economic globalisation for cultural heritage. Privatisation can have a positive impact on cultural heritage for its re-functioning and finance of maintenance, however it can also diminish public control over its conservation (Negussie, 2006; Jessop, 2002). Symbolic politics, in this sense, threatens heritage conservation by putting pressure with demands of global market economy: Because as Jessop (2002) states, the new urban governance rarely represents local economy.

From citizens to users: The change in the users of heritage.

Conservation has become more and more spatial, rather than a social issue. Changes after especially the 1990s have made heritage values serve mainly political and economic ideals within which tourism has become the expression model for growing importance of heritage intended only for tourists. This has emphasised the tension between globalisation and localisation of heritage in the "tourist-historic city" (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1990). While, on one hand, an infrastructure for the purpose of attracting visitors are started to be built such as convention centres, prestige hotels, shopping malls; on the other hand, the community is isolated. Urry (2002) terms this process as a 'tourist gaze' that conservation sites become postcard images of themselves by both bringing people together through common images, but at the same time separating people by social class and cultural preferences. On the contrary, conservation is not simply an architectural deliberation, but also a political, economic and social issue; because the environment cannot be divorced from the society living in. As Rogers (1982, cited in Orbasli 2000, p.2) suggests "*we are infact conserving cultures not buildings*". Within that context, urban regeneration projects in historic sites are

argued to have limited context that they lack social goals and generally end up with gentrification (Bianchini, 1993; Pearce, 1994; Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996).

As a result, the attempts to remove the obstacles fronting growing global cities have started to have deteriorating effects on its cultural heritage and on the society that have become part of this heritage:

- The space is started to be restructured in fragments through so-called 'flagship' projects. Space has become fragmented, so does the planning.
- Heritage places have become places of consumption, and they are rearranged and managed to encourage consumption.
- The regeneration trends tend to undervalue the real potential of cultural assets for producing short-term economic benefits.
- The focus on strict conservation legacies tends to result in less locally distinctive identities through nourishing of gaze.
- The exploitation of cultural heritage as a promotion tool has the lack of public accountability and social goals replaced by capital. The real owners of the process cannot benefit from the developments; on the contrary, they are forced to leave their heritage through gentrification actions.

That is, on one hand there is increasing social exclusion, minor economic significance, more heritage loss; but on the other hand there is more visible planning efforts, more support from media and urban elites and more real estate interest. There is no doubt that the heritage-led regeneration becomes the new orthodoxy within these social and political contexts. However, the question is its sustainable management.

Comparative to the progress in Europe in defining and utilising conservation as a tool and a valuable policy to regenerate historic areas and also to achieve creative and competitive cities, Turkey as a developing country, brings forward a different degree of caution to the discussions above. The insufficiencies in realisation of public policies, rapid population growth, uncontrolled urbanisation, limited resources and different appreciation of historic environment result in pressures for development, through a greater complexity of issues to be tackled when compared to Europe. However in general, the concept of conservation in Turkey, which was formerly taken to be a museum-related phenomenon, has changed over the years; is now being interpreted as a process of revitalisation and integration of the entities having historical, cultural and architectural values with certain economic and functional potential. However, the perceived economic benefits from the re-use of the cultural heritage increasingly cause the transformation of the historic sites into large-scale development projects. Within this context, Beypazari presents a unique heritage-led regeneration example to be a model for Turkey in balancing change and continuity with development policies.

The Impact of Heritage-led Regeneration Policies on Sustainable Development: Case of Beypazari

Beypazari is a district of Ankara remaining as a cultural and economic centre throughout history due to its location on the Silk Road. Its population of 10.000 in the 16th century has become 36.227 in 2007; providing an evidence for its historical importance (Beypazari Municipality, 2005).

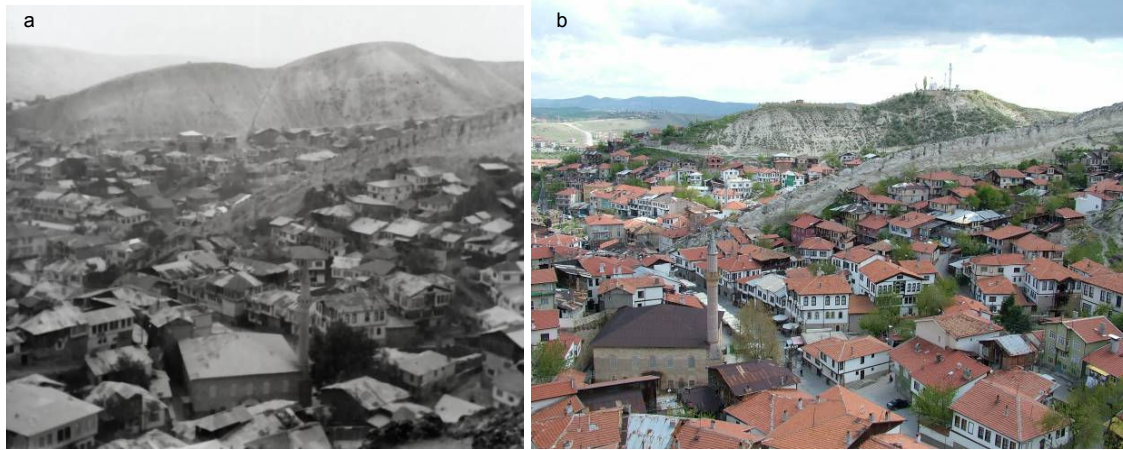


Figure 1. Bey pazari: a_ in the 1960s, b_ in 2008 (Bey pazari Municipality Archive, 2008)

Its economy is based on agriculture, trade, industry and mining. 67% of the population works in agriculture and 6% in trade sector. 60% of carrot demand of Turkey is supplied by Bey pazari. Mineral water, trona mining zone, local foods and silver works “telkari” are other important assets of local economy.

It is also one of the richest settlements of Turkey for both its historical and natural values. The settlement grew along the south and east axes since the beginning of the 20th century, creating two different spatial organisation. The old part comprises of the 150-year old historical bazaar area and six surrounding neighbourhoods where the community still lives in 3500 timber houses dated back to the 19th century.

Despite its rich history, Bey pazari has sat in the agenda of Turkey with its regeneration project. It has become a model for heritage-led regeneration with ‘Bey pazari Yeniden Project’ which was launched by the Mayor Mansur Yavas after his election in 1999. Within ten years, he created a vital and viable historic settlement through the promotion of cultural heritage as a tool to enhance cultural identity and to develop local economy.

The project consists of various sub-projects including the restoration of historical pattern, the promotion of traditional handicrafts and products, the protection of Turkish language and the conservation of natural values (Bey pazari Municipality, 2005). By starting with the restoration of only 25 buildings, the project has had a major impact in sustaining historical and architectural pattern, embracing local cultures and identities, rising property values and increasing the awareness on conservation.

Below is the summary of findings for the impacts of “Bey pazari Yeniden Project” on sustainable development of Bey pazari:

Physical Environment

The most important and visible impact of the Project is on the historical environment. By the interventions started in 1999, 500 houses were renovated according to the original pattern in the first 3.5 years. The target is 1000 for the year 2008. The restoration has taken place along with re-functioning programme. The restored housing stock gained new functions such as restaurants, museums and prestige accommodation pensions. Figure 2 shows the centre of the Project which is Alaaddin Street Renovation Scheme. Figure 3 and 4 shows the transformation of two buildings in Alaaddin Street. Tasmektep in Figure 3 is the first primary school in the Republican Era and today it serves as a local restaurant. The other figure shows the transformation of Konak Munsur from a house to a local restaurant. As stated by the interviewees, the Project has not only respected to the appropriate standards that are necessary for protection of historic environment, but also it has generated quality of life by

providing re-use of historical buildings and environmental improvements by utilising public space and public art, and changing the image of the settlement. The interventions also provide the local community to understand and cherish the value of their properties.



Figure 2. Alaaddin Street: a_before 2000, b_in 2000, c_in 2008 (Bey pazari Municipality Archive, 2008)



Figure 3. Tasmektep: a_in the 1930s, b_in the 1990s, c_in 2005 (Beypazari Municipality Archive, 2008)



Figure 4. Mansion Munsur: a_in the 1930s, b_in the 1990s, c_in 2005 (Beypazari Municipality Archive, 2008)

Economic Growth

Local economic development is surely one of the most important outcomes of the Project. It is encouraged through the promotion of heritage tourism; however, the considerations were not separated from the role of heritage as a public entity.

According to data from museums, the number of visitors reached to 45.000 in 2005, while it was 2000 in 1999. The total number of visitors has reached to 200.000 in 2008. Regarding the data, the annual visitor ratio increased by 1000%. The target for the number of visitors is 1 million. There are four hotels, 20 prestige mansion accommodations and one thermal hotel providing 1150 beds in total, while there was only one hotel beforehand. The average price is 35 YTL (1 YTL= 0.518644 EURO). The annual average vacancy rate of hotels is 30-35%.

Cultural attractions and events are utilised to make this significant setting alive. 'Historical Houses, Handicrafts, Carrot and Casserole Festival' is the most important cultural event in Beypazari. The first week of June welcomes concerts, exhibitions, stands for local products to present Beypazari nationally and internationally and also to present national and international values to Beypazari. The number of visitors reached to 130.000 in 2008, while 50.000 visitors participated to the event in 2005.

In addition, the income of 1500 families depends on tourism. When the average ratio of household is taken as 5, the number of people working in tourism sector equals to 7500. The average GDP is approximately 4000-4500 euros. The major sources of income are local foods and handicrafts. Majority of the local foods have patents.

There are 67 local food stands, 16 local handicraft stands, 21 local restaurants, 7 local bakeries, 45 silver ateliers and 32 silver shops which are opened after 1999. The stands are rented for 10 YTL per month from the Municipality and average monthly income of a stand is equal to 1000-1500 YTL. In the festival weeks, the average weekly income rises to 1000-1500 YTL. This has helped the traditional crafts survive.

One of the strengths of the Project is that it encouraged the local community to possess their own properties and their own businesses. By this way, the income has stayed in Beypazari.



Figure 5. Alaaddin Street and Working Women (Zeynep Gunay Archive, 2008)

Project has also had a major impact on property values. Average cost of a traditional mansion in Alaaddin Street has reached to 350.000 YTL from 10.000 YTL in five years. It is stated by the interviewees that the community regrets selling their old properties to move to new settlement areas.

Those developments have decreased the unemployment level and especially made women gain a special role in local economy. By the incentives of the Mayor, women were encouraged to sell their local products on the stands. The focus on sustaining local products has made Beypazari a focal point for visitors to experience traditional lifestyles, for community to make their crafts survive. Moreover, protecting the 'Turkish Language Project' is initiated by the prevention of the use of foreign words in labels of shops and products.

Cultural participation and Social capital

Beypazari Project outlines the fact that one of the success factors is to define the owners of cultural heritage and integrate them actively in the process. The provision of cultural participation and the encouragement of social capital are two of the important impacts of the Project. Not only the physical interventions but also participation in the process have increased confidence and pride among the community, provided a platform to express and exchange needs and ideas for becoming better off without making anyone worse-off.

The Project especially focused on women labour. The women of Beypazari started to take role in their society equally as men. It is stated by the interviewees that before 2000, it was impossible for a woman to walk along the city centre alone, however today they are the main labour force selling their own local products and sharing their ideas in the City Council.

'Kentler Cocuklarindir / The Cities are Children's' Project has started by the cooperation of CEKUL Foundation and Beypazari Municipality in 2008 to make children aware of the cultural richness of their hometowns, make them develop an understanding of urbanism and cultural identities and to make them become the cultural ambassadors of their hometowns. 'Beygem Youth Fest' is another event to make youth learn its own cultural richness from food to local dances.

Results of the community audit shows that the Project has increased the role of community in urban projects; changed the perception of the community on the settlement and its cultural heritage, increased quality of life, encouraged volunteering among the community and increased the organisational capacity of the community. It has created local community not only confide in themselves, but also confide in others.

Management

The pioneering role of the local government and local community participation are two important factors in the management of Beypazari Project. According to the interview results, it can be stated that the Project has increased the role of community in urban projects, encouraged public-private partnerships, sponsorships and volunteering, provided public participation in decision-making process and encouraged integrated planning process.

The basic difference of Beypazari Project is that the regeneration attempts were initiated without designated as an 'urban site'. The Mayor claims that designation would bring strict measures making impossible to enable conservation including time constraints and bureaucratic boundaries. Eventually in January 2008 Beypazari was designated as an 'urban site'.

Mayor's attitudes towards not getting professional help from universities and experts were debated extensively. He stated that an expert demands 1 million YTL, but he finished the first phase of the restoration job for 150.000 YTL. Additional finance was allocated from Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Nationalist Party and other sponsors. He claims that "*You have a ruined car, but you want to put a Mercedes motor.*"

By personal incentives of the Mayor, the sponsorship of major Beypazari holdings, universities and business organisations has been provided. The agreements started with 25 buildings, now exceeds 500. Lately the Mayor has launched a programme called 'Sponsorship for Beypazari Houses'. There are various opportunities provided for sponsors including the renaming of the street after the sponsor firm, the provision of stands in the fests for ten days and permission for promotion and selling products, the promotion of the restoration event in media organs. He has also encouraged the community to take role in the restoration of their properties by outlining the fact that they will be living in healthy buildings; the value of the buildings will be increased and they will be earning money from this. The Municipality pays for the roof and outer façade maintenance, the rest is due to community itself. The possible opportunities of having a restored property have created willingness for the community to conserve their environment and properties.

Beypazari project outlined the fact that conservation cannot be achieved solely through physical interventions but through the protection of promotion of identities as a whole. This requires not only a strong integrated vision, but also a strong branding effort. Beypazari Project can be defined as a 'branding' project within which includes the integrated performance of physical interventions, local development strategies and their promotion in the media. It is stated by an interviewee that this is a self-oriented total quality management.

The Mayor provides regular referendums and face-to-face contacts to make people have a role in this project and also share their ideas about the planned projects. This has also created a self-monitoring process to assess the impacts of the Project.

'One price' application is another programme of the Mayor. This has not only brought the control of quality in production and purchase, but also provided equal opportunities for everyone.

In addition, Beypazari City Council was founded according to Municipality Law No. 5393 article 76; with the participation of professional boards, universities, related non-governmental institutions, neighbourhood directors, representatives of public authorities and political parties. Its role is to enhance city vision and citizenship awareness, to provide sustainable development, social tolerance, transparency in management, participation and self-management through volunteership. The efforts which were started by the enthusiasm of one man have taken new forms with such developments to provide effective management of conservation cultural heritage.

Challenges

Besides the positive impacts stated above, there are also challenges threatening the sustainability of cultural heritage.

To begin with, the uncontrolled renovation of historic environment by not designating Beypazari as an urban site has resulted in major debates in the conservationist academic arena. The project developed it's a self-management scheme to prevent the measures of conservation legacy; however it ended up with controversies on the meaning of sustainable conservation.

There are also claims from the community that the Project is limited to a specific geographic area and a specific income group. It is stated that the community who are getting the benefit of tourism today are already the privileged group. The community living and working in the surrounding areas claims that the visitors have started to prefer the refurbished part of the settlement and they have been losing attraction.

Another point underpinned by the interviewees that the concentration on tourism threatens the traditional crafts especially in the bazaar area. Because of the opportunities served by the tourism sector, the owners of crafts shops have shifted to tourism-related purchase such as gift shops selling cheap Chinese products.

Moreover, there are drawbacks about the worsening quality of local products. Interviewees state that the demand generated by tourism increases competition among the community. Regarding the 'one price application', the community searches for more income by using low standard input.

There are also hesitations about the increasing number of visitors. It is stated that alienation has not been observed since there are less foreign visitors. However with the target of 1 million visitors per year, the community expects alienation within the community.

But Beypazari is lucky in one sense that it can learn lessons from previous examples not to duplicate similar mistakes for its own sake. Regarding the previous examples such as Safranbolu, the most important factor in Beypazari's future success depends on the integrated regeneration efforts that target local community and its economy.

Conclusion

Neoliberalism is constructed on 'There is no alternative' ideology. But there are always alternatives. It is impossible and needless to ignore the reality of a globalised economy. But the beneficiaries of globalisation can be adopted and measures to reduce the negative impacts of a globalised economy can be established. Every nation should take responsibility of its own economic future. Because despite the growing internationalisation, most efforts are in local scale and conservation of cultural heritage is a public duty.

As Rypkema (2005) states

"In the 21st century, only the unwise city will make the choice between historic preservation and economic development. The wise city will effectively utilize its historic built environment to meet the economic, social, and cultural needs of its citizens far into the future".

It is evident that the promotion of cultural heritage in regeneration initiatives can both help respond to social and cultural needs and to fulfil economic objectives, however if the attempts to remove the obstacles fronting growing global cities start to have deteriorating effects on their cultural heritage and on the societies that have become part of these heritage, it is time for us to make a selection.

There is a change in the concept of assets to be conserved resulted in the interpretation of history. Economic development should also be encouraged, especially in an era where the

world order is designed by competitiveness; however, it should not be the primary goal and the considerations should not be separated from its role as a public entity.

There is a change in the reasons for conservation. But the economic or political commodification of the past should reconsider regeneration policies in order to respect to the appropriate standards that are necessary for protection of historic environment and for generating quality of life, social cohesion, and community development.

There is a change in the actors of governance, so as in the users of heritage. But the success demands respecting the influence and interest of diverse stakeholders, but at most the community as the major Subjects of urban practices. This is defining the owners of cultural heritage and integrate them actively in the process.

And Beypazari proved that it is a wise city, because:

- It created a growing and diverse local economy which provides employment and wealth,
- It respected to community needs,
- It provided active volunteership and community organisations,
- It provided quality public service,
- It encouraged diverse and creative local cultures and identities that community can embrace and be proud,
- It achieved the conservation of historic environment,
- It created a healthy and safe local environment by well-designed public space,
- It provided an environment that can respond to different needs by using minimum resources,
- It created a sense of place,
- It provided public participation, social inclusion and justice.

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Bey pazari Municipality Archive, 2006, 2008

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Zeynep Gunay
Research Assistant
Department of Urban and Regional Planning,
Istanbul Technical University, Faculty of Architecture
Turkey