



An Analytical View on the Process of Formation of Shushtar Sustainable City

Anahita MAKVANDI¹, Mohammad Reza RAHIMZADEH², Mehdi MAKVANDI^{3,*}

¹Msc. Student, Architecture Engineering, Shoushtar Islamic Azad University,

²Professor of Shoushtar Islamic Azad University and Head of Tehran Cultural Heritage Faculty,

³Teacher Assistant of Izeh University of Applied Sciences

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Abstract .The experts believe that the most prominent question in the area of recognition and evaluation of cities is about their historical evolution and formation. Also, it should be noted that the similarity and uniformity of the structure of a specific city in different periods of time, does not necessarily refer to lack of change in that city. This paper focuses on the reviewing and explaining this subject using library research method besides studying the historical documents. Cities like Shoushtar are commonly developed on a natural bed and possessed their own local culture based on a collective sense and movement, rather than a personal computing base. More importantly, it is essential to consider this historical background including the intrinsic dialects of the city for renovation and organization of the architectural structures and their details instead of using useless and ineffective techniques transported to our country as the wastes of the West. Results of this study can be useful for architecture and urban planning students to form their thinking style and guides them about how to face the designing problems.

Keywords: Shoushtar, New-Shoushtar, body, Framework, urban development

1. INTRODUCTION

Shoushtar urban development was restricted in a water ring in the city until about two decades before. Since then, the population overflowed into the adjoining towns. But still the residential neighborhoods and towns out of this area are dedicated to the lower classes of society and non-native newcomers such as industrial Companies employees. The noble families have preferred to stay in the old city. Gradually, the multi-storey buildings became appear around the city.

In the first step of investigation of Shushtar, we face a type of disorders and overlapping of historical layers, which makes it difficult to find an answer to this question. But also it should not be forgotten that acceptance of a kind of stability in the body of the city does not essentially refer to deformation or lack of historical revolution. Briefly, regardless the usual models and methods that orientalist have proposed for investigation of Iranian cities, it's better to investigate the city based on the viewpoints that the city teaches to its lovers. Like many of the great cultural centers of the world, Iran is a land of divine arts. While its dominant architecture ignores the most original feature of the earth (weight or attraction) to experience the fly in an awesome halo of arrays and unique designs, how we can talk about the static logic of contemporary western scientists and reason numbers? Shoushtar is another city free of all measures, owing the accent of water and sun.

* Corresponding author. E-mail: Mt2.vivace@yahoo.com

2. APPELLATION

In the case of Shoushtar appellation, Hamzeh Isfahani says that: ‘Shoush’ is the Arabic form of ‘Sus’, which means ‘good’ in Farsi. In reality, Shoushtar word refers to ‘better’. ‘Susa’ city was constructed in an open form and the area of Shushtar resembles a horse, while area of Ahwaz city is in the form of a chess side. Zojaji also claimed that ‘This city is called Tostar, because Tostar- Ibn-Noon (someone from Bani-Ajal tribe) has conquered it.’

Also, some historians believed that the city had six gates and some have called it as six-gate.



Figure 1. View of the old Shoushtar

3. SHOUSH TAR

Shoushtar with the area of about 3440 Km² is located at the north of Khouzestan province (longitude: 48 degrees 20 minutes east, latitude: 32 degrees 30 minutes). Shoushtar is bound in the north, west, east, south and south-east by the Bakhtiari mountain range and Dezfool, Dezfool and Sus, Masjed Soleyman, Ahwaz and Ramhormoz, respectively. In the year 290 AH, Abu Ali Ahmed Ben-Rasteh, in his valuable book ‘Alagha-Lenafsie’ named ‘Tostar’ as one of the cities belonged to the Ahwaz land, besides other cities including ‘Askar Mokaram’, ‘Jondi Sabur’, Ramhormoz’ and so on. Also, this point was seen in the book ‘Almasalek & Almamlek’ written by Abu-Eshagh Ebrahim Ben-Mohammad Farsi, known as “Estakhri, in the 4th century AH. Abu-Dalf Mosar Ben Mohalhel in his book ‘Resleh-Alsalaasyieh’ has mentioned that several rivers are flown in the Ahwaz market place including ‘Vadi-Alazam’, and also water of ‘Tostar’ is flown in the vicinity of the city. A massive branch is originated from this river and flows within the Shoushtar. A big bridge is also constructed over the river, next to a beautiful grand mosque. In addition, some types of wonderful mills and water buckets are installed in the vicinity of the river. He also pointed out that there are lots of beautiful historical monuments of Sassanid Empire in the Khouzestan.

Framework Evolution Process:

Investigation of the revolution trend of Shoushtar is possible just by considering the geographical and environmental features and focusing on the the water path and enteries of the city, as the main parts. Shoushtar is born and grown in a closed ring limmitted by rivers and water borders. The initial urban servises and housing facilities were formed in the northern coasts.

In the early Islamic centuries, Shoushtar was more developed toward the southern borders, residential areas and urban elements like mosque, Band Lashgar bridge, Imamzadeh Abdullah were constructed in the southern parts of the city. Because of being far from the main entry of the city

(Shadravan Pol-Band), such development toward southern borders was not unlimmited. But, because of potential range of the city such trend would be chenged, as during the Qajar era, Mostofi Grand House was constructed in the nearest places to the city center and before-Islam urban elements. While it cannot be imagined that the population density stayed far from the main element of the city (Shadravan to Polband-Gorgor path), for a long time. In reality, it is concluded that the city development in this case is not similar to the usual trend of other cities of Iran, a vector development or developing based on a specific path and direction. In other words, maybe the city development during the historical periods must be considered as a undulation movement with continuous reciprocating motion toward a relative balanced point.

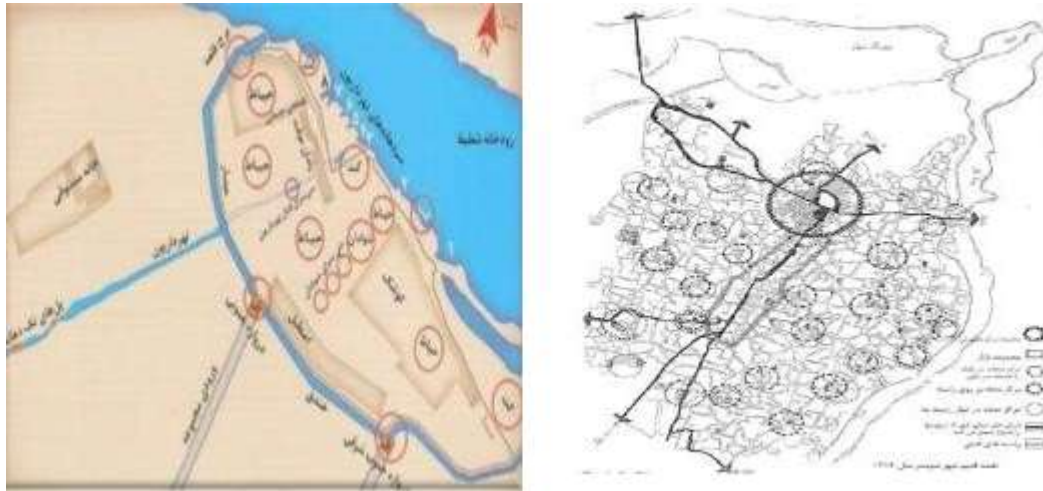


Figure 2. Framework evolution process.

The important point that Achaemenid have constructed their cities based on the pre-designed sanctified plans, must be also considered about Shoushtar. But, it should be mentioned that this type of design was almost applied for the metropolises of the Achaemenid and could not be applied for cities like Shoushtar, developed in a different bed with different objectives. Imagination about Shoushtar initial design as the (horses), according to the Hamd-Ollah Mostofi's written documents, cannot be anything but a poetic (too much) and non-specialized idea. In a general view, cities of the Achaemenid and Sassanid period have been established developed gradually around the governmental capital, so-called the Citadel. Although the 'Salasel' castle in Shoushtar can be considered as a core for development of initial parts of the city, this castle would not be a Citadel. Shoushtar is established along the Shadravan Bridge which is the first and most important entry of the region (Shoushtar Island). Probably, this point besides the special geographical location of the Salasel Rock and its adjacent river is one of the main reasons of the Salasel Castel site selection. This point has a delicate difference with city development around the Citadel that should not be ignored. Although the establishment of the rulers in this castle is mentioned in the literature,

'Salasel; must be considered as a military and guard fortresses rather than a developing urban embryo. In modern sense, Citadel means as the palace of governors or the rulers elected by the central government and the urban elements and citizens housing were established in the vicinity, while the more ancient meaning of the Citadel must be considered as the protective applications of the King. In this way, Citadel is constructed in a specific geographical location, often outside the city, as the city can be completely observed and controlled. Undoubtedly, the structure of 'Salasel' castle mostly resembles the second and more ancient definition of the Citadel. In the cities established in the Sassanid era and then, market (in the modern sense) is composed of an internal flow toward the external flow and forms the Quarters and sub-quarters in this way. Naturally, it is not possible to track and identify such path in the Shoushtar,

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because the concept of flow and Citadel are established there, differently. In the Qajarian map of Shushtar, despite referring to the small shrines, even no mention was observed about the main path of the market, as the most common, most important and most known communication lines of the urban elements. This phenomenon was also observed about the city streets and crossings. Often in the large cities we can see the Shoushtar map (1850 AD), including the streets, distinct from other accessible networks because of some reasons which play an important role in the city communications. In this way sometimes they form an urban resort or become the main place for generation of important urban elements, especially public buildings referring to their creator's honor, wealth and altruism. These streets may be established between the important religious, governmental, economic and natural centers in inorganic or non-organic form. Restrictions of Shoushtar construction zone resulted in kind of contraction of the city besides lack of gardens and resorts (like what was happened in Isfahan) and deprived it from having grand streets, connection lines and even squares (in special concept). Squares of 'Mesgar-Khaneh', 'Ghassab-Khaneh' and 'Rang-Khaneh' despite the proximity with 'Masajed-e-Ali', 'Mish Clu Hossein' and 'Haji-Aziz Caravan-Serai' (existed in Qajar Map), could not be considered as the usual squares in the case of dimensions and urban elements. Even, nowadays Shoushtar suffers from lack of such real squares. As shown in the aerial photos (1935), this structure remains intact with no major changes in the accessibility network until the Pahlavi (resembling the accessibility networks of sub-Quarters). In this era, because of the overall policies of the government, some types of raw modernism (essentially not based on real requirements of city and citizens), wide interventions were happened in the city structure, while today after about some decades all of the city area can be visited easily and without the use of motor vehicles and there is no need to such services unless in special cases. Also construction of wide roads in the city during the past decades led to formation of a false requirement, as it creates the traffic problems and destructive solutions. The two constructed lines are located between the city entry and waterfalls in the eastern-western side and Imam-Zadeh Abdullah in the northern-southern side, respectively. While especially in the northern-southern side, we could not find any historical background. This point was also observed about the ring-roads in eastern and western borders of the Shoushtar ring and its internal branches.



Figure 3. Aerial photos (1951).

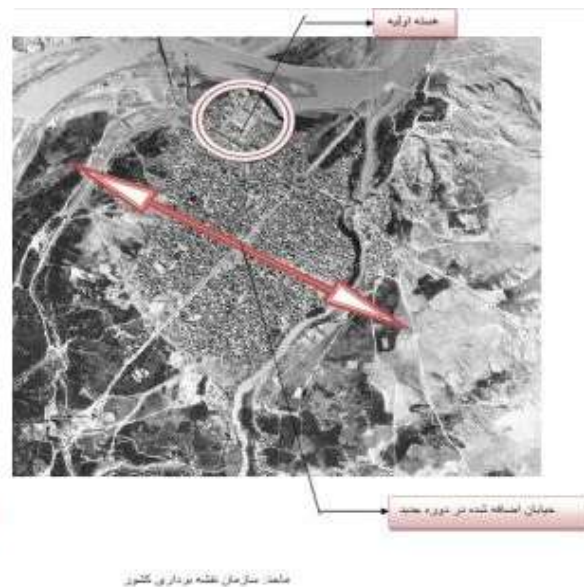


Figure 4. Aerial photos (1971)

If we accept that ‘Quarter’ is a small urban unit, possessing all vital and required elements proportional to its population and dimensions that can provide all residents in that small scale besides owing the cultural and local factors (language, race and etc.), so we must search for a novel concept of Quarter in Shoushtar. We also took a look at type of distribution of general buildings like mosques, bathrooms and found out that the heterogenous distribution of these elements can be another witness showing that although some parts of the city are named as the distinct quarters, there is no quarter (in its common sense about the framework) available in this city, aside from some cases of racial or ethnic affiliation. Before the last two decades, Shoushtar development was restricted in the city water ring and since then, the population overflowed into the adjoining towns, gradually. In the eastern part of the city, some types of organic overflow can be seen and start of its formation is depicted in aerial photos of the year 1935. In comparison with the central part, this part of the city is almost free of any kind of urban elements and attractions. As in the Qajar era maps, this part is marked as a specific point. However, in the western side some parts of the overflowed population have settled in New-Shoushtar-town. But the quarters and residential towns outside this island are still dedicated to the non-native newcomers such as the employees of industrial companies, while the noble families preferred to stay in the elder parts of the city. Thus, despite the dominant native culture, multi-storey buildings have grown around the city.



Figure 5. Aerial photo (2001).

5. OBJECTIVES OF DESIGN OF NEW-SHOUSHTAR

Direct Purpose: it was about construction of a suburb city including housing units, schools, business units, and mosque and so on, also used for settlement of employers and workers of Karron Kesht&Sanat (Cane Production Factory). General Purpose: In order to establish a relationship between architectural and environmental concepts linked to the traditions and customs of the region.

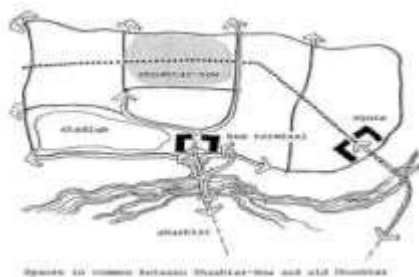


Figure 7. Joint spaces among Shoushtar and New-Shoushtar.

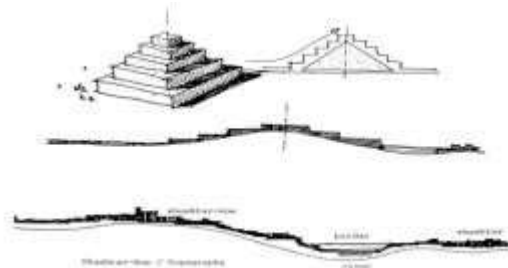


Figure 8. Initial sketches of design of city based on the topography.



Figure 9. The final sketch of New-Shoushta.

6. CONCLUSION

At the first glance, maybe the mentioned issues in this article seems to be far from reality, but it should be considered that cities like Shoushtar have formed mostly based on a community sense and movement on a bed of nature and native culture, rather than a personal computing basis. So, their believes in addition to the dominant culture can determine the structure and designing process of the city, which is a smart and wise action in formation and development of cities like Shoushtar. As a result, we tried to notice that while investigation and more importantly while reparation and organization of such cities, it is essential to face the elements with the native dialects of the city, rather than using improper and rigid experiences that have been applied imitatively nowadays as the export wastes of the west. Since these rules and experiences have threatened the life of Iranian cities until the brink death, by treatment claims, repeatedly.

7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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