



Various Types of Islamic City and Pointing Out to Defining the Major Aspects of Ideal Islamic City

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Received: 24/11/2014

Accepted: 07/10/2015

Abstract

In recent decade, various types of reports, articles, and books have been published in relation with Islamic city, but the terminology of “Islamic city” is not yet defined clearly in these publications. Explanation of the subject and its definition that called as Islamic city is the first step of this research. The descriptive and analytical method has been used as the research methodology in this paper, through which all the existing published literature were surveyed and analytically reviewed. Literature survey shows that most of the recent studies are about existing cities that Muslims settled over there. The recent publication about Islamic city can be classified into two groups. First, those who defined Islamic city based on dominating elements of existing traditional Islamic cities. The second group is those who define Islamic city based on significant Islamic advices. In the other word the first group tries to say what an Islamic city is, on the bases of existing city in Islamic era. The other group besides denying the first group definition tries to say what an Islamic city shall be on the bases of religious valid documents. In addition, addressing to some of Islamic general principals mentioned in the major Islamic documents such as holy book of Quran is another side of nowadays published studies. Unfortunately, Muslim thinkers and theorists in the field of urban design and planning have little activities for presenting clear definition of Islamic city, pointing out its major criteria, and the approaches that one can physically crystallize various religious thoughts with emphasis on Quran, “Nahj al-Balaghe”, and Hadiths (Important statement of Islamic religious leaders). Furthermore, the text context that was published by eastern experts has been studied and analyzed. In this regard, results of the studies were presented by focusing on the main key words in relation to urban areas and urbanism, in valid description of various specific Quran verses, and “Hadiths”. Discussion of this article also deals with a brief history of Islamic cities. In this regard a few towns related to Muslims, and their relation with Islam was studied as case studies. Then, application of Islamic thoughts, for an urban society is followed. In continuation, it has been tried to define and developed a process to determine the main principles for creating Islamic conditions on the bases of the significant aim and objectives of Islam religion. In this paper, views of various western and eastern scholars about: How one can define an Islamic city is reviewed. Result of the study indicates that western theorists have defined an Islamic city on the bases of the dominating physical features and elements of existing cities of Muslim inhabitation during various Islamic eras.



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The result of this section of the study shows that these elements are such as “Jame” mosque, bazaar, governor fort, and city enclosure walls. But, the eastern theorists who are familiar with Islamic religious verses and the advices of great Islamic leaders show that: Islam is a perfect religion among other religions. It has useful fruitful teachings that many of them can be quiet responsive in achieving good criteria for planning and design of an Islamic city. Some of the eastern theorists who are familiar with Islamic religious verses and the advices of great Islamic leaders like prophet and Imams show that: the main concept and spiritual aspect behind each and every element in an Islamic cities and the various factors to call a city Islamic, is much more important than those physical one. They also believe that an Islamic city should be planned and designed on the bases of major Islamic principle concepts such as justice, unity security, privacy, etc.

In the end, to show the process that how one can reflect the Islamic advices in a physical situation, a conceptual presentation which is already written by M. R. & A. Pourjafar (2013) about an Islamic Iranian mohalla is described and displayed in brief below. The design principles of «Mohallahs» (Traditional Persian-Islamic Neighborhood) in the Islamic cities since the beginning of Islam are examined in that research. Then the role of mosque as one of the important elements that defines the physical dimensions and also meets the needs of the social, political, cultural and residential sectors of the city was determined. The superiority of design principles of «Mohallahs» in Persian-Islamic cities with having Mosque, «Hoseiniah», «Tekyeh» and other religious buildings as their centers and hub of their socio/cultural activities in comparison with planning and design of present situation in Muslim residential areas, is shown clearly. Studying of «Mohallahs» in the old Persian-Islamic cities of Iran proves the sustainability, durability and significant role of mosque for quality dimensions of city designing and social issues in compare with neighborhood unit in the west. The study of Persian-Islamic advices also indicates Islam as a religion has many advices as far as neighborhood design is concerned. This can happen, on the bases of Quranic verses and «Hadiths», and conclusion derived from study of existing traditional Persian-Islamic «Mohallahs», through which a new modal has been proposed for Persian-Islamic «Mohallah». A central car free square with respect to social dimensions with all required, land uses and activities all around it was also proposed. The mosque and other religious and socio/cultural buildings are the focal points of this «Mohallah». The central urban space of the «Mohallah» has walkable accessibility from farther points all around it. The functional radius of the purposed «Mohallah» on the bases of the mentioned «Hadiths» by Imam Ali (Forty houses from the mosque, are neighbors) is about four to five hundred meters. This model may be used for designing of contemporary residential «Mohallah» in new towns and extension areas of existing cities in future. A purposed Islamic city may have number of such residential units called “Mohalla” around a bazaar complex (similarly designed on the bases of above process). In this way and the bases of above process, one can achieve various kind of Islamic city. Finally, it is concluded that: The great religion of Islam has wise and rational advises and teachings. These can be converted into practical criteria through a proper process and programming. In this way, one can create responsive Islamic environment that may not be as utopian as heaven but, obviously they can be more responsive than what we are facing in our contemporary situation nowadays. No doubt, there are also many examples of Islamic-Persian cities with high quality of urban design. By analyzing their design one can derive various criteria and get many lessons for contemporary planning and design of the Iranian Islamic city. Therefore, hopefully, in this way we can create a better kind of environment for Muslims inhabitants that can answer most of their behavior and activities with creation of various convivial urban spaces.

Keywords: Islamic city, Islamic valuable document, Ideal Islamic city.

