



Risks of Urban Regeneration Projects in Istanbul

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Urban transformations and metamorphosis are reflected directly upon historic cities. Restructuring of social life in various fields always shaped the physical environment. However changes in the physical environment of Istanbul in the recent years follow a different path from that of the past. This puts Istanbul in confrontation with an imposed process instead of a naturally evolving one with limited interventions. The legal framework and organization of this forced transformation is realized in high speed. Currently these projects are to be implemented, again in rush. Such transformation projects are about to initiate irreversible processes that will change historic areas in Istanbul. On one hand new spaces for divergent formations is most wanted by the power of law. On the other hand the stratification of the city dating back to centuries are subjected to regeneration projects that include conservation or restoration work. However the preservation approach in these projects displays an inclination towards “gentrification” at the higher scale. Meanwhile, gentrification bears the risk of denial of the authentic qualities of the actual urban fabric or the buildings. In other words, exchange of the dilapidated, ruinous, poor and marginal character of the present through gentrification is desired. However what is considered as heritage is the accumulation and stratification of all transformations and metamorphoses in the natural stream of history.

In this paper the consequences of urban transformation projects upon cultural assets, specifically at the scale of details will be discussed. Examined by an analytical method the documentary value of a building in a possible urban regeneration zone will be presented.

Documentary value of a structure is the qualities of a cultural asset which needs to be preserved. In this regard, this paper will demonstrate documentary values threatened by the intended urban transformation projects in the Historic Peninsula of Istanbul.

KEY WORDS: Urban transformation, heritage, documentary value, authenticity.