

Gaining Ghost Town of Tourism Economics Northern Cyprus Varosha City

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Abstract

Ghost towns were abandoned places for same reasons such as disasters, economic collapse, disease, war. North Cyprus City's Varosha is a ghost town. The city was received during the Turkey's Peace Operation. It has been closed until that time - 1974. It is under the control of UN and takes place in the Green Line buffer zone. The research is based on the site work. The data obtained from the local authority and information collected by interviews with local people. To be entered in the City with special permission and observation could be made in Varosha. Before 1974 Varosha is one of the most lively tourist center of the world. 200 billion euros investment needs for Its reconstruction. After reconstruction business volume of the region will be exploded. Without wasting more time, the City should be given to the tourism economy. However, the risk of deterioration of existing tissue will raise after opening of Varosha. The city has been witness to the period of the humanity history. There is no other city in the world having this property. Projects related to the City must be produce without losing its texture. Aimed of the study is that without lossing its features, put forward proposals for opening to tourism of the City. In this study recommendation for the City's protection were developed. Based on the successful example of revived ghost town, a museum city proposal improved for Varosha.

Keywords: Tourism, North Cyprus, ghost cities

Introduction

“Ghost towns” refer the settlements abandoned by their occupants. Ghost habitations are the ones left because of various reasons such as human/nature-born, decreasing resources, difficulty to fulfill basic needs, shifts in railway/highway routes, shifting local economy, epidemics, war and etc. Maraş City in Northern Cyprus which has been kept closed since 1974 is ghost city today. The city captured during the Peace Operation was banned

from occupation. It is located on the “Green Lane” buffer zone under the UN control. It is considered as significant bargaining counter in Cyprus Crisis in pursuit of a resolution. Neither a consensus has been reached until today nor any step taken for Maraş City. Although Maraş City was one the most alive 10 tourism cities in the world before 1974, currently it is just a dead one. Whereas assumed land values of the city is just above 100 Billion US Dollars, 2 Billion Euro investment is needed for its re-construction. It is expected that upon its re-construction, employment, commerce and trade of goods and services would be boomed. The city, without losing further time, is required to be gained in tourism economy by conforming to the universal law and monitoring benefits of the winning party. However, opening Maraş may introduce the risk of losing its current texture.

Although it was banned for people, a different life aspect prevails in the city. As a result of 40-year isolation, the city has never lost its value and created a unique ecosystem. As the city witnessed a certain history period of humanity could be considered as live documentary with its current condition. Every building in the city has its own story which enhances magnificence of the city. There no any other similar city with this characteristic in world. Projects are required to be produced without losing this texture. In the present study, it was aimed to grab attention for closed city Maraş within the scope of Ghost City concept. The relevant suggestions were presented to gain the city in tourism economy without preserving empty-texture of the city which has now been a natural feature of the city. Some successful ghost town cases which were rejuvenated were shared.

Ghost cities are the ones usually abandoned as a result of failed economic structure, disasters or wars etc. Ghost town expression is used to refer settlements losing their populations remarkably. Furthermore, antique places not occupied anymore, which could only be visited, and which cannot survive under regular circumstances except tourism could be included in this definition. However, the real ghost settlement is the one still preserving its structural and architectural characteristics but abandoned by its natural residents. Some ghost towns are open to tourism activities and visitors. But, whereas some of them are forbidden by the law; and some are considered as dangerous to visit.

Reasons to Abandon Settlements and Ghost Town Examples

The common reason for human beings to leave their settlements is disaster. Then, this is followed by economic reasons and decreasing resources. In today’s world, number of cities emptied because of wars has displayed a sharp increase as well. In the following section, abandoning reasons were exhibited in tables with relevant examples:

Disasters

Natural – humane disasters such as flood, volcanic eruptions, fire, earthquakes and nuclear threats are effective in occurrence of ghost settlements.

Flood :The U.S. Missouri, Pattonsburg City have experienced flood incident 30 times since its foundation in 1845. In 1993, it was moved 3 km away and re-established under the name of “New Pattonsburg” (Gençalp, Sabah, 2015).

Volcanic Eruption:Italy - Pompeii and Herculaneum are Roman Cities covered by ashes upon eruption of Vesuvius Volcano in 79 A.C. As these cities were lost for 1700 years, they were discovered coincidentally. These cities are included in the UNESCO World Heritage list. They are among the most popular tourist destinations of Italy (Gençalp, Sabah, 2015)

Earthquake:Nepal – Katmandu – Two earthquakes with 7.8 and 7.3 magnitudes experienced in April 2015 turned Capital Katmandu into a ghost town. Hundreds of residents left the city for safer places to shelter. All business and touristic places in the city are closed. While there is food and fresh water shortage in the city, people are experiencing difficulty in supplying their needs (trthaber, ghost-city Katmandu, 2015).

Nuclear Disasters: Ukraine – Pripjat City was established for employees of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in 1970. By 1986, the most significant nuclear accident of the 20th Century occurred; 500 thousand people were immediately evacuated from the city. Scientists reported that the city would not be occupied for another 900 years; and that the radioactive residues could only be cleared out in 48 thousand years. People banned from the city (telegraph.co.uk 2015).

Fire: The U.S. - Pennsylvania, Centralia – This city is a prosperous settlement with coal mines. However, afterwards of fire in 1981, population of the city significantly reduced and finally 9 people left in the city by 2008 (sputniknews, 2014).

Economic reasons

As mine has lost its economic weight, as economic activities varied and shifted to other business areas, changes in commercial routes, draught, scarcity and environmental pollutions are main reasons for abandonment of settlements.

Mines losing economic significance: Japan - Gunkanjima (Hamachi Island) - While the island was silent in 1887, it transformed into a coal center by 1890. After Mitsubishi Company purchased the island, it exhibited great development pace. The first large concrete buildings of Japan were built for workers. In 1959, it was the most condensed residential area in the world (1,391 ha/person). After coal is replaced with oil in 60s, the mine was shut

down and emptied in 1974. Whereas "Battle Royale II (2003)" was shot in this island, it inspired "Killer 7" video game. The island is closed to visitors (sputniknews. 2014).

Shifting economy to other places:The U.S. – Detroit was once industrial and commercial city of the U.S. According to the figures reported by the U.S. Population Office, population of Detroit has decreased by 25% in 10 years. While it was 951 thousand in 2000; it is 713 thousand in 2014. Due to bankrupting automobile industry, closed automobile factories, the city has emigrated. Currently, the lowest population is observed since 1910. The population of the city was 1.85 million in 1950 (usasabah, Detroit, 2015)

Draught:India - Fatehpur Sikri – This is the capital of the Mongol Empire in the period of 1571 -1585. Whereas the settlement has social-complex structure, the Mongol architecture is dominant. Akbar Shah waited for a child for twelve years. Then, he built this city for his boy miraculously born. Then, the city was abandoned for water scarcity. The city was declared UNESCO Heritage in 1986 (Server, gezialemi, 2015).

Draught and scarcity:Italy - Craco Craco – This is an impressive medieval city located in Basilicata Region. Whereas the population was more than 2,000 in 1891, it reduced because of draught and scarcity. The last people in the city migrated in 1963 and the city was left to rot away (sometimes-interesting, craco, 2011)

Change in commercial route:The U.S. - Colorado - St. Elmo was established in 1880 as mining town and its population was 2,000. Then, the town was emptied upon closure of Colorado railway in 1922. St. Elmo is the most preserved ghost town in Colorado; and it was included in National Historical Locations lists. Hundreds of people visit the town every year. Old house goods are still remaining the same as they used to be at homes and stores (Wikipedia, St. Elmo, 2015).

Wars, terror and political reasons

They are substantially important reason for abandoning settlements. Changing capital cities and political decisions leave ghost towns behind.

Wars: Syria – Kobani in the Middle East - While the war in Syria and Northern Iraq has intensified its violence, communities have abandoned bombed and invaded settlements and left ghost towns behind which bear their sorrows. Kobani, Humus, Daraya Cities and Bayırbucak Turkmen area of Latakia City are just examples of these settlements (milliyet, ghost-kent-kobani, 2015)

Terror and Vandalism:Azerbaijan – Agdam – Whereas the city was occupied with 150,000 population once upon a time, Armenian rebels invaded in 1993 during Nagarno Karabagh issue. The city was not directly in

the middle of clashes. However, it was victim of vandalism and terror and abandoned (google, agdam, 2015).

Anarchy:China - Kowloon Walled City – The city was built by the United Kingdom. Then it was occupied by Japanese during the World War II. Upon their defeat, the island passed to China. Neither Chinese nor British governments were interested in the island; and it has turned into a lawless place under mafia control. As its population has significantly increased, the city was structured with labyrinth streets and high buildings. While the streets of island were burst into garbage, casinos, barrel house, substance manufacturing places filled the city. Finally, the city was evacuated based on British – Chinese agreement in 1993 (google. Kowloon+Walled+City, 2015)

International Disagreement: Turkey - Kaya Köy – The village was established in Muğla City around 1200s. In the last period of the Ottoman Empire, population of the village was 3,000 and its residents were Greek s. Then, based on the migration-exchange act between Turkey and Greece in 1923, the village was evacuated. Since Turks brought from Thrace experienced difficulty in accommodating this village, they were settled in the plain. Studies on taking advantage of Kaya Köy in tourism activities have still been continued (google. Kaya+köy, 2015).

Concentration Camps and large detention centers:Russia – Gulag – This concentration camp was gigantic detention center in the Soviet era for millions of political and criminal prisoners. In Gulag not operated today, there was numbers of prisons once (google, rusya+gulag, 2015).

Other Reasons

Mysterious events, settlements believed to bring bad luck, scientific study areas, dam constructions and residential areas experienced epidemic diseases are significant factors in abandonment of settlements.

Bad Luck and Mysterious Events: Taiwan - San Zhi – The construction of a holiday village complex was initiated in this settlement interesting futuristic architecture. The construction was not completed because of bankruptcies and work accidents. According to ghost rumors in the area, no one wanted to make an investment and even to visit here. Finally, the project was terminated ([sputniknews.2014](#)) (notcot. San zhi, 2008).

Scientific Developments:The U.S. - Mississippi - NASA – When governments expropriate land properties for scientific studies, the settlements in proximity are evacuated. When some lands are expropriated for rocket tests of the NASA, town in nearby were abandoned (space.nasa,

2015). Evacuated research stations in Antarctica could also be considered in this regard.

Dams: Turkey - Hasankeyf – Evacuation of basin area of dams results in ghost settlements. The most important example of this is Hasankeyf next to Tigris River. This location is quite old such that its history could be traced back to 10,000 years ago. The most magnificent period of this town was experienced during Ayyubids in the 14th Century. Majority of today's remaining monuments and buildings are from this period. Upon construction of Ilisu Dam, all these treasures will be buried by water. The county was declared as Natural Protection Area in 1981 (wikipedia, Hasankeyf, 2015)

Epidemics: Peru - Machu Picchu City – This city was built by Inca civilization around 1400s. It is located at 2,360 m altitude at the top of And Mountains and it could be climbed up through 200 stairs with 3000 steps. While the reason for establishment of this settlement was a temple for some people or prison for some others. This settlement was protected very well from invasions and attacks and has never got damaged. However, it was abandoned because of smallpox. In 2007, it was nominated as one of the 7 wonders of the world (bilgiustam, 2015).

Future Ghost Towns

International Economy Magazine Forbes published list of cities which would turn into ghost towns during the 21st century due to climate change, global warming and flood etc. reasons. It is expected that these cities which shelters millions of residents would be destructed before this century ends. Banjul City in Gambia will be deserted; Mexico City will be a ghost city soon. Textile center of Russia, 1,000 years old Timbuktu City of Mali, would be erased from the map real soon. Whereas Napoli in Italy is under danger of volcanic eruption; Venetia tried to be saved by means of giant dam is under risk of swallowed by water (mynet. 2015).

Rural areas are also in danger of disappear. In this regard, there is an ongoing fight in the U.S. by distributing free lands to their citizens. On the other hand, cities populated over 10 million are also in the same condition. Although the world population is fixed around 9-10 billion, migration to metropolitan cities is still continuing. At this rate, 60% of world population will be living in these metropolitan cities by 2030 (planlama. 2015). Nevertheless, these cities have been fed. In the developing countries, this trend started to work reverse side. In Tokyo, the most populated city of the world, the population display tendency to decrease. Similarly, population growth rate in New York and London is stopped. On the other hand, the problem still intensifies exponentially. The population of Lagos reached 16 million; and it is expected that its population would reach 21 million in 10 years. A similar pace exists in Bombay and Calcutta as well (mimdap.2015).

Revival of Ghost Towns

European and American planners are working on “shrinking cities”. Efforts for revival of ghost towns and gaining them into economy have gained pace. Public interest to historical events and settlements witnessed to history has increases. Revival models for ghost towns These places are usually utilized for tourism purposes. It is also common practice to utilize them as film setting or museum-city.

Making use of ghost settlements in various purposes: Canada – Toronto - Distillery District is industrial settlement with extraordinary architecture, located in Toronto. While this industrial complex was established in 1832, it was the largest liquor brewery center of the world and steered establishment and development of Toronto City. This place transformed into a ghost settlement after termination of production in 1990. Then, it was revived in 2003 and became the prominent cultural-tourism center of Canada (Torlak, 2013).

Opening for Tourist Visitors: Italy - Balestrino – This town is located in Toscana territory and has the same appearance for centuries. As the town was established by San Pietro Prince around 1100s, its historical fortress and buildings exhibit medieval view. It is open for tourist visitors (Gençalp, Sabah, 2015).

Film Studio: Namibia – Kolmanskop – Upon discovery of diamond in 1900s, the town was rushed by people; and casinos, hospital, luxury mansions were established in the middle of the dessert. As the demand for diamond reduced in 1950s, this brought end of the city. Abandoned city was raided by dust of dessert; houses and streets were covered by sand. "The King is Alive" (2000) and "Dust Devil" (1993) films were shot in this city because of its interesting scenery. It is open to visitor (Gençalp, Sabah, 2015).

Museum-City:France- Oradour-sur-Glane – During the World War II, Germany brutally invaded by mistake; killed all residents and burned the whole town. Their real target was Oradour-sur-Vayres territory. After the war period, the city built on another location. The old town was preserved in the memory of this tragic event. Burnt buildings and goods witnessing the invasion are currently exhibited in this museum-city (Gençalp, Sabah, 2015).

Opening for Tourism Settlement: Russia - Kizhi Island – The island was developed around the church built in the 16th century. Since there is tough winder season (-40), the residents who were mainly farmers left the island. Then in 1960, the island became an open archeological museum exhibiting Russian wooden architecture. It was acknowledged as world heritage by the UNESCO. Main income resource is tourism. All residents of the island have business in tourism ([wikipedia, Kiji,2015](#))

Maraş

Maraş is district of commonly known Mağosa Region of Cyprus. The Maraş district is composed of three regions as tourism, residential and central areas. The tourism section of the district was banned after the 1974 military operation. Residential and central areas are still open for public use. The Maraş is located on the “Green Lane” dissecting the island under the UN control.

History of Maraş

The Maraş city was first emerged in the Ottoman period. Upon conquest of the island in 1571, the whole island became Ottoman territory. Mağusa city walls were repaired and the community was settled within these city walls to protect them against attacks. Christians once was in the walls were moved outside the center and they formed a suburb. Greek s used to call this suburban area as "Varosha". Whereas there was ancient city texture within the walls, a modern city texture was apparent in Maraş.

During the English Colony period, while Turks lived in the walls, Greek s were settled down on the shore in Maraş. In this period, both societies used to have independent administrations in terms of education, religion and culture. In the 1960 Republic of Cyprus period, the country was administered under two different societies as Mağusa In-Walls and Maraş. However, alienation of Turkish society from Cyprus administration in 1963 deepened distinction among two societies (Dağlı, 1998:19). Accordingly, as result of intensification of assaults in 1963, Turks totally retreated inside the city walls and polarization strengthened. Concerning the period of 1963-74, contribution of Cyprian Turks into the island economy was very limited. Turks had to work in jobs in Maraş. However, they were not able to afford their living. Therefore, Kızılay was sending humanitarian aids in every six months through ships. Since the government of the island was Greek , all sorts of business credits were issued only Greek businessmen.

In 1974, Greek s organized military coup in Cyprus with the support of Greek military rule. Long term violence intensified after the military coup in the island. One of the guarantors of Cyprus, Turkey organized a military peace operation in 1974. The military operation resulted in dissection of Cyprus Island into two sides. While Greek s left the Maraş district, Turkish Armed Forces captured the city. Western side of the city was opened for immigrants from south Cyprus and Turkey. Touristic eastern side was held as leverage and closed based on the decree of the UN Security Council. Afterwards, the city turned into a “ghost town”. Military Social Facility of Turkish Army, the UN Military Residential Facility and a dormitory for girl students were established and the others were banned from entry. People who want to see the city are not allowed to pass beyond Maraş Icona Church.

Ghost Town Maraş and Its Tourism Economy

Industrialization in the Cyprus commenced after its release from English dominance and foundation of Cyprus Republic. In this period, large amounts of capitals flowed into the island owing to church donations. Tourism was remarkable income for Cyprus. Tourism activities were initiated in the island around 1940s; and urbanization gained pace by 1960s. In the period 1965-66, a five-star hotel was built in every six months. Significant portion of hotels and tourism businesses in Maraş were investments of international organizations. Italian, German and British companies leased lands for 50-100 years and were allowed to make long term investments. One of the most important hotels was the Golden Sands Hotel which belongs to British Royal Family. In 1970s, while half of the overall hotels in the island were located in Maraş, the city was with capacity of 100 hotels and 10,000 beds. In the same period, all bed capacity of Turkey was below 10,000. In 1974, 53% of general tourism accommodation was in Mağusa. The city used to supply 10% of general labor force of the island and to provide employment for 5,000 employees. Today, bed capacity of the Northern Cyprus is 16,000. While tourism share of the island was 53%, it decreased to 7%. As Mağusa was hosting 700,000 tourists annually once upon a time, only 40,000 tourists visited the city with 8 facilities and 1,500 bed capacity in 2000. In the period before 1974, whereas 50% of tourists were entering into the Cyprus through Mağusa Port; today, naval transportation dropped from 46% to 4% (Boğaç, 2002:7-15).

High-tech furnace, washing machines, refrigerator and television which are not found in Turkey in that period were just ordinary household appliances. Automobile dealers, luxury fashion store, perfume stores, international banks, taverns, faded store signs, entertainment places, luxury restaurants and tourism agencies are still remaining in the condition as they were left 40 years ago (Boğaç, 2002:7-15). In addition to all these, there are 414 sealed safe cases filled up with cash reveals former prosperity and luxury of the city.

Regarding the population of Maras before 1974, all of Mağusa was occupied by 39,000 residents; and population of inside the wall was 15,000. Maraş experienced its most magnificent period in the period of 1970-1974; and visited by world-famous stars such as Marilyn Monroe, Sophia Loren, Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Raquel Welch, and Brigitte Bardot. As the Mağusa was the most important port of the island; the most attractive tourist hotspot of the island was Maraş. Maraş City has 3,400 m-long beach and 6.4 km² closed area. Together with its modern architecture and urbanization, it's most vivacious and luxury art and intellectual centers of Mediterranean. Once this city was full of sparkling life in its period, today, time is frozen in this city. The city is occupied abandoned buildings, streets and creepy

silence deeply influence observers. Walls with bullet holes, high wild bushes on streets and wild trees grown in hotel rooms formed an interesting ecosystem in which only animals live.

Resolution process and the issue of property ownership

The most significant issue regarding resolution of the Cyprus crisis is closed Maraş. Maraş City was captured to gain leverage for bargains after Peace Operation in 1974. In the “Doruk Act” signed in 1975, which constituted foundation of the Cyprus talks, the article concerning Maraş was included as following: “in case an agreement reached, Maraş will be opened without a comprehensive solution is waited”. However, no any agreement has been made until today. Regarding return of Maraş under supervision of the U.N., there are numbers of the U.N. Security Council decisions enacted between Denктаş and Kipriyanu afterwards of “10 Point Agreement” on 19.05.1979.

Discrete talks which have been continued until 1983 gained different dimension together with proclamation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The U.N. did not recognize this proclamation. While Eastern Mediterranean University was planned to be established in Maraş, the U.N. Security Council declared that no any other parties could settle in Maraş except its legal owners. In 1984, Maraş transferred to the control of the U.N.. After proclamation of the TRNC, President Denктаş proposed a suggestion under "good intentions". The suggestion was including intimate cooperation between the two societies, termination of embargo, and commencement of integrative agreement talks. "Security Lane" will be maintained. On the other hand, Greek leader Kipriyanu in this period refused the suggestion by stating that “this suggestion meant that the TRNC was recognized”. Additionally, agreement packages of the General Secretariat of the U.N. were accepted by Turkish side but again refused by the Greek s. The travel restriction was removed for the first time for two weeks. Under the U.N. control, residents were allowed pass through the buffer zone. In the 2004 Annan Plan, a united Cyprus was suggested. Maraş was left to Greek administration. In the general referendum, whereas the Annan Plan was accepted by Turkish Cypriots, refused by Greek Cypriots. The essential purpose of the Geneva meetings, it was aimed to integrate both societies in 2012 and to create a federal structure with two societies. Nevertheless, these efforts did not yield any result.

The TRNC prepared a plan for Maraş. The suggestion was returning the properties in the close Maraş to their Greek owners; giving administrations of local authority and police department of Gazi Mağusa to the Gazi Mağusa Municipality. Greek Cypriots who have properties in Maraş are required to appeal to the TRNC Property Commission (TMK) and they

are allowed to return to the area. Repair of the Greek properties in the Maraş could only be implemented through purchasing material and labor from the TRNC. Ottoman Foundations would be secured by the TMK. Vakıflar İdaresi (Foundation Administration) will be in charge of the foundations maintaining their existence in the Cyprus. Accordingly, Greek property owners were required to appeal to the TMK for their great amount of real estates in Maraş so that they could demand compensation or return of the property. Diplomatic represents indicated that the suggested plan was appropriate for practice. Greeks required return of Maraş as “confidence building measure” as a precondition to continue talks suspended since March 2012. Turkish Cypriots declared that they were ready for talks but they emphasized that Maraş was only part of comprehensive solution to the crisis and there should be a compromise in the exchange of Maraş. Turks associated Maraş suggestion with natural gas and opening Ercan Airport and Mağosa Port to international service.

Key aspect of the Cyprus Crisis is “property issue”. Without handling this problem in a satisfactory way for both sides, it is not possible to reach a peaceful conclusion. There is Maraş in the center of property issue. It was aimed to resolve property issues through the TMK established by the TRNC. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) recognizes the TMK. The reason for recognition was that the TRNC administration assured that they acknowledge return of the Greek properties. The TMK resolved number of property issues through return, compensation and exchange procedures. However, Closed Maraş was not under authority of the TMK. Individuals who own a property in Maraş have appealed to the ECHR against Turkey.

The most important debate issue is that Maraş territory has the Ottoman Foundation Land status. Upon conquest of the Cyprus, number of Ottoman senior administrators such as Sultan Selim II, Lala Mustafa Pasha, Abdullah Pasha and etc. established foundations. Two thirds of Cyprus is comprised of lands in the possession of these foundations. Majority of these lands remained to Turks are located in Maraş. Land of Maraş is registered in the name of pious foundations with the land registry office. The region is property of aforesaid foundations evidenced with land registry certificates. Seventy-eight percent of Gazi Mağusa is registered property of Abdullah Pasha Foundation. In the beginning, English Administration used to respected property of foundations. Then, these lands were transferred to Mağusa Greek Municipality in 1898. Then, lands of foundations were distributed to churches, priests, monasteries under leading of Greek Orthodox Churches after parceling them in 1913. All monuments representing Turkish existence were destructed. Turkish names of these foundations were changed into church and monastery names such as Nikola and Aya Luka. In the exchange of capture and seizure actions of English and Greek Administration against

Turkish foundations, title holders went to courts and these lawsuits continued until 1975. There interim decisions regarding lawsuits at the TRNC courts regarding lands of Maraş foundations.

In these verdicts it is emphasized that characteristics of these lands could be changed from foundation property into something else. Vice versa, land of foundations could include these buildings into their properties. Former president of the Turkish History Institution, Ph.D. Y. Halaçoğlu stated that “according to the law of foundation, it would not be possible to take property of foundations into personal possession at all; and accordingly, there is extensive lawless execution at this point”. Additionally, principle of “reciprocity” is not applied for our foundations in the abroad as well. No matter how much Greek Administration who does not miss any chance to capture Maraş claim right, it is a solid fact that the city was established on the land registered in the name of a foundation. Legal possession and retrospective approach subject are required to be investigated by the specialists.

Potential Results of Opening Maraş

Maraş City has great economic potential. Its land value is calculated around 100 billion U.S. dollars. Re-construction process of Maraş necessitates 2 – 4 billion dollars. During the re-construction process, construction and labor activities, export and transportation of materials and increasing frequency of naval shipment would develop local economy. Upon construction of Maras, more than a million tourists could be welcomed annual by means of 10,000 bed capacity. Opening Maraş would result in increasing commercial activities and accordingly, Mağusa and Girne will be influenced in positively. Employment in Mağusa and sales of goods and service would increase exponentially. Opening of Mağusa harbor to international shipment would vitalize the port operating at quarter capacity currently. Incoming tourists in Mağusa, both old city and other districts, would provide income to the regions. Restoration of historical and cultural monuments in old Mağusa would also contribute into tourism income. However, tourism specialists remark that it would take 5 years for Mağusa to recover to its old days; and it would be pointless to expect making profit before this period. In case Maraş is opened for settlement, it is questionable whether the TRNC economy would benefit from this and what sort of impact would it have on the city; and whether Turkish company would receive share from this development. If Maraş is handed over to the Greek Cypriots, it is considered that Turkish entrepreneurs would not be given much opportunity and future of Greek capital in the city is questionable. On the other hand, in case Maraş is opened under the monitoring of the U.N., it is considered that the organization would provide more fair opportunity to the Turkish

Cypriots. Opening of Maraş City is considered as catalyzer for resolution of the Cyprus crisis (Dağlı, 2011;10-13).

Suggestions for Closed Maraş

Maraş issue is the most vital point of the Cyprus crisis. It is the most prominent tension point between two societies. The city is currently located in the TRNC. Although it was natural to be in control of the winning party after the war, it was closed for settlement after the war for a gesture the crisis has long took until today. In this process, neither a solution has been reached with the crisis nor any step taken for Maraş City. Any step that would be taken in terms of Maraş City, both parties would exhibit reaction. However, without waiting any further, it is necessary to open Maraş City to tourism by means of a project that could be agreed by both parties. A project that could be developed for Maraş should not be postponed to the period after resolution of the crisis; rather, it should be part of the resolution.

In this regard, there are numbers of various studies and different project were suggested. One of the notable ones of these studies was suggested by Ph.D. G.Tankut. It was suggested that the city would be opened to settlement by repairing buildings if their structural statuses are appropriate; by renovating the damaged buildings; and by re-consideration of the region through a new urban design respecting property rights and land prices (Tankut, 1999:195) Another suggestion was to transform Maraş into an eco-city. The plan includes re-creation of the current city by means of green technologies to vitalize the life energy which once existed in the region. The city was to be re-built from scratch. TRNC Deputy Prime Minister, Serdar Denktaş, stated that “Closed Maraş city could be made a film studio” (Milliyet Gazetesi, 26.08.2014). In general, it could be observed that suggestions were revival of Maraş through opening the city for settlement. Prevailing visibility is to develop Maraş as one of the popular entertainment and tourism centers of the world (Dağlı et al., 1998:19).

Museum-City suggestion for Maraş – “Maraş, the City of Peace”

Re-settlement of Maraş is also accompanied with risk of deterioration of existing city texture. The city was transferred into a ghost town for the purpose of bargaining; closed its doors to settlers and turned into a dead city. However, it continues the life in different dimension in itself. Maraş did not experience looting after the war; it was sealed and surrounded by wires against looters. This insulation surrounded the city like a bell-jar. Finally, the present form of the city occurred like everything was frozen for 40 years. The city has not lost its value at all and still persisting against years. This texture should not be lost. Each building in the city has different story. Everyone is curious about this ghost city, its stories, windowless hotels and its lornness; and they are willing to see its current status. On the other hand,

the city is like a historical documentary and it could be considered as exemplary story for humanity. There is no any other city in the world. The closed city Maraş is required to be protected and be transformed into a museum-city; and it must be preserved as “city of peace”. This is suggestion for creating a model to live in “peace”. The city must be a present to history of humanity. Its conservation could be obtained through inclusion into the UNESCO’s World Heritage list. In this regard, international society and governments are responsible as well as universities. The present study was considered within this responsibility aspect.

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