

Local / Regional Integration and Cultural Heritage

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Introduction

The culture, cultural heritage and essential values of historical identity of cities have great significance. Culture is defined as the material and moral values generated during historical and social progress and the totality of the tools that are used in the establishment and transfer of these values to next generations¹. Culture is also the combination of a group of attitudes that societies which share the same background and traditions to future generations transfer to future generations and that need to be protected and developed (Erkal, 2006). The cultural heritage which is a historical and social possession of a society that bequeaths as legacy to future generations has its place in its cultural being and attains greater importance with its historical identity.

Concepts such as cultural heritage and historical identity both integrate with the history and common past of a society. In addition, cultural heritage is a dimension of cultural tourism aiming at getting information and education of the cultures of other societies.

Cultural heritages are historical sources which also promote traveling of cultural tourists. The cultural and natural possessions of a city or region, protected sites, unique architecture, monuments, museums etc., historical values in terms of science and culture all make up the cultural heritage. The factors that are influential in the visit of cultural tourists are forming a common atmosphere for socio-cultural aspects such as language, local and national traditions, and folklore (Cohen-Hattab, 2004).

In this respect, cultural heritage regions have the ability to bring together the local and regional community that have a common language-history and culture with foreign visitors. In this proceeding, the Western Anatolia Fronts formed during the War of Independence between Afyon, Kutahya, Usak, Eskisehir, Sakarya provinces were chosen as the subject of the study. This study shows how a war, to which a nation owes its very existence was won, aims to transmit the same to the coming generations while preserving it as a cultural heritage, playing an efficient role in integration of the local / foreign people around the peace.

The Wars that have taken place in the West Anatolian fronts, the current situation of these regions, the involved cities as well as the strategy and organization for these regions in terms of city wise and national cultural policies are taken into consideration. The sources within this context are from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, and Preservation Councils. The study is based on the data received from these materials. In fact, this research that is made for determining and functionalizing the values of cultural heritage have divulged the lack of communication and common policies within interinstitutions.

¹ www.turkyasam.com

Concept of “Cultural Heritage”

Cultural heritage is defined as the accumulation of cultural values that have arisen right from the originality of “human beings” and interaction of communities as of the beginning of the history of humanity in order to maintain a life with better quality².

Besides, cultural heritage is the entirety of moveable and immovable property over the earth, underground or under water resources in respect to ancient and modern pieces of science, culture, religion and art (Kolcu, 1993).

There are various research and study in literature that define cultural heritage and emphasize its significance in terms of the progress of cultural tourism and socio-economic development and that makes proposals for its transfer to the coming generations and examine the policies on the preservation of cultural heritage in addition to the efforts of the European Community for the preservation of shared cultural heritage and guiding the new members in this means.

In the agreement which came into effect on 1975 for the Preservation of the Cultural and Natural Heritage of the World, cultural heritage is classified to include;

- Monuments (Architectural buildings, monumental statues and paintings, archaeological structures, inscriptions and cave drawings)
- Groups of buildings (that have universal value in terms of their architectural style and history, artistic and scientific qualities)
- Sites (man made or natural works of historical, natural, urban or archaeological art and/or sites (Aksu, 2004).

In another classification, cultural heritage is distinguished as tangible and intangible. The tangible ones is composed of monuments, archaeological sites, churches, monasteries, citadels, historical buildings, traditional settlements and historical city centers; libraries, theaters and movies, concert rooms, portable elements and man novelties (paintings, statues, engraving, books etc). The abstract elements consist of language, dance, music and other means of communication and expression as well as custom and usage and habits (Tsoulouvis, undated).

Cultural heritage is considered to be a very important component of tourism in most of the developed countries. For instance in the United Kingdom, cultural heritage is defined to be, “an essential power in the market of the country for tourists coming from abroad (Garrod and Fyall, 2000).

Cultural heritage is one of the crucial factors that provide the realization of cultural tourism. Cultural heritage comes into effect when an individual moves from one place to another in order to satisfy his cultural needs, to attain new knowledge and experience or participate in performances, art and cultural shows, festivals, fine arts and theatre in regions possessing historical and cultural heritage (WTO, 2005).

A society is only able to preserve its continuity as long as it looks after its cultural heritage; preserve its way of living, traditions and usage, unique architectural structures and historical identity. In this respect cultural heritage is a factor that has the ability to attract cultural tourism and it may be used as a tool for local / regional integration and development. The local community that visits such venues is this way able to get a closer recognition of the historical identity and the foreign visitors have the opportunity to get a better view of a different culture.

² www.kultur.gov.tr

Approach to Cultural Heritage in Our Country

Turkey possesses a very rich constitution in terms of cultural heritage and values. The country contains many officially registered structures including historical, natural, archaeological and urban sites, civil architectural samples, religious-cultural structures, war cemeteries, monuments, national parks etc.

It was first in the 5th Five Year Development Plan (1985–1989) when it was decided to evaluate natural, historical, archaeological and cultural possessions along with other existing tourism potentials. The purpose was to integrate historical values with progress in tourism (Kükreç, 1991). In the 8th Five Year Development Plan, it was stated that Turkey was a matchless country in terms of its cultural possessions that is attractive for the tourists. The types of cultural tourism that are planned to be improved are Belief tourism, Silk Road tourism, Antique Cities and Ancient Monuments (DPT, 2001).

The West Anatolian Fronts belonging to the time of War of Independence, and that is a part of the cultural heritage were formed against the Greek Army since it was an occupational force in West Anatolia and attacked from various points. The West Anatolian Fronts bear great significance due to the fact that they shaped the fate of the War of Independence and represented localities where national struggle was held before the institution of the Republic. The wars that took place in these fronts and their current status are summarized in the table below (Figure).

First Battle of İnönü: 6 - 10 January 1921



Second Battle of İnönü: 23 March - 1 April 1921



Battle of Sakarya: 23 August– 13 September 1921



Great Offensive: 26 – 30 August 1922



Figure. Outline of the Wars that took places in the West Anatolian Fronts during the War of Independence

Source: <http://www.aysetulun.com/kurtulus/kurtulus.asp>

Within the borders of the cities of Afyon, Kütahya and Uşak where the West Anatolian Fronts are set up, the Başkomutan(Chief Commander) Historical National Park is announced to be a Historical Protected Area. The historical elements in the regions where Atatürk win a War of Independence between August 26–30, 1922 are included in the core values of the Historical National Park. The Kocatepe and Dumlupınar combat areas, posts, War Cemeteries, monuments and natural beauties are all present in the National Park³. Ever year during August 26–30, International Victory Festivals are organized in these cities where congresses, exhibitions, fairs and folklore activities are presented. Besides, the “Road of Victory” Project in the city of Afyon between Şuhut and Kocatepe is built in memorial of the War of Independence.

Table. Cities in the West Anatolian Fronts

City	Current Status of the Fronts	Organized Activities
Afyon	Başkomutan Historical National Park Historical Protected Area	August 26 – 30 International Victory Festival
Kütahya	Başkomutan Historical National Park Historical Protected Area	August 26 – 30 International Victory Festival
Uşak	Başkomutan Historical National Park Historical Protected Area	August 26 – 30 International Victory Festival
Eskişehir	-	September 2 Liberation of Eskişehir
Sakarya	-	June 21 Liberation of Sakarya

Source: Table is created by the author, Eryılmaz,S.

The areas, where significant events in regard to our national history and military war history, constitute the historical protected areas along with their natural resources⁴. It is observed that cities of Afyon, Kütahya and Uşak are considered to be within these protected areas but there is no similar application in others.

Historical protected areas are also an element of cultural heritage. Cultural heritage should be considered as a source of tourism that needs to be enhanced. In this respect, the West Anatolian Fronts should be set up in an integrated approach with an awareness of national historical identity.

West Anatolian Fronts should not be regions that are only visited in certain days during the year and on the contrary must be reorganized as elements of cultural heritage which binds people of our day with their recent past and that brings together the local community with the region while preserving a status of representing peace where tourists from the international arena may gradually visit.

³ www.kultur.gov.tr

⁴ www.kultur.gov.tr

Suggestions for the Evaluation of West Anatolian Fronts as Cultural Heritage

Culture is a historical accumulation and should be preserved in order to maintain the future of the community it belongs to. Elements of cultural heritage bind the past and the future and provide communication between the generations that enhances the feelings of belonging to a place/a nation/a culture while strengthening the historical identity (Kiper, 2004). Essentials of historical cultural heritage are an important element of attraction for tourism purposes (WTO, 2005).

The two main functions of culture are preservation and development-renewal (Erkal, 2006). In this sense, two different policies may be implemented for the West Anatolian fronts that represent regions of cultural heritage;

- Preservation by protecting values such as fronts, war cemeteries, monuments etc.: the goal is to demonstrate environmental and recreational aspects in order to establish an open area museum.
- Policy for preserving the activities in the fronts and generating novel ones: Reorganizing and revitalizing the locality within their historical values and unique circumstances for presentation to tourism. Since 3-E tourism (exciting-entertainment-education) has replaced the tourism focusing on 3-S (sea-sand-sun), there need to be activities within the 3-E dimension. The presentation of historical and cultural heritage must be differentiated in order to make it more attractive and contemporary people should be provided with means of accommodation in historically integrated localities.

Besides being a source of tourism, the West Anatolian Fronts that are elements of cultural heritage should also be considered as a source of education by revitalizing and teaching “history” in the locality; and new policies should be developed in order to develop the region, revive the historical identity that bring together the local and regional communities for contribution to tourism goals.

- First of all the failure in the organization and synchronization of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, General Directorate of Foundations, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Municipalities and Preservation Councils that are the institutions for the enhancement of the Culture and Tourism sector must be removed.

An interactive cooperation must be maintained among these units that lacks communication in regard to data and mutual conduct. In a joint project, the Inventory of Cultural Heritage should be itemized for the West Anatolian Fronts and Shields. This inventory should be reconsidered in a country and region wise dimension.

There is a very close relationship between residential planning and heritage policies. The reason for this is the realization of historical events in a certain locality. This relationship is obligatory for continuous improvement (Tsouluovis, undated).

Due to their quality of being homogeneous, the regions within the West Anatolian Fronts should be considered as a target for economic, social and cultural development in respect to regional tourism policies. In this scope, cultural heritage areas should be planned in a way to reduce interregional inequality, enhance socio-economic progress, improve quality of life, develop cultural heritage and aim at participation of the community (Şen, 2004).

- A mutual cultural policy must be followed for the localities within the West Anatolian Fronts. In order to develop cultural heritage and cultural heritage tourism, local community should be made aware of the historical context, historical events and tourism. The

participation of the community should be provided in order to transform the region to an open area museum for the promotion of cultural possessions and for the transfer of these values to future generations. In parallel to the goals of regional development, the fronts should be reorganized and tourist attraction of regional cities must be enhanced to contribute to the revitalization of the economy of cultural tourism.

- Primarily, a National Park Directorate should be established with a new approach of management. Within the framework of the cultural heritage tourism project, the areas under private ownership should either be purchased by the national park directorate or the yearly revenue should be periodically paid to the property owner taking into consideration the rental of the area. Agriculture policy should be combined with museum operations to generate recreational tourism.

- The areas for agriculture may be brought together in order to reduce the expenses of the farmers, to remove difficulties in operations and enhance market opportunities by receiving collected products. Otherwise, production activities should be controlled in an organized way by the village cooperative or investor agricultural corporation so that improvement of product variety and technical equipment should be carried out by these institutions. The workforce remaining from agriculture should be directed to other service operations in the region and the profits from regional tourism activities should be distributed to the villagers (Çelikhan et al., 1998).

- Within the scope of the integration of historical, residential and cultural tourism, every season festivals, concerts, etc., art activities, film and animation shows should be performed as a part of the "Victory Celebrations" locally and internationally.

- In the cities of Afyon, Kütahya, Uşak and Eskişehir that from the West Anatolian Fronts and also take place within the "Phrygian Thermal Tourism Region", there should be a common cultural heritage tourism policy that should be led under a regional strategy. Cultural heritage should be presented in the form of summer-winter tourism and health-thermal tourism should be combined with historical cultural tourism. In this respect the "Thermal Tourism Cities Project" that is initiated by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has great significance in terms of the improvement of Health and Thermal Tourism⁵.

- According to the research results by Eurobarometer which is an institution that investigates tourist profiles, reasons and activities that promote traveling of tourists in Europe; the visitors in the age group 10-15 and above 50 have the tendency of visiting cultural attractions (WTO, 2005). The factor of age for the ones who tend to participate in cultural tourism is significant in terms of the culture-education relationship. Transfer of knowledge and culture is done through training. The transfer of culture that is a social function of education is also considered to be a social function to maintain continuity of societies (Erkal, 2006). The transfer of the culture of society to young generations that need to be educated preserves the nationality of the culture and maintains its permanence.

It has great worth that the youth that is at the process of education sees the fronts in their locality with an awareness of history and that they participate to the activities organized there in order to attain an identity that gives worth to national values and transfers these values to future generations. While visiting the fronts, the students will develop the spirit of National Struggle and the importance of peace will be emphasized through activities that simulate history and gives training.

- The invented policy should not destroy the cultural atmosphere and identity that include the social life, local attributes and architectural structures in the locality/region. These localities should be preserved in a balanced protection-utilization policy which prescribes the determination of main touring routes that emphasize the significance of the locality and the

⁵ www.kultur.gov.tr

region, and structures appealing to tourism and revitalizing that period should be built along this route.

- In this region, precautionary measures should be taken for the protection of the National Park without impacting the current property ownership, and construction that is in violation of the protected area concept must be prohibited. Natural elements should be developed as a symbol of peace.

- The proposed activities should possess the quality of perpetuating moral heritage in harmony with the history of the locality. The historical value of each residence must be disclosed and the cities/roads/lines where the war took place should be determined. Cemeteries, monuments, shields etc. should be organized in total coordination with the historical values as factors of entertainment/recreation. The shield areas should be simulated recreationally similar to its original form or by excavation and shield activities should be originated. Lines that are used during the war must be highlighted each year with different recreations.

- War cemeteries and monuments should be connected with each other through footways, biking roads and miniature train establishments that have low operational costs and consistency with the environment. Recreational settings should be made in order to create the feeling of an atmosphere and the inscriptions should be translated into various languages. The integration of the history and locality should be attained by means of hologram and laser-water shows, electronic screens and billboards, voice announcements (tape, video, band, animation and movie displays) and plant figures, and also sensor interactive electronic displays should be developed (Çelikhan et al., 1998).

- Places of attraction should be developed for education, games, sportive and visual activities. Sports facilities that symbolize peaceful struggle should be emphasized including the building of foot ways and biking roads, and mountain trekking in the context of traveling for peace and nature should be encouraged while generating sportive activities such as golf tourism, parachute jumping, strategy games where shields are used (Çelikhan et al., 1998).

- There should be opportunities for setting up cafes and restaurants for having a view of the landscape, there should be places where cultural and art programs may be organized including cuisine, hand crafting, etc. Miniatures symbolizing the tools used in war and scale models including the reduced form of the national park should be displayed.

- A regional project must be held including the combat areas. Necessary cooperation should be established among the institutions so that the fronts, which have great significance for our recent history, are evaluated as a part of the cultural heritage and so that these are protected and renewed in order to revitalize the historical identity.

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