

# WHAT IS THE THRESHOLD IN URBAN REGENERATION PROJECTS IN THE CONTEXT OF URBAN IDENTITY? THE CASE OF TURKEY

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*Cities are trying to adapt to the rapidly changing global trends by regenerating themselves. Approaches and practices of this regeneration are different in several countries. In big Turkish cities, particularly in the past decade, urban regeneration practices, processes and consequences have sparked several debates. The 'new' gained or converted spaces in the city are also significant in terms of their impacts on urban identity. In this context, this study aims to identify the impacts of urban regeneration, which occurred in historical city centres, on urban identity in the case of Turkey. The study determines general framework of urban regeneration and then defines a conceptual framework of urban identity. It focuses on urban regeneration projects in the case of Turkey. Then, the topic is explored through two case studies which are selected from Turkey, Istanbul and Bursa. The findings of the study indicate that there are several problematic aspects of urban regeneration. The findings also show that urban identity was ignored in urban regeneration projects, which caused significant breaks in the context of physical, cultural, historical and semantic continuity.*

**Key words:** urban regeneration, urban identity, culture, neighbourhood, urban morphology, Turkey.

## INTRODUCTION

Cities are trying to be attuned to the rapidly changing global trends by regenerating themselves. In international forums, such projects of regeneration, their criteria and outcomes are often discussed; however, on the local level, particularly in the developing countries, these aspects are generally neglected. Therefore, such projects sometimes cause socio-cultural and spatial discontinuities in urban spaces. This study emphasizes the significance of urban identity which creates successful places and questions the sustainability of this identity in this process of regeneration. In the global market, cities have become assets to be marketed and in this sense, urban regeneration projects emerge as important opportunities to be utilized. In this context, these practices, which result in significant changes in social, economic and physical space, should be discussed in terms of their effects on urban identity as well.

In this sense, the purpose of this study is to discuss the effects of frequently encountered socio-cultural and morphological discontinuities on these 'new' urban forms in the case of Turkey. The study firstly deals with the concept of urban regeneration. Then, based upon the approaches concerning urban identity, a conceptual study of coding is employed and the methodology is explained. Case studies are discussed and research findings are presented. Finally, debates are introduced to contribute to further studies.

## URBAN REGENERATION IN THE CONTEXT OF URBAN IDENTITY

Recently there has been extensive literature on the concept of urban regeneration and its practical applications. The content of the literature does vary according to the scope and area of the study. But there are some basic principles that are common to most of them. These principles have the following in common: it is a consensus on possible outcomes of regeneration; it includes new paths and methods developed in order to resolve problems in declining urban areas in a coordinated way, and it is a comprehensive and integrated vision and action that is performed to constantly improve economic, physical, social,

and environmental conditions (Urban Regeneration and Bursa Report, 2008). In this context Roberts (2000), puts several reasons for urban regeneration such as: to establish a direct link between physical conditions of a city and its social problems, to redevelop urban areas in accordance with new physical, economic, environmental, and infrastructural systems, to introduce an economic development approach, and to present strategies towards the effective use of urban areas. In parallel with these statements, the reasons for and forms of decay must be defined in order to formulate realistic strategies of urban regeneration. Urban decay can have physical, functional or geographical causes (Keleş, 2003). When urban regeneration is not evaluated in a holistic way, it results in discontinuities in the spatial and social context.

In historical development of urban regeneration, it is observed that the concept was assessed from several perspectives with different concepts concerning the aims and methods of urban regeneration. In this context, between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, urban regeneration was discussed in the framework of 'urban renewal' while in the 1960s and 1970s 'urban improvement' was introduced. Since the

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1990s till today, the concept of 'urban regeneration' has been discussed. In this period, the process of urban regeneration has been shaped not only by the public and private sectors, but also by local governments, non-governmental organizations and several actors from different segments of society in a holistic approach which takes legal, institutional, organizational, monitoring and evaluation processes into consideration, in addition to physical, economic, social and environmental dimensions of the place. In urban regeneration, the opinion on utilization of public interest has become popular (Akkar, 2006). This principle is highlighted in the European Union's Regional Policies (2011), as diversity in cities is related to 'culture, identity, history and heritage'. It is emphasized that 'the core of cities were constituted by local inhabitants'.

Therefore, during the process of urban regeneration in a particular urban area, it is essential to analyse all the codes emphasizing urban culture and place in a precise way; in this sense, the form of intervention and its possible consequences should also be taken into consideration. This holistic approach plays an important role in maintaining the sustainability of urban identities which were city-specific and accumulated in time.

The concept of identity is a complex process and cannot be fabricated (Correa, 1983). Robins and Morley (1997) define the concept of identity as a distinctive characteristic and emphasize that identity is formed 'not through similarities but through differences'. According to Relph (1976), the relationship between a human and a place includes a dimension concerning attachment and the identity of the place). He explains this identity by using three components which are, physical structure, the activities provided and hosted by this structure and the meanings formed by the users in that place, in a particular time. Massey (1995) says that this complex process is also built through people's attachment to other place and through articulation of images of the past to the future, and is formed through several basic characteristics and social integration that help to define people in a group or society (Pol, 2002). Related to this theoretical background of identity, urban identity is a whole built by urban values of environment, history, society, culture, functions and space. In this context, urban identity is an indispensable part of a city which is on the turn of regeneration. Lalli (1992) says that it is possible to state major factors in evaluating urban identity: evaluation, continuity, attachment, recognition and commitment.

In summary, it can be said that urban identity is produced by interaction of factors of nature,

human and built environment in a particular process. Different styles, policies, the use of construction materials and technology, and attitude towards the environment are significant factors in architectural language and identity. Components of identity concerning the human environment are integrated with cultural structure while on the other hand, the built environment also matters in purpose and typologies of use. In this sense, it is necessary to see urban identity from an environmental perspective and to evaluate it in physical, socio-cultural, historical and semantic dimensions. Particularly in historical cities, identity can often be identified via urban space and collective memory that is attached to the place. Morphological structure of the city provides the most convenient text of identity to read, which is based on the inseparable integrity between culture, economy and types and spatial design (Kubat *et al.*, 1994). The above mentioned urban parts inevitably include socio-cultural codes which have built the city. Morphological marks concerning urban space are made up with traces of spatial, socio-cultural and economic memory. Therefore, sustainability of this framework will provide the continuity of mentioned marks in the background. In urban regeneration projects, particularly concerning practices in historical and traditional urban places, the necessity for transferring these codes has gained importance

## URBAN REGENERATION PROJECTS IN TURKEY

Turkey houses heritage both from the East and the West. This multiculturalism also played a significant role in Turkey's distinctive social, cultural and economic structure. Historical changes and accumulations of Turkey resulted in original reflections and representations. The globalisation process has also shaped this change. Although urban regeneration process in Turkey is similar to its counterparts in Europe, there are several differences that stem from distinct socio-cultural and economic structures. These differences caused different consequences.

State policies mostly aimed at improvement of infrastructure and provision of public services during the first years of the Turkish Republic (since 1923). Since the 1950s, due to changes in society, economy and technology, such policies had begun to consider urban aspects. Rapidly changing structure and increasing population of the country, particularly in big cities, caused new types of unplanned settlements. Building of highways brought radical changes in urban morphology. However, since the 1950s, new forms of settlements, such as squatter houses, apartment buildings and mass houses, occurred. There have been several periods from the 1950s

until today in urban regeneration process. These periods have a wide range of transformations including, firstly, the industrialization and economic growth period, secondly liberal economy and globalisation period, and last the cooperation of local governments and the private sector period in which 'regeneration' was defined as strategy (Ataöv and Osmay, 2008). As Türkün (2011) indicates, increasing influence of urban coalition has become dominant since the 2000s. In addition to central and local governments, other actors and institutions have been cooperating with the real estate sector for the use of urban space. These practices have been strongly supported either by semi-private institutions or the private sector such as investors, land owners, consultants and media.

## QUESTIONING THE URBAN IDENTITY THROUGH THE REGENERATION PROJECTS

In this part, the paper aims to consider the impact(s) of urban regeneration projects on urban identity, related to the concepts and processes mentioned above and in the case of Turkey. In order to make this consideration, the methodology is defined as follows.

### Methodology

Although we mention how and to what extent the physical environment affects urban identity while at the same time providing cultural interaction, it is hard to put specific borders between the built, natural, social or perceptual environment. Without doubt, all the components have an effect on each other. In order to analyse and find some specific features of urban identity, the case studies are considered in two phases. The first phase serves to clarify the abstract concept of identity on an urban part scale. The sub-expansions of the concepts have been determined in order to make them tangible, while on the other hand searching for an answer to the question 'which kind of characteristics sustain the urban identity in order to follow it in regeneration projects?'. Parameters of urban identity and its components were analysed. Then these abstract concepts were converted into concrete elements in the case studies. A comparison method was used to evaluate the cases which comprise the second phase. In this comparison method, the cases were analysed before and after the regeneration projects (Table 1). The social reactions and the physical consequences in the case studies were described and then the backgrounds were analysed. Natural, built, perceptual and social environmental data are based on observation, documentation and analysing.

**Description of the Case Studies**

The aim of this paper is to analyse two different urban regeneration projects with their impacts on urban identity. In this context, the case studies were chosen according to their originalities in regeneration projects. The first case, Sulukule is located in the city of Istanbul, which maintains a distinguished position among the metropolises of the world with its location and cultural heritage of thousands of years. Istanbul was chosen as one of the cases where recent urban regeneration projects prominently occurred. One of these projects is The Sulukule Urban Regeneration Project which is located in the historical city centre and caused several disputes and debates concerning social aspects and urban identity. The second case, Doğanbey District is located in the city of Bursa, which has always been one of the prominent cities in Turkey with its geographical, cultural and historical identity. The case of Bursa was chosen because it demonstrates the socio-morphological discontinuity and it is a fine example of the spread of urban regeneration from a metropolis (Istanbul) to Anatolia.

**The Sulukule Urban Regeneration Project, Istanbul: Social Identity Loss**

The Sulukule neighbourhood, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was called Edirnekapi and Sulukule during the Ottoman period. The neighbourhood was home to its Romani inhabitants since the 11<sup>th</sup> Century. Sulukule is also a significant urban area with its natural, historical, cultural and archaeological heritage (Figures 1, 2, 3). Since the conquest of Istanbul (1453), during the Ottoman times, Romani inhabitants of Sulukule engaged in music, dance and entertainment (Göncüoğlu, 2009). In the Republican period, the neighbourhood became famous for its 'entertainment houses'. The general characteristics of Sulukule were preserved until the 1960s (Foggo, 2007). Partial demolition occurred in the 1980s. The entertainment houses were closed down in the 1990s, due to the claims that Romani people were dealing drugs and engaging in prostitution (Somersan, 2007; Kentsel Dönüşüm Bilgi Platformu, 2013). Consequently, approximately 3,000 locals lost their jobs (Kocabaş and Gibson, 2011). Afterwards, 'the area has been denied access to basic municipal services such as transportation, sanitation and education and has been abandoned to its own fate' (Kentsel Dönüşüm Bilgi Platformu, 2013). The neighbourhood has since turned into a slum area. In this period, Sulukule's population decreased from 10,000 to 3,500 (Foggo, 2007),

Table 1. Parameters of urban identity and their consideration in the case studies

Criteria			Case Studies											
			Sulukule Renewal Project						Doğanbey Regeneration Project					
			Before			After			Before			After		
			absent	weak	strong	absent	weak	strong	absent	weak	strong	absent	weak	strong
Physical Dimension	Natural Environment	Climate and flora	x			x			x			x		
		Topography		x			x			x			x	
	Built Environment	Morphology (building island, parcel, street)			x		x				x	x		
		Typology (type, activation pattern, circulation patterns)			x	x					x	x		
		Topology (geometric form)			x	x				x	x			
Meaning and Perceptual Dimension	History	Social environment, historical buildings, continuity			x	x					x		x	
	Aesthetic and perceptual features	Figure-ground, topography, urban relationship, urban density, part-whole relation in urban space			x		x				x	x		
	Meaning	Collective memory, living style, place-attachment, familiarity			x	x					x		x	
Socio-cultural and Functional Dimension	Demographic features	Population, literacy, employment		x			x			x			x	
	Institutional features	Legal, administrative, economic, religious		x		x				x			x	
	Behavioral features	Continuity, social relationships Activities			x	x					x		x	

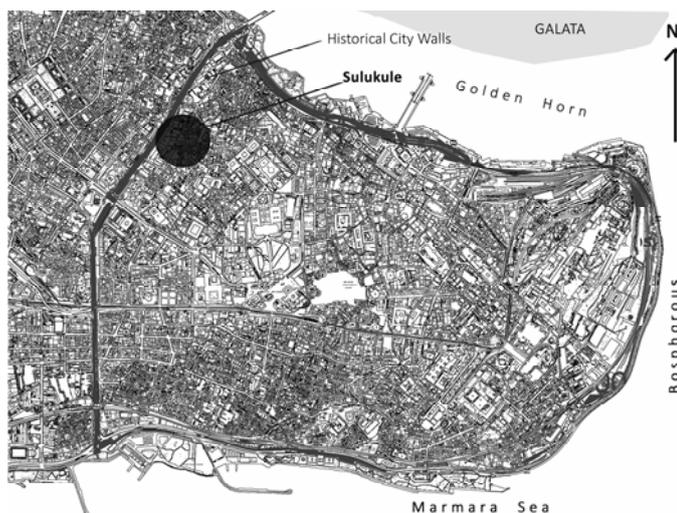


Figure 1. Istanbul city map; Historical city walls and Sulukule. Scheme: İ. Özbek Eren.



Figure 2. Sulukule general view, 2010. Photo: Gökhan Tan. Source: <http://tr.habervesaire.com/haber/1887/>

(Figure 4). The Law 5366 for Renovation, Protection, Cherishing and Use of Worn Historical and Cultural Immovable Properties (issued in 2005) provided the legal basis for the Municipality of Fatih, The Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, and Mass Housing Administration Development of Turkey (TOKI) to sign a joint protocol and to implement the urban regeneration project. The following reason for regeneration was stated: 'the neighbourhoods have turned into slum areas with their deteriorated buildings'. The above mentioned authorities agree on a regeneration project called 'The Neslişah and Hatice Sultan (Sulukule) Neighbourhoods Urban Regeneration Project' in 2006 (UCTEA Press Statement, 2012; Fatih Belediyesi, 2013). The area covers approximately 90,000 m<sup>2</sup> in which there were 12 city blocks, 354 parcels and 22 registered monuments. The project was implemented on 46,091.19 m<sup>2</sup> net area (Islam, 2009).

In October 2006, the Municipality of Fatih authorized expropriating of 12 city blocks. In December 2006, the decision on 'immediate expropriating' was taken and after this, locals in Sulukule and the Chamber of Architects appealed to the court. The expert report

included these statements:

'There is no conservation plan for the neighbourhood, 90% of the area is now UNESCO world heritage site. In this area, construction of 3-4 buildings has been allowed. The original morphology and street regime were changed and not conserved' (Dağlar, 2011).

Despite the objections of local inhabitants, academics, lawyers, non-governmental organizations and international institutions, the project was approved (UCTEA Press Statement, 2012; Sulukule Atölyesi, 2013) which led the formation of 'The Sulukule Platform' and 'Sulukule Association of Advancement of Romani Culture and Solidarity' in 2006. These activists developed an alternative development plan by introducing the slogan 'Another Sulukule is possible' in 2008 (Sulukule Atölyesi, 2013). This alternative project was both compatible with the Law 5366 and the principle of public good containing important values such as 'liveability, participation, value of use, equity, cultural life, conservation and development'. The project suggested regeneration of the neighbourhood without displacement of the locals. Although the project was presented to TOKI, the Municipality of Fatih, councils of conservation and renewal, it

was rejected and not realised (Ince, 2012; Sulukule Atölyesi, 2013). Following that, despite the court decisions and reactions of public opinion, the implementation of the project continued and evictions and demolition began in May 2008.

One of the reasons that locals in Sulukule did not wish to leave the neighbourhood are these gradually strengthened relations with the neighbours and the feeling of attachment. Unit cost of the houses in the area was 3,500-4,500 TL/ m<sup>2</sup> (The Guardian, 2011), however owners were only paid 500 TL/ m<sup>2</sup> and evacuated houses were sold to the new owners who paid 10 times more (Kocabaş and Gibson, 2011). In other words, Romani people had to abandon their houses where they had lived for centuries (Dağlar, 2011). Only 10% of the residents were able to afford payments which will last 15 years. Others, who were unable to pay, were provided mass houses constructed by TOKI which are located 40 km away from the city centre (Kocabaş and Gibson, 2011). The debates on the project primarily focused on Romani inhabitants' networks of relations and the break of continuity within the area (Dinçer, 2009) (Figure 5).



Figure 3. A typical traditional Turkish house.  
Source: Fatih Belediyesi, 2013.



Figure 4. General view before the project.  
<http://www.hkmo.org.tr>



Figure 5. 'New' Sulukule houses from the same perspective in Figure 5, March 2014.  
Photo: İ.Özbek Eren

**Doğanbey Urban Regeneration Project, Bursa: Urban Image Loss**

Bursa, with its geographical, cultural and historical identity, has always been one of the prominent cities in Turkey (Figure 6). Being one of the capitals of the Ottoman Empire, Bursa has always enjoyed its assets such as fertile lands, geography, historical and cultural accumulations, and its location on the historical Silk Road. It was also a commercial centre for the textile industries. During the first years of the Republic, this significance remained unchanged. In the 1960s, the city's population increased in parallel with urbanization processes in Turkey. In accordance with the globalisation process, the 1980s witnessed changes in Bursa's socio-cultural and spatial structure. After the 1970s, there have been significant changes in city's morphology and socio-cultural structure due to industrialization. In 1978, 'Historical, Natural and Archaeological Sites of Bursa' was officially instituted in order to conserve The Bursa Plain from these changes. Despite efforts on city planning in the 1980s, urban sprawl has got out of control (Özbek Eren and Özeke Tökmeci, 2012). The Environmental Plan (with the scale of 1/ 100000) was issued in 1998; it helped to maintain urban development (Ataöv *et al.*, 2011).

In 2005 The Doğanbey Urban Regeneration project area was launched in the neighbourhoods called Doğanbey, Tayakadın, Kiremitçi and Kırcaali, located nearby the historical city centre. The area was designed as Central Business District in 1993 due to its proximity to the historical city centre. Consequently, commercial activities increased; however, the Doğanbey Neighbourhood turned into a slum area within this commercial district (Özbek Eren and Özeke Tökmeci, 2012). Initial preparations for the project began in 2005. Finally on 28.11.2006, The Prime Ministry Mass Housing Development Administration and The Osmangazi Municipality signed a protocol on 'The Doğanbey Urban Regeneration Project'. The neighbourhoods Kiremitçi, Tayakadın, Doğanbey and Kırcaali (282,000 m<sup>2</sup> area) were declared as 'Urban Regeneration Area' (Urban Regeneration and Bursa Report, 2008) (Figures 7, 8). The apparent reasons for urban regeneration were that the area has no functions, it is economically in decline, and the infrastructure is in miserable condition. They are mostly detached buildings with 1-2 floors and gardens. Therefore it is hard to rehabilitate these buildings in accordance with modern housing conditions. In addition, joint-ownership, legal reasons, social problems, housing rights etc. prevented the implementation of the project. Because most of the locals are low-income dwellers, it was also



Figure 6. Bursa city general layout; Historical city centre and the project area. Scheme: İ. Özbek Eren



Figure 7. Tayakadın Neighbourhood before the demolition. Source: Urban Regeneration and Bursa Report, 2008

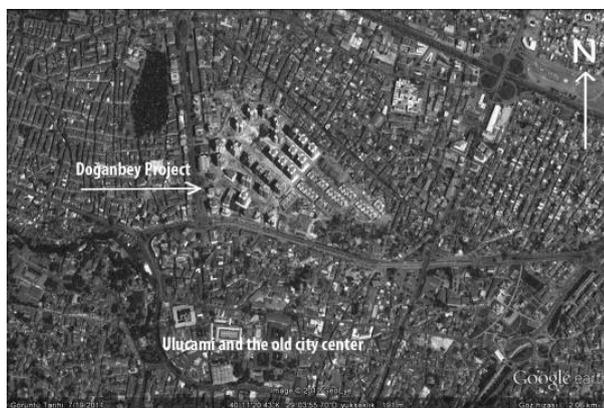


Figure 8. The project area and the morphological transformation, 2012. Source: Adapted from Google Earth.

not possible to regenerate buildings individually (Uyan, 2008). But according to Tosun (2007:136), 'the main reason for urban regeneration projects that are widely observed in the Osmangazi District, is that there is not enough space to implement new housing project as it is one of the oldest areas of settlement in Bursa'.

In the project, construction of 2,500 houses and 50,000 m<sup>2</sup> open spaces were assumed. In 2007, 4,300 title holders agreed on the project and demolitions began (Uyan, 2008; Urban Regeneration and Bursa Report, 2008).

However, there have been several changes in the project. For instance, 23-floor buildings, which were not part of the original plan, were considered. The morphological structure changed 'from 75-100 hectare/person to 800 hectare/person with this new project' (Bursa Mimarlar Odası, 2010). The Doğanbey Project, which led to a change in urban identity, was later regarded 'as a mistake' by the former Minister of Environment and City Planning (Deniz, 2012). In a joint declaration, The Bursa Union of Chambers stated that: 'it is not an urban regeneration but an urban dividing. The

Doğanbey Project is an irreversible mistake in the history of Bursa' (UCTEA Press Statement, 2010) and launched a photography competition with the theme 'TOKI's Smack on the City of Bursa' and discussed 'this disrespect to the city' (Ekinci, 2011) (Figure 9).

### Analysis and the Summarized Results

Following the consideration of the background of both case studies, the impacts of the urban regeneration projects are explained above. In this context, the analysis is based on the comparison of urban identities of the cases, which is conceptualized in Table 1. This comparison involves previous and subsequent characteristics of the case studies and aims to state the impacts of the projects on urban identity. The urban characteristics of the case studies are conceptualized according to the methodology elaborated in the "Methodology" part.

The analysis of the case studies in Table 1 can be summarized briefly as follows:

#### The first case study Sulukule:

Before Sulukule Urban Regeneration Project the region had important potentials physically. The social environment and the historical background had a strong impact on the settlement's morphology and typology. The settlement's morphology had reflected these environmental influences. Due to Sulukule's history, people have a social memory that constitutes the social life and demographic character of the district. Residents and their families had known each other for a long time which provided a rich neighbourhood. These parameters also had a strong influence on the perceptual environment. Social and spatial continuity had constituted a strong image with an active street life. The collective memory among the Romani had a strong meaning for the people, which was the main characteristic of this region. This was not just for the Romani people but also for the city of Istanbul as an important component of its identity. The memories had

either brought the people together or provided a strong image/perception of the city.

Although the project has been going on, the physical and social impacts of the project could be seen either on the district or on people. The 'new' houses are low-layered like the old ones, although they are totally different in terms of pattern, colour and 'sense of place'. The historical urban tissue in Sulukule, original morphology of city blocks, road systems and street orders have been destroyed. Decisions on conservation plans on the larger scale were neglected. Beginning with the legal agreements, the old residents have been forced to go to other places and most of them will not come back to their 'new' houses due to the prices. So the district is a pioneer as a 'different' and 'new' district in the city unlike the older one. Memories which belong not only to the region, but also to the city of Istanbul will be lost. In addition to this social break, principles of conservation in the neighbourhood were not considered. Buildings were constructed taking into consideration only the 'urban rent'. The expert report summarized all these concerns, such as physical changes in morphological structure, city blocks-parcels relations, typology of buildings, ratio of urban space and empty space. The report points out that the neighbourhood not only experienced a social identity loss, but also witnessed the loss of spatial identity. The project also ignored the fact that spatial traces, which were deleted from collective memory, can cause a society's alienation from its own history.

The Sulukule Urban Regeneration Project has caused an urban social identity loss. Romani people in Sulukule first found out about project and future demolitions of their houses from the press (Kocabaş and Gibson, 2011). This situation demonstrates that there is no participation of dwellers in the process. According to Kocabaş and Gibson (2011), the Sulukule Urban Regeneration Project was a catastrophe for local people'. As Uysal (2012)

writes, the case is recorded as 'a cultural turn' in urban studies. In the neighbourhood, despite the destructive confrontation between the project and Romani subculture in terms of cultural sustainability, the government and municipalities defined a 'legitimate urban culture'. It was observed that the Sulukule Urban Regeneration Project, from its approval until its implementation, has not been compatible with the principles which should be considered in urban regeneration and regeneration projects. According to Zukin (1987), the concept of gentrification points out current social, economic and spatial conditions of urban centres which experience the process of restructuring. In this context, it can be said that there is a case of 'gentrification' in Sulukule, caused by the project. But this terminology is not preferred due to the legal background of this term, which has been discussed in the country. Consequently, the implementation of the project caused several breaks in urban way of life. Displacement of locals resulted in significant losses in urban, social, and cultural identity and the break of socio-morphological memory of the city.

#### The second case study Doğanbey:

Before the project, the neighbourhoods were physically rich in terms of urban morphology and typology. The forms of the houses and the street patterns were in harmony either with the rest of the city, or with the historical commercial buildings close to the area. Although the area itself was not defined as a historical site, its closeness to the site area made it a unique place. Some historical buildings in the area, such as mosques or fountains, were also important landmarks that enriched the region's identity. The old neighbours had known each other for a long time and this publicity had also enriched the identity. The region with its neighbourhood, street-building typology, place-attachment or morphological factors gave distinct identity to the region and also affected its perception.



Figure 9. General view from the Historical Clock Tower of The City.  
Photo by İ. Özbek Eren, Şubat 2012.

After the project, front typologies and morphological orders of these new high blocks are totally different from the historical street tissue in the area. In the original structure of the neighbourhood, it was possible to observe historical continuity in terms of street design. However, it seems that these marks vanished after this new project because the area was considered only in a 'new' structure of settlement.

This change is not limited to this urban area, but a new image was also created in Bursa's urban identity. The project resulted in a historical-physical loss of urban identity. Before the project was implemented, the general image of Bursa was limited as a city that spread on the slopes of Uludağ, consisting of similar morphological language. After the project, it is now possible to see these new houses from any spot in the city. The project caused destruction of the street patterns and morphology in the area which used to demonstrate the continuity between the houses with gardens and the historical city centre. Some of the historical buildings were conserved. However, the fact that historical monument is only meaningful when surrounded by spatial and social design was ignored. The buildings have become mere 'objects'. The new area reduced the influence of historical city centre in the silhouette of the city. This new project mostly considered urban rent, rather than historical, morphological and cultural features. The original morphology has changed and this change has become a sociological and environmental threat for historical pattern in the historical city centre. In addition, although title owners were able to afford new houses, traditional relations of neighbourliness were dissolved.

## DISCUSSION

Issues regarding urban regeneration projects in Turkey consist of several different dynamics. For example, as the report prepared by Bursa Chamber of City Planners indicated, the main problems of regeneration projects in Turkey can be summarized as Insufficiency of legislation, perception of the concept only as spatial transformation, inconsistency with planning legislation and upper scale plans, urban segregation, the perception of the concept as bulldozer renewal or as a fashion, negligence of urban identity and the implementation of projects mostly not in the areas of need but in the areas of urban rent' (Urban Regeneration and Bursa Report, 2008). Additionally, settlement density in Turkey is predominantly explained by two ratios, 'Floor Area Ratio' (FAR) and 'Base Area Ratio' (BAR), which causes several problems. Today it is known that urban

regeneration projects can be successful only if they are developed in line with the approaches of strategic planning, cooperative and participative planning. Furthermore, they should include multiple actors and they should be operated by coalitions, consisting of multiple sectors, while feedback processes, also in accordance with the local context, should be anticipated. Regeneration projects should aim to close the gap between economically weak neighbourhoods and the rest of the city (Kocabaş and Gibson, 2011). In this perspective, it could be said that 'ad hoc generated identities of the new physical structures can bring the feeling of selflessness, alienation and other modes of urban pathology' in a longer period (Nedućin *et al.*, 2009:74). Lukić (2011: 56-66) supports this view by saying that the negative effects of gentrification are usually seen as social injustice, since wealthy, usually white, newcomers are recognized as 'improvement to' the neighbourhood, while its 'old' residents must move out on the account of increased rent prices and economic changes', while on the other hand it has positive effects which are better form and image of gentrified areas, and consequently the city centre itself, rising and maintaining attractiveness of a nearby environment, diversity and better quality of facilities, raising cultural and educational level of the population of that neighbourhood, increased standard of living, reduced crime rate, etc.

Urban identity has become significant in the rapidly changing dynamics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in terms of place. It is, just like the cities themselves, built in time, and is a vivid and sustainable feature. In this context, urban regeneration practices are supposed to contribute to vibrant urban way of life, its continuity and the city's future prospects. In such a process, all actors should work in harmony and cooperation. The above mentioned integrity was not achieved so far in urban regeneration projects in Turkey. Consequently, they caused significant breaks/fractures in urban social life and morphology. These experiences should be re-evaluated as learnt lessons for upcoming projects.

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