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Conservation of Izmir Historical City from Traditional Plans to Entrepreneurial Governance

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Summary

This thesis pursues two intertwined strands of research. Firstly, it sets out to investigate what goals existing conservation planning has pursued in general, and how its development has advanced or stalled in a particular local context. Secondly, it aims to ascertain whether shifts in management modes are able to further urban conservation by embracing diverse physical, social and cultural values, or whether they have enabled the domination of conservation practise by the political or economic interests of certain groups. These questions are interrogated through a case study analysis, aiming to explore the delicate dynamics in the development of conservation plans and their relations with multi actoral and instrumental governance modes in one unique case, that of Izmir's historic city. It will contribute to understandings of how to effectively implement recommendations from international documents and literature in situations where ideals of 'participation' are challenged by tensions on the ground. Izmir represents an ideal case study since it presents a starkly different vision of the conservation of historic centres, which sets it apart from the usual urban development approach imposed on Turkish cities. From this perspective, the Izmir History Project, with its introduction of new actors and instruments into of the existing conservation planning system presents an intriguing ground on which to test the ways in which new actors and tools intertwine with the existing actors, powers, concepts, and processes of conservation. To achieve this goal, it pragmatically utilises the structural-functional approach in order to dissect governance and planning processes in the Izmir case and contrasts two periods of conservation practise through specific criteria. It builds on context analyses and interviews with a wide variety of actors, to present an example of the complex interrelations between the public and private sectors and civil society actors in conservation processes, which has led to the sidelining of conservation planning and a shift towards entrepreneurial governance modes.