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The role of popular culture in urban consumption: urban sustainability and revitalisation proposals in Gaziantep

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ABSTRACT

Gaziantep is one of Turkey's most geographically and culturally significant cities and has been home to many civilizations since its foundation. The region faces challenges in terms of environmental, social and economic sustainability due to rapidly increasing urbanisation, migratory movements and consumerist lifestyles. In terms of environmental sustainability, uncontrolled construction activity, the loss of green spaces and air pollution are among the issues to be mentioned. In terms of social sustainability, rapid demographic change has altered the fabric of the neighborhood, leading to problems of social cohesion and security. In terms of economic sustainability, some areas are rapidly being devalued by consumer culture, while investment in new development areas is leading to economic imbalances. The aim of this study is to develop solutions for transforming urban sustainability by analyzing the impact of popular culture on the creation of a consumer society. It also aims to analyse the extent to which the lifespan of buildings can be extended by refunctionalising existing buildings, how awareness-raising efforts can be evaluated, what is feasible for the refunctionalisation of buildings and how transformation scenarios can ensure sustainability. The study focuses on the districts of Bahçelievler, Öğretmenevleri and Kavaklık, which are the first preferred areas of Gaziantep in the transition from the traditional structure to the modern city center. As part of the study, a comprehensive literature review was carried out. In addition, spatial analyses were carried out, the past and present situation of the area was documented with photos, and housing plan diagrams were generated. The analyses were carried out using the scenario writing method and interviews. Surveys were conducted with locals and experts and possible scenarios were examined. This study makes an original contribution to the literature on urban sustainability and the impact of popular culture on urbanization by considering ecological, social and economic dimensions together. The methods and scenarios developed in the study are based on the specific case of Gaziantep and include model proposals that can be applied not only at the local level but also to other cities. The results show that converting buildings into student dormitories and residences would be the most sustainable long-term solution for urban development. In this context, the necessity of controlling the consumerist effects of popular culture is emphasized and a broader sustainability perspective is presented. The study has the potential to be applicable not only to Gaziantep but also to other cities with similar sustainability issues.

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Gaziantep; popular culture; urban sustainability; scenario writing method

1. Introduction

Since its emergence in the 1900s, popular culture has spread rapidly through globalisation, digitalization and the media, influencing cultures by becoming a consumer activity. This effect has led to a decrease in the value of old cultural forms in the face of the glamour of new ones. The phenomenon of consumption has become embedded in life, and cities, which reflect the lifestyle, culture and traditions of a society like a mirror, are confronted with problems of sustainability. This has affected the sustainability of cities (Şengül 2001). One of the cities affected by this change is Gaziantep. Gaziantep, located in the South-East Anatolia Region of Turkey, has been home to many

civilizations throughout history and is characterized by its cultural heritage and strategic location. The city, which is located at a point where different social and economic dynamics converge, has experienced significant changes in urban development with its identity as a center of craftsmanship, gastronomy and trade, where traditional and modern structures coexist. These changes are due to the changing demographic structure and consumer culture caused by rapid migration during the modernization process.

In the past, the most popular and first preferred districts of the city were abandoned by their first residents even before they were completed. The districts of Bahçelievler, Öğretmenevleri and Kavaklık are

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among the first districts where mainly families from the upper income groups settled. Families who started to settle in these neighborhoods in the 1960s preferred to leave these areas and move to new neighborhoods as the houses in this area became outdated and new areas were developed. This change has weakened the relationship between the cultural and historical identity of the city and sustainability. Rapidly constructed buildings have caused old neighborhoods and traditional buildings to become dysfunctional (Altın 2015; Sönmez 2018). This poses a significant threat to urban sustainability, as the rapid consumption habits imposed by popular culture transform traditional neighborhoods into abandoned and devalued areas (Koyuncu 2018). While traditional neighborhoods used to have strong community solidarity, consumer culture and urbanization processes have changed this social structure. The change in user profiles in the neighborhoods is weakening the social ties between individuals and causing problems of social cohesion (Çahantınur 2007). In particular, the settlement of new social groups in neighborhoods that have been abandoned by the upper income groups has generated new problems in terms of security and social stability (GBB 2011). Gaziantep was accepted into the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and has great potential for gastronomic tourism. However, instead of sustainable tourism-oriented approaches in urban planning, a policy of expansion based on consumer culture has been pursued (GBB 2023). This situation prevents the economic exploitation of cultural heritage and leads to imbalances in regional development. In particular, the abandonment of old districts in favour of new consumer-oriented buildings makes it more difficult to protect cultural heritage (Gökmen, Koçak, and Atan 2023).

A city gains in value as it matures. For example, districts such as Nişantaşı, Etiler and Bebek in Istanbul have consistently attracted upper-income families since their inception and continue to be favored by the same profile even after their transformation. However, taking into account the devaluation of the old neighborhoods and the change in user profile, it can be assumed that the discourse on the gentrification of cities does not apply to Gaziantep as it matures. This reverse transformation in Gaziantep makes it possible to analyse the effects of popular culture in a unique way. If Gaziantep continues to relocate its old neighborhoods by devaluing other areas, it should be noted that this can lead to consequences such as a lack of sufficient space for growth, which in turn can cause serious sustainability problems in urbanization processes. In this context, Gaziantep was chosen as a city that can provide important implications for the analysis of the effects of popular

culture on urban sustainability. Gaziantep is an important area of research in terms of sustainable urbanization, as old neighborhoods are losing their value and being rapidly disposed of.

From this point of view, the study focuses on the first neighborhoods (Bahçelievler, Öğretmenevleri, Kavaklık), where the upper-income groups settled and then abandoned and lost value. The main objective of the study is to develop solutions for the transformation of urban sustainability by analyzing the impact of popular culture on the creation of a consumer society. It also seeks to analyse the extent to which the lifespan of buildings can be extended by refunctionalising existing buildings, how awareness-raising efforts can be evaluated, what is feasible for the refunctionalisation of buildings and how transformation scenarios can ensure sustainability.

The present study, which stems from a doctoral thesis, contributes to this field by analyzing in depth the relationship between popular culture and urban sustainability, which is lacking in the literature. Furthermore, although there is an extensive literature on the traditional city center of Gaziantep, there are few studies on the modern city center. Therefore, this study is important in order to contribute to the determination of the new functions that will be imposed on the areas within the modern city center, which will change in the near future as a result of urban transformation activities.

In line with the purpose and importance of the study, a literature review on the subject of sustainability and popular culture was initially carried out, housing plans were analyzed and the past and present state of the area was documented with photos. The research applied the scenario writing method and the questionnaire method. The survey includes two different sets of questionnaires. The first set of questionnaires was used with the public and the second set with experts. The first set of questionnaires was carried out with 395 residents who volunteered to take part in the study and aimed to identify the public's perspective on urban sustainability. The second group of questionnaires was conducted with 30 experts to obtain opinions on strategies for the revitalization of the region. When devising the questions, reference was made to popular culture and literature on urban sustainability. The questions for the expert survey were prepared specifically for the region through literature research and SWOT analysis. The questionnaires were evaluated using SPSS AMOS 25.0 software. Three different scenarios were generated for the scenario, and the experts were asked to evaluate these scenarios in terms of their contribution to urban sustainability. The experts indicated that the conversion of the area into student apartments and halls of residence would have the greatest impact on urban sustainability.

2. Popular culture and consumer behavior

Popular culture is a culture that shapes daily life in today's societies. The term "popular" is used by the masses both in the sense of "being popular" and of "belonging to society" (Omay 2022). There are both positive and negative opinions about this concept. Those who think positively about popular culture define this concept as a symbol of democracy and freedom, while those who think negatively believe that it has a destructive and narcotic effect on society. According to Oktay, popular culture is the production of new lifestyles for individuals by those who govern society through certain ideologies (Oktay 2002). However, Fiske (2017) argued that popular culture is not imposed by those in power in society, but rather generated by the public in response to those in power.

The main feature of popular culture is fast consumption. In other words, popular culture is a "throwaway culture". In societies dominated by popular culture, uniformity can be observed in areas such as music, fashion and art (Cosgun 2012). Popular culture can be considered as the dominant culture of a society in different periods. It is the culture of daily life, where the emphasis is on what is fashionable rather than what is prestigious (Milestone and Meyer 2020). While popular culture influenced the masses, the term "mass culture" emerged in the late 19th century. Mass culture encompasses industrial methods and widespread attitudes and behaviours that affect the masses, and is a process that is difficult to escape (Adorno and Bernstein 2020). This process is a production process that lacks creativity and follows certain rules. Individuals become passive consumers of the creations of others, which puts people into a similar order (Fiske 2017).

With the increasing importance of mass media in daily life, traditional thinking has changed, individuals have become more open-minded, and this has generated the profile of the "modern man". The profile of the modern man easily accepts and is open to being deceived and manipulated by mass culture. At the same time, people in modern societies are afraid of being disconnected from the society in which they live, which has reduced individualization. This mass movement has weakened individual imagination and blurred the line between reality and imagination (Aydoğan 2003). Thus, while popular culture is seen as driven by mass culture, the two concepts constantly feed each other (Elçin 2007).

The word consumption is defined in the dictionary as "the use and expenditure of produced or manufactured things" (Atatürk Culture, Language and History Supreme Council 2023). Consumption is associated with the buying and selling of marketed products. Consumption has a continuous, relaxing aspect. The act of consuming lasts from the moment

we start the day to the moment we finish it. It is not possible to live without consuming (Koçak 2017). The phenomenon of consumption has essentially taken on a negative meaning. One of the most important terms defining today's society is "consumer society". Today, production and consumption processes are handled together, and the negativity of the phenomenon of consumption has a more complex integrity (Şengül 2001). The concept of consumption encompasses many social, cultural and economic aspects and has been one of the most important topics of discussion in recent years. Although the economic aspect of consumption seems to dominate, the continuity of consumption cannot be ensured without social and cultural aspects. With the spread of capitalism, the concept of consumption has become increasingly important (Pirgmaier 2020).

Levi-Strauss (2014), who links consumption processes to the capitalist mode of production and the emergence of cities, notes that the large-scale production activities carried out by industrial capitalism to meet people's direct and indirect needs are concentrated in large cities, where consumption takes place. This process has led to the emergence of a consumer society in which an artificial and inhumane mode of existence is imposed.

Over time, popular culture and consumer culture have become closely intertwined. In the capitalist system, the working class sold the goods it produced, and this led to the emergence of a consumer society (Storey 2000). Consumption is not only an economic activity, but also includes elements such as social interaction, the desire for recognition, the elimination of loneliness and the enhancement of status. Shopping, which is an important part of consumer culture, occupies a central place in popular culture. Although people seem to be dissatisfied with consumption, consumption continues and is further propagated by popular culture products (Asiltürk 2019).

With consumer culture influenced by popular culture, not only products but also cultural elements, architecture and even cities are consumed. Today, the increasing intertwining of economic and cultural capital has led to architecture being presented as a consumer object. This situation has not only promoted the culture of consumption, but has also given rise to new lifestyles. Changing production methods and the global economy have led to faster capital movement, the restructuring of cities that have lost their industrial identity, and the emergence of new employment opportunities within the global economic system. Cities have become areas of consumption rather than production (O'Connor and Wynne 2017).

3. Sustainability and urban development

The concept of sustainability has emerged as the world has become more industrialized, with increasing demands for production and consumption. Initially, humans thought that resources were infinite, but since the 1970s, they have begun to realize that this is not the case. The world's ecological balance has deteriorated and major environmental problems have emerged. Many organizations, particularly the United Nations (UN), advocate the need to establish balance with the environment (Pınarcıoğlu and Kanbak 2020).

The main reasons for environmental problems include rapid urbanization, population growth, industrialization, human conflict with nature, air, water, and soil pollution, the deterioration of nitrogen, carbon, water, and mineral balances, global warming, deforestation, landslides, and acid rain (Çakır 2011). In the 20th century, the importance of sustainability, which has become one of the biggest problems, was emphasized and defined by various researchers. Sustainability: It is a social struggle that encompasses issues such as law, urban planning and transportation (Fawcett et al. 2012); it is a concept used to describe the interaction between nature and humans and the relationship between present and future generations (Özmehmet 2008); meeting the needs of the present without compromising the rights of future generations (Gedik 2020). People should know that ecosystem, organism, soil, sea and air resources are not infinite. These resources should be used, but actions that disrupt the ecosystem and biodiversity should be avoided (Yazar 2006). There are a number of strategic examples that can be used as examples of the definition of sustainability. Stockholm (Sweden) with its use of renewable energy (Arslan 2014), Amsterdam (Netherlands) with its circular economy and green roofs and Seferihisar (Turkey) with its Cittaslow movement and environmental policy for local production are exemplary places.

The term sustainable development was first defined by Gro Harlem Brundtland in the report *“Our Common Future”*, published by the United Nations (UN) World Commission on Environment and Development, as follows: “The needs of the present must be met without compromising the needs of future generations” (Brundtland 1987). In this report, sustainable development was based on the concept of need and the idea that technology and social organisations should be limited to protect the environment. Over time, this concept has evolved into a development model that can be achieved by meeting economic, environmental and social needs (Sürücü and Çakır Kiasif 2022). The concept has been defined by various researchers as follows:

- Sustainable development means meeting today's needs and preserving these resources for future generations without damaging natural resources or causing irreversible environmental damage. In the event of the depletion of resources, the damage to the environment should be reduced through recycling activities (Tıraş 2012).
- Sustainable development is defined as ensuring economic development without wasting environmental values and natural resources, taking into account the rights of today and tomorrow (Atıl 2005).

Due to the increase in the productive capacity of cities, the population attracted to cities has increased, which has led to many problems in urban areas. One of the biggest problems faced by cities is overpopulation and the environmental damage caused by population growth (Dokum and Çakır Kiasif 2024). There are many cities in the world with a population of more than five million, and this increase has made it necessary for cities to be sustainable (Karataş and Kılıç 2017). Politicians, city administrators and urban planners who have the authority to make decisions about the city should be able to establish good relationships between the social, economic and cultural environments and have the ability to synthesize these concepts (Çahantınur 2007).

According to Jenks (1996) states that urban development cannot be achieved with standardized formulas. Although there are common views, there is no single solution that is suitable for every city, and solutions should be developed in accordance with the local characteristics of each city to ensure sustainable urban development (Özden, Kantar, and Çınar 2021; Partigöç 2023).

According to a 2018 study by the United Nations (World Urbanization Survey), it is estimated that 68% of the world's population will live in cities by 2050 (UN 2023). It is assumed that this situation will lead to global crises in the long term. To solve these problems, a sustainable economy, social equality and areas with a high quality of life should be generated in cities.

Those who study urban and cultural phenomena believe that the process of urbanization increases the risk of destabilizing market structures. The increase in the number of people migrating from rural to urban areas as a result of urbanization leads to increased socio-economic demands on society (Agboola et al. 2018). The concept of sustainable urban development provides an important understanding to guide this issue. The main objectives of sustainable urbanization are formulated as follows: technological innovations, safe and clean water supply, risk reduction (risk management, natural disaster management), planning for

population growth, protecting/enhancing biodiversity and the ecosystem, preventing disruptions in access to health services, solving nutrition and employment problems, reducing poverty, improving the quality of life, exploring alternative development strategies (Yazar 2006). The role of urban regeneration is important for sustainable urbanization. Urban regeneration plays a critical role in the pursuit of sustainable urbanization by transforming degraded areas into vibrant, inclusive and environmentally sustainable places (Yıldırım and Çakır Kiasif 2022). This transformative endeavor is supported by pioneering policies that connect diverse urban development paradigms, including the green city, and aim to improve the quality of life for residents while addressing ecological challenges. Urban regeneration efforts often combine components from different sectors to foster multi-functional environments that meet the diverse needs of the community. Effective revitalization strategies emphasize the development of human capital by focusing on the education and skill development of local populations (Horbliuk and Dehtiarova 2021). Another important issue for sustainable urbanization is infrastructure reuse. Such practices in urban areas have the potential to improve the quality of life while preserving cultural heritage. It also promotes economic development (Ruocco et al. 2017).

4. Method

This study was designed to examine the effects of popular culture on urban consumption and transformation strategies in the context of sustainability in the districts of Bahçelievler, Öğretmenevleri and Kavaklık in Gaziantep. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used together in the study. Accordingly, an extensive literature review was initially conducted to develop an understanding of the topic. Data collection included a variety of techniques such as survey method, spatial analysis and scenario building method.

The results of the comprehensive literature review to determine ecological, economic and social parameters in sustainable urban development are summarized in table form (Table 1).

During the data collection process, the opinions of academics based in the city were used to define the research sample. The academics felt it would be appropriate to gather the opinions of people in the region and experts who know the city well. It was therefore decided to include both residents of the three regions and experts in the study.

The survey of the local population aims to determine the participants' perceptions of urban sustainability and their views on the transformation of the neighborhoods. To generate the questionnaire,

various documents were evaluated, including photos, documents, regional plan diagrams and historical records of the region's development. The questionnaire was developed based on existing literature and survey scales of similar studies (Can 2018). The questionnaire consists of three sustainability-related dimensions and a 38-item scale covering urban consumption, residential preference, and transformation policies. The expert questionnaire was prepared to evaluate the proposed transformation scenarios and determine the most appropriate sustainability model. In order to prepare a questionnaire for the data to be collected from the experts, the advantages and disadvantages of the region were determined based on the observations made at different times. In this sense, a SWOT analysis was carried out (Table 2). Accordingly, the questionnaire for the experts consists of a 22-part scale on the urban sustainability of Gaziantep. To ensure the content validity of the questionnaires, the opinions of two academics and an urban planning expert were sought.

As a result of this analysis, scenarios were generated to emphasize the strengths and improve the weaknesses of the region. A study similar to the present study was conducted by Çahantimur for the city of Bursa. Çahantimur determined the new functions to be assigned in the event of the conversion of areas in the traditional city of Bursa using the scenario writing method (Çahantimur 2007). In 1982, Becker and his colleagues defined a scenario as a tool that describes the events between the conditions that are likely to occur in the future and the current conditions (Becker 1982). Furthermore, scenario writing can be described as a tool that enables the people who run society to act more quickly, to make predictions about possible future scenarios and to calculate possible future situations by considering various alternatives. The purpose of scenario writing is to prepare in advance for situations that may arise in the future, to uncover unknown factors and to make predictions about the future (Karadağ and Kayabaşı 2013). Current and future situations are inherently uncertain and lead to potential difficulties. Therefore, it is more realistic for those managing the society to use flexible scenarios and analyses instead of unchangeable strategies (Bağdigen 2007). The purpose of developing scenarios in this study is to ensure the appropriate and effective implementation of planned transformation and renewal initiatives aimed at revitalizing these areas in a short period of time.

Three scenarios were developed that correspond to the physical and social structure of the existing neighborhoods, the urban development plans of

Table 1. Determining ecological, economic and social parameters in sustainable urban development.

ENVIRONMENTAL	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL	SOURCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimising the Use of Natural Resources - Using Recyclable Materials - Ensuring Recycling of Environmental Wastes - Utilisation of Renewable Energy Sources - Biodiversity Conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balancing the Relationship between Cost and Environmental Benefit - Ensuring Economic Sustainability through Efficient and Controlled Use of Natural Resources - Production of Multilateral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social Cohesion - Quality of Life - Social Equality and Diversity - Provision of Social Infrastructure - Availability of Job Opportunities - Accessibility to All - Ability to Meet Psychological Needs - Fairness in Income Distribution - Gender Equality - Welfare and Equality in Social Services (Housing, Education, Health, Security Services and Recreation Activities) - Social Participation - Respect and Justice between Cultural Identities 	(Ertin Tezgör 2021)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection of Ecosystem Functions - Ensuring Biodiversity - Protection of Natural Resources - Renewable Energy Sources - Recycling - Waste Management - Using Renewable Resources - Avoidance of Excessive Resource Utilisation - Do not allow non-renewable resources to be depleted - Transformation of Waste - Ensuring the Protection of Ecosystem Elements - Resource and Ecosystem Protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gross National Income per Capita - Employment - Physical Capital Quality and Continuity (Production of Goods and Services, Investment) - Sectoral (Agriculture, Industry, Service) and Functional (Production, Consumption, Distribution (Trade, Export)) Continuity - Producing Goods and Services in an Organised Way - Maintaining the External Debt Level - Supporting Agricultural and Industrial Production - Long-term availability of resources and low utilisation costs - Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entitlement to the same rights, including education and health - Providing Social Services Equally and Regularly - Fulfilment of Basic Needs - Increase in Social Welfare - Ensuring Equality and Security - Planning Strategies for Ensuring Human Health, Comfort and Protection of Social and Cultural Values - Equality and Environmental Justice - Improvement of Quality of Life - Solution of Employment and Nutrition Problems - Integrated Development Policies - Environment and Society Oriented Urbanisation Policies 	(Sürücü andÇakır Kiasif 2022) (Gökmen, Koçak, and Atan 2023)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growth Control and Land Use Planning - Environmental Protection and Restoration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community-Oriented New Urban Coalitions - Partnership Mechanisms - Public Participation - Strong Economy - Sustainable Economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equality and Environmental Justice - Improvement of Quality of Life - Integrated Development Policies - Environment and Society Oriented Urbanisation Policies 	(Dikmen and Toruk 2017) (Tosun 2009) (Günay 2010)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of Renewable Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing Urban Poverty-Deprivation and Violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social Equality and Participation - City Facilitating Pedestrian Oriented Movement 	(Kaya and Susan Taylan 2020)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection of Agriculture and Forest Areas - Protection of Water Resources - Preventing Fossil Fuel Consumption - Carbon Footprint Reduction - Environmental Sustainable Use of Renewable and Non-Renewable Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be able to use economic resources in the long term, to take measures for this purpose and to minimise the costs of resource utilisation. - Incentivising Ethical Investment and Procurement Policies - Supporting Local Economies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political-Administrative Structures and Democratic Organisations - Play a Co-Centred Role, Broad Participatory and Collaborative Planning Models - Equal Enjoyment of Fundamental Human Rights and Income Distribution on the Basis of Social Justice Principle - Protecting and Improving the Quality of Life of Communities - Equality - Freedom - Economic Prosperity - Education - Health - Security 	(Nazik 2021)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resource Utilisation Levels and Their Self-Renewal Rate of Resources - Amount of Waste Generated During Production Processes and Products Produced - Nature's tolerance level for these wastes - Time of Natural Resources - To Ensure Its Continuous Presence - Environmental Sensitivity - Use of natural resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sectoral and Functional Capital (Agriculture, Industry, Production, Consumption) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fairness in income distribution - Social Services - Social Justice 	(Baran 2015)

Gaziantep and the literature on sustainable urbanization. Experts were asked to evaluate each scenario in terms of the environment, economy, social aspects and feasibility. The scenarios developed in this direction are presented below.

4.1. Scenario 1

The first scenario was designed as a nursing home, rehabilitation center and care home for the elderly. The reasons why this function is considered suitable for this area:

- The fact that a small number of people belonging to the first user profile still live in the area and the average age is high allows people to continue their lives in peace without leaving their neighborhood,
- The architectural character of the buildings ensures convenience in terms of transformation,
- The calm and peaceful nature of the region,
- The view of the area.

4.2. Scenario 2

Museums, cultural centers and exhibition spaces are proposed in the second scenario. The reasons why this function is considered appropriate for this region:

- The fact that the region is the first area to be opened to settlement outside the traditional structure of Gaziantep,
- Proximity to the cultural route,
- Proximity to Gaziantep Castle,
- Presence of cultural heritage structures in the region,
- Presence of examples of quality housing from the period when they were built.

4.3. Scenario 3

In the third scenario, student houses and dormitories are proposed. Reasons why this function is considered appropriate for this area:

- Reduction of the square footage through urban redesign,

- The buildings are suitable for individual living due to their small square footage,
- The presence of four universities in Gaziantep and easy access to these universities and the city center,
- The area is on a public transport route.

The local community sample consists of 395 respondents living in the districts of Bahçelievler, Öğretmenevleri and Kavaklık in Gaziantep. According to Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality (GBB 2023), approximately 47,000 people live in the three

neighborhoods included in the study. A representative sample size with a 5% margin of error at a 95% confidence interval was calculated for these neighborhoods, and it was determined that at least 382 participants would suffice (Krejcie and Morgan 1970). Therefore, the number of participants represents the valid sample size. The method of stratified random sampling was used because people from different socio-economic groups live in the neighborhoods. With this sampling method, the views of the different groups were represented in a balanced way. The expert sample consists of 30 participants who are experts in the fields of urbanization, urban planning and sustainability in Gaziantep. For studies based on expert opinions, a sample size of 15–30 people is generally considered sufficient to provide meaningful and detailed assessments (Guest, Bunce, and Johnson 2006; Can 2018). Therefore, 30 experts represent the valid sample size for this study. The experts were identified using a targeted sampling method and selected from the professional groups that directly contribute to urban transformation processes.

The SPSS 25.0 package programme was used to evaluate the data obtained. Before the main questionnaire was generated, a pilot study was conducted with 70 participants and the internal consistency of the scale was tested. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be highly reliable at 0.94. The confirmatory factor analysis confirmed that the three-factor structure of the scale, which includes ecological, economic and social sustainability, is valid.

The study was conducted as part of a doctoral thesis and all ethical approvals were obtained in accordance with the scope of the study. Participation in the study was voluntary. Participants were informed that their data would be used for academic purposes only. The questionnaires were completed anonymously, respecting the principle of personal data protection.

5. Findings

5.1. General characteristics of Gaziantep

Gaziantep is located at the western end of the Southeastern Anatolia Region, at the interface between the Mediterranean Region and Southeastern Anatolia. Its total area is 6,222 km², which is 1.9% of the area of Turkey. The city consists of nine districts connected to it: Araban, İslahiye, Karkamış, Nizip, Oğuzeli, Nurdağı, Şahinbey, Şehitkamil and Yavuzeli (Altın 2015). Since Gaziantep is located between Eastern Anatolia and the Mediterranean regions, it has transitional climatic characteristics. Although it generally exhibits Mediterranean climate characteristics, it also exhibits continental climate characteristics from time to time due to its proximity to Eastern Anatolia. The natural

Table 2. SWOT analysis.

	BAHCELIEVLER-KAVAKLIK-OGRETMEN EVLERİ			
	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
TRANSPORT	-Suitability for public transport	-Traffic problem -Parking problem	-Easy accessibility	-Difficulty of intervention in emergency situations -Elderly, disabled people cannot park in front of their residences
LOCATION	-Proximity to the city centre -Proximity to historical texture	-Noise problem -Not being preferred by the first user profile despite its proximity to the historical texture	-Easy access by public transport -Easy access to historical sites	-Problems caused by overcrowding -Loss of attractiveness of the region for living
SAFETY	-Safe accommodation in the remaining dwellings with a small first user profile	-Security problems due to the change of user profile	-Continuation of neighbourly relations	-Security of life and property is under threat
GREEN AREA	-Abundance of green areas due to the parks in the neighbourhood	-Noise problem due to picnics in parks	-Scenic-rich housing	-Pollution of the environment by picnic users
SOCIAL AREA	-Having one of the biggest parks	-Lack of social areas in the region	-Socialisation of people	-Unattractiveness of the region
AIR POLLUTION	-Starting the use of natural fuels in the region, albeit to a lesser extent	-Continued use of coal for heating	-Reduction in air pollution with the use of natural fuel	-Pollution due to coal use
BUILDING CONDITION	-Solid construction of dwellings at the time of construction -Horizontal architecture	-Completion of the service life of most of the buildings -Low number of storeys in residential buildings	-Resilience to natural disasters -Buildings respectful to nature and environment	-Damage in case of any natural disaster -Fewer people living due to fewer floors
BUILDING M2	-Adequate square metres at the time of construction	-Square metres generally remain small compared to the city	-Being a reason for preference at the time of construction	-Not preferred by first users

vegetation consists of marquis and there are forests in the city. However, these forests have been destroyed over time and efforts are being made today to reforest the mountainous areas with sustainable environmental concerns in mind (GBB 2023). The first settlement in Gaziantep is thought to date back to the Paleolithic Age (10,000–7,000 BC). Remains of Chalcolithic and Neolithic settlements have also been found during excavations at Antep Sakçagöz (Kulakoglu 2005). Excavations in the castle of Antep revealed that the history of the city goes back to 5600 BC and that there was uninterrupted settlement until 1000 BC (Sönmez 2018).

5.1.1. Urbanisation process in Gaziantep

Antep is not found in early research and it is assumed that the first settlement of the city was in Dülük and the surrounding area (Kuban 2010). In history, Antep was first mentioned as Ayıntab in the Vakayinamesi of Mateos of Urfa in 1124 (Sönmez 2018). In most Islamic cities, buildings such as mosques, masjids and tombs were built before a settlement was established, and the administration of these areas was entrusted to clergy. In other words, when a neighbourhood was established, religious buildings were built first and then the neighbourhood was established. Although no exact information can be obtained about the mosque and masjid buildings, it is thought that the inscription of the Ömeriye Mosque dates back to the 12th century, indicating that there was life around the castle at that time (Kuyucu 2019). It can be said that the rule over the city changed hands many times until the

Ottoman period. In the sources from the late 14th and early 15th century, Antep is described as a city with beautiful vineyards and gardens (Alpargu 1999). When examining the district, it can be seen that Antep was located in and around the castle until the 18th century. It is thought that this was due to people's need for security and that living around the castle, where the city's defences were organised, offered them security and peace (Kuyucu 2019). In 1920, Abadi and Sarafian drew a sketch of the city and provided information about its boundaries. From the mid-19th century, American missionaries built numerous buildings in the city (American Hospital, Cilicia College, Middle Turkey College), which influenced the design of the city. Until the early 20th century, the city continued to be located in and around the castle, its borders hardly changing, but then it began to expand (Koyuncu 2018).

The first urban plan for Gaziantep was prepared by a German professor, Hermann Jansen, between 1935 and 1938. At the time the plan was prepared, the city had a population of around 50,000, and the plan predicted that the future population would be between 150,000 and 200,000. This plan was the most comprehensive plan for the city to date. The plan provided the first indications that the city would develop into an industrial city over time, and industrial areas were planned along the streets of Aleppo and Nizip, which are important transport hubs for the city (Yenice and Karadayı Yenice 2018). Alleben and its surroundings, which are included in the research area, were considered as green areas

and this area has been preserved as a green area until today. At that time, modern buildings were built by families belonging to the upper income group, and these buildings were mainly built in the west of the city (Atatürk Boulevard and İnönü Street), and some of them were built in place of old buildings that had been demolished. Some of these new buildings retained traditional stone materials, while others did not use these materials. Since the migration from the countryside to the city did not begin between 1923 and 1950, it cannot be said that modern urbanization began with this plan (Koyuncu 2018). From the 1950s onwards, the city began to experience intensive immigration, creating the need for new housing and jobs. Hermann Jansen's 1938 plan was insufficient and a second plan was needed. The second Gaziantep zoning plan was generated in 1950 by architects Hamit Kemali Söylemezoğlu and Kemal Ahmet Aru. The main axes of the previous plan by Hermann Jansen were retained. With this plan, the city center was modernized, Gaziler Caddesi was renewed, new streets were built in the area and the old city area was adapted for car traffic (GBB 2011). During the same period, when Ordu Street was opened up and connected to Atatürk Street, families from the higher income bracket also began to favor Kavaklık as a residential area. Between 1960 and 1975, the districts of Bahçelievler, Öğretmenevleri and Kavaklık, which are the subject of this study, began to develop in a planned manner. This preferential treatment also led to the city's development towards the southwest. It can therefore be said that the city began to segregate itself according to income groups for the first time during these years (Ay 2001).

In 1973, the third Gaziantep zoning plan was drawn up by Zühtü Can, who won the competition organized by the General Directorate of İller Bank. This plan envisaged that the city would become industrialized over time. It designated the south-eastern part of the city as an organized industrial zone and provided for the development of small industries in the eastern part of the city (Ay 2001). During this period, the city grew in almost all directions, leading to urban sprawl (Koyuncu 2018).

Due to the city's need for expansion, the fourth master plan for Gaziantep was drawn up by Hilmi Oğuz Aldan in 1990. The target year for this plan was set as 2005, and it was predicted that the population would reach 1,800,000 by that time. In this plan, the city's planned development area was increased from 8,000 hectares to 21,000 hectares. This plan, which foresaw a gradual increase in the city's population, designated Kızıllıhisar in the north and İbrahimli in the south as development areas to meet the city's housing needs. The 1990 Hilmi Oğuz Aldan plan made decisions

for industrial development while improving urban planning (GBB 2011).

After the Hilmi Oğuz Aldan plan, this plan for Gaziantep was revised several times. In 2011, a land use plan was drawn up by the Gaziantep city administration and awarded to the company Egeplan Planning Ltd. However, for reasons such as the Syrian civil war, migration and changes to administrative boundaries, the 2011 plan was revised and the Gaziantep Province 2045 Environmental Plan was generated. According to this plan, the city's population is predicted to reach 4,150,000 by 2045. The main objectives of this revision are to designate urban development areas, to meet the needs of the population and to protect the city's natural and cultural values. In addition, rural areas outside the city, transport projects, urban green and sports areas, educational facilities and social infrastructure areas have also been revised. It is assumed that these developments will have a positive impact on both the city center and the coverage of the demand for urban facilities (GBB 2023).

5.1.2. Bahçelievler, öğretmenevleri, Kavaklık

The Öğretmenevleri, Bahçelievler and Kavaklık areas were included in the zoning plan in the 1960s, and Gaziantep began to develop from its traditional structure into the modern city center (Figure 1). Upper-income families from Gaziantep first settled in these areas. Although there are some villas in the area, they are generally low-rise apartment buildings. This area can be described as one of the few green areas in the city. In particular, the area known as Kavaklık and Öğretmenevleri is home to the largest park in the city. Most apartment buildings benefit from a view of this park. This park, called Kavaklık Park, is thought to be one of the first picnic



Figure 1. Location of the Region. (Source: author)

areas in the city (Figure 2). It is known that families used to spend their weekends in this park back then. Today, this park is still actively used (Figure 3).

Over time, many apartment buildings in the region that had outlived their purpose were redeveloped. Originally planned as family apartments, they were converted into flats with residential character by reducing the square footage and increasing the number of floors. Apartments originally planned as 2 + 1 or 3 + 1 (Figure 4) were converted into 1 + 0, 1 + 1 or 2 + 1 units. Many of these apartments were sold or rented to commercial businesses such as cafes, car rental agencies and courses. As a result, the user profile of the area has changed.



Figure 2. Former situation of the region. (Source: Gaziantep City Archives)



Figure 3. Present situation of the region. (Source: author)

An analysis of the floor plans reveals that the apartments are designed as 2 + 1, 3 + 1, and large foyers attract attention. The kitchen, living room and balconies are connected to these volumes. The reason for the width of the vestibule is that it can be used as a dining area when many guests arrive in the city, which has a culture of hosting guests at home. In homes designed during this period, emphasis is placed on privacy, and bedrooms are separated by a night hall. The night hall connects to the bedrooms and master bathroom. The location of the pantry and toilet in the hallway may vary, and some homes also have a balcony in the master bedroom.

5.2. Local community analyses

The reliability and validity of the scale used in a study is an important factor that increases the accuracy and interpretability of the data obtained. Therefore, before starting the analyses, the reliability and validity of the questionnaire were measured and the following results were obtained (Table 3).

Reliability of the scale was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was 0.94 and was considered highly reliable. The confirmatory factor analysis, which was used to test the validity of the scale, revealed a three-factor structure (environmental, economic, social). The three-factor structure of the 38-item statements regarding the perception of a sustainable city was confirmed as valid.

The demographic data summarizes the basic demographic characteristics of the people who participated in the research, including age, gender, marital status, education level and home ownership. The distribution of demographic characteristics is shown in the following table (Table 4).

In terms of age groups, the largest percentage (32.2 %) was in the 26–35 age group, followed by the 36–50 age group (27.6 %) and the 18–25 age group (23.5 %). The 51–65 age group is represented with 14.9% and the 65+ age group with 1.8%. Regarding gender distribution, it can be seen that the majority of participants (75.9%) are women. 63.5% of participants are married and 36.5% are single. In terms of education, 58.2% of the participants are university graduates, 19.5% have a postgraduate degree, 19.5% have a high school diploma and 2.8% have a primary school diploma. In terms of home ownership, 78.2% of the participants are homeowners and 21.8% are tenants.

The study analyzed the monthly income of the participants, the number of people in their households and the length of their stay in Gaziantep (Table 5).

The results show that there are differences in income distribution among the participants, that the families do

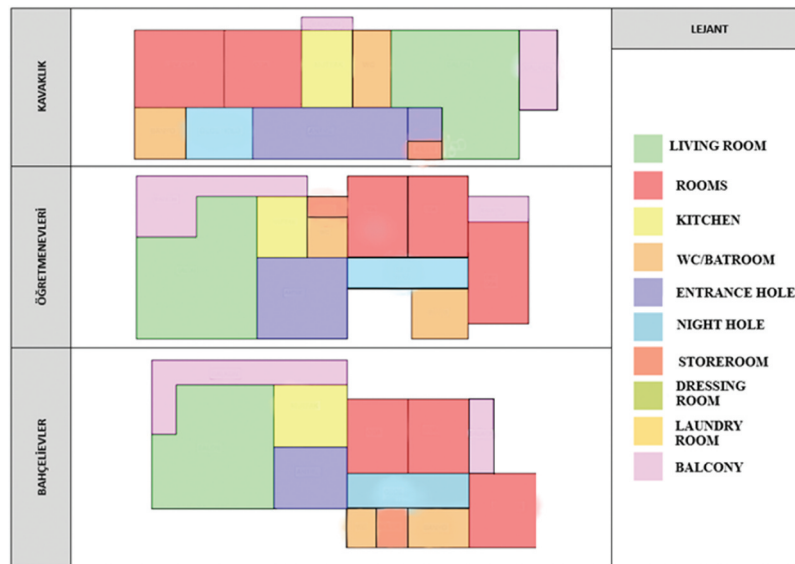


Figure 4. Regional plan diagram (Source: author).

not live very close to each other and that the participants' length of stay is long.

Descriptive statistics for the economic, social and environmental dimensions and mean values for these dimensions were analyzed (Table 6).

Table 3. Reliability and validity.

Expression	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Variance explained	KMO
I change houses between 10–15 times.	0,68			24%	0,87
I change houses between 15–20 times.	0,61				
I've lived in the same house for more than 20 years.	0,71				
The reason I'm moving house is that the neighbourhood is getting old.	0,58				
The reason I'm moving house is because it's getting old.	0,67				
The reason for changing the house is the insufficient square metres of the house.	0,64				
The reason for changing the house is the economic depreciation of the neighbourhood	0,75				
Renovating my current house is more costly and tiring than buying a new one.	0,71				
The reason for changing my house is the change in the user profile of the neighbourhood.	0,59				
Living in a newly developing neighbourhood is an advantage	0,64				
The reason why I changed my home is the security problems in the central districts.	0,72				
Noise pollution is a problem in my neighbourhood	0,61				
There is an air pollution problem in my neighbourhood	0,66				
It is easy to access clean water in my neighbourhood	0,66				
The reason why I changed my house is the car parking problems in the central districts.	0,66				
The reason why I changed my home is the traffic problems in the central districts.	0,66				
I find the conversion of agricultural land into housing positive	0,66				
It is an advantage to live in old/established neighbourhoods in the city centre		0,62		22%	0,84
Living in well-established neighbourhoods is prestigious		0,50			
Living in a newly developing neighbourhood is prestigious		0,50			
The city needs new neighbourhoods		0,61			
The city needs new buildings		0,54			
When buying a new home, it is important that the neighbourhood is new		0,72			
I live in a renovated old house in a well-established neighbourhood.		0,63			
It is important that I am the first resident in the new house I will buy		0,51			
It is advantageous that the newly developed neighbourhood is far from the city centre		0,64			
I find newly developed neighbourhoods safer than old neighbourhoods		0,51			
Changing user profile in neighbourhoods devalues the neighbourhood		0,82			
Formation of new centres within the city is advantageous for the city		0,72			
Loss of value of old neighbourhoods is a disadvantage for the city		0,67			
If the problems (infrastructure, security, traffic) of a neighbourhood I moved to before are solved, I will return there again.		0,78			
If new functions (shopping mall, cultural centre) are given to the neighbourhoods I moved to before, I would spend time in those neighbourhoods.		0,81			
I find the green area in my neighbourhood sufficient			0,57	21%	0,81
Parks are sufficient in my neighbourhood			0,45		
It is important for me that the structure I live in is sustainable			0,58		
I pay attention to the use of environmentally friendly materials in the building I live in			0,45		
I would participate if urban sustainability studies were carried out by local governments/NGOs			0,76		
I have knowledge about the concept of urban sustainability			0,66		

Table 4. Participants' demographic characteristics.

		n	%
Age	18–25	93	23,5%
	26–35	127	32,2%
	36–50	109	27,6%
	51–65	59	14,9%
	Over 65	7	1,8%
Gender	Male	95	24,1%
	Woman	300	75,9%
Marital Status	Single	144	36,5%
	Married	251	63,5%
Education Status	Primary education	11	2,8%
	High School	77	19,5%
	University	230	58,2%
	Postgraduate	77	19,5%
Home Ownership	Host	309	78,2%
	Tenant	86	21,8%

Table 5. Income, number of people in the dwelling and length of residence.

Measurement	X ± s.s.
Monthly Income	24048,87 ± 39499,47
Number of Inhabitants	3,50 ± 1,33
Duration of Residence in Gaziantep	28,05 ± 14,92

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of dimensions.

Dimensions	X±s.s.
Economic Factors	2,99 ± 0,62
Social Factors	3,17 ± 0,61
Environmental Factors	3,28 ± 0,73

It can be said that the people participating in the survey are the least aware of economic factors, while they attach the greatest importance to environmental factors. These results show that environmental factors occupy a prominent place in the perception of sustainable cities.

The results of the analyses carried out to understand how economic factors change according to the various demographic characteristics are shown below (Table 7).

The corresponding table shows that although there is no statistically significant difference between the economic factors in terms of age, gender, marital status and home ownership, there is a statistically significant difference in terms of the number of children ($p = 0.01$) and educational status ($p = 0.01$). As the number of children increased, the average economic factors decreased, with the highest average observed in participants with one child (3.13 ± 0.55) and the lowest average in participants with three or more children (2.74 ± 0.63). In terms of education, primary school leavers perceived economic factors the most (3.19 ± 0.72), while those with a high school diploma perceived them the least (2.74 ± 0.68).

The results of the analyses conducted to understand how social factors vary according to different demographic characteristics are presented below (Table 8).

As can be seen from the corresponding table, the variables of age ($p = 0.04$), number of children ($p = 0.01$) and educational status ($p = 0.01$) show statistically significant differences in terms of social factors. When analyzed by age group, the lowest mean was found in people over 65 years of age (2.91 ± 0.60) and the highest mean in the 26–35 year age group (3.22 ± 0.54). The mean value of the social factors decreases with an increasing number of children. It is found that primary school leavers (3.36 ± 0.33) have the highest mean value, while high school graduates (2.94 ± 0.71) have the lowest mean value. Among the social factors, no statistically significant difference was found between the variables of gender, marital status and home ownership.

The results of the analyses conducted to understand how environmental factors change according to the various demographic characteristics are shown below (Table 9).

The table shows that age ($p = 0.01$), number of children ($p = 0.01$) and education status ($p = 0.02$) show statistically significant differences in relation to environmental factors. In the age groups, the highest mean value was in the 26–35 year-old age group (3.40 ± 0.67) and the lowest mean value was in the over-65s (2.86 ± 0.51). The mean value of the environmental factors decreases with increasing number of children. Primary school leavers (3.39 ± 0.8) and those with post-graduate education (3.37 ± 0.76) have the highest mean, while high school graduates (3.06 ± 0.77) have the lowest mean. No statistically significant differences were found between the variables of gender, marital status and home ownership in the environmental factors.

The relationship between the participants' perceptions of the economic, social and ecological dimensions and other demographic variables was analyzed (Table 10).

A significant positive relationship between the number of households and all dimensions was found ($p = 0.01$). Economic factors ($r = 0.15$), social factors ($r = 0.18$) and environmental factors ($r = 0.21$) are positively correlated with the number of households; this shows that as the number of people in the household increases, so do the economic, social and environmental factors.

The relationships between the economic, social and environmental factors were analysed (Table 11).

The corresponding table shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between all factors ($p = 0.01$). It can be seen that the correlations between the factors are not low.

5.3. Expert survey analysis

The economic, social and environmental factors were analyzed using a questionnaire survey. The demographic data summaries the demographic

Table 7. Demographic characteristics affecting economic factors.

		Economic Factors	
		X±s.s.	p
Age	18–25	2,87±0,68	0,09
	26–35	3,10±0,57	
	36–50	2,94±0,58	
	51–65	3,03±0,63	
	Over 65	2,85±0,75	
Gender	Male	3,00±0,67	0,58
	Woman	2,98±0,60	
Marital Status	Single	2,94±0,67	0,27
	Married	3,02±0,58	
Number of Children	None	2,97±0,64	0,01*
	Single	3,13±0,55	
	Two	3,06±0,58	
	3 And Above	2,74±0,63	
Education Status	Primary education	3,19±0,72	0,01*
	Postgraduate	3,05±0,56	
	High School	2,74±0,68	
	University	3,04±0,59	
Home Ownership	Host	3,00±0,62	0,32
	Tenant	2,96±0,61	

*Significant difference at 0,05 level.

characteristics of the experts participating in the study, such as age, gender, marital status, level of education, occupational distribution, professional experience and length of service in Gaziantep. The distribution of the demographic characteristics is shown in the following table (Table 12).

85% of experts are female, 15% are male, 55% are married and 45% are single. In terms of age distribution, the largest group, 40%, is between 31 and 35 years old. 42.5% of the experts have a bachelor's degree, 35% have a doctorate and 22.5% a master's degree. In terms of profession, 70% of the experts are architects, while the rest are interior designers, urban planners, surveyors, designers and academics. 35% of the experts have 6–10 years of professional experience, 25% have 1–5 years of experience and 25% have 11–15 years of experience. In terms of working hours in Gaziantep, 40% of them have

6–10 years of experience and 30% have 1–5 years of experience.

The experts' opinions on Gaziantep were analyzed in the context of sustainable urbanization (Table 13).

According to the experts, the problems in Gaziantep are traffic (4.28±1.11), consumer behavior (4.28±1.11), sustainability issues (4.13±1.26) and air pollution (3.90±1.06). It is seen that opinions on protecting natural values (4.15±1.31) and on sustainable urbanization that increases the quality of life (4.15±1.21) are strong. It is also found that it is important to be on the spot (4.05±1.04) and that there is a need for more cultural structures in the city (3.93±1.21).

The results of the scenario analysis are shown in the following tables (Tables 14–16).

In the evaluations of the scenario in relation to rehabilitation centers, the social dimension (3.43±1.36) has the highest average value and the opinion

Table 8. Demographic characteristics affecting social factors.

		Social Factors	
		X±s.s.	p
Age	18–25	3,17 ± 0,74	0,04*
	26–35	3,22 ± 0,54	
	36–50	3,16 ± 0,54	
	51–65	3,13 ± 0,66	
	Over 65	2,91 ± 0,60	
Gender	Male	3,17 ± 0,60	0,89
	Woman	3,17 ± 0,61	
Marital Status	Single	3,17 ± 0,69	0,92
	Married	3,17 ± 0,56	
Number of Children:	None	3,22 ± 0,67	0,01*
	Single	3,22 ± 0,35	
	Two	3,19 ± 0,55	
	3 And Above	2,93 ± 0,72	
Education Status	Primary education	3,36 ± 0,33	0,01*
	Postgraduate	3,24 ± 0,54	
	High School	2,94 ± 0,71	
	University	3,22 ± 0,59	
Home Ownership	Host	3,15 ± 0,6	0,11
	Tenant	3,26 ± 0,63	

*Significant difference at 0,05 level.

Table 9. Demographic characteristics affecting environmental factors.

		Environmental Factor	
		X±s.s.	p
Age	18–25	3,31±0,82	0,01*
	26–35	3,40±0,67	
	36–50	3,13±0,73	
	51–65	3,28±0,68	
	Over 65	2,86±0,51	
Gender	Male	3,23±0,78	0,35
	Woman	3,29±0,72	
Marital Status	Single	3,35±0,79	0,18
	Married	3,24±0,7	
Number of Children:	None	3,4±0,77	0,01*
	Single	3,36±0,6	
	Two	3,25±0,64	
	3 And Above	2,92±0,84	
Education Status	Primary education	3,39±0,8	0,02*
	Postgraduate	3,37±0,76	
	High School	3,06±0,77	
	University	3,32±0,7	
Home Ownership	Host	3,27±0,74	0,44
	Tenant	3,31±0,72	

*Significant difference at 0,05 level.

that such centers provide social benefits is high. The perception of the environmental factors and user-friendliness is in the middle range (3.23±1.27 and 3.23±1.31). The economic dimension was rated lowest compared to the other dimensions (2.95±1.39), which shows that expectations regarding the economic contribution of rehabilitation centers are lower.

The ratings for the scenario for the museum, cultural center and exhibition areas show that the social dimension (3.50±1.34) has the highest average value. The environmental factors (3.23±1.17) were rated at a medium level. The user-friendliness (3.03±1.29) has the lowest average value compared to the other dimensions. The economic dimension (3.33±1.05) was rated higher compared to the other scenarios.

Likewise, the social dimension (3.60±1.26) has the highest average value in the evaluations of the scenario in relation to student accommodation. The economic dimension (3.58±1.13) is also rated highly on average, and its assessment in terms of

economic contribution is positive. The environmental factors (3.23 ± 1.33) are rated at a medium level, while the user-friendliness is perceived positively (3.33 ± 1.34).

6. Discussion

This study examines the effects of popular culture on urban consumption and the strategies for a sustainable transformation in the districts of Bahçelievler, Öğretmenevleri and Kavaklık in Gaziantep. The results are compared and evaluated with previous studies and discussed in relation to the literature. Although the results are consistent with previous research in the literature, they offer a new perspective for sustainable urbanization policies in Turkey. It was found that urban redevelopment projects have a significant impact on district culture and social structures. In a similar study conducted in Gaziantep, the effects of urban transformation on

Table 10. The relationship between the dimensions and the characteristics of the participants.

		Economic Factors	Social Factors	Environmental Factors
Monthly Income	r	0,02	-0,02	-0,05
	p	0,69	0,65	0,31
Number of Inhabitants	r	0,15	0,18	0,21
	p	0,01*	0,01*	0,01*
Length of residence in Gaziantep (years)	r	0,03	-0,07	-0,06
	p	0,51	0,18	0,21

*Significant difference at 0,05 level.

Table 11. Analysing the relationships between the dimensions.

		Economic	Social	Environmental
Economic Factors	r	1		
	p			
Social Factors	r	0,63	1	
	p	0,01*		
Environmental Factors	r	0,47	0,57	1
	p	0,01*	0,01*	

*Significant difference at 0,05 level.

Table 12. Demographic characteristics of experts.

		n	%
Gender	Male	6	15,0%
	Woman	34	85,0%
Marital Status	Single	18	45,0%
	Married	22	55,0%
Age	25–30	12	30,0%
	31–35	16	40,0%
	36–40	7	17,5%
	41–45	3	7,5%
	46 and above	2	5,0%
Level of Education	PhD	14	35,0%
	Licence	17	42,5%
	Master's Degree	9	22,5%
Professional Title	Scientist- Academician	1	2,5%
	Map Engineer	1	2,5%
	Interior Designer	6	15,0%
	Architect	28	70,0%
	Painter designer	1	2,5%
	City Planner	2	5,0%
	Designer	1	2,5%
Professional Experience (Years)	1–5	10	25,0%
	6–10	14	35,0%
	11–15	10	25,0%
	16–20	3	7,5%
	20 and above	3	7,5%
Your Professional Experience in Gaziantep Region (Years)	1–5	12	30,0%
	6–10	16	40,0%
	11–15	8	20,0%
	16–20	1	2,5%
	20 and above	3	7,5%

neighborhood culture were examined and the effects of transformation processes on the social fabric were discussed (Şirin 2017).

The local population believes that environmental factors are more important for urban sustainability than economic and social factors. It is assumed that prioritising environmental issues will contribute more to urban sustainability in the long term and that economic and social sustainability will follow once ecological sustainability has been achieved. The study examined how the three sub-dimensions affect demographic characteristics. Increasing the number of

children and reducing the level of education had a significant effect on the dimension of economic factors. This result can be interpreted as an increase in economic concerns due to the increase in the number of households and low professional qualifications. In line with the results of this study, Başlevent (2020) emphasizes that the increase in household size in low-income families in Turkey leads to a decline in income per person and a decline in long-term investments such as education spending. The increase in the number of children, the ageing of the population and the decline in the level of education have significantly

Table 13. Statements related to sustainability.

	X±s.s.
I find the new plans to meet the housing need in Gaziantep correct	2,03±1,03
I find it right to open up areas outside the city for development in order to meet the housing need	2,88±1,28
Gaziantep is growing in a planned manner	2,08±1,07
The neighbourhoods of Gaziantep that have lost their former value should be revitalised by giving them new functions	3,88±1,22
If the old neighbourhoods of Gaziantep are given the right functions and new arrangements are made, the city's housing areas will be sufficient.	3,28±1,24
Gaziantep needs growth	3,00±1,3
Green areas in Gaziantep are sufficient	2,05±1,15
Gaziantep needs new spaces to increase social interaction	4,00±1,24
Gaziantep needs more cultural buildings in order to increase its tourism activities	3,93±1,21
Gaziantep has an air pollution problem	3,90±1,06
Gaziantep has a traffic problem	4,28±1,11
Housing prices are affordable in Gaziantep	1,20±0,46
Gaziantep has a security problem	3,43±1,34
The square metres of houses built in Gaziantep are sufficient	3,6±1,24
Gaziantep has infrastructure problems	3,33±1,33
Natural values must be protected to ensure sustainable urban development	4,15±1,31
Localisation is necessary for sustainable urban development	4,05±1,04
Sustainable urban development improves quality of life	4,15±1,21
Gaziantep has sustainability problems due to consumption frenzy	4,13±1,26
The consumption habits of people in Gaziantep need to change	4,28±1,11
Gaziantep's educational facilities are adequate	1,93±0,86
Gaziantep's health facilities are adequate	2,33±1,13

Table 14. Scenario 1 (rehabilitation centres).

Statements	$\bar{X} \pm s.s.$
[ENVIRONMENTAL]	3,23±1,27
[ECONOMIC]	2,95±1,39
[SOCIAL]	3,43±1,36
[CONVENIENCE]	3,23±1,31

Table 15. Scenario 2 (museum, cultural centre, exhibition areas).

Statements	$\bar{X} \pm s.s.$
[ENVIRONMENTAL]	3,23±1,17
[ECONOMIC]	3,33±1,05
[SOCIAL]	3,50±1,34
[CONVENIENCE]	3,03±1,29

Table 16. Scenario 3 (Student houses, dormitories).

Statements	$\bar{X} \pm s.s.$
[ENVIRONMENTAL]	3,23±1,33
[ECONOMIC]	3,58±1,13
[SOCIAL]	3,60±1,26
[CONVENIENCE]	3,33±1,34

influenced the dimension of social factors. It can be interpreted that the desire for socialization decreases with increasing age, that socialization is more difficult when there are more children in the household than in individual life, and that the desire for socialization increases with increasing level of education. The increase in age and education level had a significant effect on the dimension of environmental factors. This result can be interpreted to mean that people's sensitivity to the environment increases with age and education level. This result is consistent with the study by Yasak (2021), which found that people attach more importance to environmental issues with age and tend to support particularly sustainable urbanization projects.

In terms of the relationship between the three sub-dimensions considered in the study, a positive relationship was found between economic factors, social factors and environmental factors. There is also a positive correlation between social factors and environmental factors. This leads to the conclusion that the sub-dimensions cannot be separated from each other to ensure urban sustainability. This result is also supported by studies that address issues of sustainability (Hayaloğlu, Artan, and Demirel 2019; Kaya and Kaya 2013).

As part of the study, experts were interviewed about the urban sustainability of Gaziantep. The experts stated that educational opportunities are insufficient, housing needs are poorly planned, the city has grown in an unplanned manner, there are not enough green spaces and housing prices are high. They also believe that new areas are needed that promote social interaction in the city, that there

is a traffic problem, that natural values should be protected and localization ensured, and that consumerism should be ended by changing consumer habits. These results show that experts are also aware of the sustainability problems in the city and believe that the city is being consumed by the influence of popular culture. This situation has also been reported in studies on how urban spaces are being transformed by consumer culture. Kocalar (2013) emphasizes how consumer culture is transforming urban space by discussing the spatial effects of globalization and urban transformation processes. This situation confirms that urban sustainability is at risk in the long term if the consumption habits imposed by popular culture are not changed.

In the study, the experts were also presented with three different scenarios and evaluated which functions would be more beneficial for urban sustainability in the long term if these areas were to be re-functionalized at the end of their useful life. They found that the scenario of converting the neighborhood into student apartments and dormitories (scenario 3) would be the most appropriate model in terms of economic, social and environmental sustainability. Of all the scenarios, this one is considered by the experts to be the one that contributes most to urban sustainability. The fact that the area is close to the city's universities, that students will socially revitalize the area and that an ecological transformation can be achieved without major changes to the buildings in the area makes this scenario more significant than the others. The results are consistent with previous studies that have looked at the impact of students on cities. Donat et al. (2019) and Kurtça (2020) emphasize that the demand for student housing in Turkey is increasing and that this situation has a direct impact on cities' housing policies. The studies propose solutions to address the issue of student access to housing. Hamurcu and Buldurur (2017) and Keskin and Dağgözü (2025) note that the preservation and transformation of existing buildings promotes environmental sustainability.

7. Conclusion

As Gaziantep's traditional urban fabric transitioned into a modern city center, the old neighborhoods lost their appeal due to changing consumption patterns and were abandoned, and new areas were developed. The expansion of urban areas is associated with both physical and demographic growth. This situation and the development of new expansion areas have popularized the consumer phenomenon imposed by popular culture. When this process occurs unconsciously, significant sustainability problems arise. The aim of this study is to analyze the effects of popular culture on urban consumption and to develop sustainable

transformation strategies in the neighborhoods of Bahçelievler, Öğretmenevleri and Kavaklık in Gaziantep. The analysis of the interviews with residents and experts showed that the sustainability issues in the area are multidimensional and that consumption patterns have a direct impact on the use of urban space. Both the public and the experts are concerned about the sustainability of the city. The results obtained from the study are presented according to social, economic and environmental factors.

The results of the study relate to the social factor: local people believe that the existing neighborhoods need to be renovated to ensure social sustainability. The change in user profiles in the neighborhoods has weakened social solidarity and led to problems of insecurity. It was found that social relations decrease with age, social interaction decreases with increasing number of children and social interaction increases with increasing level of education. Experts believe that socialization spaces in the region are insufficient and that new cultural and artistic facilities need to be generated that contribute to people's social lives.

After determining the economic factor: It was found that housing prices in Gaziantep are high and the city is growing uncontrollably. The data collected from the local population showed that this factor is particularly related to family size and education level. The experts found that Gaziantep's housing market is unbalanced, new developments are unplanned and economically unsustainable.

According to the results of the environmental factor: Locals indicate that environmental sustainability is more important than social and economic sustainability. There is a prevailing opinion that if environmental problems are solved, the long-term sustainability of the city can be ensured. Experts agree that the existing green spaces are insufficient and that more green spaces should be provided for a sustainable urban model. They also believe that urban growth should be planned with environmental impacts in mind.

Among the three scenarios, the conversion of neighborhoods into student residences is considered the most advantageous in terms of social, economic and environmental sustainability. It can be seen that the realization of this transformation will change the stagnant social structure in the region, the young population will increase, the neighborhoods will become socially dynamic and promote the construction of cultural centers, libraries, sports facilities and the region will become more active. With the residential model, it can be seen that the existing buildings can be converted at low cost and offer economic mobility to the neighborhoods, and that the buildings that have been converted at low cost reduce the need for new buildings without major changes and reduce the environmental problem. Converting buildings

instead of demolishing them can help to reduce the ecological footprint.

This conversion model offers a solution that is broadly compatible with the needs of the stakeholders addressed in the study. For local residents, it is important to maintain the economic vitality of the neighborhood. The integration of the student population into the neighborhood can be a mechanism to support these goals and strengthen the social fabric of the area. Access to affordable housing is increasingly becoming a problem for students, and this conversion model offers a direct solution to their housing needs, bringing social benefits. Considering the environmental and economic costs of large-scale projects designed from scratch, experts consider the conversion of existing buildings to be a much more sustainable solution. This model can help Gaziantep develop an urbanization policy in line with its sustainable goals and plan urban growth in a more orderly fashion. In summary, a balanced solution has been proposed that meets the expectations of the various stakeholders in terms of economic, social and environmental aspects. In summary, this conversion model shows that the conversion of student accommodation and industrial estates can boost economic vitality in the region by supporting local businesses. Maintaining district culture, increasing green space and integrating the young population into the area can strengthen social cohesion. From an environmental perspective, energy-efficient buildings, sustainable transport and green infrastructure can improve urban ecology by reducing carbon emissions. For this model to succeed, collaboration between stakeholders such as local government, the private sector and the public is essential. It is anticipated that this transformation model will enable Gaziantep to achieve its urban sustainability goals. It is possible to make suggestions in this direction.

Converting existing buildings into student residences, establishing commercial areas and increasing social activity areas can be a step towards improving the quality of life in neighborhoods with solutions that can be implemented in the short term. Implementing long-term strategies such as adapting the region to the urbanization dynamics, reducing the ecological footprint and expanding the green environment requires a serious planning process. It may be suggested that the applicability of the planning be increased by involving stakeholders. Local governments can support these processes by providing land use plans, financial support and incentives that promote projects to transform cities. It is clear that awareness of sustainability needs to be raised in Gaziantep and consumption habits need to be changed. It is clear that the responsibility for ensuring urban and regional sustainability cannot be assumed by a single institution or organization. It is therefore recommended that local

administrations, universities and non-governmental organizations work together. Activities such as panel discussions and interviews should be organized throughout the city to raise awareness of sustainability. The public should be made aware of the concept of a sustainable city, its importance and its advantages, not only in ecological terms but also in economic and social ones. Furthermore, it is of great importance to strive to leave a more livable city for future generations.

The results of this study provide important insights into urban regeneration and sustainability. However, the study has some limitations. The study used SPSS for survey analysis. Adding additional statistical models can triangulate the data and provide deeper insights. The sample size is limited to a specific region, and the generalizability of the results may not be fully transferable to other cities. It should be borne in mind that participants may have been biased during data collection. The fact that the study was conducted within a specific time period does not provide an opportunity for long-term analysis. This is because the effects of sustainability can change over time. In view of these limitations, it is recommended that future studies evaluate the participation of different socio-economic groups with a larger sample size and analyze them by supporting long-term studies.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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