

Local governments' role in conservation and evaluation of cultural and historical values: Beypazarı case

1. Introduction

Globalization process affects the form and function of cities in various ways and creates a very competitive environment among them in order to integrate to the global network. The spatial, social and economic inequalities among cities have stimulated local actors to rediscover local identities and to react by formulating economic and marketing strategies to enhance the competitiveness of the locality in the national and global system. In the integration of this global system historical and cultural values are determining factors of local identity. These historical and cultural values are accepted as common heritage of the World, carrying these values from past to future by conservation is an important duty and responsibility of contemporary communities.

Turkey is one of the richest countries having cultural and historical heritage. In Turkey, various central and local actors are responsible for conservation of historical and cultural values. By Municipal Act No.5393 Turkish municipalities has been determined as one of these actors. Turkish municipalities encounter some difficulties and could not be able to fulfill these responsibilities. On the other hand there are some success stories, such as Beypazarı Municipality. In a short time, the Municipality realized successful implementations about conservation of local historical and cultural values. The aim of this paper is to introduce a successful municipality case, in the scope of rediscovering local identities by protecting historical and cultural values and to constitute a sample model for other municipalities. For this aim, in the first section, conservation of cultural and historical values in Turkey from institutional perspectives is explained briefly. Legal and institutional arrangements emphasizing the role and responsibilities of local municipalities related to this subject are analyzed. In the second section, Beypazarı case is evaluated by determining the local potentials as well as the projects and implementations. At the end of the paper, leading from this success case, possible strategies oriented toward implementation are developed for municipalities which have similar values.

2. Conservation of cultural and historical values in Turkey

Politics and implementations of historical and cultural conservation in Turkey have not been effective up until now. Especially, migration process arising after 1950s, results in a rapid urbanization and the urban areas grow out unboundedly. Within this period, historical urban structures and historical urban centers have been threatened where compatible conservation policies have not been generated. On the other hand, insufficient social consciousness and inadequate financial resources prevents implementations. By the way, some of the historical and cultural values come to harm and disappear; despite these values are safeguarded by laws. From this perspective institutional structure and especially the municipalities role in conservation is given briefly.

2.1. Institutional structure for conservation

In Turkey, Ministry of Culture and Tourism is the main authority responsible for conservation of cultural and historical values. Determining the cultural and historical buildings and areas for conservation, making the official registration, preparing the conservation and development plans and programs, putting these plans into practice, carrying out and supervising the archeological digs and managing the museums are duties and responsibilities of the Ministry.

General Directorate of Cultural and Natural Heritage and General Directorate of Monuments and Museums are units of Ministry of Culture and Tourism that are directly assigned to conservation. At the same time a number of organizations and institutions have duties and responsibilities concerning conservation. Ministries like Ministry of Public Works and Settlement, Ministry of Industry; investor organizations like Housing Development Administration of Turkey (TOKİ), General Directorate of İller Bank, General Directorate of Foundations (VGM), General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works (DSİ), General Directorate of Highways (KGM) and local authorities like special provincial administrations and municipalities are other authorities responsible for conservation of cultural and historical values (Bademli, 1997).

Also there are some voluntary organizations interested in conservation such as architecture and city and regional planning departments of universities, the chamber of architects, the chamber of city planners and non governmental organizations like The Foundation for the Promotion and Protection of the Environment and Cultural Heritage (ÇEKÜL), The Foundation for the Conservation of the Heritage of History, Archeology, Art and Culture (TASK) and Union of Historical Towns (TKB).

Ministry of Culture and Tourism, generates general policies and resolutions through the medium of underlying conservation boards. The boards approve conservation plans however the Ministry does not have a role in implementation. On the other hand, investor organizations, local authorities and voluntary organizations; play important roles in implementation process of conservation. For example; TOKİ, establishes credits for restoration of immovable cultural properties (<http://www.toki.gov.tr>). ÇEKÜL executes projects to constitute social consciousness and also participates actively in conservation process. In more than 50 cities which have been able to preserve their cultural heritage and identity, many traditional buildings are restored and renovated; and conservation plans are designed (<http://www.cekulvakfi.org.tr>). Municipalities are preparing, applying and controlling conservation plans for the purpose of historical environment protection.

Despite there are various organizations and institutions having duties and responsibilities concerning conservation; successful policies and implementations have not been displayed yet. One of the main reason for this failure rises from institutional structure where organization and execution of institutions embraces troubles. Responsibilities concerning conservation of cultural and historical values are shared by various institutions. Coordination and cooperation difficulties, conflict and disharmony occurs among these institutions and therefore effective and entire conservation could not be satisfied (Koruma Komisyonu, 1995). Furthermore, inadequate financial resource, qualified personnel and technical supplies and sophisticate bureaucratic process handicap success of institutions.

2.2. Municipalities role in conservation

The municipality is a local authority that meets the common local needs and carries municipal services in areas. Reference law of the municipalities is the Municipal Act no. 5393. The duties of municipalities are arranged in the article 14 of the Act. According to this article municipalities have various duties concerning health and social aid, public works, culture and education, agriculture, economy and welfare. Conservation of cultural and natural values and historical areas has been determined as one of the optional duties of Turkish municipalities.

However Turkish municipalities encounter some difficulties and could not be able to fulfill even their obligatory duties. Today, Turkish municipalities are facing various problems and they can not fulfill their duties and responsibilities. Administrative tutelage practices, financial resources shortages, insufficiency of qualified personnel, inability to utilize modern government techniques, non-development of fellow citizenship, inadequacy of public

participation, absence of transparent government, lack of legal conformity supervision and the increase in the service expectations of the local public are all common and general problems for municipalities (Gürel Üçer, 2002).

Municipalities must execute the leading role in conservation of historical and cultural values, because these values must be evaluated by local dynamics. On the other hand municipalities in Turkey, does not have sufficient consciousness and responsibility. Most of them evaluate conservation as an obstacle for development, indicate a contrary manner and not adopt conservation approaches (Bademli, 1997). Besides there are a few success stories that appear from the individual efforts of local governors by stimulating the local initiative. Kastamonu, Beypazarı and Safranbolu are some of these municipalities that execute successful implementations concerning conservation of historical and cultural values.

Lack of consciousness, inadequacy of financial resource and qualified personnel and the inability to utilize modern government techniques such as participation can be enlisted as the major factors hampering service provision concerning conservation by municipalities (Yılmaz and Gürel Üçer, 2004). However, achievement of conservation process, local consciousness and participation is a precondition. Beypazarı that successfully realizes all these conditions will be given in the next section as a case study.

3. Case study: Beypazarı Municipality

Beypazarı is located northwest of Ankara in Central Anatolia Region and surrounded by Ayaş, Güzöl, Nallıhan and Polatlı districts (Figure 1). According to the Turkish Statistical Institute, Beypazarı is the biggest district of Ankara with population of 51.841 in 2000 (TURKSTAT, 2000). 66 percent of its population situated in city center and the rest of them are living in villages. Beypazarı was one of the prominent center of settlements during the Hittite, Phrygian, Galatian, Byzantian and Seljuki periods and lastly during the Ottoman Empire period. Being located on historical Silk Road, which was towards from İstanbul to Bağdat during the Romans up to Republic period, increased the importance of the city as a commercial center. Along with official records, the population of Beypazarı in 1573 was 10.000 people, and this also shows the historical importance of the city (www.beypazarı-bld.gov.tr).



Figure 1. Location of Beypazarı (www.kgm.gov.tr)

Beypazarı's economy mostly depends on agriculture sector (67% of total labour force). Industry, commercial, stockbreeding and handcrafts are also important in economic life of the city. The most crucial agricultural product in Beypazarı is carrot and it was distributed to the whole country. Approximately 60% of the carrot demands of the country is supplied by Beypazarı (www.beypazarı-bld.gov.tr). Mineral water and "Trona mining zone", which is in the second order in the world, are other important factors for local economy. Beypazarı is also very famous in silver work i.e. telkari (a kind of silver work) and local foods, i.e. casserole of Beypazarı¹, sarma (vine leaf food)² and Beypazarı kuruşu (hardtack)³.

3.1. Local potentials for conservation

Beypazarı has 84 listed (officially registered) houses, 3500 traditional Beypazarı houses coming from 1800's, a market place dating up to back 200 years, 20 religious buildings, 18 archeological sites and one natural site. In addition to these values, local products are also very crucial local potentials for development of Beypazarı and these values will be presented briefly in the next section.

3.1.1. Natural values

Beypazarı has special geological and topographical characteristics, these values are attempted to be conserved in Beypazarı by the effective projects of the Municipality. Some of these values are like bellows (www.beypazari-bld.gov.tr, www.beypazari.gov.tr);

İnözü Valley is situated in the north of Beypazarı has a rich appearance with its natural vegetation and cultural remaining. It is a narrow valley due to the erosion of İnözü Stream with sharp and rising sides like camber. In both sides of this valley, there are caves into rocks to which hard to climb. It is understood that these caves were built during old ages and used for housing. It is said that these were graves of people living at those times and they had been protected with their family, valuable things and jewelry. According to the Act no. 2863 (The act of preserving cultural and natural values), these caves and churches in rocks are determined as archeological site and natural vegetations in the valley are protected as natural site.

Eğriova Plateau is located in Karasar is at a distance of 44 km to Beypazarı. It is surrounded with forests and covered with various grasses and flowers. In the plateau, there are some available places, suitable for golf tourism, trekking and horse riding.

Kırmır Stream flows to Sakarya River after connecting with Süveri and İlhan Streams and İnözü Stream flowing through the county center. Not only for agriculture, but Kırmır Stream is used for fishing, as well.

Tekke Valley, at a distance of 10 km to the country was arranged as forest park to provide as picnic area. Traditional Picnic and Casserole Day is held here every year.

Dutlu-Tahtali Thermal Facilities is located on the road of Ankara- Ayaş - Beypazarı at a distance of 20 km to the county center. Beyter thermal Spring Facilities with a capacity of 700 beds, suitable to bath and cures and it is beneficial to many diseases.

3.1.2. Cultural values: Historical buildings, traditional houses, handicrafts and local foods

Beypazarı has been one of the prominent center of settlements during centuries, so there are many, historical buildings traditional houses, handicrafts and local foods. Some of these cultural values are given below:

Historical buildings

Boğazkesen Dome is situated on a rocky ground at the ends of two streams. It was used both for water storage and observation tower and a remaining of Seljuks from 13th century. There are two graves inside it.

Suluhan Caravansary was built in 1613 at the beginning of 17 th century. The plan of Suluhan, which is classical Ottoman city inn type, is near to square and double floored. There is a stone, on which its history and a sword figure exist, on its inscription. It has five bridges and it is a building with geometrical figures on it. Restoration works have been continuing.

İvazdede Tomb is located between the chitlenbik trees on the hill near to the top of Salihler Hill in the east of county. It is understood from its inscription that larger one among two graves belongs to İvazdede, when smaller one belongs to Mehmet Efendi, chief of a tariqa called as Halveti. It is thought that there was a healing water source.

Yediler Tomb is on the right of İnözü stream at the hill. In the tomb, at a point overlooking two streams and a bridge 3 km. away from county, there are graves of 7 dervishes. It is said that they have come from Horasan and have set up a dervish convent in this region.

Akşemseddin Mosque is located at the city center, in Beytepe avenue It is in a type of Seljuk' architecture. The mosque was built by Aksemseddin, teacher of Fatih Sultan Mehmet, with a medresseh next to it. It is restored in the past.

Soultan Alaeddin Mosque is named as Cami Kebir or Pasha Cami, too. Construction years are between 1221 and 1225. Its walls are made up of bricks, a typical example for single minaret in Seljuks style. It was built during Alaeddin Keykubat, Soultan of Seljuks.

Kurşunlu Mosque is in the market place at the city center. It is a 17th century Ottoman remaining. From old sources founded, it is predicted that this mosque was built by Sadrazam Nasuh Pasha.

Karacaahmet Sultan Tomb is on the left exit point of the way to İnözü vineyards. It is in a shape of closed square. Some sources said that Karacaahmet Soultan had a place here, dervish covent or dervish lodge, in Beypazarı. Afterwards it has been noticed that a few of his disciples had been buried under this building.

Karadavut Tomb is in the north east of 7 km in Kuyumcu Tekke Village Karadavut was one of caliphs of Hacı Bayram Veli. He was one of savants living during Fatih.

Traditional houses

The most successfully preserved civilian architectural houses of Ankara are seen in Beypazarı (<http://www.kenthaber.com/IlceDetay.aspx?ID=70>). These houses, which were also a subject for the Evliya Çelebi's "Seyahatname", are generally with three storeys, with a bay window and an attic called as "guşgana" in the local dialectic. One of the most important characteristics of these houses is their facade. These walls were laid by a special lime from Tekke village. This material is unique to the region and it absorbs the polluted air and humidity in the rooms. There are cellars with iron doors on the ground floors and these cellars are still used in order to keep foods. In some of these houses there are mezzanine floor of 2 to 2,5 meters of height over the ground floor. This storey covers to the whole or a small part of the ground floor. Access to the mezzanine floor is provided by a secondary staircase in addition to the main one. This storey is generally used to be lived in wintertime. It has to be mentioned here that the active urban life especially in the traditional urban fabric increased the number of restored and used traditional houses. Today there are 3.500 civilian architectural houses in Beypazarı, some of them are restored, but the rest of them are waiting for restoration (Photo 1).



Photo 1. Traditional houses of Beypazarı (www.beypazari.gov.tr)

Handcrafts and local foods

Traditional handcrafts and foods are other important cultural values of Beypazarı. These handcrafts and foods which have been prepared during the centuries, have gained popularity in last years. Chevre (an embroidered handkerchief), yazma (a special handkerchief on head), bindalli (a local garment the fabric of which is velvet), silver filigree, copperwork, yemeni (a special handkerchief on head) can be given as examples of these traditional crafts (Photo 2) and sarma (vine leaf food), Beypazarı kurusu (hardtack), guvech (a cooked special bakery in souil dishes), kapama (a dish with meats), hoshmerim (a special desert) as examples of traditional foods (Photo 3).



Photo 2. Traditional handcrafts (www.beypazari.gov.tr)



Photo 3. Traditional local foods (www.beypazari.gov.tr)

All in all, there are important local potentials in Beypazarı. These potentials are aware and projected by Municipality. The next section gives successful projects and implementations of Beypazarı Municipality.

3.2. Implementation of Beypazarı Municipality

In Beypazarı, under the leadership of Beypazarı Municipality, many projects have been evaluated aiming to protect, keep alive, develop and sustain the historical patterns, culture and traditions. These projects can be grouped in four parts as; rehabilitation and restoration of the historical patterns, sustaining the traditional handcrafts, protecting the Turkish language with local words / tongue and conservation of natural values (Beypazarı Belediyesi, 2005).

“The rehabilitation and restoration projects” were started at the May of 2000 with the rehabilitation of the timber houses belong to Ottoman period with the aim of protecting the local and traditional architecture and culture. Since than 500 houses restoration has been completed (Figure 2) (Beypazarı Belediyesi, 2005). Financial and technical supports for the projects provided by government, different associations and stakeholders like Park Holding, ÇEKÜL (The Foundation for the Promotion and Protection of the Environment and Cultural Heritage), Union of Historical Towns, Gazi University, METU (Middle East Technical University), Ankara University, İstanbul Technical University, Mimar Sinan University etc. The Municipality played an important role in the restoration of the traditional houses by persuading these entrepreneurs for restoration.

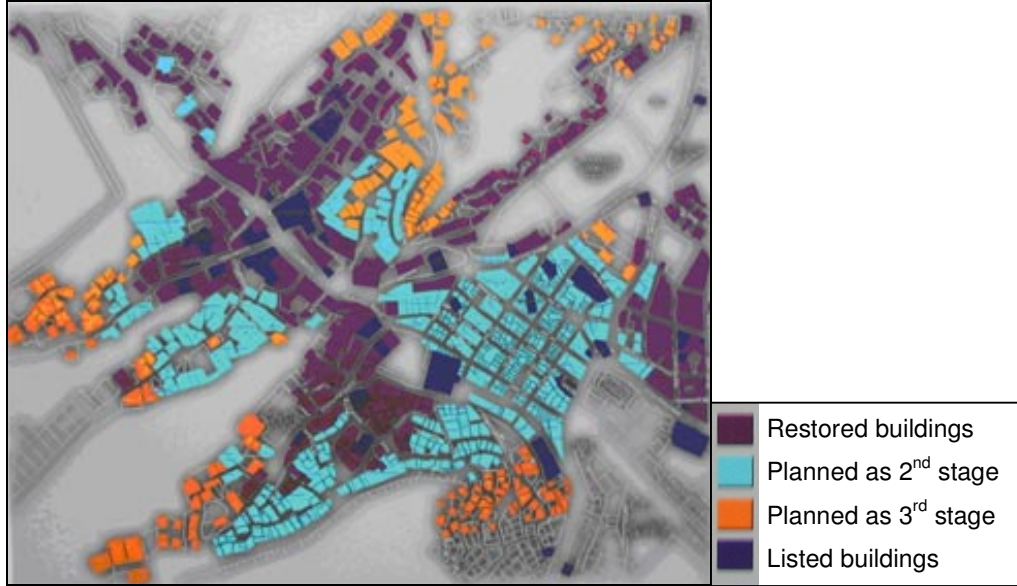


Figure 2. Stages for restoration process (Beypazarı Municipality)

The restoration projects started with analyzing of the traditional urban structure. This study showed the potentials and gave some clues for the determining the sub-aims and strategies for the settlement. Then the solutions for the financial and technical support problems were defined. At the beginning of the project, the minor supports coming from universities and private sector were used for the sub-regions in the planning process. In the next step, the Municipality provided to proceed the project, with transferring some steps to local handicraftsmen, architects, engineers and contractors via tender. During the implementation process of the project, local society were informed about the projects with the information forms and their opinion and suggestions were asked with questionnaire and referendum. According to the results, a number of modifications were made like rehabilitation of the waterway and some special buildings, transformation of some roads to pedestrian usage etc. Again with the help of local residents, the old photos of Beypazarı were collected and filed to use in the projects. Besides these evaluations, the Municipality behaved as a controller at the each step for monitoring the project.

At the beginning, the restoration process began with little repairs by owners, like converting the chimneys of the houses to the original, repairing of roofs and rain channels, after awhile these small scales repairing became bigger and the Municipality gave free technical supports to the owners and some of them covered all expenses. Some meetings were organized by the Municipality and inhabitants informed about the benefits of the projects as creating more healthy places, increasing the economic values of the houses, preparing and marketing home products creating additional income, making a living with the home pensions, coming into value of the houses with the tourism development. So consciousness was increased and rehabilitation projects were become supported by the local residents. Young generations of the settlement worked for the sustaining the architectural and cultural heritage as a volunteer (Photo 4).



**Photo 4. The restored houses (before restoration and after restoration)
(Beypazarı Municipality)**

In conclusion, with the implementation of these restoration projects Municipality took a big step in sustaining historical and architectural pattern of the settlement, maintaining the traditional lifestyles, rising of the economic values of the houses, increasing the awareness of the importance of conserving historic buildings and returning from apartment buildings to detached houses. All these implementations are realized by participatory planning approach.

The second project is “sustaining the traditional crafts and local foods”. After the restoration of houses tourism became more brisk. These developments increased the interests of new generations to the old and traditional crafts. Thus, local handcrafts had revived and have an important place in the economy of Beypazarı. Today the professions such as jewelry, shoemaking, weaving, quilt making, packsaddle making, ironworking, copper working and silver working are still alive.

The most important handcraft of the settlement is the art of “telkari” (a kind of silver work). Before the project started, as it was about to forgotten because of marketing limitations, yet nowadays it becomes popular again. For supporting these developments The Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation arranges some courses and training inhabitants on the silver works, and local government fixed the prices for silver, etc. With these arrangements the number of silver shops increased from 8-10 to 50-60 (Beypazarı Municipality, 2004 as quoted in Eceral, 2004). There are also enterprises for encouraging the other local crafts and local foods. The Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation also opened some other courses about weaving, root painting and fabric painting for the job creation (Photo 5).



Photo 5. Beypazarı Public Education Centre Carpet Workshop, 2005
(www.ulusalegitim.org.tr/foto159.htm)

For the local foods, the local government permitted citizens to sell their local products on the stands and in historical buildings. In general these stands are managed by women (Photo 6). Additionally, there are some special restaurants which introduce the local identity and culture by serving local foods to the visitors.



Photo 6. Stands for selling traditional products (Personal archive)

3rd type of the project is “protecting the Turkish language with local words / tongue”. As it known language is a key component of the cultures. For reaching this aim the municipal council took a decision which prohibited the using of foreign words on the labels of work places. This decision was appreciated by many organizations and primarily Turkish language organization and received many awards both from the state and non-governmental organizations. Within this context, 5600 local words were identified with a competition and forwarded to Turkish Language Association (Beypazarı Belediyesi, 2005).

The last type of the project is “conservation of the natural values”. All planning implementations are developed by taken into account sustainability of natural values. Natural site and other natural values i.e. agricultural areas are preserved against negative effects of urbanism.

4. Conclusion

Municipalities are crucial actors in conservation of local cultural and historical values that are key components for integration to the global system. In this context, the success of municipalities is determined by the effective evaluation of these values. In Turkey institutional structure has some difficulties in conservation process. In order to eliminate these difficulties institutional structure should be reconstructed, conflict of authorities should be prevented and coordinated action of institutions should be provided. Powerful and effective cooperation among institutions concerned with conservation of historical and cultural values, should be

developed. Within those arrangements more responsibilities could be given to municipalities. However, before all else, local governors should become conscious about conservation and local governments should be supported by technique, economic and personnel. Entrepreneurial capacities directing conservation actions should organized locally, within the framework municipalities should play a pioneering role. Public organizations and institutions, non-governmental organizations, private sector and individuals must take active roles in efforts for conservation of historical and cultural values.

Beypazarı Municipality is accepted as a successful model in evaluation of local values by conservation. The success of Beypazarı Municipality is strongly related to;

Consciousness

- Respect to the historical and cultural values as a reflection of local identity
- Be aware of local potentials
- The correct balance between economic development and conservation
- Common goal for all citizens.

Flexibility

- Ability of rapidly adaptation to the different conditions
- Creation different alternative solutions for problems

Entrepreneurial capacity

- An effective local leader and good team
- Work as a controller, advisor and an entrepreneur

Cooperation

- Cooperation with private sector in restoration projects
- Cooperation with universities and non-governmental organizations

Participation

- Give importance to the local participation
- Integration of the citizens to the conservation process
- Asking the opinion of the citizens in each step of the process.

All in all, consciousness, entrepreneurial capacity, flexibility, cooperation and participation are vital factors creating the success of municipalities in evaluation and conservation of local values. Municipalities that have similar potentials could also be successful by taking these vital factors into account. Undoubtedly, consciousness is the major factor in the conservation process.

Endnotes

¹ Casserole, belonging to Beypazarı, is cooked on stone ovens, bottom heating, and special earth plates. There are types with large and small pieces of meat, with chicken and with vegetable. Casserole preferred at invitations and weddings is a food belonging to Beypazarı.

² One of the traditional foods of Beypazarı. It is cooked with vine leaf. It is a special mixture of rice and lamb meat. It is the fundamental of Beypazarı menu classes.

³ It is a special kind of Hardtack belonging to Beypazarı. It consists of milk, butter and powder, but not water. It's good in tea breaks. It keeps its freshness long term.

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