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# Project-Based Urban Renewal and Transformation of Urban Landscape in Turkey

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## Abstract

Nowadays, the effects of capital-based decisions and, therefore transformation has effects on the structure of the existing city, the physical, social, and economic future of the people living in that city, and consequently all the traditions of the city. In this process, the urban landscape rapidly changes and the public urban landscape areas are replaced by the private landscape areas in many cities. In the recent period, within the scope of space's meaning changing for the capitalism and capital accumulation, the cities are rapidly renewed with a model that can be named "project-based urban renewal." The objective of this research is to determine the problems of project-based urban renewal approach and to examine the effects on the urban landscape in Turkey. For this purpose, Kayseri city that comes to the forefront with its planned development history since the proclamation of the Republic in Turkey was selected as the study area. In the study, the project-based renewal projects built in Kayseri province and the changes in the urban landscape were comparatively examined at urban level and structure level in terms of uniform structuring, increase in the density, devastation in the green system, privatization of the public space, and gentrification.

**Keywords:** urban renewal, urban landscape, project-based renewal, planning systems

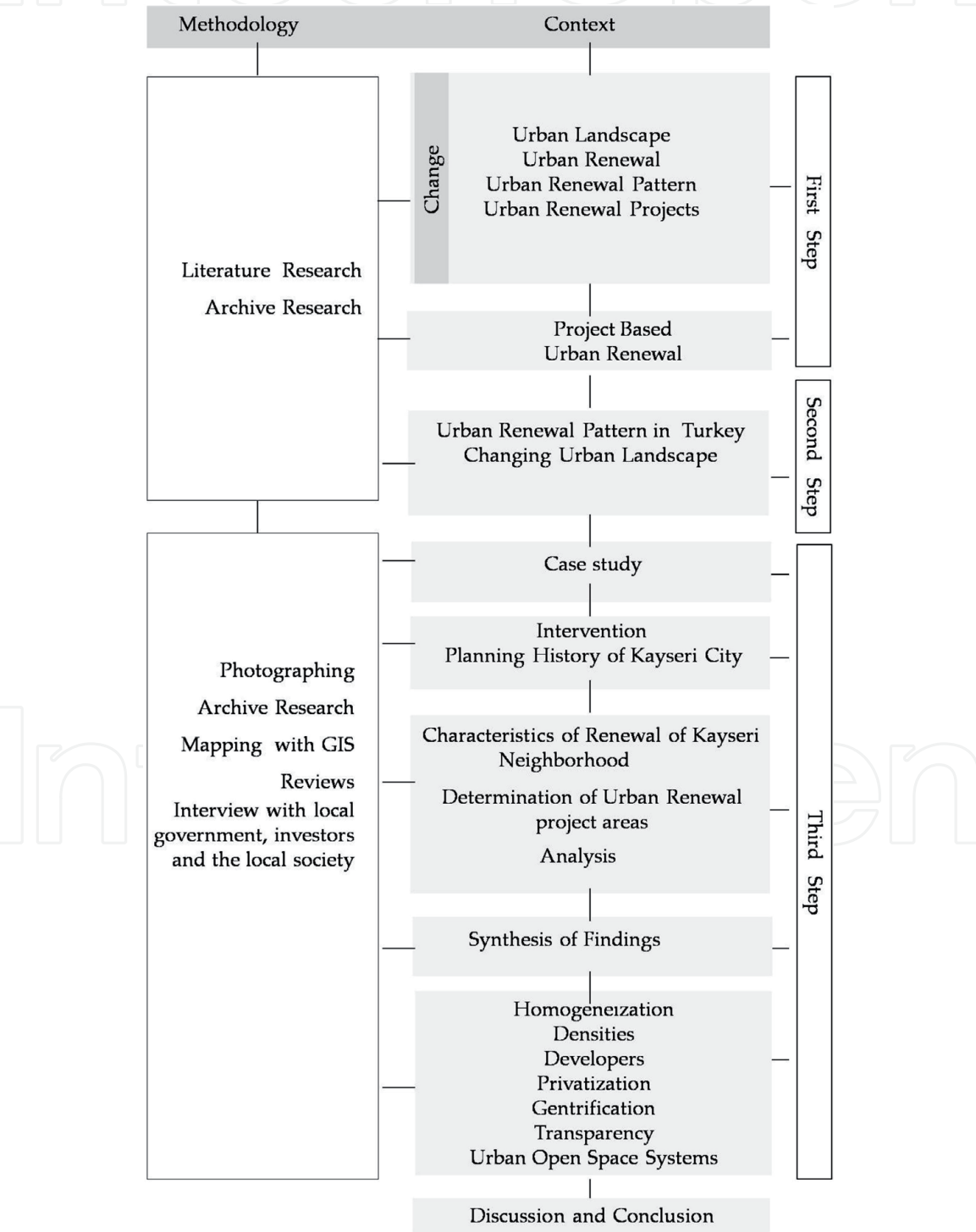
## 1. Introduction

The cities transform through the economic, demographic, social and ecological processes accompanied by the significant functional and structural changes in the urban landscapes. The urban landscape is constantly transforming into a different, because it has a sensitive structure that it carries the records and traces of events and movements [1]. Together with the residential, commercial, industrial, government-institutional, cultural-educational land uses, the patches of remnant vegetation, the secondary green areas such as parks and/or cemeteries, and the lands used for other purposes, the urban landscape mosaic constitutes is a quite complex structure [2].

In the literature, the concept of landscape refers to the complex transformation of the spatial structures through the social and cultural processes and it also refers to the interconnectedness between the spatial and the social aspects [3]. In the

formation of urban landscapes, the data related with the socio-cultural structure is under the significant influence, as well as the physical structure.

From this aspect, the social, economic, environmental, natural and technological transformations also affect the urban area and, thus, the urban landscape constantly changes. The industrial revolution and also the population growth in the late nineteenth century accelerated the process of change. In the recent years, the economic developments but especially the neoliberalism placed the cities into the focus of the economy. The neoliberal policies are known to have spatial consequences [4]. As a coherent and long-term strategy arising from the neoliberal perspective, the production and consumption of the urban and metropolitan territories are debated. "Planning through the urban "projects" has been developed



**Figure 1.**  
*Methodological diagram of the study.*

as the main strategy of stimulating the economic growth” [5]. For this reason, the world witnessed the neoliberal strategies of the economy and governmental policies that started in North America and Western Europe since the late 1970s, then it has expanded elsewhere “in the hope of harmonizing (if not standardizing) economic and social policy” [6].

Together with the neoliberal transformation in the economy, “the development and expansion of industrial capitalism burgeoning the cities increasingly express the powerful impulse toward the centralization of capital” [7] that forces urban projects to re/organize the city space for the accumulation of labor and capital. As a result of this process, the poor and slum neighborhoods turned into the targets of profitable urban renewal projects.

In the present study, firstly, the change of urban renewal patterns and the project-based development process were examined theoretically by making use of literature research. The city of Kayseri, which is defined as the study area, has been developed in a planned manner since the proclamation of the Republic. The transformation in the urban landscape through the project-based urban renewal projects was analyzed together with the transformation planning processes by making use of the theoretical base developed. In this process, the detailed researches were carried out in the study area such as interviews and observations, archive researches, photo documentation. Also GIS-based mapping were used in revealing the overlapping between urban green areas and project areas in order to document the devastation in the green system (**Figure 1**).

## **2. The change of urban renewal pattern**

The urban renewal projects of the nineteenth century focused on solving the problems of industrial cities, as well as sustaining the healthy and livable areas. The context of urban renewal projects dramatically changed especially after World War II. After the WW II, many cities of European countries faced problems such as economic decline, environmental destruction, and social dereliction. It is known that the State concentrates on the urban redevelopment, as well as the urban renewal, downtown revitalization, reconstruction of demolished areas, and public housing programs. Furthermore, the economic benefits of the urban redevelopment projects are also attention-grabbing for the investors and the State. Large amount of profit can be made by selling new and modern units at the city centers. The increase observed in the population density necessitates an increase in the employment opportunities. Moreover, it also accelerates the modernization process of city centers. Furthermore, it also became a tool for the state in order to prevent the inner cities from urban decline [8]. Thus, the main objective of the renewal projects in this period was to sustain the job opportunities by creating the flagship projects located at the older parts of the city centers, as well as increasing the demands for these areas.

The main focus of the urban renewal projects before the 1960s was on the eradication of the landscape observed after the WW II. Within the scope of these projects, the destructed and old houses were cleared off and the reconstruction process was initiated. The increase observed in the highway construction, on the other hand, created an increase in the number of cars owned. Because of these results, many residents left their homes. As a result of this process, many new problems emerged such as the relocation of residents. However, during this process, the commercialization of the city centers also increased and the number of people living in the residential areas decreased as a result of the displacement policies and suburbanization. Moreover, the importance given to protecting the cultural and

natural heritage raised awareness about the historical locations at the city centers. After this Then, evaluating the existing large number of vacant housing stock in historical districts in inner cities became an important approach in the urban renewal agendas. Thus, the urban renewal performed during the aforementioned period can be called “urban rehabilitation” [9].

At the end of the 1970s, the inner city problems, especially depending on economic decline and environmental decay caused restless in societies. Depending on job losses and increases in the rents of houses, an increase was observed in the number of homeless people [10, 11]. The number of urban regeneration projects arose in the inner parts of the cities, where the economic decline, environmental decay, community dereliction, growing unemployment, and some social problems are observed [12]. The urban renewal projects aim to revitalize the old city centers. The common properties of urban renewal projects between the 1960s and 1970s were their comprehensiveness [13]. The urban renewal projects strategies refer to the social and physical rehabilitation of ancient areas in city centers.

Besides the effects of neoliberal political-economic factors, environmental factors too were important after the 1980s while implementing urban renewal projects strategies. According to Knox (1991), there are two important movements that have transformed the economic and socio-cultural structure of societies since the 1980s and they also influenced the urban renewal projects in the built environment of cities. The first among them was the transition from the Fordism (mass consumption and production) to the advanced capitalism concepts such as flexible accumulation, post-Fordism, and postmodernism. The second movement was based on “a philosophical, cultural and attitudinal differentiation from the modernism to the postmodernism” [14]. By making use of these concepts, Knox reported that the new urban patterns and landscapes are created by the relationships between the demand/consumption and the supply/production. The urban decline areas emerged in the built environment because of the changes observed in the demand and supply circuit. The changes in production also reconstructed the occupational structures. The advertising agencies, financial services, media specialists became new popular sectors for the last two decades. These sectors created a new bourgeoisie and also gained a place at the heart of the cities. The employees working at these industries moved from the suburbs to the city centers. The preservation of the old city quarters also attracts these groups and, thus, the gentrification became an inevitable consequence [14].

The tendencies for historic preservation, gentrification, or postmodern architecture became popular in the reformation of the built environment after the 1980s. These terms can be seen as the most visible reflections of the new policies of the new world order in the built environment. Similarly, the slums, old industrial quarters, and the old neighborhoods located at the city center were placed at the focus of the renewal projects of the neoliberal economy. Even though the urban renewal is not a new phenomenon that has emerged in the neoliberal era, the cities and rescaling projects became the key instruments for the entrepreneurial strategies aiming the economic success since the 1980s. The interests of the companies are determined in accordance with these strategies put into realization by the partnership between private and public sectors.

The urban renewal projects were the prominent urban strategy instruments in the 1990s, especially in the European countries, and these projects have been put into practice mainly for the revitalization, improvement, and preservation of the historical city centers or the industrial and commercial centers [15]. Keleş also stated that, over the last 20 years, the concept of regeneration turned from a physical definition into a more complex set of propositions that combine the social, cultural and economic objectives. In the majority of these regeneration projects, a significant amount of urban employment has been created [16].



The production methods and employment structure have also transformed and this transformation has also brought have new requirements from the aspect of urban systems. The traditional local economic progress became weaker because of the knowledge-based economy, negligence of the local interest, as well as the economic globalization. On the other hand, these factors also strengthened the effects of the external factors on the urban development. For instance, because of the globalization, the economic and cultural bonds in the city weakened and this caused the deepening social exclusion and deprivation (**Table 1**).

The cities of today promote themselves as a “world city,” “global city,” “knowledge city,” “creative city,” etc., in an entrepreneurial and competitive way. From the aspect of the competing cities, the neoliberal urban strategies such as privatization of public spaces, large-scale urban projects, residential housing projects, large-scale advertising and promotion campaigns of cities, highly speculative flagship or mega projects, dissemination of imaginary and brand cities, commodification of city centers, new consumerist practices of cities, and promotion of cosmopolitan city-center lifestyle come to the forefront [18–23].

### 2.1 Urban renewal projects

In literature, the urban renewal projects refer to a process of remodeling the urban areas by the means of rehabilitation, conservation, and redevelopment. The urban renewal projects are put into practice in various ways. The main urban renewal strategies can be exemplified as *urban revitalization*, *urban redevelopment*, *urban rehabilitation* and *urban regeneration* [24].

The *urban redevelopment* refers to destructing the existing buildings and changing the land use at that location [25]. However, the redevelopment approach also refers to the implementation of new projects replacing the existing building stock, which are in severely deteriorated status and have no preservation value or in which the arrangement of buildings cannot provide the satisfactory living conditions [8]. Moreover, this approach added new functional characteristics in order to revitalize the project area more from social and economic aspects. Generally, the redevelopments include the reconstruction of new buildings on the cleared land.

Period	Urban renewal pattern
1950	The rebuilding of new urban uses for the replacement of old uses, the elimination of physical problems from the past and cities often based on a master plan, suburban growth
1960	Continuation of the 1950s approach. Suburban rehabilitate, peripheral growth
1970	Give priority to urban improvement and urban renewal projects Acceptance of the link between physical deterioration and social distortion, Projects focused on social problems
1980	Major schemes of development and redevelopment Flagship projects downtown and outside Cooperation with the public-private sector Visible reflections of new policies of new world orders
1990	Move toward a more comprehensive form of policy and practice more emphasis on integrated treatments Revitalization, improvement, and preservation of historical city centers or industrial and commercial centers
2000	The change in the concept of urban renewal from the “urban project” Market-led and project-based development

**Table 1.**  
*The evaluation of urban renewal in Western countries [17].*

The urban redevelopment projects have been generally put into practice in the 1980s.

The *urban revitalization* refers to “the process, through which the disagreement between the services offered by the texture of the old regions and the contemporary needs can be eliminated” [26]. The urban revitalization aims to sustain the vibrant economy at the city center, as well as regaining the declining areas by developing new functions at those locations. The urban revitalization projects have played a dominant role in the declining areas since the 1960s. Doratli emphasized two types of urban revitalization [26]. The concepts stated by Doratli were the physical revitalization and the economic revitalization. The physical revitalization refers to the renewal incorporating the demolition, refurbishment, and conversion. The urban rehabilitation, on the other hand, means more than the revitalization since it incorporates the social improvement and the objective of raising awareness of society about the urban heritage. Moreover, the urban revitalization can be seen as an objective of urban rehabilitation processes [26]. The economic revitalization refers to a strategy that aims to create a vibrant economy in the old historical districts and economically disadvantaged regions. The historical urban regions play an important role for tourism and the economic potential of historical areas came to the forefront in last 30 years. The historical urban regions’ adaptation to the global economic policies was continued by the strategies of urban renewal projects such as the urban revitalization. Moreover, the development of commercial and business centers in the declining segments of the city centers significantly contributed to the vibrant economic environments.

The *urban rehabilitation* refers to “the large-scaled interventions aiming to recover and update a lost or deteriorated function. The rehabilitation process includes different types of interventions ranging from the territory and urban areas to the building itself.” The rehabilitation projects’ main objective is to enhance the conditions of current building stock, infrastructure, as well as protecting the original character of the urban texture and removing the physical stock causing the urban decline [27]. The beginning of urban rehabilitation projects in the built environment in western countries dates back to the 1960s. According to Günay (1991), the urban revitalization and urban rehabilitation projects refer to the efforts aiming to keep existing inhabitants and property ownership pattern constant in the target area [27].

As stated by Weaver, there are two ways of applying or making use of the urban renewal. The first one refers to the interventions such as slum clearance and urban redevelopment. Constructing highways, establishing public works, and also the demolition and construction activities transform the physical structure of cities. The urban renewal projects fitting to this type have been widely put into practice between the industrial period and WW II [9]. The second use is urban regeneration programs for urban rehabilitation, which are financed by local and private funds. The second type of urban renewal projects has been widely applied, especially in the 1970s.

## **2.2 Project based urban renewal**

The shifts in economies from the liberal to the neo-liberal policies increased the value of the city centers. The dominant approach of urban policies in the 1980s was the economic development based on the sustainability approach with the *project based urban renewal*.

In the recent years, the renewal is understood as a more controlled process that is carried out via different projects and strategies [28–30], whereas the regeneration (or revitalization) is explained as more spontaneous process

taken place prevailing in Central and Eastern European cities in the context of market-led urban development and slight intervention of public authorities [31–33]. Project-based projects, which are public-sector led and later partnership-based, are designed to capitalize on those sectors of economy which have growth potential [34].

The aforementioned process was a consequence of the market-based structure of the project-based urban renewal approach. In fact, the market-based urban renewal emerged after the political transformation and the emergence of market-based economies especially 1990. This segment refers to a large group consisting of a great variety of interventions with changing patterns of objectives, stakeholders, financial systems and political willingness, but characterized by some common elements, especially the extension of private financing and the relatively weakness of urban planning and regulation.

This fact does not exclude the presence of the programs incorporating the role of the public sector. The planned patterns of the urban renewal have two important common characteristics. First, all of the interventions were applied in parallel with the market-based interests and the main outcome that was expected was the increased attractiveness for the city or the neighborhood. So, gentrification was inevitably a result. Second, almost all of the interventions were limited to the physical renovation/renewal, whereas social, cultural, environmental, global urban factors remained secondary and they were often mostly ignored.

There was no doubt that these processes were differentiated every countries. For example, market-based urban regeneration in the Eastern-Central European countries was related to the transition of these countries and cities from a state led system to a decentralized and market-oriented system. The most important of these processes was the reform of the housing system implemented in all countries, but there were only minor differences in character and timing.

As a consequence of the decentralization and privatization, the housing stock, which is a basic element of urban renewal, was depleted. The house ownership increased everywhere and public rental diminished. This development has a particular importance regarding urban renewal, and run-down inner city areas were affected in a specific way. While a growing number of inhabitants became owners of their housing, they often had no further capacities to contribute to the renewal of the common parts of the condominiums. As a result of the privatization, the local governments' physical intervention abilities were generally limited to the interventions in public areas, streets, squares, public buildings etc. However, they actually have no capacity to support the housing renovation. It can also be stated that this approach may be seen as the consequence of the *economic weakness of the local governments*.

In the literature, there are two methods of implementing the housing renewal; "property-led" and "area-based." The regeneration concept was developed in order to define the housing policies, legal tools, and programs aiming to re-organize the areas especially in the city center, which lost their functionality, that are transforming into areas of physical degradation and that need structural strengthening.

In the literature, the property-led regeneration practices refer to the prestigious projects having outstanding architectural and functional features, as well as the economic expectations they create [35]. The property-led regeneration significantly transforms the urban form on the specific decayed or deteriorated site and shares the same parcel units while neglecting social and economic sustainability at all. *Property-Led Development* can be defined as "the assembly of finance, land, building materials and labor to produce or improve buildings for occupation and investment purposes" [36]. The property-led regeneration involves the regeneration of an inner-city area by changing the image of the area, improving the



environment, attracting private investment and improving confidence for further investment.

The main task of the public administration in property-led regenerations, which are led by the private sector, is described as the provision of a platform, coordination in capital stocks and investments, and efficient organization of local institutions. The task of coordination is suggested to bring together central government, related public institutions and local administration [37]. Despite the positive aspects of property-led regenerations from the aspect of economic development, the necessity of enhancing the role of inhabitants of deprived areas in the local economy is also criticized. On the other hand, the economic focus of the problem is frequently criticized because it causes an uncontrolled development [36].

*The area-based regeneration* refers to the redevelopment of a neighborhood that has integrity in its structure. The main objective here is to develop a program combining the physical, economic and social aspects of the physically degraded and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. The property-led regeneration is an economy-based approach; however, the area-based regeneration concept initiated numerous programs and policies until the 2000s in many of the European countries particularly in France, the Netherlands, and the UK. The intention to bring physical, social and economic gain at the same time, the area-based regeneration programs have generally failed in achieving this goal [38].

In recent years, it was possible to identify a shift in the political discourse since the policy-makers and practitioners became interested in facilitating the involvement of local people in the process of developing the area-based regeneration initiatives because it is understood that the renewal begins from a proper understanding of communities. Furthermore, it is also clear that, even when the policy-makers and practitioners tried to employ a more bottom-up and community-centered approach in regeneration, the necessities on local administrations and other partners to incorporate the local society provided neither the time nor the resources to support this involvement. There are numerous different forms of the area-based policies. The most frequently seen type is a top-down mixture of different types of (physical, economic, social) interventions. Another type, which gained a place in the 2000s, was characterized with the efforts made in order to increase the role of local residents.

### **3. The change of urban renewal pattern in Turkey**

The massive immigration from rural areas to big cities of Turkey began as a consequence of the industrialization. The increase in the population of metropolitan areas has reached high levels and the urbanization pressure has increased. Urbanization process started in a short time and the demand for urban land and housing increased to a very high level. As a result, especially housing needs of increasing population has been the most important agenda. These developments caused the urban renewal to the agenda and then the urban landscapes changed because of these practices (**Table 2**).

Turkey's urban developments in the 1980s and 1990s have remarkable similarities with the worldwide trends. Since the 1980s, the far-reaching administrative changes of the new era foreshadowed the upcoming urban developments. However, many trials have been failed until the 1990s. After that new strategies and approaches have been embraced in order to fix squatting and urbanization problems.

The increasing liberalization and globalization of the Turkish economy, further reflecting many other countries' experiences, the state in Turkey has played

Periods	Urban renewal pattern	Changing urban landscape
1923/1950	Turkish cities to sustain physical transformation in the built environment under the effects of modernization movements	Grid urban texture, residential areas which made by Garden-city approach <i>Build a new modern city</i>
1950/1980	Between the years of 1950 and 1980, the economic growth in large cities pulled people from rural to urban area. As a result of the rapid urbanization, the vacant areas in large cities were transformed into squatter housing areas	Beginning in the 1950s and continuing throughout this period, the medium-rise (five to seven stories, two or three units per floor), reinforced-concrete frame apartment buildings on small urban lots became the generic residential typology in Turkish cities. <i>Urban Apartments and Squatter Housing Areas</i>
1980/2000	Suburbanization, new residential developments were seen in the outer parts of the cities gentrification processes took place in historic districts User-built first-generation <i>squatter</i> was progressively replaced by higher-rise, multi-unit apartments, now produced by a speculative process of commercialized, profit-driven, frequently illegal, and substandard construction.	The establishment of the Mass Housing Administration in 1984, with the aim of providing credit for large-scale production of low- and middle-income housing, has played an important role in the proliferation of standardized, multi-unit, high-rise blocks. Higher rise (twelve to twenty-four stories and more) residential typologies, often built with prefabricated techniques and rationalized construction processes <i>Residential towers, shopping malls, hypermarkets entire new edge cities</i>
2000/today	Urban land became highly commoditized, the regulation of land market became an important asset of governments <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to prepare a legal basis for new investments for land development in urban development projects by privatization of state land</li><li>• announcement of urban transformation and development projects</li><li>• create new institutions</li><li>• (re) organize the market</li></ul>	Newly developed high-rise office buildings, luxury residences, gigantic shopping malls, mega-urban projects designed by star architects, numerous touristic entertainment facilities and mega-events, which are similar to urban projects elsewhere Gated Communities and Suburban Expansion <i>Project-based urban renewal</i>

**Table 2.**  
*Urban renewal and changing urban landscape in Turkey.*

a central role in engineering the market and the form of these urban projects. This nation-state led policy change had a significant consequence for the cities of Anatolia as they were able to nurture their export base and reach new international markets. At the same time, increasing decentralization efforts, again initiated by the nation-state, granted larger resources and greater responsibilities to the municipal governments. Thus, the local actors in the Anatolian cities gained increasing recourse to the market-based practices benefiting more from the market-based instruments of re-zoning urban land. The role of the State in the formation of the land and property market, its major role in designating and implementing the urban renewal projects, and its authority of determining the terms and conditions of the projects without allowing the participation of other parties define the current focus of urbanization as state-led urban development [21, 39].

The period of the 1980s constitutes a milestone in terms of changing the public response to the urban regeneration. The previous objectives (provision of housing,

public amenities, and specific emphasis to the people having a low level of income) were put aside and the economic growth measured by the concentration of private investment became the sole criterion of the success for urban revitalization.

By the 2000s, the partnerships between local authorities and private sector arose. The urban renewal projects are implemented not only in slum areas but also in areas that are sensitive to natural hazards. Until 2012, there was no general law enacted for the urban renewal projects. The urban renewal projects were applied either region-specific laws or Law No. 5393 and 5272 municipality law. The urban renewal projects were applied by the authorized agencies. According to Article 73 of Law No. 5272 municipal law, these authorized agencies are metropolitan municipalities, country municipalities within the boundary of the metropolitan municipality, provincial municipalities, and municipalities larger than the population of 50,000. The current law applied to the urban renewal projects is Law No. 5393 municipal law.

According to this law, “The municipality shall implement urban transformation and development projects in order to create residential areas, industrial zones, commercial areas, techno-parks, recreational areas and any sort of social reinforcement areas, to reconstruct and restore the wearing segments of city, to protect the historical and cultural structure of city, and to take measures against the earthquake risk. In order for an area to be declared as urban transformation and development area, one or several of aforementioned criteria shall be found within the borders of municipal or neighboring borders.” The law does not allow the metropolitan municipalities to declare urban renewal and development area without any limitation or supervision or allowance.

The 1999 İzmit earthquake was the crucial point for the urban renewal projects in Turkey. The government aimed to identify high-risk areas that are sensitive to possible natural hazards and re-arrange building stock that is out of standards. The government, private sector, and real estate investment trusts have attention on illegal and non-standard slums in city centers [40].

After 2011 van earthquake, the government took serious steps for demolishing illegal buildings and regenerating old ones; therefore Law No. 6306, known as “Urban Regeneration Law,” officially named as “Law on Restructuring of Areas Under Risk of Natural Disasters” entered into force in May 2012.

After 2012, the urban renewal became one of the most frequently discussed problems in Turkey’s urbanization process and practice. The law takes the earthquake risk as base and it addresses the renewal of buildings, which are in danger of an earthquake. The law defines the implementation processes and tools for both property- and area-based regeneration projects. Law No. 6306 introduced the term “risky building” and it defines this term as the buildings located in any area that is under the risk of an earthquake or the buildings scientifically and technically found to face the danger of collapse or get seriously damaged in an earthquake. The law simplifies the process of demolishing of a risky building and constructing a new one.

Since the entry of the Law No. 6306, a significant increase was observed in the numbers of property- and area-led regeneration projects. To date, due to their widespread effects on the socio-cultural and physical texture of the city and the project-based renewal projects were widely discussed. While the existing buildings are renewed through the property-led renewal, a significant transformation is also observed in the residential areas from the aspects of physical, social and economic environmental characteristics, as the overall effect of these implications.

The urban renewal projects are generally put into practice in order to improve the unplanned and problematic areas, occupied public lands, regions under disaster risks, and cultural and historic areas surrounded by the illegal settlements. It can be stated that the project areas are generally located around the city centers, where the land is of relatively higher value. In Turkey, the urban renewal projects

were put into practice in order to convert the illegal squatter settlements into the well-planned modern commodities via the Housing Development Administration of Turkey and private corporations. Because, the squatter housing areas and old-historical quarters of cities do not only cause transformation in the physical structure of cities but they also affect the social, economic and environmental dynamics in the built environment. The municipalities with squatter or illegal established housing areas within their boundaries make use of the urban transformation and regeneration projects in order to enhance the living conditions and physical built environment with the standards of a contemporary lifestyle in transforming aforementioned areas into the prestigious regions [41].

In Turkey, it is understood that the “project-based method” is the most common and “market-based” and “area-based” methods for urban renewal projects. The Urban Renewal Project strategies such as urban rehabilitation, urban redevelopment, urban revitalization, and urban regeneration have an important place in the public discussions and the urban planning agenda, especially for the last 20 years. There are two main alternative approaches to implementing the model:

(a) demolishing the illegal settlements, constructing new houses in the same area, and allocating them to the right holders, and (b) constructing new houses in a different area to transfer the right holders living in the upgrading area [42].

The investment in urban land and the formation of a speculative land market had an important effect on the urban economies and the development of new urban projects. The urbanization plan was designed on the basis of the idea of deindustrializing the metropolitan centers, which are intended to serve as the bases of the finance and service sectors. This laid the foundation of the state-led regeneration projects in the old industrial districts and working-class neighborhoods, as well as the gentrification of the neighborhoods located at the city centers and the megaprojects including gigantic shopping malls, high-rise office buildings, gated residential communities, and luxury condominiums.

As the urban land became highly commoditized, the regulations related with the land market became an important asset of governments in Turkey. The state has become one of the most important actors in the market, directing the privatization of state-owned lands, providing land for urban development projects, preparing legal grounds for new investments and announcing the fields of urban renewal and development projects [43].

#### **4. Urban renewal and changing Kayseri city**

The city of Kayseri, where the first practices of urban planning activities in Turkey were initiated and which remained at the forefront of the planned development process since the proclamation of the Republic, was selected as the study area. Kayseri's urban renewal process showed considerable similarities to the trends in Turkey. After the defeat of Ottoman Empire, the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923. In this period, the main purpose of the state was to reconstruct the national economy and make institutional developments in the economy. In order to create the new and modern environments, the state made reforms and applied new master plans for eliminating the effects of World War I and transforming the traditional Turkish society into a modern one. The national economic policies were applied in order to establish a bourgeoisie class and to fasten the social-economic transformation [44].

Big public works and urban reconstruction projects were applied in Turkish cities in the process of the establishment of the new country. Danger plan for Izmir, prost plan for Istanbul and Ölsner-Aru plan for Kayseri are examples of master plans at this period [44, 45]. The planned development and modernization



activities played important role in Kayseri since the proclamation of the republic. Until the 2000s, it can be said that the renewal processes of the city have developed according to the plan (**Table 3**).

This city was partially planned for the public investments in the 1/8000 scale schematic Çaylak plan, which has been prepared in 1933. As a reflection of this modernist approach, the urban plan of this city was prepared by Kemal Ahmet Aru-Öelsner from a holistic approach in the year 1945. In the plan prepared by him, the gridded urban design incorporating the wide boulevards, which was accepted as the main representation of those years and constituting the main pattern of the city, became dominant.

After the 1950s, the squatter housing areas became apparent in city pattern. The migration from rural to urban areas formed housing problem in cities, because the housing stock was not enough for newcomers. They constructed substandard housing units on the public land. At the beginning of the 1960s, some of the squatter housing districts transformed into illegal, and high rise apartment stocks, whereas the vote potential of squatter housing districts has been used by politicians. In this period, Kayseri began to canalize their capital, which they had been accumulating through commerce, into industrial investment and, as a result, urban mobilization began.

Another important period is the one after 1970. The second master plan prepared by Yavuz Taşçı, an architect, in 1975, the city center was reinforced and a

Plans	Impact of plan on urban landscape	Urban renewal patterns
33 Çaylak plan	Modernist The distinction of the old and new city part Grid system neighborhood Establishment of public spaces	Urban rehabilitation (on existing urban texture)
1945 Oelsner-Aru plan	Reflection of modernization on space Destruction of an urban site Grid system Garden city effect Detached, extroverted houses	Urban revitalization (on existing housing stock) Clearance (on traditional housing texture)
1975 Taşçı plan	Linear development Sectoral distinction in the city Metropolitan city vision Identify urban sites Transition to multistory construction	Urban rehabilitation (on existing urban texture) Urban conservation (on urban historical site)
1986 Topaloğlu-Berksan plan	Linear development Metropolitan city approach Shrinkage of historical site boundaries Multistory construction Building layout flexible/uncertain	Urban rehabilitation (on existing urban texture) Urban redevelopment Urban renewal (on squatter areas)
2006 Doğan plan	Urban expansion as a spreading “oil stain” Radial urban texture Building pressure on natural and urban sites Density increase Transformation of squatter areas into multistory residential areas Gated sites Mass housing construction Expansion of municipal boundaries and merger with semi-rural settlements Grid urban texture Urban projects Urban renewal as an intervention tool	Urban revitalization (on existing housing stock) Urban rehabilitation (on existing urban texture) Urban conservation (on urban historical site) Urban renewal (on squatter areas) Urban redevelopment (Gated sites)

**Table 3.**  
*Urban landscape and urban renewal pattern in Kayseri.*

development plan with a single center and linear form were designed. In this period, the city's traditional districts (which were filled with ornate mansion-houses mostly dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) were demolished. Besides, the historical trade center was transformed into the modern city business center. New housing development areas were set across from the west to the east side of the city. Therefore, the city was converted from compact to linear form. The development plan suggested constructing broad boulevards and high-rise buildings which are still characteristic features of the city of Kayseri [45–47].

In 1986, a new master development plan was prepared by Topaloğlu and Berksan. Similar to the previous period, high-rise buildings and housing projects for middle and upper-income groups increased and the use of new materials and techniques was common in this period [45]. The first renewal projects were performed at the parcel-level by contractors.

During the 1990s, in Kayseri, market-based policies became more important for the city. The period that began under Karatepe's leadership in 1994 demonstrated that these municipal practices favored export-oriented policies and the liberalization of the Turkish economy [48, 49]. The privatization of municipal services continued at a greater level, especially after 1999. This process entailed a model popularly known as build-operate-transfer. During this period, the basic spatial practices were large-scale housing projects, transport and infrastructure projects, thematic-parks and sports facilities, museums, historic urban texture renewal projects, traditional public spaces projects (streets, squares, and parks) and mixed-use projects [45, 48].

Depending on the initiatives taken in laws regarding the urban transformation in the 2000s, the renewal practices gained significant speed in Kayseri city and entire country world In Kocasinan district, Ziyagökalp, Yenidoğan, Seyrani, Ahi Evran, Yunusemre, Argıncık, Yeşil Mahalle, Kuşcu, Oruçreis, Mithatpaşa, Erkiilet, Yıldızevler, and Uğurevler neighborhoods were announced as the urban renewal areas under the conditions specified by law on municipalities No. 5393 Art. 73. But, besides these squatter areas, also the neighborhoods that are nearby the city center

District	Neighborhood	Area (ha)	Population (persons)
Kocasinan	Ahievran	25.5	240
Kocasinan	Cırkalan	260.55	397
Kocasinan	Sahabiye	50	5341
Kocasinan	Seyrani	5.1	340
Kocasinan	Uğurevler	87.23	6240
Kocasinan	Yunus Emre	7.3	780
Kocasinan	Yıldızevler	27	1628
Kocasinan	Ziya Gökalp	23.25	1568
Melikgazi	Anbar	5.8	268
Melikgazi	Karacaoğlu	3.7	284
Melikgazi	Küçük Ali	3.5	336
Melikgazi	Kazım Karabekir	32	1392
Melikgazi	Yeni Mahalle	85.53	2752
	Total	593.21	21,566

**Table 4.**  
*Urban renewal areas in Kayseri province.*

and have a historical background and subjected to habitability certification such as Sahabiye, Küçük Ali, Battalgazi, and Karacaoğlu neighborhoods were also declared as the urban renewal zones (**Table 4**).

In Melikgazi district, the project processes of Kazım Karabekir and Anbar neighborhoods within the scope of law No. 6306 on renewal of regions under the risk of disaster were almost completed, and the implementation stage was started. Besides the renewal of 593.21 ha area influencing 21,000 users in Kayseri province, also the urban renewal requests were placed for Argıncık, Yeşil Mahalle, Kuşçu Mahallesi, Mithatpaşa, Erkilet, Bahçeşehir, Yavuzlar, Oruç Reis, Pervane neighborhoods and (in Melikgazi district) Kılıçarslan, Battalgazi and Seyitgazi neighborhoods.

## 5. Findings and discussion

Thirteen areas, which are to be subjects of a renewal project, have been determined in the light of the information gained from Melikgazi and Kocasinan. According to the examinations, the formation ideas of the areas in Kayseri, which were 1944 Oelsner-Aru plan, 1975 Yavuz Taşçı plan, 1986 Toplağlı- Berksan, 2006 Doğan plan already transformed or whose renewal decisions were taken, are mostly based upon 2006 plan decisions. The reason for this situation, after 2000, as a result of the economic growth of the city of Kayseri, it is the increase of renewal pressure in the space depending on the competitive processes.

Kayseri is going through a period of urban projects changing the urban landscape. However, the previous researches showed that the number of holistic projects with economic, social, and physical objectives is limited. Investigating Kayseri from the aspects of the basic characteristics of urban regeneration areas and categorizing the city as area-based and site-specific projects, it can be seen that the site-specific projects are at the forefront.

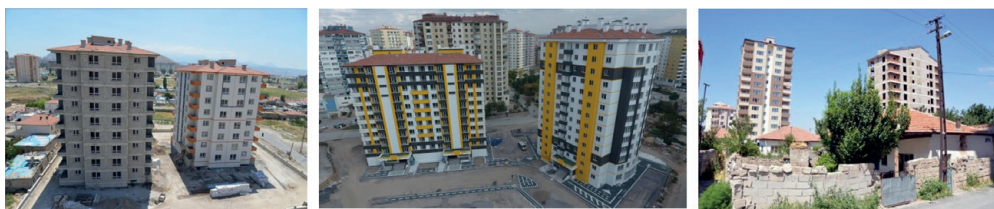
When we consider the renewal process as a whole; we can identify the things below;

### 5.1 Homogeneous architecture and urban environments

Even handle with best intentions and professional care, larger areas designed by single designers or groups of designers lack the heterogeneity of urban neighborhoods (**Figure 2**).

The Turkish word for “neighborhood” is mahalle. While the mahalle is the urban residential space, this word also refers to a space of social memory in Turkish popular culture defined by familiarity, belonging and tolerance in a local. In these areas, where people feeling belonging to the neighborhood live, people are in a close relationship in their daily lives. The physical renewal affects the social structure deeply (**Figure 3**).

In the neighborhoods that have been partially transformed, there are problems of not only of the new gentry but also a homogenous urban usage. These areas



**Figure 2.**  
*Homogeneous architecture (Karacaoğlu, Anbar, Mithatpaşa Neighborhoods, 2018) [49].*



quickly turned into the centers of new life and got invaded by the cafes, restaurants, boutiques. For this reason, they became the areas attracting tourists at most and losing the sense of a real urban neighborhood.

## 5.2 Possible gentrification

Without careful public interference, private initiatives as well as government-led projects both lead to a complete change of inhabitants as well as urban character. Before the projects, the social geography of the neighborhoods was marked by its heterogeneous population, which suffered from poverty and the impacts of forced migration to this area because of poverty concentrated in this neighborhood. The central location of the neighborhood, which offers easy access to the informal labor markets in the center, cheap rent levels available abandoned building stock underlies the existence of very diverse and the least privileged groups in the neighborhood. After this project, the people living in the area started to leave there. No social policies, programs were integrated into the culture and tourism-based urban renewal scheme and no fixed measures were undertaken in order to keep the current population of Kayseri urban site in the area while improving their living conditions.

## 5.3 Extreme densities

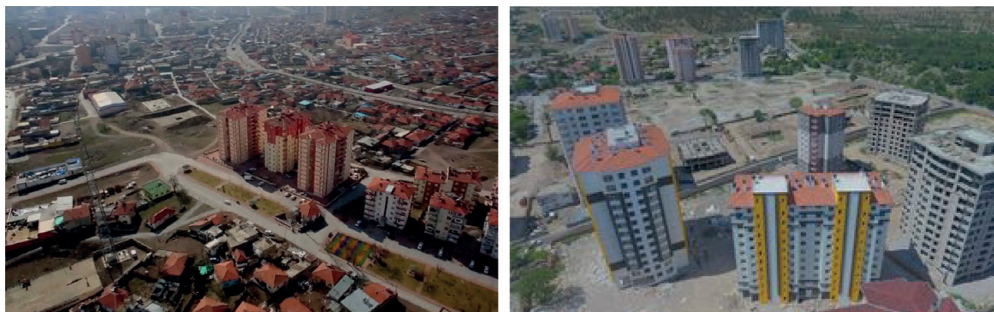
In the case of renewal, in accordance with the general view, urban densities need to be increased in order to create a viable economic model without re-placing original inhabitants. However, in areas such as Sahabiye, Yeni Mahalle and Ahi Evran neighborhoods (**Figure 4**), higher densities increase the pressure on infrastructure, roads and public facilities. Because of these insufficient systems, quality of life is reduced and does not provide planning standards. In addition, these projects are exemplary and rapid transformations are observed in the neighborhoods, city centers and city boundaries after these applications.

A new texture, that cannot be adapted and articulated with the existing texture is formed, the urban landscape is deteriorating in its entirety.

## 5.4 No interest by developers

In the case of models such as “Support,” it may sometimes be very hard to draw the attention of developers because the areas in urgent need of transformation are not the primary targets in order to achieve a higher economic gain in the city.

Investors do not show any interest in places where weathered and unqualified housing stock, such as the Fevzi Çakmak Quarter and Argıncık Quarter, are high. The most important reason for this is the fact that because of the lack of



**Figure 3.**  
*Homogenous urban environments (Kazım Karabekir Neighborhoods) (2018) [50].*





**Figure 4.**  
*Extreme densities (Sahabiye Neighborhood) (2018) [51].*

attractiveness, investors believe that will not be able to get the economic value of their investments.

### **5.5 Transparency**

Due to the controversial structures of renewal projects, decision makers and practitioners do not tend to be transparent in order to reduce public reaction and are trying to implement them in a hastily. The developers and designers of these projects are usually government-dependent and have the power to advance the system rapidly. The interviews conducted in the fields, usually until the last moment, it was seen that the people do not have any information that their neighborhoods have been declared as renewal area.

It was understood that the people living in the neighborhood obtained the information about the project from the visuals held in the negotiation process after the implementation decision and from the visuals displayed around the project area.

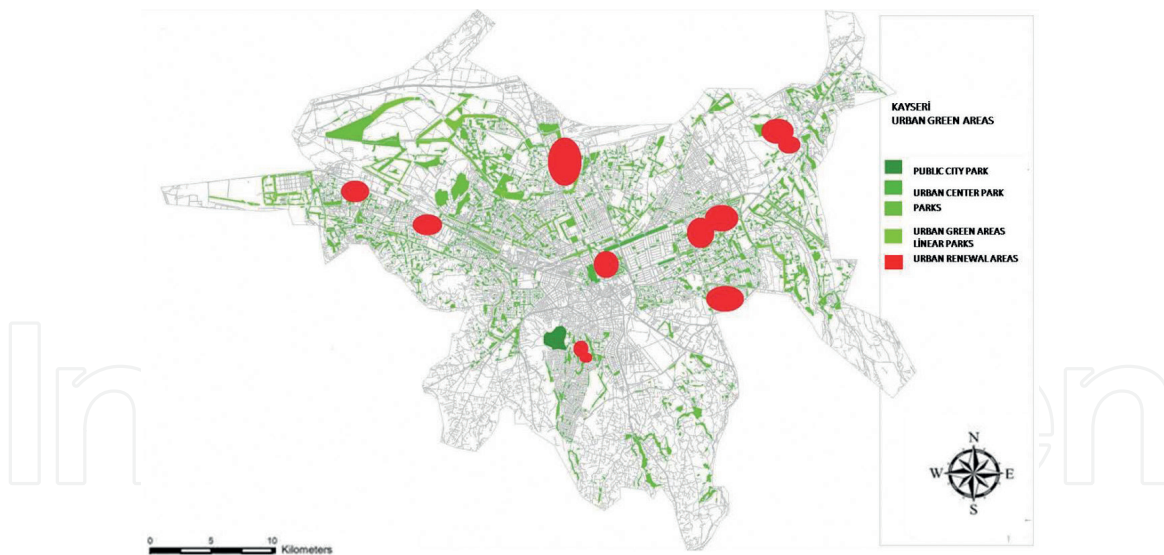
### **5.6 The regions have seen a mission developer**

These areas have become an attraction for new investments. This entrepreneurial role is significant in the sense that the situation of severe disinvestment in the neighborhood would not be halted by private investors.

### **5.7 The deterioration of urban open space system**

These projects, which take place on the urban green system, harm the integrity of the system after the transformation in the area (**Figure 5**). These areas, which mostly serve the integrity of gardens and parks and open, semi-open green space, make the system inadequate with new typology.

Another aspect of these constructed spaces is the way, in which the open spaces are used within these projects. Increasingly, the shopping malls and the other facilities are constructed with the functional open spaces around the buildings. Some of these are in the form of parks landscaped with exotic plants and benches, some others are designed as small plazas with marble pavements. In the beginning, these open spaces were just a part of the architecture of the projects. However, in the course of time, they turned into extensions of shopping malls and recreational facilities. Increasingly, the previously mentioned claim of providing a desirable public space to the residents and customers of the projects has evolved into a new form through the “public events” organized by the managements of these newly constructed projects.



**Figure 5.**  
 Kayseri urban green areas [45] and urban renewal areas map.

## 5.8 Privatization of public open spaces

These places they use are safe, monitored, clean and convenient in order to meet their demands, as well as free from the unwanted urban crowds. The major similarity between these projects is their claim to bring the public and private realms together. The perceptions of urban residents about the “publicness” of the urban space also have an important part in the formation of these projects. The ways in which the urban middle classes think about different parts of the city elevates the demand for the lifestyle offered by such projects and thereby encourage the investment to the construction of privatized public spaces.

## 6. Conclusion

The urban landscape is a complex structure which is a result of the interaction between human and his environment. It also involves a social dimension, a cultural dimension, and an economic dimension. Therefore, they inherit communities’ values, beliefs, and symbolic meanings occurring and changing in the course of the time. They change as the communities change, the lifestyles change, and the global economy changes. The urban renewal or revitalization is related with not only the old or the other buildings and the environment or rent but also with the collective memory, symbolic meanings embedded to buildings and structures, and the values attached to the space for centuries by the people living in the area.

In Turkish metropolitan cities, similarly to Kayseri city, the most significant renewal projects of the past decade have been increasingly in the form of “project based” in terms of their size and cost. Urban renewal projects’ main aims are to improve the social mix, to improve the environment, as well as the quality of life of inhabitants and city dwellers, to promote rehabilitation of complex urban structures, to preserve the valuable and unique fabric of the selected areas, to control-reverse the deterioration of specific urban zones (i.e. residential, commercial, etc.), to restructure economic activities located in the urban fabric, to sustain urban landscape. These are a very important issue in terms of the renewal process. Social goals may be the main focus in the context of a national policy for combining urban social fabric and larger social structure. Although sustainable development goals such as improved living conditions, existing structural equipment and risk

prevention and protection are never ignored, they are rarely the main focus. Targets should also include:

- To restore buildings;
- Improvement of infrastructure and public systems;
- Identify, analyze and identify working needs and opportunities for selected areas (urban core, out-of-city, etc.);
- Developing new business and professional opportunities;
- Establishment of indirect measures (infrastructure) and direct instruments to promote economic growth;
- Organize capacity building for institutions and organizations responsible for urban management and physical planning;
- Strengthening the provision of community-based integrated core services for vulnerable groups;
- Strengthen communities by increasing their problem solving, management and negotiation skills;
- Promote public participation at the national level for urban renewal policy and support;
- Developing transparent and participatory policy.

However, as in many countries and in our country, there can be discrepancies in the theory and post-practice. The economic development should also be encouraged, especially in an era where the world order is designed by competitiveness; however, it should not be the primary goal and the considerations should not be separated from its role as a public entity. In addition, historical urban housing areas are no longer seen as “common public assets” and thus designated renewal areas are not viewed as society’s common cultural capital.

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