



A Critical Look at the Role of the Planning Legislations in Sustaining the Authenticity of Traditional Settlements: Akyaka & Mardin Cases

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This paper discusses the role of the planning legislations in sustaining the authenticity of traditional settlements in Turkey through two characteristic examples: Akyaka (Muğla), Mardin. The first example Akyaka is a small picturesque town located at the west end of Gökova Bay in Muğla. The town is a popular summer destination both for short term visits and summer houses. The development of the settlement was mainly triggered by the Agha Khan Award given to a house designed and built by Nail Çakırhan who was not an Architect. He later designed and built more than 80 houses and contributed in the planning and building legislations to maintain the identity imposed by his prototype house. The other example Mardin is a medieval city located at the north end of Mesopotamian plane on the silk road in the south east of Turkey. The city had an important role in the history because of this strategic location. The old city has grown from its seed: The Castle that is located on top of a mountain. The old city that used to be surrounded by city walls is located on the southern slopes of the mountain and it remained like that till late 1970's. With the pressure of the population growth that accelerated in the beginning of 80's and the so called "Yenişehir " (New City) was added to absorb this demand using stereotypical planning legislations. This planning approach unfortunately created a stereotypical urban tissue that is not able to reflect on any local reference (natural & cultural) and that can be found all around Turkey.

Both settlements were extensively studied during several professional and academic studies by the author himself and by interdisciplinary teams involving the author in the past years. Domain knowledge acquired during these experiences supported by related literature will form the main source of reference in this study. To examine the relation between the legislation and its product: the settlement in both cases maps, satellite images, legislations (plans, plan notes and related documents) photographs, will be used comparatively.

KEY WORDS: Urban Design, Urban Transformation, Planning Legislation & Urban Design.