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# RESEARCH GENEALOGIES OF HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN THE FIELD OF TRADITIONAL TIMBER FRAME BUILDINGS IN ANATOLIA

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## ABSTRACT

*The main concern of this study is revealing the continuities, alterations and developments in the scope of heritage conservation through their epistemological frameworks in six decades between 1950s and 2000s. The methodology of this study is firstly established by Prof. Dr. Zeynep Mennan for the graduate course titled "Architectural Research" conducted in Middle East Technical University.*

**Keywords:** *Research Genealogies, Heritage Conservation, Traditional Timber Frame Buildings, Anatolia, Epistemological Framework.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge in heritage conservation is changed and developed in accordance with the spirit of time and place. Research areas are formed in relation to this knowledge. The purpose of this study is to understand and reveal the alterations and developments in the scope and in the problem area locations of the researches about heritage conservation in five decades between 50s and 2000s. According to the scope of this study, the research area is confined to specific research term upon distinguished dissertations. The main subject of this research is the traditional timber frame buildings in Anatolia. For the purpose of the study, timber construction, traditional timber houses and vernacular architecture are chosen as the research terms.

According to the purpose and scope of this study the research strategy is planned as searching the dissertations at important universities' databases in Turkey. Since, the subject of the research area is specifically related with the Anatolia. Due to the lack of dissertations in terms of the research terms in the 60s and 70s important research papers for proficiency of academic degree, a book and an article are utilized.

Accordingly, this manuscript tries to examine the process of researches in traditional timber architecture in the field of conservation. So that, firstly it is important to merely mention about the process of the heritage conservation in time and the historical background of the field of conservation in Turkey which can shed light on the discussions. After that, the findings are tried to be discussed in the

chronological order through their epistemological framework.

## 2. HISTORY OF CONSERVATION

Modern conservation theory was constituted in the 20th century, whereas the term of architectural conservation is dated back to ancient times. Indeed, in the 19th century the idea of enlightenment sowed the seeds of the conservation. Since, science became the primary way to truth, public access to culture and art became acceptable, romanticism glorified the beauty of local ruins, nationalism glorified the value of national monuments as symbols of national identity (Munoz-Vinas, 2005). This trend was especially intense among the single authors with their single theories such as Ruskin (1819-1900) (2001) and Viollet-le-Duc (1814-79) (1990) who can be said that the first true conservation theorists symbolizing two extreme attitudes about conservation, from the most restrictive to the most permissive. Many names came after them such as Camillo Boito (1836-1914) (2018), Gustavo Giovannoni (1873-1947) and Luca Beltrami (1854-1933) who tried to find a balance between them. Many theories and many theorists could not manage to clearly triumph over the others that led the great differences in the way the heritage was treated. To overcome this situation several institutions made attempts such as charters and normative documents that were the results of agreements between professional conservators and specialists to normalize the situation (Munoz-Vinas, 2005). The first was the Athens Charter in 1931 and the others promulgated with increasing frequency and became the common way of expressing the ideas in the field of conservation (ICOMOS, 1931). The conservation

theory and the problem area locations in the field of conservation was formed with these prominent consequences of these promulgations.

### **2.1 Brief History of Conservation Theory**

The main turning point of the modern conservation theory was the World War II in the 20th century which make nations to conserve their heritage in order to conserve and continue their culture (Larkham, 1996). Consequently, and progressively, international and national documents regarding the conservation of cultural and natural heritage produced and published.

Accordingly, firstly the single monumental buildings are assigned to be conserved in 1960s led by the Venice Charter, 1964 (ICOMOS). Following this, integrally conserving the close environments of these monuments and the integrated conservation which guarantees the continuation of the monument and provide the utilization of the monuments as benefits for society financed by public funds are issued in 1970s led by Amsterdam Declaration, 1975 (ICOMOS). Afterwards, in 1980s historic and architectural areas including the vernacular areas, the urban patterns and urban characters are assigned to be conserved not only for the buildings but also for the social context, the relationships between the built-up and open spaces defined by lots and streets as parts of historical heritage. The Washington Charter in 1987 is the one of the important documents from 80s (ICOMOS).

In 1990s the problem area locations of conservation field which were issued before the 90s are tried to be developed and inquired in detailed manner upon various subjects such as authenticity and significance of cultural heritage. Vast number of documents were promulgated by the national and international boards of conservation such as Nara Document (UNESCO, 1994) and Burra Charter (The Australia ICOMOS, 1999). It was tried to be declared that each culture is established on particular means of tangible and intangible heritage which should be assessed respectively. Accordingly, all types of heritage including natural, social, local or historical were acknowledged as having cultural value and covering a lot of ground.

In 2000s the field of conservation increased the radius of its action field which were progressively issued such as conserving intangible heritage (UNESCO, 2003), conserving the digital heritage (UNESCO, 2003) and conserving the spirit of place (UNESCO, 2008). Correspondingly, the professions awaked that the heritage conservation field needs great amount of disciplines which deal with different

types of conservative interventions on different heritage types mentioned hitherto. For instance, the ISCARSAH Charter was carried out to meet the need for technical and engineering regulations related to field (ICOMOS, 2003). Therefore, it is important to say that in 2000s the significance of the interdisciplinary studies was emphasized and the importance of the collaboration between the social and natural sciences with the conservation field were accentuated. Due to the needs of the interdisciplinary studies new sub discipline areas were emerged.

To sum up to here, until bringing this situation to this degree researchers have passed through some cognition processes and struggles. In the first stage, the questions of “why do we conserve” and then “what do we conserve” and lastly “how do we conserve” have tried to be answered in all of these documents. In the light of this brief information it can be said that the researches after 50s first try to answer the question “what do we conserve” which can be answered as “heritage” and after years the question of “how do we conserve” come to light which has been trying to be answered in research in design.

### **2.2 Brief History of Conservation in Turkey**

The historical background of the conservation field in Turkey has a parallel process with the other European countries. Turkey’s legislative regulations have kept abreast of all the latest developments. The beginning of the 1950s is the main turning point for conservation in Turkey. In fact, the first legally established governmental agency is dated back to 1951 in Turkey which is composed of academic members who have the freedom to study in an independent and scientific environment. This academic governmental board made decisions about the monumental buildings until 1957 and after 1957 this board had rights to define the conservation sites and make decisions about the environmental scale. In 1970s with the first conservation legislation and the first conservation attempts of urban conservation sites were started and the inventories of the urban conservation sites and conservation plans of the urban sites were started to be produced. Afterwards, in 1983 and in 2004 with new legislations, the regulations were developed in terms of defining the conservation fields, planning and conservation relations, the financial sources, cultural development and social integration (Şahin Güçhan & Kurul, 2009).

Now it is clearly said that Turkey’s conservation process is developed and progressed simultaneously with the conservation theory that is discussed in the

international boards, even it can be said that the legislative regulations were earlier in Turkey than some of the developed European countries.

In the light of the discussions above, it is obvious that the knowledge in heritage conservation is changed and developed in accordance with the spirit of time and place. Accordingly, it is thought that the problem area locations should have significant changes and developments parallel with the changes in the conservation theory. By the help of this study the alterations and developments in the scope and in the problem area locations of the researches about heritage conservation in the specific subject of traditional timber frame buildings in Anatolia in six decades between 50s and 2000s will be revealed and it will be checked if the processes are parallel to the issued conservation theory in the world and in Turkey.

### 3. SIGNIFICANT STUDIES ABOUT THE TRADITIONAL TIMBER FRAME BUILDINGS IN ANATOLIA

Returning back to the hearth of the study, the main aim of this study is to understand and reveal if there is a privileged research trend of the specific period or if there is a significant change from decade to decade or if there is any researches continued and developed in years. For this purpose, the problem area locations, epistemological positions, theoretical perspectives and methodologies of the significant and distinguished dissertations of which the main concern is traditional timber frame buildings in Anatolia are searched. The searched and determined dissertations are gathered in the table attached at the end of this text and they will be discussed in chronological order starting from 50s and continuing until 2000s.

#### 3.1 50s Finding the Knowledge

As it is mentioned before, the conservation field and the legislative regulations were emerged in 1950s in Turkey. Parallel with this new emergence, the professional and academic studies were arisen in the field of conservation of cultural heritage. In order to clarify the subject matter of this new field the main concern of these researches were built upon finding the knowledge. Two important studies can be found in 50s. Indeed, these two findings belonging to Ruhi Kafesçioğlu (1949) (1955) are the earliest studies which treated timber buildings.

Table 1: The researches in 1950s

Year	Problem Area Location / Condense Abstract	Theoretical Perspective / Epistemologi	Methodology & Methods
1949	Research on the Eskisehir, Ankara, Kayseri village houses in order to understand the structural system, construction technique and the material usage. Documenting and revealing the preferences according to the needs and convenient materials.	Positivism	Objectivism  Case Study of houses Observation/ Documentation / Identification / Statistical Analyses of houses Quantitative Research
1955	Research on the traditional timber houses in north-western part of Turkey to understand the structural system, construction technique and the material usage. Documenting selected ones and exploring the constructional details of timber houses.	Positivism	Objectivism  Case Study of houses Observation/ Documentation / Identification of houses Quantitative Research

These studies deal only with documentation by drawing and defining the structural system, construction technique and the materials. Their purpose is to reveal the essential constructed elements, their positional relations, how they come to nearby near. So that, the methodologies of these studies depend on the visual observation, documentation and definition without any assessment. Moreover, researchers try to have statistical analyses to ground the preferences of the material with an objectivist position putting an interval between them and the subject matter. The main aim of these studies is to understand and identify the built timber constructions. In other words, these studies are trying to find the knowledge that is already embedded in the object itself.

**3.2 60s Continue with Finding the Knowledge**

In the 60s there is not any significant academic research about these topics. The survey and determination process of the cultural heritage in Turkey were continued by the governmental bodies. It is important to state here that, simultaneous to the studies managed in the field by the governments, significant universities in Turkey established restoration or conservation graduate programs and branches in their architecture departments. Middle East Technical University founded the graduate program in 1964 and started to conduct studies related to the field. Subsequently, İstanbul Technical University instituted their documentation and restoration branch in 1963 and then transformed it into a graduate program in 1976.

**3.3 70s Solving the Building Puzzle**

Accordingly, after two decades the researchers realized that understanding these traditional buildings is impossible with only examining the form and structural systems but it should be studied in relation with their environment and social life around them. Under the objectivist umbrella the study in 1970 that belongs to Orhan Özgüner (1970) tries to understand the logic behind these relations. He tries to deduce a correlational pattern which explains the cause and effect of these preferences and approaches to the problem as a puzzle to solve and grounds the results to determinate and rational causes.

1974	Trying to define the term vernacular architecture and to demark the vernacular architecture from squatters and institutionalized architecture.	Interpretivism / Hermeneutics	Constructionism	Identificatory and argumentative interpretation Qualitative Critique / Interpretation
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After a few years, with the developments in conservation field in the world and also in legal and administrative aspects about conservation in Turkey, these group of buildings are realized as heritage. So that, the definition and identification of these buildings become so critical. The studies of understanding these buildings evolved to understanding the values of buildings (Germen, 1974). That is, value assessment became a very critical point to issue which bears interpretivism and hermeneutics, constructionist arguments about value assessments of vernacular architecture which was said to be the architecture without architects. The interpretations about demarcation of the valuable / unvaluable and vernacular / institutionalized architecture.

**3.4 80s Constructing the Systematized Assessments**

In pursuit of the arguments in 70s although researcher Okan Üstüncök (1987) tries to decide on the heritage to conserve with critical inquiries and interpretations, he pursues his objectivist tradition to ground the value assessments on a foundationalized system by a model for more proper evaluative criteria. The researcher tries to generalize the assessment process to be valid for all circumstances and universe as a law making. The methodology and methods that they use become constructionist but the result product and the suggested methodology become objectivist again.

*Table 2: The researches in 1970s*

Year	Problem Area Location / Condense Abstract	Theoretical Determinism / Epistemologi	Methodology & Methods
1970	Research on the Eastern Black Sea Region village settlements and buildings. Documenting different types of timber constructions and details and research on relations between the settlements-built environment and social life-nature.	Rationalism / Determinism  Objectivism	Case Study of buildings and settlements Observation/ Documentation / Identification of buildings / Deductive research of correlation between buildings and their situatedness in the life history and geography Quantitative Research

*Table 3: The researches in 1980s*

Year	Problem Area Location / Condense Abstract	Theoretical Determinism / Epistemologi Qual Decision	Methodology & Methods
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<b>1987</b>	Examining the various issues surrounding the process and criteria of architectural evaluation as regards the traditional vernacular houses with a view to identify the possible sources of conflict and controversy and then construct a prospective model for a more proper evaluative criterion for future reference.	Critical Inquiry/ Hermeneutics	Constructionism	Discourse analysis of architectural criticism in terms of vernacular architecture Descriptive analysis of vernacular architecture Externalization and systemization of qualitative assessment criteria for vernacular architecture Quantitative & Qualitative Research	<b>1990</b>	Surveying the traditional vernacular houses in north-eastern part of Turkey to identify the qualitative and quantitative variations. Trying to reveal these variations by discussing them in accordance with the physical environmental, material, building and cultural factors.	Interpretivism	Constructionism	Case Study of houses Observation/ Documentation / Identification Experimental Research Statistical / Comparative / Interpretive Analyses of houses <b>Quantitative &amp; Qualitative Research</b>
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**3.5 90s Situatedness**

After a few years later, this ambiguity is discerned and impossibility of this generalization is brought out. In 90s these buildings are tried to be analyzed and evaluated again with an interpretive approach, pioneered by Reşat Sümerkan (1990). Generalization as a methodology is set aside and each of the heritage is inquired case by case. The variations and the value of this variations are presented. The naivety of previous cause and effect researches are propounded. The significance of “situatedness” is declared. To explore the situatedness of these heritage new disciplines are emerged to ground again the interpretations of architecture (as a problematic discipline). In parallel to these discussions the legislative situation was also changed in Turkey and the case by case assessment was enhanced. So that, it can be understood that why the Turkish Conservation Legislation is open to interpretation according to the interested case.

*Table 4: The researches in 1990s*

Year	Problem Area Location / Condense Abstract	Theoretical Perspective /	Epistemologi cal Position	Methodology & Methods
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Following the value assessment arguments and deciding on what to conserve, the importance of interventions on these heritages which questions how to conserve come into existence (Şahin, 1995), (Akdemir, 1997). The transdisciplinary and supranationalist boards decide on the conservation principles and the architects applies the interventions or restore buildings and environments according to interprets of them (Cobancoğlu, 1998). These transdisciplinary and supranationalist consensus proposes the principles in correlation with the multidisciplinary studies. Indeed, this process of decision making develops by theories feeding each other. Then, this theoretical and empirical progression resembles to Lakatos’s (1970) research program much more than Kuhnian (1970) paradigm shift or revolutionary science.

It is worth to say here that, “restoration” has always been an argumentative term which can be regard as a Kuhnian (1970) paradigm shift in history discussing which can make this paper to wander off the subject. Does restoration mean to turn the building to the first existence phase? Or, turn it to the most important phase (which makes it most important)? Is it possible to find and turn it exactly back to that phase? Is it a puzzle solving? Are the pieces ready to find? In the English terminology, yes, restoration means turning to back but it is not the same for Turkish. In Turkey, it means applying contemporary interventions on the heritage to continue its life by conserving its identity, authenticity and integrity while designing a new unity.

Table 5: The researches in 1990s (continue)

Year	Problem Area Location / Condense Abstract	Theoreti	Epistem	Methodology & Methods
1995	Defining the technical and practical conservation problems of historic timber framed houses and proposing some techniques and materials for their preservation, rehabilitation and contemporary requirements.	Interpretivism	Constructionism	Case Study of houses Documentation / Observation Qualitative Interviews Participant Observations Interpretation Quantitative &
1997	Surveying the traditional houses and residence settlements in north-western part of Turkey by documenting the formal features and structural organizations of houses and understanding the urban design tendencies and economic, social, cultural, material and technological opportunities of the region in order to suggest new buildings.	Interpretivism	Constructionism	Case Study of houses Documentation / Observation Interpretive research of correlation between buildings and their effective factors Interviews
1998	Surveying the traditional timber houses in different regions of Turkey to analyze the evaluation of different structural systems of timber houses and design methods in order to renovate these according to generally accepted universal protection guidelines.	Interpretivism	Constructionism	Case Study of houses Documentation / Observation Interpretive research

So that, architects in a problematic discipline, being in a valuable environment to be conserved, need other disciplines' help while grounding their design approaches. In late 90s researches start to become related with the understanding the material properties, social factors, structural behaviors to decide on the design approaches. Although all of these researches are achieved by a positivist manner the results of these quantitative researches are interpreted by the author in a constructionist approach while suggesting the new interventions.

### 3.6 2000s Interdisciplinary Approaches

When we come to these days, 2000s, these quest for the help of other disciplines bears new sub disciplines. New sub disciplines find their positions in the research areas. At the first, these new sub disciplines try to understand the properness of their empirical methods on the traditional buildings (Aksoy, 2003), (Kandemir, 2010). All of the new sub disciplines try to use their own main discipline's methodologies and methods and they pursue their own objectivist tradition especially in the natural science and engineering disciplines. On the other hand, architects try to take credit for their own problems and still try to ground their own interprets.

Table 6: The researches in 2000s (continue)

Year	Problem Area Location / Condense Abstract	Theoretical	Epistemologi	Methodology & Methods
2003	Surveying the traditional timber frame houses in terms of their structural behaviors under earthquake effects.	Positivism	Objectivism	Experimental Research Simulation Quantitative Research
2010	Developing combined use of ultrasonic pulse velocity (UPV) measurements and infrared (IR) thermography, together with visual analyses for soundness assessment of structural timber in historic buildings.	Positivism	Objectivism	Experimental Research Survey Research Sampling Measurements Quantitative Research

2011	Evaluating the seismic resistance of traditional Ottoman timber frame "hımsı" structures from an engineering point of view. Testing different types of constructed frames which have exactly the same configuration and scale with the original selected buildings from Safranbolu in the construction laboratory.	Positivism	Objectivism	Experimental Research Simulation Quantitative Research
2011	Investigating 110-year-old timber building chosen in Istanbul with finite elements method on software programs to determine drifts of each flat, to verify carrier system elements' axial tensile strengths and to show the differences between physical conditions.	Positivism	Objectivism	Experimental Research Simulation Modelling Quantitative Research

At the present, all of the new sub disciplines and architecture in the field of conservation pursues their own traditional research methodologies, methods and epistemological position (Aktaş, 2011), (Dışkaya, 2011). This pertinaciousness obstructs the interdisciplinary approaches and makes these studies multidisciplinary. Multidisciplinary approaches have difficulties about working together with the other disciplines and understanding each other's work. Accordingly, at the end developing the researches and problem area locations becomes impossible. So that, there is a big question mark about how to utilize and evaluate the results of the new sub disciplines researches in the field of conservation, restoration and architecture, and vice versa.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In the light of the discussions about the conservation theory and foregoing findings about the dissertations, it is clear that the problem are locations in the specific subject of traditional timber frame

buildings in Anatolia in six decades between 50s and 2000s have changed and developed in accordance with the changes in the conservation theory. Privileged research trends that are attributed to a specific period can be detected and these preferences show a parallel process together with the issued subject matters and discussions in this specific subject. The epistemological approaches, theoretical perspectives and methodologies changes and continues according to the privileged discussion trends which are being issued in the international boards of conservation field.

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