

Cappadocia: The Current Issues in Planning a World Heritage Site*

Track 08
Urban Design, Cultures, Heritage, Public Realm and Planning

Prof Dr. H. Yuksel Dincer

Galatasaray University, Ciragan Caddesi, No.36 34357 Ortaköy Istanbul / Turquie
Tel: + 905323245862 - email : hydincer@gmail.com

The cultural heritage landscapes are facing many threats. These threats can be focused on the human effects simultaneously on the nature. In special cases the threats due to the nature's and human's effects, can be together and simultaneous. The effects of threats is widening; the problems of protection are becoming increasingly complex. Cappadocia is a significant example for this situation.

Cappadocia in terms of natural and cultural values, with transcultural continuity of daily life, say semi-troglodyte, in cave houses, is a unique masterpiece of nature. The permanent contributions of humanity throughout history have transformed Cappadocia, from a natural area of the simple rural life troglodyte, to a World Heritage Site of UNESCO. The fairy chimneys with their structure easy to dig and shape, are good protectors for cultural continuity created in the natural landscape.

The most essential natural threat that Cappadocia is facing today is the erosion. The life of hoodoos that begins with the birth followed by improving ends with a slow process of disappearance, the cycle of nature. The idea to keep or maintain their shape is synonymous to stop the time.

Moreover, cultural works created in these hoodoos are the most important values and prestigious in the world and certainly their protection is a humanitarian obligation. The tourism potential of World Heritage sites is very important for local people. But the extreme increase in tourism sector oriented cultural values has become a destructive threat. Development plans and regional planning were shaped by decisions and policies that contribute to this development. The trend is to offer cave houses to tourism demands, transforming them to "boutique hotels". Small traditional institutions lose their vernacular habitat, gradually transforming to holiday villages. All tourism industry players support this trend and nobody complained. The urban and the regional planning activities tend to promote a tourist-oriented tourism to be stepped on protective measures against tourism-based threats.

The current reality is that the rewarding collaboration between man and nature has become a process of destruction. This is the paradox of contemporary protection planning, while local officials prefer instead of trying to solve the problem, to improve the management of this process.

As we already said, it is difficult to frame the issues of tourism. Finally we want to draw attention to a few key points. The geomorphological structure of the region, the rocky terrain of the cultural landscape should continue to live in their authentic natural conditions; that is to say, we must ensure ecological continuity to facilitate the preservation of rocky environments in the region, which means going beyond mere sustainability. Beware of plans for urban renovation and revitalization projects strong structural destroyed hoodoos and especially of those who are to rebuild from scratch with modern technology and contemporary materials.

Establishing a balance between conservation and use is an expression of sustainability. By cons, approaches that propose to establish links between these two concepts generate an interpretation of a highly economical form; the concept of "use to keep" destroys the natural and cultural values. In the area of planning of cities and historic villages, the balance between supply and demand must promote conservation and must not grant protection for the sole purpose of increasing economic gains. So the question is a cruel way: the reality of the obligation to have a well developed economy in order to speak of sustainable tourism and permanent preservation of universal values. This proposal is very naive in the current situation of the world economy especially the capacity planning in emerging countries. In this case, you can change the axis of reflection by guiding us towards good governance, with integrated planning, which is still a dead end for these countries.

The good governance with urban planning is probably a function of democracy. Especially because of the absence of subsidiarity, World Heritage site management plans remains an obligation that we must meet to be included on the World Heritage List. The direction of the management of sites then remains as a municipal sub-department and site managers as municipal employees. The foundation of the site management, the development and implementation of management plans are not sufficient to achieve effective conservation of World Heritage sites. We need management bodies that have the authority and decision-making responsibility. And we must carefully monitor the effectiveness and question the functionality of urban planification and management plans of the sites as part of the work of preparation of periodic reports.

Therefore, if the approaches and understandings of planning and management will remain in the same condition today, cultural landscapes, historic towns and villages with its tangible and intangible values seem doomed to extinction. The essential purpose of this article, based on the author of eight years experience in the official Committee for the Protection of Cappadocia, is to discuss with its copies, provide sustainable protection for the problems and solutions to protect the values of the World Heritage property.

Therefore, if the approaches and understandings of planning and management will remain in the same condition today, cultural landscapes with tangible and intangible values seem doomed to extinction. The essential purpose of this article, based on the author of eight years' experience in the official Committee for the Protection of Cappadocia, is to discuss, with its examples, and to provide an sustainable planning context for the problems and the solutions to protect the values of the World Heritage property.

(*)"This work has been financially supported by Galatasaray University Research Fund under Grant 14.104.001."