



## **The Dilemma of Cultural Heritage - Urban Renewal: Istanbul, Süleymaniye and Fener-Balat**

**İclal DİNÇER**, Associate Professor  
Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul  
iclaldincer@gmail.com

The structural changes and transformations observed in all aspects of society in the last thirty years have affected the settlement areas of cities deeply. While managing such transformations is becoming increasingly difficult, the government is aiming to reduce its regulating role day by day. Therefore, while the holistic perspective of modern planning is being replaced by fragmented institutional systems, piecemeal projects are becoming more widespread. The planning and project development efforts of over 20 institutions all disregarding one another is the outcome of the last thirty years in Turkey. The year 2000 marks a turning point in this context. The urban interventions that have been focusing on improving the urban infrastructure and organising the housing areas located at the outskirts, are concentrating on the regeneration of city centres in the last ten years. It is especially the historical housing areas, due to their location and cultural heritage advantages that are being perceived as exceedingly attractive areas for investment. Amongst the existing legal arrangements, the Law on Renewal that defines the limits of the urban interventions in areas of preservation and the projects developed alongside the law have been widely discussed in the public domain in the last five years. This article deliberates on the Law on Renewal and the critiques directed towards it, as well as two project areas with points of criticism. Both of the project areas are located in the Historical Peninsula of Istanbul, enlisted in the UNESCO World Heritage List. A comparative analysis of 'Süleymaniye Renewal Area' and 'Fener-Balat Renewal Area', the project development processes of which have been continuing since 2008 and both awaiting implementation, is pursued. The physical and socio-economic effects that will be created through these two distinct projects with different approaches and models of implementation are evaluated.

**KEY WORDS:** Urban conservation, urban renovation model, Istanbul, Renovation Law.