

FINAL EXAM QUESTION: DISCUSSION OF PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE
CONSERVATION OF TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS WITHIN THE
FRAMEWORK OF PLANNING

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After facing the situation in conservation issues of traditional residential architecture with a planning student's background, I dare to say that certain ideas have formed in my head as to how planning and conservation come together, what kind of problems arise out of this, and how planning stands as a tool for better solutions. In a short nutshell of main ideas; it appears that a lot is to be said about the interaction between the plan-making process, conservation committees and the rest of the legal framework. Other relevant key concepts include the literature belonging to Urban Sites; the definitions accompanying the different site degrees; the "saviour" effect of law no. 1710 which helped the shift in perception toward collective conservation; the relations of political administrations with legislations and committees; the coordination between various responsible organs, like the Ministries; and the very controversial issue of NGO organisation stemming from HABITAT II literature. While dwelling on each concept, though, it seems important to keep in mind the sociological realities of the typical traditional architecture occupants and users.

Traditional residential architecture has a collective nature, as a given, setting it apart from monuments, but the late acknowledgment of this in 1974 (law 1710) caused the development of legal arrangements, of an accumulation of cooperation between power-holding institutions, to lag behind the urban trends of migration, demand for housing with low rent from rural and usually low-income newcomers to çýtyes, the subdivision of units to accommodate family extensions or expanding neighborhoods, the pressure groups seeking to replace TRA areas with rent-bringing new housing, and so on. A foresight of what would happen to TRA was lacking.

The presence of such foresight could also have been effective in defining the attitudes of regular development plans toward such areas, developing complex, details-worked-out strategies. Such complex policies might have produced "weapons" to combat obstacles that arose on the legal power level, like central and local administrations under pressure who have too much power concentrated in their hands, which makes them targets in the first

place, and like creases in the bureaucratic plan-making and plan-approving processes' synchronisation whose occurrence during implementation would have already been experienced earlier. The plan-making processes of development and conservation plans could also be merged into a more single line of policies, rather than one replacing the other with a soft transition period.

The definition of site degrees could also be sensitive toward changing conditions, and the peculiarity of individual cases. For instance, the development for tourism, even though more harmful than residential development, is permitted more easily in natural sites. Such inconsistencies could perhaps be better controlled with more flexible definitions.

1.2 [Among planning measures to take, the declaration of an Urban Site could be worked into a more developed literature, not more prohibiting and distressing for occupants, but equipped with more plentiful alternative models of resource organisation, bringing together the bodies with economic power with the right responsibilities. Models encompassing the whole neighborhood unit and its collective living habits, needs, characteristics, with some neighborhood-scale planning consideration like services, traffic, and infrastructure, would require a greater number of specialised bodies, increasing the importance of good organisation. In the Ankara Castle Improvement and Restoration Plan Project, several models have been put forth, but only on a basis of general description, without details of operation. Trying these out in small projects could yield good results. But it seems to me that some coordinating, supervising body should be set up in any model, to bring together all bodies, including Ministries, banks, the Municipality, the Parliament, and smaller agents; every one of such bodies hold tools for some aspects or cases but are not stable as to how right they are for the job at hand; only the general aim of conservation stays the same, but it is an abstract, and "unclaimed" thing, in need of a body just as static as itself. Here, one may speak of non-governmental organisations, something that comes from the public, although this is not so easy to attain in Turkey, civil organisation not being too widespread.

(pilot projects)

1.2

Conservation committees, the existence of which has been a strong positive asset for the country's conservation, are in the center of all talk above, and in a way like the unit of operation on which power games are played- the dismantling of long-standing committees right after government renewals, the increase of dominance of bureaucrats over academicians. Somehow, the rights given to the committees should be made more assertive, the human and economic resources allotted to them more extensive, and their decisions more immune to political

administrations' steering toward other interests. Governments can be too effective in directing mentalities, even defining concepts- to give a current example, Refah may perceive cultural heritage primarily as religious works and may seek to conserve a mosque in a traditional neighborhood and not a synagogue. The support to committees should be made at constitution level, in a way that their reinforced structure will sustain their effectiveness in long-term practice.