

Professional scientific sessions for art, architecture and urban planning Thursday evenings

Date: 17.09.2020

Title: Interaction between Development and Protection Concepts in Fabric Areas.

Speakers: Mr. M. Mo'azami and Mr. M. Iranmanesh.

Roundtable Members: Mr. S.M. Mousavi, Mr. M. Kiani and Mr. M.M. Mahmoudi.

At the beginning of the 142th session Mr. Mahmoudi talked about the new manner (on line) of the session because of Corona virus, tanking the Iranian Architectural Society and the Eivan magazine for their support.

The first speaker was Mr. M. Iranmanesh that beginning to talk about interaction between development and protection concepts in fabric areas, asserted that it was important to focus on three concepts of development, interaction and fabric areas. Regarding the concept of development he believes that in Iran in the managerial spheres often there are misinterpretations that have caused many problems when and where fabric areas were the target. In his opinion the misinterpretations are related to quantitative, limited and superficial approaches. In the first case the quantity is presented as a sign of success in the program realization. The second problem is when our approaches are selective and we focus and pay attention to just part of an entire content, like when, for example, we focus on a particular edition of Ferdowsi works, forgetting that even though from a cultural-historical point of view it's important, it's the spiritual-historical heritage of the poet that should be in the center of our attention. The third approach regards the superficiality, when the planners and programmers look for immediate and visible results, forgetting that such programs and approaches should be realized in a long term period, avoiding focus on partial and limited goals and results. Mr. Iranmanesh asserted that if the mentioned approaches are substituted by comprehensive, qualitative and extended approaches, we can hope that the path and obtainable results can be satisfying. He explained that if in the issue of fabric areas protection we consider just the component of development, ignoring the issue of interaction with the social environment, of course the established goals can't be reached. He compared developed and developing societies, saying that in the second case the most important problem is the lack of stability that can be economic or social. Such lack of stability doesn't permit long term planning and programming, trying to find short term solutions that naturally can't ensure the desired results. Concluding his speech Mr. Iranmanesh asserted that the key solution in our society is the rediscovery of national, cultural, historical... values trying to identify and use them for the development process of the country.

The second speaker of the session was Mr. Mo'azami began his speech saying that the issue of interaction between development and fabric areas is important because Iran is a country with ancient civilization and with many cities that have fabric areas. He said that during the last years the responsible members of Cultural Heritage Organization has worked on the protection of the historical heritage and on the other side government organizations that consider the development as an important issue, have focused their activities to promote and accelerate the development. The problem is how to approach these two dispositions.

Talking about his personal experience he had with other colleagues Mr. Mo'azami mentioned three

projects: the first is entitled “The Comprehensive Document for Management and Protection of Tehran Fabric areas and Buildings”, the second is “Plan for the Management Tehran of Historical Event-Areas” to revitalize Tehran historical texture and the third is entitled “Program and plan for spatial honoring and managerial organization of Mashq square in Tehran”.

Regarding the first mentioned case “The Comprehensive Document for Management and Protection of Tehran Fabric areas and Buildings”, he explained that it was a very appreciated act for the decision that Tehran urban management made to intervene in such issue, because the urban authorities prefer to avoid such complicated problems. Such behavior can be considered as a sign of maturity and high level of responsibility of urban authorities. Talking about the document he said that it has been realized through the successful cooperation of Tehran municipality and Cultural Heritage Organization approved by Tehran Islamic Council. Talking about the content of the document Mr. Mo’azami explained that it has included also and principally legal inherent aspects, because the protection of the historical heritage has always to face legal aspects of the problems (like economic, managerial, cultural...). The problem is that in many case the law makers have approved decisions to maintain and protect components of historical heritage, but because often they belong to the private sector or owners, they find the legal manner to “free” their belonging, trying to have immediate and larger economic benefits. This because the maintenance of the historical building or monument is imposed to the owner, forcing him to sustain huge amounts of money, that it’s not justified in his economic plans. Considering that the existence of historical monuments and buildings can attract the presence of tourists, the law makers must consider also the interests of the private owners in order to encourage and help them to participate to this policy.

The following project was the mentioned “Plan for the Management Tehran of Historical Event-Areas”. Mr. Mo’azami explained that generally in fabric areas the buildings and monuments were seen as values to be maintained and protected from architectural-urbanistic point of view. He explained that in this project the working team has identified and classified various social, cultural, religious, political and military events, in order to show and register that fabric areas are important and precious not only for the presence of buildings and monuments but also because of historical events. Mr. Mo’azami explained that this was a new approach regarding the historical heritage, helping to see from another point of view the heritage of Tehran.

Talking about the experience “Program and plan for spatial honoring and managerial organization of Mashq square in Tehran” Mr. Mo’azami explained that the project began with the approval of Council of ministers in 2002 for the development of Iran National Museum. Through this project various administrative building had to pass under Iran National Museum administration and other buildings have been transformed in different museums (Like the Telecommunication museum). Through the mentioned 10 new museums have been established in the heart of Tehran administrative area, creating the necessary conditions for the protection of the buildings, for the revitalization of the area and for creation of new touristic attractions.

Concluding his speech Mr. Mo’azami expressed the idea that if the urban policy makers consider all inherent aspect of historical heritage protection and development, it’s a secondary problem which offices are involved for their realization, because the route to follow is clear and aims to defend the

interests of the entire society and not a particular sector of the society.

During the roundtable debate the first speaker was Mr. Kiani that began his intervention trying to define the concept of “sustainable development”. He explained that it can be defined as the satisfaction of needs and necessities of the current generation, without harming the capacities and necessities of the future generations. This approach generally includes political and especially social issues. In other hand we have to face the issue of protection of our cultural heritage that can be considered as a material and spiritual capital. In this content the process of development has usually economic aspects that can create problems and dissonances in urban fabric areas. So the main goal is to reach a balance between different components of a historical area.

The second speaker was Mr. Mousavi. He expressed the idea that it’s difficult to define a priority between development and protection of fabric areas, because, especially in fabric areas of Tehran, these areas are far from being updated to the modern development standards and it’s difficult to pretend from the people that live in such areas to refuse modern solution in the name of protection of historical values. Mr. Mousavi asserted that it’s very important to balance issues of development with the protection of fabric areas creating coordination between the inherent aspects of the problem.

Mr. Mahmoudi asked the participants of the roundtable how come the studies in various organizations and universities are numerous and acceptable but in fact the realization isn’t satisfying?

The first speaker to answer to this question was Mr. Kiani. He said that the issue of studies regarding fabric areas protection and development have a history of at least 50-60 years. The main involved offices are the ministry of roads and urban planning, the Cultural Heritage Organization and the municipality of Tehran. If the practical result are not satisfying the reason is a lack of coordination between the mentioned offices and the personal preferences of the managerial staff.

Completing the assertion of Mr. Kiani, Mr. Mahmoudi said that in western countries the cooperation in study and realization phases ensure the desired result, meanwhile in Iran when the studies must be transferred on the ground the lack of coordination creates problems.

Confirming what the two members of roundtable asserted, Mr. Mousavi talked a bigger problem that in his opinion is the lack of a unified urban managerial system. The problem is that the issue of protection and development of fabric areas request large amounts of investments and during the past years the management of Tehran municipality has preferred to direct the investments to new areas where the problems are minor and the results are almost immediate.

Mr. Mahmoudi continued the debate admitting the importance of government offices role in this issue, but asking where were the inhabitants of the fabric areas and what should be their role in a matter that regards their living space?

Answering to the question Mr. Mousavi expressed the idea that during the last 30-40 years the inhabitants have followed the policies made by urban management that created the conditions to

push them out from fabric areas, especially people with a social high ranking, causing the gradual degradation of the area. During the last years the policy of the urban management, and not only in Tehran, is to direct part of the investments for the development of fabric areas with the creation of touristic infrastructures and attractions. Mr. Kiani answered to the question asserting that in order to achieve the desired results the policy makers should have as a priority the economic interest and needs of the local people, creating a balance between development, protection and economic factors, in order to encourage and compensate the participation of the inhabitants. In his opinion this is the path to follow and it has shown its positive results in other developed countries.

Talking about the bilateral participation of inhabitants and urban policy makers Mr. Mahmoudi said that where the inhabitants had a better social position the managerial staff has more welcomed and satisfied their needs and where the inhabitants had a lower social position, usually they have been ignored. As a conclusive question he asked, considering the existing challenges which was the best solution.

Answering to the question Mr. Mousavi said that in many cases programs that at the beginning seemed to be successful, became negative experiences, like the foundation of a highway, to facilitate the vehicular circulation, causing social damages to one of the areas of the city, destroying the unity of the area. In his opinion probably cooperation between the inhabitants and the municipality could pave the way to a positive and acceptable solution. As the last question Mr. Mahmoudi wanted Mr. Kiani to talk about the heritage as a capital and what should happen to prefer the wellness of the population instead of a material development.

Mr. Kiani repeated the idea that until there is a lack of unified management we will have always problems that rise consequently. May be we can learn from foreign successful projects, in order to avoid past mistakes.

Mr. Mahmoudi concluded the session evaluating it as positive and constructive, expressing the hope for the protection of the fabric areas.