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## The necessity of subsidiarity for the realisation of urban conservation

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**THE NECESSITY OF SUBSIDIARITY FOR THE REALIZATION OF URBAN  
CONSERVATION**

**Abstract**

It is known that during the last years of the 20th century, transformation towards globalization is realized. Such a process has the quality of changing the utilization form of the political power. In other words it indicates to a positive progression in democratization. Especially tendencies of “localization” is widely adopted beginning from international agreements like the European Charter for Local Self-Government and European Urban Charter. When localization is defined as liberalization of the local - government from the hegemony of the central and subsidiarity with the participation and the control of the citizen, autonomy of the local governments gains importance. Parallel to this fact, a transformation from the government to governance is at the agenda of Turkey.

In this sense, the concept of locality and its components (social / space wise processes locally originated) is revealed. Therefore, the continuity / conservation of cultural properties of a special place can not be managed with the continuity understanding of a central government, as it can be mentioned that in conservation the economic / social / government aspects and even the lives of the users is substituted according to needs of the day. Such a reality can only be known in place and be evaluated by the related citizens.

The paper will include the situation in Turkey in exemplary cases.

## **Introduction**

Globalization can be described as the directionalization of unified manpower, service, capital, knowledge and product on the world, towards a synchrony. Together with the foresights of globalization describing a new world order, positive or negative discussions of development reaching to global transformations are continuing. The medium of discussion is in the agenda of the world openly or secretly with its cultural continuity and obligations with specific instruments of globalization on ethnographical, mediatic, technical, financial, ideological arenas.

Every discipline; political sciences, sociology, economy, foreign affairs, urban planning and the like, is integrated to the discussions on theory and implementations depending on its own field of interest and on their specialized subjects, priorities.

In these discussions concepts, which are known before and pointed to “local”, like participation, democracy, cultural variety, identity are in advance, while other formations and concepts have been investigated. Among these “government” is ahead. Despite globalization nation-state system is still going on, all over the world.

In other words, it had been the basic reason why “governments” were questioned when globalization and nation-state situation was still existing at the same time. Under such a circumstance the wearing nation-state had started the process of “restructuring” in its political and institutional structure, where participation and representation is realized and / or condensed. In such a restructuring, it can be said that, depending on international references “localization” has been wide-spread during the last twenty-five years.

Here, in this paper localization is not accepted as a reaction or a must of globalization. It means the strengthening of the local governments on the principle of subsidiarity, achieving every kind of services concerning local governing at a level closest to the citizens. Therefore, the realization of local services with public participation and control it in its “place” where the government sets free from a central power, is adopted (Geray, 1997:84-85).

The realization of local democracy, strengthening local governments and attaining a much more efficient structure is currently at the agenda of Turkey. In this context it seems hope giving from the aspect of sustainable conservation as there are proposals of change on legal base concerning urban conservation. Furthermore, concepts of locality and localization carry special importance in the urban conservation process as one of the most important specifications of the local, is culture. In other words culture can be interpreted as a strategy used in describing the local scale forming the cultural identity and the physical spaces it shapes.

At local scale, the participation of the citizens on subjects like governing, controlling the cultural heritage and / or the identity of the town is a must that should be realized at the concerning place.

In this composite process, the cultural heritage conserved at local scale, being the common property of humanity is also an over-local scale. It can be seen that general or over-local processes are also realized at the local levels. In this sense, within the limits of this paper, the examination of the need for the realization of urban conservation in its place in Turkey, is superimposed with the saying of “think globally, act locally”. When it is observed from this point it can be said that globalization - localization is not a tension but a consensus.

### **1. Development of Urban Policy-Making from a System of Government to Urban Governance**

Globalization redefines the world economy with respect to its territorial dimensions. In fact, improved systems of communication and information flows, together with changes in capitalist mode of production through flexible production, open up a new era characterized by the removal of historical territorial boundaries.

With increasing “time-space compression” which implies the geographical stretching-out of social relations (Massey,1993:59), it becomes impossible to solve problems by grouping them in different territories. With the rise of interdependency on the world scale, the possibilities are now diminishing for separate, partial solutions for the local community, for each social group and even for each individual being.

Thus the nation-state first considered to be too rigid to be able to respond to the heterogeneity of the public problems living in its own territory, and secondly, it is too small to deal with the external / global determinants of the events taking place within its borders, under the circumstances of the new global system. Currently nation-states have been experiencing important limitations in a process of integration into the new world political order. This has been the start of a discussion on the political systems and decision-making processes which had been set on nation-states. Decentralization of power mechanisms in the hands of local authorities to be the government units closest to the citizens and increasing the participatory elements of urban decision-making are the preliminary points of these discussions.

“In fact, 1980s was the period from managerialist nation-states to entrepreneurial models of spatial governance and the role of states are now restricted to...provide the basic mechanisms to enable their populations to be a participant of all activities in the city scale. Thus new concepts such as... subsidiarity / government closest to the citizen, public-private partnerships, participation and transparency and urban growth coalitions, have become the cornerstones of an entrepreneurialist model of spatial governance.” (Dündar,1997:2)

So urban governance is different from urban government in the respect that with urban governance all actors in a society become powerful in the organization of space and these actors will eventually have different objectives of a liveable urban environment.

### **1.1. Global / Local Dialectic**

Globalization is a process extending all relations to the world as a whole. Thus, the new response to economic conditions under the new global basis define universal standard replacing the particular homogeneity of small territorial units and representing a uniformity on the global scale.

So territorial communities have been losing their traditional identities due to both growing internal differentiation and individuation of their components (groups, individuals), as well as to an increase of mutual interdependence in the space across their borders (Mlinar,1992:25). In another word, globalization defines a standardization of the physical and social elements of human settlements, a

phenomenon which can be observed in the formation of a chain of hotels, trade marks, office towers and gentrified inner-city areas, regardless of the local characteristics. This is in fact one of the basic aspects of globalization to which critics most often react as it points out to a process of becoming the same all over the world.

However, one consequence of the process of globalization should not produce homogeneity but to produce greater diversity, of the local cultures, having a considerable amount of cultural property with an increasing sensitivity to the local differences. Such an understanding points out to a dialectic instead of a dichotomy in the evolution of globalization and localization tendencies. Globalization will not totally abolish the local diversities but the territorial units will transfer their identical characteristics to the global scale in the new world order.

“In a global-local dialectic framework, localization means utilizing local economic, social, cultural potentials for the sake of increasing competitive capacity at local or global markets , whereas globalization refers to the tendency towards the exploitation of advantages at the international markets for extending the competitive power.”(Eraydın,1993:2)

Thus, localization thesis not only transforms the structure of the traditional nation-state and the inter-state and state-to-state governmental relations but it also develops a living environment by reproducing the historical, cultural and physical identities in opposition to the standardized, monotonous and homogeneous forms of globalization. These discussions point out to changing political atmosphere centered around the need to strengthen local authorities within a process of decentralization of power mechanisms. This is infact an outcome of the localization thesis, through the reinforcement of local authorities as the government units closest to the citizens, with an anxiety of transferring local identities to the global scale, outside the territorial boundaries.

## **1.2. Urban Governance Within the Processes of Democratization and Participation**

As it has been metioned above, the localization thesis depend upon individualistic preferences rather than a unique whole, identifying the concept of pluralism in all aspects of life with the basic components of citizenship and citizen rights as the

determinants of the political system, through the questioning of democracy (Dündar,1997:6).

Currently, nation-state identification is reduced to one of many representative processes. However, state is actually not capable of reflecting social attachment and it is perhaps not the best system in operating the phenomenon of identification and social integration neither in local and national nor in international and global scales. On the other hand pluralism not only provides the individuals to present their ideas and demands from their living environments, but also enable them to live their lives as they like and that's how different sub-cultures will be integrated on social and physical space.

These discussions prove the fact that with the rise of interdependency on the world scale, diversity of local cultures can not be managed under the monopolistic power of the nation-state. Such a system leads to the hegemony of the majority and limits the freedom and equity of the actors in a local entity. Thus, a renovation from representative to participatory democracy will constitute the backbone of 21st century's democracy discussions through the development of urban governance in all urban environments. In fact, a pluralistic society, as defined before, will enable the participatory mechanisms to organize it more easily. Increasing the number and effectiveness of such organizations are very important for the consolidation of popular initiatives.

However, a highly politicized and active population is one of the preliminary conditions for the development of participative democracy, in addition to a decentralized government system supporting local democracy. This phenomenon points out to a shift from decision-making by the majority, to decision-making by consensus between the interested parties from the local governments to the politicians and to the citizens. This subject especially carries importance from the aspect of historical zones and their users.

Thus by taking urban space as a dynamic notion and by considering it as of produced with a mix of all the diversities of the individuals and social groups, urban governance brings a new scope resting on the power of citizen loyalty and citizen rights. Tekeli

describes the sphere of being a citizen as a sphere in which all individual rights intersect. This sphere is called the “citizen rights” which is based on the concept of solidarity (Tekeli,1995:18) with individuals standing as protectors to their living environments in a peaceful mechanism of decision-making by consensus.

## **2. Possibility of Subsidiarity and Governance in Urban Conservation**

The years when the capitalist world fell into a crisis, the 1970s, is the starting point of a transformation period which will create very important results for the world in future. Up to those years an understanding that every kind of interferences about the urban space including planning can only be shaped by economic and technological developments was dominant. Such an understanding that can be evaluated as the foresight of modernism had been started to criticize, is the denial of the citizens’ role in shaping and / or alterations of the structural factors related to cities. During this process standard and / or unidentified cities occurred depending on elimination of local characteristics. Settlements in Turkey have grown like oil-slicks with high density related to the transformation system that do not allow to be far away from the already constructed zone.

Together with this growth formation that started “destruct and construct afterwards”, the historical and cultural properties of the cities have either been destroyed or demolished. Such loss have been tried to be prevented with the Law of Antiquities at 1973 for the first time. Nonetheless, neither this law, nor the increase in the private car owning after the second half of the 1970s could obstruct this condition.

Despite this destructuring, eradicating effect during the last ten years, an increasing effort is observed to conserve and revitalize the existing traditional fabric. There are examples where the central government, local governments and the NGO’s have been successful. This process will be given down at chapter 3.

### **2.1. The Alternating Meanings of Urban Conservation**

The immovable cultural properties and / or the fabric they compose is an architectural heritage that carries cultural, physical and social values of the past to the present.



Therefore, it is one of the continuity paradigms of the city and among the areas of urban identity. For these reasons and parallel to the realization of cultural continuity their conservation / revitalization is a must.

In the fact of conservation - revitalization, apart from the doers of these facts it is known that there are also other social, economical, cultural data and events that has been lived. Especially, special alterations relative to social development is a condition directly related with the own history and social times of a society. Such a differentiation points to the “local”. However, the cultural property to be conserved do not only belong to the society it is owned by, but, it is the property of the whole humanity. At this point, the cultural property to be preserved is one of the striking examples of local / global dialect and / or reciprocal effectiveness. Therefore, an historical / cultural property that is destructed or demolished somewhere on the world is not only the loss of that “place” but also the civilization. Depending on this reason, it should be conserved, and its continual existence must be realized in life and space.

Continuity can be described as the coming of the situation of the future to light, based on the realities of the previous and current situations. In the conservation process, the ability of building structure or its settlement pattern in explaining past with its existence in the future or its ability in describing the changes continuing until its first existence is dependent on the current directionalization. To make the future individuals know their cultur and past through their cultural heritage can only be possible with the original context and / or meaning of the buildings, with their continual form.

“Within the context of the sustainability, sustainable conservation can be described as an act of meeting the needs of the current users and in the future ( to know the cultural identity, to feel to be belonging to the living environment, to sustain the social existence, to use the building / fabric). So, sustainable conservation is a principle of justice, related with the cultural heritage, between generations”. (Gültekin, 1995: 60-65)

This shows that sustainable conservation brings flexibility to the use of historical / cultural heritage. In another word, it does not take conservation as “to keep” for the future and so proves the fact that human beings can conserve the things only if they use

them. This approach can be evaluated as a “vision” in the process of conservation - revitalization.

Vision can be described as a positive prediction of the “hopeful thought” or the “strong possibilities” which have not been taught or could have not been implemented before. Within this respect, sustainable conservation forms a vision of preservation with the idea of surviving the living environment with its real characteristics, as a continuation of the content and style of historical / cultural heritage. This describes the individual vision from which the common vision take their energies. So, powerful strategy is possible with a “common vision” developed with the participation of the social community. For this reason, when sustainable conservation is evaluated as a vision, “participation” will be the most powerful energy and the means of realization of the common vision. The realization of participation seems to be possible with a change in the government organizations within the process of conservation - revitalization ( Gültekin, 1995: 110-121).

## **2.2 The Necessity of Governance and Subsidiarity Within the Implementation Process of Urban Conservation**

Governance not only determines a structure containing the non-governmental actors having directing powers but also points out to the principles such as democratization, transparency, to give an explanation, pluralism and subsidiarity ( Leftwich, in Tekeli, 1996: 93).

This occasion has a specific importance in urban conservation because conservation - revitalization is a multi-actor ( property, owner, user, social community, entrepreneur, citizen, ...) process. To bring the potentials of all actors into action, to convince them to take responsibility and to provide such an environment can be made possible by an enabling strategy. In another word, enabling of the actors can be realized with providing them to reach the knowledge and technology of conservation - revitalization , to support them financially and to make them to gain respect, etc. However , directionalization of the actors and to make them to stand as protectors of the historical cultural heritage can only be achieved by urban governance.

This occasion points out to a transfer of the responsibilities in conservation, from the state to the civil society. Thus, conservation can be legalized in the name of all actors , in such an environment. Because, the power of governing transfers from the center to local, to the government unit closest to the citizens. In another word , subsidiarity is seen as an absolute necessity.

### **3. Urban Conservation and Government Relations in Turkey**

Urban conservation in Turkey is a relatively new concept when compared with the announcement of the first conservation laws, beginning at the last years of the past century. The first conservation laws of the Republic were directly addressing single monumental buildings only. Until 1950s the great stock of traditional houses, were indeed a part of life, so they need not have to be conserved as a special case. Urban traditional fabrics were actually the main settlement zones of every city or town in the country.

Depending on industrialization, migration to urban settlements from rural areas, brought with it a set of problems. Unexpected necessity for housing, new construction techniques changed the face of the cities. Urgent need for housing, for people who can hardly afford their daily expenses resulted as slum-housing zones around the settlements. New construction techniques based on reinforced concrete capable of composing multi-storey buildings began to take the place of the traditional, realized by using modest timber frames or load-bearing stones. The easily adopted multi-storey apartment block zones, supplied with the sanitary eases of the contemporary life, became the preference of the rich. Traditional urban fabrics thus abandoned, were filled with the newcomers. At the end of 1970s, in order to stop the deterioration of these zones the first attempts on urban conservation are realized by the central government. Laws determining urban conservation, describing concepts like “site” , “monument”, “modest traditional urban house” and the like were prepared. “Urban conservation”, was a decision of the central government, and actually was not an elongation of the cultural consciousness of the society.

In short, it can be clearly stated that conservation and especially the conservation of the urban traditional fabric was an obligation of the government that was posed to be accepted by the citizens and by the owners of such buildings.

### **3.1. Governmental System of Urban Conservation in Turkey**

As the central government being the owner of the subject, the whole urban conservation system was authorized by it until 1990s. The new law announced at 1983, which is still valid today, directed the urban conservation from one hand although it seems not very successful. Even if it sounds that it is organized at one hand, actually, the authority and rights has been dispersed to several institutions of the government. Starting from the Prime Ministry, Ministries like Culture, Housing and Development share some part of the subject. General Directorates related to them like National Palaces, Conservation of Cultural and Natural Properties, Pious Endowments are responsible from urban conservation at different aspects. In this chaos the owner of the cultural properties are after gaining the maximum rant from the land that the property stands over, more than the cultural meaning they possess.

However, Anatolia being a settlement zone for more than 8.000 years, nearly every city or town is confronted with the problem of being composed over an archaeological site. The last buckle of the cultural link is the housing zones of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, which is usually ignored.

During the last ten years depending on the rapid growth of the cities, urban conservation had to be taken into consideration when development plans of the related settlements are mentioned. As the inventory of the cultural properties has not been completed -at this point it should be remembered that Turkey possesses the remnants of thirty-nine different cultures known for today- the building stock composing the urban fabric is examined at this stage basically.

Urban traditional fabric which is decided to be preserved is thus chosen, listed and presented by the above mentioned related institutions of the central government. The final institution that has the right to order urban conservation is the High Commission for the Preservation of Cultural and Natural Properties. The commission and its sub-branches, which is sixteen in number each responsible from a different zone of Turkey,

prepares the principles of conservation. Every kind of decisions both for single buildings and the traditional urban fabric is given by these commissions. Although the mayor or an authorized official of the municipality who is responsible from the construction and development of the related settlements is the member of these commissions, it can easily be observed that, urban conservation is the responsibility of the central government despite the citizens and other related actors.

The whole aspects of urban conservation beginning from inventory, extending to the establishment of conservation principles integrated with the internationally accepted policies and reaching to the realization of urban conservation through actual physical interventions, is given to the central authority.

### **3.2. Appreciation of Urban Governance at Implementation Level during Conservation Process**

Up till now it can easily be detected that urban conservation is a fact of insistence to the society / citizens despite their approval. Within the changing scope of the world-view it is certainly impossible to achieve conservation without public participation. Related to the efforts of localization central authority is after distributing rights and responsibilities to the local governments, namely the municipalities. Urban conservation can only be realized if it is organized and applied in “place”. At this stage being the representative of the citizens, the municipalities are supplied with necessary legal tools. As it is obvious that man can only conserve what he uses and adopts, local authorities should be provided with the local participation of the users directly. Being elected is not enough even at this position. NGO’s should be organized to be in direct link with the local governments so that the citizens may find a direct way of interfering to decisions concerning themselves directly. This shows the level of democratization in a society. In case the user can not be able to relate his needs, expectations and sincere beliefs on his own environment, on his own property directly, of which he is an unseperable part of it, a real urban conservation is a dream. In examples where urban conservation is done without public participation at one to one scale, the conserved zones serve to upper social classes, not the original owners any more.

Consequently, Turkey is at a point to decide whether urban conservation will be done for the actual citizens or to those who will use it as a source of income. A real conservation thus, can only be achieved by the local actors, as governors and as the governed.

### **Epilogue...**

Sustainable urban conservation is a multi-actor process. What carries importance is that the actors should be integrated in this process directly and be capable and efficient.

Urban governance and subsidiarity is another must in achieving the goal. Local governments should be the mechanisms that will provide such process with the participation of conscious citizens. In this sense, in Turkey, an organization that will realize urban conservation is not existing yet. It is a hopeful hint that the Turkish Government who has signed international conventions like the European Urban Charter and European Charter for Local Self-Government, is ready to handle down many rights and responsibilities in related subjects to the local governments, namely the municipalities. Urban conservation will be evaluated in this context too. A tangible result of this is the attempts to establish the “Local Commissions for Preservation of Cultural and Natural Properties”.

With the sincere beliefs that a liveable environment will be shaped in the hands of local citizens...

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