

Historical analysis of the strategic principles of Ilkhanate ‘Abwab-al-berr’ cities’ structure with an approach of Carmona urban design indicators

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Abstract

There are two general parts in the foundations of special ilkhanate cities ‘Abwab-al-berr’ (Shanbe Qazan), Rab’e Rashidi and Soltanieh) including central core and the ‘shahrestan’, which were constructed with a regular and pre-designed geometric appearance and essentially two perpendicular axes which were leading to the gates. One of the axes was the bazaar and the other axe was called ‘Mamer’ i.e. a path which led to the central core that was te religious zone in ‘Abwab-al-berr’ cities. Furthermore, the surrounding gardens in addition to the bulwark, had enclosed the outer limits of the city and enformed them as city gardens. This article aims to explain the relation among principles of factors affecting the formation of ‘Abwab-al-berr’ cities foundation and to categorize the mentioned factors with the Carmona’s indicators. This historical research is based on precision in the context and tips of the historical texts using the content analysis method and with a contemporary approach to the analysis of the strategic principles of urban structure uses exploratory method. Although primary physical studies on reviewed ‘Abwab-al-berr’ cities represents differences in appearance like size, location and context, but a deeper analysis of indicators which form these cities, show us that considering philosophical approach and purpose of construction, All the three cities have similar principles with a unique goal and all of them are based on Islamic values and ‘waqf’ system. These principles, as spirit of the cities, beside physical features of the cities, lead the different spiritual and physical aspects of urban life. The mentioned principles, according to the Carmona’s theory, are classified in morphological, perceptual, social, visual, functional, chronological and environmental indicators.

Introduction

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Including the major changes during the ilkhanate period was that religious beliefs became bold among the Ilkhanate leaders. Among other changes were the advent of the cities named 'abwab-al-berr'. The first idea of building these cities was to build a social welfare for people so as the name tells the rewards of these heritages open the doors of heaven to the benefactor of them. In the historical texts of this period construction of the 'abwab-al-berr' has been abundantly mentioned which confirms the importance of reviewing these cities in order to achieve the ilkhanate cities structure.

Materials and Methods

The purpose is to mentally communicate between historical facts of the city and physical forms of them. Research strategy is a commentary-historical strategy which is based on precision in the context and tips of the historical texts using the content analysis method and with a contemporary approach to the analysis of the strategic principles of urban structure uses exploratory method.

Discussion and Results

Some of the parameters of the 'abwab-al-berr' cities can be categorized like this due to the Carmona's indicators.

Morphological indicators: these cities had a coarse texture in the core and fine texture scattered in all 'shahrestan'. In the core we witness the accumulation of different functions based on the principle of hierarchy and neighborliness which emerged a coherent atmosphere. Communication network and component pattern which were partially systematic and partially organic led to the qualities such as attractiveness.

Perceptual indicators: the chainsaw perceptual indicators of these cities has created readable spaces by creating a strong impression in the minds and it made it possible for citizens to make a whole image of the city which created an emotional attach due to the Islamic-Iranian identity.

Social indicators: In these cities, suitable spaces for communication and social activities were considered and also the construction of open spaces and multi functionalities of religious spaces were for the same reason. Construction of different neighborhoods for different social groups, confirms the attention of the creators to all aspects of society.

Visual indicators: in locating the core the highest section was selected so that the city could have a visual identity which was the mosques. The skyline ws homogeneous everywhere and it rises in the core and takes its peak in the highest form of the Islamic values of the mosque.

Functional indicators: Throughout the historical texts of this period, they refer to a pre-designed plan for these cities which coordinated design of functions and their responsiveness to the needs of residents has been emphasized in all of them.

Chronological indicators: The 'waqf' system has been the basis for the construction and survival of the 'abwab-al-berr'. The benefactors of these cities have been looking for a historical continuity with the old architecture and urbanism.

Environmental indicators: The presence of green spaces on a large scale, in addition to creating visual qualities, led to a favorable psychological environment, such spaces, evoked the concept of the "garden of the city". Preventing environmental pollution as a principle has created sewage disposal, treatment and etc. which provides a suitable environment for promoting environmental conditions and sustainable urban development.

Conclusions

Features and spatial structure of 'abwab-al-berr' cities are extracted according to the historical texts and the principles, according to the Carmona's theory, are classified in morphological, perceptual, social, visual, functional, chronological and environmental indicators.

Key words: Abwab-al-berr, Ilkhanate, historic texts, indicator, Carmona

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