

# ANCIENT IRANIAN URBAN STRUCTURE AND ITS SITUATION IN CONTEMPORARY CITY

*Nayerehossadat Mousavi\**

## ABSTRACT

The main topic of the article is based on studying the structure of historical Iranian cities. Most of the ancient Iranian cities have had recognizable skeleton and structure, which have been expanded from the most public places of the city such as Bazaars (market places) and Squares to the most private parts like neighborhoods. This type of unique organic structure organized the city form and the development of the city occurred within this framework.

There are lots of examples of such cities, that have maintained their main structure and their historical form can be easily identified even upto the last fifty years. Some cases of these structures and constituents (such as their axes and joints) are mentioned in this article.

However, if we consider the current condition of Iranian cities, we will see that the major growth of cities in the contemporary era- specifically in recent decades, has happened outside of the historical zone, whilst the physical structure of old city is suffering from severe erosion and disintegration, it is still coherently interwoven with the social structures and values. The disintegration and erosion of the old urban fabrics and diffusion of city landmarks, neither show the unified structure nor transform the valuable ancient pattern into a major issue.

The main pattern of the old city's structural body and its basis which had been constant, have been transformed due to diffused and unorganized development of the cities. As a result of the disorganized but continuous urban growth, the pattern of city structures which had its roots in the history of the city underwent metamorphosis. The structures of ancient Iranian cities which have had unity, integrity and regulation are collapsing within this irregular growth and are remaining as broken frames of the city.

To find suitable strategy for dealing with historical cities which are collapsing internally and expanding towards their

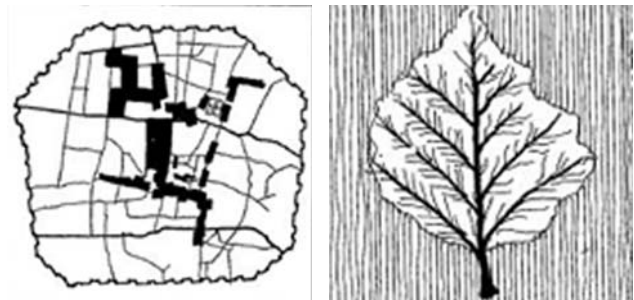
suburbs, we have studied the definition of the main structure of a city and the perspective of the theorists in this respect so that we can provide a framework for sustainable development for these historic cities.

Additionally, this paper studies the ideas of structuralisms and the definition of the structure of the city, structure of ancient Iranian cities and its component (joints and axes) through a few examples. Afterwards, it refers to some examples of expanding ancient cities. In light of these examples, it will present solutions and strategies to achieve sustainable development and structural regulations.

**Key Words:** Urban main structure, Iranian old city structure, joints and axes, sustainable development.

## MAIN STRUCTURE OF HISTORICAL IRANIAN CITIES

A city structure is comprised of a main part, as a spine and a network of various land uses in addition to elements which integrate the city as a unity, its order extend & to the furthest urban fractions such as residential districts. The expression (urban main structure) is used regarding a certain part of the city, in which physical and behavioral centralization (density) takes place, and other constructions throughout the city fill the gaps between these main sectors following its order as fillers (Hamidi & others, 1997, p1) (Figure 1).



**Figure-1:** Comparison Structure of a city (old Tehran) and structure of a tree or leaf.

\* Master in Urban Fabric and Architectural Conservation and Revitalization from Fine Art Faculty, University of Tehran.