Frontiers of Architectural Research (2020) 9, 890–899

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Research Article

Effect of urban transformation on the values of historic sites around mosques: Two cases in Manisa, Turkey

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Received 15 January 2020; received in revised form 6 April 2020; accepted 11 April 2020

KEYWORDS
Assessment;
Cultural asset value;
Historical mosque;
Manisa

Abstract This study presents a framework for assessing the cultural asset values of historic sites around mosques. Case studies are selected from provinces of Manisa, Turkey, namely, Çarşı in Salihli with its new urban development and Pazaryeri in Gördes that is abandoned and currently considered as an archaeological site. Literature review, archive research, historical research, comparative study, and site survey are carried out to evaluate the urban development of site neighborhoods with a retrospective perspective. An approach presenting the effects of urban transformations on the cultural asset values of the historic neighborhood centers is proposed. The cases reveal that the urban aesthetic is nearly all lost today, but the holiness of each site preserves its authenticity while the historic land use is sustained. Their preservation problems are lack of maintenance and abandonment due to disasters, illegal interventions, inappropriate development plans, and unsuitable restoration approaches. The principles proposed for managing these historic environments consider their cultural asset values in relation to urban history, development of coherent strategies for their presentation, and participation of all actors to their preservation and development.
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Peer review under responsibility of Southeast University.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foar.2020.04.003
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1. Introduction

When historic sites are transformed, their cultural asset values degrade. Several approaches have been presented to understand the effects of changes on the cultural asset values of historical sites. Wang and Gu (2020) propose a historic urban landscape approach for the sustainable management of urban changes. Urban design and place making are also proposed to respond to the needs of local communities and tourists. Based on the understanding of the evolutionary process of places, these tools can strengthen the connection between people and places that is required for a sustainable management. Havinga et al. (2019) propose a quantitative assessment process for the sustainable refurbishment of historic sites and define four scales, namely, site, ensemble, building, and building element. The amount of refurbishment to be realized is determined by considering the heritage significance of these scales. Ruiz-Jaramillo et al. (2019) put forward a heritage risk index concept to compare different buildings at a historic center. Damage level is assessed in accordance with the affected percentage of building elements and percentages are grouped into four levels. Building elements to be assessed are categorized into 10 groups. The heritage risk index is obtained by multiplying Ki (category coefficient) and Wi (impact percentage or weight coefficient). The resulting index is evaluated in four categories, which are classified as "good," "acceptable," "poor," and "bad." A hierarchy map is prepared using these risk indexes. Prioritization of those in need of urgent conservation is realized. Wells and Baldwin (2012) question how people value, perceive, and experience the age of their urban environment. An authentic historic site is compared with a new one. Informants take photographs of their urban environments and use them in the interviews as indicators of their perceptions. As a result, the shared experiences of both old and new sites are composed of landscapes. The contrasting elements are personal memories related to the new place and spontaneous fantasy about the old place. Residents in the urban place mention hypothetical features that they believe are important for their future children compared with layers of the past mentioned by residents in the old place. The age value of an urban environment strengthens the place attachment while it is sustained.

Historic sites around a religious monument have a mutual relationship in terms of their visual, sensorial, and functional qualities (Feilden and Jokilehto, 1993; ICOMOS, 1964; ICOMOS, 2013). Thus, the sustainability of these relations determines the continuation of environmental quality and sociocultural welfare. Seyedashrafi et al. (2017) question the effect of the latest development plan on the cultural asset values of a historic site around the Masjed-e Jame of Isfahan, Iran. The site has faced various urban implementations throughout its history. The latest master plan proposes rebuilding and rehabilitation in the site. The significance of the threats and benefits is interpreted in accordance with the severity of their effects. Priorities of mitigation strategies for negative effects are defined. Peled (2019) questions the value of Sidna Ali Mosque and its surrounding site in Tel Aviv, Israel. The historic pilgrimage site was abandoned in the mid-20th century after the settlement of the Jews. Today, the site is extensively renewed and the mosque is renovated. The method involves literature review, which shows that the authentic picturesque characteristics are radically altered while the spiritual ones are re-established to a limited extent because its community is not sustained. The traditional site around the historic *Gökcamii* (Blue Mosque), Erivan, Armenia is completely renewed as high-rise housing blocks today (Darieva, 2016). The mosque is repurposed first as a storage space then as a museum, but is now used as a mosque again (Şafak, 2018). The picturesqueness of the site is reduced at present, but the holy spirit of the place is re-respected to a certain extent.

Built as focal elements of traditional neighborhoods, historical mosques in Turkey are often continually used for community gathering with worshipping purpose given their spiritual significance. This study aims to understand how alterations affect the cultural asset values of historic sites around mosques in Manisa, Turkey. The objectives are to identify the value types in the study sites and determine the change in the intensity of these values throughout their life spans.

1.1. Method of the study

The case study approach is undertaken for this research. First, historic commercial sites around mosques are selected from neighboring settlements. Both selections have undergone extensive alterations but in different ways. One has been abandoned after a landslide while the other has been renewed in relation to increasing population. Second, archive review is carried out to gather old photographs, drawings, reports, and conservation decisions regarding the cases. Third, historical study is performed to understand the backgrounds of the cases. Fourth, site observations, sketches, and photographic documentation[1] are realized. Fifth, urban scale alterations in the site neighborhoods and values attributing significance to the case studies are analyzed in retrospective. Urban scale alterations are changes in land use and urban density, implementation of development plans, and restoration of focal monuments, that is, mosques. Significance to the case studies are attributed to picturesqueness and spiritual values. Picturesqueness is defined as the environmental quality stemming from the integral beauty of topography, solid-void pattern, scale, man-made and natural elements, and silhouette of a historic site (ICOMOS, 1931; Kiesow, 1982). Spiritual value is defined as the presence of awe-inspiring qualities in a historic site and continuation of the holy function of its focal monument for the social welfare of its community (Feilden and Jokilehto, 1993; ICOMOS, 1994; Stubbs, 2009). A series of site plans and silhouettes illustrating the urban development around mosques is prepared for both case studies. The results are summarized in graphs. Sixth, fluctuations in the values by periods are evaluated as appropriate or inappropriate in accordance with the following criteria: appropriate land

[1] All drawings and photographs belong to the author, unless a source is stated.

use and urban density for sustaining traditional activities and physical characteristics, addition of sociocultural and service facilities to improve life quality, or limitation of usage and construction due to a permanent disaster risk (ICOMOS, 1996). Inappropriate land use and urban density mean alteration of the traditional spirit and physical characteristics of a site through extensive renewal, lack of contemporary facilities improving the life quality or security precautions against vandalism, or delimitation of usage and construction despite disaster risks. The implementation of a development plan is appropriate if site development is controlled by respecting or re-establishing the authentic site characteristics (e.g., solid-void pattern and silhouette) and sustaining the site-scale values (ICOMOS, 1987, 2011). However, implementation is inappropriate if an uncontrolled development occurs (ICOMOS, 1987), authentic site characteristics are not respected, and site-scale values are reduced. The mosque restoration is appropriate if qualified interventions are realized. That is, authentic solid-void pattern in the lot, mass and façade characteristics, proportions, and remains of past periods are conserved and presented while regular monitoring and maintenance of the monument are guaranteed (Madran and Özgönül, 2005). By contrast, restoration is inappropriate if the above interventions are insufficient. The results of the period-by-period evaluation are presented on silhouettes and site plans. The effects of changes as negative or positive are shown on related drawings with pink and blue colors, respectively. A value is represented with a solid symbol if all of the qualities necessary for the attribution of that specific value are present. Reduction in value is displayed with degrading symbols. Seventh, the accumulated values are graded (Table 1).

Eight, the case studies are discussed in relation to similar applications. Evolution and current conservation regarding historic sites around mosques are compared with those in the case studies. Three sites from different countries are selected, as follows: Masjed-e Jame, Iran; Sidna Ali Mosque, Israel; and *Gökcamii* (Blue Mosque), Erivan, Armenia (Section 1).

2. Understanding the case studies

This section presents the evolutions of the sites around Pazaryeri and Çarşı Mosques.

2.1. Evolution of the site of Pazaryeri Mosque

The old Gördes, which has been settled in since the Hittite Period (1450–1200 BC) (Tekdemir, 2016), is at the skirts of Kepez (Tekke) Mountain at the northeast of Manisa center. Bazaar Masjid was built in Bazaar Masjid (*Mescid-i Bazar*) Neighborhood in the 14th century. The modest monument was in harmony with its rural setting, and the traditional buildings in the vicinity were at the human scale in the 14th century (Fig. 5). The repetition of traditional design elements and construction technique provided a unity in the site (Fig. 3a). The neighborhood had weekly open bazaars and seasonal festivals, which contributed to the social welfare of the community. Pazaryeri Mosque is considered to have been constructed in the Nakıp Ağa Neighborhood in place of Bazaar Masjid built in Bazaar Masjid (the former name of the neighborhood) Neighborhood in the 14th century, before the Çarşıbaşı Fountain dated to 1753 (Figs. 1a and 5) (Adamaz, 2016).

The mosque is relevant to its surrounding bazaar area. The worshipping space is elevated over the ground floor composed of shops around a passage. The main road led to Çarşıbaşı Fountain and a few shops were situated on

Table 1 Grading of values.

Grade in symbols		Grade	Definition for grading
Picturesqueness	Spiritual		
		Full	Presence of all qualities
		High	Presence of almost all qualities
		Medium	Presence of half of the qualities
		Low	Presence of several of the qualities
		Very Low	Presence of almost no qualities
		No	Presence of no qualities

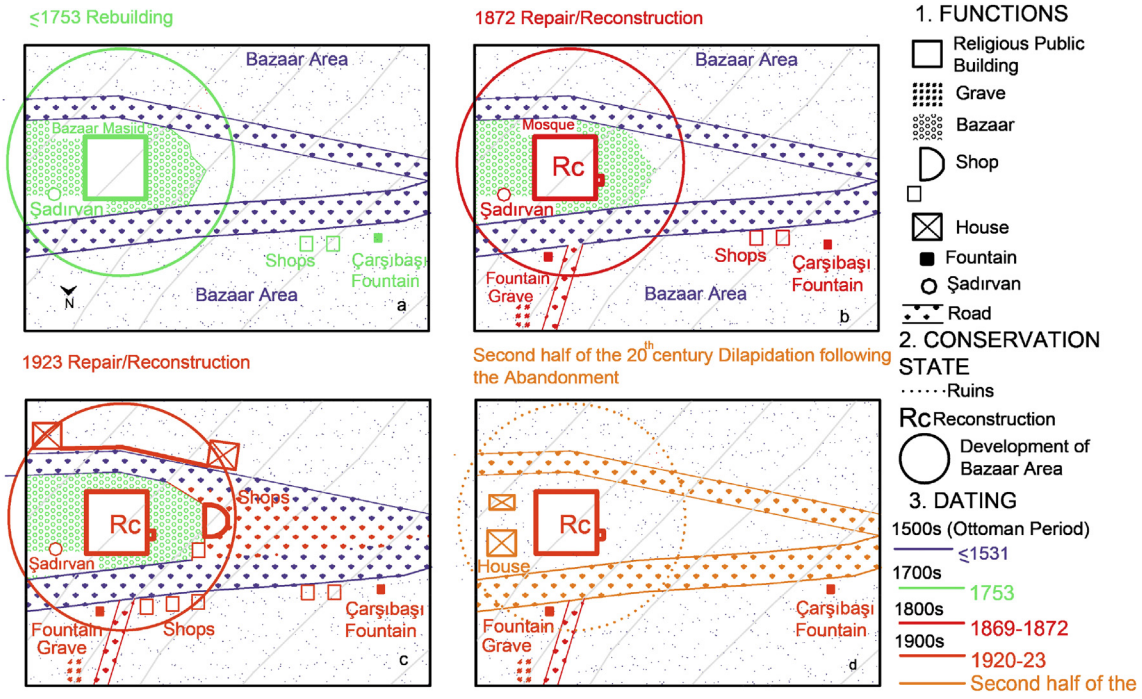

Fig. 1 Evolution of the Pazaryeri Mosque and its vicinity (site plans).

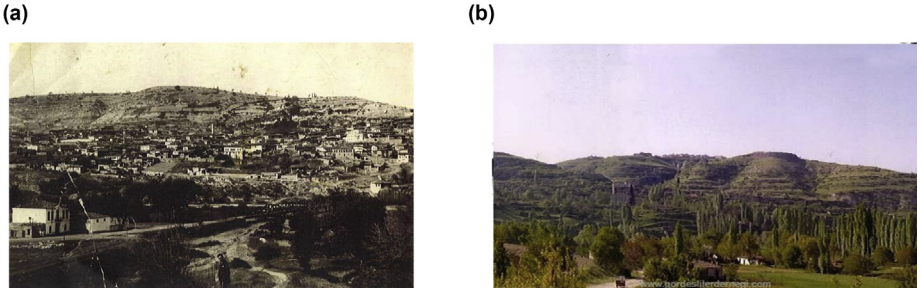

Fig. 2 Old Gördes: (a) Unknown date; (b) After abandonment.

its sides. The construction of the mosque in place of Bazaar Masjid sustained the spiritual significance of the site, similar to many other religious places where holiness has been sustained throughout history (Jokilehto, 1999). The building density in the site slightly increased but the human scale remained the same (Fig. 3b).

Pazaryeri Mosque was partially burned in 1869. The fire resulted in an overall decrease in environmental quality. Loss of the third dimension of the site resulted in partial reduction in picturesqueness value. The mosque could not be used until 1872; consequently, the spiritual value was slightly lost in this period (Fig. 3c). Then, the monument was reintegrated in accordance with the repair inscription panel dated to 1872 (Acun, 2013) (Fig. 1b) and opened to its community. The traditional buildings in its vicinity were maintained and repaired, allowing the re-establishment of the traditional environmental quality. A new fountain was constructed (Acun, 2013), and with the grave of Bayram Baba (İlker et al., 1999), was located at the north of the Pazaryeri Mosque. Bayram Baba is an important spiritual figure, and his burial in the vicinity of the mosque further reinforced the spiritual value of the site. The upper part of the building was rebuilt in accordance with the style of the time (Fig. 3d).

The 1921 fire set by Greeks ruined the mosque together with its surroundings. The site's picturesque qualities were negatively affected (Fig. 3e). The shops and houses were not totally abandoned but repaired or reconstructed by the owners. The mosques were continually respected and immediately repaired in accordance with Waqf regulations (Madran, 1996). The buildings were rehabilitated in the early Republican years, and the number of shops at the bazaar area increased. The mosque's repair was realized in 1923 (Acun, 2013) (Fig. 1c). A timber room mass was added to semi-open last comers' hall, and its eastern and western façades were closed with stone masonry walls. Although these interventions were in line with the period's legal framework (Madran, 1996), the quality of the historic environment decreased (Fig. 3f).

The mosque and its historic site were abandoned due to the landslide risk detected in 1940, which induced a forced

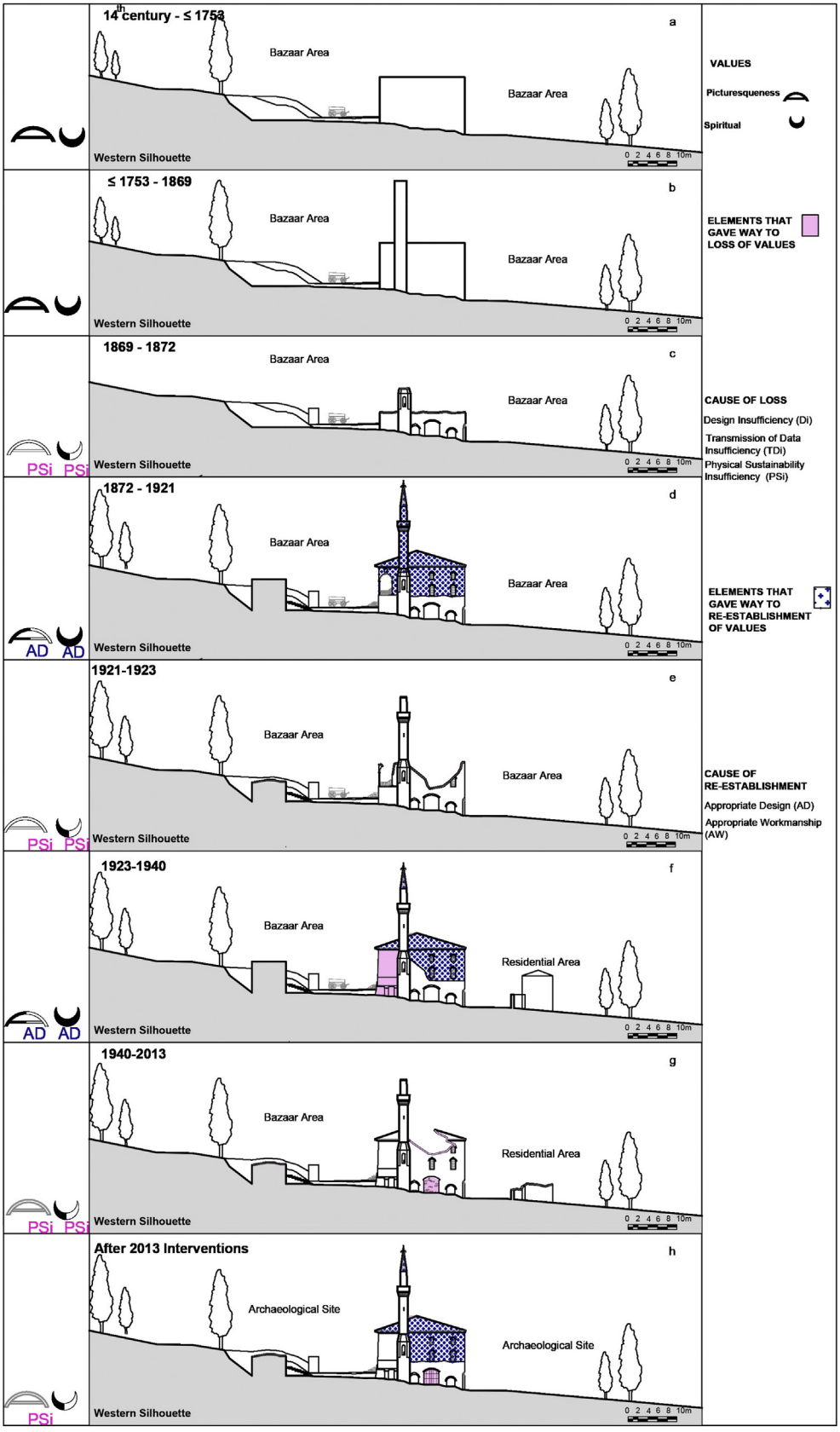

Fig. 3 Evolution of Pazaryeri Mosque and its vicinity (silhouette drawings).

Fig. 4 Mosque mass, including its western entrance to a semi-open colonnaded space and its surrounding site.

Fig. 6 Collapsed buildings at the north (view from the last comers' hall of Pazaryeri Mosque).

migration of the entire community (Fig. 2a, b). Inhabitants moved to a new place identified by the government. The rapid dilapidation caused by weathering, lack of maintenance, and the removal of building elements by the former inhabitants moving to their new destinations triggered the loss of the urban fabric in their departure town (Fig. 3g). The mosque lost its community, resulting in the rapid transformation of the settlement of old Gördes into an archaeological site. The lack of maintenance led to partial collapse (Figs. 1d and 6), and the mosque lost its superstructure (roof and *külah*) and portions of its walls. Its eastern and western passage entrances and shop windows. Only the old house located at the east of the mosque continued to be used at the abandoned site. In addition to the exterior elements, interior elements were exposed to weather conditions.

In old Gördes, only Pazaryeri Mosque was reintegrated. The monument was restored by RDPF in 2013 (Fig. 3h) and the partially collapsed building was reintegrated (Fig. 4). A house exists at its east and is the only building currently lived in.

2.2. Evolution of the site of Çarşı Mosque

Salihli is the neighbor of the ancient Sardes, the capital of Lydia (Fig. 11), and is located at the east of Manisa center. In place of the discussed settlement, rural lands of a former village were present (Baykal, 1990). In the second half of the 19th century, following the construction of a railway station at the site, Çarşı (Fig. 11) and the new commercial zone were implemented (Fig. 7a). Çarşı Mosque was placed on the Mithatpaşa Street in Eski Cami Neighborhood, Salihli District, Manisa. The neighborhood developed around Çarşı Mosque after its establishment in 1875 (Fig. 10a) during the Ottoman modernization period, when grid layout was a common design preference for settlements. The mosque had Neoclassical characteristics. Until its 1930 restoration,

Fig. 5 Urban development around masjids/mosques in Gördes center.

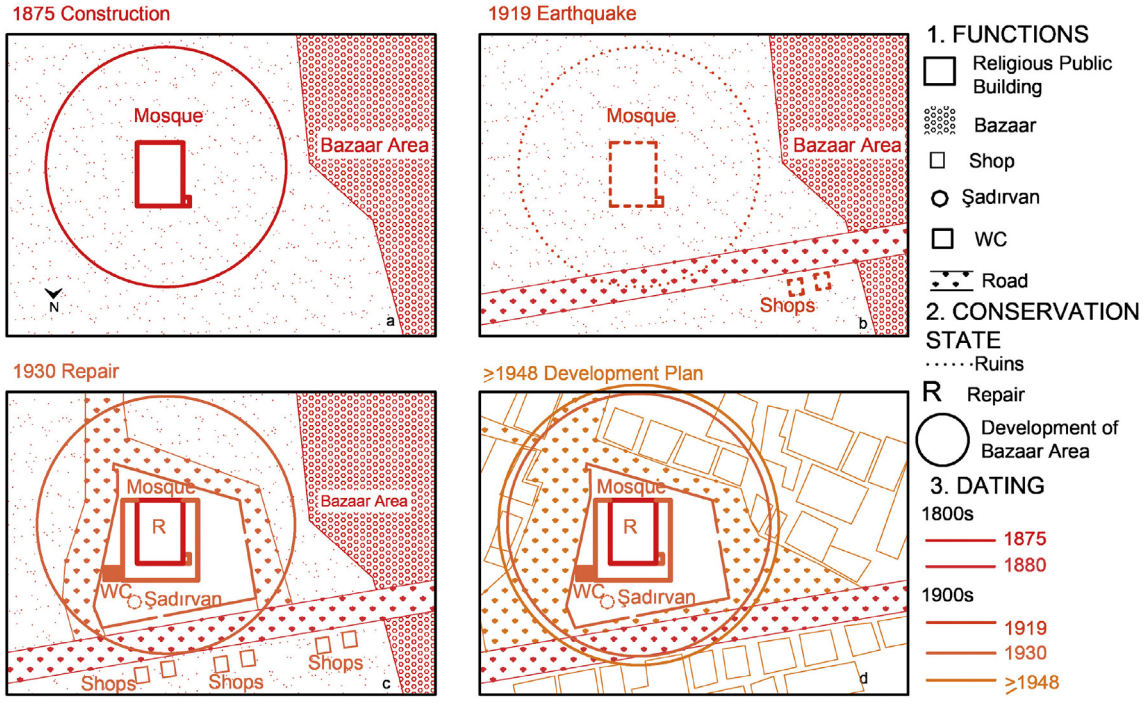

Fig. 7 Evolution of the Çarşı Mosque and its vicinity (site plans).

Fig. 8 Southeast view of Çarşı Mosque.

Fig. 9 Northeast view of Çarşı Mosque and its environs.

Çarşı Mosque was composed of a closed main mass, including a prayer hall and *mahfil* for women, semi-open last comers' hall at its north, and a minaret adjacent to the main mass at its west. Its original minaret should have been proportional with its mass, as seismic vulnerability necessitates (Kuban, 2016). Human scale, balanced solid-void organization, and repetition of traditional building elements and construction technique led to a picturesque site (Fig. 10a) with a holy focal element.

The Soma (a district of Manisa) earthquake in 1919 (Fig. 7b) (BUKOERIRETMC-Boğaziçi University Kandilli Observatory and Earthquake Research Institute Regional Earthquake-Tsunami Monitoring Centre, 2017) and the fire in 1922 (Uluçay and Gökçen, 1939) negatively affected the newly emerging commercial district. These incidents caused the collapse in the hipped roof, last comers' hall, and the minaret of the Çarşı Mosque (Fig. 7b). The site's picturesque qualities were negatively affected (Fig. 10b). The shops and houses were not totally abandoned but rather repaired or reconstructed by the owners. The mosque was continually respected and immediately repaired in accordance with Waqf regulations (Madran, 1996) in 1930. The restoration included the alteration of the last comers' hall with a reinforced concrete mass and its enlargement toward the north, reintegration of the main mass by altering its eastern and western façades for reaching the reinforced concrete masses added to these sides of the mosque, reintegration of minaret as a disproportional element with two *şerefes*, and the addition of an unqualified *şadırvan* to the courtyard (Fig. 7c). The interventions used modern building materials, and despite their alignment with the period's legal framework (Madran, 1996), the quality of the historic environment diminished. The reinforced concrete threatened not only the picturesqueness but also the spiritual values (Fig. 10c).

The 1948 development plan and its revised versions in 1973 and 1987 (Baykal, 1990) caused an increase in urban

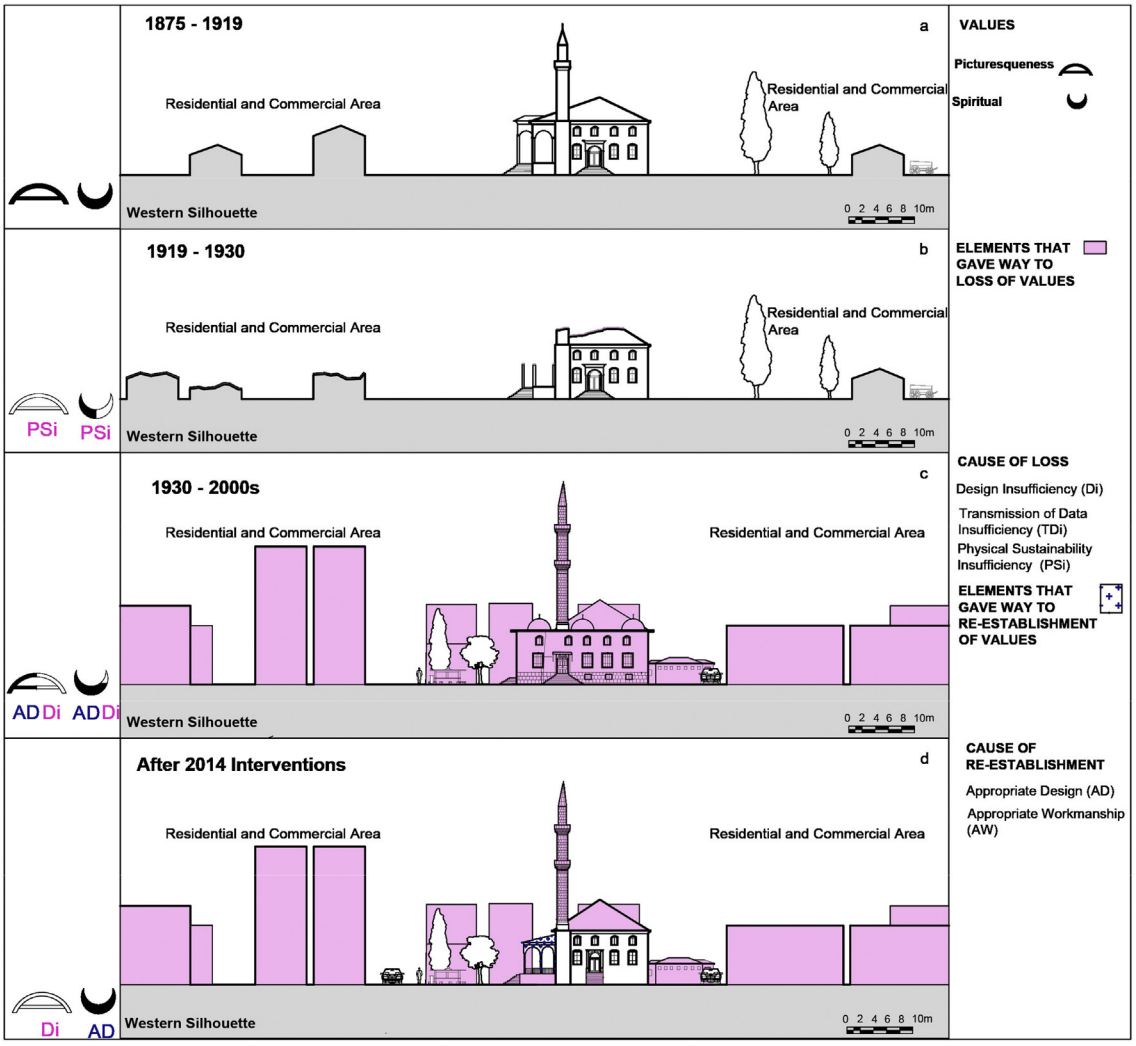

Fig. 10 Evolution of Çarşı Mosque and its vicinity (silhouette drawings).

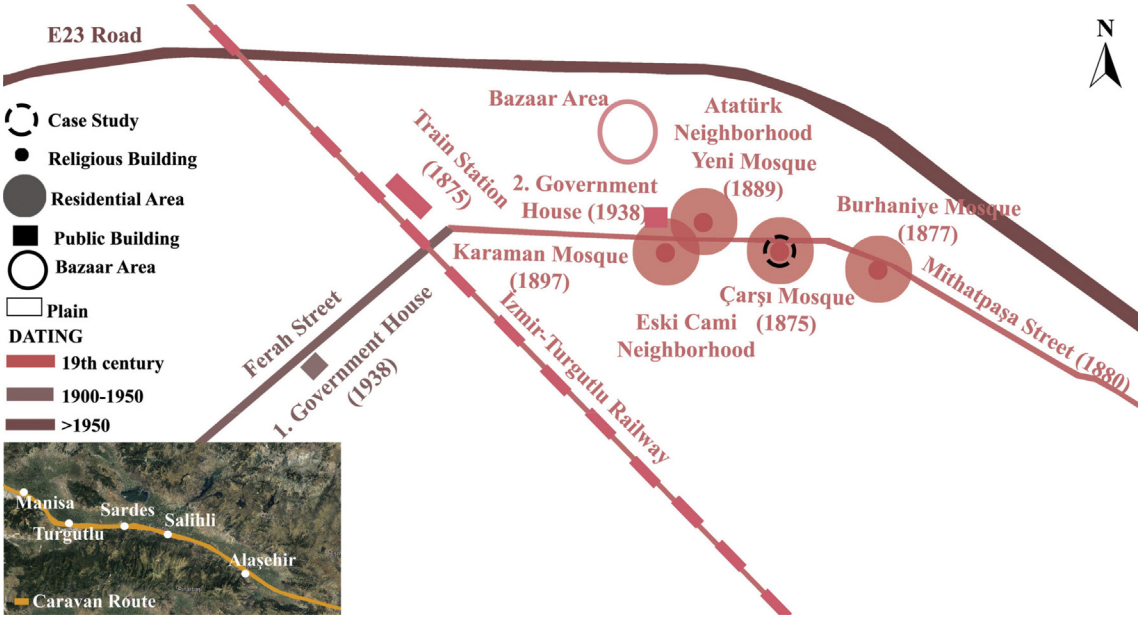

Fig. 11 Urban development around mosques at Salihli center.

Fig. 12 Multistory buildings at the north (view from the last comers' hall of Çarşı Mosque).

density in the environs of Çarşı Mosque. Multistory buildings began construction (Fig. 12). Human scale, traditional urban elements, and the balance of open—closed spaces in the neighborhood were lost (Fig. 10d). The grid urban layout in the vicinity involved two-to seven-story buildings, most of which were residential buildings with shops on their ground floors in accordance with the 1987 Development Plan (Baykal, 1990) (Fig. 7d). A parking area and a single-story toilet building were situated at the area adjacent to the mosque courtyard (Fig. 8). RDPF restored Çarşı Mosque in 2014. The courtyard encloses the mosque building (Fig. 9) from all sides, and can be accessed everywhere because of the low height (approximately 40 cm) of the courtyard wall and flower pots. The courtyard elements included an unqualified *şadırvan* repaired in 2011 at the north of the eastern corner, a *musalla* stone at the south-western corner, and trees at the boundaries (Fig. 9). The praying space is elevated over a storage space at the partial basement floor. The removal of unqualified reinforced concrete mass additions, alteration of the closed last comers' hall with a semi-open one as appropriate to its authentic state, and the presentation of the original mosque mass were appropriate interventions, but the unqualified *şadırvan* was sustained in the restoration.

3. Results and discussion

Both of the case study sites have maintained their traditional physical characteristics until the 20th century (Fig. 13). Disaster such as a landslide (Pazaryeri) and dense urban development (Çarşı) have enabled the radical alteration of the site characteristics starting from the mid-20th century. The other historic sites around the mosques have also maintained their traditional qualities until the 20th century (sites around Sidna Ali Mosque, Masjed-e Jame, and Blue Mosque) (Section 1). The loss of traditional physical characteristics has started in 1948 at Sidna Ali, in 1925 at Masjid-e Jame, and in 1920 at Blue Mosque. The causes of these losses are the transformation and modernization of the city.

The focal monuments in the case study sites, that is, the mosques, have been preserved because they have sustained their spiritual significance at different degrees (Figs. 3 and 10). Spiritual value is most preserved when the interaction of the religious function with other activities in the site, such as commerce and housing, continue as in the history (Çarşı, Subsection 2.2; Masjed-e Jame). When the authentic worshipping is rarely experienced as a result of site abandonment (Pazaryeri, Subsection 2.1.) or the exchange of population with a non-Muslim group (Sidna Ali; Gökcamii (Blue)), the spiritual value diminishes.

The sites have lost their picturesqueness (5 of 5) in different ways. For Pazaryeri, the traditional neighborhood is completely lost. The archaeological qualities of the present site contradict the reintegration of the mosque itself. For Çarşı (Subsection 2.2.), Sidna Ali, Masjid-e Jame, and *Gökcamii* (Blue), the traditional sites are completely

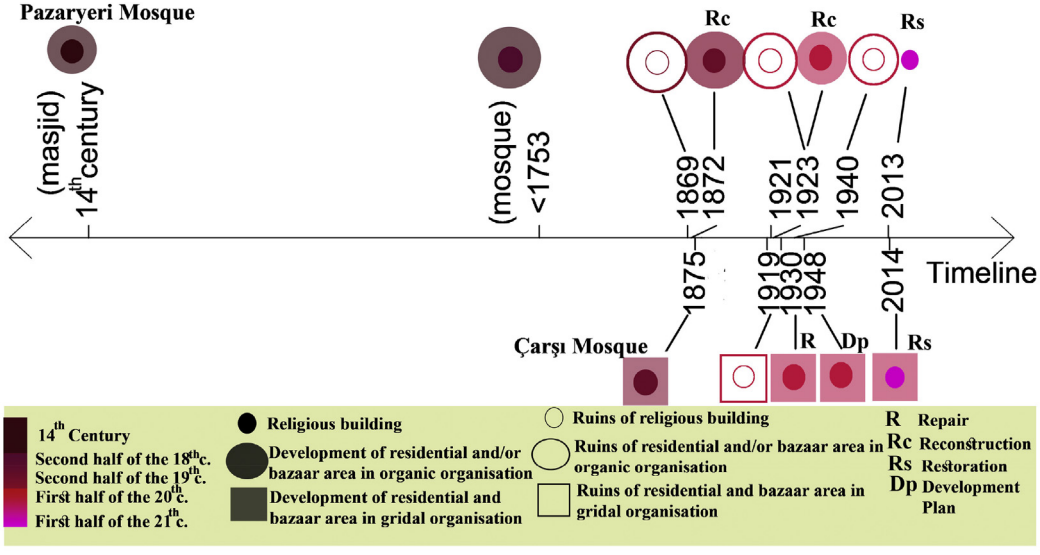

Fig. 13 Evolution of the case study sites.

renewed whereas the authentic scale, solid-void balance, and silhouette are lost. The re-establishment of authentic mass qualities in Çarşı and Sidna Ali Mosque or the sustainability of the authentic qualities of their monuments in *Gökcamii* (Blue) Mosque are minor contributions to the overall physical qualities of the historic sites.

4. Conclusion

Historic sites around religious monuments are significant due to their spiritual and picturesqueness values. Their holy spirits are sustained to a certain extent due to the respect of all communities. Nevertheless, the higher the degree of spiritual value results in higher continuation of traditional activities in the entire site. The picturesqueness of the historic sites, however, is under the threat of population growth and abandonment. Preservation of the religious monuments themselves is achieved to a considerable extent, but this is insufficient for the preservation of the picturesqueness of their sites.

Participation of administrative organizations in charge of single monument restorations in the preparation of the development plans is necessary for the sustainability of monument-context relationship. Reintegration of a historical mosque in a site with archaeological status should be avoided. At this point, the archaeological potential of the mosque should be evaluated. In the vicinity of historic mosques within the urban fabric, appropriate control of urban development is necessary. Illegal mass additions threatening the picturesqueness of the site should be avoided by preparing a monument management plan and appropriate monitoring.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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