

The City of the Prophet, a Reflection on the City Structure during Early Islam

Abstract

The structure of cities has been influenced by various economic, social and cultural factors since the emergence of the first cities. Over time, these factors have undergone changes and transformations. Efforts to achieve a suitable model of the Islamic city that can meet the needs of today's society have been raised as one of the concerns of researchers in the field of urban planning and Islamic studies in recent decades. Identifying the characteristics of the Islamic city in the time of the Prophet (PBUH) as the founder of Islam, can help identify this pattern. This research has been done by a descriptive and analytical method based on library data via a comparative-historical method and has studied the examples of the first early cities of Islamic history such as Mecca and Medina. Previous studies show that the city at the time of the Prophet was more known for the function of its components, especially the mosque, rather than for its physical components. The use of the method of transgression in order to divide the earth is the technique that has led to the formation of the principle of spatial and territorial hierarchy in such cities. In terms of function, the mosque is formed in a hierarchical manner, following the method of *Taqtit*, with an open space pattern for urban events, and acts as the most important urban space in this period. Without doubt, in the following periods after the Holy Prophet (PBUH) - we see the decline of the importance of the mosque in its physical aspect.

Research aims:

1. Identifying the characteristics of Islamic cities in the early period of Islam, especially in the time of the Prophet (PBUH).
2. Recognition of effective factors in the development of urban life in the first century AH.

Research questions:

1. What were the examples of urban planning in the early cities of Islam at the time of the Prophet (PBUH)?

٧. How did the religion of Islam affect the structure of the city during the time of the Prophet (PBUH)?

Keywords: Urban planning during the period of the Prophet (PBUH), the method of transgression, Islamic city.

Introduction

City and urban planning is one of the categories that has always maintained its novelty as a subject of study. It is of significant as it is closely related to various political, economic, social and cultural factors. Urban planning in the Islamic world has also had its own ups and downs. So far, many studies have been composed in relation to the characteristics of Islamic cities each studying the subject from a different perspective. What is certain is that in relation to the structure of the city in general and the characteristics of urban planning in this period, there are few examples in Persian-language studies that analyze the issue comprehensively leading to the formation of a pattern in the structure of Islamic Iran. Cities are a symbol of the people they live in, in addition, examining the characteristics of each period of urbanization helps to understand the ideology and beliefs of its inhabitants. Therefore, the study of the characteristics of the Islamic city also depends on the knowledge of the ideology that governs it and cannot be summarized as physical or geographical characteristics. The study of such cities should begin with the first examples; Because in the first years of the emergence of Islam, the Prophet (PBUH) has taken the most significant and purest measures in relation to the promotion and spread of this religion and these measures have had the first effects on the cities of early Islam.

Research on the relationship with the Islamic city in the early period leads to several categories of studies. Some of them have examined the characteristics of each city including the history, structure and components of each city with no comparison or analysis. From this group, we can refer to the studies of Seyyed Baqer Najafi (۱۹۸۵) in the book "Medinology of Medinology", which deals with the various components of the city of Medina and Islam influenced the structure of this city. The article by Mohammadpour and Jan Ahmadi (۲۰۱۶) entitled "Factors Affecting the Expansion of Fustat to the Establishment of Cairo" also explains the reasons for the formation of Fustat and how it cultivated and developed; this article, despite clearly illustrating the city of Fustat, cannot generally represent the characteristics of other early cities. In the second group, the characteristics of the Islamic city are given, regardless of the corresponding historical periods. One of the studies in this category is the article of Azarniushah (۲۰۱۳) which, despite dealing with the formation of Islamic cities, did not refer to the cities that the Prophet (PBUH) directly influenced, as it refers to the causes and how cities originated. Farahani and Rafieian (۲۰۲۲) carried out a research with an analytical-historical method and traced the roots of the formation of urban open

spaces, geometry and large-scale in the history of Iranian-Islamic cities; however, it only studied Iranian cities. In the third group, the principles of formation of the Islamic city are not based on historical examples; rather, it is introduced based on religious combinations, hadiths and narrations. For example, in the study by Sajjadzadeh and Mousavi (۲۰۱۴) the essential and existential dimensions of the Islamic city based on verses and hadiths is studied and less attention to historical evidence and documents is seen; despite the fact the mentioned study is valuable as it provides physical examples for each of the dimensions; nevertheless, the effect of historical periods on how these principles are applied is unclear. Karami (۲۰۱۳) in the article of the Sharia of the Islamic city, regardless of considering specific periods, has examined the characteristics of the Islamic city through the lens of the principles and components of the Sharia of the Islamic city and from the perspective of a monotheistic worldview. Studies show that, despite being aware of the importance of the role of the Prophet (PBUH) in shaping Islam and the Islamic city, this subject has not been addressed directly and can be done by relying on face studies and looking at historical and specific to the period of the Prophet (PBUH) by examining the characteristics of Islamic cities.

This article attempts to provide examples of urban planning in early Islamic period and how Islam affected the structure of the city during the lifetime of the holy Prophet by examining the characteristics of the early cities of Islam. Consequently, the cities that were directly influenced by the Prophet (PBUH) have been studied as case studies in order to achieve the characteristics of the city of the Prophet (PBUH). With these explanations, the city of Mecca has been studied as the first city and the place of emergence of Islam; however, due to the short presence of the Prophet (PBUH) in this city, it is less possible to find manifestations of his actions in this city. The city of Medina, due to the direct influence of the Prophet (PBUH) on the formation of the Islamic government is considered as the main manifestation of urban planning during the lifetime of the Prophet (PBUH) and the characteristics of urban structure and elements can be effortlessly studied. Therefore, most of this article is dedicated to this city. Other cities, such as Kufa, Basra, and Fustat, have also been studied since they were among the first Muslim cities outside the Arabian Peninsula and were more influenced by the Prophet's actions during his lifetime. This study aims to identify the characteristics of the Islamic city to study these characteristics in the first cities of the Islamic world with emphasis on the cities that the Prophet had special impact on. The present study is of developmental type and is a subset of qualitative paradigm. The reasoning of research is the logic of inquiry. This study is carried out in the field of qualitative studies and with the strategy of

discourse analysis and attempts to describe and understand the relationships and structures in the early Islamic cities and to understand how the actions of the Prophet (PBUH) affected the shape of the city. The methods of collecting information in this research are the study of documents, books and articles in the manner of library studies.

Conclusion

Understanding the characteristics of the Islamic city and achieving a model for its republishing requires rooting the issue theoretically and historically. Cities that were founded by the Prophet (PBUH) as the first Islamic cities can be a decent model for study and research since the basic principles of Islam have been observed in these cities without any changes or distortions. This study attempted to achieve these features by examining historical texts related to the characteristics of the first cities of Islam during the time of the Prophet (PBUH) and a few years after his passing. However, due to the scarcity of historical sources, there has been a limitation of information and the summaries have been made with these restrictions in mind. The use of the method of transgression in the division of spaces has led to the formation of hidden order in Islamic cities, which is in line with the functional levels and the principle of territory in the urban planning and design literature. This principle has led to the formation of a functional and physical hierarchy of the city. In different levels from the city to the neighborhood and even a residential alley, the method of physical and functional confrontation and even public participation in space management has been different. In addition, the results of these studies show that in the eyes of the Prophet, the city is something beyond its body and the people living in the city are more central in shaping the city. This issue is even evident in the mosque as the first and most important basis of Islam in all the mentioned cities. As studies show, the mosque does not have a prominent body and building, and most of the intention of the mosque is to achieve a space for the presence of Muslims and to hold religious and political ceremonies. In fact, the mosque has played the role of urban space and all the expectations and potentials of an urban space have been met in the form and functions of this space. Also, people's participation in decision-making, whether in choosing the location of the mosque or in political decisions and even in the implementation of decisions, is observed in all cities, and this makes it easy to control and manage the space at different levels. As a result, what can be concluded in general is the existence of order in the absence of regular checkered cities. The Islamic city cannot be identified by searching for its appearance and the

efforts of the Prophet (PBUH) to achieve and establish the Islamic city is more focused on the structural and semantic features of the city than all citizens and users.

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