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ONE OF THE RECREATIONAL AREAS NEAR ISTANBUL: POLONEZKOY

ABSTRACT

Polonezköy was founded in 1842 as a refugee settlement and has served long as a refuge for the Poles escaping from their long-occupied home and for the Polish soldiers escaping from the Russian army. Always attracted attention of the Istanbulites since its establishment with its difference cultural structure, the village is also one of the oldest natural recreational areas in Istanbul. Started with hunting in the forests surrounding the village from 1910 on, the recreational activities have developed in the course of time and increasingly developed this quality of it as a result of declaration of the village as "national Natural Park" in 1994 and "natural sit area" in 1995. Polonezköy is an important entertainment and recreational area preferred by most of the Istanbulites in recent years especially for short-term holidays (most of the time for daily or weekly excursions) thanks to easy transportation facilities from the downtown, forestry nature still undestroyed, cultural features it has and a number of accommodation facilities.

Keywords: Tourism, Recreation, Urban Recreation, Istanbul, Polonezköy

İSTANBUL'UN YAKININDAKİ REKREASYON ALANLARINDAN BİRİ: POLONEZKÖY

ÖZET

Polonezköy bir mülteci yerleşmesi olarak 1842'de kurulmuş, uzun yıllar işgal altındaki ülkelerinden kaçan Polonyalılar ile Rus ordusundan kaçan Polonyalı askerlerin sığınma yeri olmuştur. Kuruluşundan itibaren farklı kültürel yapısı ile İstanbulluların ilgisini çeken köy, aynı zamanda İstanbul'un en eski doğal rekreasyon alanlarından biridir. 1910'dan sonra köyü çevreleyen ormanlarda avcılık ile başlayan rekreasyon faaliyetleri zaman içinde gelişmiş, köyün 1994'te "milli tabiat park alanı", 1995'te "doğal sit alanı" ilan edilmesiyle daha da yaygınlaşmıştır. Polonezköy şehir merkezine olan ulaşım kolaylığı, orman içinde yer alan henüz bozulmamış doğası, sahip olduğu farklı kültürel özellikleri ve çok sayıdaki konaklama tesisleriyle, çoğu İstanbullunun son yıllarda kısa süreli tatilleri (çoğunlukla gününbirlik ya da hafta sonu) için tercih ettikleri önemli bir eğlence ve dinlenme merkezidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Turizm, Rekreasyon, Şehirselsel Rekreasyon, İstanbul, Polonezköy

1. INTRODUCTION (GİRİŞ)

Today one of the most important economic activities worldwide, tourism has appeared as a result of interaction of many factors. Here we should stress that the travel concept, a basic component of tourism, as one aspect of the *recreation* which brings about a very comprehensive diversity of activities. Recreation is, very roughly, a concept which expresses activities performed by the people in their leisure time, which is defined as "all times outside the time spent for existential (sleeping-eating-drinking, etc.) and subsistence actions (working, going to/from work, school for children, home and office for women, etc.)."

Although the recreational activities are categorized in a variety of ways, it is, in general sense, classified as "urban" and "rural". While the urban recreational activities are performed indoor and outdoor spaces of the city, the rural recreation activities are rather performed at areas near or outside the city as they require use of natural environment and usage of a larger area. Urban recreational activities include movies, theatres, amusement places, eating-drinking, indoor or outdoor sport facilities, museum, art galleries and a variety of park; and rural recreation, on the other hand, include (a) recreational activities which can be performed during the short leisure times on places reserved for recreation (e.g. picnic places in the park, places for angling or big sport areas, etc.) in or near the cities, over wide range of lands, and (b) all kinds of recreational activities at off-city areas during short- and long-time holidays. Considerable changes they create in the space and huge mass of population they mobilize make both urban and rural or off-city outdoor recreational activities increasingly developing areas of interest for geographers (Özgüç, 1977: 143 and Özgüç, 2011: 4,10).

While, as it has been with most of the big cities, fast and unplanned urbanization in Istanbul, especially after 1950 on, has expanded borders of the city, it has also caused housing density in downtown. And this phenomenon has destroyed natural recreational areas of the city and restricted the areas where the city-dwellers may enjoy nature peacefully with a limited number of parks. The population increasing higher and higher forced the Istanbulites to find new places far away from crowds. In this search, in addition to the natural areas surrounding the city (Şile, Riva, Ağva, etc., villages (Ortaköy, Vaniköy, Yeniköy, etc.) have also distinguished themselves. As the city continued its expansion to cover the near villages, the orientation which started from the villages near the city (Ortaköy, Vaniköy, Yeniköy, etc.) has switched to more distant villages Demirciköy, Garipçe, Gümüşdere, Kısırkaya, Kilyos, Rumeli Feneri Köyü, Uskumruköy, Polonezköy, Anadolu Feneri, etc.).

Interest in a variety of settlements and districts which are in and around Istanbul and bearing names with the suffix "köy" (village) has started with daily recreational activities and continued so far with the weekend and longer holidays. This situation has caused significant changes in both spatial use and economical structures of the villages. So much so that, these changes have caused declaration of some villages or districts completely (Polonezköy¹), and some of them (Ortaköy²) partly as "tourism zone". The villages, having limited

¹ Located in the municipal adjacent area of the county of Beykoz, Polonezköy is defined as "Tourism and 2nd housing area" in the 1/25000-scaled plan as per the legal regulations, and thus encouragement of housing for tourism purpose has been prescribed (Beykoz Municipality, 2010).

² Ortaköy-Kuruçeşme shore line has been declared "tourism zone" (Timor and Doldur, 2006).

recreational activities in the beginning, have started to be cited among the important recreational areas of the city as soon as the activities have diversified over time.

And Polonezköy is one of the villages that have undergone this transition. In Polonezköy, one of the oldest natural recreational areas of Istanbul, the recreational activities started with hunting in the forests surrounding the village in 1910. The activities getting more and more diversified over time have further developed when the village was declared as "national natural park area³" in 1994 and "natural site area" in 1995. Polonezköy has become an important entertainment and recreational area preferred by most of the Istanbulites in recent years especially for short-term holidays (most of the time for daily or weekly excursions) thanks to easy transportation facilities from the downtown, forestry nature still undestroyed, cultural features it has and a number of accommodation facilities.

2. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE (ÇALIŞMANIN ÖNEMİ)

Importance of the rural recreational areas needed by the big cities is highlighted by explaining the transition of Polonezköy from a completely agricultural structure completely to a touristic village that meets rural recreational needs of the city over time due to its position near to Istanbul.

3. SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF POLONEZKÖY (POLONEZKÖY'ÜN KURULUŞU VE GELİŞMESİ)

Polonezköy was established as a refugee settlement in 1842 under the name of *Adampol*. It has been used by the Poles escaping from their invaded country as a refuge until their country became independent.

With the agreement signed in 1775, Polish State was divided and invaded by Russia, Prussia and Austria. Adam Czartoryski, Polish Prince, objected to this division and established a "National Polish Government" when he was an exile in Paris and made some efforts. Prince Czartoryski believed that Poland might gain its independence only by fighting against the Russians at the side of the Ottoman Empire.

Having good relations with the Ottoman Empire, which did not approve the said division then, Prince Adam Czartoryski established Oriental Agency in Istanbul in 1841 and assigned Michal Czajkowski, renowned author, as head of it. Later on, because of the prevailing conditions, Czajkowski converted to Islam, taking name and title of Mehmet Sadık Pasha⁴. Securing approval of Prince Adam Czartoryski,

³ Polonezköy Natural Park: Remaining within the county of Beykoz, Polonezköy shows floristic characteristics of Western Mediterranean Region with its flora surviving against industrial development around it. It has a rich forest structure made up of coniferous trees in addition along with deciduous trees such as hornbeam, common beech, elm, alder, chestnut and linden, diversified with a variety of sub-flora. Its wild life community is also very rich. Furthermore, the area is a stay and nutrition place for thousands of birds during migration of white storks and birds of prey during spring and autumn. Its geomorphologic structure, showing a plateau characteristic, has a historical feature along with its beautiful landscape and recreational facilities ("Polonezköy Tabiat Parkı" <http://www.istanbulkulturturizm.gov.tr/Genel/BelgeGoster.aspx?>).

⁴ In 1849, Russia and Austria asked the Otoman Empire to return the Poles that had escaped from their countries after the invasion and took refuge in the Otoman Empire. As the Otoman Empire could not dare to take a war risk with these powerful countries, it has, as the sole remedy, ensured the refugees are converted to the Islamic religion. Thus, many people, including military officers of high rank among those settled in the village were converted to the Islamic religion (Antonowicz, 2006:25).

Czajkowski leased a 500-acres of land, then called Gypsy Mansion, (today Polonezköy) from Lazarist Priests⁵ connected to Saint Benoit High School for good with a view of providing accommodation of the military families. It was decided to settle a village in these lands. In a religious ceremony held on March 19, 1842 the name "Adampol" was given to the village and foundation of the first house was laid. The name was an amalgam of the first name of Adam Czartoryski and first syllable of the Poland.

The first people settled in Polonezköy were the Polish soldiers and their families escaped from the Russian Army and bought by Prince Czartoryski from the slavery markets. Subsequently, some soldiers and officers escaped from the 1848 Hungarian Riot have also been brought to the village.

The first settlement place was some part of the orphanage and dairy farm owned by the Lazarist Priests; arrangement of the settlement has been directed under guide of these reverends. The village, which became completely independent only twenty years after its establishment, has developed in the subsequent periods without any need of external assistance (Antonowicz, 1992: 2, 4).

Although Polonezköy had the status of "village" when it was established, it actually had the quality of "farm". Hence, the seal pertaining to the village in the Ottoman period bore the inscription of "Adampol Farm Administration". From the establishment on, the village has been administered by a committee consisting of priest, chieftain and mukhtar. Apart from holding religious rituals, the priest was also performing functions of teacher and consultant in the administration. Chieftain has looking after the internal affairs and mukhtar has executed affairs of the village with the government (Beyaz, 1990: 59).

In 1853, Crimean War broke out between the Ottoman State and Russia. Thinking that it would assist for independence of Poland, two divisions of Polish patriots participated among the ranks of Ottoman army in the army. After the war, a number of soldiers secured a residence permit from the Ottoman authorities and settled in Polonezköy. Sultan Abdulmecit has made an imperial decree and awarded the Polish officers and soldiers fought in the war and brought tax exempt to those that would live in the village.

Although Polonezköy had originally been established for accommodation of the military families, it has in the course of time almost acted as an *unofficial Polish Agency*⁶ upon inclusion of the Poles away from their homeland and fought in certain riots and battle.

Administered by the administrators assigned by the prince till 1858, precarious treatment of the different administrators has led to public reaction. As a result, the Prince has enacted a new law regarding administration of the village. Accordingly, the village would be administered by the decrees of a sub-district council to be formed and the village people would be responsible for administration, security and order of the village. And this law reduced disputes between the villagers and administrators on the other hand, and enabled the village to administer and subsist by themselves. After death of the Prince in 1864, the Sub-district Council decided to share the land among the villagers. Accordingly, the villager would be owner of the land they cultivated according to the existing lots, and the

⁵ Priests promulgating Christianity among the villagers (Antonowicz, 2006:29).

⁶ As establishment of a Polish Agency in the territories of the Otoman Empire at that time would mean fort he Otoman State to oppose to Russia, Prussia and Austria, and hence the Otoman State did not desire to take such a risk (Antonowicz, 2006:34).

remaining lands would remain under the administration of the Sub-district Council to grant to the new-comers. However, that the property of the land belonged to the family of Prince Czartoryski and villagers had only lifelong lease right of the lands have made anxious the villagers who desired to have property right of the land they cultivate.

In 1870, Prince Vladislav Czartoryski, son of Prince Czartoryski, made an agreement with the Lazarists and bought the village lands, previously leased to the villagers for good, in amount of 10 thousand Francs. And the Ottoman government officially recognized the purchase transaction in 1881 and sale of the village lands to Prince Vladislav Czartoryski was documented with a title deed signed in 1883. And thus the village was officially bought by a Pole.

Upon death of Prince Vladislav Czartoryski, the legal status of the village has become more complicated. Prince Adam Czartoryski was a French citizen, but his son, Vladislav Czartoryski was an Austrian citizen. French Embassy, taking into consideration this matter, gave up patronage of the village. And thus the village, under auspices of France since its establishment, passed to the patronage of Austria. In the subsequent period, when the heirs of Czartoryski waived from their rights, the villagers have finally become owner of the land. The state issued a certificate of citizenship to the refugees living in the village. However, the village people had to pay an annual tax specified by the Ottoman government and Sub-district Council.

The Turks have named this village where the Poles have settled as *Adamköy, Polonaise Village* (Polonez Karye) and it finally took the name of *Polonezköy* officially in 1923. Registered with the Beykoz Land Registry Office under the date 1298, volume 16, page 56 and item 32, the village had 550 hectares of coppice forest, 138 hectares of agricultural land and 50 hectares of high forest. The forest was nationalized by enactment of the law No. 4785 in 1945.

By 1968, the villagers in Polonezköy have no title deed of their own. Having received their title deeds upon registration of the village in the cadastre in 1968, some of the villagers sold their farms and houses for a variety of reasons (education, new work opportunities, etc.) and left the village. And settlement of the Turkish people in the village has realized as a result of purchase of these lands offered for sale in that period (Antonowicz, 2006: 10, 63).

In the historical development of Polonezköy, 1989 has been the important year second to 1968. Put into service on this date, the second Bosphorus Bridge (Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridge) made transportation to the Anatolia and in turn to Polonezköy easy. Added to the easy transportation, it was declared as natural park in 1994 and natural site area in 1995, it increased visits of the Istanbulites to the village for recreational activities, creating radical changes in the economical structure.

4. DEVELOPMENT COURSE AND VARIOUS CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION (NÜFUSUN GELİŞME SEYRİ VE ÇEŞİTLİ ÖZELLİKLERİ)

First residents of Polonezköy were 12 persons in number, consisting of deserters of Russian Army and their families, who were freed from slavery by Prince Czartoryski. Most of these soldiers were the Polish places in origin such as Warsaw, Kalish, Zamashi, Plock, Kamienica and Podolski. Foundation of the settlement in the village was laid by dividing these people into five farms. Population of the village has increased over time with migration of other soldiers and immigrants who have not accepted division of Poland and involved with some riots and fights against it. At that time, the people that desire

to settle in the village were required to be Catholic or Slav definitely and, furthermore, they had to show a reference letter to this purpose.

As Prince Czartoryski was French citizen, the people living in the village were under protection and care of the French Government. A special document had been given to them that allowed them to freely move on the territories of the Ottoman Empire and a good status in the society.

In 1851, there were 15 houses and 18 persons in the village. With the people coming back from the Crimean War, the population reached to 121. Upon settlement of the immigrants consisting of young and educated persons that escaped from the January Riot in 1863, the population further grew. Among these immigrants, there were engineers and technical professional, who worked for construction of Warsaw-Vienna railway line. The Ottoman government has taken advantage of the experience of these people, offering a variety of official position to them for construction of railway and bridge.

And considerable changes occurred in the population as a result of those as well as immigrants that have settled in the course of time for different reasons. Continuously increased till 1955, the population increased in the period of 1955-1980, and finally started to increase from 1980 on again. Among the different reasons of the decrease of the population between the years of 1955-1980, the most important one is issue of title deed to the villagers as their lands were registered with the cadastre. Previously, no land sale was possible as nobody has his/her own title deed. Upon issue of the title deeds, it became possible to sell land and thus some villagers sold their farms and houses and left the village. That the villagers sold their lands after issue of the title deed is based on some economic and social reasons. These reasons include insufficient land against the increasing population, limited job opportunities and failure to meet various requirements (education, etc.) of the young population and departure to Istanbul and other places in Turkey as a result of marriage made with the Turkish people. While some of the immigration was to other places in the country, especially Istanbul, an important part of it was to foreign countries such as USA, Australia, Germany and Canada (Antonowicz, 2006: 20, 49).

Settlement of the Turkish people in Polonezköy has become possible with land sales started after issue of title deeds to the villagers. Turkish people have built villas on the lands they bought to use as their "second home". Thus, previously homogenous in ethnical sense, the village has gained a dual social structure (Beyaz, 1990: 36). While such a duality in the social structure could easily caused disagreements in any village, no problem has arisen here and, to the contrary, it continued so far in a very civilized framework.

Today 768 persons live in Polonezköy. 100 of these persons are of Polish origin. Speaking Turkish and Polish very well, this community generally completed their education in foreign schools in Istanbul and most of them have university degrees. For this reason, they mostly speak one or several foreign language (Romaic, French, Italian and German) (Antonowicz, 2006: 56).

For the soldiers and national rebels that have originally settled in the village, Polonezköy was only a stop on the way to independent Poland to be established again. They were in foreign country here and they would go back to their homeland once their country gained its own independence. For this reason, they brought up their children with patriotic values and as people attached to Poland. However, the generation born in the Ottoman Period thought different from their parents and considered here as their "small homeland". For

this reason, they tried to further develop and prosper Polonezköy (Polonezköy Mukhtar's Office, 2011). The third generation in the village, current villagers, as grandsons and granddaughters of the first settlers do not think of coming back to Poland for good; they consider themselves as Polish and Polonezköy as their homeland where they have been born and brought up.

Apart from the Polish-origin people, the population is consisted of the Turkish people working as workers in the village. This people generally work as waiter, cook, watchman or gardener in the boarding houses, hotels, restaurants and villas used as second home. In addition to the workers residing permanently, there are also workers who are brought to the village at the busy weekends. As there is no bus or public transportation vehicle running to the village, these workers are carried by shuttle vehicles of the facilities and given bed and then taken back to the city.

Table 1. Population of Polonezkoy
Tablo 1. Polonezköy'ün Nüfusu

Years	Total	Years	Total
1842	12	1965	194
1851	18	1970	196
1856	121	1975	196
1935	258	1980	279
1940	236	1985	359
1945	332	1990	400
1950	565	2000	500
1955	958	2010	768
1960	212		

Source/Kaynak: DİE Population Statistics and Antonowicz, 2006.

Children, taking small part in the population, are those of the workers in the village. Previously active, the village school is now closed because of insufficient number of children; and the children, therefore, are taken to Cumhuriyet Village Regional School near the village by shuttle vehicles.

While a considerable part of the population engaged with agricultural activities, now almost all of them deals with tourism activities. Of the total 15 persons doing agriculture, 5 cultivate vegetable in the small gardens, 8 engage in stock farming and 2 in beekeeping (Agricultural Directorate, County of Beykoz, 2011).

5. ECONOMICAL ACTIVITIES (EKONOMİK FAALİYETLER)

For the first thing, the people settled in Polonezköy bred farm animals (cows) to live on. While they produced cheese and butter from the milk of the animals they breed, they also cultivated small vegetable fields and orchards near their houses. In 1851, there were 24 cows, 20 oxen, 7 horses and 3 foals; and the cultivated area was 244 hectares. While the agricultural and stockbreeding activities that spread over time constitute an agricultural structure, it also caused the former soldiers to become villager engaging in farming.

After 1856, agricultural-based working order was well-established. They were cultivating wheat, barley, potato and corn and growing peaches, grapes and figs. Furthermore, they were also breeding fowls in addition to cows, goats, sheep and pigs. Despite of labor-intensive working, farming was not enough to meet their needs. For these reason, they benefited from the surrounding forests. They satisfied their need of meat by hunting wild boar, roe-deer and deer

in the forest and used skins of the animals they hunt for in a variety of ways. They also contributed to the family budget by collecting mushrooms, blackberry, nutgall and chestnut and generated an income from sale of wood and wood coal. Some of the products they obtained from agricultural activity was consumed by the villagers themselves and the remaining was marketed in Istanbul. They rather sold butter, pork, chicken and eggs and thus they purchased clothing and agricultural instruments in return (Ankara Embassy, Republic of Poland, 2009).

While the village maintained its agricultural-concentrated structure from the beginning to 1910, hunting activities started to develop after 1910. That Polonezköy was a good hunting ground for the hunters (generally Foreign Service officers in Istanbul) among the Istanbulites was effective in it. As the people coming to the village could not go back to the city due to transportation difficulties, they had to stay in the houses of the villagers. The boarding business started with such compulsory stays happened to be a new source of income for the villagers.

Agricultural-based structure has been maintained in the years of the First World War (production of barley, wheat, corn, various fruits and vegetables and stockbreeding). Agriculture and boarding business remained as primary source of income for the village (Antonowicz, 2006: 24, 40).

No significant change occurred in the economical structure (agriculture and boarding business to a small extent) till 1950. After 1950, the increased welfare level thanks to positive developments in the Turkish industry also developed economical relations with this Polish village. Infrastructural services provided after 1960 made easy the connection of the village with Istanbul and neighborhood and increased number of visitors. Together with this increase, number of the boarding houses and, consequently, income gained from the boarding business has increased as well. And thus the boarding business became an important source of gain for the village second to the agriculture. and "horticulture" gained importance among the agricultural activities, which were losing their ground over time. This development was based on the fact that almost all of the vegetables and fruits produced in the gardens were consumed at the boarding houses (Kaya, 1994: 22).

When Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridge put into service in 1989, it further facilitated transportation to Polonezköy and increased interest in the village. Against the increasing demand, the agriculture in the village proved to be insufficient and new facilities were built. That the village was declared national Natural Park in 1994 and natural site area in 1995 caused diversification and spread of the recreational activities. All these developments changed the economical structure. While the agricultural activities are limited with fruit and vegetable production in the small activities today, the recreational activities got the edge over it overwhelmingly. And the gift shops opened in connection with the recreational development has ensured diversification of the business activities in the village.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF THE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES (REKREASYON FAALİYETLERİNİN GELİŞMESİ)

Polonezköy has always been an attractive place for the Istanbulites due to its being close to Istanbul, lush green forest and the European character it has. Recreational activities in the village started with hunting after 1910. Presence of game animals such as wild boar, deer, fox, roe and jackal in the forests surrounding the

village has made it famous for the Istanbulites hunting as a hobby, attracting a great number of hunters to the village. Greater part of the visitors was diplomats serving in Istanbul. As most of the visiting people could not return due to difficult transportation, they had to hire room in the village. This compulsory accommodation was the beginning of the recreational activities in the village.

In the subsequent periods, Polonezköy became summer resort for the embassies, foreigners and some nature-loving families in Istanbul. And it was also visited by the Ottoman courtiers for its magnificent landscape and clean water till the First World War. In addition to its natural beauties, the different cultural characteristics (traditions of the Polish-origin villagers, houses reflecting Polish architecture, handicrafts, authentic clothing, folklore and different dishes⁷) made the village authentic and ensured frequent visit of it.

Despite of all these characteristics, the recreational activities in the village has remained limited with the boarding business in a small degree for long years due to transportation problem. Real development in the recreational activities has realized after 1950. Positive development in the Turkish industry during this period has increased welfare and, consequently, number of the people participating in the recreational activities. Thus great number of visitors started to come to Polonezköy. Village road was paved in 1961 and power supplied in 1973, followed by other infrastructural services such as telephone; and thus they facilitated connection of the village with other places, especially Istanbul. New boarding houses were built to give better service to the visitors and number of rooms serving as full- and half-board increased considerably. Increase of the boarding houses has also increased the income from the boarding business. Thus, the boarding business, second to agriculture, has become important source of income. This status continued till 1970. And after 1970, the boarding activities have increasingly developed and constituted 85% of the total income, outclassing the agriculture (Kaya, 1994: 24).

The recreational activities have diversified more over time together with formation of facilities such as resting places in the forest, walkways and cycling track, etc.

Real jump in the recreational activities happened when Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridge put into service in 1989. Completion of the bridge and peripheral roads made it easier to have access to the village. In addition to the transportation facilities, the increased number of people having private car also made Polonezköy one of the places to go for daily or weekend excursion. In the face of the increased number of visitors, the present accommodation facilities have proved to be insufficient both in quantity and equipment. In order to offer better service to the visitors, hotels were build, providing many activities together (resting, entertainment, sports, etc.). While some of the former boarding houses renewed their internal furnishing, some others were destroyed to build hotels instead. Together with hotels, the restaurant business started to spread.

Another factor that contributed to development of the recreational activities is Cherry Festival⁸, which is organized at the

⁷ Villagers served traditional dishes to the visitors: sour milk (a kind of kephir), potato dish with meat and cabbage, "jur" (a kind of sour soup), "pierogi (ravioli with cheese or patota), "leniwe" (dough cut into thick pieces and boiled in water), omelette, smoked meat and home-made bread. Furthermore, on Sundays, roast pork or dishes made with wild birds were served on Sundays (Republic of Polant, Ankara Embassy, 2009).

⁸ Polonezköy Cherry Festival is one of the important festivals in İstanbul and traditionally organized in the first week of June each year. The Festival is also a cultural event that strengthens bonds between Turkey and Poland. Opened with attendance

beginning of June each year. The Festival contributes to the introduction of the village today as it has been in the past, drawing many visitors to the village and maintained to be an important source of income.

6.1. Current Status of the Recreational Activities (Rekreasyon Faaliyetlerinin Günümüzdeki Durumu)

A successful development of tourism in any place is achieved only with attractions in the area, accompanied by transportation infrastructure developed to have access to them and development of a variety of accommodation services. One of the basic components of the tourism, the accommodation is a concept that expresses overnight stay and food. Development of tourism at a place depends to a great extent on the accommodation capacity. Today there are many different types of accommodation for the tourists. They are classified in a number of ways. One of them is the grouping where the accommodation facilities are, very broadly, classified as "commercial" and "private". While those in the group named commercial include hotels, motels, boarding houses, holiday camps and similar, the private group is consisted of the houses of relatives and friends and second homes/holiday homes as private residences. And according to another grouping, accommodation facilities are cited as "traditional" and "complementary". In this concept of grouping, the hotels and motels are traditional accommodation facilities, the holiday camps, camping, holiday resorts, second homes and similar are included in the complementary group (Özgüç 2011: 102).

When the facilities in Polonezköy are examined by taking into consideration such ways of grouping, we see that they are mostly of "traditional" group; however, some facilities of the "complementary" group are also present. In the traditional group, the boarding houses come first in the rank (20 units), followed by hotels (7). Although small in number compared to the traditional facilities, the second homes (villas), restaurants (7), cafes, and picnic areas constitute the complementary facilities of the village.

The oldest and most widespread accommodation facilities in Polonezköy are *boarding houses*. Enjoying the greatest share among all facilities in number (20 units), they are generally houses with big gardens. They are mostly old houses, restored many times, but protected their traditional architecture. With their external appearance protected by restoration, the houses have all kinds of facilities inside in accordance with the modern understanding of tourism. Although the boarding houses provide limited services with room accommodation and food and beverage compared to the hotels, they are preferred more as they are cheaper.

of the ministers and top-level bureaucrats, the festival includes performance of folklore teams from Poland, a variety of cultural activities, exhibitions, concerts and resitals in the garden of the village church. Furthermore, a miss cherry is awarded as well ("Polonezköy Kiraz Festivali" <http://www.polonezkoy.com/kiraz-festivali.html>).



Figure 1. Stella Boarding House
(Şekil 1. Stella Pansiyon)



Figure 2. Kamilça Boarding House
(Şekil 2. Kamilça Pansiyon)

Following the boarding houses, the hotels (7 units) constitute the important accommodation facilities of the village. While most of them are built directly as hotel, there are small number of hotel, which were converted from the former boarding houses. Polka Hotel is one of the hotels, which underwent such conversion. Providing service as Polka Boarding House since 1905, the building was restored and became hotel in 1996. Polka Hotel is also the first and single hotel granted with "tourism operation license". Just like the boarding houses, the hotels also operate in the buildings, not multi-storey, and reflecting general architecture of the village. Besides their size, they draw attention with their operating structure offering a number of accommodation facilities. Among these facilities are accommodation in the rooms, breakfast, brunch, restaurant and bar, café, indoor and outdoor swimming pool, basketball, football and volleyball fields and courts, children's park, garden, picnic area and car park services.



Figure 3. Polka Hotel
(Şekil 3. Polka Otel)



Figure 4. Gülayım Hotel
(Şekil 4. Gülayım Otel)

These facilities, running for seasons, offer room options to the local and foreign guests (rooms with Jacuzzi, detached and standard) as well as comfortable accommodation facilities in all rooms such as telephone, wireless internet, hair dryer, TV set, central heating, air-conditioner and steel safe).

Hotels are also equipped to allow the visitors to perform some sport and fitness activities of the visitors. They include gymnasiums, football, basketball and volleyball fields and courts, indoor and outdoor semi-olympic swimming pools, mini golf courses, table tennis, Turkish bath, message and steam bath units. Again for satisfaction of the entertainment needs of the visitors, live music organizations, disco, bar and cafes, barbecue parties, backgammon and chess tournaments are also organized. Additionally, it is also possible to hire these facilities for wedding (rural and poolside), ball, cocktail, birthday party, meetings with meal (congress, seminars and dealers meeting, etc.).

Table 2. Accommodation Facilities in Polonezkoy
(Tablo 2. Polonezköy'deki konaklama tesisleri)

Name of Facility	Number of Room	Bed Capacity
Hotels		
Alinda Hotel	42	84
Adampol Hotel	68	117
Polka Hotel	15	43
Gülayım Hotel	41	82
Country Club	50	100
KlonJawor Boutique Hotel	20	43
Santa Roza Boutique Hotel	19	38
Boarding Houses		
Turpol Boarding House	8	16
Roza Boarding House	19	34
Hera Boarding House	12	24
Defne Boarding House	4	8
Ludwick Boarding House	5	10
Adamköy Boarding House	8	18
Polina Boarding House	10	20
Melis Boarding House	62	125
Dohoda Boarding House	10	20
Kamilça Boarding House	7	14
Celal Boarding House	7	14
Fredi Boarding House	5	10
Samara Boarding House	4	9
Stella Boarding House	10	20
Galaxy Boarding House	5	10
Berik Boarding House	20	40
Köşem Boarding House	20	40
Lara Boarding House	50	100
Irena Boarding House	5	10
Jozefin Boarding House	7	14

Source/Kaynak: Provincial Culture and Tourism Directorate, Istanbul, 2011 and Beykoz Municipality, 2011.

In addition to the boarding houses and hotels in Polonezköy that take place in the traditional group, there are also second homes (villas) taking place in the complementary group. These are mostly owned by people of higher income group that live in Istanbul and come to the village in certain periods of the year or at the weekends. One of them is the summer house of the Maldives Embassy. Most of them have permanent workers, consisting of watchman and gardener. The workers together with their families live in the extensions built for them in the gardens of the villas.

Another component of the complementary facilities are the restaurants (7 units) providing food and beverage services. They rather serve the daily visitors. Mostly operated by the Poles, the restaurants serves distinguished dishes of the Polish cuisine as well as other cuisines. And again it is possible to hire these facilities for special organizations (wedding, reception, celebration, business meal, etc.) for full day or several hours. Although they are scatter here and there in the village, they mostly operate on the avenues of Cumhuriyet and 75. Yıl (Figure 9).



Figure 5. Leonardo restaurant
(Şekil 5. Leonardo restaurant)



Figure 6. An internal view of Leonardo Restaurant
(Şekil 6. Leonardo Restaurant'ın iç görünümü)

In addition to the second homes and restaurants, there are other units, which can be included in the complementary ones, with facilities such as café, picnic park, walking-running and cycling tracks, paintball, golf and tennis. Among them, the picnic parks in the forest surrounding the village are generally preferred by families with children. Fenced in and entered by paying an entrance fee, these parks have facilities such as garden chess, basketball court, and ornamental pool, picnic area sitting groups, playing tools for children, café-restaurant and car park. Furthermore, some parks have mini zoos containing camel, fallow deer, lama, ostrich, sheep, goat, pig and a variety of birds.



Figure 7. One of the picnic park in the forest entered against an entrance fee

(Şekil 7. Orman içinde oluşturulan giriş ücreti ödenen piknik parklardan biri)



Figure 8. One of the resting units in forest
(Şekil 8. Orman içi dinlenme alanı)

Recreational activities continue throughout the year, mostly on weekends. While the highest season is in the period of April-June, intensity gets lower in the summer and winter months. The reason of intensity in the period of April-June is that the schools are open. In this period, some of the families that cannot go to their summer houses outside Istanbul prefer Polonezköy for their weekend or daily holidays. It continues until the schools are closed early summer. And then they go to their summer houses outside Istanbul (in the Aegean and Mediterranean region). Another season when the visits to the village are less is the winter due to the cold weather.

As the village people do not want run of the buses for the fear that it would make the village crowded, transportation to Polonezköy is possible only by private car, taxi, daily or package tour vehicles. Daily tours are organized by some organizations (Yeji Dohoda Restaurant). Visitors are taken by vehicles at various points in Istanbul (in front of Telecom and Bostancı Cultural Centre) and they are brought back to the downtown by the same vehicles in the evening hours after they stayed in the village along the day. Tour program

covers food (mixed barbecue, salad, French fries, yoghurt, 3 horsd'oeuvres, 1 beverage and 3 bottles of water) and transfer (by 14-person vehicles, Ford Transit type). Furthermore, for groups of minimum 10 persons, service is given in any date (except for Sunday) and from any location.



Figure 9. Distribution of the accommodation facilities in Polonezköy
(Şekil 9. Polonezköy'de konaklama tesislerinin dağılışı)

Apart from the daily tours, it is also possible to spend several hours and benefit from the accommodation facilities by joining the package tours, covering Polonezköy and completing at Şile or Ağva. Visitors joining the tours, generally organized in the summer months, also show interest in the historical sites in addition to the natural landscape of the village. Among them are Aunt Zosie Memoir House, house, now museum, visited by Atatürk in 1937, old village mill, old brickyard, church, village mosque and cultural house.

6.2. Visitors of Polonezköy (Polonezköy'ün Ziyaretçileri)

Polonezköy has long been drawing attention and visited thanks to its "originality". First visitors of the village were foreigners (especially diplomats) serving in Istanbul. Later on, the village was visited by the Ottoman courtier and some European artists that came to Istanbul (Franz Liszt in 1847, Gustave Flaubert in 1850, Pierre Loti in 1900 and Karel Droz, Czech author and linguist, in 1904).

It is seen that today the most visitors of Polonezköy (except for those coming with tours) are from higher income group (e.g. top-level executives, bankers, medical doctors, etc.).

Villagers are very pleased about the profile and number of the visitors. They do not make any effort (advertising, etc.) to increase number of the visitors. What's more, in order to keep the status, they took a joint decision that the public transportation vehicles (IETT bus, minibus or dolmuş) do not run in this line. They think that the public transportation would bring more people than the capacity of the village, resulting in destruction of "silence", one of the most important characteristics of the village. Furthermore, they do not want public transportation for the fear that the peddlers would rush in, setting up their stalls randomly here, creating visual pollution and, more importantly, sharing income of the villagers. In this way, number of visitors is restricted and the tourism activities in the village develop under control.

Apart from the visitors, mostly Istanbulites, it is also stated that people from almost all places of the country (especially Ankara, İzmir and Bursa) as well as foreign visitors of Istanbul show interest in the village.

7. POLONEZKÖY, ECOTOURISM AND SUSTAINABILITY (POLONEZKÖY, EKOTURİZM VE SÜRDÜRÜLEBİLİRLİK)

Development and current status of the recreational activities in Polonezköy was described above. When this development in Polonezköy is evaluated by taking into consideration the tourism trends widely recognized worldwide in recent years, we see successful application of sustainable "ecotourism".

Before dealing with the ecotourism applications in Polonezköy, it worth giving short information about ecotourism. As the natural areas are getting less and less worldwide, it led to the concern of protection of it, and thus resulting in "ecotourism". "Ecotourism" increasingly spread worldwide and it may be defined as travel for certain purposes such as survey, seeing-learning relatively undestroyed or undisturbed natural areas, landscape and wild plants and animals as well as present cultural characteristics, if any.

With development of various protection programs which involve with highlighting individual sense of sensibility, it is considered that the natural areas may be protected by application of "sustainable tourism". When applied to tourism, the concept "sustainability" means "arrangement use of tourism without destruction, pollution and undisturbed so that the future generations of tourist may also benefit from them" (Gökçen, 2006: 180,181).

Although ecotourism sometimes is expressed as a type of tourism solely basing on tourism, it is also cited as a type of tourism which does not disturb the environment and does not give harm to the environmental resources and even continuous protection and correct operation of the natural resources used. Among a variety of protection, the mostly widely used is protection of the area to be protected under protection by laws giving it names under different statuses/names such as "natural site area", "national park" or "natural park" (Özgüç, 2011: 178)

Although the protection in Polonezköy started upon official declaration of the village as "national natural park area" in 1994 and "natural site area" in 1995, it has actually started automatically without any planning much earlier before these dates. Enjoying a special status and an effective administration since the beginning, Polonezköy was protected by the resolutions taken by the villagers and administrator. The village people have always had a voice in the administration of the village. Thanks to the administrators they elected among themselves, they had the right to take resolution and implement with respect to all matters in connection with the village.

As a result of this freedom, they established an order to easily survive Polish culture and spent their life in accordance with their traditions. This cultural difference has ensured the village to remain from peripheral effects for long years, protecting their original structure. And the surrounding forest area, which is the property of the village till 1945 has also survived together with the village.

Polonezköy surprises the visitors with its unplanned, but sustainable ecotourism applications. Among them the most fantastic one is its achievement to offer a silent and peaceful environment to the visitors, protecting its natural (forest area surrounding it) and cultural characteristics, although it is very near to a Istanbul, a city with a very difficult and complex daily life and whose natural areas around it has been destroyed quickly. Another surprising characteristics of is that the housing in the village is consisted of short buildings in harmony with the nature, and those newly constructed ones are constructed in accordance with the regional architecture. And again it is also one of the indicators of protection in the village that old village houses, samples of typical Polish architecture, have been carefully protected.

Good administration and sensitive village people having a sense of responsibility has been high effect on the successful protection applications in Polonezköy. Today, as it has always been, the villagers themselves take the resolutions about the village and put them into implementation. People, well educated and organized, are both implementer and follower of the resolutions taken. Thus all development in the village is taken under control to protect the village.

In addition to protection, the controlled development of the tourism activities and minimization of its effects on the environment is also very important in the ecotourism. For this reason, studies for determination and evaluation of the effect of the tourism activities on the surrounding ecosystems are also required. Such determination should not be made with official organizations only, but it should be performed by an approach covering various aspects of the social and economic factors related to the matter. And it requires that tourism sector should have an organization able to assess tourism activities at all levels. However, in order that future development of tourism is "sustainable", the World Tourism Organization established a series of "environmental indicative" criteria to make tourism destinations healthy and thus try to measure whether the tourism areas are sick or exceed the capacity they may meet. In this respect, pilot areas have been selected and nine environmental criteria were tried and developed. These indicators include:

- Protection level of the ground or area;
- Pressure on that area at the peak days of the tourism movement;
- Level of utilization density;
- Development density;
- Measures taken related to waste;
- Level of planning and review;
- Critical "habitats" and eco-systems;
- Satisfaction level of tourist and local people.

As it may be seen, environmental impact assessment to be performed in such an organization, also taking into consideration the interests of the local people in the rural areas, should cover protection of the environment and study of all interactions, positive or negative, of the tourism activities (Gökçen, 2006: 183)

When Polonezköy is assessed on basis of the criteria above:

- **Protection Level of the Ground or Area:** With both its cultural characteristics (its being a Polish village) and natural characteristics (surrounded by forests), it is protected very well by the villagers. The reason is that the villagers are aware of the fact that protection of these two characteristics of the village is an important source of income for them, as they started the boarding business since early 1900 and acted in a conscious way to protect the village as it is. Furthermore, the village was officially taken under protection by declaration of it as "national natural park area" in 1994 and "natural site area" in 1995.
- **Pressure on that Area at the Peak Days of the Tourism Movement:** Saturdays and Sundays are the days when number of visitors in Polonezköy is at its peak. On these days, no pressure or chaos is seen to make it difficult for daily life in the village. The reason is that most facilities have big gardens as well as private car park areas. In this way, no vehicle traffic or parking problem is seen in or around the village. It is not possible to come across vehicles parked on the avenue and streets of the village on these days.
- **Level of Utilization Density (Frequency of Visitors):** when utilization density is assessed by seasons and days; seasonally, as the schools are open in the spring and early summer and people could not go to their summer houses outside Istanbul, Polonezköy becomes attractive for weekends and it maximizes the density. In the winter, density is at its lowest level due to the effect of the cold weather. When it is assessed by days, it is the density increased several times compared to the weekdays, and it is doubled on Mondays when compared with Saturdays, as it has been clear with negotiations made with the owners of the organizations and observations.
- **Ratio of Tourist to Local People on the Peak Days:** Although it is difficult to find out this ratio exactly, it is estimated on basis of both negotiations made with the owners of organizations and observations, that number of tourist becomes three times the local people.
- **Level of Planning and Review:** The reason that Polonezköy is a successful "sustainable" tourism area is its efficient administration. Well educated and well organized, the village people themselves take the resolutions and have the tradition of putting into application all resolutions exactly as they are. They show a different attitude in this respect when compared with other villagers.
- **Satisfaction Level of Tourists and Local People:** *Tourists* leave the village very satisfied with warm interest and kindness shown by the local people, hosted by them as guests that visited their home and service quality they offered (offer of different and delicious food prepared by good materials and at a price not excessive).

Furthermore, the visitors are very pleased to be peaceful in nature and forest, walking, running and performing other sport activities like cycling, swimming in the pools (special for adults and children), sun-bathing and eating-drinking under the trees at the pool side. And they also feel themselves good when walking around village due to the clean appearance and good order they witness, and thus feeling themselves better to be in a clean environment.

One thing that disturbs the visitors is the noise emitted by big trucks carrying sand and gravel when they pass on Cumhuriyet Street.

This facts disturbs both the visitors of the facilities on the said street and the people walking on the route.

Local People: They are aware of the fact that the visitors show interest in the village's culture and natural beauties surrounding it and they make efforts to maintain this interest. As they gain important part of their income from tourism activities, they desire that the interest in the village be kept for long years, leaving it as a heritage to the future generations. For this reason, they act very sensitive for development and spread of tourism activities and they want to progress without making any irreparable mistakes. By this approach, they think they protect the village and fulfill their responsibility against the future generations.

8. THINGS TO BE DONE DURING A DAILY VISIT TO POLONEZKÖY (POLONEZKÖY'E GÜNÜBİRLİK BİR ZİYARETTE YAPILABİLECEKLER)

Accessible by the people living on the Anatolian side in 30 minutes and by those on the European side in 1 hour, Polonezköy meets the visitors in a complete silence. Although it is so near the city, it is very surprising for the visitors that it managed to remain away from the effects of the city. You may make reservation beforehand by telephone or internet to benefit from the accommodation facilities or you may get an idea about what kinds of services are offered by help of the sign board they post at the doors of the facilities. When walking on the silent and peaceful streets of the villages, in contrary to many places frequently encountered in Istanbul, you will not come across anybody at the doors of the facilities or at any place in village to induce you. Built in big gardens with many fruit trees, the facilities offer the visitors services of drinking-eating, resting and sporting opportunities in the green. Food and drink service starts with breakfast, followed by lunch, teatime and dinner. Breakfast options offered by the facilities include village breakfast, open buffet breakfast and, in some boarding houses, home-made pastries. In addition to open buffet breakfast, the boarding houses offer village breakfast (various types of cheese and olive, butter, honey and minimum 4-5 types of home-made jam and egg) and home-made pastries (Polina pastry, pastry with potato and cheese offered in Polina Boarding House), and the hotels offer open buffet breakfast with a rich content.

After the breakfast, you may spend long hours without disturbed (reading in hammock, sleeping, swinging, resting on big cushions, and talking when drinking coffee) and you will not be disturbed with disturbing remarks frequently witnessed in other places such as "anything you want?" or extra fee for long stay.

Among the sport activities in Polonezköy are walking or running on the 5-km walking track (even in the winter) in the forest, by discovering wild birds here and there, cycling on the special track as well as benefiting from other sports such as tennis, football, volleyball, basketball or swimming by making reservation in advance or riding horse on the horse-riding tract of Polonezköy Country Club Hotel.



Figure 10. Start of the walking track
(Şekil 10. Yürüyüş parkuru başlangıcı)



Figure 11. Cycling track
(Şekil 11. Bisiklet parkuru)

For lunch and dinner, restaurants offer very different alternatives (home-made horsd'oeuvre and meals from Polish cuisine) or barbecue type menus in the gardens.

Among the teatime options, you may try special home-made Polonaise cake (Polina Boarding House), cookies and desert as well as Polish type home-made cherry and walnut liquors made with absolute alcohol and vodka (Leonardo Restaurant).

Those curious about the village's history may visit "Aunt Zosia's Memoir House" where the village is reflected from its establishment by documentation and photos; "Pohat Gallery" and "Cultural House" which serves as "Polonezköy Library", hosting many cultural and social activity throughout the year, historical Village Church, the house, now museum, which was visited by Atatürk in 1937, old village mill and old brickyard. Furthermore, "wood-carved sculpture exhibition" in the green in front of the Cultural House also would give you an idea about it.



Figure 12. Woodcarving exhibition in front of the Cultural House
(Şekil 12. Kültür Evi önündeki ağaç oyma sergisi)



Figure 13. Woodcarving exhibition in front Of the Cultural House
(Şekil 13. Kültür Evi önündeki ağaç oyma sergisi)

As an important economic activity in the village, sale of souvenirs is concentrated in the village square; the people visiting the village at the weekend may do the shopping in the market where local food is sold. Furthermore, in the evening hours (when the visitors on their way home), small stalls set at the exits of the village and along the road in the forest offer fresh vegetables, fruits and egg.

9. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS (SONUÇ VE ÖNERİLER)

Polonezköy is the place where the boarding business was made for the first time in Turkey. Today it is an entertainment and resting place near Istanbul, and it is preferred by the Istanbulites for short holidays (generally daily tours or weekend stay) with easy transportation to the downtown, nature in the forest not destroyed yet, different cultural characteristics and many and comfortable accommodation facilities.

Despite of all these positive characteristics of Polonezköy, it is face to face with some problems. One of them is the trucks carrying sand-gravel passing through the village from Şile to downtown in the recent years. While big trucks using the narrow village roads create

dangerous situations, they also create traffic density, noise and visual pollution. Road expansion works as an effort of the concerned authorities to solve the problem are not supported by the villagers as the new road will invade their lands. Instead, they desire that a new road be built for passing of the trucks outside the village. Furthermore, it is also desired that the prohibition preventing the trucks from passing through the village during June, July and August be extended to cover the months of April and May and that the trucks should be completely forbidden to pass through the village on Saturday and Sunday.

Another problem of the village is the intensive investment demand for investment, especially by tourism investors, thanks to the fact that it is declared as tourism region. Such demands are closely followed by the very conscious and well organized villagers and housing construction should allowed provided the characteristics of the village are kept strictly and that construction of buildings to disturb the general structure of the village should be prevented.

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