

## URBAN REGENERATION STRATEGIES IN HISTORICAL CITY CENTER OF BEYSEHIR-KONYA / TURKIYE

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### ABSTRACT

*Regeneration of urban areas revitalizes both physical built environment and socio-economic structure of society by providing for environmental rehabilitation. Generally, comprehensive and integrated visions and actions are used in the resolution of urban problems of the European Cities. Besides used the other regeneration strategies are sustainability and making best use of resources. All of strategies firstly need to have detailed analyses of the urban fabric and simultaneous adaptation of physical, social, economic and environmental realms.*

*This paper is focused on regeneration policies in the historical of Beyşehir (Konya) in the future vision. Although Beyşehir is one of the oldest settlements of Anatolia with physical, cultural and human richness, the original function and socio cultural values of the settlement are getting lost in the entire city scale due to urbanization process. Beyşehir, chronologically hosted several governments, is located in the south east of the Lake Beyşehir. Almost most of cultural heritage have concentrated in the historical city center. Some of them have disappeared today. For this reason, culture-led regeneration approach needs to a comprehensive conservation model. On the other hand, taking into account the wishes and needs of local people, integrated and comprehensive regeneration strategies and policies for historical city texture were studied in "İçeri Şehir" (Inner City Center) Historical District. In this framework, in order to determine social characteristics of local people, a field survey was applied by using a questionnaire and comprehensive interview techniques. SWOT analysis was carried out according to spatial and social data. Finally, the comprehensive urban regeneration policies strategies are developed in the historical city center. In this context, proposed conservation and regeneration policies will guide to existing urban conservation plan regarding revitalizing historical center.*

### INTRODUCTION

Regeneration of urban areas prevents the decline of economic, environmental, social and cultural processes causing the deterioration of physical built environment (Roberts 1999, Roberts & Sykes 2000). Generally, comprehensive and integrated visions and actions are used in the resolution of urban problems of the European Cities. Because the factors of urban regeneration process are becoming in a dynamic and complex context. All of renewal actions aim at creating more sustainable and liveable cities. Especially in many historical cities post-industrial renewal related to culture, tourism and technology are developed. Old urban centers area new politics, strategies and funds have been used for re-utilization from this old central district. Cultural led regeneration and socio-economic improvement strategies are needed for restructuring traditional urban pattern. For this reason, this paper focuses on regeneration strategies and policies in Beyşehir historical city centre which is medium-size city in the Central Anatolia. In this framework a field survey was applied by using a questionnaire and comprehensive interview techniques in order to determine social characteristics of local people. Finally, the comprehensive urban regeneration policies and strategies are developed in the historical city center.

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

According to literature review, urban regeneration includes various definitions which emphasize on different aspects of urban regeneration. Generally, it is defined as “a comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change” (Roberts, 2000). He determined major aims of urban regeneration under five elements following;

- The relationship between the physical conditions of urban space and social deprivation,
- The need to attend to matters of housing and health in urban areas,
- The attractiveness of linking social improvement with economic progress,
- The containment of urban growth,
- The changing role and nature of policy.

In historical context, first of all, urban transformation activities included ‘clearance’, ‘renewal’ and ‘redevelopment’ strategies until the 1940s. Secondly, urban transformation activities included mainly the ‘reconstruction’ strategy in the 1950s. Thirdly, in the 1960s, ‘revitalization’, ‘rehabilitation’ and ‘improvement’ strategies are more modest approaches to urban transformation in terms of the efforts trying to keep the existing inhabitants and property ownership pattern in the target area (Günay, 1991 cited in Duzcu, 2006). The strategy of ‘urban renewal’ has become the major urban transformation strategy with a particular emphasis on the coordination of the separated economic, social and physical aspects of urban policy in the 1970s. Fourthly, ‘urban redevelopment’ could be seen as the main urban transformation strategy in the 1980s. Private sector, instead of central government, became the major actor in the urban redevelopment projects in this period. Also, many partnerships between public and private sectors were established in this period (Roberts, 2000).

Finally, ‘urban regeneration’ has become the fundamental urban policy since the 1990s. Also in this period, the strategic and comprehensive planning approach in urban planning has started to be commonly used in regeneration projects of many cities (Healey, 1997; Carter, 2000; Roberts, 2000). These projects have been implemented to revitalize the declining city centres, old-industrial and harbour sites, and the working-class residential areas and undermined historical heritage sites of cities. Additionally, culture has become an important factor for regeneration. In Turkey urban regeneration has come to agenda especially after the 1980s. During this period, Turkey started to adopt extrovert economic policies with the aim of achieving integration with the global economy (Duzcu, 2006). However, many of urban projects have ignored cultural dimension of urban regeneration.

According to literature review, in recent years, culture and tourism regeneration policies have been evaluated as a regeneration tool and improved as strategic planning approach, like many other urban regeneration projects in historical city centres, such as Ayvalık, Zeyrek, Mudanya and Mersin. These studies focus on the re-use of derelict buildings to highlight the historical character and contribute to the emerging new values after regeneration policies to urban economy. In the regeneration process, the main goal is to increase life quality of local community and to ensure their participation to this process (Aykaç et.al. 2009; Gülersoy et.al. 2009; Galdini, 2005 and Ünlü, 2009).

### ***Culture and Regeneration***

Cities have common economic strategy for attracting capital investment and obtaining an international identity and they are important part of the globalization. The cultures of urban spaces including fashion, architecture, media, food and entertainment are affected by cities (Binay, 2007 cited in Yeoh, 2005). The definition of liveable city can be expressed mixed use, liveability, diversity of social, cultural and commercial activities. Cities are the centre of commerce, creativity and culture. At the same time, they represent tradition, identity, nations and continents. Good cities have different character and identity (Montgomery, 1995).

In European cities, cultural policy has become a basic part of economic and physical regeneration strategies. Importance of cultural life has been increasing as

an important instrument of city marketing and internationalization strategies to attract mobile global capital and more skilled people (Binay, 2007, cited in Bianchini, 1993b). Additionally, Miles and Paddison (2005) state that culture could be used as an effective urban regeneration tool for successful social policy, environmental renewal, social cohesion, health promotion and strength cultural life. Also, culture can be seen as the source of amelioration of urban problems. "The role of culture has assumed unprecedented significance and that its redefinition as a source has enabled it to be used as the means for resolving political as well as socio-economic problems..." (Binay, 2007, cited in Miles and Paddison 2005).

Gradual changing in the role of culture has begun to be seen since 1980s. Local government, arts organizers, workers, companies and chambers (Chamber of Commerce, etc.), educational institutions, social groups, artists coming together have started to create the informal merger around cultural strategies which aims at revitalization of the city. The role of culture, built environment, economic benefits of the arts and cultural industry is defined as the revitalization of the city at the national and international platform. According to Lovatt and O'Connor (1995), it is important point that creativity and skills of people in the city should not be forgotten.

Cultural strategies have played important role on the both economic development and place marketing. In order to put the cities into the prestigious status among others, cities government should take cultural life of urban areas into account for reimagining city. Also, cultural life is important for governments to attract visitors, investors and specialized workers through mixed-use development and diverse cultural activities (Binay, 2007 cited in Mageean, 2000).

Developed strategies for the revitalization of the city centres and open spaces should respond to the changing needs and demands of people. Therefore, it is necessary to understand these strategies how to make maximum use of space for the broad masses and groups and how to edit cultural production, distribution and consumption in the city with the new local and global interaction (Lovatt and O'Connor, 1995).

Cultural projects are symbols of the cities which increase the national and international image of the city. These projects performed as symbols of the rebirth, modernity and innovations, reconciliation and urban renaissance (Binay, 2007 cited in Bianchini, 1993a). They develop global image providing on the city's interaction between global economy and social network (Yeoh, 2005). The advantage of cultural and social activities has an importance in providing successful result in the competition between cities and also creating stimulated city's image (Binay, 2007).

Culture-related investments and policies are used to diversify economic activities in the cities and increase the quality of urban life and the image of the city from the end of 1980's to the early 1990's (Özdemir, 2003). Therefore, it is understood that in order to revitalize the economical and physical structure of the cities, culture-led strategies and projects have gained importance in the revitalization policies.

Three different relationships involving culture and regeneration are identified. These are:

- *Culture-led* regeneration (e.g. high profile, catalyst/engine of regeneration, building-based/re-branding), in which cultural activity is 'the catalyst and engine of regeneration',
- *Cultural* regeneration (e.g. full integration of cultural activity into planning and development), in which cultural activity is 'fully integrated into an area strategy, together with other activities in the environmental, social and economic sphere' and,
- *Culture and* regeneration (e.g. cultural activity is not fully integrated but contributes to regeneration) in which culture is not integrated into the strategy but merely a tool in reaching other targets (Evans, 2001; Blessi, 2007; IFACCA, 2006; Garcia, 2008).

Cultural regeneration aims are determined by Wansborough and Mageean (2000); the first aim of cultural policies is to create accessible public life for all people under equal socio-economic conditions. The second aim is to encourage people for face to face interaction and community involvement through some organization which promote city's image positively. That means; cultural policies aim at making the city more attractive than before f

## CASE STUDY AREA; HISTORICAL CITY CENTER OF BEYŞEHİR-KONYA / TURKEY

Beyşehir is a town which is 75 km far from the city centre of Konya. Beyşehir is located at the south-east of Beyşehir Lake in the Mediterranean region. The settlement lies within the province of Konya but a big part of its boundaries within the Mediterranean region (Figure 1).

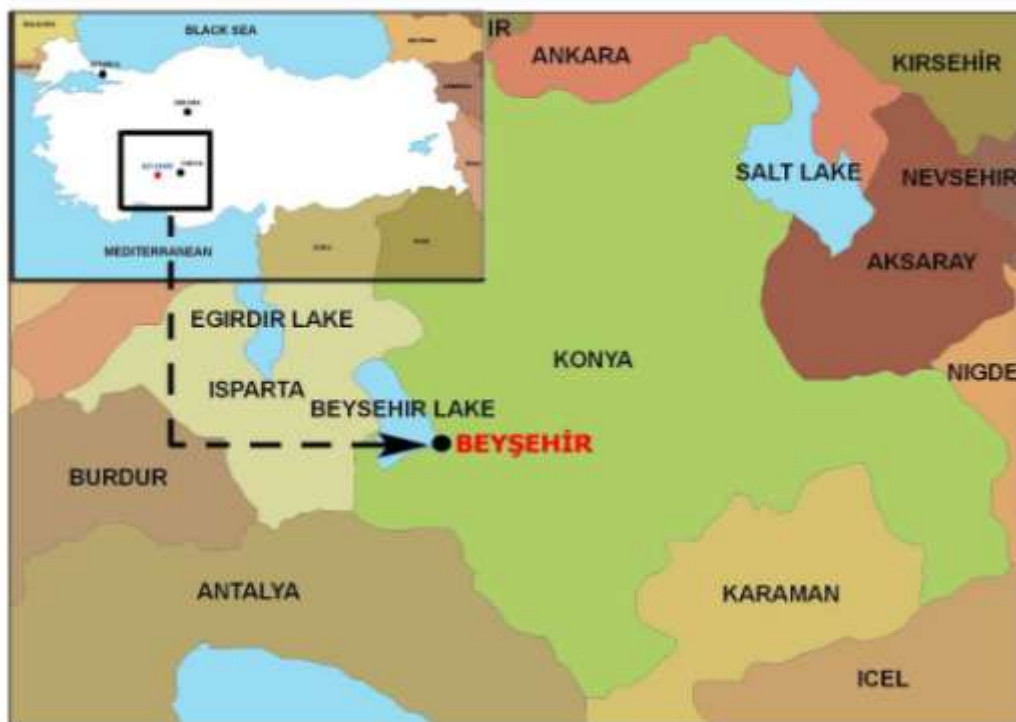


Figure 1. The location of Beyşehir in the Middle Anatolia

## HISTORICAL AND SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF BEYŞEHİR

Beyşehir has become an important city for ages. The history of Beyşehir settlement is dated to 8. century BC (Gürdal 2006). Being have important natural value, Beyşehir have hosted different cultures and civilizations. The region has Neolithic settlements and the most important of them are Çatalhöyük, Suberde, Er Baba and Çukurkent (Muşmal, 2008).

Studies of the surrounding settlements of Beyşehir have shown that the region has been settled in (during) the Neolithic period. Today, the most of the abandoned settlements dated to the Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk and Ottoman period. Beyşehir entered into a multi-state domination in historical periods, such as Hittite (BC 2000), Phrygian (BC 1200), Lydia (BC 700), Roman (BC 120), Seljuk (1071) and Ottoman Empires (1476) (Gürdal, 2006 and Muşmal, 2008).

The Basin of Beyşehir Lake possesses a rich cultural and historical heritage as a result of being used as a settlement for long years by the different civilizations

mentioned above. In the period of Hittite, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk and Ottoman Empires the basin has been the scene of the exclusive historical and cultural artifacts of these civilizations (e.g. Eflatunpınar Memorial, the Monument of Fasıllar, the ancient city of Mithia, etc.). Beyşehir gained its real identity after becoming the summer capital (from where the state was ruled) of the Anatolian Seljuk State and the most important historical and cultural structures at the lakeshore have been built in this period. Kubadabad Palace, Maiden Tower, Beyşehir Castle, Esrefoglu Mosque, Ismail Aka Madrasa, Bazaar, Bath and Kurucesme Han are some of the most important historical artifacts in the zone (Güngör and Arslan, 2003, Gürdal, 2006 and Yavuz Özdemir, 2004). Beyşehir Lake Basin is one of the most important areas of Turkey with its tourism potential.

#### ***Settlement Patterns of Beyşehir in Historical Course***

Beyşehir town center is the largest residential area at the lake shore. The Residential area is divided into two parts by Çarşamba Canal. İçerişehir quarter is the first settlement part of the town which previously surrounded by walls. Cami, Subaşı and Meydan quarters located in İçerişehir within the city's castle are the city's oldest neighborhoods with respect to their organizations (Erdoğan, 1998).

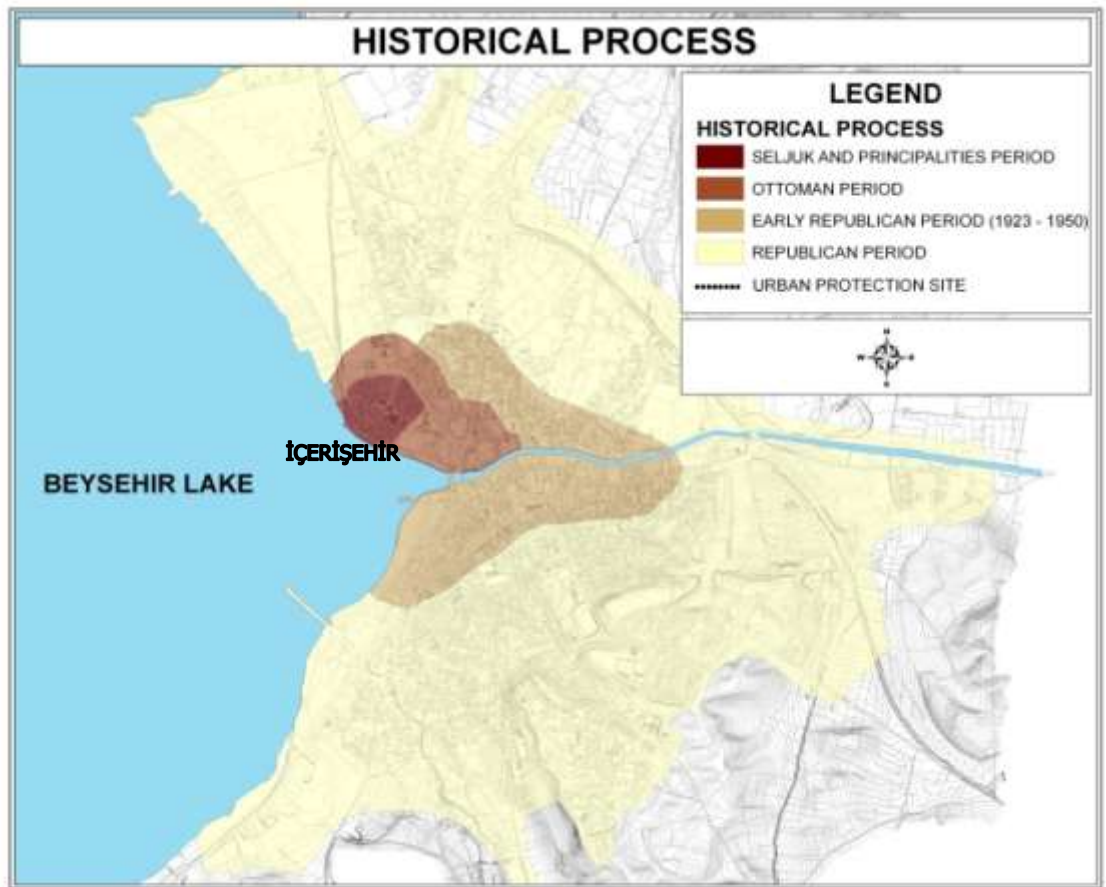


Figure 2. Beyşehir's spatial development in historical process

## **SOCIAL AND SPATIAL ANALYSIS OF BEYŞEHİR**

### ***Urban Planning Studies***

The first development plan in Beyşehir was prepared in 1971 for guiding the development of the city. However, as a result of the rapid development of the city, the plan became insufficient. The second development plan was prepared in 1982. However, this plan was also insufficient because unplanned developments could not answer to requirements of growing industrial development. The plan was revised in

1997 because of these unpredictable rapid changes. Housing and social facilities in various parts of the city were developed. Finally, in 2006 the plan was revised again because of location of housing estate, reorganization of industrial area and transferring plans-maps to computer.

İçerişehir district, which is the case area in this study, is oldest settlement area of the city. The district is approximately 15 hectares and it was announced as “Urban Conservation Area” in 1988. Boundary of urban conservation area was determined in 1992. İçerişehir district which was surrounded by city walls around was a stronghold city, but these walls could stand alone with only a door. Furthermore, Eşrefoğlu Kulliyesi, Bedesten, Büyük Hamam and Taş Medrese are the major examples of monumental architecture that have survived until today. There are also civil architecture examples which maintain their original character (Figure 3). In 2006 Beyşehir Conservation Development Plan was prepared to make İçerişehir as a recreational, commercial and tourism centre.

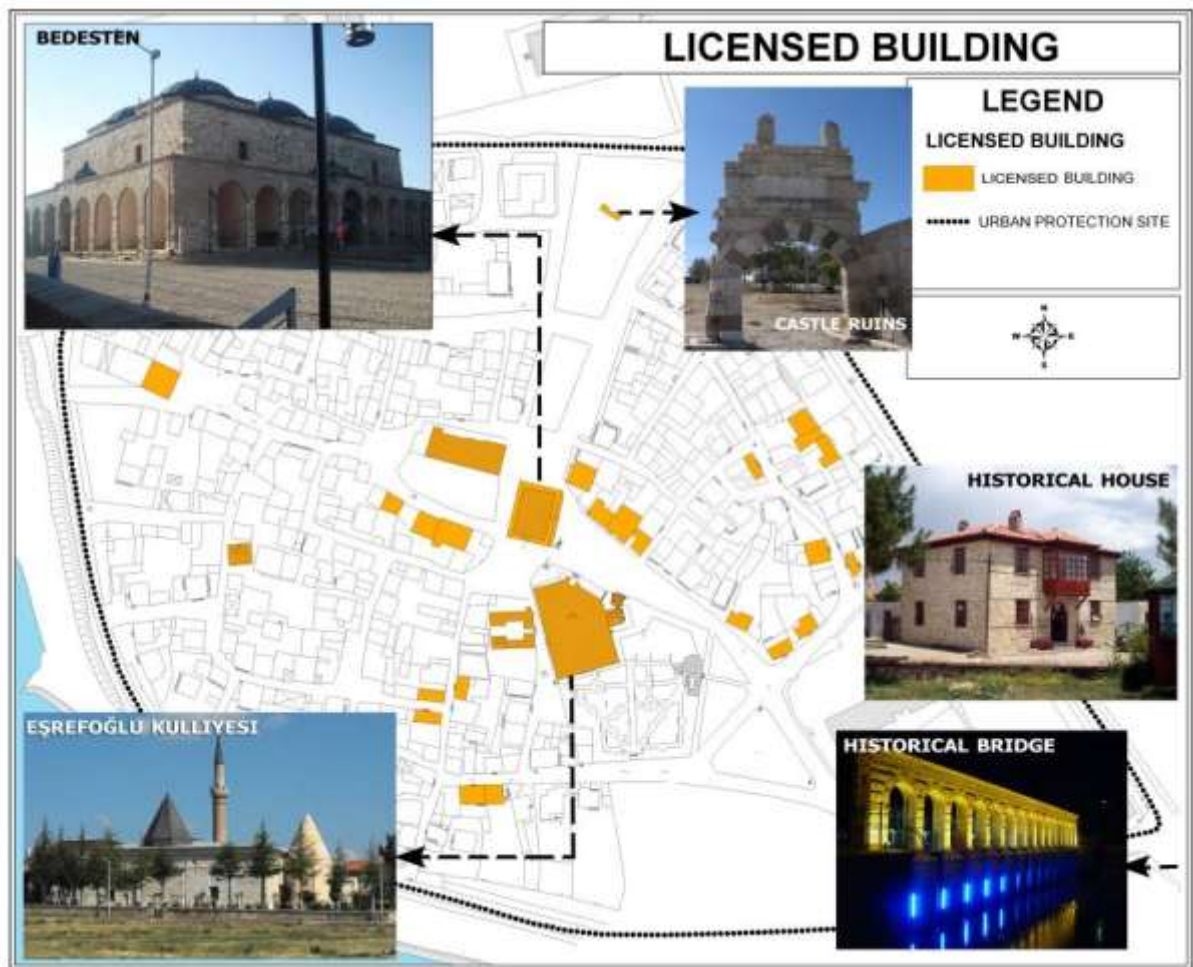


Figure 3. Listed Buildings in İçerişehir District

Eşrefoğlu Kulliyesi, Bedesten, Büyük Hamam and Taş Medrese is located in the center of the area, the official institutions are situated in the south east of the area. Residential areas were located around the historic center (Figure 4). Urban building fabric usually consists of house and auxiliary buildings in the courtyard (Figure 5).





Figure 6 Land Property in İçerişehir District  
Materials in İçerişehir District

Figure 7 Building

Buildings varies in terms of their physical conditions in the area. The physical conditions of buildings in the inner city have been classified as 'poor', 'moderate' and 'good quality' (Figure 8). Also, there are buildings without basement and 1, 2-storey buildings (Figure 9).

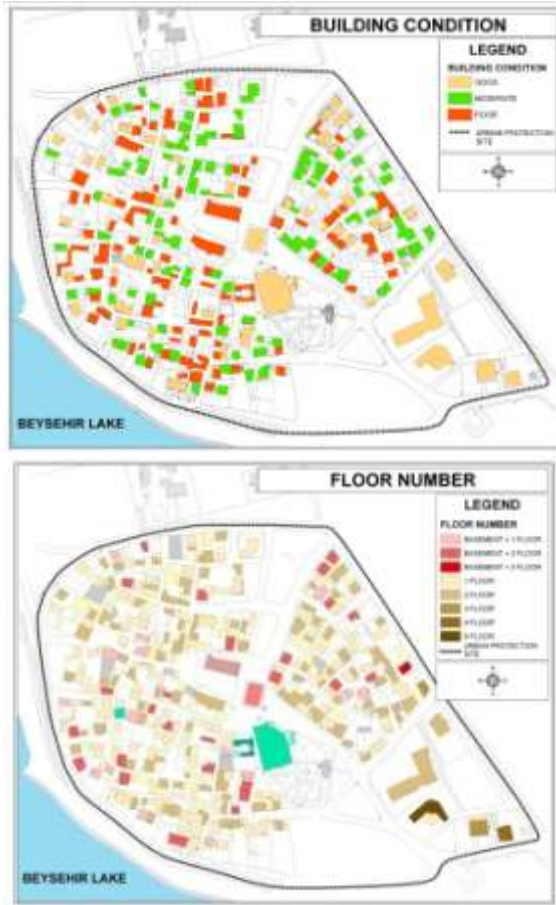


Figure 8 Physical building conditions in İçerişehir District Figure 9 Floor number in İçerişehir District

### Socio-economic structure of İçerişehir

Interviews are performed to determine socio-economic positions, living conditions of local people, and also their thoughts and concerns about urban conservation studies.

51 % of residents are men and most of them (54 %) are over 30 age. The private sector (52 %), retired men (11 %), worker (29 %), and civil servant (8 %) compose majority of the householders' occupational groups. Most of the residents (94 %) are from Beyşehir. 42 % of the women is analphabet while 52 % of them are graduated from elementary school. In addition only 5 % of the women residents are graduated from secondary school. The men's educational background is better than the women. The ratio of analphabet men are less than the women (11 %). 27 % of the men is graduated from secondary school, while 59 % of them are graduated from elementary school. The men are three times more university-educated than the women. The ratio of the working women is at a very low rate (5 %). 47 % of the residents' monthly income are 351-5000 TL, while 10 % of them have no income. Most of them work in Beyşehir (96 %) while there are some people working outside of Beyşehir and also in abroad. 25 % of the families participated in questionnaire have private car. Table 1 refers to the İçerişehir residents' individual and demographic characteristics.

Table 1. İçerişehir residents' individual and demographic characteristics (adapted from Yılmazkent 2006)

Occupation of the householder	Private sector	52 %	Gender	
	Worker	29 %	Labouring	
Civil servant	8 %	Male	Female	
Retired men	11 %	51 %	49 %	
Age group	Over 30 age:	54 %	5%	85%
	Over 50 age:	46 %	Illiterate	42 %
			Elementary	52 %
		Secondary	5 %	11 %
				59 %
				27 %

Characteristic of settled population	Local	94%	High school- University	1%	3%
	Other	6%		Housing time	1-5 years
Income of the householder (TL / month)	No income	10%	6-10 years		13%
	Less than 350 TL	29%	11-20 years		15%
	351-500 TL	47%	21-30 years		10%
	501-750 TL	11%	Over 31 years		50%
	751-1000 TL	1%			
	More than 1000 TL	2%			
Residential Property	House Owner	Tenant			
	91%	9%			
Genuineness of the private car	Yes	No			
	25%	75%			

91 % of local people live in their own houses. Although the houses quality of İçerişehir district are extremely poor, the majority of local people (84 %) are being happy to live there. Most of the residents (84 %) are satisfied with living in Beyşehir. 67 % of residents want to repair and undertake conservation works for their houses, while 33 % of residents do not want these works. 77 % of the residents want to get grant from the central government to restore their houses.

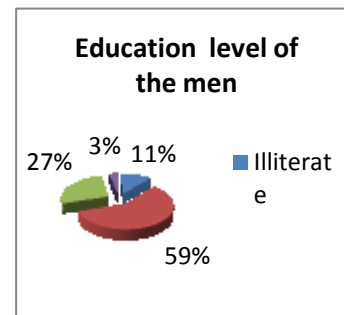
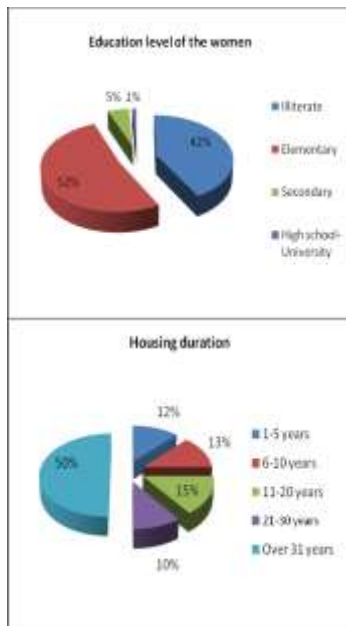


Figure 10. Education level of the women

Figure 11. Education level of the men

Figure 12. Housing duration

Only 27 % of the house ownership want to move different houses. The ratio of residents who want to live in a house improved its living conditions is 47 %. This ratio goes up to 53 % when conservation works could be supported by a good government grant. While 68 % of residents whose houses living conditions are improved prefer to live in the same quarter, very few (10 %) of them are accepted to live in a flat. Moreover, 81 % of the residents have an opinion that the multi-storey housing block (apartment in Turkish) will effect the environment negatively. Although common space in the surrounding is highly insufficient, 86 % of the residents have strong relationships with their neighbors. Table 2 shows SWOT analysis for İçerişehir historical district.

Table 2. SWOT Analysis of İçerişehir District

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
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<p><b>1. Socio-cultural and Economic Dimension</b></p> <p>1.1. Having a rich cultural heritage</p> <p>1.2. The presence of local people in the region</p> <p>1.3. Annually festival arrangements</p> <p>1.4. Public interest to the tourism activities</p> <p><b>2. Spatial Dimension</b></p> <p>2.1. Being a settlement centre during the different civilization periods</p> <p>2.2. Existence of a traditional urban pattern</p> <p><b>3. Environmental Dimension</b></p> <p>3.1. Locating on the Beyşehir lake waterfront</p> <p>3.2. Existence of the sight and view points</p> <p>3.3. Existence of technical infrastructure</p>	<p><b>1. Socio-cultural and Economic Dimension</b></p> <p>1.1. The low level income</p> <p>1.2. The low education level</p> <p>1.3. The lack of women participation in the labour force</p> <p>1.4. The lack of skilled workforce in the labour force</p> <p>1.5. The lack of trade promotion</p> <p>1.6. Poor evaluation of the tourism potential of cultural heritage</p> <p><b>2. Spatial Dimension</b></p> <p>2.1. Physical depreciation</p> <p>2.2. Disfunctional and visual-aesthetic incompatibility</p> <p>2.3. Existence of inharmonious building groups in traditional urban fabric in terms of building storey and the characteristics of facade proportion</p> <p>2.4. Existence of the main road separating the old and new city centre</p> <p>2.5. Lack of the accommodation facilities</p> <p>2.6. Lack of the social facilities</p> <p><b>3. Environmental Dimension</b></p> <p>3.1. Deprivation of waterfront landscape</p> <p>3.2. Under threatened natural life</p> <p>3.3. The proximity to the industries polluting the environment</p>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p>
<p><b>1. Socio-cultural and Economic Dimension</b></p> <p>1.1. The continuity of local people existence in historic centre</p> <p>1.2. Existence of coastal and culture potential as a tool for economic revival</p> <p>1.3. Being strong community relations</p> <p>1.4. Annually festivals arrangements</p> <p><b>2. Spatial Dimension</b></p> <p>2.1. Existence of the “Urban Conservation Site” statute in the settlement</p> <p><b>3. Environmental Dimension</b></p> <p>3.1. Proximity to the areas which have alternative tourism potential</p> <p>3.2. Proximity to the metropolitan cities such as Konya, Ankara and Antalya</p>	<p><b>1. Socio-cultural and Economic Dimension</b></p> <p>1.1. Economic declining and recession</p> <p>1.2. The raising movement desire of the local people to another area</p> <p><b>2. Spatial Dimension</b></p> <p>2.1. Existence of inharmonious building groups in traditional urban fabric in terms of building height and the characteristics of facade proportion</p> <p>2.2. The lack of comprehensive plan concerning conservation and regeneration</p> <p><b>3. Environmental Dimension</b></p> <p>3.1. The lack of coastal arrangements and recreational facilities</p> <p>3.2. The proximity to the industries polluting the environment</p>

## CONCLUSION

Integrated and comprehensive regeneration strategies are needed for revitalization of historical city centre. Urban regeneration projects should contain physical, social, economical and environmental dimensions in the framework strategical plan. Furthermore, all of the stakeholders should be taken into account in regeneration process. However, the social dimension is generally neglected in these projects like this case study area. For this reason, physical renewal process do not achieve aimed targets. Additionally, cultural policies and strategies have been important factors of economic and physical policies in urban regeneration. In

the future, with regard to sustainability, culture-led policies need to be adopted new approaches to collaboration between different actors. These policies must be integrated into broader local development plans including local resources, aspirations and needs. Cultural activities should be evaluated as substantial regeneration tool to attract skilled personnel and capital investment. Also, they should be seen as a tool to enhance city's urban image, quality of life and competitiveness among the other cities.



Figure 13. The framework schema of urban regeneration strategies for Beyşehir Historical Centre

The survey area of Beyşehir historical centre has not only physical problems but also social, economic and environmental problems. The solving of these problems could be achieved in a integrated regeneration process together with producing innovative strategies. It is an important point that community should be represented in these processes. Also, participation of community should be supported in the production of these strategy processes.

**In the participation-oriented process, general strategies may be summarized as following;**

- Culture should be considered in regeneration process (such as a social entrepreneur or a group)
- Culture should be integrated into the comprehensive and strategic planning stage
- A multi-disciplinary project team should be established
- Environmental quality and accessibility should be considered in urban regeneration - design of facilities, public realm and integration with services (e.g. transport, housing)
- The participation of residents/users/local people/other stakeholders should be ensured in all stages of regeneration process.

- The acknowledgement of the contribution of all stakeholders should be obtained.
- As a part of regeneration process, unskilled labour structure should be organized with vocational training programs.
- The historic city awareness should be supported by local community and the other sectors of society.
- Vocational and working programmes should be organized in order to get women to participate into labour market.
- Some of the monumental buildings in historic site have lost their functions or abandoned and also have not been used for their main purpose. These buildings should be transformed functionally in this area which is suggested being oriented to culture and tourism.
- Public buildings which have negative effects on traditional urban fabric should be interfered in terms of building height and the facade proportion.
- Beyşehir Lake waterfront, the historic centre, bridge and new city centre should be evaluated with an integrated approach in urban design process (such as traditional streets could be used as a cultural line-axis).
- Beyşehir wetland is international asset natural heritage and protection area, so the continuity of protection of this area should be ensured in terms of sustainability.
- Beyşehir lake waterfront should be used for recreational facilities.
- The process of urban regeneration which has taken place in Beyşehir should be carried out through social rehabilitation projects which revitalise the study areas (İçerişehir district) both economically and socially by helping small businesses and handcraft.
- The pedestrianization of the old centre should be supported by new parking areas as well as by good public transportation (Figure 13).

To conclude, Beyşehir historic center which losing the original identity will regain it; and also the quality of local people's life will be increased by means of culture-tourism-led regeneration.

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