



Research article

Sustainable Urban Revitalization of Renkli Evler

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ABSTRACT

Projections of current urbanisation trends show urban spaces will need to be multiplied by two between 2000 and 2050 in developed countries. Rapid urbanisation will need new settlements for the growing population. If those new settlements cannot meet the necessities of adequate housing, they will become part of the ongoing global inadequate settlement problem. Dağ Mahallesi, locally known as “Renkli Evler” is one of the inadequate settlements in Kuşadası, Aydın. This research intends to suggest exemplary solution-oriented strategic approach for inadequate settlements such as informal settlements, and slums in the case study of Renkli Evler. Strategies should cover the inhabitant's problems by taking into consideration both social sustainability and environmental necessities. Improving the inhabitant's wellbeing, social integration is one of the key factors. Enhancing the sense of belonging for inhabitants and promoting the communal spaces with the help of acknowledgement of cultural and social values is important to achieve sustainable solutions.

Introduction

Urban revitalisation projects are extensive and holistic development proposals for improving the inhabitants' living space. Moreover, the reason for referring to extensive and holistic approaches in urban revitalization projects lies in their ability to provide development proposals while considering the physical, social, cultural, economic, and environmental aspects. Due to insufficiency of physical and social infrastructure, economic problems, illegal settlement issues, etc., living spaces are becoming unhealthy and risky areas for communities. In order to renew these areas, authorities use various methods. Today the most common and well-known method is called “Urban Regeneration” (UR) because of its comprehensive and holistic manner (Zheng et al., 2014; Couch et al., 2011).

Most urban development projects focus on the physical aspects of living spaces to improve inhabitants' life quality while less attention to other aspects of living such as cultural, health, and social sustainability. On the other hand, due to the urban development approach focusing primarily on physical aspects rather than inclusive solutions to involve inhabitants with considering cultural, economic, and social sustainability aspects as a holistic approach to urban development projects. Unfortunately many such solutions are intended to displace inhabitants' whether willingly or unwillingly. Thus, especially considering social and economic aspects,

existing inhabitants could not continue living in well-developed spaces. However, in recent years it has been understood that focusing on the social side of urban regeneration projects is critical for the ultimate success. Otherwise, social unrest occurs; complaints and demonstrations arise (Uysal, 2012). Now a day, it is realised that every aspect equally has a vital role in achieving success in urban regeneration projects, the definition of urban regeneration projects and at the same time the term of regeneration is changed to urban revitalisation. Thus, the term, urban revitalisation, becomes a holistic approach with physical, social, economic, cultural, etc. aspects to renew or improve the degraded inadequate settlements.

After the 1950s, rapid urbanisation became a serious problem for Turkey due to mechanisation and industrialisation in various fields such as mass production of goods or mechanisation in agriculture. Thus, new opportunities become available in the cities where mass production facilities are located. A population who seeks to benefit from this new opportunity began to migrate from rural to urban areas. When those individuals arrived in cities their primary needs were sheltering. Due to this, new migrants, who were involved in the city's urban fabric later, and still often perceived as outsiders by the established community, to meet their housing needs, used their resources primarily to build structures for

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accommodation. Due to their limited resources, they cannot meet established community urban texture standards with structures for their accommodation. However, inhabitants managed to complete inadequate structures aiming to shelter their basic accommodation needs, settlement emerged with other basic necessity infrastructures such as clean water, proper electricity, black and grey water drainage systems, waste management as well as health care services and education facilities, especially pre-school and primary school. Nonetheless, the established community currently residing here has addressed their necessary needs over the years, either through planned or unplanned means, by developing solutions that cater to their requirements over time. Therefore, the issues of this inadequate settlement, which was later integrated into the urban fabric, are not resolved in the community agenda, either unknowingly or due to indirect reasons. As a result of this unmatched urban fabrication, those new inhabitants, willingly or unintentionally could not actively participate in the city's decision-making processes due to physical or metaphorical barriers separating them from the established community. Thus, separation or discrimination pushes the inhabitants to find suitable solutions to emerged necessities either adequately or inadequately.

Aydın, located at 37°50'53"N 27°50'43"E coordinates of the Aegean Region. Aydın is the 19th biggest city in Turkey according to the census conducted by TÜİK in 2023 (TÜİK, 2023). The city has many historical sites on its borders. Therefore, the city attracts many tourists in different districts throughout the year. Kuşadası, a district in Aydın, which is located in the northwest of the province is 71 km away from Aydın city centre and 95 km away from İzmir city centre and 65 km away from Adnan Menderes International Airport. Kuşadası consists of 23 neighbourhoods and a total area of 264 square kilometres. The population is 66.108 men, and 67.069 women and the total number is 133.177 according to the population census conducted by Turkish Statistical Institute in 2023 (TÜİK, 2023). During the tourist season, this number can occasionally increase up to 5-10 times. Kuşadası is one of Turkey's most important tourism centres and attracts many visitors throughout the year. The historical sites such as Ephesus, Neopolis, Virgin Mary, Zeus Cave and others make Kuşadası a popular destination for international cruise ships and tourists. Also, Kuşadası is one of the well-known holiday towns in Turkey with luxurious branded hotels. Thus, local and foreign tourists contribute significantly to its appeal. Thus, Kuşadası becomes an attraction point for those who would like to visit as a tourist or benefit from opportunities provided by the city such as social, cultural, and economic opportunities.

The rise of tourism in the 1950s, a new employment opportunity began to emerge in Kuşadası. As a result, a population eager to take advantage of the new opportunities began to migrate to Kuşadası. Previously, the city had enough residential space within its walls, but with the increasing population, new areas became necessary. Thus, new settlements began to develop outside the city walls and towards the hills. Thus, today known as Renkli Evler, Hacıfeyzullah Mahallesi (Neighbourhood) emerged as an inadequate settlement. Throughout history, as in all periods, those who started living here were people

who migrated to benefit from the opportunities offered by the city. These individuals, aiming to meet their housing needs, used their resources primarily to build structures for accommodation. Since they integrated into the region's unique social and cultural fabric later, they were often still perceived as outsiders by the established community. They could not actively participate in the city's decision-making processes due to physical or metaphorical barriers separating them from the city. Despite not being an active part of the decision-making group, they still participated in various ways by using their own mechanisms on issues.

The Concept in Question

The idea is to look into the phenomenon of Renkli Evler and its resilience as concept of resistance. In other word the concept in question is:

Renkli Evler: Urban Resilience or Urban Resistance?

Kuşadası, a district of the Aydın province, is an enchanting county to visitors known for its remarkable natural beauty, attracting both local and foreign tourists. The vibrant neighbourhood of Renkli Evler in Kuşadası, Aydın, Turkey, presents a fascinating paradox within the urban fabric; despite all the external forces, Renkli Evler represents a high degree of disobedience of a community which tries to survive stay resilience despite all the external forces. In other words, is Renkli Evler a sign of obedience or disobedience?

Research Methodology and Data Collection Methods

Research Methodology

In order to gain a better understanding of the negative and positive results as well as the impact of Inadequate Settlement Transformation Project on inhabitants, this research performed qualitative and quantitative (mix-method) methods of data collection. Istanbul Kağıthane Slum Upgrading Project as a case study is selected to establish a reliable information structure for research guidelines. As a case study, Istanbul Kağıthane Slum Neighbourhood Transformation Project (SNT) helped to understand the relationship between inhabitants and Non-Governmental Organisations. Thus, this work aimed to develop a deeper understanding of what local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are aimed to publicise about slum neighbourhood transformation projects and what Non-Governmental Organisations already proposed to inadequate settlement's inhabitants, and to what extend the NGO's policies and interventions in SNT projects were successful. Also, this research aimed to employ holistic research on the inadequate settlement inhabitants' opinions regarding the NGO's interventions. It managed to cast clear communication and objective process during the data collection thanks to common language between author and inadequate settlement inhabitants.

Data Collection Methods

The required data for the review and analysis of Istanbul Kağıthane Slum Neighbourhood Project in inadequate settlement neighbourhood were gathered primarily from three sources: (a) Unstructured interviews such as extended conversations which conducts the researcher and the volunteer or welcoming inadequate settlement inhabitants. The research participants include inadequate

settlement inhabitants and neighbourhood government representatives which is locally known as Mukhtar (Muhtar). Interviews are recorded in audio format and transcript by researcher and eliminated unnecessary information during transcription; (b) face to face delivered questionnaires among slum dwellers; (c) secondary sources which were relevant to slum neighbourhood transformation project in Istanbul Kağıthane such as systematic review of published academic journals, articles, reports, documents, plans, laws, and regulations from

governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and private establishes. Reviewed articles were reached primarily in 3 ways of search method; (a) by searching the keywords determined depending on the subject on google scholar; (b) by searching for keywords in the library search engines of various universities such as Istanbul Technical University, Oxford University, Cambridge University, Yıldız Technical University; (c) by reviewing the academic journals written and published on the relevant subject in Turkish and English.

Table 1. A Sample of Data Skim Table for Articles, Kağıthane Case Study Data Skim Table (Developed by Author)

Title of Article	Does the Upgrading Plan Help to Improve Squatter Settlements? Case Study: Kağıthane, Istanbul.
Author/Year/Journal	Fatih Terzi, Fulin Bolen, 2005, Conference: The Dream of a Greater Europe, AESOP Congress At: Vienna
Notes	I found the answers to my questions about implementations in inadequate settlements such as ‘Are those implementations considered the benefit of inhabitants?’ settlements in Turkey, Istanbul Kağıthane case. The article contains valuable and trustable data about slum upgrading projects and processes in Istanbul. The mentioned case study is significant to realize what stages are successful and what stages of implementations are unsuccessful or insufficient to achieve solutions.
Key Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intention of the government towards the informal housing market and financial perspective of the problem. • Evaluation of the housing market and comparison during the various times and shows how slum housing contributed to the market. • Large scale proposals implementation and advertisement on the slum upgrading projects. • Outcomes of slum upgrading projects. • Slum settlements solution system examination.

Interviews with Inhabitants

One of the primary methods of this research and gathering data tool is interviews with inadequate settlement inhabitants. As a native speaker of Turkish, and inadequate settlement inhabitants speak only Turkish, research interviews are conducted and delivered as questionnaires in Turkish language. They include two types of interviews with inhabitants: (a) Semi-structured and open-ended interviews act like daily conversations with inhabitants. During the interview sessions, questions are asked related to their current problems. Also inquired about inhabitants’ opinions regarding slum neighbourhood transformation projects and their household-level data. In this way, planning to organise interview sessions with inadequate settlement inhabitants and Mukhtar. In addition, close-ended questionnaires are also distributed among the inhabitants. At the same time, thanks to the General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship, collecting and analysing the data such as how many people are accommodated in the settlement, age, gender, educational level, economic sectors, income, etc. All interviews were conducted in face-to-face model. Interviews were recorded by transcribing my field notes and reorganising the field notes. Reorganising and filtering the recorded data, assisted the author in pointing and highlighting the existing problems in inadequate settlement.

Inadequate Neighbourhood Settlements Transformation Project Process in Renkli Evler

Hacıfeyzullah Neighbourhood, also locally known as "Renkli Evler" (Colourful Houses), is an inadequate settlement located 500 meters from the international port of Kuşadası which is named as Ege Port and 700 meters from the city centre. Due to the inadequate settlements location (see Figure 2), this settlement is one of the first places noticed by visitors or existing community to Kuşadası.

Prior to the transformation project, the appearance and deficiencies of the structures made it immediately apparent that this settlement was incongruent with the urban fabric and inadequate. The poor appearance led the existing residents to regard the settlement as possessing a negative identity. As this issue began to emerge as a significant problem for Kuşadası identity, it reached an unavoidable point for both local authorities and various institutions and organisations, prompting a decision to address the problem within the city’s identity. Meetings were held between local authorities and residents, represented by the neighbourhood mukhtar (Turkish Muhtar), to discuss the settlement’s issues. These discussions identified postponed or unaddressed problems, and both participants began working collaboratively on solution proposals. However, over time, the proposed solutions were either not implemented or not executed successfully, resulting in a lack of social and cultural sustainability. Consequently,

this prominent Hacifeyzullah neighbourhood, located close to the historic area and in the city centre, continued to exist with its problems and negative identity. In 2018, Hacifeyzullah Neighbourhood resurfaced in the public eye as part of a nationwide project by a private paint company in Turkey. The company, in collaboration with local authorities and local artists, aimed to attract the attention of the residents and involve them in the problem-solving process. This initiative encouraged residents to become active participants of the solution and the relevant process. However, the efforts focused on improving the identity and appearance of the settlement to make it socially acceptable, rather than addressing the primary, more pressing necessities.

The private company promising to solve the issues, along with the local government announcing its collaboration with the company, shared that the problems were resolved, and the project was completed within the estimated timeframe with joint participation from the

parties involved. However, upon examining the implemented project, it is evident that the specific problems addressed are not clearly articulated. Moreover, when reviewing various sources such as photographs, interviews, and information shared on the project by National Geographic magazine, the private company's international website, different architectural blogs, and local newspapers, it is not fully apparent which issues of the inadequate settlement were resolved through sustainable practices. Based on the examined visuals and information, it can be concluded that the project primarily involved simple repairs to the settlement's structures, superficial cleaning of the streets, preparation for painting, and repainting the structures in various colours to alter the old appearance. Nevertheless, there is no accessible information regarding fundamental needs such as access to clean water, wastewater drainage, waste management, education, and healthcare services implementation regarding Renkli Evler or Hacifeyzullah Neighbourhood.

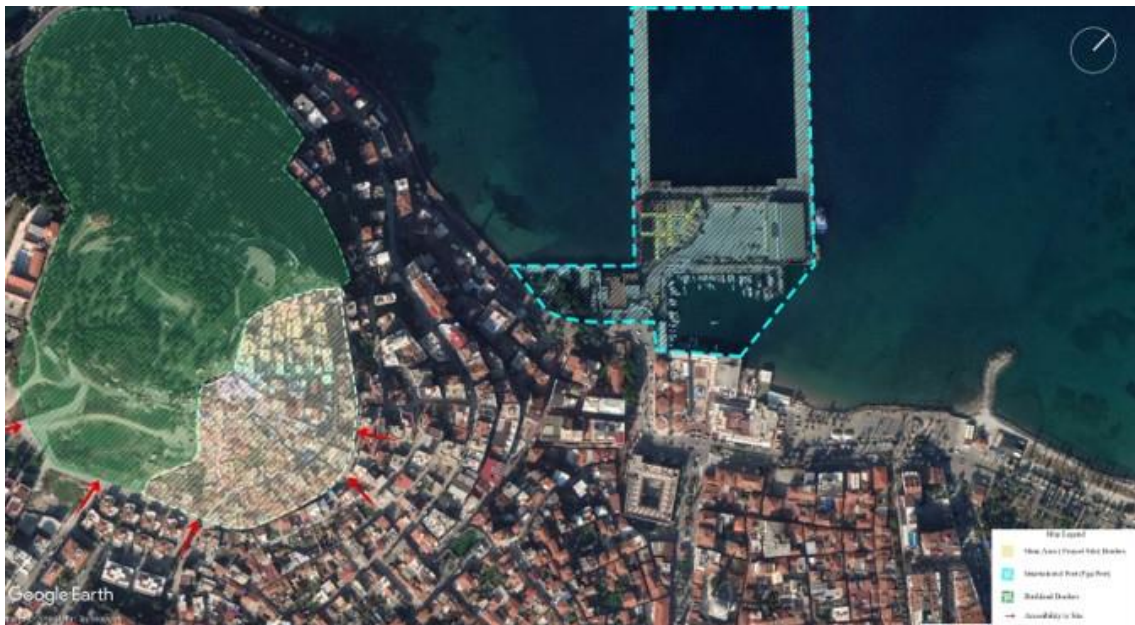


Figure 1. Satellite View & Neighbourhood Location from Google Earth (Developed by Author)



Figure 2. Renkli Evler Before - After Photos. *Jurnalist*, Ö. F. Çınar, 2019, *GZT* (<https://www.gzt.com/jurnalist/kese-dagin-in-renkli-yamaci-3471610>).

Consequently, this approach merely masked the underlying issues, essentially "painting over the problems" without resolving them. Therefore, the efforts following the proposals aimed at changing the negative identity of the settlement and addressing the residents' problems failed to create a comprehensive solution process. Instead of implementing a bottom-up approach, which would have been more appropriate, they adopted a top-down approach to showcase the result, thereby proposing solutions that only superficially addressed the issues.

Results

As mentioned above about the concept in question, Renkli Evler: Urban Resilience or Urban Resistance? The vibrant neighbourhood of Renkli Evler in Kuşadası, Aydın, Turkey, presents a fascinating paradox within the urban fabric; Renkli Evler: Urban Resilience or Urban Resistance. Is it obedience or disobedience?

To respond this concept in question, one must first examine the background of the settlement objectively. Hacifeyzullah Neighbourhood (Renkli Evler) originally emerged organically as an informal settlement. This new settlement, created by newcomers seeking to take advantage of the various opportunities offered by the city, consisted of structures built without any attempt to conform to the city's fabric, driven by the settlers' limited resources and their primary goal of addressing their housing needs. Over time, this organically developed settlement began to reflect the characteristic features of its inhabitants, becoming more visible as a neighbourhood.

Even after it was noticed, this settlement was not brought to the city's agenda directly or indirectly; if it was, the issue was often postponed for the similar reasons. Eventually, the issue became unavoidable and found its place on the city's agenda to discuss necessities of neighbourhood and especially inhabitants. At this point, the aim was to resolve the problems through the initiatives of the neighbourhood residents, local government, and private or public organizations. Initially, workshops held between the local government and neighbourhood residents did not achieve the desired level of solutions.

As these unresolved attempts began to affect not only the identity of the neighbourhood but also the city's identity and urban fabric, civil organizations joined the search for rapid implementations and solutions. Consequently, individuals and organisations seeking attention and benefit proposed solutions in the most rapid and cost-effective manner. Among these proposals, the most effective solution in terms of time and budget management, promising the fastest and noticeable results, was decided to be implemented, encouraging the participation of the neighbourhood residents. This solution led to the neighbourhood being renamed as "Renkli Evler" (Colourful Houses). In the information shared about the outcomes of the Renkli Evler project, the neighbourhood was portrayed as a colourful, hopeful, and vibrant settlement by its residents. Thus, it became recognized as an urban resilience. And considering the examination of Renkli Evler background, evaluation required their texture to compare existing urban texture. Renkli Evler resists conformity to conventional norms. In this organically developed settlement, shaped by the residents according to their aesthetic values derived from their cultural and social

backgrounds, one can observe these influences in the building plans, facade details, and communal areas. Its non uniform aesthetics challenge the surrounding urban landscape, disrupting the monotony of standardized urban architecture. Thus, obedience of this urban settlement inhabitants could be considered as urban resistance in perspective of monotonous standards.

Conclusions

Projections of current urbanisation trends in global, shows urban spaces will need to be multiplied. Rapid urbanisation will need new settlements for the growing population in the cities. If those new settlements cannot meet the necessities of adequate housing, they will become part of the ongoing global inadequate settlement problem.

In the Renkli Evler, Hacifeyzullah Mahallesi, an inadequate settlement in Kuşadası, Aydın, Turkey, it is imperative to adopt a comprehensive, holistic approach to solution and proposals. This approach should not only address the challenges faced by inhabitants but also prioritize their well-being and social integration into the community and urban texture. By enhancing the sense of belonging among residents and promoting communal spaces for urban scale, can create an environment that fosters community cohesion and resilience. Moreover, acknowledging cultural and social values becomes pivotal in achieving sustainable solutions in inadequate settlements due to their experiences of physical or metaphorical discrimination. Therefore, propose a multifaceted strategy that combines infrastructural improvements, community engagement, and policy reforms within improved structures for their housing. Through these concerted efforts, Renkli Evler can transform into a thriving, inclusive neighbourhood that uplifts its residents and contributes positively to the broader urban fabric.

The vibrant neighbourhood of Renkli Evler in Kuşadası, Turkey, presents a paradox within the urban fabric. Hacifeyzullah Mahallesi (Renkli Evler) emerged organically as an informal settlement, later on characterized by its rainbow-coloured houses as a problem-solving implementation according to local government and one of the known global paint companies. These dwellings, though modest, reflect the resilience of their inhabitants.

Even the inhabitants have limited resources for building structures to achieve accommodation needs, inhabitants' adaptive life skills establishing vibrant houses that withstand adversity. The colourful facades even before the proposed and implemented solution, inhabitants tried some personal design touches on the neighbourhood, giving hope, creativity, and a refusal to provide ways to solve problems. Thus, inhabitants establish strong social bonds among them sharing their personal experiences with each other.

Renkli Evler collocation with neighbouring areas emerges spatial tension. This situation challenges the status, prompting questions about authenticity, authenticity and the role of diversity in urban texture.

Is Renkli Evler urban resilience as obedience? Renkli Evler residents' ability to thrive despite adversity, poverty, lack of urban planning for necessities, and marginalisation hints at resilience. It embodies the human spirit's capacity

to adapt skills and find beauty even in challenging circumstances.

Or is Renkli Evler urban resistance as disobedience? At the same time, Renkli Evler resists homogenization and monotony urban texture. Its rebelliousness of architectural and society norms and refusal to mix in with the collocations signal resistance. It stands as a living testament to the power of individual expression within collective spaces.

In conclusion, Renkli Evler (Hacıfeyzullah Mahallesi) as an inadequate settlement, disrupting the sharpness of line between resilience and resistance, invites us to question the essence of urban fabric. Is Renkli Evler

resilient dwellings or a defiant symbol of urban resistance in urban fabric?

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Conflict of Interests

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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