

Spontaneous and Purposeful Shaping of Cities in the Modern and Postmodern Paradigms

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Expanded Abstract

Introduction

Three types of city models may be identified in terms of type and level of intervention in their forms: 1. the "shaping" city, 2. the "shaped" city, and 3. the city where its form is a combination of "shaping" and "shaped". Obviously, the quantity (numbers) of the three model types are by no means the same, i.e. it varies greatly from time to time, system to system, as well as from region to region. From the time when urban design was officially recognized as an academic field and a profession, up to now, in the middle of the last century, a question has always been seriously addressed by philosophers, intellectuals and urban design professionals. The question is that what level of intervention in the form of city is truly logical and reasonable. We have been witnessing the creation of two entirely opposite poles [no intervention at all (pre and post-modern) to full intervention (in the modern era)]. Undoubtedly, each of these models has been based on a specific paradigm and worldview.

Materials and Methods

In this study, the two modern and post-modern paradigms associated with the concept of city form are analyzed in a philosophical /epistemological framework of modernity debate; followed by an analysis of the three cities including Brasilia (purposeful shaping), Yazd (spontaneous shaping), and the *Safavid's* Isfahan (a combination of the two concepts), and a comparison of the features of each introduced model. Finally, with the current conditions of the contemporary city, it is concluded that the desirable form of intervention in the contemporary city should shuttle back and forth on the basis of integration between the two above paradigms. This is as an interaction between the two above opposite positions such that the result would be a combination of "shaped" and "shaping", or whether control it or not, and ultimately, direct or indirect design of the city.

Obviously, the main objective in urban design has, from the beginning, been to somehow intervene in the natural process of urban growth and move it towards desirable quantitative, qualitative, and purposeful development. This is in order to prevent uncontrolled and inappropriate development. However, the significant question unanswered yet and has caused great uncertainties in the design career and discipline activities is the desired level of intervention, its type and the related paradigm.

Philosophical framework of this research starts with an in-depth study of modernity, modernism and post-modernism concepts. The relationship between modernity and modernism may be so described that one of them is paradigm (modernism in the scale of several decades) and the other one super-paradigm (modernity in the scale of several centuries); they are usually divided into three periods: the pre-paradigm, paradigm, and post-paradigm. While modernity was a long-term project beginning in the renaissance era, but gradually took power by criticizing the works of Dilthey and Bergson, and phenomenology, in general.

Super-paradigm as modernity declined over the course of the 20th century and entered into its post-paradigm stage. Thus, the modernism at its peak paradigm age (early to mid-twentieth century) is related to the pre-paradigm stage of the modernity, and post-modern has been present in the background as an agent to awaken the inactive part of the modernity's lateral dimension.

It may generally be said that "purposeful shaping" or full intervention in the city form is typically a manifestation of modernism. The shaped city largely conforms to the modernism urban development ideas. But, on the other hand, influenced by cultural analysis of the Post-modern, the "spontaneous shaping" paradigm importance has been enhanced.

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Modernism philosophy which is based on the ideas of Descartes, Ramos and other thoughts has resulted in emergence of urban development movements like industrial city, utopia, metropolis and ultimately anti-urbanization ideas. The post-modernism philosophy has roots in the Heidegger's critical thinking, the Frankfurt cult, and the George Simmel ideas, which seriously questioned the certainty (or pragmatism) of the city form, derived from the emergence of conflicts within modernism and during the post-paradigm modernity.

In studying the three cities of Brasilia, Yazd and Isfahan, the following results may be obtained. The new Brasilia City was built in 1957 with an urban design by Luceo Costa. Brasilia sought to be devoid of any history and identity and wished to manifest as a viable city with a series of large-scale highways and skyscrapers and with special geometric design, without looking back at its indigenous roots and background settings. The orderly, dry, and symmetrical plan of the Brasilia was never fully materialized, as was envisaged; in that, there are today 16 satellite towns (slums, often dubbed the "anti Brasilia") around the city with a population of about 3.1 million. This is, in fact, the example contrasting to the natural growth of a city.

Factors such as climatic conditions, qanats (subterranean waterways), social characteristics, necessity to defend and economic activities are influential in forming of the Yazd city. Spatial variations of the Yazd city have always been a function of gradual and endogenous needs of the living environment. Formation of the Yazd city is the consequence and the result of various forces that existed in the area at that time, without a pre-thought plan, designer, or any special entity to supervise formation and shaping activities.

Developments are divided into several periods in the Isfahan city. But the most significant transformation of the city was the change of the city center from the old square to the Naghsh-e-Jahan Square, which changed direction of the city main body (or Roon) from Mecca direction to the river and scenery direction. Naghsh-e-Jahan Square is situated in the right direction in terms of climate and air currents; consequently, the core body of the new urban area around it, with histological regular and geometric texture is spread in the Roon direction. The Zayandeh Roud River axis, around which the city has expanded, in one hand serves as a separator edge of the town and the other, manifests itself a city with regulator of important market rows. Finally, the structure of the city is formed in relation to the area of the old city. The Safavid Urban development is assigned to soft elements such as water and trees so that the main body would be a combination of gardens and settlement areas. The result is a structured configuration in relation to the old city arrangement. The configuration organizes the life of the city in a semi-stable or unstable balance, which is always maintained by the time element.

Discussion and Results

The philosophical conflict between modernism and post-modernism in the city may be analyzed and summarized in the context of the following fields.

- **Order/ disorder axis**, which includes a range that begins with change, softness, anarchy and chaos state (or pole) and ends into the systematic, clarity and conceptual analysis one.
- **Static/ dynamic axis**, with stability and lack of change in one pole, but movement and clarity in general on the other one.
- **Continuity/ discontinuity axis**, which includes a range in between universality, integrity, and unity on one hand, and diversity, separation and rupture gap on the other.
- **Inner/ outer axis**, which includes a range between demand to enter into the personally experienced phenomena and a desire to show their consent to a foreign perspective expressing them.
- **Micro-precise/ macro-general**, where the contrast between the clear and precise experiences verses general and threshold ones.
- **This world/ other world**, which includes acceptance of the self- expressing world belief in contrast to the rejection of that belief; and accepting the fact that here and now is in contrast to another time and place.
- **Spontaneous/ process-based**, one border of this lays the stronger component of occurrence and innovation, and other border is an equally strong belief in the "control / management of events".

Numerous experiences in the past one hundred years in the Brasilia city suggests that this type of intervention in the city form, which is the first range of the axes, has never been able to guarantee the creation of a perfect, dynamic, lively and flexible environment for human civic life. On the other hand, in analyzing the formation process of Yazd in connection with these axes, there is no doubt that the complex conditions of today's life makes it neither conceivable nor favorable to escrow the entire city to the ruling forces without formation control or interference. It seems, therefore, that among the three analyzed models of the cities, it is the Isfahan city that can determine the type and the extent of intervention in the cities of nowadays; a model that can combine shaped and shaping together into a state of equilibrium.

Integrating the shaping and shaped changes the contemporary urban planning approach from "urban development" to "urban studies", and alters the intervention in the city in the following way:

1. Understanding the city as a product of a massive network of processes

City is the resultant of different political, religious, social, functional, economic, cognitive, environmental,

and other forces. Meanwhile, respective to time and place, one or few forces act more powerful. Regarding emergence of the city, ecosystem will have special influence on the main body and in the case of neighborhoods, social component of behavior patterns in the public arena will have its impact on both cases, as economics is the determinant factor.

2. Creation of new constructions with the aim of establishing continuous structure of micro processes around it.
In the combinational perspective with scale in the city growth process, different degrees may be allotted to space, which can fit in both in the existing configuration and also provide the possibility for future growth.
3. Livelihood and continuity of city growth
Growth through dynamic performance in the market and religion has been decisive in this matter, in Iran; the Imam Square in Isfahan is a good example of relations to the old market.

Conclusion

In this research, three approaches: absolute intervention (spontaneous shaping), Brasilia example, non-interference (purposeful shaping), Yazd example, and a combination of these two approaches, Isfahan example, were studied in urban design within the perspective of samples in the two modern and post-modern dominant paradigms.

Hence, it is undoubtedly the urban designers' task to assume direct control of the main physical, social and economic structure of the city. In fact, this structure is a spatial network that puts together the different and even opposite forces in a way which we conceive the city as a cellular, linear and spatial system. This is while other parts of the city that are the live and transforming tissues should be controlled indirectly, using rules and regulations prepared for this purpose. These parts have, to some extent, freedom of action, and their residents have the authority to shape their activity space, within a general formulated framework.

Keywords: modernism, post-modernism, purposeful shaping, spontaneous shaping, urban design.

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