

Sustainability of Historic Environment in the Neoliberal Age

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Introduction

The historic environments, in the twentyfirst century, have become the centre of change and transformation demands that emerged as an opponent to conservation efforts. Technological developments introduced with globalization together with the new forms of socio-economic and political organization types have given way to a major, unexpected and rapid transformation process in all spheres of daily life. Throughout this process where economy is defined as the driving force of anything; national boundaries, economies and cultures have lost their significance; local socio-economic life and place have taken new forms. Regardless of the diversified meanings attributed to globalization, common view advocates that globalization is inevitable. This inevitableness gains an ideological attitude through “Neoliberalism”. Neoliberal ideology can be defined as the mechanism that is clear, competitive, and free of every state restriction and the most suitable for economical development (Brenner and Theodore, 2002). According to neoliberalism, what is public is inefficient; competition is the essential. “The survival of the fittest” as a result of competition is the balance of nature and; there is no other alternative (George, 1999; Peck and Tickell, 1994; Brenner and Theodore, 2002).

As an outcome of neoliberal policies which aim to efficiently distribute all the natural, physical, social and financial resources that develop parallel to competition, “place” turns into the main theoretical sphere of political strategies. While the city is rediscovered with economy and marketing strategies, more productive, competitive, flexible, innovative, income-generating models are needed for the management of cities. Urbanization within the context of neoliberalism then is all the economic development-led national state politics that supports privatization and free-market; and in which the role of state is restricted for governmental and economical efficiency in the frame of place competition. Within this spatial organization form of globalization, cities turn into places to be the indicators of this alternation and transformation process, while at the same time historical environments become one of the most significant instrument designed to enhance the competitive power of cities.

Through this current trend, cultural heritage is cut off its settled and global cultural property concept possessing a public value and gained new values within the framework of personal

interests hence may turn into a new concept in interpreting history. While urban conservation -which Tankut (2004) describes as “a political weapon”- has been viewed and interpreted as an integral part of regeneration process of the historical, cultural and architectural properties by featuring their social and economical potentials; nonetheless they are being pushed of their social context and turned into an expression of the political and economical interests. With this new meaning and role attributed to cultural heritage and urban conservation, historical environment loses its identity of an environment where cultural heritage is conserved for a universal objective but instead it turns into an artificial environment that is packed and marketed as a good/commodity. This is the shift from goal-oriented conservation to instrument-oriented conservation resulting in the change in the concept of assets to be conserved resulted in the interpretation of history, the change in the reasons for conservation, the change in the actors of governance, the change in the users of heritage (Gunay, 2008).

In Turkey too, historic environment has become a component of this alternation and transformation process. Liberalism movement initiated in the 1980s continues to pervade in the 2000s via privatized competition-based public services, real estate-oriented, privatized and gated large-scale urban projects, and gentrification projects supporting social and spatial polarization. As a result of these developments, urban conservation, which is one of the most significant issues parallel to the universal trend in the 1970s, is pushed backwards (for an overview of Turkish conservation policy, see Gulersoy et al. 2003). It is evident that the promotion of cultural heritage has a key role in urban policies that aim to respond to social and cultural needs, to resolve conflicts and to fulfil economic objectives through long-term visions. 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. Initially, the tight and limitative legal structure of urban conservation which conflicts with independent urbanization policies are left outside of development policies, which in turn brings about disintegration in place and conservation process in historic environment. Secondly, within the framework of selective definitions that enable interpretation of cultural heritage and history, urban conservation turn into a concept associated with current conditions; urban conservation has become a modification of the past; the connection between the “past” and the “conserved” is ripped off. Finally, traditional top-down approaches in urban conservation and planning policies fall short in finding solutions to problems emerging in historic environments under neoliberal urbanization conditions and lessen their effects on society. Especially small and medium-size historic settlements that are ignored by neoliberal ideology have the obligation of surviving by themselves.

In the frame of all these worries and threats, the idea is becoming prevalent that the solution for the tensions that historic environments are faced with globalization and neoliberal urbanization policies, is the utilization of sustainability principles in the urban conservation process (Strange, 1997; Tankut, 2005; Rodwell, 2007; Pendlebury, 2009; Tekeli [2004] 2009), although it has been a controversial issue since the 1980s. Sustainability, which can be explained as “capacity of continuity” in its widest definition, resurfaced in the 1960s to defend environment-sensitive economic development. Although it has been for years associated with environment, after the 1980s, it started to be on the agenda of development process, since environment-led approaches have fallen short in answering to the new problems emerging in cities depending on the changing political and socio-economic conditions triggered by neoliberal ideology. It has been a key factor for urban conservation among also international conservation institutions since 2000s (i.e. ICOMOS, 2001; English Heritage, 2005). Unlike the 1960s, it turned into a political expression for governance and social justice concepts which became a universal guide for modern development. One of these changing meanings is the applicability of sustainability concept in urban place.

Sustainable urbanization ideally describes a process that brings environmental and socio-cultural responsibility and provides society a viable, liveable and equitable environment. When cultural heritage is considered, it presents the responsibility to continue the contribution of cultural heritage to present day via management methods sensitive to historic environment. It is the basic principle of urban conservation to transfer historic environment as a source of historical document and cultural identity for the next generations and in the long-run cultural heritage operates as key for sustainable strategies which aim to present a livable, vital and equitable environment by making a connection amidst spatial, socio-cultural and financial responsibilities. Despite the common strategies; a reductive and partial-approach observed in both disciplines (Bizzarro and Nijkamp, 1996; Roald, 2000; Stubbs, 2004; Rodwell; 2007). Sustainable development is still been discussed in the extent of environmental sustainability; its role in planning, its applicability in cities are ignored. Parallel to this approach, conservation studies generally focuses on natural heritage in the sense of sustainability. As a result, despite the increasing academic and practical studies, sufficient integral infrastructure have not been formed for sustainable development, methods and indicators have not been detected, and empirical evidences have not been presented.

On the other hand, there are increasing suggestions advocating that sustainability in historical environment approach is an excuse for the pressures introduced by neoliberal ideology. Within the scope of rapidly alternating political and economical processes, there is a need for strategic approaches enabling functionality of both subjects in an integrated form

in order to secure the success of urban conservation policies applied in historic environments.

Research Methodology

The research sights an answer to the main question “how can the sustainability of historic environment be ensured within the context of neoliberal urbanization dynamics?”. In a process when even the sustainability of sustainability is under discussion, the research asserts the need of discussing other alternatives especially in the historic environment in the extent of sustainability in the frame of contradictions, worries and threats created by “there is no other alternative” approach of neoliberal urban policies. It advocates the view that the sustainability of historic environment is subject to the way historic environment adapts into this new order as well as the way it can control the effects of globalization on historic environment. Meeting the requirements of these necessities which are in fact an urban management problem, the research emphasizes the necessity for the discussion of urban conservation policies within a holistic system approach; in comprehending and interpreting all spatial, social, economic, structural and administrative components that are effective in the formation of historic environment as a living and dynamic system. Within this scope, the aim of the research is to define the success criteria in facilitating the applicability of sustainable urban conservation through a holistic system approach within the context of neoliberal urbanism by adopting sustainability as a principle in the management of urban conservation to ensure a balance between the necessity to conserve the values of cultural heritage in historical environment and socio-cultural needs and financial interests. Sustainable urban conservation model is introduced with the presentation of 12 sustainable urban conservation objectives to assess to what extent these objectives have been fulfilled according to 41 performance indicators (Table 1).

Table 1. Goals and objectives for sustainable urban conservation

<i>Goals and objectives for sustainable urban conservation</i>	
Goal 1: Viable and liveable historic environment	
[I.1]	Provision of viability of cultural heritage
[I.2]	Provision of liveable historic environment
[I.3]	Preservation of urban identity and image
Goal 2: Social justice and development	
[II.1]	Support of social justice in historic environment
[II.2]	Enforcement of social development
[II.3]	Development of conservation conscience
Goal 3: Balanced development and productive local economy	
[III.1]	Provision of vitality of local economy
[III.2]	Provision of welfare for local society
Goal 4: Good governance and participation	
[IV.1]	Provision of integrated conservation management
[IV.2]	Encouragement of coordination and collaboration between conservation actors
[IV.3]	Increase of technical and human resource capacity for urban conservation
[IV.4]	Utilization of effective communication tools in the conservation process

Regarding the contextual operation of adaptation of urban conservation policies applied in Turkey to neoliberal urbanization dynamics, the experiences of two medium-sized towns, Safranbolu (Bazaar Region) and Beypazari, are highlighted as empirical evidence constituting alternative urban conservation models being goal-oriented and instrument-oriented respectively. The assessment methodology follows a holistic multi-criteria approach integrating spatial, social, economic and structural sub-systems of historic environment. Bearing in mind the fundamental research results, the paper concludes with key precautions in enabling sustainability of historic environment in the neoliberal age.

Safranbolu urban conservation process is an urban conservation model which enables cultural heritage and historic environment to live integrated with modern developments under the conditions of changing social and economical conditions. The characteristics of this process is its “planned” and “legal” structure in the frame of goal-oriented urban conservation perception of the 1970s. Beypazari urban conservation process, on the other hand, is an urban conservation model whose economy is largely based on tourism, which is prominent with its historical character and supports the economic usage of cultural heritage with presentation and marketing techniques. The characteristics of this process is its being a striking example of shifting from an urban conservation process directed by laws and regulations towards instrument-oriented urban conservation perception of the 2000s in which law and regulations are directed by actions.



Figure 1. Safranbolu, Carsi Region (a) and Beypazari (b)

Research Findings

Research findings in the scope of sustainability of urban conservation policies applied in Safranbolu and Beypazari are presented under the titles of viable and liveable historic environment level, social justice and development level, balanced development and productive local economy level, good governance and participation level.

Viable and liveable historic environment

Research findings show that the settlement which has higher performance profile for the level of preserving cultural heritage is Safranbolu. Indicators that distinctively show higher performance of Safranbolu against Beypazari are the registration level and authenticity of cultural heritage.

In the scope of registration, there are 1318 buildings; 584 of which are registered in Safranbolu (Bazaar Region) urban conservation site according to 2009 field survey (44.30%). In beypazari, there are 1977 buildings; 283 of which are registered (%14.30). In Safranbolu, the urban conservation process which was directed with laws and regulations and conservation construction plan enabled the increase of the number of cultural heritage under registration and provided a legal conservation status. In Beypazari, on the contrary, urban conservation practices that were carried out without taking urban conservation site decision and preparing conservation construction plan fell back in the sense bestowing legal quality. However, the high rates of unregistered buildings in both of the settlements increases the cultural heritage rate under risk. In Safranbolu, 33.1% of all the buildings and in Beypazari only 15.2% of all the buildings are in quite good and good condition.

One of the most distinctive variables among the results of urban conservation policies applied in Safranbolu and Beypazari historic settlements is the level of protecting the authenticity of cultural heritage. In the scope of conservation construction plan in Safranbolu, urban conservation practices carried out with the participation of universities and experts since 1975 has given important results in the sense of authenticity value. In Beypazari however, urban conservation practices cause serious discussions among experts in the sense of authenticity. These discussions also reflected in the research findings. According to the field survey carried out on the basis of authenticity of buildings; the rate of buildings that their authenticity is entirely preserved is 28% in Safranbolu and 1.9% in Beypazari.

The integrity is also an important issue in the sense of sustainability as well as the authenticity. Facade dressing technique which is defined as “replication” and “modification” in

literature is applied on new buildings on both settlements. When the integrity of new buildings with historic environment is considered, 41.9% of the buildings in Safranbolu and 35.9% of buildings in Beypazari show integrity with the environment. Enabling the appearance of “historical Beypazari house” to the buildings in Beypazari is one of the most important sub-projects of Beypazari Yeniden Project. Examples for this practice are Bazaar shops and shelters used as handicraft shops in İmaret Street. There are examples in Safranbolu too; such as İş Bank, but they are not as common as in Beypazari.

Suitability level of uses supported by urban conservation practices is as important as utilization of cultural heritage. Uses that effect suitability level in historic settlements are storage and manufacturing. When registered buildings are regarded; the rate of suitable uses is 93.9% in Safranbolu and 69.1% in Beypazari. Storage areas compose 1.7% of all the uses in Safranbolu and 2.1% in Beypazari. Rate of manufacturing and small industry usage are 0.5% in Safranbolu and 2.4% in Beypazari. The role of historic environment as a “marketable” commodity draws attention about infrastructure, cleaning and security issues in these settlements. However when education and health services are considered, these tendency is not adequate. This result shows that the practices for improving quality of environment and life focus on “image and beautification” rather than “social policies”.

Social justice and development

There are different results between Safranbolu and Beypazari when the level of social justice and development is considered. Conservative structure of society in Safranbolu and Beypazari forms a hindrance for local cultural participation. According to the expert survey; the rate of experts who think the level of inclusiveness of activities is sufficient is 25% in Safranbolu and 42.9% in Beypazari. The household survey shows that wealthy people are more influenced by these practices in Safranbolu with a percentage of 50. In Beypazari, the view that all community equally make use of these developments is dominant (66%).

Rgeneration practices in touristic enterprises such as accommodation and cafés cast out local community who do not have the capital and equipment to invest on these enterprises and causes gentrification. Direct support of local community in Beypazari; make the view that all the people are influenced positively from the developments after urban conservation practices become common in public.

In addition, education and information opportunities and consciousness level about conservation created in both settlements could not reach adequate level in the scope of social consciousness level. The interviews in Beypazari expressed that the vitalization in this

historic environment would not last long due to the inadequacy of education and information facilities especially in tourism.

A factor for the level of social consciousness and awareness according to the findings of interviews is the time span of conservation practices. Safranbolu urban conservation process being a pilot scheme in the period when the issue of urban conservation was firstly began to be discussed in 1970s, while Beypazari urban conservation practices started to be carried out when the importance of urban conservation began to be adopted by large groups of people with the example of Safranbolu in the 2000s. Another factor is the profile of owners and users of cultural heritage in Safranbolu and Beypazari. According to interview results; only 10% of the people living in Safranbolu are the original settlers while most of the people in Beypazari are original settlers. This profile influences the perception of owning and cherishing historic environment in the sense of sustainability.

Balanced development and productive local economy

Local economic development in Safranbolu does not have the feature of being an integrated part of urban conservation policies; it is rather a result that emerged due to conservation practices. In Beypazari, local economic production was supported as well as urban conservation practices in order to utilize current development potentials to create new market opportunities. New products were presented in national and international platform; functional variability in commerce, services and tourism was provided for traditional crafts and handicrafts as well. There are currently 60 silver shops, saddle-sellers, ironsmith and quilt-makers and 20 touristic enterprises in the city centre of Beypazari. Regional and local food contributes to the local economy as well, which is the basic reason for domestic and foreign visitors. With the practice of “1 product-1 price”, equal income opportunity is provided and the competition is regarded to be served by the quality of products.

Research findings support these evaluations. There is a distinctive difference between Safranbolu and Beypazari in the sense of supporting local products. The level of support of local products in Beypazari has a higher value according to household survey (97%). This rate is 62% in Safranbolu. For example, the rate of traditional crafts in the survey of building use is 5.7% in Safranbolu and 3.2% in Beypazari; however there is transformation from commerce to traditional crafts in Beypazari in recent 10 years with a percentage of 11 as an evidence for the support given to traditional crafts. Traditional crafts are meant to be sustained in the booths of Imaret Street with a monthly rental of €75. In Safranbolu, on the other hand, 7.2% of total uses have transformed from traditional crafts to manufacturing in the recent 10 years. According to the information obtained from Safranbolu Chamber of

Commerce and Industry and Safranbolu Chamber of Merchants and Craftsmen there are 1 leather shoe maker, 5 ironsmiths, 1 saddle-seller and 2 harness makers left.

Another important indicator in the scope of research is the rate of workers in the field of industry and services. Development in economic activities results in relatively higher rate of employment of commercial workers in active population (DPT, 2004). The rate of workers in service sector in Safranbolu is 45.32%. According to this, Safranbolu is in the 87th rank among 872 counties in Turkey in the sense of rates of workers in service sector (DPT, 2004). The rate of workers in services sector is 29.01% in Beypazari and it is in the 223rd rank. Diversity in commercial enterprises have been increasing in Beypazari since 2005. 32% of the working population has been working in services sector since 2006 (Beypazari Municipality, 2006). Safranbolu's industry and service-based economy and Beypazari's agriculture-based economy have influence on these results. It is expressed in the interviews that shifting from agriculture to industry with the foundation of Karabük iron and steel plant, and then shifting towards service sector caused agricultural activities and traditional crafts to cease in Safranbolu. Sustaining agriculture-based economic development in Beypazari enables traditional crafts such as silver treatment to be protected and Beypazari settlers to carry on living in here.

Another important issue about local economic development is the level of wealth and economic income. The change in income level after urban conservation practices in Safranbolu and Beypazari, emphasizes the importance of cultural tourism. According to the household survey; 11% of the households in Safranbolu and 19% in Beypazari expressed an increase in their income. In addition, there is a distinctive difference between two settlements in the means of employment opportunities that were created. According to the household survey; the rate of households who think employment possibilities created by conservation practices is sufficient is 44% in Safranbolu and 80% in Beypazari. Unemployment in activities such as handicrafts and regional food production has decreased profoundly in Beypazari. Interviews expressed that nearly 1500 families earn their income from this sector. In the stands which are placed in Alaaddin Street with a weekly rental of €5, the local community is encouraged to produce and market their products.

It is seen that the community who were unemployed before conservation practices and the majority of whom were women had jobs with a percentage of 47 after the conservation practices. Apart from that, the festivals play a vital role in settlements' economic development and contribute importantly to the income level. For example in Beypazari, interviews show that average income of €75 per week in Beypazari rose up to €500 per festival week. Share

of additional income was enabled by workers rented from outside in busy months. This potential attracts demands from outsiders. However in Safranbolu, youngsters have a tendency of immigration due to unemployment problem.

Good governance and participation

Regarding integrated conservation management as the first objective of achieving good governance and participation, research findings show that Safranbolu has a higher performance value. The most distinctive indicators that cause this result are the level of adaptation towards urban conservation law and regulations, orientation level of urban conservation actions in direction with management/strategic plan and orientation level of urban conservation actions with urban conservation site designation. Urban conservation policies in Safranbolu has followed the processes of conservation site designation, the preparation and application of conservation construction plan according to national and international norms. Urban conservation practices in Beypazari has been oriented by flagship projects, while the projects gained legal status with conservation site designation after urban conservation applications reached at a specific level. In Safranbolu, the conservation site status made the activities compulsory to be carried out according to conservation construction plan. Bureaucratic formalities that last long frustrated the public and encouraged public to find their own solutions. However, none of the settlements have a management or strategic plan that direct urban conservation practices. Despite Safranbolu's long experience in urban conservation field and placement in UNESCO World Heritage List, the lack of a management plan constitutes a major drawback for the success of conservation process.

Secondly, the coordination and participation among actors defines the content of public collective practice in which they all take place to guarantee sustainability of all the shareholders who have effect and interest in urban conservation process. Propellant role of local governments are the common characteristics of Safranbolu and Beypazari. Apart from local governments, local governance has the feature of being a part of management with collective practices as well. "Urban conservation movement" in Beypazari has been a communication-based campaign which was identified with local government elections. Urban conservation practices have organizationally been a university and civil community action. However, research findings expressed that participation was not enabled sufficiently in both of the settlements.

Regarding the institutional structure, there is a distinctive difference between Safranbolu and Beypazari. The basis of Beypazari Yeniden Project has been composed of a finance mechanism that is based on public-private partnership. Mansur Yavas -Mayor of the period- explained the tendency towards public-private partnership as the collaboration with

universities and experts slows down the urban conservation process and costs much financially. Observations in Beypazari show that 31.8% of the restored historic buildings were financed by private sector. This rate is only 2.4% in Safranbolu.

Another distinctive variable in the management of Safranbolu and Beypazari conservation processes is the way of utilizing from communication and marketing resources. Beypazari Yeniden Project was carried out with a comprehensive marketing and image campaign. Information and experience has been made public and shared with other historic settlements such as Safranbolu via local government in Beypazari; but in Safranbolu, this communication is provided rather via civil community organizations.

Conclusion

The results of research shows that the most important potentials of small and medium-size historic settlements is to utilize their cultural heritage in a way that would best meet the demands of modern life conditions. There are different local resources for historic settlements to use in order to conserve their cultural heritage and these resources can add value to the competition platform brought by neoliberal politics.

Contrary to legal and planned urban conservation process of Safranbolu; inverse functioning of urban conservation process as a legalized methodology does not damage Beypazari much; though its being a model for other small and medium-size historic environments forms a threat for the future of cultural heritage of Turkey. In Safranbolu, urban conservation policies which have not been managed integrated with social and economic sectoral policies are insufficient for responding the needs and problems of historic environment.

However, the success of historic settlements is based not only on the way they are adapted to new economic order in the process of globalization and but also the way they control the effects of globalization on cultural heritage and historic environment. This should not be a choice between conservation and development but to utilize the value and potential of cultural heritage as a source for sustainable development.

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