

The Effects of Urban Renewal Politics on Historic Urban Regeneration Projects: Case of Kadifekale

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Abstract: - Cities are dynamic urban spaces that are under constant change and transformation due to the pressure of needs and evolving economy. Especially after 1950's immigration to major cities in Turkey has accelerated and problems concerning urban spaces, culture differences between city dwellers and urban decay have been increasing ever since. The need for urban regeneration is inevitable. İzmir is a historic city with 8000 years of history and it experienced rapid urbanization and unfortunately, historic sites such as Kadifekale took a lot of immigration and experienced a deep urban decay. Additionally, Kadifekale site is a disaster region, which has to be handled with extra care. A valuable historic heritage site with squatting and disaster problems requires a detailed urban renewal plan that pays attention to urban spatial use, historic preservation and the needs of residents. This study will examine and evaluate the present urban regeneration project that is carried out in the region with the perspective of present day laws about the issue.

Key-Words: - Turkey, İzmir, Kadifekale, urban regeneration, urban preservation, urban renewal, disaster region, squatter

1 Introduction

Cities have become unhealthy habitats as a result of rapid urbanization, fast increase of population, economic reasons and natural disasters. Therefore urban regeneration projects emerged as a response to the problematic areas of cities. Especially in Turkey, unhealthy urban spaces are places that are attached to big cities' borders. In this context, one of İzmir's first urban regeneration projects is Kadifekale urban regeneration project and it is a significant project due to its special situation of being a historical urban place, a squatter area and a disaster zone.

The residential needs in Turkey have increased with the migration from rural areas to cities due to better job opportunities. Nevertheless, the quality and the safety of the residential structures were overlooked in the times of fast urbanization. The risk of disaster makes the case even worse. Especially in the last decade, authorities in Turkey are trying to execute urban regeneration and renewal projects in order to enhance the living standards of the residents. Local authorities have even more responsibility to maintain orderly urbanization, take precautions against disasters and lead urban regeneration projects.

In this context, İzmir has been an important case due to its disaster zones, historic heritage assets and massive squatter areas. A good example for this is Kadifekale, which has the risk of earthquake and landslide at the same time, is also a squatter area with historical assets. Due to these facts, Kadifekale has seen a long process of urban regeneration and it allows the researchers to see the administrative, legal and social changes it caused. Therefore, Kadifekale, its history and the urban regeneration process it went through will be discussed in this study.

2 Development of Urban Regeneration Politics for Disaster Areas in Turkey

Turkey's history is very extensive and it has hosted various civilizations and cultures in the past. Therefore there is a significant amount of historic heritage assets that need to be protected in the country. According to Turkey's constitution's 63rd article the government has the responsibility to protect the historic, natural and cultural assets whether they are tangible or intangible [1]. Article 63 is the fundamental law of Turkey about historic

conservation. In addition to article 63, there are laws in Turkey such as 2863, 5366, 5226, 5393 and 6306, which are concerned with historic conservation and applications.

Law 2863, which is known as Conservation of Cultural and Natural Assets Law, has the objective of defining cultural and natural heritage assets and regulate historic conservation applications. Law 2863 was accepted in 1983 and it forbids to make physical changes to historic cultural assets and it defines the term conservation area [2]. In 2004, law 5226 was modified and added to Law 2863. Law 5226 enabled local authorities to have more power about historic conservation projects and decisions. By this enactment, local municipalities established local inspection offices for historic preservation applications and they now had the right to manage their own restoration and renewal projects [3]. This modification provided a better communication between authorities and local community.

At this point, another law is worth to mention about the topic. Law 5393 stated: "Urban spaces that are declining should be revived and enhanced in a harmonious approach with the city's identity and urban regeneration projects should be followed for conserving the historic characteristics of the city" [2]. Following this, Law 5366 for Conservation of Damaged Historical and Cultural Assets by Renewal and Revival was enacted in 2007 and for the first time, the concept of renewal for historic urban spaces was introduced besides physical restoration [2]. Throughout time, the authority for historic conservation has passed to local governmental bodies from central authorities. The concerned local authorities even have the right to expropriate private properties to handle historic conservation projects better [3]. Nevertheless, Law 5366 was tremendously criticized due to its concept of renewal and development in historic areas with the fear of destruction to historic fabric of the city. However, historic places are best protected when they are used, revived and become part of daily life.

A significant Law that has an impact on some historic conservation projects since 2012 is Law 6306, which is concerned with the regulation of places that are under disaster risk. This law has the objective of creating healthy and secure urban environments within aesthetic and scientific standards by suggesting principles for the renewal or demolition of urban places under disaster risk [4]. Dangerous buildings and dangerous sites that have a risk for the safety of communities should be handled with care and consideration as they might cause a disaster. Old buildings that are corrupted over time, loosely monitored constructions, living

environments under natural disaster risk are a few examples for such dangerous situations. Nevertheless, some of these structures possess a historical importance and therefore demolishing them may not be a solution. This is the reason why law also gives the responsibility of renewing and strengthening these kinds of structures to local authorities.

Turkey's past is not very bright when it comes to natural disasters. Devastating earthquakes took place and caused real damage in Turkey and so earthquake regulations for buildings are very strict but the existing structures need to be enhanced as well. Law 6306 gives the local authorities full right to act for areas under disaster risk. The only condition is to treat the residents right and with justice. According to the Law 6306, urban regeneration projects should be applied within the borders of orderly, healthy and aesthetic urbanization principles. It is also important to note that Law 6306 has priority over other historic conservation laws such as 2863 and 5366 [4].

2.1 Evaluation of Law 6306

It is every citizen's right to live in a healthy and stable environment and the governments are obliged to provide for residential needs by considering the environmental conditions. Natural disasters are a very important part of this process and they need to be taken into consideration, especially in Turkey's situation. It can be said that, it is the government's duty to decrease the disaster risk to minimum by taking precautions. Unfortunately, with the dense migration from rural areas to cities in the past, urgent need of housing was answered with structures that were not very well monitored while being constructed or by unauthorized, low quality constructions. Such settlements are generally located around the city center as squatter areas sitting on public lands and they generally don't care about the risk of natural disasters. Law 6306 targets exactly these types of dangerous structures and unhealthy urban areas.

Law 6306 has two main areas to operate; areas under natural disaster risk and risky buildings in areas without natural disaster risk. It specifies the principles for demolishing, renovating or enhancing such areas and buildings in order to create a healthy environment and it gives full authority to the local governments.

However, the final decisions about risky urban areas are generally given without considering the residents' requests. Criteria for declaring an urban place under natural disaster risk are not very clear

and this damages the trust to local authorities. Besides, the local residents are generally aggrieved by such decisions. Licensed establishments are authorized by Ministry of Environment and Urbanization (MoEaU) for detecting risky structures. However, a board of MoEaU representatives and some academicians evaluates the consents to these decisions [5]. In this case, the board doesn't seem very objective, since it contains MoEaU representatives. This law also has the right to put unrisky areas under risky category in the name of maintaining integration [5]. Therefore a resident that owns a non-dangerous structure doesn't have the right to keep his/her property. According to Law 6306, agreement should be maintained between local authorities and stakeholders in situations of demolition or other applications concerning risky areas. However, for the owners that don't agree with the local authorities, there is not much choice left. They need to evacuate the buildings in a very short while such as 60 days and if they don't agree with the offers, local authorities have the right to expropriate their buildings in 30 days [5]. In short, owners are actually forced to agree with the local authorities' decisions and only then they will have the right to take the financial support of the local authorities. There is not a specific definition for situations that agreement cannot be maintained between two sides.

As a result, urban regeneration projects are conducted with an approach beneficial to government without the actual consent of local communities and owners. Law 6306 also states that applications within the borders of this law cannot be stopped by court. So, the citizens cannot look for their rights even in the court. Even though Law 6306 was enacted for areas under risk, the definition of risk is very unclear in the regulations and therefore owners of buildings in urban regeneration areas under risk are really worried about whether they are being conned or not by the government and they feel insecure [5]. One of the most important aspects of Law 6306 is its priority over other laws of historic conservation such as Law 2863. This can provide significant damage to historic assets especially if they are on prestigious parts of the city. Law 6306 serves the local authorities' objectives rather than decreasing disaster risk. Distrust to authorities among local communities has spread in Turkey because law enables all kinds of urban regeneration acts in the name of disaster risk elimination. Nevertheless, successful urban regeneration applications must include all citizens and provide minimum social support to local communities.

3 Kadifekale Urban Regeneration Project



Fig. 1 Kadifekale Castle [6]

Kadifekale is located right above the historical center of Izmir, the third biggest city of Turkey, and it was the place where historic Izmir, generally known as Smyrna, was resettled. Therefore, there is an important amount of archeological remains in the territory. During 1970's Kadifekale experienced a very fast and irregular urbanization due to the dense immigration from Eastern Turkey to Western Turkey.



Fig. 2 Illegal Slums in Kadifekale

Immigrants built illegal houses and squats in Kadifekale because it is in the very center of Izmir. Even though the buildings are illegal, the government started to provide water and electricity service to the region and started to collect taxes in return. The dangerous and unauthorized buildings had cracked walls and slided houses due to the high risk of landslide in Kadifekale. The region was announced as a disaster zone in 1978, 1981, 1999 and 2003 and finally in 2005 Izmir Metropolitan Municipality decided to apply an urban regeneration project to the area [5]. The risk of landslide, slums, security problems and the damage of historic remains were the main reasons of the urban regeneration project.

Kadifekale is the first urban regeneration area of Izmir. Izmir Metropolitan Municipality accepted the Development Plan for Protecting Kadifekale, the Ancient Theatre and Surroundings in 2008 [7]. Kadifekale is also the first slum area of Izmir and most part of it is under high risk of landslide [8]. Therefore Kadifekale urban regeneration project has the aims of both slum clearance and also conservation of important archaeological remains.



Fig. 3 Historical Axis and Kadifekale Map, [11]

Kadifekale urban regeneration project is an important case for Turkey because precautions have been taken before any disaster has happened. Urban regeneration area in Kadifekale is 420 thousand m² and 1968 houses [5]. In 2006, Kadifekale was declared as a disaster prone area again and the council of minister gave the decision of expropriating the buildings within. Next, an agreement with TOKİ was made and cluster houses in Uzundere were bought by the İzmir Metropolitan Municipality from them. The owners of houses that were expropriated had been moved to these cluster houses but the ones who didn't accept this option received their expropriation values in cash [9]. This area, which was empty after the expropriation, was decided to be afforested by İzmir Metropolitan Municipality and 12000 trees were planted in an area of 202 thousand m² [10].



Fig. 4 New trees on the former slum area, [12]

The historically important part of the project is the 186 m high Castle of Kadifekale, which was erected in 334 BC by Alexander the Great's command. The castle went through some damage in the past such as the attack of Timur in 1402 and the earthquake in 1668. Therefore, only 5 towers, and a part of Southern walls remain today but originally it must have been 6 km long. Also there is a cistern and a small chapel inside the castle walls [7]. A historic conservation and renewal plan was developed for the castle walls in 2012. A team consisting of experts from various disciplines worked together for the restoration projects. In the project, 120 m of fortification walls and towers were strengthened and 1420 m of fortification walls were renewed, restored and completed [13]. In 2015, the municipality started the bidding process for the restoration of the cistern and the chapel [14].



Fig. 5 Castle Walls Restoration, [16]

The ancient theater just below Kadifekale neighborhood was also decided to be excavated in 2008 by the municipality and therefore expropriation process was carried out in the area. According to Otto Berg and Otto Walter's studies in 1917, the ancient theater has a capacity of 16000 audience [15]. The excavation has started in 2014 and after it is completed, a "park of archeology and history" will be implemented to the area. In the end Kadifekale castle, the ancient theater and Agora will constitute a wholesome historic axis of Izmir enlightening an important cultural heritage.

4 Effects of Urban Regeneration and Urban Conservation Politics in Kadifekale

Dwellers in Kadifekale were mostly immigrants as mentioned before and they were forced to immigrate again due to the urban regeneration project. Even though residents were given a new home or expropriation price in return to prevent injustice,

expropriation prices were too low according to the actual values of houses. For example, a house with an expropriation offer of 40.000 TL gained the right to get 180.000 TL after suing the government. Besides, supporters of the same political party as the İzmir Metropolitan Municipality were paid higher expropriation prices. Another issue was the size of houses. A family living in a squat house of 280 m² was offered a 75 m² house in Uzundere but families that had relatives or friends in the municipality got bigger houses. Additionally, new cluster houses in Uzundere were not given for free but they required a mortgage [5]. These kinds of issues damaged the reliability of İzmir Metropolitan Municipality. Residents were offered either to take the low expropriation price or the small house in Uzundere and many of them had to accept because they thought they were weak and had no rights before the government. The ones that moved to Uzundere had huge debts due to the mortgage because these people generally don't have regular income [9]. Social problems also occurred after resettling in Uzundere. The cluster houses of TOKİ in Uzundere consist of 15 story buildings and 5000 people live in the buildings in total. They started to live in a compact area in private houses and started feel lonely. Also the location of Uzundere is far to the city center so it has become difficult for these people to access their jobs in the center. For now, the buses became more frequent but still the traffic and distance is an issue for them. They only prefer to go to the center if they need to and Uzundere is insufficient in social terms with only one shopping mall. It has been hard for these people to adjust to their new lives and they feel excluded. Another major problem is safety. Some of the dwellers in Kadifekale were involved in criminal matters and now they are all living together with other dwellers in big apartment buildings. There are drug-dealing and theft problems in the premises of Uzundere due to this resettlement. As a result, people without a criminal history are not feeling safe [5].



Figure 6 Uzundere Cluster Housing Project, [17]

However these security issues were also present in Kadifekale as well. Therefore some social projects are needed to change this situation and decrease the potential of crime. Quality of life is rather low in Uzundere as health services are not adequate and the conditions of houses are really bad in terms of physical quality. Besides, the houses don't have insurance [5]. In short, all the social, economic and security issues that were present in Kadifekale are now present in Uzundere. However the local cultural fabric of the neighborhood life in Kadifekale is lacking in Uzundere. Besides, due to the expenses of apartment buildings, neighbours are angry at each other and their relations are now corrupted. People are having difficulty to adjust to apartment life and they are missing their old socially active lives.



Figure 7 Excavation for Ancient Theater, [18]

5 Conclusion

Even though there are significant differences between countries in terms of urban regeneration processes, nowadays it has been observed that urban regeneration gained a socio-economic dimension worldwide. After the evolution of suburban areas, the ethnic chaos due to cities' rapid growth with migration, physical, economic and social deterioration increased. However, urban regeneration projects are now demolishing the living habitats of these left-out groups with intensions of gaining economic benefits. Urban regeneration aims to recover the decaying areas but in Kadifekale example, the social fabric in the area has been neglected and the public stopped trusting the government due to misconduct of laws. In order to achieve this, participation of public should be maintained besides informing them about the procedure.

The residents weren't aware of what was happening until after they were moved to Uzundere in Kadifekale urban regeneration project. Additionally, it was devastating for them to be this far to the city

center. Due to the problems that emerged during expropriation and the lack of social services that they have received, they started not trusting the local authorities. This prevents the local residents from embracing the urban regeneration project. The public already takes urban regeneration projects as a tool for misplacing the poor for the benefit of other actors such as government or contractors. A solution to this might be clarifying the laws in order to avoid corruption in local authorities.

Besides the failed social side of the project, Kadifekale urban regeneration project has been a success in terms of historic conservation and disaster prevention. The areas, which were cleared after the demolition of slums, have now been afforested and there is a plan implement a thematic recreation area with the name of “Aegean Civilizations Park” [8]. The historic axis of İzmir has been more in light now after the Kadifekale fortification walls’ restoration and the excavations of the ancient theater. The historic axis will combine these to Agora and Kemeraltı presenting an open-air museum about the city’s culture and being a touristic attraction point. The laws for historic conservation and areas under disaster risk have been applied properly with a balance.

In order for the urban regeneration projects to succeed, extensive analysis should be carried out in the region prior to the application. This will lead to understand the causes of the project and help to choose a socially and physically balanced place for the displaced residents. Urban regeneration projects are not only physical but also socio-economic and cultural cases. Therefore the social aspects about the project must be thought through from the beginning with the participation of public.

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