Camp of Faith explores the political foundations of the city. It positions itself around a definition of the idea of the political, which is determined by the specific constitution of opposed entities, a dichotomy between a sovereign body and movements. Subsequently, it suggests a dialectical reading of the notion of Urban Form, which is built upon the relation between norm and exception, between friendship and enmity, inclusion and exclusion. Departing from this definition, the research stresses on the (constructive) dynamism of opposing forces which motivate or shape a creative tension: the state of antithetical, which becomes spatialised in the form of the city.
The Etchmiadzin complex is the oldest state-built church in the world. The original basilica was built in AD 301–303 by Saint Gregory the Illuminator, under the Sassanid Empire. Later, in AD 480, the Sassanid governor of Armenia ordered a replacement of the basilica with a new cruciform church (as depicted in the etching).

Source: Published in Chardin, J. Journal du voyage du Chevalier Chardin en Perse (Amsterdam: Jean Wolters & Ysbrand Haring, 1686); Bibliothèque Nationale de France, département Cartes et Plans, GE DD-2987 (6773).
Camp of Faith:
On Political Theology and Urban Form

Proefschrift

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1. Architectural history is not separated from the history of power and religions. All significant architectural concepts are secularized theological ideas!

2. Like all memberships, citizenship requires a form of commitment: a binding contract that validates the performance of the civic subjects – as appears in religion, law or faith – to define the relationship between the individuals, territory and the lawgiver.

3. ‘Camp of Faith’ revisits Urban Form as the political repercussions of theological ideas, which in a way shape the shared conceptions of history and authority. It offers a peculiar form of the built environment where the interior and exterior are explicitly distinct.

4. Among the fundamental elements of architectural form, wall comes before the rest. The primary purpose of wall is to establish a relationship. Association comes before separation.

5. There is no proclamation of space, in the form of appropriation, division or ordering, without corresponding faith, just as there is no faith without an explicit spatial referent.

6. ‘Camp of Faith’ draws a connection between spatial consciousness, power and resistance. By tracing paradigmatic urban forms it suggests a possible role for architecture to activate citizenship.
7. ‘Camp of faith’ offers an idea of architecture derived from political theology, reduced to its ideal form and detached from any specific use, while defining the subject in an on-going process of resistance.

8. The idea of Urban Form is not theologically determined in the sense of being legitimized through an appeal to religious traditions, but it is structurally theological in the sense that what founds the order remains both part of it and external to it.

9. Today Architecture has strong commitments to the global economy. As economy needs security, every step forward is towards stabilizing the contemporary condition, in order to make it predictable and calculable. Planning takes over project.

10. Faith is projective. It is not a permanent contract or a stable pleasure of a final bliss. Faith is rather an act in the present that enables the possibility of an imminent change.

*These propositions are regarded as opposable and defendable, and have been approved as such by the supervisors, Prof.ir. M. Riedijk and Prof.ir. S.U. Barbieri.*
1. De geschiedenis van architectuur is niet gescheiden van de geschiedenis van macht en religies. Alle belangwekkende concepten uit de architectuur zijn geseculariseerde theologische ideeën!

2. Zoals alle lidmaatschappen vereist burgerschap een vorm van betrokkenheid: een bindend contract dat de participatie van burgers bevestigt – zoals dat voorkomt in religie, de wet of geloof – om de relatie tussen individuen, territorium en de wetgever te bepalen.

3. ‘Camp of Faith’ keert terug naar Stedelijke Vorm als de politieke repercussies van theologische ideeën, die op een bepaalde manier gedeelde concepties van geschiedenis en autoriteit vormgeven. Het biedt een specifieke vorm van de gebouwde omgeving, waarin interieur en exterieur scherp onderscheiden zijn.

4. Van alle fundamentele elementen van bouwkundige vormen komt muur voor de rest. Het primaire doel van muur is om een relatie te vestigen. Associatie komt voor scheiding.

5. Er is geen proclamatie van ruimte, in de vorm van toeëigening, scheiding of ordening, zonder bijbehorend geloof, net zoals dat er geen geloof is zonder een expliciet ruimtelijke verwijzing.

6. ‘Camp of Faith’ legt een verbinding tussen ruimtelijk bewustzijn, macht en verzet. Door paradigmatische stedelijke vormen te traceren suggereert het een mogelijke rol voor architectuur om burgerschap te activeren.
7. ‘Camp of Faith’ definiert het subject in een voortdurend proces van verzet en biedt een idee van architectuur aan dat voortkomt uit de politieke theologie, teruggebracht tot zijn ideële vorm en losgemaakt van elk specifiek gebruik.

8. Het idee van Stedelijke Vorm is niet theologisch bepaald in de zin dat het geligitimeerd zou zijn door een beroep op religieuze tradities, maar het is structureel theologisch in de zin dat waarop de orde is gegrondvest zowel onderdeel daarvan is als extern blijft.

9. De Architectuur is heden ten dage sterk betrokken bij de wereld economie. Omdat de economie zekerheid behoeft stabiliseert elke stap voorwaarts de hedendaagse conditie, zodat het voorspelbaar en berekenbaar kan worden gemaakt. Planning vervangt project.

10. Geloof is ontwerpgericht. Het is niet een permanent contract of een stabiel genot van een ultieme gelukzaligheid. Geloof is met name een handeling in het heden die op handen zijnde verandering mogelijk maakt.

Deze stellingen worden opponeerbaar en verdedigbaar geacht en zijn als zodanig goedgekeurd door de promotoren, Prof.ir. M. Riedijk en Prof.ir. S.U. Barbieri.
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I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family, my father Mozaffar Khosravi, my mom Mojgan Shariatzadeh Rafie, and my beloved sister Maryam Khosravi, who are constant source of inspiration, encouragement and love.
Camp of Faith:
On Political Theology and Urban Form

Hamed Khosravi
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Plan of the Holy Shrine of Mecca, North Africa, Late 18th Century/Early 19th Century
Today’s architectural discourse, through its commitment to the global economy, often highlights the negative role of borders and divisions in formation of a good and productive urban development.¹ In this sense walls have been addressed as emblems of failed urbanism, causing segregation, separation and interruption.² In fact, the very project of the modern city has been to fade these borders and walls by which economy of the city has historically been produced. This process not only affects the way cities are planned, designed and constructed, but also abandons the collective dimension of life: citizenship, which is political by definition.³ Besides legislating laws and orders, urban form has been always a fundamental device through which the idea of citizenship has been defined. Walls not only protect the life of citizens but also legitimate the life in order to control it.⁴ Yet in a juridical understanding, without having a definite border, the citizenship could become an abstract notion.

Like all other memberships, citizenship requires a form of commitment – a binding contract that validates the performance of the civic subject and appears in religion, law or faith to define the relationship between the individual, territory and the lawgiver. On one hand, the beliefs of a city’s inhabitants can imply specific definitions through which space is conceptualised and how it ultimately materialises by boundaries. On the other hand, architecture itself can enclose and simultaneously identify these subjects by framing, limiting
and forming spaces that articulate the political community and relate to the city; by containing the political subjects, architecture makes them eligible for their civil rights. Therefore this spatial frame can be seen as a political device that enables lawmakers or the state to conduct power through acts or projects. Moreover it maintains the possibility of counter-project in form of ‘resistance’. In fact, architectural form not only accommodates such tension – of power and conflict – but also territorialises and projects them on the city.

The relationship between architecture and the city can no longer be seen as inductive or deductive, in a way the former constitutes the latter, and the latter is the only condition for the former. But it is seen as analogical. By grounding itself on individual autonomy and reinforcing the relationship among subjects, power and territory, architecture can reclaim its role to enable the possibility of achieving a political life. Of course here the issue of political life goes beyond the parliamentary politics or political activism, while it addresses an Aristotelian definition of man as ‘political animal’ whose ultimate goal, happiness, can only be secured through the exercise of his political nature. In approaching such a concept, Aristotle pinpoints essential activities of the political animal: making the city and household management. In this way architecture fulfils a fundamental role; it not only materialises borders and boundaries of the city, but also gives the inhabitants, specific way of life. While in a more conventional approach to the city, the political sphere stops at the border of the houses – where the public sphere ends –, it can be also argued that it is precisely through the form of life, defined by the interior architecture of the house, that the political dimension of life within the city can be achieved. In this regard the plan does not only operate functionally but it rather tends to condition the subject in a certain way.

Referring to the Greek polis, as an archetypical example in which the political life of citizens was fully practised, Arendt defines the city (in opposition to village or town) as the only place that can provide the conditions to be political (to be subject to the law of the polis), which means not only
0.2

Christianopolis
Proposal for an Ideal City by the German Theologist Johannes Valentinus Andreae in 1619.
living in the city, but also owning a space – a private property that harbours and encloses political life. In this sense, citizenship can literally be defined by a wall (*nomos*), without which there might have been ‘an agglomeration of houses, a town (*asty*), but not a city, a political community.’ Hence, the interior space of the household embodies the essential activities related to the biological life of the inhabitants, while the exterior functions as the boundary between one household and the other. As Arendt explains, ‘the law originally was identified with this boundary line, which in ancient times was still actually a space, a kind of no-man’s-land between the private and the public, sheltering and protecting both realms while, at the same time, separating them from each other.’ The spatial manifestation of this idea as it relates to the urban form appears in the concept of *nomos*, a wall that defines the city but also encloses private property.

This reading offers an understanding of the city as a form through which the political – that fundamental activity of human life – can be achieved. In this sense, architecture performs as a device that not only delimits the lives of individuals, but also enables them to determine the political community. Walls therefore, are studied as a spatial device; a frame that epitomises the core idea of the city, marking where the laws, thus power, are applicable. By excluding inside from the outside, it protects, and lets various forms of life proliferate within and beyond a boundary. In this sense architecture, as an act of framing, defines space through marking the boundaries of the property as well as the city. At the same time, the city can be produced and reproduced through its architecture.

Drawing upon Aristotle’s idea the Islamic theologian and philosopher al-Farabi, in his treaties the *Book of Opinions of the People of the Ideal City* (also translated as *Al-Farabi’s The Perfect State*), distinguishes various ways of living in the cities. He argues that the ideal state was the city-state of *Medina*, when it was governed by the prophet Muhammad as its head of state, as he was in
direct communion with God whose law was revealed to him. He writes:

“The excellent philosophers who have discussed the views of the excellent cities apply the word *medina* to a group of people who concur with one another in holding excellent views and who live near to one another in one place within closed walls [...], in a caravanserai or in a house, on top of a mountain or beneath the ground.”¹⁰

Based on this ideal model al-Farabi describes the city as a body through which its inhabitants aim at co-operating for the things by which felicity and happiness (*al-Sa’ada*) in its real and true sense can be attained. He further highlights that this condition is only possible when a ruler, whose decision is analogous to God’s acts,¹¹ holds the people together by constructing the ideal form of city.

While for the Greek philosophers the concept of the city, goes beyond the mere actuality of the *polis* and the very paradigmatic case of Athens, becomes a political concept; an ideal kingdom of reason, where the only person eligible for ruling the city is philosopher-king. In Islamic thought, this concept appears essentially as an existential one; the city conceived as ‘terrestrial paradise’ where the ruler ‘is a person over whom nobody has any sovereignty whatsoever.’¹² For the citizens of the earthly paradise, the ‘faith’ is the index, to be preserved, outlined and expressed actively. It is through the faith that believers and non-believer, friend and enemy and city and countryside are distinguished. The Islamic sovereign, through the act of separation, frames the lives of the people and directs them toward the happiness. Hence, in this manner, the possibility of having a good way of life is conditioned by the presence of a sovereign power without which no political life can be achieved. And the (ideal) city is the manifestation of this power relation, which accommodates it and holds it together. This understanding here derives from Political Theology and characterises the ‘exception’ as an appropriated (legal and physical) space upon which the sovereign decides.
In the thesis the notion of political theology is not limited to the specific ‘religious’ ideas such as in Christianity, Judaism or Islam, in which they underlie political, social, economic and cultural discourses. But rather it tends to explore the ways in which ‘theological’ concepts are used to reveal the relationship between the urban form and the original and the most explicit form of power, represented by the sovereign in the modern state. Although comprehending the city as a space of sovereignty has remained a subject of dispute, yet the notion of separation, an inherent part of political theology, becomes a fundamental concept that activates when an ideological power attempts to define itself through exclusion.

In 1922 Carl Schmitt in his book *Politische Theologie* coined the term once again in the contemporary political discourse. However his reading of the theme should be read in the context of his critique on the liberal parliamentary democracy as an apolitical form of state, here Schmitt’s argument is reduced to its theoretical basis. For him political theology is the structure of political concepts; ‘all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularised theological concepts.’ In other words, that political theory addresses the state (and sovereignty) in much the same manner as theology does God. Within Schmitt’s view of the political, the theological notion of God transfers to the sovereign. Sovereignty is what Schmitt calls a *Grenzbegriff*, a ‘limiting’ or ‘border concept’. ‘Sovereign is he who decides on the exception.’ The act of decision, here subsumes its very meaning, decide from Latin *decidere* ‘determine’, from *de-* ‘off’ + *caedere* ‘cut’ or ‘separate’. The core of this authority is its exclusive possession of the right of, or its monopoly of, political decision-making. The reasoning for such a political project is twofold: it is first an attempt to dominate the space, and then an act to establish a clear intelligible sovereignty. This idea shapes the very core of Schmitt’s definition of the political as the work of friend-enemy distinction, without which the autonomy of the state cannot be maintained. By constantly making decisions and creating borders, the sovereign not only
3. View of the Sanctuary at Medina, 17th or 18th Century
Opaque watercolour, gold, silver and ink on paper, 65 x 46.5 cm
establishes order but also transcends it. To apply this power is thus to project it on the territory.

Accordingly the thesis shapes around a reading of the city as a project, through which urban developments are formed as a result of a political power. Project and state are not conceivable separately; while according to Schmitt, these projects rely on state power; however, they are only productive when they enable counter-projects as opportunities of *resistance*. The spatial dimension of this dialectical process lies in the moment of conflict when opposing forces collapse and projects are initiated, thus making cities laboratories of projects and counter-projects. Depending on how a space is shaped, organised and holds tension, the architecture of the city constantly produces new confrontations. Approaching the city from a political perspective not only reveals the ways in which cities were historically founded by the sovereign power, but also offers an alternative reading of the reality of cities today. Reading a city through its projects means understanding its architecture as an act through which political intention is instrumentalised.

This Schmittian dichotomy of projects and counter-projects is rooted in Hobbes’ political theology, which illustrates the state as an absolute power – a mortal god, whose utmost task is to provide people safety and security. In this first of two models of the city, the sovereign invokes ‘fear’ through conflict to sustain a relationship with subjects. For both Hobbes and Schmitt, the source of political order lies in the ever-present ‘possibility of conflict’. Therefore the need for security and the fear of losing it forces citizens to obey the sovereign entity. In the Hobbesian paradigm, the sovereign state is both the terrifier and protector – a monstrous Leviathan made up of the bodies of its citizens and aggressive when confronted. By holding all juridical, political and social legitimacies, this Leviathan closely resembles the image of God to essentially transform the city into an ‘earthly paradise’, thus implying a specific configuration through which the political idea of the city is spatialised: here, the idea of the frame (or boundary) is instrumentalised as the core
Frontispiece of Leviathan, Drawn by Abraham Bosse
On the top a giant crowned figure is seen emerging from the landscape, clutching a sword and a crosier, beneath a quote from the Book of Job *Non est potestas Super Terram quae Comparetur ei* (There is no power on earth to be compared to him), linking the figure to the monster of that book. In the bottom, the two sides reflect the sword and crosier of the main figure - earthly power on the left and the powers of the church on the right. Each side element reflects the equivalent power - castle to church, crown to mitre, cannon to excommunication, weapons to logic, and the battlefield to the religious courts. The giant holds the symbols of both sides, reflecting the union of secular and spiritual in the sovereign, but the construction of the torso also makes the figure the state.
of the projects of the city through which citizens (political subjects) both separate and relate to each other and the urban space. This inherent tension physically realises in the form of inhabitable structures whose nonfigurative monumentality represents the utmost order and performs to frame and, at the same time, to house the political subjects: the citizens.

Conceiving the city as a political form, the research tends to investigate the architectural quality of such a device though which life can achieve its political form. Besides being merely a wall, this frame is a space that houses subjects. In fact through boundaries state distributes rights and makes places in the city, and thus fosters conditions for the political community to be defined and activated.

To explore the idea of urban form in relation to this act of framing, each chapter is centred on different attributes of the architecture of enclosures. By widening the historical focus, the thesis aims at exploring some ‘paradigmatic examples’\(^9\) that together can produce knowledge, which can be applicable for today’s problem: a plan of the past that can be projected towards the future. In this investigation of the events of the past, effects of a *contemporariness* that is part of the author’s position, is unavoidable. This position has been reflected through the medium of drawings. Each chapter explores particular examples, where the concepts of theology, sovereignty and the city are intertwined, and their intersection is precisely the point that has propelled the ‘project of the city’ throughout history. By re-drawing, and in some cases re-constructing the examples, the thesis proposes a continuity in the way those particular projects demonstrate the idea of political theology in relation to urban form. This approach inevitably helps the thesis to situate itself within the dichotomy of oriental and occidental discourses. In order to critically bridge this division, it tries to minimise the effect of cultural values, and instead using architectural vocabulary to enhance a close reading of the projects. In fact the conscious use of abstraction— and not simplification- helps here to highlight the inherent ideas as once manifested by their creators and architects.
This reading is not limited to the historiographical narrations; by questioning the relationship between the role of historical knowledge and the position of architect-scholar toward the city, it employs series of paradigms that exist over the limits of time and geography. In the following five chapters of the thesis investigates the validity of the argument by tracing them back in the ideological foundation of the territory. As Croce once noted ‘all history is contemporary history.’ In fact the sequence of the chapters is the reverse order of the research. Therefore, here, the concern is not so much stylistic period, but rather is the issue of continuity; specific conception of space which has remained constant despite the advent technological and economical development: reading the city as series of inhabitable walls.

According to Rousseau, ‘men had at first no kings except the gods and no government but a theocracy.’ By bringing up the example of pagan societies, he claims that in fact, those nations unified the two ideas of political and theological. Every nation and tribe had its own gods and deities, who also had limited rights over their societies and defined territory. In case of war, captured groups or the defeated side had to acknowledge the gods of the conqueror. Indeed, war was the only way through which a religion was extended. It was in such a condition that Jesus rose to establish a ‘spiritual kingdom’, a new idea aiming to separate the law and the sacred, the political and the theological. This division not only changed the relationship of the new believers to the state, but also to the territory. In his book, *The Social Contract*, Rousseau described these theological and political markers as two religions: the religion of man, which is ‘the purely internal cult of the Supreme God’ identified as faith, and the religion of the citizen, which possesses an ‘external cult prescribed by law’. Thus he criticised Christianity for not allowing these dimensions to work together in the establishment of the idea of the ‘political’. This is actually the major critique put forward by Hobbes in his *Leviathan*, which proposed that the unification of the political and theological was the only way through which society could be governed.
The Camp of the Israelites According to Lamy, 1723
Hypothetical Reconstruction of the Temple of Solomon, 1721 (Tab. I & II)
The plan of the complex is formed based on the spatial organisation of camp of the Israelites.
and how citizenship would be maintained. Thus, Hobbes argued, the actions inherent in civil law ought to be conducted through the mechanism of faith—obedience by heart to the sovereign. Therefore, the Leviathan is an absolute sovereign, an earthly God, the civil sovereign and the supreme pastor in the same body, who unifies the ‘sword of justice and the shield of faith.’

Similar to the condition that Hobbes described, Islamic society develops as the result of a deliberate choice— the outcome of a contract, which takes place between the faithful and their creator. The principles of this social framework are accepted as faith and expressed through action. In fact, ‘the idea of faith is understood not as the abstraction of a metaphysical belief in God, but rather as the lived subjective commitment to an infinite demand.’

There can be no valid faith without purposeful action to reinforce it; nor can there be any meaningful action of perpetual significance without faith. The two are as inseparable in Islam as they are outside of the religion. Thus, the essence of these principles is an internal commitment reinforced by an external manifestation. The domain in which the bodies of faithful perform is city. It is the only eligible earthly framework that the ideal life can be achieved and developed. Therefore by reconstructing the idea of medina, as a delimited form, separating the faithful and unfaithful people, Islam defines the platform where the civil laws and religious rites are conducted, no longer as separated rituals, but as a civil religion. The Islamic city is the physical environment that embodies these relationships, a camp that defines what is inside and is further defined by the constituents.

Following this introduction to the discourse of political theology in relation to urban form, the structure of the thesis revolves around the central concept of medina, in which each chapter unfolds specific political and architectural dimension of this idea in exercise of political and religious power within a territory. In this sense medina has been taken as the pure architectural manifestation of the political theology, which not only in specific periods in the history has shaped totality of city, but also, as a diagram, it remains
instrumental in re-thinking of a project for the city today. As al-Farabi stated in his book, this political understanding of the concept of city has always been entangled into the theological polemics. In fact the very notion of separation, which is embedded in the theology, here becomes a fundamental concept, when an ideological power aims to define itself through the act of exclusion. The spatial dimension of this dialectical process lies in moment of conflict when the opposing forces collapse and ‘projects’ are initiated. Cities, thus, become laboratories of projects and counter-projects; through which the space is shaped and organised.

Respectively the theological and political concept of *medina*—a term which has mostly applied for the study of specific Islamic and Arabic settlements—is revisited in the First Chapter, *Camp of Faith; Medina and the Idea of Islamic City*, as the development of a particular spatial apparatus; the absolute embodiment of the power of state in the architecture of the city (archetypes). Quite contrary to the orientalists’ approach, which reads the Islamic city model as ‘less autonomous structure’ that lacks a ‘peculiar character’ comparing to the Western (Greco-Roman) model, this chapter defines the Islamic city as an autonomous political space, which is formed exclusively to mark the faithful community. Ultimately this chapter tends to situate the modern Islamic ideologies of the city on a ground, which basically can be read in the continuation of the very fundamental political category such as ‘spaces of sovereignty’. These political projects, therefore, are first to subjectify the others and then to demonstrate the absoluteness of the sovereign.

This understanding nevertheless implies a specific definition of city through which the space is conceptualised, and ultimately materialised by the edges; borders that separates the land and the people: friend from enemy, believers from non-believers, and city from urban lands. In fact the Schmittian dichotomy tires to identify the very mark of the political existence. Plans, as political apparatuses, utilise these forces to manage and therefore to govern the society and the city. This form of management ought to guarantee the
happiness of the people (citizens) by conducting security and order while it maintains the political stability. This differentiation instrumentalises the idea of border (wall) as the core of the projects on the city, which historically exposed in formalisation of the exclusive concept of paradise. In this chapter, the idea of paradise is re-read and unfolded as a spatial configuration which is originated in theological and political understanding of the ‘ideal earthly condition of living’ Paradise not only conceptually correlates with medina, but also, architecturally serves as a model in re-emergence of concept of medina in early Islamic cities.

The Second Chapter, Spaces of Sovereignty; Persian Garden and the Idea of City, expands the concept of medina and situate it in a wider historical context. This chapter particularly tends to explore the very idea of city through the archetype of garden. More than being a space for leisure or agriculture, Iranian gardens were the only spatial configuration wherein any form of life was possible; they were in fact life-sustaining camps in the literal tabula rasa of the Iranian plateau. By reading gardens as the index of city the chapter explores some historical examples such as the Sassanid circular cities and Safavid meydan as the focal points through which the ideological power of state is represented and the paradise is re-created. The notion of the wall here goes beyond such functions as protection and defence, while it becomes a spatial device, delineating the territory of the power. These examples are to be contextualised in the ideological understanding of the built environment, which consequently led to the formation of an exclusive city form: The City of Peace (Baghdad) during al-Mansur.

This example summarises and links the first two chapters in formulating the ‘inhabitable wall’, which remains as the key concept throughout the thesis. The inhabitable wall in fact is a device, a frame; by accommodating various forms of life it establish a spatial relation between the subjects (inhabitants), state and the territory. Historically this device is developed in shaping of particular architecture such as monasteries, which could hold the dialectical
Map of the City of Peace (Baghdad) after Herzfeld
relation within the architecture of the city, aiming to construct the most ideal way of living on earth. The City of Peace, built in AD 762, employs the same architectural device in the scale of a city, where the ideological power of the Abbasid Caliph manifested through the urban form, in shaping the totality of the city as well as every dwelling unit.

Following the idea of inhabitable wall as an architectural composition which gave rise to different archetypical forms, the Third Chapter, *Spaces of Resistance; from the House of Muhammad to Iranian Courtyard House (serai)*, investigates its constitutive unit, the household (best conceptualised as the Greek *oikos*), as the minimum compartment of a city which political theology gets an spatial dimension. This chapter not only reads the house as a political and sacred space, which even in a particular moment in the history comes as antithetical concept to the temple. Reading the House of Muhammad as a paradigmatic architecture that manifested fully the political attribute related to a domestic space, the chapter extends the argument in investigation of the Iranian courtyard house as a typology that carries this hypothesis through the history, from the Islamic middle ages to the beginning of the 20th century, when what is called for in this research, is an implicit form of resistance, through the architecture of the city.

In Chapter Four, *Politics of Urban Form; Architecture of Tehran (1921-53)*, Tehran is studied as the very example of a contemporary metropolis that embodies these spatio-political tensions within its urban form; a paradigmatic case, where the biopolitical power of the modern state are manifested through series of architectural projects and urban interventions. However, Tehran’s urban form remains deeply rooted in the historical ideologies of space in shaping a contemporary space of sovereignty; not only by manifesting a sovereign power but rather by making the counter-projects visible. By reading the city through a cycle of projects and counter-projects, the relationship between its architecture and political power will be exposed as an example in which the architecture of the city is charged with the task of not simply

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*Fig. 0.8*
Octagonal Wall of Tehran, Abdul-Ghaffar Map 1891
framing political subjects (citizens), but enabling an ideological interaction through action and reaction, movement and resistance.

In particular, the chapter addresses the period of 1921-1950, which is marked by two political events: the military coup by Reza Khan in 1921 that put an end to 140 years of the Qajar dynasty, and the 1951 appointment of Mohammad Mosaddegh as the Prime Minister of Iran who led the first nationalist government and changed the balance of power in the country. This moment is in fact highlights the earliest visible socio-political counter-project in the city when the massive social mobilisation made the state to run a vast project of secularisation. This chapter aims at re-visiting the architecture of this period in two different scales of the city form and housing projects. The former is marked by destruction of the late-nineteenth century wall of the city and development of extensive urban projects based on the master plan of 1937. While the latter is exemplified in the first housing project of the city, known as 400-Unit Housing, through which a new way of living was envisioned and materialised through the architecture of domestic space.

These projects can be seen as paradigm shifts that helped shape Tehran's urban form. The project of neutralising space, initiated by the rise of Reza Shah during the 1921-41 and continued during the occupation period 1941-46 by his successor Mohammad Reza Shah, destructed the historical and symbolic totality of the city, and as a result, released social resistance: a counter-project was activated when a politicised middle-class began to occupy the city. Following the cycle, however, the state employed a subsequent planning instrument – multi-storey housing on the fringe of the city – and relocated the mobilised masses to Tehran’s periphery. Ironically, it was the displacement of the middle class that in fact unified the citizens; they still bound together a political community, as seen in various Islamist, Socialist and Nationalist movements between 1953–79. By addressing this specific period the Fifth Chapter, Architecture for Revolution; Architecture of Tehran (1951-79), concludes the argument of the thesis arguing the same spatial devices of neutralisation.
General Plan of Kuy-e Farah, A Mass Housing Project in Tehran (1963)
and control activates the newly formed individuals (new subjectivity), and
triggers the counter-project that was spatially emerged within the massive
housing projects, implemented by the state. In these projects the very concept
of citizenship was reinforced and emerged to drive the mass movements that
would ultimately result in urban uprising – the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

This concluding chapter reads this contemporary condition critically; trying
to reclaim the totality of the city, by framing the idea of citizenship through
architecture. Here, action becomes an inherent part of this concept of the
city. This definition opens up a new possibility for architecture to encompass
the forms of life to enable them for retaining the idea of the political. Once
this architecture, as a frame, houses the subjects, it holds conflict; a moment
in which action and reaction, movement and resistance emerge. Camp of
faith offers an idea of architecture derived from political theology, reduced to
its ideal form and detached from any specific use, while defining the subject in
an on-going process of resistance. As studied in the case of Tehran, through
the advent of a global economy, project of the modern city has become
precisely about the process of de-politicising or neutralising space. Perhaps
in these circumstances it is worth rethinking the significance of the ‘wall’ to
reclaim a dissolved socio-political identity. Contemplating the idea of a city
defined by edges reveals an alternative process based not on integration but
on exclusivity where citizens (faithful bodies or believers) become the city
itself as dwellers of inhabitable walls.
1.1 Assomption de Mohammed, engraved by J. B. Tiliard in Ignatius Mouradgea d'Ohsson, Tableau général de l’Empire othoman, divisé en deux parties, dont l’une comprend la législation mahométane; l’autre, l’histoire de l’Empire othoman (Paris: Imprimerie de Monsieur, 1787).
In 1787, the French artist J. B. Tilliard illustrated one of the first Western depictions of the Miraj, which appeared in the book *Tableau général de l'empire Ottoman*. The scene depicts a night in the year AD 621, when the archangel Gabriel guided the prophet Muhammad on a physical and spiritual journey. They first embarked on an earthly passage from Mecca to Jerusalem and then made a divine trip from Jerusalem to the seven heavens, finally ending in Paradise. Tilliard’s engraving divides the scene into two equal parts, showing the earthly vista and the heavens. The physical world is bound by a generic enclosure that fits the exact proportions of the plate and is pictured from a birds-eye view. A tile grid fills the space. Its squares lend an absolute order to the world. Identical chambers with circular roofs frame the tile flooring, while the bottom of the engraving hints at what’s beyond their boundaries. All of this surrounds the Ka’ba, which is located just off-center as the only element that does not follow the logic of the chosen perspective; rather than being viewed from a similar aboveground standpoint, the Ka’ba seems to almost float above the contrasting grid. The top half of Tilliard’s scene portrays Muhammad surrounded by angels and sitting on Buraq, his supernatural mount with the body of a horse, the wings of a bird, and the head of a human. Gabriel guides Muhammad to the right-hand side of the engraving to signify where their journey begins.

Despite the seemingly separate scenes, these worlds are, of course, linked: both Muhammad and the Ka’ba demonstrate the essence of the Islamic
concept of space – the terrestrial paradise, or the city, is ordered around a physical structure (the Ka’ba), whose slightly off-center position indicates its role as a vessel – a representation of the true core: the spiritual form of the Prophet himself. This organization indicates a non-figurative monumentality through which a divine order converges with an actual place. In this allegorical illustration, the Islamic conception of “the city” is presented as an ideological management of space through strict boundaries. However, it is also the specialised depiction of two parallel yet connected layers, where God and mankind separate their territories – terrestrial city and celestial paradise – and connect through both the formation of the religious sovereign state and the bodies of faithful believers. Here, Islamic political theology is not merely preached: it also takes the physical form of architecture, specifically of walls that divide a faithful group from the rest.

Today, it seems unusual to center one’s approach to the project of the city on walls. In fact, the very project of the modern city tends to fade the borders or walls by which any economy of the city has historically been produced. The increasingly limitless flow of goods, capital, and information that orchestrates scenes of daily life has made cities boundless fields of urbanization. This process not only affects the way cities are planned, designed, and constructed, but also dissolves the role citizens play as the political subjects of the city. In this sense, the city has become merely an interconnected space of coexistence. But adopting such a condition means relinquishing the collective dimension of life: citizenship, which is political by definition, goes missing. Like all other memberships, citizenship requires a form of commitment – a binding contract that validates the performance of the civic subject – as appears in religion, law, or faith – to define the relationship between the individual, the territory, and the lawgiver. However, as the case studies in this dissertation will show, the beliefs of a city’s inhabitants can, in fact, imply specific definitions through which space is conceptualised and ultimately materializes. This reading enables a possibility of recalling theological concepts attached to certain cities
that have not yet been considered in the context of a metropolitan plan or project for the contemporary city.

**Political Theology and Urban Form**

Regarding the theological concept of space, a fundamental distinction exists between paganism and Abrahamic religions. In its early Christian adoption, the Latin *paganus* evoked an inherently anti-city connotation, as it meant “country dweller” or “not of a city.” In contrast, a historical investigation of the Abrahamic religions’ theology in relation to the city reveals specific interpretations of the urban form: the concepts of religion, sovereignty and the city are intertwined, and their intersection is precisely the point that has propelled the “project of the city” throughout history.

The exclusive archetype of the temple as the dwelling of gods or sacred spirits has transformed in accordance with the idea that, in the holy city, the community of citizen-believers manifests the sacred. During the time of the Essenes in the mid-second century BC, the first notion of the “celestial” temple emerged. This minor Jewish sect believed in the community life, while they viewed their own community – as opposed to a particular structure – as the true Temple, a notion further developed by both Christianity and Islam.

For instance, in the context of the former, Jesus himself is portrayed as the temple in John 2:19 – “destroy this temple [Jesus], and in three days I will raise it up.” And in Judaism, Paul first defines the individual body as a “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 6:19) and then identifies that temple with each individual: “Do you know that you are God’s temple and that God’s spirit dwells in you” (1 Cor 3:16). However, the most explicit and concrete development of this idea occurred at the dawn of Islam, when the religion reconstructed the concept of the city through the medina – a specific spatial configuration, differing from the common settlements that existed in Arabia at the time, which was instrumental in the Islamic state’s early development towards an
exclusive definition of an urban settlement. The medina not only enabled spatial principles to evolve, but also made the state’s newborn juridical and religious ideologies manifest. “Medina” describes a city structured and defined by edges; in early Islam, this absolute form divided “true” believers from the rest, and its implementation restored the notion of “terrestrial paradise” in which the divine power marks the land and secures its inhabitants.

Etymologically, the term “medina” derives from the Akkadian root *dinu* (or *denu*), which stands for “law,” “right,” and “judgment” and appears as *din* in Aramaic. In Aramaic, *din* means “law” and “to rule.” In its exclusive occurrence, *din* is politically loaded and borrowed primarily in Hebrew and Arabic as the root of two fundamental words: *din* as “judgment” or “law,” and *medina* as “city.” There is, however, another translation of *din*, which provides further meaning: in Persian, *din* means “religion.” These three readings – legal, political and religious – construct the deep meaning of “medina,” a term which affirms the formation of a city or settlement defined and controlled by theological power through governance and the physical construction of *nomos* – walls that serve as structures defining the edges of a city only the faithful can enter.

In the Islamic city, the wall of paradise transcends its role as an architectural element. It defines the habitable space that will contain the “community of faithful,” visibly separating believers from non-believers. Here, the eternal paradisiacal house of mankind (which was abandoned following the original sin) is reconstructed in the form of terrestrial heaven or medina.

Topologically, the concept of the camp can be used to better understand “the wall of paradise.” In the most generic but still exclusive version of the structure, a camp houses a specific group of people, and the space is constituted by the occupants’ bodies. It is therefore constantly ideological and spatial. Early Islamic cities were no different, and the concept can be traced back to the very first city on which Islam was based: the Medina of the Prophet.
1.2
The Temple of Mecca. The Ka’ba is Surrounded by an Inhabitable Wall.
In AD 622, the prophet Muhammad and a group of faithful people who had just converted to Islam moved from Mecca to a place called Yathrib – an area that had been mostly settled by Jewish-Arab clans. Historical documents reveal there was no formal city settlement; Yathrib was a simple constellation of inhabited lands that surrounded wells. Muhammad moved there to build the first Islamic sovereign state – the medina – and therefore the earliest Islamic city. By the order of the Prophet, an enclosure was erected and later known as the Mosque of Muhammad. It was built as a square plan of 100 cubits (51.8 meters) in each direction and bound by a wall seven cubits high. When Muslims were still praying towards Jerusalem, they built a roofed structure that was partially supported by two rows of columns where prayers and common meetings could take place. In AD 624, when the qibla (the direction faced for formal prayer) shifted towards Mecca, the covered area was extended to the southern side of the building. Two rows of identical dwellings were built along the other two sides to host the prophet’s family and others who accompanied him. Construction on these chambers began with two units on the eastern side, at the residence of Muhammad, while a roofed platform (suffa) was erected for the companions. This was based on an open, extendable plan to house the core body of the Islamic society, the true believers who had migrated from Mecca to this new city. Locals who had just accepted Islam settled in a ring around the wall of the early enclosure, while an outer wall surrounded the entire “camp.” Historically, this structure was simply known as the house or mosque of Muhammad, but in fact, its actual function was not residential. Instead, it marked the core political body of the Islamic state: the Prophet, the divine sovereign power, and the community of faithful existed within the same territorial dimension. The act of excluding non-Muslims found its spatial dimension not only in the form of a carefully planned enclosure, but also by using the dwellings as the border – an organisation formalised in the foundation of the very first cities of the Islamic Empire.
The House (Mosque) of Muhammad in Medina, Constructed in 622 AD
A rectangular border encloses the gathering place with a series of chambers, which were developed in different phases. The qibla wall is roofed and columned.

(a) Before change of qibla. (b) After change of qibla. (1-4) Mud-brick rooms roofed with palm branches and mud. (5-9) Reed-and-mud rooms roofed with palm branches and mud. (A) Original dimensions, AD 624. (B) Enlargement under Umar, AD 638. (C) Enlargement under Uthman, AD 644.
As the Islamic state emerged out of the Arabian Peninsula, confrontations between Muslims and Persians occurred on the western borders of the Sassanid Empire along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Consequently, Islam’s first cities were constructed on the frontiers of this expansion as organisational plans, or camps, to house new Muslims—mostly conquered Persians who had converted to Islam. But the supposedly “faithful people” were actually the first settlers of the cities. These “true” believers were families whom Islamic rulers had transplanted from Arabia to the new occupied territories to represent the spreading religion.\textsuperscript{11}

With the exception of the hypothetical plan of Baghdad, mostly elaborated by the British-born architectural historian K. A. C. Creswell, there is little archaeological evidence to verify plans of the early Islamic cities. However, a literary geography, when supported by partial site-specific archaeological explorations, can provide enough information to compose a schematic image of the original city plans.\textsuperscript{12} The spatial organisation of these early cities implies a particular ideological setting through which the idea of the border or wall is extensively developed in a specific moment when theological and political ideologies are spatialised in the construction of a new empire.

**The Early Islamic Cities**

In AD 635, after defeating Persian forces, the Islamic empire founded the city of Basra. The Muslim commander Utbah ibn Ghazwan had ordered construction of a mosque on the site, which had been chosen directly by the Caliph as the settlement’s centre.\textsuperscript{13} The city was laid out on a rectangular plan and organised as a camp to support Islamic troops who had been sent to the Persian border in Mesopotamia.\textsuperscript{14} A number of ethnic groups and tribes settled in specifically marked places; the mosque was located at the heart of the city.\textsuperscript{15} Initially, the structure was a square enclosed by a non-masonry wall. The north side opened up to the *Dar al-Imara* (palace) and contained a prison.
and *diwan* (administrative building).\(^{16}\) This primitive semi-open space (which must have covered an area of 100 cubits on each side), including the mosque, made up the “forum” of the very first city of Islam, and it was here, in the place of assembly, that decisions affecting Islamic society were taken.\(^{17}\)

The mosque quickly gained significance, and thirty years later it was enlarged and rebuilt in the same place on the orders of Ziyad ibn Abihi, who was aware of the turbulent spirit of early cities. At the same time, he understood the political role of the mosque and its dominant position among the political and social facets of the Muslim empire. As a result, he further developed the spatial features of the previous mosque by introducing design elements used in the Sassanid cities, which were the most advanced architectural complexes of the time. The forum was expanded and partially roofed; five rows of stone columns supported the prayer hall and the ground was covered with pebbles. The official residence of the governor (the *Dar al-Imara*) was also moved from the northeastern side to the wall of the *qibla* in the south, allowing the Caliph or governor to directly enter the sanctuary. Exact archaeological proof of Basra’s image as the first city—with its mosque and governor’s palace—stops here. Yet applying the documentation of Kufa, a city founded almost simultaneously to Basra, suggests the overall scheme of the latter’s spatial organisation.

In AD 638, according to the Caliph’s advice, Kufa was chosen and founded as a camp town.\(^{18}\) It was located on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, with the Persian city of Hira a short distance to the southwest. The chief Islamic commander, Sa’d abi Waqqas, ordered the plan of Kufa to be marked out, and the first element to be considered was the mosque: like in Basra, it would be the center of the city. When Sa’d arrived at the site, he commanded an archer to fire five arrows: one towards Mecca (the *qibla*) and one in each cardinal direction. Sa’d then marked where the arrows landed and determined that the mosque and governor’s residence should be built approximately where the bowman had stood. The points where the arrows fell formed a square that

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**Fig. 1.4**
1.4
Hypothetical Plan of the Mosque and Dar al-Imara of Basra
The early Mosque (AD 636), as it has been described in historical accounts, was planned according to the landing points of five arrows shot on the governor’s orders. It had a square plan, 200 cubits to each side. The qibla wall was roofed, with five rows of marble columns. The palace (Dar al-Imara) of Kufa was built next to the Great Mosque; they were connected through the qibla wall, whereby the Caliph or governor could directly enter the sanctuary.
Fig. 1.5

was 200 cubits long on each side, and the center of the square signified where the mosque would be built. In Kufa’s early stages, no wall existed to enclose the site; a ditch was simply dug around the square to separate it from the rest of the land. A prayer hall, including a sanctuary, was arranged on the side of the qibla; and along the length of the south side ran a colonnade, covered by a high, flat, timber-supported roof raised on five rows of marble columns, which had been removed from the Sassanid Palace in Hira. The prayer hall was originally open on all sides, but a temporary wall was erected later to mark the settlement, physically excluding exterior land from the rest of the territory that housed Islam’s faithful. As in Basra, the governor’s palace and the treasury were centrally aligned with the mosque on the south side so that both buildings could share the qibla wall.19

When a primary report was sent to the Caliph, he commanded further changes in the positioning of the mosque and the palace where the treasury was located. According to the early Islamic historian al-Tabari, in AD 670, a Persian architect was commanded to revise the plan and enact these changes.20 From there, the complex developed through spatial configurations and architectural details; the sanctuary was kept to its previous proportions and erected on five rows of lofty slender columns, which supported a teak roof. A set of chambers that opened to an arcade ran the perimeter of the courtyard. Main entrances on the north side punctuated their flow. Although the size and number of habitable spaces may have changed during later periods according to specific needs, these dwellings have often been represented as rows of open arcades in reconstruction plans.21 The mosque followed the same dimensions of the first structure (104.5 meters per side), but it was positioned to the west to allow room for the house of the fourth Caliph and first Shi’a Imam, Ali ibn Abi Talib. As the successor of the Prophet, Ali moved from Medina to Kufa in the year AD 656 and chose the city as the capital of the Islamic empire, an event that marked a fundamental moment in Islamic political history: soon,
the formalised city of Kufa would give birth to the Shi’a ideology.

Thus, the great mosque of Kufa evolved into the political centre of the entire Islamic empire. The mosque and palace were not centrally aligned in this new composition, but instead connected to the house of Ali, who did not choose to live in the palace. The *qibla* side was covered by a hall of marble columns thirty cubits tall (15.54 meters); these dimensions physically reveal the high political and ideological ambitions of the Islamic state.22 Kufa continued to develop according to the Caliph’s advice: “the main roads were forty cubits wide, the next most important were thirty cubits, and those in between were twenty cubits; the lanes were seven; and the land grants, except those in Bani Dabbah, sixty cubits.”23 Although historical descriptions make no account of the city’s general form, the contemporary Iraqi historian Kadhim al-Janabi proposed a hypothetical plan, which considers the city as an orthogonal grid divided into four main rectangular districts, with the great mosque and palace in the middle.24 This spatial organisation can be traced back to the Sassanid capital cities, such as Gur (Ardeshir-Khura), Darabgird, and Ctesiphon, and it placed the temple and palace in the center to allow the king to enter the sanctuary directly from his residence. In AD 762 (at the time of al-Mansur), this exact plan was reconstructed to found the City of Peace (Baghdad).

In almost every city of the early Islamic Empire, the architect or planning advisor was familiar with the Sassanid ideological structure of the city, a relationship that was reflected in the urban form as well as the architectural details. The combination of the early mosques and palaces followed the exact pattern of the Sassanid palace-temple, while the concentric structure and dogmatic function of the “wall” allowed the Islamic state to physically form its empire. The embodiment of the political and religious power in one symbolic figure, the Sassanid king, defined “sovereign” as the only legitimate power that could decide, control, and secure. Cities thus became laboratories for the exercise of this sovereignty. On one hand, they represented an absolutist
power; on the other hand, they marked, and therefore limited, the territory
to which they belonged. This characteristic of Sassanid cities was adopted
by the Islamic state in the literal materialisation of the medina. However,
Muslim settlements further developed this ideological and political city model
with the formation of new archetypes, which embodied the same ideological
relationship between political power, inhabitants, and the territory.\textsuperscript{25}

In Basra and Kufa, as in all early cities, the plan functions as an
organizational tool. In the context of the Arab empire, it enabled society
to no longer be dominated by tribal supremacy. The social order of the
new Islamic cities consisted of various groups of minorities who had been
captured or did not belong to the land, and it was up to the Caliph or “ruler”
to determine where they lived.\textsuperscript{26} This applied across all forms of planning:
the acts and control of the religious ruler were explicitly recorded; he set
the concentric structure of growth as well as the actual plans, which were
the political instruments for the central power to remotely govern, manage,
and control the empire through a series of boundaries around the city core.\textsuperscript{27}
A settlement was not founded until the moment a habitable structure was
built for the governor and the faithful. Imprecisely identified as mosques,
these spaces comprised the temple and palace, and were meant to house the
bodies of the faithful (in temples) or the court (in palaces).\textsuperscript{28} It was in this
livable “wall of paradise” that the political and religious ideologies of Islam
converged in architecture. The mosques, consequently, were the embodiment
of this ideological space as they manifested the Islamic Empire outside the
Arabian Peninsula to form camps of true believers.

\textbf{Inhabitable Walls}

The common image of the mosque, or \textit{masjid}, as a place for prayer
was shaped after the twelfth century, during the Seljuk Empire. According
Hypothetical Plan of Kufa
to the Quran, the mosque did not imply a religious function; there was no spatial code for the act of individual prayer. Rather, it called for a physical manifestation of the Islamic political ideology inherent in the concept of *ummah*: the community of the faithful. It was a political apparatus installed in new lands to mobilise, manage, and control territories. As a simple, expandable structure, it could provide basic necessities for the early Muslim communities. Because the mosque was commonly attached to an administrative building as well as to the residence of the governor or Caliph, the political illustration of the Islamic faith prevailed over pure religious practice. The mosque, therefore, was not just the center of the city, but actually the city itself. New settlements were constructed literally by “laying out” the mosque as a camp: a defined space, which served exclusively Muslim purposes. The mosque, then, in its early centuries, did not possess any advanced architectural form or precise function. It was merely meant to “exclude non-Muslims.”

Two paradigmatic examples of this all-encompassing structure can be found in the royal city of Samarra, constructed in AD 836 by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu′tasim: the Great Mosque of Samarra and the Mosque of Abu Dulaf. Both were among the first structures to formalise the new capital of the Abbasids, and they demonstrate the mosque’s extended structure, which went beyond merely religious functions. Besides offering a sanctuary and political space for gathering, they contain different inhabitable spaces (housing typologies) within their very structures; they were built and still stand as examples of cities in themselves.

The Great Mosque of Samarra was once the world’s largest mosque and was in use until the end of the eleventh century. It was the first formal structure of the capital, and the city’s subsequent expansion was ordered around its center. Three avenues, each fifty-two meters wide, cut through residential areas to permit fast access to prayer. The famous spiral minaret and the iconic enclosure manifested an exquisite figure of the political and religious power concentrated in the capital’s architectural language. Today, the
mosque defines an immense rectangle with bastioned walls of burnt brick, measuring about 240 by 156 meters. In this enclosure, covered porticoes accommodate groups at the Friday prayer. Two other enclosures surround the mosque and contain a series of courtyard houses and chambers aligned to the grid of the mosque. A building behind the mihrab seems to have been intended to receive the Caliph or accommodate the imam. The general composition of the mosque-palace follows the same pattern as in the aforementioned cities, but, as the capital of the Abbasids, Samarra possesses a more advanced structure featuring seventeen aisles in the prayer hall, a triple portico around the courtyard, and piers, which were octagonally reconstructed with marble columns on the corners.

The Mosque of Abu Dulaf, a second example of architecture as an ideological vessel, followed almost the same model as the Great Mosque of Samarra, measuring 214 by 135 meters and set inside a nearby square enclosure of 358 by 347 meters. A double arcade of rectangular piers forms the courtyard portico, while the prayer hall has sixteen arcades oriented perpendicularly to the qibla wall, which looks out on two larger portico buildings to the east and west. Beyond lies a housing complex composed of a main courtyard with four-iwan halls and one secondary courtyard. Around the main courtyard are eighteen more houses noticeable in the outer enclosure. Indeed, the well-preserved structure of these two mosques, visible from the archaeological maps of the sites, confirms that the city layout transcended the mere practice of prayers. The extensive number and structuring of dwelling-spaces affirms the integration of the idea of ideological borders – inhabitable walls – within the plans, while the abstraction of the space in both examples goes beyond the simplicity of early primitive mosques; it signifies an iconic representation of the Islamic philosophy of space.

The paradigm of the inhabitable wall appears not only in the structure of the mosque, but has been more explicitly expressed in the evolution of the dwelling archetype best known as the caravanserai—a form that has not been
Hypothetical Plan of the Great Mosque of Samarra, Built in AD 836

The plan shows the complete structure of the mosque and its multiple walls inferred from excavations of the site in 1911.
Hypothetical Plan of the Abu Dulaf Mosque in Samarra (al-Mutawakkiliyya), Built in AD 859
This drawing shows the complete structure of the mosque, including the outer walls, chambers, and courtyard houses.
1.9
The Ruins of the Abu Dulaf Mosque
studied beyond a mere typological category under the organization of roads and infrastructures. Historically, caravanserais have mostly been described as the areas where caravans stayed overnight. But their original function goes much further than plot points on a route; the term literally means “the house of the army” or “camp,” and, like the medina, the caravanserai indicates a bound space. A caravanserai is a building that extrudes a two-dimensional diagram of a settlement, highlighting the separation of the collective space (the void) and the individual (the one who inhabits it). The outer wall was built in an almost uninterrupted circle, allowing access only via a single and easily controllable portal. Much as in a mosque or madrassa, open arcades circumnavigate the courtyard, and the middle of each side is sometimes emphasised by a larger arch or vault, stressing the plan’s four-iwan structure. These arcades were constructed to be two rooms deep and sit several feet above courtyard level. Living quarters were often equipped with fireplaces for cooking or warmth, and there were provisions for special services: water, sometimes a commissary, and quarters for guards, attendants, and groups. Ultimately, the caravanserai was a machine equipped with all of the functional necessities, which became a “living” wall to segregate the collective area from the unorganised realm. Similar to early mosques, caravanserais were instrumental in defining who was excluded or included. In both archetypes, organising power is visible in the building structure; the spatial form itself manifests the ideological and political order in its absoluteness. Caravanserais and mosques are two archetypes of habitation (and therefore the city) that operate with embedded concepts of camp and faith. In the Islamic city, it was the inhabitants who made secular structures (such as mosques and caravanserais) ideological. When imbued with meaning – or action – these singular forms led to the development of an empire.

The monastery, however, is a third form that marks ideological territory, and this particular archetype drove the construction of the City of Peace (Baghdad) during al-Mansur’s rule in AD 762. According to al-Tabari, when
1.10
Caravanserai Typologies
1.11
The Caravanserai Shah Sultan-Hussein, Isfahan
al-Mansur wished to build the city of Baghdad, he consulted his companions, and among them was Khalid ibn Barmak, a Persian architect and former governor of Fars who had converted to Islam. As the American historian and linguist Christopher Beckwith argues, evidence of Khalid’s architectural qualification exists: when he was twenty-one years old, his father – an elder of the Buddhist (in some accounts Zoroastrian) monastery of Nawbahar (a city-sized complex) – was ordered by the governor of Khurasan to rebuild the city of Balkh. This project involved Khalid, for the first time, in the planning of a city. However, Khalid had a certain amount of personal experience in city-building already, and had no doubt been educated by his learned father in the Buddhist-Zoroastrian sciences, one of the most important of which concerns the design and construction of monasteries and shrines. The city of Balkh was re-planned based on an ideological model: a circular form following the spatial organisation of the monasteries. The monastery of Nawbahar (or Nava Vihara), where Khalid grew up, featured the same plan as the Sassanid city of Darabgird, including a circular structure enclosed by walls. A domed sanctuary was placed in the middle, around which ran a circular, covered arcade, surrounded by a building of 360 chambers for residents. Although no explicit evidence exists to prove that Khalid designed the plan of Baghdad according to the particular model of Nawbahar, documents confirm that the very spatial organisation of the Zoroastrian monastery had been applied to the construction of the circular Sassanid cities, and, in fact, that the original plan of the city of Baghdad can actually be traced to a single building: a set of chambers laid out around a sacred core, most likely a Sassanid Zoroastrian or Buddhist temple. This ideological relationship evolved from a single archetype to the entire city, and the mosque, caravanserai, and monastery are the architectural forms that embody this ephemeral tension – yet they must house a specific group of faithful people to ideologically mark their territory.
Hypothetical Plan of the City of Peace, the Original Core of Baghdad, circa AD 762
Camp of Faith

In his book, The Social Contract, Rousseau described these theological and political markers as two religions: the religion of man, which is “the purely internal cult of the Supreme God” identified as faith, and the religion of the citizen, which possesses an “external cult prescribed by law.” Thus he criticised Christianity for not allowing these dimensions to work together in the establishment of the idea of the “political.” This is actually the major critique put forward by Hobbes in his Leviathan, which proposes that the unification of the political and theological is the only way society can be governed and how citizenship can be maintained. Thus, the actions inherent in civil law ought to be conducted through the mechanism of faith – obedience by heart to the sovereign. The Leviathan is an absolute sovereign, an earthly God, the civil sovereign and the supreme pastor in the same body, which unifies the “sword of justice and the shield of faith.”

Similar to the condition that Hobbes described, Islamic society has developed as the result of a deliberate choice, the outcome of a contract that takes place between the faithful and their creator. The principles of this social framework are accepted as faith and expressed through action. In fact, “the idea of faith is understood not as the abstraction of a metaphysical belief in God, but rather as the lived subjective commitment to an infinite demand. Faith is understood here as a declarative act, as an enactment of the self, as a performative that performs itself into existence in a situation of crisis where what is called for is a decisive political intervention.” These principles are intended to make the life of the individual meaningful by instilling in him an active political role to play in society. There can be no valid faith without purposeful action to reinforce it, nor can there be any meaningful action of perpetual significance without faith. The two are as inseparable in Islam as they are outside of the religion. The essence of these principles is an internal commitment reinforced by an external manifestation.
The city is the domain in which the bodies of the faithful perform. It is the only eligible earthly framework in which the ideal life can be achieved and developed. Therefore, by reconstructing the idea of the medina, Islam defines the platform where civil laws and religious rites are conducted, rendering them no longer separate rituals, but a common civil religion. The Islamic city is the physical environment that embodies these relationships, a camp that defines what is inside and is further defined by its constituents.

In this sense, the relationship between the society of Muslims, the state, and the land is theorised in a specific way; as Rousseau would put it, the body politic may be measured either by the extent of its territory or by the number of its people (believers). Between these two modes of measurement exists an appropriate ratio according to which the state may be given its genuine dimensions. It is the faithful bodies who constitute the state, and it is the soil that sustains the men; the ratio, then, is that the land should suffice for the maintenance of the community, and there should be as many inhabitants as the land can sustain.

The idea of a city conveyed by faith comes about as an exclusive spatial apparatus to enclose inhabitants. The camp, here, is employed as a topological space: a bound container irreducible to any other structure. It not only performs as a divider or wall, but also houses the believers. This is reproducible through the multiplication of inhabitants and limited by them too. A “camp of faith” resembles a theological and political category of space; the inhabitable physical enclosure is instrumental in crystallizing how faith functions as a social relationship or contract.

The Islamic city is an architectural category that embodies a political idea: a diagram of the sovereign’s ideological power, planned and constructed under his direct supervision or that of his institutions and expressing an ideological relation through and within its boundaries. Unlike the Roman and the Greek models, the Islamic city was born of archetypes and is marked by the power of the state. The plan goes beyond mere economical management of the land;
1.13
A Late 18th-Century Depiction of the Plan of the Temple of Ka‘ba
It precisely illustrates the structure of the enclosure, geometrically laid out around the temple and extended from its outer border into the fabric of the city.
it also represents a relationship through the built world. The embodiment of this socio-political contract (the faith) within the foundation of the Islamic city can be seen not only in the form of an organisational plan that measures the territory, but also through particular spatial relationships within and beyond the city’s elements. Every part of the city maintains a link to the rest and a relationship with ideological power. This definition consequently reads the Islamic city as an autonomous spatial organisation, manifested through a specific diagram of settlement, the inhabitable wall, which arises from the evolution of single archetypes to the entire city. However, it does not dismiss the existence of a divine plan for the city. Rather, the settlement is instead seen as the spatialised illustration of two parallel realms — the dwellers as the profane and God’s chosen figure (the merging of the political and religious authorities) as the sacred — meeting ultimately in a definite form, fundamentally hiring the idea of camp as a spatial code to exclude the rest from those who believe.

Today Architecture has strong commitment to the global economy. As economy needs security, every step forward is towards stabilizing the condition, in order to make it predictable and calculable. In the world of free markets, today’s project of the modern city has become precisely about the process of de-politicising or neutralising space. Perhaps in these circumstances it is worth rethinking the significance of the “wall” to reclaim a dissolved socio-political identity. Removing boundaries from a city eases trade, encourages urbanisation, and enables flexible citizenship of space. However, contemplating the idea of a city defined by edges reveals an alternative process based not on integration but on exclusivity wherein citizens — or faithful bodies — become the city itself as dwellers of inhabitable walls. Action becomes an inherent part of this concept of the city. This definition opens up a new possibility for an architecture of the city that performs as a machine. Its task is no longer simply framing faithful subjects, but also enabling an ideological interaction through action and reaction, movement and resistance.
In fact, a camp of faith offers a sort of architecture derived from political theology, reduced to its ideal form and detached from any specific use, while defining the subjects in an ongoing process of resistance.
City Typologies in Mesopotamia
2.1
Plan of the Garden of Paradise
From an Early Eighteenth-Century Indian Manuscript, Illustrated Guide to Mecca and Hereafter
The early Islamic cities embodied a new way of living, promoted and supported by the Islamic law and the life of the Prophet and his successors. The idea of ‘paradise’ as a reward for the Muslim faithful was the basic concept developed by Muhammad from the beginning of his apostolic mission in Mecca.\(^1\) This was more than an abstract vision of future bliss because the Prophet made many specific statements as to the garden’s iconography, topography, its nature and its inhabitants. Since then these descriptions have played an important role in the Muslim ideology in relation to the built environment.

The Quranic descriptions of the celestial gardens are consistent to convey an impression of greenery, overflowing fountains, rivers, foods and sensual beauty to be found in that place. They are illustrated as ‘enclosed’ spaced that you have to enter, where you shall ‘dwell in’.\(^2\) This image, apparently, follows the description of the Garden of Eden in the Book of Genesis. Originally, it is in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, in which for the first time the idea of paradise coincided with the image of garden.\(^3\) James F. Driscoll in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, under the term ‘Terrestrial Paradise’, writes: “The association of the term [Paradise] with the abode of our first parents does not occur in the Old Testament Hebrew. It originated in the fact that the word paradeisos was adopted, though not exclusively, by the translators of the Septuagint to render the Hebrew term for the Garden of Eden described in the second chapter of Genesis. It is likewise used in diverse
other passages of the Septuagint where the Hebrew generally has ‘garden’, especially if the idea of wondrous beauty is to be conveyed.”

One of these images of paradise comes in the Song of Solomon, roughly contemporary with Xenophon, which describes a royal garden in fabulously sensual language and images: “a large and beautiful παραδείσος, possessing all things that grow in the various seasons” or “a large and beautiful παραδείσος, shaggy with all kinds of trees.” These descriptions not only depict the Judeo-Christian image of the celestial Garden but rather matches the actual spatial configuration of the Iranian gardens to be found in the Iranian Plateau long before the advent of Islam. The celestial garden is described mostly with topographic features where the water flows on the valleys (underneath the planted region). There are detailed descriptions of four rivers, which come together in the gardens, which remind us the cruciform water-channels of the typical Persian gardens. In fact, it was by the Greek authors, which the image of Persian (or in that time Achaemenid) garden represented as an exotic planted oasis. However due to the hostile landscape of the Persian territory, the garden was an exceptional built environment. Various trees, animals and irrigation system were parts of the microcosmic model of the imperial economy, where all manner of goods and resources flowed from the provinces to the centre.

Moreover the Quranic verses (following the Judeo-Christian texts) illustrate the celestial garden as a ‘permanent house’ and not only a place for everlasting pleasure. Architecturally this depiction seems not referring to what was the form of living in the Arabian Peninsula at the rise of Islam, while it matches more the reality of the ‘earthly gardens’ of Sassanid Iran. In development of the Islamic ideology, the terrestrial paradise got same attention and importance as the celestial garden; indeed these two realms address two different, yet connected aspects of life which had to be formed and controlled carefully by following certain way of living. This would ultimately
2.2
Iranian Bagh (garden). The Burial place of Omar Khayyam at Nishapur
lead humankind towards achieving a life fulfilled with felicity and happiness (al-Sa’ada).

Quite contrary to the common form of tribal settlements in Arabia, Islam promoted ‘urban life’ as the essential path to accomplish the ideal life. Consequently medina became widely practiced model, to provide a frame to support, and at the same time to control a specific way of living in the new empire. Through its spatial organisation, medina mirrored the celestial garden (garden of Eden) on earth; the Muslim rulers aimed to reconstruct the original house of mankind not only to resemble the heavenly state of peace but also create a minimum structure that could protect life and enable it to reach to its final goal. This spatial condition therefore was reduced to a diagram that embodied three necessary relationships: the link between the believers (ummah), between the individuals and the Islamic ruler (the Prophet or his successors), and ultimately between the community of faithful and the territory.

**Bagh; The Space of Re-Creation**

The analogy between the early Islamic cities and garden did not appear only in the metaphorical aspects but in fact these terrestrial gardens, followed the physical configuration of the garden-cities already existed in pre-Islamic times, commonly called bagh (in Persian) or garden. These urban artefacts were inevitable form of built environment in the arid topography of the larger Iranian plateau. Gardens in Persian territory are always behind a wall. On the outside is the desert, representing desiccation and death, the harsh reality of life on the Iranian landscape. Within the wall are flowers, fruit, shade, water and life. While there are real and tangible, the contrast with what is outside the wall is so striking as to make the interior a veritable paradise on earth. However the form of these gardens was intimately related to its function, as a mechanism that could makes certain form of life flourish within the hostile environment. In fact the etymology of the term can help revealing its mani-
2.3
Typical Form of the Settlements in the Central Iranian Plateau, Fars- Neyriz
fold meaning. Bagh originally is derived from the Indo-European root *bhag* that means ‘to share out’, ‘to enjoy’. It comes in the Old Persian and Avestan as *baga*, that means ‘distributor of good fortune’. In its Modern Persian usage, the term appears in two forms of *bagh* (short –a- sound) as ‘God’, and *bagh* (long –a- sound) as ‘Garden’. Interestingly while these terms seem to connote two radically different meanings, they address the same concept, which is the act is the ‘distribution’ and ‘allocation’ of life. More than being a space for leisure or agriculture, Iranian gardens were the only spatial configuration wherein any form of life was possible; they were in fact life-sustaining camps in the literal tabula rasa of the Iranian plateau.

The original idea of the *bagh* or garden can be seen as the direct result of the geographical constraints, which has historically developed into an ideological concept. The physical geography of the plateau can be compared to a bowl. To the north the long range of Alborz mountains separates the midland from the central Asian landscape, while in the Zagros mountains, aligned north-south, divides Mesopotamia from the Iranian Central Desert which is extended to the East till the Indian Peninsula. This territory is characterised by extreme geographical conditions: Most part of the Iranian Plateau is bordered by deserts and barren, high mountains. In only a few places one finds contiguous settlements covering wide areas. The land is part of the Eurasian mountain belt, which runs from the Iberian Peninsula, through the Alps, the Balkans, the Carpathians, the Taurus and Pontus, and the Iranian highland rims of the Alborz and Zagros. This territory is also part of the arid belt of the Old World, which stretches from the Sahara in the west across the Arabian Peninsula and the Iranian plateau to the deserts of Central Asia in the east. These two belts which traverse the Old World intersect in Iranian Plateau which in fact characterises both exceptional form of life within this territory as well as the form of the settlement and cities. In such landscape, as the absolute space of exception, the garden is the only form that can preserve necessary conditions for life.
2.4
Perisan Garden, Chaharbagh, Fars
The typical spatial configuration of the Iranian gardens is known as *Chaharbagh* (literally four-garden). While the evidences of this typology are traceable since the sixth-century BC, there are few accounts that give precise description of the architectural form and configuration of *chaharbagh*. In one of the surviving treaties, *Irshad al-Zara’ah*, Qasim ibn Yusef who composed it at Herat in AD 1515, conducted a detailed study on the ways of managing the land and planting. Among the four treaties two are on the mathematics and geometry (multiplication and division with reference to circles and other geometric figures) in their very practical application for the circulation of grain and for construction of tents and pavilions; the third is concerned with the distribution of well waters, manipulation of topography and the economy of the city of Herat. The Chapter 8 of *Irshad al-Zara’ah*, specifically addresses “The layout of the *chaharbagh* and its pavilion”. *Chaharbagh* is described as a rectangular walled platform, divided by paths or two waterways (a cross) into four symmetrical sections. It set on the ground, which rises to the north thus allowing for the water flow. Two streams, each a cubit in width are led round the garden; the first, three cubits from the wall, is separated from the second and inner stream by a path three cubits wide. The main canal flows down the centre of the garden into a pool, which is some twenty cubits from the pavilion. Just inside the wall there are rows of shade-giving trees—pine tree or cypress—, which are restricted to the outer bank of the first stream. The fruit-bearing trees planted on a grid-pattern within the four plots, divided by the two main water axes, where the flowers planted in the same manner on the perimeter of the plots. In fact as Qasim ibn Yusef composed his treaties, the garden, or specifically *chaharbagh*, was part of the series of engineering for the management of the territory and founding the cities. Indeed garden is an urban artefact through which the life is allocated (water supply), protected (wall) and managed (grid) on the land.
The most shared feature of this territory is scarce and limited water resources. Regions with a mean annual rate of precipitation less than eight inches constitute the major portion of the territory. Considering the fact that this amount of water is inadequate for dry agriculture, the existence of many cities in this plateau is fully dependent on availability of subsurface water reservoirs that have historically been used by the habitants of the land to make life possible within this harsh environment. The presence of subsurface water reservoirs is related to the geological history of the Iranian plateau. Heavy rains and violent floods of the glacial periods resulted in severe erosion of mountain rocks that were pulverised and transported to the foothills and nearby plains. Because these lands contain irregular layers of sand and pebbles, they form considerable water reservoirs. The particular surface configuration of the Iranian landscape and the available irrigational technology through qanats, allow this water to be moved to the lower lands to be used for drinking or irrigation.

Qanats are subterranean aqueducts that collect groundwater at the foot of mountains and carry it, by gravity, through gently sloping tunnels into alluvial materials, to the fields and settlements. Historically qanats have been constructed with hand labour by a group of skilled men, called muqannis (digger), who often transfer their craft to their heirs. The first step in construction of a qanat is finding the location of the first shaft or mother well. The muqanni usually follows the track of the main gullies coming from the hills and looks for evidence of water such as a spring, seepage, vegetation like long-rooted summer plants, or some other clues that help him to estimate the approximate location of the mother well. This mother well is dug until it reaches the groundwater of an impermeable stratum. The well is approximately one meter in diameter and as deep as the water table of the area. The depth of the mother well also depends on the length of the qanat, the size and gradient of the alluvial fan, and the amount of the owner’s investment. Then to outline and calculate the path where the water will flow out onto the surface, the fall
2.5
A Qanat Comes to the Surface to Serve the Walled Structure, Golpayegan
2.6
Qanat Structure, A Schematic Section
in the ground between the mother well and the outlet of the qanat is measured and the path is planned. When the location of the mother well and outlet and the direction and gradient of the qanat have been determined, the construction of tunnel begins. In intervals of 50 to 100 meters a series of vertical shafts are dug along the qanats to connect the tunnel to the surface. The function of these shafts is to ventilate the air and remove the excess dirt during construction and to provide access to the tunnel if repairs are necessary. The excess dirt is collected around the mouths of the shafts and is used to protect the shafts against shifting sands and flooding. Similar to foundation of cities, the construction of qanats always starts with some religious ceremony and many ritual preparations. Most of the time these underground networks were constructed before building the actual physical structure of the cities and gardens. This process was operated through series of infrastructural interventions and territorial management in order to provide the necessary conditions for life. Indeed through various forms of rituals and performances the founders imitated the moment of re-creation.

The city of Bishapur (or Veh-Shapur), constructed by Shapur I (AD 240-270), is one of the best surviving examples that clearly shows the significance of qanat in planning of the early Sassanid ‘garden-cities’. While the city lies on the steep left bank of the Shapur River, the king used the qanat system to provide permanent water flows for his capital. The city wall shapes a rectangle in the southwest and southeast while it follows the river valley to the north. A ditch runs just outside the formidable earthen wall; it is fed with water from the upper course of the river by means of a rock-cut tunnel. Apart from the general layout of the city, which is comparable to the Roman conventions, the city represents an extensive territorial engineering. In the residential quarters we can still make out much of the grid pattern of the streets. Two major axes mark the central cross that, to the west, bridges over the river. As it is still visible today, the grid-plan of the city follows the grid of the underground water channels; considering the three-dimensional structure of the qanats un-
The Sassanid City of Bishapur
derground, the city not only manifest one of the most complex irrigation system, but also affirms the use of grid as the managerial tool to support and control the life over the territory.

Bishapur, as one of the few remaining examples, illustrates garden as diagram of the city. In the Iranian landscape gardens were not only limited to the agricultural units or royal parks, but in fact, they were the minimum structures to make any form of life and human settlement possible. While construction of these urban artefacts required precise knowledge of topography, ground layers and mechanics, it also presupposed the performance of a powerful executive authority that can run such a project in a territorial scale. These ‘garden-cities’ epitomize a unique urban form, which is, to a great extent, an ideological-historical response to the natural environment in which life constantly confronted with death and maintaining a life was an exceptional deed. The built environment therefore created micro-cosmos within the extreme landscape; camps that protected life and let it flourish within the tabula rasa. In such a condition any distinction between various forms of life ceases to exist and life becomes the ‘ideal life’, kings represent God and city becomes paradise.

**Geopolitics of Tabula Rasa**

Since the first millennium BC, the garden has been an integral part of Persian architecture, be it imperial or vernacular. By referring to the original meaning of bagh, it become clear that these gardens were not limited to the royal park, hunting grounds or agricultural fields, they were the most common form of the built environment through which the extreme geographical condition was tamed the life became possible. Regardless of the practical aspects of the garden and its sensual pleasures, these artefacts also incorporated political, philosophical, and religious symbolism. These camps, since the Achaemenid Empire, became the political institution through which a certain
urban form was defined that spread throughout the empire. The idea of the king creating a fertile garden out of barren land, bringing symmetry and order out of chaos, and duplicating the ‘divine paradise on earth’, constituted a powerful statement symbolizing authority, fertility, and legitimacy. This idea of the ‘king-gardener’ is well-recorded in case of Achaemenid king, Cyrus and his capital city Pasargadae. The royal city included a magnificent rectangular garden at the centre of the palace complex, alongside a portico with colonnade. Inside the portico was located a royal throne and a number of seats reserved for nobles, who were able to gaze out on the garden from this covered space or descend and stroll through the vegetation. The walls that enclosed the garden had two gates, which admitted visitors and water through two irrigation channels, connected to an extensive network of qanats. Inside, the space was divided into four sectors, representing the four cardinal directions. Indeed Pasargadae is one of first historical evidences of the use of typical Iranian Chaharbagh structure in construction of a city. Except bagh, which indicates the general idea of garden, Achaemenids called their urban entities, pairi-daeza or paradise.

**Paradise**

Zoroastrian texts characterise the universe as the opposition of two poles: the Wise Lord (Ahura Mazda) and the Evil Spirit (Ahriman). However this doctrine constitutes the Wise Lord and his original creations as entirely good, the world’s imperfections were understood to have appeared at a later moment, as the result of what is usually called ‘the Assault’ of the Evil Spirit. In this conflict the very goal of mankind is to protect itself from the evil forces—represented in the three main categories of the lie, famine and the enemy. This protection can only happen through the dominating power of the sovereign, he who builds the most perfect earthly place: paradise, in order to have society attain the ultimate purpose of creation, which is happiness.
2.8
The Plan of the Royal City of Pasargadae after Stronach
2.9
Frontispiece of Traité de la Situation du Paradis Terrestre, 1701
Therefore the idea of the city, for the Persians, was firmly bound to the ultimate goal of creation, which according to Zoroastrian ideology is “Happiness for mankind”.²³ It is the divine power (the sovereign or the emperor), which should re-establish this happiness throughout the empire by literally constructing the ideal model. This ‘ideal state of peace’, appears in the form of the walled estate, by preventing the main three evil forces: the enemy, the lie and famine. It is in a way the restoration of the ideal moment of creation. Therefore paradise is “a space of re-creation in the most precise and most profound sense.”²⁴ This ideological spatial model has been described in the surviving accounts emphasising its exquisite beauty, the abundance of water, and the profusion of plants and animals with which it was filled: that is, the elements which constitute the sustenance - and, more importantly - the happiness of mankind.

Indeed, the root of the word Paradise (*pairi-daêza*) nevertheless does not bear any idea of a holy secured garden, however, this very particular image is extensively promoted and supported by the religious beliefs as the original dwelling place where men live in the Godly realm. The word paradise literally (and originally) means “walled (enclosed) estate”; it insists on the idea of the wall as the ‘divider of space’ when it defines what does/does not belong to the dominant power (the owner). The wall here is not a defensive wall; the word *daêza* is rooted in a verb that means “to construct from the earth” or “to be made of clay”. It divides and separates, therefore it produces space. The original description of paradise in Avesta, explicitly illustrates an image of an earthly place. This ‘enclosed estate’ occurs only once in the entire text, but that occurrence is an extremely significant one. It is where Ahura Mazda describes an earthly place:²⁵

“There, on that place, shall the worshippers of Mazda erect an enclosure, and therein shall they establish him with food, therein shall they establish him with clothes, with the coarsest food and with the most worn-out
2.10 Terrestrial Paradise

It is depicted as an enclosed square-shaped estate; four gates, which are guarded by four angels, face the cardinal directions. In the middle of the domain two bodies of water meet and the Tree of life is located; that is where Adam and Eve are illustrated by the Tree of knowledge positioned in the bottom-left corner of the walled territory.
clothes. That food he shall live on, those clothes he shall wear, and thus shall they let him live, until he has grown to the age of a Hana, or of a Zaurura, or of a Pairishta-khsudra.”

As Patrick Healy wrote in the notes on the 52nd Venice Biennale, paradise “signifies and has the sense of a dwelling place, earthen enclosure, of those intimately associated with death;” the place where you should eat and wear clothes, the place that you should live in: the city. The earthly image of Paradise - Terrestrial Paradise - in one of the strongest physical representation is illustrated, in the Athanasius Kircher’s *Arca Noë*, as a walled domain located between the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia. It is formed as an enclosed square-plan; four gates, which are guarded by four angels, facing the four cardinal points. In the middle of the domain two bodies of water meet and the Tree of life is located. It is where Adam and Eve are illustrated by the Tree of knowledge positioned in the bottom-left corner of the paradise. This image actually does not imply an imaginary model while it is precisely constructed out of an exceptional urban form, which is still traceable in the territory. By the vast use of this model in the Iranian plateau, paradise became a political device to divide the evil form the good, enemy from friend and the city from the rest of the territory, to re-construct the state of well-being. It developed into archetypical forms of built environment to expand the empire, peace and happiness to such an extent that “the earth would become part of the empire, the empire would become paradise.”

This particular reading of paradise was only valid when religious ideology was used as the necessary condition for maintaining political autonomy. In Iranian history, such conditions resulted in shaping two exclusive spatio-political devices (archetype) that ultimately fostered specific urban forms: the circular city (during the Sassanid Empire, AD 224-651) and the meydan (during the Safavid Empire, AD 1501-1736). These examples not only represent ideological responses to the geographical constraints, but rather a political
Aerial Photo of the Sassanid City of Gur.
project’ through which the relationship between the political theology and urban form becomes the most visible.

**The Sassanid Circular Cities**

Zoroastrianism was established as the state religion during the Sassanid Empire. It was the first time in Iranian history that religion was used as a political tool. Throughout the Sassanid era the main enemy was the Roman Empire to the west. Christianity, which had been mixed up with Zoroastrianism in the Parthian period, became the hated religion: the religion of the enemy. However, other religions appear to have been largely tolerated. By employing all the political, religious and economic power, the Sassanid Empire became the absolute power in the region around AD 310. The formation of an autonomous state resulted in a big shift in development of Iranian cities in this period.\(^3\) Despite self-governing cities, during the rule of the Seleucids and Parthians,\(^3\) that covered and controlled considerable territories independent from the central government, the early Sassanid period saw the rise of cities, which were headquarters of the central administration: capital cities. Thereby, the idea of the city was no longer redefined as a military camp or punctual intervention but as the utmost realisation of the ideology of the state.\(^3\) The emergence of the Sassanid Empire can be seen as the result of the mobilisation of Iranian *civil society* towards political power, while previously it was the nomadic and tribal societies who ruled the country.\(^3\) The combination of religious legitimacy and political power resulted in the Sassanid thesis of capital cities; they “were built based on the religious beliefs and principles,”\(^3\) they were ideological spatial structures.

In the Sassanid monarchy, changing conditions enabled a gradual centralisation of the state. “The *polis* was replaced by the *royal city*; the system of semi-independent kingdoms by a unified state administrative system, the religious toleration of the Parthian kings and the multitude of religions by a single state
religion, Zoroastrianism.\textsuperscript{35} Hence, the urban form changed fundamentally; as a result of a political project, the position of the state in the city turned out to be an emblem of the sovereign power: the centre.\textsuperscript{36} The ideological city plan replaced the defensive structure and became the most prevailing model in constructing or re-constructing the (capital) cities throughout the empire.\textsuperscript{37} All of these capital cities adopted a similar spatial organisation,\textsuperscript{38} a round wall at the centre of which the palace and the temple were located enclosed them. 

Undoubtedly the most glorious city among those is the city of Gur or Ardashir-Khurra\textsuperscript{39} (Firouzabad in the Islamic period). It was founded in around AD 224, during the reign of Ardashir, the first Sassanid king. Throughout the entire Sasanian period, Ardashir-Khurra was revered as the birthplace of the kingdom, and the name survived far into the Islamic period as an administrative district. However, the city soon lost its political and economic significance due to its remote location. Although modern visitors are most impressed by the substantial remains of the palaces of Ardashir, these structures find little notice in medieval sources. However, the precise circular design of Gur was a constant source of amazement in earlier times and it duly inspired many colourful legends. Indeed the greatest praise in medieval accounts is reserved for the perfect geometric shape of the city and the skilful reclamation of this once swamp-like plain.

From still visible evidence on the ground it is in fact possible to deduce that the introduction of certain essential drainage operations governed many of the ways in which the city and its adjoining suburbs came to be laid out.\textsuperscript{40} For example, one of the two main axes of the blueprint for the city was a main drainage canal that runs more or less parallel to the meandering course of the Firouzabad River — and which divides at one point in order to feed the moat that surrounds the city. This axis then led to the sole outlet where the river leaves the plain. A cross-axis, combined with further radial lines, served to divide the city and its suburbs into 20 equal sectors. These divisions in turn determined the course of various drainage ditches and the boundaries
Hypothetical Plan of the Sassanid City of Gur
2.13
Hypothetical Plan of the Sassanid City of Darabgird
of roads and fields. Certain surviving stone foundations also indicate that the city and its outlying gardens were at one time surrounded by a 1-m thick perimeter wall. This feature took the form of a 20-sided polygon that was ca. 8 km in diameter. Elsewhere a rock-cut tunnel served to supply water to an adjacent valley.\textsuperscript{41}

The plan of the old city covered a perfect circle of almost 3-square kilometre (1,950 metres in diameter), surrounded by a massive mud wall. A precise radial pattern of streets and water channels separated each residential sector from the other. The innermost circle of the city with a diameter of ca. 450 m was separated from the rest of the settlement by a further wall that probably had four gates located on the main axes. This central precinct undoubtedly represented the administrative heart of the city, where the palace and temple located; a ditch (35 m wide) separated this inner wall from the fore-wall. Inside the town a third inner wall delimited the circular city centre, which was probably the site for official buildings.

The exact centre point of the city is marked by a 30-m-tall tower. The outer walls that once enclosed the roughly 2-m-wide staircase, and supported the vaults above the successive flights of steps, have all disappeared. This tower, covering an area of just under 20 by 20 m, and was originally some 40 m in height, has inspired various highly speculative reconstructions. But its primary function is likely to have been of a practical nature, associated with the fire temple. However, the tower, which stood at the focal point of the city, can be regarded as a visible symbol of the central, hierarchical authority that lay at the heart of the Sassanid administrative system, as opposed to the decentralised system that characterised the prior Parthian state.\textsuperscript{42}

Darabgerd or Darabgird\textsuperscript{43} is the other perfectly round capital city located in the province of Fars to the south of the empire. It was built by Dara II the son of Dara. In the absence of any archaeological investigations at Darabgird, it is not yet known whether the city was an original creation or it followed the model of Gur, where concentric walls surround the political and
2.14
Plan and Section of the Sassanic City of Darabgird.
religious centre and the residential quarters were organised in the radial tracks separated by the streets and water channels. At the centre of the city is a tall rock outcrop on the very top of which are the remains of a small fortress. The ruins are associated with the famous Sassanid temple-palace of Azarakhsh. The perimeter of the city, which is about 2 km in diameter, is marked by a decayed but still relatively tall mud-brick wall that lies inside the circuit of an adjacent moat in the form of a somewhat irregular circle. The city itself is divided into four segments by four main streets, but these streets were not laid out with geometric precision. In aerial photographs, in fact, one is hard pressed to pick out the presence of any streets. The main roads are stretched from the centre to the four inter-cardinal directions, marked by four gates.44

The wall of the (capital) city, as the enclosure and therefore the formal identification of the totality of the city, was peculiarly used as the political apparatus during the Sassanid period. In its utmost formal demonstration, walls have been constructed to mark the empire as such; on the Northern borders of the empire, the Sassanid King Khosro I (AD 531-579) for example built, a 195-kilometers clay wall from the Caspian Sea to the Alborz Mountains to mark his territory to the northeast.45 It has come to be known as the ‘Gorgan Wall’ or the ‘Red Snake’. However, as the topological investigation of the site reveals, these walls were not a defensive structure, rather they marked the territory of the Sassanid King. Though the idea of the wall of the empire, as well as the wall of the cities, were representations of the theological Iranian ideologies that were implemented as political projects throughout the empire. Accordingly, by laying out the model across the territory it becomes a geo-political tool. This very particular use of wall, as the formal representation of the absolute power of the Sassanid state, developed further in the early Islamic period. A profound extension of this archetype can be seen in design and construction of the magnificent city of Baghdad, built by Caliph al-Mansur in AD 762.
2.15
The Gorgan Wall (Red Snake)
In Islamic ideology the image of the universe is not bipolar; God (Allah) is absolute and creates all beings and non-beings in the utmost perfection. The sacred is conducted through the God’s chosen figures: The Prophet, Caliphs, Imams and ultimately the Islamic Jurist (Faqih), who has the divine task of reclaiming sovereignty and setting up the nomos of the Islamic society in the form of laws and ideologically constructed environment. Good and evil are separated by ‘faith’ as the indicator, while man, by his authority, can choose between them, therefore people are divided into the faithful and unfaithful. The Islamic idea of city thus symbolises this grouping (the act of exclusion) as an exclusive container of the good (the community of faithful: ummah) and withstander of the evil (unfaithful), to rebuild a paradise on earth.

The very condition for the ideal state of living is illustrated in Quran, where in 10:24, God describes the “earthly life” as suspended consciousness; “when the earth hath taken on her ornaments and is embellished, and her people deem that they are masters of her,” however God’s command, anytime, can alter this stable state. It then explains that the “good life” is the one, which constantly “lives” in this “possibility” of confronting death and those who live such a life will live in the “House of Peace”. The Islamic city, which by definition is supposed to house the ideal form of life, becomes an architectural category that embodies this idea: a diagram of the ideological power relation, which is planned and constructed to accommodate and expose this tension. It thus implies a specific configuration through which the ideal state is spatialised: here, this particular idea of wall was instrumentalised as the main concept of the city, through which political subjects both separated and related to each other through the urban form.

The embodiment of this ideology appears in the concept of medina, where the spatial, juridical and religious ideologies of the new-born state had to be manifested. In fact, it can be seen as the continuation of the very idea of paradise, while it affirms a form of settlement which is fundamentally shaped, defined and controlled by the theological political power; an absolute form to
divide the true believers, the faithful, from the others by setting up *nomos* (laws and walls). Perhaps one the most emblematic application of the Islamic reconstruction of the terrestrial paradise occurred at the dawn of the Abbasids when al-Mansur wished to build the ‘City of Peace’ or Baghdad.

**The City of Peace (Baghdad)**

“It is said: When al-Mansur decided to build it he wanted to behold it with his own eyes, so he ordered that it be delineated with ashes. Then he began to enter from each gate and to walk through its passageways, its arcades, and its courtyards, which were a diagram in ashes; and he turned around and looked at the men (in succession), and at that which had been delineated of the [city]’s trenches. Having done that he ordered that cottonseeds be placed on those lines, and naphtha be poured on them; and he gazed at it as the fire was blazing up, and he comprehended it, and came to know its design; and he commanded that the foundation thereof be excavated according to the design. Then the work on it was begun.”

During the first century after the rise of the Islamic Empire, it had expanded from Transoxiana to the Atlantic coast. However due to constant conflicts and wars in the mid-eighth century, which caused dissolution of the central power in Umayyad, the Islamic empire had lost its totality. After a few years of chaos, Abbasid Caliph al-Saffah, with the help of the Persians who had an inborn hatred of the Umayyads, took over power. However it was only during the second Abbasid Caliph, al-Mansur (reign: AD 754-775), that an overall order was established throughout the empire. A new capital for this new power was indeed an imperative need. The most strategic place for al-Mansur was Mesopotamia, close to the Persian border where he had the most support. The Caliph made many journeys in search of a site for his new capital, travelling up and down the Tigris, finally he fixed upon the site of Baghdad. In the year AD 761 al-Mansur decided to build its new capital city,
2.16
The City of Peace (Baghdad) during al-Mansur and Its Surroundings
2.17
Hypothetical Plan of the City of Peace
Baghdad was still a Persian village along a canal named al-Serat on the west bank of the Tigris River. The fifth of Jumada al-Awwal, 145 A.H. (August 1, AD 762) was picked by Nawbakht, the Persian court-astrologist, as an auspicious day for the city to be laid out.

In AD 762, when al-Mansur wished to build the city of Baghdad, he consulted his companions, and among them was Khalid ibn Barmak, a Persian architect and former governor of Fars, who had converted to Islam. Although no explicit evidence exists to prove that Khalid designed the plan of Baghdad according to the particular Sassanid model the circular cities, documents confirm that the very spatial organisation of a monastery (Nawbahar) had been applied to the construction of the city, and in fact, the original plan of the city of Baghdad can actually be traced to a single building: a set of chambers laid out around a sacred core – most likely a Sassanid Zoroastrian or Buddhist monastery, which implied a certain way of living. The city was planned and constructed at once; unlike other early Islamic cities where the foundation of the city had been initiated by the construction of the mosque and Dar al-Imara (palace), the City of al-Mansur was built as a whole, just like a building. The Caliph named it the ‘City of Peace’ referring to the Quranic description of the heavenly paradise, the ‘City of God’ or the ‘House of Peace’, aiming to shape and house the ‘good life’.

The construction of all the buildings and quarters was started at the same time, but perhaps the most essential part of the process was the construction of the walls. The city was shaped by construction of a double wall forming a perfect circle; a circular compound which was pierced by four gates opening up to the inter-cardinal points; Damascus Gate (North-West), Khorasan Gate (North-East), Basra Gate (South-East) and Kufa Gate (South-West). A ditch was stretched from gate to gate, directing the water of the canals around the city. Inside the enclosed circle a third wall separated the inner royal quarter–including the palace and the mosque– from the residential districts, at the centre of which was al-Mansur’s celestial domed palace, precisely laid at the
crossroads of the world. In planning of the royal quarter, the Caliph had followed Sassanid precedent, which was already prefigured in construction of the mosque and Dar al-Imara of the city of Wasit. The Palace of al-Mansur (named after The Green Dome or The Golden Gate) was a square-plan of 400 cubits (207 m) a side, which was oriented towards the four gates of the city. In the middle of the palace was an Iwan, a vaulted hall open at one end, while from the other end it was connected to the central audience hall at the very centre of the palace. This central hall was a square of 20 cubits in each side, covered by a dome. Above this hall was a second room of the same size also covered by a dome. The famous Green Dome was the latter one, which from outside reached the height of 80 cubits (41 m), as it was the highest edifice in the city. From the opposite side of the Iwan, the palace was connected to the Great Mosque, in which they shared the wall of qibla. The Mosque did not exactly face the Mecca point, as it should have done, the cause being that its plan having only been laid down after the palace was completed, the quadrangle of the mosque, for the sake of symmetry, had to conform to the already existing lines of the palace walls. This mosque stood for half a century, when it was pulled down by Harun al-Rashid (AD 808-9) who replaced its primitive structure by a structure solidly built of kiln-burnt set in mortar. However the construction of the city was interrupted two times, but most of the buildings had been completed in AD 763 when al-Mansur ordered to relocate the Treasury and Diwans (Public offices and Institutions) from Kufa to the new capital. In AD 766 construction of all the buildings including the houses, public buildings and the royal quarter was finished.

The area between the second wall and the third (inner wall) was divided by four vaulted galleries, which ran from the main gates to the gates of the inner zone, thus the in-between zone was arranged into four quadrants. Unlike the outer ring (which was vacant), these quadrants were occupied as the residential ring. They were built over by the houses of the immediate followers of the Caliph al-Mansur, to whom had been granted here plots of land, and before
2.18
Hypothetical Plan of the Great Mosque and the Palace of Green Dome
2.19
Hypothetical Plan of the Main Road, the City of Peace
long the whole space had come to be covered by a network of roads and lanes.\textsuperscript{56} Two encircling streets of 25 cubits wide separated the residential quarters from the outer and the inner walls. The grid of the street were planned in such a way that the houses in the streets and lanes of each quadrant could also, as needed, be closed off by these roads by strong gates.\textsuperscript{57} Each quadrant was sub-divided into city blocks, which were separated by radial streets. Al-Yaqubi mentioned these streets that were named after the group who were settled there or, in some cases, after clients who had been charged with the building of them.\textsuperscript{58} Close to the Basra Gate a police headquarters,\textsuperscript{59} prison,\textsuperscript{60} and guardhouse were placed. On both sides of the main galleries there were series of arcades connecting the four gates to the inner zone, these spaces, until AD 773 were the market place (bazaar). However before many years had passed the Caliph ordered all the shops to be removed from within the city and he then built the suburb of Karkh for the accommodation of the market people and the merchants, the arcades thus cleared of the shops being used as permanent barracks for the city police and the horse-guard.\textsuperscript{61}

The organisation of the residential area was in fact the most emblematic spatial configuration of the city; the residential units were designed as a ring around the central void; they were both excluding and at the same time binding the city together. In the City of Peace, it was not only the earthen walls that excluded the outside from inside, but rather it was the inhabitants that were set around the centre to mark the city; the form of life itself became the form of the city. It was this inhabitable wall that related the individual and groups to each other and to the sovereign. And the city was a spatial apparatus, housing this relations; it embodied the ideological diagram of power within its parts and exposed it through its urban form.

It was only AD 814 that the City of Peace turned into ashes;\textsuperscript{62} in its very short life, the city manifested thoroughly an ideal form, and remained abstracted just like the way it had been delineated; a diagram in ashes. It exposed the relations between forces, which constitute the power. The City of al-
2.20
Garden as the Index of the City. A Village near Neyriz
Mansur then, was both specific, in that it precisely maps the space of individual confinement, and universal, in that it (imprecisely) refers to an entire social regime. It manifested a spatial condition that embodied a political idea; a diagram of the ideological power, not only between the sovereign and the political subjects but also, among the people itself. This tension was carefully expressed through the architecture of the city, where this life proliferated entirely. In fact the city housed and, at the same time, shaped specific form of life through its mechanism. The City of Peace held such a tension, which was charged with the task of not simply framing the people, but enabling them as the political subjects. Through its emblematic urban form it was able to incorporate both the spatial and the political. Embodied in its form, there was a sense of the ideal that haunt the real.63

The City of Peace nevertheless manifested a political project: the wall of paradise has been developed in the Islamic conception of city while it becomes not merely a wall but an inhabitable space that contains faithful bodies; it appears in the form of a camp where faith arrives as the decisive factor to mark the community of the faithful. The faithful bodies therefore, are granted a great privilege to enter this place: the city. In fact, the eternal paradisiacal house of mankind, which had been abandoned due to the original sin, is reconstructed in the form of the terrestrial paradise or medina. Topologically the concept of the camp, like the wall of paradise, is borrowed to define the space in the form of a bounded container, which is not reducible to any other structure. The camp, in its generic, but at the same time exclusive structure, can house specific groups of people. It is not a sacred place in itself but since the space is constituted by the occupants’ (faithful) bodies, it is, therefore, constantly ideological and spatial. This ideology is exclusively represented in the act of foundation of the early Islamic cities; it appeared in a concrete spatial configuration while the Persian ideological city model met the Islamic state’s will to assume the shape of an empire.
The Safavid Meydan

Since the Safavid Empire (AD 1501-1736) Shi’ism expanded rapidly, eventually becoming the official state religion throughout the entire Kingdom. This period can be read as the starting point of the shaping of a geopolitical opposition between Shi’a and Sunni in the country (and later on in the Muslim world). The main confrontation of the Safavids was with the Ottoman Empire - the largest Sunni Muslim kingdom on the western borders of the country. Hence religion came to stand as a political tool for making a clear distinction between friend and foe. Following the Sassanid period this was the second time in Iranian history in which a sovereign political power established an ideological state, and a very particular ideology (Shi’ism) was supported and endorsed by the central power; there the state itself re-founded its legitimacy through the instrumentalisation of a particular religious ideology. However, this time the political body appeared in the form of a modern state, an extensive system of institutions to manage and organise the civil society. In fact this reform not only happened in the hierarchical structure of the political authority but was even more visible in reconceptualisation of the idea of citizenship.

Nevertheless, the Safavid (capital) cities embodied of the religious, political and economic institutions on both an urban as well as territorial scale. This project in fact aimed to manage, protect and ultimately to neutralise the society that had been ruled for centuries under the Sunni empires. Planning was used as the very instrument through which the Safavid sovereignty was manifested. Reconstruction of the city of Isfahan is a paradigmatic example of this extensive political project within the boundary of a city. However, its explicit architectural materialisation happened in the formation of a specific spatial configuration of square: the meydan (meidan). The meydan was a rectangular space surrounded by bazaars that served as the forecourt to the royal palaces, gardens and mosques. It thus embraced activities related both to the
court and the public. Among the others Naqsh-e Jahan in Isfahan represents the most outstanding example of the Safavids’. It became the archetype of Iranian modern city in which the sovereign state communicated to the world through this very spatial apparatus. While traditionally the complex of royal temple-palace was the geographical address of the Iranian capital cities, this building complex was replaced by the meydab; a void, enclosed by an inhabitable wall to capture and represent the fundamental part of the modern state that was the political mass: the citizens (believers) through whom the ideological power of state was conducted. Regardless of the existence of a square prior to the Safavids, it had never been instrumentalised as a political apparatus before; Market Square typology indeed was an inevitable part of the Iranian cities that had never been the centre of the city. They were mostly placed close to the city gates or just outside the wall, for receiving caravans and accommodating temporary bazaars.

After the two cities of Tabriz (AD 1501-55) and Qazvin (AD 1555-98), the capital of the empire moved to Isfahan in AD 1598. The radical religious reform and demonstration of the ideological power of the Safavids is most manifest in the development of the architectural language and spectacular urban projects in the time of Shah Abbas, who chose the city of Isfahan as the epicentre of the empire. The master plan of Shah Abbas took shape outside the medieval walled city to extend the city towards the southwest. A new square, Meydan-e Naqsh-e Jahan, and a promenade, called The Chaharbagh, formed the armature of the Safavid capital city, while previously the city had a medieval Islamic structure; it was shaped around a centre featuring the Friday Mosque and the palace. The 1.9-kilometer boulevard (the chaharbagh) was an impressive urban intervention, which was built as the north-south axis of the new capital to connect the new centre of the city (the meydab) to the royal quarters over the river. The construction of this massive urban project, unprecedented in the concurrence of its extraordinary scale and its integrated planning, took several decades. This most significant phase started in AD
2.21
The Safavid Meydan
1590, when Shah Abbas ordered a series of building campaigns in anticipation of the official transfer of the capital. These series of projects began with the construction of the new state square: *Meydan-e Naqsh-e-Jahan* as the new official centre of the city (AD 1590-95). Then sequentially the refurbishment of the old bazaar, *Qaysaria* (AD 1591-1603), the Royal Seat, *Aali Qapu* (AD 1590), new Friday Mosque, *Masjid-e-Shah* (AD 1611-16), the Royal Mosque, *Masjid-e-Sheikh Lotfollah* (AD 1603-19), the Royal Quarter, *Hezar Jarib* (AD 1596), Royal Boulevard *Chaharbagh* (AD 1596-1602), Royal Bridge, *Allahberdi Khan* (AD 1602) and the Royal Quarter (AD 1611). In fact what the Shah and his advisors embarked upon was a radical re-conceptualisation of the city as the imperial capital, embodying both ideas of Persian paradise and Islamic medina in their utmost manifestation.

The first instalment focused on the *Meydan-e Naqsh-e Jahan*, when in AD 1590 the square was formalised as an urban space through the levelling its surface and by removing the old urban fabric of the site. Then it was girded by a rectangular perimetral ‘wall’ of a one-story row of chambers used to house and host special guards, special royal guests, foreign travellers and merchants, and even prostitutes; later other functions were replaced by workshops. The space covered an area of 165 meters wide and 510 metres long, defined by a continuous wall of double arcades of buff brick, the top tier of which contain recessed blind niches of white plaster. The rhythm of the walls is serial, combining with a circular order at each major fenestration. A stone water-channel lined with trees, set twenty meters in from the edge of the square, originally bordered the space.

Four prominent events occurred within the above boundary: to the south, the *Shah Mosque*; to the west, the *Aali Qapu* gateway leading to the royal precincts; to the east, the *Sheikh Lutfollah Mosque*; and to the north, the gateway to the bazaar. Together they monumentalised the first phase of construction and facilitated the political and economic linkage between the vibrant old commercial hub of Isfahan, the *Old Meydan* (market square), and its aspirant
rival. Anchored on these earlier building works was the 1602 campaign during which the functionality of the meydan was enhanced with the addition of a second row of shops and a second-story of chambers; thus shrinking the area of the meydan. By formalising and adding more chambers and a covered walkway in-between the rows, the inhabitable space was enlarged; it was therefore politically and architecturally a more advanced presentation of the sovereign king.

Two other monumental features of the meydan, the Sheikh Lutfollah (royal chapel) mosque and the Masjid-e Shah (originally called the new Abbasi Mosque), reaffirmed the interconnectedness in the Safavid imperial discourse of politics and economics on one hand and Shi’ism as the state religion on the other. The Royal Mosque was built in front of the palace, crossing the meydan, for the use of the Shah and his royal family. It was to demonstrate the autonomous position of the king as a religious leader (Shi’a), a short distance from the Shah Mosque, which was supposed to replace the old Friday mosque (public mosque) of the city. The positioning of the mosques and their placement in the two strategic locations in the meydan is the absolute representation of the prismatic Safavid claim to legitimacy and authority.

Through the project of meydan, the Safavid king unified the political and religious authorities and he reclaimed the total sovereignty of the state. The space binds and, at the same time, defines the life of the subjects in relation to the power. It marks the territory of the power, by making borders and walls, outside which the life is not protected and defined. In fact this is the relation that characterises the city as a political project, where political power (state) constantly produces such a condition to confront life to death. This inherent tension physically realise in the form of inhabitable structure whose nonfigurative monumentality represents the utmost order and performs as a life-sustaining machine, protecting the lives of the political subjects. In this ideological model, the wall not only accommodates the tension, but shapes specific urban form constituted by the lives of its subjects.
2.22
Meydan-e Jaqsh-e Jahan, Isfahan
2.23
The Plan of the Meydan-e Jajash-e Jahan, Isfahan
Such a project is a result of a specific form of power, which is defined as sovereign; who can decide on the moment of urgency and has power over the life of the subjects. This particular concept of city has become more explicit when an absolute power in the form of a sovereign state assumes a visible and operative dimension. The heart of the city, in this definition, is the state—a mortal god, whose task is to provide people safety and security. In a Hobbesian image, the sovereign can be illustrated as a monster, made up of the bodies of its political subjects (citizens) and aggressive when confronted. He comes to be in the first and becomes the cause of the existence of the city and its parts instance, “and the cause of the presence of the voluntary habits of its parts and of their arrangement in the ranks proper to them.”

By holding all juridical, political and social legitimacies, the sovereign ruler closely resembles the image of God to essentially transform the concept of ideal city into an earthly paradise.

**Spaces of Sovereignty**

Seven centuries before Hobbes, al-Farabi, described the “excellent city” as a city through which its inhabitants aim at co-operating for the things by which felicity and happiness, in its real and true sense, can be attained. He further highlights that this condition is only possible when a ruler, whose decision is analogous to God’s acts, holds the people together by constructing the ideal city. Indeed in Zoroastrian and Islamic thoughts, this concept appears essentially as an existential one; the ideal city is a terrestrial paradise where the ruler “is a person over whom nobody has any sovereignty whatsoever.” The Sassanid King or the Islamic Caliph, through the act of separation, frames the lives of the people and directs them toward the happiness. Therefore, the possibility of having a good way of living is conditioned by presence of a sovereign power without which no political life can be achieved. The city is in fact the place that this power relation has to be manifested.
In this definition the sovereign’s power does not appear anymore as a killer monster whose power is constituted in the right of “taking or giving life”, but it provides the security and safety through the “administration of life”; he protects and at the same time defines form of life, as an act, analogous to the way the sacred power performs. Historically this condition is reflected in a way that the urban civilization emerged and developed in the Iranian plateau.

Due to the harsh and hostile environmental condition of the Iranian plateau and the neighbouring areas to the east and northeast, urbanisation started much later than Mesopotamia. Whereas in Mesopotamia since the late fourth millennium BC, cities were developed as natural phenomenon of the settlement of the agrarian societies, in Iran ‘proto-urban’ settlement developed in the Bronze Age, i.e. before BC 2000. While in the arid landscape of Iran the primary form of life was nomadism, these early ‘proto-urban’ settlements only developed into a well-defined cities when at the end of second millennium BC, two ideological powers, Medes and Persians emigrated and settled in the central plateau and established Median and later Achae menid empires. Historically these powers, by promoting certain ideologies (Mazdaism, Zoroastrianism and later Islam), took over the whole territory and constructed cities as epicentres of their power. The (capital) city therefore became the exceptional form of built environment; bordered territories through which special groups of people were marked, protected and represented. This ideological space inevitably was identified by the enclosure: a wall that protects life and also represents the state. While in the early cities wall appeared as spatial device to outline the form of the city and the empire, in the modern state, it was the bio-political subjects who maintain the political existence of the state; the wall therefore was to house (and to promote) the specific way of living.

The wall (paradise) becomes inhabitable and forms the city; through its spatial configuration it bears the very meaning of separation and therefore of
2.25
Shazdeh (Prince) Garden, Kerman

PERSIAN GARDEN AND THE IDEA OF CITY
the spatial order. The interior is managed, organised and ruled by the (divine) sovereign power, while the exterior is an unknown, unmanaged, and therefore uncivilised domain. The wall not only protects life and fosters it within the harsh landscape, but even assumes symbolic dimensions when it goes to other cultures, religions and different geographical conditions; within the context of Christian symbolism, the wall signifies divine intervention, redemptive interruption of the natural order, “pointing up the power of Grace to undo the natural propensities of human will [and signifying] life-giving separation between nature and Grace.” The interpretation can be compared to the concept of *terminus* in the Roman Empire. It appears as an active producer of space that simultaneously performs processes of territorial definition and spatial partition. As Matteucci describes it: “On the one hand, in marking the end (or the *finis*) of a territory, it functions as a means of delimitation of the land. On the other hand, in dividing two or more pieces of territory, it also performs a process of separation.” Like *termini*, paradise and *medina* separate the *urbs* from the *pomerium*, the sacred and the profane spaces, the city from the country, and the territories of the empire from the rest of the world.

The wall in both archetypes of the Sassanid city and the *meydan* fundamentally implies the idea of *pairi-daeza*. It turns into a geopolitical device, while it outlines the order on the land. In these cases the executive power decides and divides, however in modern times it is the legislative power that shapes the border. “The sovereign becomes the living *nomos*;” he constantly (re)defines friends and enemies and hence modifies the walls. The city therefore is adjusted to every new condition. As the bio-political bodies are the subjects of the modern state, this process of constant division and redefinition of space (wall) appears in every units of the city: dwelling space, and the ‘state of exception’ becomes the norm.

More than narrating historical phenomena this reading offers a way (a lens) though which the contemporary form of the city can be read, where
Inhabitable Walls, Aerial Photo of a Small City in Khorasan
the power relation does not appear anymore as encircling walls around the cities but rather it is conducted through the most common architecture of the city; the domestic space. While previously environmental constraints and geopolitical strategies were the main drivers behind the use of religion as the ideology of the state, in modern times it is the ideological thesis itself, which has been used to theorise the ideal and hence the legitimate form of power. The wall as an apparatus once again becomes instrumental in re-establishing the relationship between the state, the people and the territory. It is no longer presented in the vestige of a historical political-geographic model that appropriates life of the individuals for the sake of “living” itself. But it is rather a geo-biopolitical tool that shapes certain form of life: a life that cannot be separated from its form. In a way “space becomes ‘vital’ – and life becomes spatialised.” The house therefore, as the smallest constituting part of the city (inhabitable chamber), holds the tension.

In this perspective life is defined and shaped in relation to power, while power “founds itself on the separation of a sphere of naked life from the context of the form of life.” It is not just the rule that implied a particular life but the way of life also forms the rule. The city then, like a monastery, not only territorialises this relation, but it is the only condition, through which certain form of life can be achieved. Through these inhabitable walls, bound the individual and groups to each other and to the sovereign. By housing these relationships the city embodied the ideological diagram of power within its parts and exposed it through its urban form. Here indeed paradoxically the vertical application of power of the sovereign ruler is reversed, while the rule becomes the way of life and life defines the rule in a dialectical relation, and it is spatially manifested through the very tectonic of the city.
3.1

Haji Mohayya House (serai), Shiraz (ca. 1840)
The House is the finest grain of urban form. While the house seems provide the most essential need for life— a shelter—, by accommodating ideological and spatial means, it also gives form to life. The analogy between city and house, and city and universe, has been subject to dispute; historically for political power, it has always instrumental in conveying and, at the same time, controlling ideologies through the organisation of domestic spaces. Yet the same mechanism— management of the house— allows citizens or believers to possess their power and their presence in the city.

The spatial manifestations of this idea in relation to the urban form appears in the Greek *nomos*. The term indicated both a wall that encloses a private property and also the wall of the city. Schmitt claims that *nomos* is a unique spatial device that, in its expansion and multiplication, can define and produce a house as well as a city. Arendt however goes further and suggests a closed space conditions the very possibility of citizenship. In other words, citizenship depends on frame, a wall that binds and, at the same time, hosts the individuals. In its later adoption, *nomos* also stands as law. However by its quite literal spatiality, it implied a space (or a subject) that lies within the law of the state. In fact the inhabitable enclosure, provides a condition that the political community could be defined and activated. Besides being a protector, as it is inherent in the term, *nomos* is a space that houses the subjects, and through its boundaries, distributes rights and places in the city.

Historically the courtyard house has been an architectural solution both
holding socio-political tensions and providing environmental durability. Undoubtedly, widespread practice of this form as an inevitable typology, recalls reconsideration of a global phenomenon that is shared across vast geographical and cultural domains. Yet it is primarily due to its strong environmental adaptability and ideological specificities that the courtyard house demands new attention. Perhaps, revisiting this type could unfold an inherent dialectical relation between the state’s religious and political power and the subjects, while they force or resist a certain way of life. Nevertheless common association of this typology to specific religions, such as Islam or Zoroastrianism, lacks scientific precision, while existence of the courtyard house long before establishment of those faiths, validates it as an unavoidable regional type. At the same time, persistency of the courtyard house, as an urban typology, which supported by the wide geographical dissemination, characterises it as a resistant architectural form. It not only protects life within the extreme climatic conditions but also reconstructs it as an ideal form. Beyond and before any religious principle, the courtyard house manifests the sacred. It is represented in the cosmological order and rituals, which have historically shaped and modified the type. However this state of life in the city inevitably assumes a dialectical relationship to the power, which makes it to be the target of various political projects.

**House as Temple**

The preliminary purpose of a house is thought to have been a shelter to protect a deity or a family from harsh climate, animals and enemies. Despite their variety, they share a dominant characteristic: an inhabitable space preserved by walls and a roof, to create an interior separated from the hostile territory. Sacred spirits were also accommodated within the enclosed space of the house to ensure the safety and to protect the inhabitants from the unknown forces.
Indeed, in the early settlement human and gods lived together while the living itself had a form of ritual. Regardless of various forms that such primitive structure took, from a wooden hut to a tent or stone cottage, there can be found a particular historical shift, when house conveyed more meaning than secured space; perhaps it was the moment in which architecture of a house appeared not as satisfaction of the basic needs but also representation of an ideology; “houses originally were neither shelters nor dwellings, but temples.” It was the materialisation of the divine; “a specific space that anchored the presence of God and allowed for the sacred to be approached, if not seen.”

For the early nomadic societies the ideological aspect of a house became of much importance. In the life of a nomad, daily activities were acts of survival in extreme conditions. Each aspect of life was a rite, protected and conducted by a spirit or god; and house was spatial manifestation of those rites, protecting and regulating every act and habit. Richard Bradley, the British archaeologist, argues that ritualisation of life and transformation of dwelling and domestic into ritual spaces began during the Neolithic and became even more pronounced during the later Bronze Age and Iron Age. By settlement of the nomads, as house became more enduring, it presents an obvious model for thinking about the cosmos and domestic life underwent “symbolic elaboration.” By giving it a momentary stability, a permanent house appeared as an exceptional structure, a sacred enclosure. Life was carefully choreographed by sequence of spaces, which enclosed it to protect and to let it proliferate within an impossible condition.

However by later development of communal life in cities, state tried to separate the sacred from the domestic life and possessed it by the political power. The result was construction of monuments and temples. Indeed, the same spatial configuration of a house was employed in designing of the temple; while association with a power materialised into elaborated decoration and proportion of facade, yet the plan of such sacred spaces resembled a house.
3.2
Building no. 10 (temple), Altn Tepe
3.3
Building no. 3, Dahan-e-Gholaman
**Altyn Tepe and Dahaneh-e Gholaman**

One of the best examples of these temples can be found in the *Altyn Tepe*, a historic settlement located within the larger Iranian Plateau and now in the south of Turkmenistan. The temple (known as building no. 10) forms a square plan, measuring 22 metres in each side. The inhabitable space is shaped around a central courtyard while a corridor runs in the perimeter of the void, which effectively separates the chambers and the open space. Series of identical living units set along each side; the larger rooms are located at the corners, seemingly hosting different functions than the typical chambers. The enclosing wall is blind to the outside and sunlight and air is provided only through the courtyard. There is single entrance located on the east side. Archaeological investigation examined the edifice to be dated back in the 5th century BC. Function of the structure is thought to be a distinctive house or a ceremonial religious (sacred) building. Despite a long geographical distance, in the building no. 10, the organisation of the space is very similar to house in *Dahaneh-e Gholaman*, close to the city of Zabol in Iran.

The Site of *Dahaneh-e Gholaman* is associated to the great city of *Drangiana* in the Eastern Achaemenid Empire by the historians. In one of the most outstanding preserved structure of the site, an edifice (known as House no.3 or Sacred Building) stood round a large, almost square courtyard, with a single entrance on the south side; the space is flanked by four large porticoes, each with a double row of square pillars, open to the courtyard. In the four corners are located the square rooms, with stairways in them leading to an upper storey or the roof. In the centre of the courtyard were three large rectangular altars in a row. While in the early reports the building is thought to be a Zoroastrian temple however Mary Boyce, a leading British authority on Zoroastrianism, has voiced serious doubts about this proposal on ritual grounds. The fire altars, which were associated with the religious rituals, were found in other buildings of the site too. Also evidences for animal
3.4
Building no. 3, Dahaneh-e-Gholaman
bones mixed with ashes, imply that the altar had used for cooking which
would have been far from acceptable in a sacred Zoroastrian structure.\textsuperscript{14} As
those two examples suggest, even in the early building, the organisation of
space goes beyond mere protection and habitation, and postulate an idea: the
inhabitants were not so much living domestic life as performing it.\textsuperscript{15} The plan
of the buildings demonstrates certain arrangement of space with rigorously
designed and constructed. Besides the archaeological specificities of each
case, they confirm that there was not a rigid typological divide between
sacred and profane, nor an impermeable barrier between the supernatural
and the everyday. Those two realms overlapped in a single architectural form:
courtyard house.

\textbf{The Idea of the House}

In the territory of the larger Iranian Plateau, including the central Asia and
part of the Near East, two fundamental terms have been historically used, to
identify the house, each of which characterises conceptual and architectural
specificity of the type: Maskan and Serai.

\textit{Maskan} (in Arabic and later adopted in Persian) or \textit{mishkan}, has an
Aramaic root, derived from the word \textit{Shekinah}.\textsuperscript{16} The word appears in Hebrew
as \textit{mishkan} as Tabernacle. It is a derivative of the same root and is used in the
sense of dwelling-place in the Bible.\textsuperscript{17} Accordingly, in classic Jewish thought,
the \textit{shekinah} refers to a dwelling or settling in a special sense, a dwelling
or settling of divine presence, to the effect that, while in proximity to the
\textit{shekinah},\textsuperscript{18} the connection to God is more readily perceivable. While in the Old
Testament \textit{mishkan} connote the house of God in Quran it mostly appears in
plural form, \textit{masakin} as the houses of people.\textsuperscript{19} For some, like Philo, \textit{shekinah} is
discussed as a feminine reality distinct from God. In the Kabbalistic tradition,
the \textit{shekinah} is the feminine aspect of God and the pivotal tenth and the
last of the sefirot, which is the point of contact between God and humans—
the Gate of Heaven. This characteristic is shared among other beliefs; *Vesta*, the virgin goddess, ruled and accommodated in the household fire, at the centre of the house, and the civic hearth of the Roman city. Her performance was very close the Greek goddess of hearth, Hestia. While the goddess of household in most of the cults represented by the hearth or the fire, in Zoroastrianism the deity of fire, *Athar (Azar)*, is a male spirit. It was considered to be the most sacred among the four elements and has been always kept away from the cooking fire. It is mostly placed in *iwan* or *pesgam* (the vaulted hall), in one of the four sides of the courtyard. Instead, the very centre of the house was protected by *Anahita*, the goddess of fertility, healing and wisdom, represented by a pond of water.

While *Maskan* connotes ideological aspects of a house, a dwelling place for God (original equivalence to the Tabernacle) or the goddess of household, *serai* features spatial configuration. Etymologically the word is from the Indo-European root *tra* as boundary or limit, which appears in Avestan as *thraya* (to protect), and Persian *serai* as a bounded space or a house. In its historical development *serai* offers an architectural layout; a delimited space by inhabitable chambers. It becomes suffix in shaping words like caravanserai, referring to the physical arrangement of the space.

In Zoroastrian ideology *serai* is a sacred space. While garden represents a terrestrial paradise, house is celestial earth or a spiritual flesh. In a Zoroastrian house, some spaces like, *pesgam* was considered pure and hence no one in a state of ritual impurity could enter it. Its floor was of plain earth. Brick, being a man-made material, was considered unsuitable. The age of a house could often be estimated by the height of the great *pesgam's* floor. This was always higher than the floors of the rest of the house, a consequence of the fresh layer of soil that was spread upon it every year during the *Farvardagan* festival (the festival that welcomes back the spirits of the dead). In both faiths courtyard had an allegorical dimension: representing the celestial garden (paradise), once was abandoned by the man’s wrong decision. Consequently
serai became one of the most successful and easily achievable architectural means to mediate between open and closed, inside and outside, social constraints and environmental requirements, or, more abstractly, between sacred and profane.

The house determined a territorial organisation; it not only provided a shelter but also was the end point of a series of mechanical and engineering operation to tame the harsh environment. Nevertheless various foundations of early courtyard houses, in different regions, were a response to their climatic and topographic conditions. However the spatial configuration of these living units went beyond satisfaction of the life’s necessities. The environment captured within the courtyard was not representing a natural condition; it was deliberately constructed and ordered to host the sacred. Indeed by living around a courtyard life itself protected the terrestrial paradise while at the same time the presence of the divine provided security and safety against the evil forces. Hence, once again sacred and profane overlapped. By reconstructing the ideal form-of-life, the courtyard house became a machine for thinking with, an instrument for understanding the world and the human predicament in it by sampling and ordering liveable parts of larger territory in an architectural compound.

Serai: From Sacred Space to Political Space

Common association of courtyard house typology, and specifically serai, to the Islamic architecture, seems to have been subject to serious doubts. Though the type has adopted by different religions, particularly Islam and Zoroastrianism. Ibn Khaldun, the well-travelled 14th-century historian and social philosopher, writes in his Muqaddima (Introduction to History) of building activities in the areas newly conquered by Islamic forces, originates them into the construction traditions of the neighbouring regions such as Iran: “the Arabs are quite firmly rooted in the desert and quite unfamiliar with the crafts.
3.5

The House (Mosque) of Muhammad in Medina, Constructed in 622 AD

A rectangular border encloses the gathering place with a series of chambers, which were developed in different phases. The qibla wall is roofed and columned.

(a) Before change of qibla. (b) After change of qibla. (1-4) Mud-brick rooms roofed with palm branches and mud. (5-9) Reed-and-mud rooms roofed with palm branches and mud. (A) Original dimensions, AD 624. (B) Enlargement under Umar, AD 638. (C) Enlargement under Uthman, AD 644.
Furthermore, before Islam, the Arabs had been strangers to the realms of which they took possession. When they came to rule them, there was not time enough for all the institutions of sedentary culture to develop fully. Moreover, the buildings of others, which they found in existence, were sufficient for them. Furthermore, at the beginning, their religion forbade them to do any excessive building or to waste too much money on building activities for no purpose.” The existence of the courtyard seemed to be the most practical response to the topographic and climatic conditions, but in serai courtyard assumes an allegorical form; a house for the sacred, protected by the faithful bodies. It is fundamentally different from the rural courtyard houses. Indeed serai did not emerged as a religious architecture that is advised and promoted by Zoroastrianism or Islam, while through its exclusive form it hosted different ideologies that made it grounded in a political framework.

House of Muhammad

Perhaps one of most emblematic examples of adaptation of this type occurs at the dawn of Islam, when Muhammad had moved from Mecca to Medina (it was called Yathrib at the time) to establish a political centre for the new faith. In AD 622 Muhammad and his companions arrived in the place wherein they built up a permanent house for the prophet, it later became known as the house or mosque of Muhammad. By the order of him, they delineated a square plan of 100 cubits each side and the walls were seven cubits high, it was built of sun-dried bricks.

They did not build a courtyard house at once, however it was the life of the new believers that gradually shaped the house. At the beginning, the courtyard was quite open, but the Companions complained of being exposed to the burning rays of the sun during the prayers, and after that a portico was built consisting of a number of palm trunks, used as columns supporting a roof of palm branches woven together and covered with mud. It had three
gates to the south, east and west. At the beginning, against the outer wall of the courtyard, at the south end of the east side, were built two chambers for the family of Muhammad; they were of mud bricks and thatched with palm leaves and mud. When later the family extended Muhammad built similar rooms for each one, until ultimately there were nine huts along the east side of the enclosure. These chambers, each covering 6-7 cubits square, were constructed against the east side of the building and on the outside of the enclosing wall. That maintained the autonomy of the courtyard, as a symbolic protected (and sacred) ground.

In the southwest corner of the courtyard was a raised platform (suffa) roofed by a primitive shelter similar to that on the north side, serving as a home for the faithful people who had followed Muhammad in his Migration (ashab al-suffa). The construction of the enclosing wall and attached rooms was a work of the greatest simplicity, and there can have been nothing to prevent his using it for purposes of daily worship, had he wished to do so. Nevertheless Muhammad did not do so, evidently because he did not intend it for a mosque but for the private house. In fact the mosque originally was nothing but a house of faithful. The House of Muhammad never functioned as temple until his death in AD 632, when they buried his body in his chamber. The House became a sanctuary and the hypostyle hall was extended to house more people. The first mosque (the house of God) was indeed the house of people and the notion of sacred manifested in the living bodies and became a temple, which later developed into a city.

In the House of Muhammad the architecture was reduced to a diagram that, in its development, established a three-fold relation: it connected the inhabitants (believers/citizens) together, to the sacred (courtyard) and to the state (city). It was precisely through this spatial diagram that political institutions were able to establish their power and controlled the territory. In the expansion of the Islamic empire not only the cities were planned but also every house was laid out by the central authorities. Archaeological excavations
3.6
The House (Mosque) of Muhammad during Omayyad Period (Late 7th century)
in the Abbasid city of Samarra, revealed many examples of courtyard house with elaborated architectural details, built during the first half of 9th-century. Their spatial configuration went beyond individual units while they together shapes autonomous urban form representing a socio-political identity in a form of Islamic citizenship.

The instrumentalisation of the type by the political authority was carried out through specific spatial orders and regulatory frameworks; they ultimately aimed to secularise the house as the epicentre of the ideological space. The state’s commitment in use and promotion of elaborated architectural language aimed at monumentalising the sacred and separate it from the domestic space; employment of such elements as dome and iwan in the architecture of the mosques was precisely to associate the sacred to the central power and thus to control the inhabitable enclosure. Also by applying gridded street patterns in planning the residential quarters, the central power to isolate inhabitable units in order to avoid any political tension. The house became the focal point of the political projects; the central power tended to determine individual’s life of which the totality of the state had been shaped. Nevertheless though these attempts, serai gained much political significance and became an architectural model for spaces of resistance.

**Formal Aspects of Iranian courtyard House (Serai)**

Architectural features of serai, have been developed in response to the environmental constraints and ideological orders in the aforementioned territory. Each of those enhanced the other in shaping a resistant form, which remained consistent through the history. Therefore the introverted form of the house cannot be solely visited through the lens of adaptability or religious beliefs. However architectural representation of each force, in shaping the type, demands further clarification.

To investigate the formal aspects of the serai, 12 examples have been
3.7
House III, Ground Floor Plan. Excavation of Samarra 1911-13 by Ernst Herzfeld
chosen from different microclimates of the Iranian Plateau.\textsuperscript{30} While representing a single type, they employed different techniques to tame and control environmental features. The aim is to indicate the common spatial characteristics of the type in which have remained consistent regardless of geographical conditions or ideological forces. The twelve houses are selected among the registered valuable architecture, documented by the Iran Heritage Organisation.\textsuperscript{40} With the exception of the House XII that dates back to the 17th century (Safavid period), these houses were mostly constructed during 18th and 19th centuries. To compare environmental sensibility of the form, the house were chosen of different climatic condition, from arid landscape of the central desert of Iran to the delta region of the Dez River on the border of Iraq.

Finally a uniform method of redrawing is used to help the architectural comparison possible. According to the archival documents the ground floor plan of the houses were drawn in the same language and scale. In each case the placement of the house in the neighbourhood, orientation and alignment to the topography or underground water channels (\textit{qanat}) were confirmed with supporting maps and information. In addition to the plans an axonometric view of each is drawn, illustrating volumetric features of the type: Series of analytical drawings then were induced, to compare the persistence elements of \textit{serai}.

\textbf{Twelve-Houses}

Despite each house’s unique characteristics, the comparative analysis of these twelve houses indicates certain set of rules, which are shared among the examples and identifies consistent formal aspects of \textit{serai}. The house is shaped by an introverted mud-brick enclosure, at the middle of which courtyards are dug out. An uninterrupted series of inhabitable units delineate the borders of the courtyard. The houses are joined together and forms a continuous
3.8
Twelve Houses, Ground Floor Plans
3.9
Twelve Houses, Axonometric Perspective
earthen mass, which reduces the surface area exposed to the sun. Narrow alleys and dead-ends lanes are cut out in this fabric and define the borders of neighbourhoods. Besides making access to the houses, they define juridical spaces, conducting civil and religious rights associated with different groups of inhabitants. Indeed *serai* in both form of individual unit and aggregated fabric, is an exclusive urban typology. It is fundamentally different from the rural type where the courtyard is a functional space attached to the house and the houses are detached units.

Arrangement of space varies according to the land division while the size of the house does not necessarily indicate the social class. For example in House II, topographic and climatic constraints of the delta region have responded in the shrinkage of the footprint and vertical extension of the house. Even in the irregular small lots of land, the courtyard forms as a rectangular space that occupies most of the ground. The four-side plan with an interior space covered by the dome of the sky has rather a symbolic value as a microcosmic image of the order of the universe. These symbolic orders have been emphasised by employing certain geometry or proportion, it becomes manifestation of transcendental values.

In the House IV, despite irregularity of the plot’s boundary, geometrical arrangement of the space implies an explicit order through which various units have laid out; the space has shaped around two distinctive cruciform spaces, at the centre of each, courtyards are placed. Four corners of the cross are occupied by the main chambers facing the courtyards, each of which works autonomously; They are separated and, at the same time, connected to the rest of the house through the side corridors which also make access to the courtyards. In fact the plan demonstrate an explicit architectural layout, which goes beyond the functionality of the space and environmental consideration. It implies certain rules through which the life is defined, controlled and performed.

The exterior wall of the house is a thick earthen enclosure (mud-brick)
whose shape is determined by the neighbourhood fabric or the city grid. The wall is blind to the outside with no windows of opening except the entrances. The formal structure of the house is never exposed to the outside. Indeed serai is planned and constructed from inside out; the act of crossing marks the focal point. After surveying the land, the architect, just like an augur, fixes a landmark within the boundary of the lot; the crossing not only verifies the orientation of the space, and manages its connection to the infrastructural networks of water and streets, but also it is an act of divination preparing the space to host the sacred. Then the plan, which is designed and drawn on the gridded boards, is laid out on the ground. After setting up an auspicious day, and giving offerings to God—mostly a scarified animal such as sheep, cow or camel—construction begins.

The first part to be laid out is the courtyard, through which orientation and distribution of different spaces are planned. Association of courtyards’ orientation to the cardinal point or the direction of qibla, has been commonly stated, however the study here shows that the houses are rather carefully aligned to the topography and underground water channels (qanats).\footnote{For instance, in Iran Cultural Heritage Organisation’s documents, the House VIII has been described as it is oriented towards the direction of qibla, however, by conforming it to the underground water channel maps of the city, it can be seen that the plot divisions on the East site of the old city centre of Tehran have been aligned to the main qanat (known as sar-cheshme). The argument can become tangible, when, for example, all twelve houses’ orientations were seen together; courtyards are stretched in different directions, according to the topography.}

Perhaps one the distinctive points of the Iranian courtyard house in comparison to the other courtyard houses is that in serai, courtyard is not a functional space, like a templum,\footnote{it marks and hosts the sacred,\footnote{at the centre of which the pond of water represents the celestial world and reflects the sky. The spacious courtyards may contain interior gardens. These are usually} it marks and hosts the sacred, at the centre of which the pond of water represents the celestial world and reflects the sky. The spacious courtyards may contain interior gardens. These are usually
3.10
House II, Gournd Floor Plan
3.11
House IV, Ground Floor Plan
3.12
Twelve Houses, Crossing
3.13
Twelve Houses, Porticos on the Cross Marks
3.14
18th-Century Plan of a Bathhouse Complex from Iran, Drawn by Mirza Akbar, the Architect of the Qajars
The plan is drawn on a gridded board of cubit module.
3.15
Detail of an Iranian Miniatur, Baburnama or History of Babur (ca. 1590)
This painting is the right half of a double-page composition. It depicts the Mughal emperor Babur superintending the laying-out of the Garden of Fidelity at Kabul in the northern reaches of the Mughal empire, now in Afghanistan. Detail. The Architect is showing the plan of the garden, drawn on the gridded board.
3.16
Top: Underground Water Channel Map of Tehran (Die Qanate der Stadt Teheran), Detail
The qanat line which passes under the House X is marked as XVII.

3.17
Bottom: Site plan of the House VIII on Tehran 1:2000 Map

SPACES OF RESISTANCE
3.18
Twelve Houses, Geographical Orientation
richly paved with stone or tiles, and lushly planted. Walkways, often raised above ground level, divide the planted areas, in four quarters; this dividing pattern is common in the Persian Gardens.

Inhabitable spaces are geometrically defined as a thickened border of the courtyard; series of chambers run along each side, at the centre of each located a large portico, with an exceptional high or domed roof. In small lots sometimes, rooms are placed in three or two sides of the courtyard and the other sides meet the enclosing wall. Though, even in these cases, the cross axes have been always emphasised by having arched recesses on four sides (House II, VIII and XII). The chambers are raised some three steps above the courtyard, separating the living space from the void. These rooms can be used interchangeably and can host various activities. The use of space follows a seasonal pattern; for example, during the summertime rooms on the south or west sides are used as sleeping-rooms while in winter is the opposite. The largest room— known as panj-dari (literally a room with five doors)—, close to the main entrance, mostly functions as a reception hall for guests (House I, IV, and VII). Walls of the chambers are hollowed out; it makes the mud-brick structure lighter and also provides shelves and storage places for cloths, and home wares. This flexible use of living space is reflected in the absence of cumbersome furniture; only the floor is covered and decorated by a carpet that fits to the proportion of the room. The only façade of the houses is around the courtyard. Windows are emphasised by a 10-centimeter recession from the main level. They follow a three-, five- or seven-partite division, which is framed with richly embellished pediments.

Among the twelve cases, House X has the most varied chambers. Four distinctive rooms have marked out the cruciform axes; to the South-West the main portico (summer hall) is located, on the opposite side, facing to the South, the second portico (winter hall) which functions interchangeably with main portico as the gathering room for the family. Along the eastern side the guest room is places, sided by two rooms serving as kitchen and tea-room,
on the backside of which the oven and storage rooms are. The western side contains the living units; three rooms are placed symmetrically to the short axis of the cross, hosting the daily activities.

As it has been pointed out, there are only two common functional spaces in the house; kitchen (cooking space/oven) and toilets. The function of the kitchen is divided in three spaces serving for preparing, cooking and storing foods; the space for preparation has a central position in the plan of the house (House X, VI, and XII). It is the place that housewife spends most of her time during the day; well-connected to the courtyard and other rooms, while to its back it is sided with the cooking place with a clay oven and storages places. Lavatories are placed close to the entrance points. The utility spaces are places in the second layer around the courtyard, occupying the space between the chambers and the enclosing wall of the house; therefore, they mostly have irregular shapes (House VI, IX). There are mostly lit through small skylight holes in the ceiling.

None of the chambers has direct access to the courtyard; narrow and barrel-vaulted galleries create a network of transitional zones both connecting and separating the chambers. The complexity of this network, that also connects the ground floor to the underground spaces and the rooftop, provides different layers of privacy and publicity associated with each space. Each group of daily activity can have their internal access without intersecting the others. Thus the inhabitable units and the courtyards gain relative autonomy that enables the possibility to attribute private and public functions to the space. Later this feature is adapted to the promoted Islamic or Zoroastrian life. In fact the persistence of serai is not only the result of environmental adaptability, but also it is a type, capable to conduct a rule. It encompasses a certain form-of-life through architectural form, deliberately planned and constructed.

The plan of the House VII can illustrate a distinctive example of these transitional spaces. Although the house can be described as an introverted

Fig. 3.20
3.19
House X, Ground Floor Plan
3.20
House VII, Ground Floor Plan
compound, but in fact it has formed along a larger urban network; two seemingly blind alleys that end at two entrances, shape an interconnected circulation system. Indeed the house plays a significant role as node in the collective space of the neighbourhood; while through the sequential spaces and bended galleries it provides security and control, it redirect and extend the urban network to the internal courtyards and connected to the rooftop of the house.

Certain rules govern the structure; it follows a grid whose module corresponded to the ancient cubits. Load-bearing mud-brick walls are set perpendicular to the exterior wall of the house and shape a gridded earthen mass. These walls apply a rhythm to the inhabitable spaces; life is choreographed by sequences of dividers. In some regions, wood or burnt-clay is used that makes the wall thinner. But the most varied part of the structure is the roof, which is shaped according to the environmental necessities. Besides protecting the house, roofs are also living spaces during the summer nights. The connected rooftops create collective spaces that exceed the limits of one dwelling unit. These communal spaces sometimes are produced by the extension of the underground chambers.

Underground rooms or zir-zamin are not common in every house; the process of excavation, construction and insulation is difficult and time-consuming and required professional construction management. However there can be found, unplanned chambers, which are dug out underground of the house after it construction. These tunnel-like spaces usually connect different houses in the neighbourhood together. Sometimes the water channel of the neighbourhood is connected to the zir-zamin, in a form of a carved-out pond or fountain. This space (called hoz-khaneh) is usually a space to preserve cold water and is a gathering place especially during summer days.

In all of the houses the plan implies form of life. It is reduced to a simple diagram that encompasses the lives of the inhabitants, an inhabitable enclosure through which the life proceeds from within and expands to the city.
3.21
Twelve Houses, Inhabitable Walls
same time it is connected to the territory; through specific elements (the water channels, wind-catchers and shading walls), it controls and manages the natural recourses. In the way it sits on the ground it modifies topography (platforms), and finally it covers life by various roof shapes according to the local climatic conditions. Indeed the environmental sensibility of this type is responded though various spatial treatments employed in design of the space in section, however plans is remained the same.

Although the house performs as an enclosed compound, the extensive network of galleries and corridors exceeds the boundary of the unit. In fact the notion of public/private separation is gradually defined by the complexity of this network rather than walls and gates. It thus provides the possibility of a mutual autonomy and interdependence of the type. The courtyard as the epicentre of the space, manifest the transcendental, while the faith is preserved within the enclosure. This relation is conceived as form, which is both shaped and shaping the life of the inhabitants. The architecture of the house escapes from the law of the city, and establishes a dialectic that comes to be manifested collectively through the larger body of mahalleh (neighbourhood). There is pronounces a political significance.

**Mahalleh: the Political Form**

*Mahalleh* has often been translated as neighbourhood, quarter or district. However the meaning exceeds these translations. Etymologically it is an Arabic term, the feminine form of word, *maball* meaning a place or place-ness. *Mahalleh* connotes a ‘sense of belonging’, affirming a relationship between the inhabitants and the city. Although *serai* itself was an urban type but it was only through *mahalleh* that a citizenship can establish. It provides a spatial and ideological framework for individual in the city, a physical space to foster socio-political interaction.

*Mahalleh* is an ancient and ubiquitous phenomenon in Iran; the 8th century
3.22
Serai, Agglomeration in the Old Mahalleh of Yazd
The dead-end alleys of the mahalled are connected together through the internal galleries and corridors of the houses.
plans of the City of Peace (Baghdad) included provisions for individual quarters, each of which was to have a bazaar and workshops for its needs. Quarters were not divided according to social status; each was a microcosm with rich and poor living alongside one another and sharing temples, fountains, bathhouses, ovens, and markets. In the Sassanid or the early Islamic cities *mahalleb* occupied just a single street, or was formed by relatively small, usually homogeneous communities bound by common religious, ethnic or occupational ties, mostly transplanted and settled by the central power. Indeed, at the beginning, they had a strong feeling of group solidarity with reciprocal duties and obligations, not only because of their common status but more due to the external forces that bound them together. Gradually these permanent settlements became part of the official administrative body of the city and claimed their autonomy within the formal structure of the city. After the Middle Ages, by the decline of the walled cities, *mahalleb* became an eventual urban form, which embodied the political life within its structure.

Typically urban studies portray *mahalleb* as social components rather than spatial units. However historical accounts are explicit in describing the formal aspects of these structures; *mahallehs* were rather characterised by their limits. Originally they did not have a centre but borders. In AD 1052 Nasser Khosrow, who travelled across the central Asia, describes the urban structure of Isfahan, mentioning that all the *mahallehs* in the city has walls and gates. They were indeed cities within a city. These limits of the *mahalleb* were carefully documented in the maps of the cities especially in Qajar era. Maps of Tehran (AD 1857) or Tabriz (AD 1880) are two examples of these documents.

Scholars often read the structure of these *mahalleb* as a result of an “organic” process. Manu P. Sobti, an Islamic Architecture historian, writes “since these cities grew largely by the process of unlegislated, organic accretion within delineated boundaries, incoming populations continually built on available pockets of land in specific sectors, appreciably increasing

![Fig. 3.23](image-url)
the urban density.” He further explains that the incoming populations came to reside within *mahallehs* “in close proximity to or with members of their own clan, extended families, community, or ethnic group.” This process created informal settlements that demonstrated a varied mix of house types. Migrant population settling in new cities accommodated themselves by building dwelling types and structures largely based on memories of their hometown. This implies emergence of *mahalleh* as a later phenomenon in the development of the cities, however clear examples of the Sassanid or the early Islamic cities that shows these residential quarters are planned together with the city at once. In fact, it can be said that ideally *mahallehs* are planned as a physical and political frameworks by the central government as autonomous compounds holding a dialectical relation with the power of the state. Indeed there were administrative and spatial means of control that allowed central power to control and, even tame, possible turmoil of the city.

*Mahalleh* was traditionally considered by the state authorities as an administrative and taxation unit, and had a headman, a council and, in periods of social tension, its own defence unit. Tax calculated differently for each quarter; usually minorities and tradesmen in each historical period had to pay more to the central authority, but there were always exceptions for the royal families. Tax collection was one the main tasks of the police, organised by the lieutenant (*darogha*) of the city who was directly assigned by the governor. However the internal security of the *mahallehs* was provided by the local associations, known as *pahlavans* or *lutis*. They were de facto leaders of the community, usually supported by the religious leader or the headman of the quarter. They were trustees who voluntarily assumed protection of the *mahallehs* by patrolling the streets at night or at the moment of any tension. They also undertook the maintenance and preservation of the public morality, the education of poor and orphaned children, and collection of donation from the rich families of the district to distribute to the poor. Usually central government had supervision over the activities of the *lutis* but sometimes it
3.23
Tehran, Map of 1857 (August Krziz)
Four Mahallehs of Sangelaj, Oudlojan, Chalemeydan, Bazaar and the walled royal quarter (Arg) are outlined on the map.
3.24
Tabriz (Tauris), La Carte de Tauris. Pendant la Revolution (1908)
seemed that city suffered from two parallel central police and local groups led by lutis. However the most visible side of such conflicts was in the moment of political movement and social mobilisation. Iranian notables and political activists often supported lutis to run local riots and the spontaneous demonstration in the scale of a maballeh which could escalate into a battle, as a normal political weapon to settle disputes or to attain particular political objectives.

These acts ultimately resonated in a larger scale of the Constitutional Revolution in the late 19th century in Iran. Historical evidences confirm distinctive role of maballeh as resistant urban units that performed as political structures. At the dawn of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran, Tabriz, the second capital of the Qajars, was the focal point of the struggle between the central government (royalists) and the revolutionists (constitutionalists).

In a valuable map of the city, titled le Carte de Tauris, Pendant la Revolution and dated as 27 September 1908, Tabriz is illustrated as a battlefield between the two groups; frontlines of the war is drawn carefully in red lines highlighting temporary bastions, strategic routes and buildings. Moreover residential areas, which sided with either force, are marked in two colours. These lines are exactly adjusted to the borders of the maballehs. In fact examples of this kind suggest that maballeh, especially during the Qajar period (1785-1925), was not only merely agglomeration of the courtyard houses of a tribe or religious section, indeed it was precisely an urban form that capable to hold ideological tensions that sustain possibility of political movements and resistance within the formal structure of the city.

Resistance of the urban form in maballeh is not simply a result of physical segregation, or an organic process; but perhaps it is rather a political and juridical complexity, which is inherent in the organisation of the space that makes it an undefinable structure. For instance the absence of the state-owned “public space” has been mostly associated with the “informality” of such space, however maballeh characteristically rejects the binary system of
3.25
Isfahan, Channelising the Old Mahalleh, During the Pahlavi Era
Part of the new Ibn-e-Sina Avenue showing the dramatic effect of the bulldozer cutting across the urban grain of the courtyard houses.
public-private ownership, instead comprises a collective dimension, varying in size and proportion of the enclosures and courtyards. The space is owned and maintained by the community, while the houses also host a range of collective activities such as political gatherings and religious festivals.

Dimensions and alignment of the courtyards reveals a hidden grid, adjusted to the topography and the underground water network (qanat lines); Inhabitable spaces are off-set around the perimeter of the courtyards while a cruciform emphasises on the liveable chambers, marking them out from the service rooms and corridors. On the ground floor level, the network of streets (ma’bar), alleys (kucheh), and dead-ends (bon-bast) which seemingly end at the entrance of the houses, are actually connected to the internal circulations of the courtyard houses, in which together shape a larger and much complicated web around the chambers. These spaces not only perform as means of connection but also separating houses or groups of buildings; two parallel layers of the underground chambers and rooftops interconnect these spaces and provide various communal spaces; rooftops were mostly used for the family gathering, sleeping and more private activities, while the underground spaces such as sardab (cellar), boz-khaneh, and zourkhaneh (gym) were mostly used as male spaces, hosting gatherings, and meetings.

In fact mahalleh cannot be read neither as an agglomeration of courtyard houses nor as an extension of urban space. But it rather assumes an inherent logic; a collective architectural form that is planned and constructed deliberately, demonstrating specific spatial configuration through organisation of enclosures: inhabitable walls set around the courtyards bound up by juridical frames, which often get an spatial dimensions as walls, gates, alleys, and corridors. They accommodate individuals (in singular chambers of the caravanserais or mosques), families (in serai) and a community (in mahalleh), providing various possibilities of socio-spatial contract that bind and, at the same time, separate the group from the others. This multi-layered structure, therefore, performs as an autonomous urban form, which sustain an inherent
tension, able to resist and counter the controlling power of the state. The eventual conflicts seldom resulted in massive political projects run by the state; Construction of *meydans*, for example, is one of the most visible spatial demonstrations of such projects. In the late sixteenth-century, in Isfahan, Shah Abbas wiped out the whole central *mahalleh* of the city to build up *Meydan-e Naqsh-e Jahan*; or even in twentieth-century the same strategy was used by Reza Shah when he ordered the demolishing one of the most politically problematic *mahallehs* of Tehran– *Sangelaj*– which later on became the site for the City Central Park; the other districts were channelised by streets and boulevards to tame the mobilised masses. Consequently while historically the tension between the power and the political subjects was held on the border of *mahalleh* however after modernisation process and the project of neutralisation this tension occurs in every dwelling unit.

**Spaces of Resistance**

In the landscape of the Central Asia, or particularly, the larger Iranian Plateau, the original form of life is the *nomadism*. And it is only possible through extensive control and management of the natural forces. In such a condition, what is at stake is to oppose the external forces, and through these constant conflicts, make them productive. For nomads the ideal form of living can only be achieved by having a communal life. The idea of a “common life” seems to have an obvious political meaning. Aristotle defines “communal life” as the response to the political nature of humans (as they desire to live together). The political significance of such a life reveals itself fully when it is in antagonism with stabilising forces of state. Settlement of those nomadic lives, presupposes a land-appropriation, and a land-division that is determined by a broader stable order, applied by state. This order was conducted through both spatial and legal apparatuses: *nomos*, a frame that bounded life to a territory in order to regularised it. It has undergone many
changes in its more than three thousand-year history, while in this transition, the nomads reclaimed their original way of living and habits in the structure of the house.

In the nomadic society, Schmitt writes ‘the shepherd (nomeus) was the typical symbol of rule,’ which stands opposite to the statesman; He rules over the flock with the nourishment through which he regulates their lives. While the statesman does not stand as far above the people he governs; he only tends to, provides for, looks after, takes care of. In this way the shepherd mirrors the image of God and the divine Rule. This relationship indeed sustained in the architecture of the house when the nomadic way of life was hold within the nomos; an inhabitable wall enclosing a central courtyard. It became a complex organism composed of heterogeneous relations, projected onto an architectural layout that hosts and regulates life, through which any formal distinction between the house of gods (temples) and house of city dwellers ceases to exist. Despite the regional diversity the plan stays the same; a diagram that establishes a three-fold relation: it connects the inhabitants (believers/citizens) together, to the sacred (courtyard) and to the state (city).

Whereas the external forces tend to territorialise the life, the house suspends life from the laws. Serai forms a wall of multi-functional chambers around the central courtyard; each room can accommodate a temporary activity in a certain time. In a way there is an internal migration encountered within the formal structure of the house that allows the inhabitants to regulate their life according to the rules. The walls establish an elementary distinction between inside and outside, between the rules and rituals and the orders that govern life. However the nomadic way of life maintains its dialectical opposition to the static forces; it is characterised by constant movement and change, and is unfettered by systems of spatio-temporal organization. Through the spaces of serai, living becomes an act and tends to exceed the boundary of the house and overcome the city. The extensive political projects, especially in the 20th century, that aimed to neutralise the typology somehow confirms the political
significance of *serai*. Both architecture of a single unit and its collective form (*mahalleh*) creates resistant form that could retain the possibility of conflict, creating a dichotomy between order and disorder, stability and *nomadism*, and sovereignty and resistance.
4.1
Construction of the Octagonal Wall of Tehran, December 1867
It is probably taken from the old walls or northern entrance to the Arg, and shows in the distance white tents, crowds and upturned earth..
The advent of the global economy has not only changed ways of life within cities; it has massively impacted how architecture can form, define and appropriate space. Technological developments, new modes of communication and global networks have made contemporary cities boundless fields of urbanisation – amorphous masses whose ‘productivity’ prevails formal aspects of architecture. Historically, cities – as epicentres of political life or citizenship – were defined and shaped by their boundaries and walls. Today, however, the formless fluxes of capital, commodities, people and information characterise the urban condition to a point that city space is seen as interconnected and productive units of inhabitable structures defined by infrastructural interventions. In this sense, architecture of the city, which had been analogon of the sacred world, has lost its transcendental value, thus becoming a generic structure to accommodate its units, or households. This process not only affects the way cities are planned, designed and constructed, but also announces an important socio-political shift: the dissolution of the political community.

Drawing upon Aristotle’s *zoon politikon*, Hannah Arendt highlights that among all human activities, only two are deemed to be political:¹ action (*praxis*) and speech (*lexis*). Referring to the Greek *polis* as the best example in which the political life of citizens was fully practised, Arendt defines the city as the only place that can provide the conditions to be political (to be subject to the law of the *polis*), which means not only living in the city, but also owning...
a space – a private property that harbours and encloses political life. In this sense, citizenship can literally be defined by a wall, without which there might have been “an agglomeration of houses, a town (asty), but not a city, a political community.” In essence, the interior space of the household embodies the essential activities related to the biological life of the inhabitants, while the exterior functions as the boundary between one household and the other. As Arendt explains, “the law originally was identified with this boundary line, which in ancient times was still actually a space, a kind of no man’s land between the private and the public, sheltering and protecting both realms while, at the same time, separating them from each other.” The spatial manifestation of this idea as it relates to the urban form appears in the Greek *nomos* a wall that defines the city but also encloses private property. Carl Schmitt claims that *nomos* is a unique device whose expansion and multiplication can define and produce a house as well as a city. However, Arendt further suggests that a closed space conditions the very possibility of citizenship, which depends on a frame – a wall that binds.

This reading offers an understanding of the city as a form through which the political – that fundamental activity of human life – can be achieved. In this sense, architecture performs as a device that not only delimits the lives of individuals, but enables them to determine the political community. By marking the boundaries of the property as well as the city, architecture defines space. At the same time, the city can be produced and reproduced through its architecture, thus highlighting that the relationship between architecture and the city can no longer be seen as inductive or deductive, but as analogical. Regardless of historical or contemporary conditions (city or urbanisation), this logic opens the possibility of retaining the “political” by addressing the urban form, whose parts “always appear to us as separated and connected at the same time. If one follows this analogy too closely, everything becomes identical; if we avoid it, everything scatters to infinity.” But by judging and possibly revising goals, norms and standards rather than accepting them as
given – while also basing itself on individual autonomy and reinforcing the relationship among subjects, power and territory – architecture can reclaim its own autonomy to make the city a project that enables the possibility of political life to be exercised.

**Two Urban Paradigms**

Throughout history, the holistic concept of the “city as a project” has risen whenever an absolute power in the form of a sovereign state assumes an explicit and operative dimension, and reading a city through its projects means understanding its architecture as an *act* through which political intention is instrumentalised. Comprehending the city as a space of sovereignty has remained a subject of dispute, and the notion of separation, an inherent part of political theology, becomes a fundamental concept that activates when an ideological power attempts to define itself through exclusion. The reasoning for such a political project is twofold: it is first an attempt to dominate the space, and then an act to establish a clear intelligible sovereignty. This idea shapes the very core of Schmitt’s definition of the political as the work of friend–enemy distinction, without which the autonomy of the state cannot be maintained. While according to Schmitt these projects rely on state power, however, they are only productive when they enable counter-projects as opportunities of resistance. The spatial dimension of this dialectical process lies in the moment of conflict when opposing forces collapse and projects are initiated, thus making cities laboratories of projects and counter-projects. Depending on how a space is shaped, organised and holds tension, the architecture of the city constantly produces new confrontations. Approaching the city from a political perspective not only reveals the ways in which cities were historically founded by the sovereign power, but also offers an alternative reading of the reality of cities today. Tehran is one of the best contemporary examples of a city that embodies this tension within its urban form. Indeed
“the recorded history of Iranian architecture [specifically the one of Tehran] is not a story of Iranian architects but rather one of powerful patrons who preserved their glory in architecture and urban form.”

It transcends the manifestation of a sovereign power while remaining deeply rooted in the very ideological basis of the country’s dominant religions – Zoroastrianism and Islam. By reading the city through a cycle of projects and counter-projects, the relationship between its architecture and political power will be exposed as a paradigmatic example in which the architecture of the city performs as a machine charged with the task of not simply framing political subjects (citizens), but enabling an ideological interaction through action and reaction, movement and resistance.

This Schmittian dichotomy of projects and counter-projects is rooted in Hobbes’ political theology, which illustrates the state as an absolute power – a mortal god, whose utmost task is to provide people safety and security. In this first of two models of the city, the sovereign invokes “fear” through conflict to sustain a relationship with subjects. For both Hobbes and Schmitt, the source of political order lies in the “possibility of conflict”. Therefore the need for security and the fear of losing it forces citizens to obey the sovereign entity. In the Hobbesian paradigm, the sovereign state is both the terrifier and protector – a monstrous Leviathan made up of the bodies of its citizens and aggressive when confronted. By holding all juridical, political and social legitimacies, this Leviathan closely resembles the image of God to essentially transform the city into an “earthly paradise”, thus implying a specific configuration through which the political idea of the city is spatialised: here, the idea of the frame (or boundary) is instrumentalised as the core of the projects of the city through which citizens (political subjects) both separate and relate to each other and the urban space. This inherent tension physically realises in the form of inhabitable structures whose nonfigurative monumentality represents the utmost order and performs in relation to political subjects. Thus, in this political model, the very presence of a wall
physically denotes not only tension, but the city and its subjects.

The second urban paradigm emerges with the rise of the modern subject, or man. Here, the role of power is not limited to the process of subjugation but must be seen as a simultaneous project of subjectification and subjugation. As Wallenstein writes, “That power is something productive means that it is always both power over (application of an external force that moulds matter) and power to (the work of shaping a provisional self as a response to external forces); and its operations are always connected to a certain knowledge that is formed of the self.”

In this sense, man can be understood as a “living being”, which highlights what Foucault refers to as “biopower” or “biopolitics”: an entity that no longer surfaces as an aggressive monster with the power of “taking or giving life”, but one that provides the security and safety through the “administration of life”. “The production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power,”17 and it is in fact a productive power whose mechanism of control fundamentally differs from the Leviathan, while they both are rooted in theology.18 In this sense, biopolitics and biopower should not be understood solely in terms of an action that gives form to an amorphous mass, but as a complex of cyclic forces that enables resistance. Therefore the problem of the city – the once-walled, secured and protected space – is the environment where the representation of power is substituted by economy and management, and the idea of urbanisation overtakes the concept of the city. Planning as a political apparatus utilises these forces to manage and therefore govern society. It is this form of management which is expected to guarantee the happiness of society by conducting security and order – not in the traditional sense of power, but by ordering and administrating machines (modern institutions) to maintain political stability through the enhancement of the collective bios, or population.

These two urban paradigms – the Hobbesian Leviathan composed by its subjects, and the Foucauldian biopolitical environment of management – are
4.2
Frontispiece of Leviathan, Drawn by Abraham Bosse

On the top a giant crowned figure is seen emerging from the landscape, clutching a sword and a crosier, beneath a quote from the Book of Job *Non est potestas Super Terram quae Comparetur ei* (There is no power on earth to be compared to him), linking the figure to the monster of that book. In the bottom, the two sides reflect the sword and crosier of the main figure - earthly power on the left and the powers of the church on the right. Each side element reflects the equivalent power - castle to church, crown to mitre, cannon to excommunication, weapons to logic, and the battlefield to the religious courts. The giant holds the symbols of both sides, reflecting the union of secular and spiritual in the sovereign, but the construction of the torso also makes the figure the state.
Proposal for an Administration Machine for the City of Paris. 'The Paperholder', Drawing by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin

The Machine exemplifies a diffused, bureaucratic governmentality opposed to a centralised model of sovereign power.
explicitly visible in the recent history of the city of Tehran; they shape both the urban form and the social structure of the city. As the very example of a contemporary metropolis, Tehran is a unique model whose political projects take shape through spatial devices. This condition opens the possibility of making an alternative reading of the city’s architecture and planning as a laboratory of sovereign ideological power exercised through various projects. And the way of revealing the dynamics of the city is to pinpoint how the possibility of conflict shifted in the representation and management of the city from 1921–50. Understanding conflict through the lens of Schmittian dichotomy – between friendship and enmity, between the sovereignty of the state and the movements that contest legitimacy, between norm and exception, or inclusion and exclusion – reveals that in Tehran, distinct centralised and sovereign political forces – such as the Pahlavi regime – have always approached the city as the symbolic representation of the state’s power. And it is this process of planning and design – the explicit act of political will – that consequently activates counter-forces: both the city and its citizens can resist constraint and being targeted in any ideological or practical framework. Therefore this relationship can be seen as a cycle of forces and counter-forces in which movements and reforms enforce or overcome the dominant urban paradigm, which reacts and transforms in antithetical sequences of politicisation and depoliticisation. These occurrences characterise the image of the city as a manifestation of certain rationale throughout the urban form. As a result, this critique of the city’s modern architecture will not be read as a stylistic approach brought about by European-trained Iranian architects, but rather as an inevitable political apparatus – a project for the city, consciously promoted and supported by the state.

**Tehran, a Political Project**

The political scenery of nineteenth-century Iran can be simply portrayed
by the ‘Great Game’ – a power duel between Britain and Russia, which had major roles in the Iranian political landscape. Due to constant power shifts among these international players, as well as a lack of a centralised, sovereign authority in Iran, Tehran experienced great political instability during the nineteenth century, which resulted in extensive political, military and economic manipulations of the Iranian political system. Further, the actual social and physical structure of the capital city mirrored the internal situation: for more than 200 years, Tehran had not seen a major physical transformation. Increasing European penetration weakened the state and forced the Qajar regime to initiate a series of military, administrative, educational and judicial reforms. From the resulting institutions emerged a new social stratum of intellectuals. It was during the mid-nineteenth century that the fourth Qajar King, Nasser al-Din Shah (reign: 1848-96), realised the urgency of such reforms in built environment of the capital city. His attempt was to bring back the political stability by addressing directly the urban form. Accordingly series of urban projects were initiated by the king since 1860 till the end of the century. An initial survey reveals that the proportion of religious to secular buildings was small. In fact a comparison of the figures given for the “number of mosques built which were recorded in the two censuses of 1852 and 1902 indicates a decline of 32%.” For example the king did not commission the construction of any important mosque, instead more secular and representational architecture such as the new wall of the city and a new meydan.

The New Octagonal Wall of the City

But perhaps the most controversial project was the new wall of the city. While at the same time in most part of the world reforms had happened through opening up the city wall and expanding the cities to productive territories, in Tehran Nasser al-Din Shah enlarged the boundary of the old
4.4

Tehran, Map of 1842, Known as Berezin’s Map.
Il’ya Nikolaevich Berezin, was a Russian Orientalist who traveled to all major Iranian cities in the mid-19th century. The two volumes of his travel accounts represent partly the results of his travels in his early twenties. The major part of his drawings (nearly 300 landscapes and inhabited places, 40 maps of cities and fortresses).
4.5

Meydan-e Touphaneh (Cannon Square), Tehran
Tehran by making an 18km octagonal wall, decorated with 58 spearhead-shaped bastions and pierced by 12 gates. With no threat of outside attack, the capital’s extensive fortification actually marked the manifestation of the Shah’s will and power through architecture. This form was clear, symbolic, and it re-defined the capital’s totality by separating the outside from the enclosed to emphasise the new centre of the city – Meydan-e Toupkhaneh or the Cannon Square, which was shaped by a carved out space surrounded by a chain of identical chambers running along the border of the empty plaza that delineated a public stage for the representation of the royal power. The decision itself was taken on December 1867, through which Tehran became the last city in the modern time that has been ever enclosed within a wall. The octagonal wall was indeed a political project reclaiming the sovereignty of the state through the urban form. The city then became a marked out territory to be named after the King’s power. The wall in fact can be read here not as a mere royal fascination or a military mistake but along with the very concept of the Iranian cities, conceptualised in the idea of paradise, which later appeared in materilisation of medina during the early Islamic period. In this sense, although the binding structure is a neutral device as such, but here, in the historical and ideological context of Iran, the wall clearly connoted a theological idea: an ‘earthly paradise’ ruled by the “Shadow of God”.

Over the next four years, from 1867 to 1871, this ambitious plan was successfully carried out. The old walls, except those of the Arg, were pulled down; the earlier ditch was filled in, and its course became the alignment for wide, new thoroughfares. The interstices of the old gates formed important nodal points in the new city. On the northern side the “new ditch was sited 1872 metres beyond the previous walls, and on the other three sides at a distance of 1545 metres.” A new retaining wall of brick, furnished with bastions and contained within a moat, enclosed an octagonal area four times the size of former walled city. The wall themselves was an interesting blend of innovation and tradition. It was designed and supervised by Alexander
Buhler— a French military instructor at the Dar al-Fonun— based on Vauban’s ‘first system’. Twelve gates, each different in design and attractively decorated in tile-work, pierced this boundary. The positions of five of these gates corresponded to those of the original wall but were located beyond its circumference. They were the Dowlat and Shemiran gates to the north, the Qazvin, Dulab and Shah Abd al-Azim gates to the west, east and south respectively. Seven gates were positioned at the north, south, west and east, and later a thirteenth gate was added on the south side to span the railway between Tehran and Shah Abd al-Azim.

The new form of the city can be read from the plan surveyed by map of Abdal Ghaffar (mapped between 1868–91, published in 1891), which shows an analogous map of Tehran documented during the 20 years of Naseri-ruled Tehran. In fact the some buildings and places had already changed during this process. Therefore certain urban artefacts did not exist as they are recorded. For example, the octagonal wall is drawn as it was originally designed in 1867 and not as the way it was constructed. The map shows a comparatively large and spacious city with an increased proportion of open green areas to built-up sections. At the centre Arg, the walled royal quarter, was surrounded by four residential districts, while these homogeneous labyrinthine mahallehs were punctuated by the mosques, palaces and caravanserais that shaped the backbone of the bazaar and stretched between the two gates of the city.

Through the late nineteenth century reform power no longer took the form of military organisation and war machines; it revealed itself through a presence of new institutions such as police headquarters, a royal bank, a post and telegraph office – all located around the perimeter of the meydan. Yet with the exception of a few buildings, among them the Sepahsalar Mosque and Takyeh Dowlat, these institutions, at first, lacked a cohesive formal language that distinguished them from the traditional architecture of the city; many were in fact hosted in existing buildings. Gradually by increasing the number of these new institutions, especially of those, which were mostly sponsored
4.6
Tehran, The New Octagonal Wall of The City
4.7
Map of 1891, Known as Abdol Ghaffar Map
It is the first map, which shows Tehran within its octagonal wall of 1867.
by European companies, the architecture of Tehran became an amalgamation of European elements and traditional Iranian construction techniques often combined with pre-Islamic decorations. The actual architectural scene of the city between 1896-1921 indeed reflected the declining political power of the Qajar kings after Naser al-Din Shah; with a central autonomous power missing, there was no real opportunity for a strong formal language to emerge in the architecture of the capital city. In fact, in this process of transformation, the most resistant architectural form was the Iranian courtyard house through which city obtained a consistent form.

The map of 1891 is a very crucial document in analysing Tehran’s urban form as a capital city. The city was chosen as the capital in 1786 but it had never performed as more than a military camp until the Naseri period. The very act of framing as a political project not only appears in shaping the octagonal wall of the city but is also to be found in each building component of the city. The frame becomes an “inhabitable structure” when it shapes the living rooms in a courtyard house or prayer hall in a mosque or chamber of a meydan or caravanserai. In fact the inhabitable wall operates as a spatial device that can produce the city through its confined form as well as the architecture that epitomises the same logic of the city. Although this frame is a neutral device since it accommodates life, it becomes a target of political projects through which a form of life has been (re-)produced, protected or controlled. These projects become visible when, for example, in the twentieth century the Pahlavi regime attacked the traditional courtyard houses in order to produce a state-controlled social class: urban-wage-earner. During the 1900’s, Tehran continued to extend northwards steadily absorbing country retreats into its suburbs. The gardens were divided into plots and shaped the pattern of the growth. Just a few years after the process of creating an open city was energetically pursued by Reza Shah who favoured a grid plan based on wide intersecting boulevards and avenues rather than a compact Islamic-Iranian urban form.
4.8

Inhabitable Walls
The Common Architectural Device that Produced all the Urban Typologies of the Old Tehran
Emergence of a New Middle-Class

The early twentieth century greatly impacted the global power balance and also radically influenced the Iranian political system. The First World War, followed by the 1917 October Revolution, fundamentally changed the foreign policies of the countries involved, and the conflict of interests among power blocs hindered global missions, especially in Iran. Moreover, the Constitutional Revolution (1905–11) resulted in the establishment in 1906 of a parliament, empowering nationalist forces to form political parties. The resulting social movement activated Iranian citizens and aimed to address a particular group: the city-dweller. This grassroots movement found its pivotal position in the life of the society, and therefore the city. Streets and public squares of the capital, which were previously used for basic daily life or royal ceremonies, suddenly became public stages for meetings, demonstrations and rallies and set the stage for a major political performance: Reza Khan’s assumption of power as Shah in the February 1921 coup d’état – an era that can ultimately be understood as not only reflective of global political shifts, but also as a marker of Iranian society’s initial steps towards socio-political mobilisation.

The period of Pahlavi I (Reza Shah 1921–41) has been viewed as an historical rupture that imposed a state modernisation project upon an otherwise traditional and religious Iranian society. This era will be seen as part of a wider and more inherent cultural project: the project of modernity. In 1922, Mohammad Taqi Bahar, a leading journalist, poet, scholar and politician of modern Iran, wrote an article in the periodical Now Bahar, that identified the chief deficiency of the reforms as the absence of a modern and viable political principle. He attributed this to the social structure of Iran and the absence of a politically conscious and articulated middle class. For Reza Shah, a way of overcoming a chaotic and charged socio-political situation existed in the extensive project of rationalisation. Under these circumstances the
notion of the political project was not only intended for the manifestation of the sovereign power as a “mortal god” or “shadow of God”, but aimed at shaping a new productive power. By referring to the European models of control, surveillance and policing, Reza Shah employed a scientific method completely different from what had been practised before, which launched based on a comprehensive, country-wide census taken in 1922, a year after he came into power. By 1928, the administrative machinery of the new state was operational and officially known as the Civil Registration Institute. Within a short period of time, new ministries were founded and the civil law was revised. The Shah’s military background as the former commander of the Cossack Brigade helped him to find the fastest and most effective means of intervention throughout the entire country. In fact, the ordering logic of his military training extended into every governmental and societal aspect via administrative apparatuses. The results of these changes were not limited to centralising power and achieving political autonomy; they established a new kind of “social”. Under Reza Shah, the productivity of the political machine was guaranteed by the rising bureaucracy as the main apparatus for controlling and managing a population. The body of the Pahlavi state bore little resemblance to the officials of the Qajar period. “There were no longer princes of royal blood at the head of the various ministries, but educated men of the middle class.” The emergence of a politically conscious society resulted in the shaping of a modern state with all the apparatuses in place. Therefore the need for security was no longer characterised by the Hobbesian notion of the state – the taking or giving life (war) – but as enhancement and administration of the population. Power was exerted through the monitoring of individuals. But as Virno explains, life is controlled and managed to enhance and guarantee the productivity of the system. In this sense biopolitics becomes a privileged form of intervention, which is the condition of possibility for the discovery of the individual in political philosophy as a subject with all his rights and duties. The production of biopolitical bodies was initiated in the
The Building of the Municipality of Tehran.
During Reza Shah, the northern boundary of the Cannon Square (Meydan-e Touphaneh) was demolished, where the building of the Municipality was constructed on the most central location in the city.
4.10
Heads of Departments, Municipality of Tehran, 1925
At the Centre (Number 1) is Karim Agha Bouzarjomehri, the Deputy Mayor of Tehran
project of forming an urban middle-class. But this was not Iran’s only new social group. On 12 December 1922, the fourth parliament enacted the first law regulating civil service in Iran – a project that quantitatively outlined the profile of yet another population by establishing age, nationality, education and character requirements for prospective civil servants. In doing so, the state established a formal framework that shaped these rising social classes for a newly reformed society. Government employees and officials were not princes of royal blood, but they were, with civil servants, the educated men who defined Tehran’s true middle-class, who reclaimed their space in the city.

**A City to Be Tamed**

Among the modern apparatuses that Reza Shah immediately developed and implemented was Tehran’s municipal government, based on the 1930 Law of Municipalities, which gave all of Iran’s cities more economic and executive autonomy than ever before. City revenues could be spent on local improvements including maintenance management and most importantly, architectural projects and construction development for town planning and design.

After the coup of 1921 and subsequent change of state, Iranian society was still active and unstable. Revolutionists who did not achieve every goal of the Constitutional Revolution tried to stabilise political parties in parliament. Islamic fundamentalists played a traditional role in society, but their attempt to shape a strong party did not have the majority. The communists and social democrats that had the support of Russian governments were active on a regional scale, mostly in the north and west, but they had not yet established a unified body in the capital. And in the south, local tribal groups under the leadership of Sheikh Khaz’al focused energies on attempts to take over oil extraction sites. However Tehran remained the origin of these country-wide conflicts. Therefore the first plan of the new state was to neutralise the city’s
4.11
Construction of the Ministry of Economical Affairs and Finance on the Site of the Former Qajar Palace
Tehran-Arg, 1939
socio-political tensions by isolating the former centre of power – the Royal Quarter (Arg) – and relocating it to Shemiran, a small town in the north at the foot of the Alborz Mountains outside the walled city. Despite moving the king’s residence to the mountains, most of the administration offices remained in the city, thus marking a new project of the city; the traditional walled and secured urban form that surrounded the centre of power transformed into an amorphous flow of urbanisation that stretched between the mountain and the old Royal Quarter, whose disappearance as Tehran’s centripetal force made once-strict boundaries lose all meaning. With a diminished role to play, the wall was demolished in a process that took almost five years. From 1927–32, the octagonal boundary and gates were destroyed. All the ditches were filled in an effort to reconceptualise the ‘subjectivity’ of the city. Tehran no longer required symbolic representations of religion and power (the reason for the walled city), because it was now completely dependent on its own power of productivity – the mobility of the new capital –, which was enhanced through the new regulations and infrastructural interventions.

In 1930, the local government of Tehran formed a new plan towards a project for Tehran. While the city remained surrounded by its octagonal wall, the wall of the Royal quarter was demolished and circumnavigating roads were enlarged. The remaining corpus of the city was channelled with new boulevards and streets that redirected the tension of the space from the centre, outwards. The north-south axes – Shemiran and Pahlavi Boulevards – were mapped and planned to connect the old city centre to the growing northern quarters that hosted the residence of the king and the royal families. 

Beyond the northern wall, a wide-crossing street later named Shah Reza was constructed to direct traffic flow east and west. Following parliament’s 1933 approval of the ‘Construction and Enlargement Streets and Passageways’ law, these urban interventions were organised into the city’s first government-issued masterplan. Limited to the area within the former wall, the 1937 document put all proposals for the new boulevards and traffic
squares into one plan, and included a series of the detailed recommendations for street adjustments, dimensions and corners for easier car circulation. With the exception of a few major intersections and cross streets, almost every additional road adjusted to fit this original plan.

These new streets not only orchestrated public circulation, but also became the main routes for other infrastructure such as electricity, sewage systems and water. Additionally, they helped to free up congested areas for better accessibility and physically tame the religious and political tensions in the *mahallehs*. For instance, most of *Sangelaj* – a neighbourhood where Reza Shah had lived before taking power – was completely destroyed. In another case, two boulevards were planned to cut through the bazaar. Although the one that crossed through the Friday mosque was never realised, the project’s political intent was made visible in the rapid reconfiguration of Tehran’s urban form. In fact, the plan of 1937 marked the first time the city officially overpassed the wall: streets were drawn as open-ended interventions, and gates were replaced by traffic squares to imply physical motifs of connection and expansion. Ideologically, Tehran was no longer perceived as a city but as a floating piece urbanisation – a project.

The state’s political project was also conducted with construction regulations that were forcefully applied to buildings. The focal point of the new project was housing, aiming to neutralise the old *mahalleh*’s socio-political structure through imposing new urban form. As a result, the typologies of Tehran were radically changed in a shift that directly impacted the city’s social structure. Traditional houses that had been built with access via the narrow labyrinthine passageways, were suddenly exposed to streets flanked by large windows and balconies. Moreover, this project of rationalisation highlighted the fact that the city faced an inevitable contradiction of purpose; the introduction of the urban block assigned different functions to plots, which were then used as quasi-zoning plans. First, every building was numbered and registered. Any new construction was subject to municipality permission...
4.12
Tehran Streets Map (Plan de la Ville Teheran), 1930, Drawn under François de Romeiser
4.13
Tehran Master Plan of 1937
4.14
Shah Reza Avenue (now Enqelob), Detailed Plan of the Blocks and Plots' Adjustment, 1937.
4.15
Shah Reza Avenue (now Enqelab), The New Urban Form
(The Law of 1924). Then, new construction permits were limited to buildings with two or more storeys. Additionally, most of the blocks that faced the main centre streets were required to house glass-fronted commercial space on the ground floor, and three or four residential apartments above. It was precisely this project that made the multi-storey apartment building the single archetype of the new city. An entire mass of urbanisation was shaped and controlled through this structure, which after just a few years, would overtake the courtyard houses to became Tehran's dominant typology.

Following the failure of Iranian neoclassicist architecture during the early years of the Pahlavi I, the state employed the language of modern architecture ‘as an essential part of [its] biopolitical machine,’47 using it to realise the buildings that comprised Reza Shah’s regime of bureaucratic institutions. The architecture of Iranian palaces, congressional mosques and religious schools had historically exhibited the most distinguished and exquisite typologies, but during the Pahlavi I period, the most advanced and luxurious architectural language was used in the design and construction of new institutions, such as the Police Headquarters of Tehran whose detailing, material and above all, scale, were far more advanced than even the Marble Palace of Reza Shah, which was constructed at the same time.48 These monumental objects stood as formal representations of power that performed as devices for administering and enhancing the lives of the population. In essence, they were the biopolitical machines that “intertwined with the ordering and administering of life and with the production of subjectivity.”49 In fact during the 1930s, the rapid reconstruction of these three sites resulted in a country-wide architectural vernacular that later became known as Iranian modernism.50

Between 1934–40, the Post Office Building, Ministry of Information, the Palace of Justice, the Ministry of Economical Affairs and Finance, and Tehran Radio, along with numerous other buildings such as banks and government offices, shaped the new bureaucratic heart of the city that was being built on traces of its royal, ‘Leviathanian’ past. In Tehran, three main areas were
identified as the focal points of Reza Shah’s biopolitical machination – The former Royal Quarter (Arg), the Parade Ground (Meydan-e Mashq) inside the previous boundary of the city, and the University of Tehran campus located just outside the wall – and again, modern architecture was used as the dominant language. Turning the royal quarter, which was very close to the bazaar and two main mosques of the city (Arg Mosque and the Friday Mosque), into an administrative centre allowed the state’s power to manifest through built forms whilst maintaining an overall surveillance on the city’s social activities. The other half of the administrative centre was planned and constructed on the former Qajar’s parade ground, Meydan-e Mashq, which was home to the military warehouse and soldier barracks. The architectural vocabulary and proportions of these grounds followed typical Iranian meydans that included Naqsh-e Jahan in Isfahan and Toupkhaneh in Tehran. But because of Meydan-e Mashq’s limited services and public inaccessibility, Reza Shah ordered the building and its surroundings to be reconstructed. Over the course of nearly two decades (1934–53), numerous buildings were erected: the Military Barracks, the Post and Telegraph Headquarters, Iran National Museum, the Ministry of War, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Police Headquarters, the Officers’ Club, and the Sepah Bank. Their architectural forms essentially followed the same style as the Arg complex, and they became prototypical examples for other private or governmental construction projects.

But the military base made up just one aspect of city-wide rationalisation. Due to the 1921 educational reform, which prompted the Ministry of Education to reorganise into an efficient, centralised entity with complete authority over all phases of the country’s education, Iran’s private schools, academies and technical institutions multiplied. The most notable achievement was the 1935 establishment of the state-funded University of Tehran under the influential minister Asghar Hekmat. The architects Mohsen Foroughi, Maxime Siroux, Roland Dubrule and Andre Godard collaborated on the design for the general campus plan. In 1935, Foroughi and Siroux
4.16
New Crossing and Traffic Squares (College Crossing), Tehran
4.17
Multi-Storey Apartment Building and the New Street Scene of Tehran (Laleh-Zar Street)
4.18

Growth of the City towards the Alborz Mountains
designed the first two buildings – the faculties of medicine and technology, which became prototypical examples for the university’s other departments. Along with overseeing most of the design and construction of all university buildings, this group of architects also re-established the new colloquium of the School of Architecture under the French model. In fact, during a short period from 1935–1940, the campus of the University of Tehran became a museum of Iranian modern architecture supported and promoted both by the state and through architectural education.

However, due to the oppressive political atmosphere that surmounted during Reza Shah’s final years of rule (1937–38), students and professors developed Marxist leanings. And despite the state’s immense social control, the university remained active as a Trojan horse within the state apparatus. In fact, through the encampment of the middle-class subject, the University of Tehran, which had originally been planned as the beating heart of the state’s biopolitical machine, ended up generating its own counter-forces, which would fully realise during the 1953 socio-political movement and later mark pivotal revolutionary moments in the late 1970s.

**Housing the Conflicts**

While the Pahlavi I state administered the project on the city, its power, which was conducted through various methods of social control and policing, inevitably faced resistance that was emerging from within the city structure. The new middle-class, born as a result of late nineteenth-century reformation programmes, found its position in the city, reclaimed a spatial dimension of Tehran and constructed a civil political community. Although the Pahlavi’s extensive political project succeeded in neutralising the dispersed tensions of the Qajar era and unifying the country, the administration provided an opportunity for the emerging bourgeois to actively involve itself in the biopolitical state. The same graduated students, intellectuals, officers and civil
servants who had been ‘generated’ by the state project, became constituents in a new power system of resistance. These citizens occupied their place as land and private-property owners during the city’s expansion and played a counter-role in the state’s productive machinations. If at the beginning of the century the socio-political tension was inherent in the borders of each maballeh, after the neutralisation project by Reza Shah, it existed on the border of each plot. Although the grid is supposed to tame the city, but in fact, it multiplied the resistance. As Foucault describes it, “while the human subject is placed in relations of production and of signification, he is equally placed in power relations that are very complex.” In this sense, biopower produces the counter-forces essential to sustaining antagonistic relations. The life of each opponent depends on the existence of the other.

During the 1940s, the new subjects, the urban middle-class, began to occupy the city in a project that saw few public appearances, demonstrations and manifestations but succeeded as a spatial strategy that reclaimed Tehran’s political sphere. The middle-class was attracted to the neighbourhoods, jobs and proximity of the city centre. And while the royal family, upper middle-class and foreign ministers had chosen the mountainside for their residences, this group made the city an important location. With the university campus, academic institutions, international offices and businesses all nearby, the area gained relatively high social status compared to other locales. These factors resulted in higher land prices and higher density. Four and five-storey apartments, with ground-floor shops dominated the area in a typology that spread from the Shah Reza Avenue (now, Enqelab Avenue) to Abbas Abad. The specific social order of these first residences, along with the quality of architectural design and use of advanced construction techniques such as reinforced concrete, revitalised the centre, imbuing it with exceptional political and spatial characteristics. But this trend of vibrancy and activity, especially on the university premises, put the state on alert and quickly prompted the next political project: the city centre could not be tamed unless the middle-class
4.19
Workers’ Demonstration, Tehran (ca. 1940)
4.20
Typical Apartment Building of Tehran’s City Centre (1951), Shah Reza Avenue (now Enqelab).
structure was decentralised. In an effort to displace the middle-class onto the fringes of the city, the plan took the shape of mass housing projects directed towards the very groups the state had previously defined. By the mid-1940s, the state had started providing living 'accommodations' to governmental employees and bureaucrats. Because Tehran's core was incapable of housing a large urban project, the project was moved outside. In fact the state tried to capture these social groups into residential camps, which were planned beyond the former octagonal wall of the city. As a result, the project's architecture was reduced to its barest form in order to enclose these political subjects and provide them with the necessities of a biological life.

Besides these site-specific interventions in the east and west, a 7 x 30 m module-grid of small residential plots surrounded the centre, homogenously covering an expanse of land that included the flat areas of the west and southwest as well as the hilly landscape of the north. Despite major infrastructural changes to Tehran’s urban fabric over the past half-century, these grids are still visible in the structure of the city today. Initially the spatial configuration of this new urban module was an absolute representation of the surveillance and policing through planning apparatuses: units were detached, laid out on wide-gridded streets with high levels of visibility. A lack of traditional and religious communal centres neutralised any pre-existing social class prejudice and secularised the very idea of the house, which had originally been the locus of political activity. The plans of these units show that the central void or courtyard was separated from the inhabitable structure, which occupied 60 per cent of the plot and had direct access to the main street. Typically the courtyard was turned into a leftover planted backyard, or a car park accessible from the ground-floor apartment unit. Changes like these eradicated the centrality courtyard houses had once possessed as the main communal places through which distinct units were connected. Eliminating the plots and buildings depoliticised the city’s traditional housing typologies. Thus, the multi-storey apartment became the ideal spatial apparatus for not
Map of Tehran and Its Surroundings, 1944
The New Residential Neighbourhoods are Illustrated in Isolated Chuncks Around the City.
4.22
Abbas Abad Street Grid (1956), On the North Side of the Old City Centre
4.23
Typical Single Family House Plans on the 7 by 30- metres Plot- Abbas Abad, Tehran.
only producing specific forms of life, but also controlling society through mechanisms of administration, management and planning.

**400-Unit Housing Project**

The first of these housing projects was planned in the eastern area of Farah Abad, which had not yet experienced the same socio-spatial boost as its northern counterparts due to ongoing factory construction during Reza Shah’s rule. In the first phase of the project, the state’s Mortgage Bank bought land next to the filled ditches and commissioned a group of architects (including Ali Sadeghe, Manouchehr Khorsand, Hossein Sadeghe and Abbas Ajdari) to design and oversee the construction of 400-Units Housing project that were to be known as *Chaharsad Dastgah.* The project was designed based on three housing typologies: single-storey homes featured three rooms (a bedroom, living and dining room), along with a kitchen, storage and courtyard, while two-storey buildings were made up of five rooms: two on the basement floor, which was one metre lower than ground level and therefore received light from the courtyard, and a first-floor level with two bedrooms, a kitchen, storage and a courtyard. The third typology was designed for the one- to five-room apartments that linked up to the courtyard and faced the main streets. The ground-floors of these apartments always contained a street-facing shop. Contrary to the traditional Iranian housing typology, the separation of functions and divided spaces of the new apartment plans imposed a radically new lifestyle. For example, kitchens remained separate from living rooms and often combined with storage spaces or bathrooms. In fact the Iranian woman’s role as a housewife, which had been central to the spatial dynamism of a home, became marginalised in these new typologies. Previously, all rooms were multifunctional, and living spaces could easily be adapted for different time-based activities throughout the household. The logic of the proposed apartments dictated not only very specific activities, but a certain controlled
family size and lifestyle. The city and houses, which since the mid-1940s had mushroomed in the urban periphery, had been depoliticised through rational planning.

While the previous attempts at mass housing had failed for either financial or political reasons. By the support of the Ghavam’s government, who at the time had the support of leftist parties, especially the Tudeh Party, 400-Units Housing project was completed within 1944-46. It became a prototypical model in design, planning and materialisation of the forthcoming projects. Most of these projects were supplemented by common facilities such as primary schools, post offices, police stations, municipal offices, laundromats or hospitals. Because the projects’ aim was to reduce living conditions to the essential activities of biological life, religious and political spaces, such as mosques or takyeh, had to be neutralised or disappear completely. This attempt was both present in the scale of the masterplan, which would ultimately include more housing projects constructed between 1940–50, and in how these “machines for living” were designed. By 1950’s a state-controlled social and physical barrier of new housing complexes collectively formed the city’s new boundary.

Those housing projects during the 50’s became the nodal points of the social resistance, whose seeds were planted during the political change just after Reza Shah’s abdication in 1941 when the country was occupied by the Allies. Although this condition provided a certain instability in the country’s development mostly due to the economical crisis and sanctions, at the same time, due to lack of a powerful and autonomous state, political activist, especially leftist groups, had a period of relief. After 1946 the state that felt these threats put pressure over the political parties and unions. 1946-1953 was the period of political oppression due to the state’s attack to the political parties especially the Tudeh party but at the same time it caused the mass awareness and mobilisation of the society at large, of which the ultimate moment was July 21 pro-Mossadegh mass demonstration in 1953.
4.24
Master Plan, 400-Unit Housing Project, 1945
4.25
Apartment Typologies, 400-Unit Housing Project, 1945
This eventual rise of the social movement was violently attacked by a CIA-engineered coup in 18-19 August 1953.

**Politics of Urban Form**

During 1921-53, the state attempted to neutralise the socio-political tensions spurred in the early twentieth century by implementing various means of control and surveillance. However as Foucault argues, the nature of the state as a modern power should be understood and analysed as a project of biopower that requires action *and* reaction, control *and* resistance in order to achieve subject formation. With planning as its main device, the state can manage and control the relationships and performance of an urban space. While the subject was instrumental in management, architecture as a biopolitical apparatus continued to play a key role in framing these living scenes; it did not assume the part of ornament or style, but instead functioned as an ordering machine. Therefore emergence of the modern architecture in Tehran during the 1921–53, should not be seen as a co-opted order of the West superimposed on a traditional society, but as a methodical, intentional, specific and political project inherent to the modern state of Iran. Modern architecture, as Wallenstein indicates, as a ‘biopolitical machine, is located at the point where Life and Man appear together in a process of production,’ and resistance comes as an inevitable counter-force of biopower. This moment of resistance is significant due to the fact that the biopolitical machine ‘only works by also breaking down and not working, by producing, at its margins, a resistant but by no means pre-existing multiplicity.” Modern architecture becomes a means through which the cycle of the project and counter-project, control and resistance, management and disarray, planning and chaos, revolve.

It is possible to read the cycle of “project, conflict, and counter-project” in order to understand the dynamism of the active socio-political layers of Tehran. By this logic, the Pahlavi period set forth a series of developments
4.26
Top: Pro-Mosaddegh Rally by University Students, Tehran, March 1953

4.27
Bottom: Anti-U.S. Workers’ Demonstration, Tehran, July 1951
that shaped a self-conscious middle class, which reclaimed its place in the city through housing, institutions and public spaces. These projects can be seen as paradigm shifts that helped shape Tehran’s urban form. The project of neutralising space, initiated by the rise of Reza Shah during the Pahlavi I and continued by his successor Mohammad Reza Shah, destructed the historical and symbolic totality of the city, and as a result, released social resistance: a counter-project was activated when a politicised middle-class began to occupy the city, especially university areas. Following the cycle, however, the state employed a subsequent planning instrument – multi-storey housing on the fringe of the city – and relocated the mobilised masses to Tehran’s periphery. Ironically, it was the displacement of the middle class that in fact unified the citizens; they still bound together a political community, as seen in various Islamist, socialist and nationalist movements between 1953–79. In fact it can be argued that in these projects the very concept of citizenship emerged to shape and drive the mass movements that would ultimately result in urban uprising – the Islamic Revolution of 1979. In fact the notion of a wall goes beyond a separation or division, it establishes a relation; a frame that offers the very possibility of a social contract. In similar ways to the Islamic faithful, the citizen accepts the principles of this social framework and expressed through action. The architecture generates the urban form by making inhabitable enclosures in various scales. It performs as a device that not only delimits the lives of individuals, but enables them to determine the political community: citizenship.

The wall of the city, which once was the emblem of a political power, was re-found in the housing neighbourhoods shaped around the city. In fact this new wall corresponded to the initial idea of an inhabitable border, where the tension is literally held within each apartment. Rather than functioning as a ‘space of appearance’, a political area can become a walled ‘space of concealment’. Tehran became a paradigmatic case of this phenomenon, as collective life has proliferated almost entirely in interiors. Over time, the
household has remained the locus of the conflict; in particular, it is the place where all economic, political, social, theological and class conflicts are first concealed, then deployed. Whether they have taken the form of the original walled city, appear as modernist architectural institutions of control, or transform into divided apartments that form an even newer boundary, all commercial, productive and living activities are confined within the same architectural device – a bare inhabitable structure – which is stretched in every form, throughout the metropolis as a continuous field of urbanisation. It recalls the very idea of *nomos*, a frame that gives resolution to the resistant bodies.
5.1
House of Ayatollah Khomeini, During 1979 Islamic Revolution
His House-Keeper is waiting for him to arrive (January 1979).
When life itself becomes a political project, any distinction between political action and labour, public and private, city and dwelling, ceases to exist. Contemporary bio-capitalism is nothing but the strenuous attempt to parasite and make productive any form of living far beyond the body and the spatial-temporal coordination of its movement, subsuming the whole complexity of relations, affects, desires as crucial driving forces of development.

The most typical domestic activities, traditionally concealed as ‘unproductive’ and ‘servile’ unpaid labour, have become paradigmatic forms of exploitation, to the extent that household management, reproduction, affectivity and care have become, today, the fundamental qualities of the ubiquitous field of labour precarity. In this sense, dwelling itself has been stripped out of its spatial organisations and traditional protective clichés, becoming the most profitable living performance of value production, triggering a progressive hybridisation of the domestic space through a parallel and opposite feminisation of labour and an internal masculinisation of the Existenzminimum. This differentiation indeed is tended to neutralise the life itself. The emergence of such forms of life has progressively eroded the strict division between public and private space, blurring Hannah Arendt’s distinction between work, labour and political action. The city becomes at the same time a continuous field of exteriorised publicity and a sequence of autonomous, privatised interiors.
This way of living stands in opposition to the post-war reconceptualisation of the domestic space when sets of living norms and standards were formulated into spatial codes that prevailed the architecture of the house. Indeed these norms were political apparatuses though which the state power was applied to the life of the citizens. In this mechanism of control, styles replace the living itself and citizenship, with its political commitment, is replaced by social norms and public behaviours.

Tehran is a paradigmatic case of the latter phenomenon, in which collective life proliferates almost entirely in interiors. Commercial, productive and living activities are confined between the same architectural types, which stretch throughout the metropolis as a continuous field of urbanisation. In particular, the house is the place where all the economic, political, social, theological and class conflicts are deployed.

This form of organisation is not entirely new in the Iranian-Islamic city. Its archetype is the medina, an inhabitable wall enclosing an internal space conceived as a ‘terrestrial paradise’. As analogon of the state, the enclosure is a micro-cosmos recapitulating the collective organisation of the political body. Thus, the Iranian house embodies many meaning: it is a theological entity outside history and the mythical foundation of the Islamic state; at the same time it is the engine of production and the theatre of everyday resistance. Michel Foucault, in his famous articles from Tehran during the 1979 revolt, was fascinated by the political power of this duality, which he saw as the original contribution of Shi’ism: the possibility of a religion that gave to its people infinite resources to resist state power. This final chapter will read the dwelling as the theatre and the factory for this ever-present political constituency, for a continuous state of revolution.

In Tehran, during the post-war period, the immediate need for massive reconstruction not only resulted in developing new construction techniques and planning and design processes, but also paved the way for direct and fast implementation of series of political projects. In a way those were
attempts to instrumentalise technology and modern concepts on behalf of particular ideologies to tame the socio-political tensions. This period is mainly characterised by the project of secularisation, at the centre of which was interior architecture and urban form; it not only happened through large scale planning apparatuses, but also initiated in careful engineering of the form of living in domestic spaces, while particular furniture, partitions and accessories was introduced to administer and govern the Iranian society at large.

**Social Movements and the City**

The post-war invasion of Iran inaugurated an interregnum that lasted a full thirteen years. It put an end to the era when the monarch had ruled supreme through his undisputed control of the army, bureaucracy, and court patronage. It began a period when the new monarch continued to hang on too much of the armed forces, but lost control over the bureaucracy and the patronage system. This interregnum lasted until August 1953 when the Shah, through a coup engineered by the Americans and the British, re-established royal authority, and, thereby, recreated his father’s regime and acted as an executive monarch for the next 25 years. In these thirteen years power was not concentrated in one place. On the contrary, it was hotly contested between the royal palace, the cabinet, the parliament, and most importantly the urban masses, organised first by a socialist movement and then by a nationalist one. Indeed the mass, which was mainly constituted of the urban middle-class and working class, formed a major mass threat to the Pahlavi dynasty at this time.

The first real challenge to the notables came from the socialist movements. Within a month of Reza Shah’s abdication, a group of recent graduates from European universities and former political prisoners announced the formation of the Tudeh Party (party of masses). Tudeh had become the party of the masses in more than name; in its first manifesto they claimed, ‘our primary aim is to mobilise the workers, peasants, progressive intellectuals,
5.2
Bottom: Tudeh Party Demonstration, Tehran, in Front of the Parliament (Baharestan)
5.3
Top: Noureddin Kia-Nourin is Speaking in a Tudeh Party Meeting
traders, and craftsmen of Iran.\textsuperscript{78} Besides their political activities in forms of demonstrations and gatherings they rather aimed to train and educate the public, specifically the working and middle-class. Henceforth the discourse of domesticity was at the heart of their political thesis to activate the masses. Within a few years the organisation was published various newspapers, pamphlets and books through which it not only attracted workers and peasants but also drew most of its support from urban wage earners and from the salaried middle class—especially the intelligentsia. Among the members or the sympathizers, were famous writers, artists, politicians and architects. One of the founding members of the Tudeh party was a highly educated architect, Noureddin Kia-Nouri,\textsuperscript{9} who received his PhD from the Faculty of Architecture, Technical University of Aachen in 1939.\textsuperscript{10} In 1940 he returned to Iran and in 1945 together with few other architects he founded the Society of Iranian Architects.\textsuperscript{11} Despite his teaching career at the Faculty of Fine Art in the University of Tehran, and his professional work as an architect, he was a leftist activist. Kia-Nouri was one of the main writers of the official newspaper of the party, Rabbar (leader) and later founded his own weekly periodical Bashar (mankind). In 1946 he married to Maryam Firouz a linguist and political activist, the founder of the Association of Women (the women branch of the Tudeh party).\textsuperscript{12}

Between 1941-49 more than being a pro-Communist organisation, Tudeh shaped the socio-political core of resistance. Through the anti-US positions, the organisation not only succeeded to unify all the leftist groups, but also absorbed parts of the Islamic oppositions.\textsuperscript{13} Indeed that was the main reason the Tudeh in its early years covered the masses. In 4 February 1949, Tudeh was accused of the assassination attempt on the Shah during an annual ceremony to commemorate the founding of the University of Tehran. The party subsequently was banned and all its affiliated organisations were dissolved. Consequently by the support of the Soviet Russia they continued to their underground activities and turned more into a radical opposition
force. This shift became visible in its rather violent approach to the Shah and later central government. Although during this period the intellectual body of the party reduced to few active members and the party was redirected more into a semi-militarised force, but numerous associations, institutes and unions, such as Society of Iranian Architects, Women Association, Youth Association, Institute of Iranian Writers, etc. remained sympathizers to the ideologies of the anti-West resistant forces. In Tehran the party placed its foundation in the social groups—urban wage earners and workers—who, at the time, were accommodated in the new housing projects on the borders of the city.

Camping for the Battle: Post-war Housing Projects in Tehran

One of the main domains of resistance was domestic life. In 1948 three members of the Society of Iranian Architects, Ali Sadeghe, Manouchehr Khorsand and Abbas Ajdari designed the first large scale housing project in Tehran, known as *Chaharsad Dastgah* (400-Unit Housing). Comparing to the traditional Iranian courtyard house typology, they proposed a radically new dwelling type. By allocating different rooms to specific functions, such as bedroom, dining room, living room, etc. the proposal limited the traditional way of living in the house into specific uses. Instead, through its spatial configuration, it aimed at encouraging the inhabitant to ‘go out’ of the house and ‘to occupy’ the city for their socio-political activities. The spatial feature that the architects incorporated in the proposal was a central open space (*meydan*), ought to be the locus of the public activities. Although the 400-Units Housing seemingly followed the international post-war housing typologies, however, by placing it within the socio-political context of Iran, it aimed at a domestic reform to fundamentally generate a mass mobilisation.

Based on the experience of 400-Units Housing project, Mosaddegh government (1951-52), who at the time had full support of Nationalist,
5.4
A Worker’s Wife is Listening to Tudeh Party Speaker, Just Outside Her Window, 20 May 1946
Life Magazine’s original caption tries to condemn both the Tudeh activity and the traditional woman's dress at once.
5.5
Housing Projects Marked on the Map of Tehran, 1958.
The Urban Grids are Superimposed on the Topography and Water Channels of the City.
Leftist, and Islamist groups, launched the largest housing projects of the city. In 1951, after the Law of Land Registration came into force, large plots of land around Tehran came into the possession of government as public property. At the same time the Construction Bank (Bank-e-Sakhtemani) was founded charged with the responsibility of housing construction in Iran. As a first step, the bank allocated, 17,000 small plots of land around Tehran for purpose of accommodating middle-class and working class. Accordingly two housing projects were implemented: Kuy-e Narmak and Kuy-e Nazi Abad.

The lands of the Kuy-e Nazi Abad project were bought by the Bank in 1951. The project is situated to the south west of Tehran between the railway station and the military Qalemorghi Airport and covers an area of nearly 300 hectares. In the first phase, 2,800 building plots of 200 to 600 square metres were allocated for building houses for low-income families. These plots of land, due to the financial situation of their owners, were later subdivided into much smaller plots of 80 metres. As a result the housing units of this area are mainly formed of two room flats including a small store together with limited services. However, at the beginning, the government provided housing for the working class, who were concentrated around the railway station and factories in the south part of the city, in the late 60’s, the second phase of the project started to accommodate the middle-class groups, mainly teachers and railway company employees. 8 Apartment blocks, each one containing between 24 or 32 dwelling units, were constructed. The plan of the units was strictly divided and minimised into the functional cells. A uniform 80 m²-layout was used for all the apartments: each unit had three 3 by 4.5 m-rooms, two of which were the bedrooms and one living room with a balcony attached. Kitchen was an enclosed unit placed between the living room and the bathroom. Parallel to the second phase the Kuy-e Nazi Abad was equipped with the high quality common facilities; construction of an urban park, the first multi-lingual primary school (Farah School), and cultural centres, such as cinemas and theatres (Cinema Sharg, Shahr-e Farang, etc.) totally changed
5.6
Apartment Typology, Kuy-e Nazi Abad, Second Phase
5.7
Top: Master Plan of the Kuy-e Nazi Abad
The plan is developed in phases known as Chaharom-e Aban.

5.8
Right: Master Plan of the Kuy-e Narmak
The Plan includes 100 small meydans, and the residential plots set along the perimete.
the social structure of the neighbourhood. In fact the state, by administering
the social order of the area, aimed to control possible tensions and conflicts
on the border of the city.

In 1951, parallel to the Kuy-e Nazi Abad, Mosaddegh government bought
a large plot of land covering 600 hectares on the Mazandaran Road just outside
on the north-eastern border of the city. On this large area, 8,000 plots of land
between 200 and 500 square metres in area were laid out and on most of these
one-storey villas with small gardens were eventually built. This residential
district has been divided 100 sections, each with open spaces (a meydān) and
equipped with power supply and well water. About a third of this area, that
is 200 hectares has been allocated for administrative buildings and services
as well as main and branch roads connecting sections of the area with one
another. After two years of plot divisions and land allocation the construction
started in 1953. A group of architects headed by Naser Badie and Iraj Moshiri
provided initial designs of four typologies (two main types of single-storey
and double-storey apartments, with 2, 3 or 4 rooms) for the allocated plots.\textsuperscript{19}
The clients were free to choose between the given typologies or to just buy
the plot and build their own house according to the schedule imposed by the
bank. In the later case they had to follow the general construction regulations
provided by the planners. Though, the bank constructed 400 apartments in
the northern part of the area as model houses. In 1961, the population of
this residential district was almost 70,000, while in 1966 it exceeded 90,000.\textsuperscript{20}

One of the main goals of these housing projects was to reform the
traditional role of the housewife. By separating the functions and reducing
the flexibility of the space women were encourage to go outside the house
and to work alongside men. Paradoxically this approach was not only to
criticise the traditional role of the Iranian women in an Islamic society but
also it targeted the new Western role model, promoted officially by the state.
The architecture of the domestic space, in fact was not the only instrument
for this project, it was widely expressed through the leftist media.
OLD TEHERAN FACES THE NEW

The thin vencer of modernity which ambitious Reza Shah, father of Iran's present ruler, daubed onto his capital city of Teheran does not hide the color-ful filth and misery of the Orient. The city sits in glaring sunshine 62 miles south of the Caspian Sea, in full sight of snow-capped Demavend, Iran's highest mountain peak (18,550 feet). The main streets downtown are wide and tree-lined and faced with ornate-fronted buildings. This is the European heart of Iran, which the old shah tried to graft onto his country during his 16 years in power.

But the new culture did not take, except among the rich who make up only a microscopic minority of Teheran's 540,000 people. Most people refuse to live along these wide streets. They huddle in the city's cramped southern sections, near the bazaars where foreign-made products sit side by side with native products made by Iran's miserably paid workers.

Coursing through all the city's streets are the jubes, or open sewage streams, whose muddy waters are used for drinking, washing and cooking. By the jubes, merchants stand and discuss business, housewives gossip and children play. And the depressing poverty, which neither Western-style build-ings nor Oriental color can hide, sits in the streets of Teheran and looks toward an uncertain future.

5.9
Old Teheran Faces the New
In an October 1944 article titled ‘Home and Its Limits in the Modern Age’, published in the Bidari-e Ma –the feminist bi-monthly publication of the Association of Women– contributor Farah Laqa Alavi emphasised the statement that most of women’s traditional responsibilities (such as training children, preparing food, and so on) should now be taken care by the society at large beyond the confined of the home. In step with early Soviet ideology, the main concern of Bidari-e Ma was to get women out of the house.21 Ironically these publications also accused the Pahlavi regime for its so-called Western Modernisation Project, which tried to free Iranian women from traditions.22 In another article in Rahbar the writer claimed that the pro-Western political project of Reza Shah was to follow the 3-K German slogan of ‘Kinder, Küche, Kirche, und Kleid’ (Children, Kitchen, Church, and Clothing),23 and put the Iranian women back in the role model of a ‘Good Housewife’.24 As the movement got closer to the USSR, the promoted image of the woman increasingly resembled a Communist ideal. In an interview published in Bidari-e Ma, Said Nafisi, the Iranian Marxist writer, portrayed Soviet women as open-minded and active in the public sphere. The magazine also reported that despite their simple look and modest outfits, Soviet women possessed a unique beauty that surpassed women of other nations.25 These visible Marxist-leanings, within the context of the global Cold War, was an alarm for the Shah and his American allied which consequently triggered an American counter-project.

Point Four Program for Iran: The American Counter-Project

The post-war architectural scene in Iran can not only be read as part of the extensive development of the country within the global framework of the U.S. Marshall Plan,26 but rather was characterised by the larger project of secularisation and neutralisation which was marked by the CIA–engineered coup of 1953. This intervention was the fruit of a build-up of the U.S.
presence in Iran that had been under way since the Second World War.

After the coup Shah took his full executive power back and strengthened totalitarian state. Since then the involvement of the Americans in the Iranian political scene became more visible. This condition made Iran the best test ground for operation of the largest Americans project in Middle East, known as the President Truman’s Point Four Program. In his inaugural lecture on 20 January 1949, Harry S. Truman described American foreign policy in the terms of four major courses of action. In making the fourth point he said:

“We must embark on a bold, new program for making the benefits of our scientific advancements and industrial progress available for improvement and growth to underdeveloped areas. I believe that we should make available to peace-loving peoples the benefits of our store of technical knowledge in order to help them realize their aspirations for a better life.”

In Iran the program was announced to improve and facilitate Iranian industry, communication, transportation, general services, housing, and labour. The program in Iran was conceived as a continuous rope pulling that country forward. The rope was to be made up of strands of projects, each five years long. These projects would be intertwined to make a single program for the improvement of the life of the people. The financial support of the Point Four in Iran grew rapidly, from a $1.3 million budget in 1951 to $73 million in 1956. According to a 1989 history of U.S.-Iranian relations the Point Four, with more than 300 American and 1,000 Iranian personnel by the mid-1950s, achieved tangible successes in such areas as medicine and agriculture. However, besides the technical assistance and infrastructural developments of the targeted countries, the Point Four Program aimed at a wider socio-political reform of the Iranian society to repulse the spreading Soviet influences in the Middle East and to develop a bio-Capitalist control. In Iran specifically the leaning towards Communism was not anymore a party
politics but it had turned to social movement. The key point in the Point Four project however was changing the way of life in Iran, as it was mentioned in the speech, ‘to assist the people to improve their way of life.’ This ideal life was nothing but the American lifestyle, aiming at neutralising the traditional Iranian life and at the same time to tame the so-called Communist model.

**Reforming the Iranian Domestic Life**

Similar to the Leftist project, the Point Four particularly addressed Iranian women and household organisation as the main target of secularisation. And again the focal point was the realm of architecture; it picked the house, as the finest grain of architecture in the city, through which the life of the citizen is shaped and, at the same time, controlled. Within the reformation of household, the project focused on the role of women as the organisers of the domestic life. While previously the idea and image of a ‘Western way of life’ had attracted only the royal families and limited groups of urban elites, through this project, larger social strata, specifically the working and middle-class, were targeted, while the main objective was to neutralise the society by reforming the life of the subjects. The project extended beyond temporary changes in the Iranian residential space; indeed it was to make long-term household improvements. Henceforth educational programs played an important role in the process of the transformation of the Iranian domestic space.  

The first Point Four assistance to Iranian Home Extension training began in the Fall of 1952 when the Ministry of Education requested help in designing a Home Economics Program for one girls’ school in Tehran. Nothing of the kind existed in Iran, and Point Four understood that ‘its need is keenly felt by Iranian women.’ The task of advising fell to an American teacher, Bernice W. King. As part of the American Home Economics Extension project, King made notes on furnishings, clothing types, care of the sick and family health.
5.10
Old and New, 1955
A Comics in the Iran Municipalities Magazine, Comparing the New Lifestyle to the Old Ways of Living.
She also negotiated the conversion of the girls’ school in Tehran into a teacher-training institute for home economists and home extension agents. By the end of June 1953—only eight months after King accepted her assignment—the pilot school was ready to accept sixty-three teachers for its initial summer session. It was a remarkable beginning in the annals of Point Four program in Iran. Although these developments of the Home Economics gave some rural girls access to better education, and the home extension service provided them with professional opportunities, in fact the program was not a purely technical assistance but rather a political project. It addressed specifically domestic spaces as the core of political mobilisation.

In justification of the project the Iranian society and their way of living was illustrated as ‘isolated’ and ‘old fashion’. Warne the director of the Point Four in Iran writes: ‘in 1952 the people of Iran were peculiarly responsive to a revival of “old-time” religion. It was a concomitant of the retreat in politics to old-style ideals. From morning to night the radio chanted or sang the austere, deep-rhythmmed Mullah prayers or quotations from the Koran. Agitators stimulated the revivals and derived political profit from them.’ For them the (traditional) Iranian way of life that manifested a religious, political and cultural mixture was rather limited by them and declared to be the symptom of ‘backwarded-ness’ and therefore it is subject to change. In other words this notion of backwarded-ness was in fact the ‘resistance’ against the modern modes of control and management, which was inherent in the lives of Iranians and the house was the locus of this form of life. Bernice King, the organiser of the homemaking program reports:

“We proceeded to the school, which was surrounded by the most primitive kouches [alleys] I have seen. Deep down in a large enclosure the building was found ...of equipment, there was nothing in the rooms... There was no ...dining table, cupboard, cabinets. ...or anything else.”
Indeed by rationalising ‘the need for change’, the project aimed to neutralise the household; turning the minimum spatial configuration of the Iranian house (serai), which was able to accommodate bare form of life, into a clockwork machine. It could be fully operative only through specific functional segments and devices (furniture) that regulate life within the interior of the house. The historical role of woman in the house was consequently was casted as housewife who must perform as part of this mechanism; where she could achieve the ultimate happiness only by her better performance.

In addition to the topics of food preparation, spatial arrangement, and the choice of furniture, the Point Four curriculum also addressed the subject of body position, through the ‘Table Service and Etiquette’ portion of the program. In photographs taken by members of the Point Four Division of Education and Training, the disciplined female figures stand out. These females had abandoned ‘mindless routines’ and replaced them with ‘rational habits’, as the American educational reformer John Dewey expressed it. Training included efforts to make Iranian Women rethink their ‘place’ within the home, in a quite literal sense. Every step of women’s activities within the kitchen was recorded. Mopping the floor or cleaning the windows—activities that undoubtedly had existed before—took on new meanings as performed by women dressed in Western attire. The whole program was bound to new environments, garments, furniture, and appliances. Referring to the Charlie Chaplin’s Modern Times, the women became part of the domestic machine without which neither the house nor the women would perform properly. This project in fact tried to neutralise the society by bringing the women back to the house.

The key to success of this American project was not merely to justify the need but to trigger the desire. The idea and image of a Western way of life with its associated technology were firmly established by the late 1950s, when the emulation of this lifestyle was prevalent in most urban settlements of Iran. Iranians lacked the resources for its authentic attainment, but there

Fig. 5.11
Home Economics Course in Tehran
Women are Drinking Tea and Reading Newspaper as a Practice, Adjusting their Bodies to the Furnitures.
was very little question that the urban elite and the ruling hierarchy had set their full attention on overcoming this apparent discrepancy between goals and present means. This situation created full dependency on the American products (furniture, appliances, etc.); the architecture of the houses accordingly reflected these changes.

**New Housing Prototypes**

In the extension of this extensive project, during 60’s, the Plan Organisation in collaboration with Mortgage Bank (Bank-e Rahni) and later the Construction Bank (Bank-e Sakhtemani) developed a manual of Cooperative Housing Typologies to be followed in all public housing project. In addition they published *The Construction Manual of the City of Tehran*, which described all the spatial codes and regulation that a private firm or an individual must follow to get the construction permission. The manual was so exclusive that almost did not leave any other alternative than the ones already proposed by the government. In this manual the housing typologies were categorised according to Iran climate zones and the number of bedrooms. These five main groups of Hot, Hot and Arid, Rainy, Moderate, and Cold outlined the official domestic space, though which major aspects of life aimed to be controlled: management of biological necessities (natural light, water, sewage system), family size (indicated by the number of bedrooms), habits (general layout and the spatial configuration of the units), social behaviours (elimination of any collective space and dissolution of the historical role of the courtyard). Regardless of evident banality of the plans however, their resemblance to the former attempts was rather limited. Even in the way of presentation these models were treated differently than the previous architectural projects (e.g. 400-Units Housing, Kuy-e Nazi Abad, and Kuy-e Narmak). The plans drafted together with furniture and paving patterns. With almost no formal expression or a single exterior view, these interiors implied certain ‘lifestyle’ restricted and
The Five New Housing Prototypes
defined by the spatial order. These prototypes were employed in design and construction of numerous projects during 60’s. In Tehran they developed into mass housing projects such as Kuy-e Farah (middle class housing, 1963-66) and Kuy-e Nohom-e Aban (working class, 1965).

In Kuy-e Farah, two typologies were designed: A duplex urban villa (type A) and flat apartment (type B). In both cases the layout and the arrangement of the furniture were also included. This project in fact was not only to accommodate middle-class but also to cast a particular lifestyle fitting to the ‘new standards’. For example in type A, the urban villa, a small family-size was proposed, a couple with two (or maximum three) children. They were three bedrooms provided on the first floor: one master bedroom with a walking closet and two inter-connected bedrooms furnished with single beds. In this arrangement two of the kids were supposed to be hosted in one room. There was just one bathroom provided for all the members of the family. While such aspects as sleeping and sanitation occupied only a limited space (on the first floor), there was much space allocated to the new ways of living such as sitting room, dinning room, and TV room. The ground floor was included very large, and at the same time, divided spaces; a maid room was placed close to the entrance, lit by an internal patio. Comparing to the proposed family-size, the kitchen, living and dining rooms were over-sized. While in a traditional Iranian house the courtyard had a central role in connecting the inhabitable spaces together and also providing a controlled link to the collective space of the mahalleh, in the typologies provided in Kuy-e Farah the courtyard was reduced to a backyard and not even showed on the plans; it just used to provide a gap between the housing masses to get light and air. Beside the over-sized and –at the same time divided– spaces, which in a way tried to imitate the American-style villas, the peculiarity of the use of furniture in settling the life in the interior space of these houses was quite significant. For example carpet, as the only fixed object in any Iranian inhabitable space, historically was the scale unit to which interior space was fit. In designing the
5.13
Model Interior, Introducing New Furnitures
5.14
Kuy-e Farah Dwelling Unit, Type A, Tehran (1963)
5.15
General Plan of Kuy-e Farah, A Mass Housing Project in Tehran (1963)
5.16
Kuy-e Kan, A Middle-Class Housing Project, Tehran (1960-64)
5.17
Inhabitants of the Kuy-e Kan, Using the Side-Walks a Common Space for Gathering and Eating, 1960's
The reduction of life of the inhabitants into the mechanical manageable performances was also very much apparent in the planning of those projects. Arrays of one or two storey boxes limited the forms of social interactions. Even the previous meydans, used in designing of 400-Housing Units and Kuy-e Narmak, were deliberately eliminated. In one of the largest projects, Kuy-e Kan (1960-64), that was mostly occupied by mostly occupied by middle class families the majority being government employees, the absence of any common space, resulted in using the sidewalks as the gathering place for the inhabitants. By the mid-60's these ever-opposing forces of traditional Islamists, leftist and pro-American royalists to respectively preserve, politicise and neutralise the household domain almost reached to a dead-end; the house, more than ever had become the centre of turbulence and conflict. Rather enhancing the life of the urban population the micro-scale household reform created wider socio-economic gap. The political tension was not only resolved but gradually pushed into underground activities. For Shah the need for a large-scale planning became an emergency while the most trustful allies were still the Americans.

The Emperor’s New Cloth: Tehran Master Plan 1964-68

The second layer of the American project addressed a large-scale reform. During the early years of 1960’s the Kennedy Administration was urging its allies in the third world to carry out necessary reforms in order to stave off popular unrest. This plan in Iran resulted in the Shah’s White Revolution, launched in 1962 that led to a number of reforms the basic purpose of which was to pave the way for a development process geared towards capitalist modes of control. The six tenets of the White Revolution outlined as:
land reform; nationalisation of forest lands; sale of state-owned industrial enterprises to provide interests; profit-sharing in industry; votes for women; the establishment of an Education Corps to go into the villages. Among which the most important were in fact the land reform programme and women’s right to vote. While previously two cores of political resistance were the National Front and the Tudeh Party, however in the post-1953 the role of the Islamists became more pivotal.

These changes intensified social tensions in three major ways. First, they more than quadrupled the combined size of the two classes that had posed the most serious challenge to the Pahlavi regime in the past – the intelligentsia and the urban working class. Their resentments also intensified since they were systematically stripped of organisations that had in one way or another represented them during the interregnum – professional associations, trade unions, independent newspapers, and political parties. At the same time, land reform had undercut the rural notables who for centuries had controlled their peasants and tribesmen. Land reform had instead produced large numbers of independent farmers and landless labourers who could easily become loose political cannons. The White Revolution had been designed to preempt a Red Revolution. Instead, it paved the way for an Islamic Revolution.

Social tensions intensified political radicalism – not only among the intelligentsia and the modern middle class, but also among the clerics and the traditional middle class. In this period the two outstanding figures who were articulating this radicalism were: Ali Shariati, a French-educated social scientist, highly popular among college and high school students; and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who had been exiled after 1963 for accusing the Shah of granting Americans ‘capitulations’. For some, Shariati was the true ideologue of the Islamic Revolution; he was even followed some of the Leftist groups as well as the Islamists. For others, Khomeini was not only the leader of the revolution, but also the jurist who formulated the concept of *Velayat-e Faqih* (Jurist’s Guardianship): the cornerstone of the future Islamic
Republic. The 1979 revolution which has often been labelled fundamentalist in fact, it was a complex combination of nationalism, political populism, and religious radicalism all of which received massive social support from various classes.

The new conflict revealed the sublime dynamics of the city layers. It was a symptom, urging the state to take over and control the rising social groups, especially the Marxists and Islamists (two main opposition groups). The next project on the city was to physically reconfigure the urban form. The 1966 Municipality Act provided, for the first time, a legal framework for the formation of the Urban Planning High Council and for the establishment of Land-Use Planning in the form of comprehensive plans. A series of other laws followed, underpinning new legal and institutional arrangements for the Tehran municipality, allowing the Ministry of Housing and others to work together in managing the growth of the city.43 The most important step taken in planning was the approval of the Tehran Master Plan, whilst the Americans once again got involved in ‘secularisation’ of the city. In 1964, Victor Gruen Associates, the Los Angeles-based-office, and the Abdol-Aziz Farmanfarmaian Association of Tehran, under the direction of the Iranian city planner Fereydun Gaffari, were jointly commissioned to produce the twenty five year phased physical development plan that was legislatively approved in 1968, and soon replicated by other planners for all the major cities of Iran.44 It resembled a linear version of the ideal city diagram on which Gruen elaborated in his book, *The Heart of our Cities.*45 The plan proposes a series of self-sustaining centralities; ten urban nodes, which try to divide the mass into 500000-inhabitant communities connected with a network of highways. The polarised north-south structure of the city, according to the master plan, crossed with an east-west axis: the new extension, which links the sequential city centres.

In retrospect, the master plan revealed the Western training and goal motivations of its designers and the respective governmental clients. A
5.18
The Cellular Metropolis of Tomorrow, Diagrams by Victor Gruen
concern for the traditional urban settlement patterns of this region, correct
environmental fit, and relevance to the indigenous culture of the majority of
the population very rarely were in evidence in any of part of the new plan.
Instead, broad vehicular roadways made great traverses through the existing
fabric, in an attempt to accommodate a mass urban population boom. As a
result, urban real estate prices around these roads rose nearly 250 percent from
1966 to 1971; land speculation rather than social or cultural benefit was the
principal immediate result of the new master plans. A period of speculative
construction boom commenced before the full appraisal of adequately
developed models of relevant planning concepts related to workable
community designs, environmentally adaptive movement systems, culturally
conscious building prototypes, or the availability of material resources. This
rather hasty way of implementation indeed nuanced the state's intentions of
the project to resolve and distribute the socio-political tensions.

One of the key devices that Gruen and Farmanfarmaian employed in re-
creating the 'new' city was the density. Till 1964 there was no law existed relating
to separation ownership in the apartments; the owner of the apartment was
the owner of the land and apartment dwellers were either the land-owners or
the tenants. Since then along developing the master plan, the Municipality of
Tehran issued the Law of Separation of Ownerships in Apartment, through
which the concept of vertical ownership and collective ownership was
legalised. Consequently mid-rise and high-rise residential buildings became
one of the main typologies that the Master Plan actually proposed and the
state visibly supported. In this way, by reducing the footprints of the houses
and detaching them from the space of the city, the spreading tensions ought
to be controlled. According to those guidelines most of the state's housing
projects planned and constructed by using mid-rise and high-rise buildings.
Among them Saman Apartments (1969), Behjat Abad Apartments (1970), Saei
Apartments (1972), and Ekbatan Complex (1975) were notable.
5.19
Top: Tehran Master Plan (1964-68), Urban Centres

5.20
Bottom: Tehran Master Plan, Proposal for Shopping Complex as an Urban Centre
5.21
Tehran Master Plan, A Typical Proposed Urban Form
5.22
Ekbatan Complex, A Middle-Class Housing Project on the Western Border of Tehran (1975)
Housing Revolutionary Subjects

In the late 70’s Tehran mirrored the actual tensions caused by this antagonism in its urban form, in a way the opposite forces coexist and shape the architecture of the city not in a linear process but as superimposition of different cyclic political projects. Thus the possibility of ‘conflicts’ can be seen here, as the very core of the political dynamism of such city that can narrate formal aspects of the city, as once shaped by delineating its borders. No new spatial order replaced the traditional order that had grown from a handcrafted technology of building. This inability to fill the void caused by rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, and secularisation is a commonplace problem confronting all rapidly transforming traditional societies, not only that of Iran; nevertheless, the lack of cultural and spatial relatedness of the new urban environments of Iran to their traditional, existing patterns only fostered alienation and unrest. The historical balance between the movement of the nomadic form of life and the stability of the enclosure was broken. The crack, which had been opened up in the power structure during the 50’s, developed into a mass mobilisation that ultimately resulted in the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The movement incorporated members of more than one class- proletarians, and petty bourgeois. These people, many of whom paid with their lives for their hostility to the Shah’s government, were not organised from abroad, or Marxists, or reactionaries. They were citizens who could no longer tolerate the stifling political atmosphere and the gross inequalities of Iranian urban life.

In the post-war architectural history of Iran the state has been always run the project of secularisation for the sake of neutralising the socio-political tensions. In the Political Theology, Carl Schmitt refers to the nature of the modern state as ‘secularised theological concepts’, he adds ‘not only because of their historical development– in which they were transferred from theology to the theory of the state, whereby, for example, the
Islamic Revolution February 1979
People Occupied an Unfinished Building, Waiting For Ayatollah Khomeini
omnipotent God became the omnipotent lawgiver— but also because of their systematic structure, the recognition of which is necessary for a sociological consideration of these concepts." In this way Schmitt defines secularisation as the man’s new attempt to erect the unlimited domain of security, in a way to don any transcendental faith and makes the ultimate state of happiness by exercising their power. While more than appearing as a ‘killer monster’ the paradigm of this power is shifted towards technical apparatuses and managerial devices through which the life is administered. This reflected in urban form in two radically different scales: domestic interiors and large-scale planning, through which the power tried to tame the form of life of the citizen and control them by applying standard lifestyles. The diffusion of power into the administrative and biopolitical means of control blurred the public appearance of any opposition, the same mechanism brought core of conflict back to the household, in a way once again the house became the ‘space of resistance’. These projects however, enabled counter-forces. Ironically by employing the same method the opposition parties tried to politicise domestic life, in a way both forces targeted house as the epicentre of the tension. The collapse of forces and counter-forces indeed activated a form of life that has paradoxically strengthened for over three decades by its friends and enemies alike. The ever-present possibility of conflict, which once was the core of political theology, has become the permanent state in which the life was hosted.
‘Both state and politics were linked just as indivisibly as polis and politics in Aristotle.’¹ The theory of the state as the core-concept of the political developed at the end of the Middle Ages, during the rise of modern nation-state, when political philosophers like al-Farabi and Hobbes tried to re-theorise the concept of the state as the only legitimate form of political—the sovereign—, able to bring the opposing forces together and to tame the chaos of the wars or a hostile nature. Having full executive and juridical power, sovereign stands over the others. By distinguishing allies and enemies, believers and non-believers, the sovereign asserts his power ‘over matters of faith and doctrine, and if he does not do so, he invites discord.’² To be the sole conductor of law, the sovereign must stand outside the space of law, wherein he indicates the points of its application and suspension, this process inevitably intertwines law with the process of exclusion. It marks the territory of the power through the construction of borders and walls, outside which the life is not protected and defined. Walls here are armouries that act in defence from the external attack to what is kept within, in order to preserve an ideological integrity (faith) against the potential permeations of the rest of humanity and nature, to re-create ‘paradise’ on earth.

This relationship between political theology and urban form immediately conjures up the image of the walled medieval Islamic city — medina — with the palace of the king and the grand mosque placed at the centre. Perhaps within this thesis, perhaps the case of the City of Peace (Baghdad) during
al-Mansur manifests the end of this paradigm, pushing it even further. These walls not only built a clear division between inside and outside, believers and non-believers and the sacred and profane, but, significantly, they formed the residential quarters of the city. This example indeed plays a crucial role within the argument of the thesis through which the focus moves from the wall, as the physical separator, to the domestic space and the practice of life itself. Believers’ Houses were placed within the double-wall of the city, literally delimiting its totality. These inhabitable walls frame the life of the citizens to protect it from external forces and at the same time, are constituted by those who live within the frame. The city epitomizes a membership-without-inclusion; the lives of the citizens place them neither inside nor outside, they are exceptions within the defining-line.\(^3\) Once life is the subject of power, politics becomes biopolitics. And the sovereign enters into an ever-more intimate symbiosis, not only with the jurist but also with the doctor, the scientist, the expert, and the priest.\(^4\)

In this perspective, the camp— as the pure, absolute biopolitical space— will appear as the hidden paradigm of the political space of modernity, in which city and house become indistinguishable, and the possibility of differentiating between the biological body (\(\zoe\)) and the political body (\(\bios\)) ceases to exist. In other words, using Foucauldian terms, the modern men (citizens) whose very politics is at issue in their natural body, and the Aristotelian men as animals whose life as living-beings is at issue in their politics, become one.\(^5\) Hence life has been put into a dialectical relation to power; while power ‘founds itself on the separation between a sphere of bare life and the context of the political life,’\(^6\) it resists every possibility of being neutralised.\(^7\) The house embodies this act of resistance. Paradoxically, in the house, the vertical application of power— that formalises the body of the city— was reversed. While the rule became the way of life (\(habitus\)) and life defined the rule in a dialectical relation, it became spatially manifested through the very tectonic of the city. In this way the architecture fulfills the role of a frame for the dialectical conflict,
deliberately giving rise to a condition of confrontation and separation at the same time, letting life flourish within and beyond it.

The history of Iranian architecture has been framed by a grand narrative of resistance. In fact it is through state-resistance which urban form has put into relation to the power. Whether natural or political forces, the form resists being pervaded by force, instead housing the conflict. Regardless of the ‘advances’ of modernisation, which facilitated the Iranian society with technical means of development, the project was accompanied by particular political intention to neutralise the ‘way of life’. This became evident in the destruction of traditional house-forms, establishing new housing models, and ultimately manipulating the interior space of the house. The house therefore became the epicentre of social movements where, once again, the core of the resistance was placed: ‘camps’ that could accommodate the activated lives of the inhabitants. Rooftops, living rooms, and balconies were not only functioning to protect life from political forces, but in fact, to exclude life from the state-controlled space of the city, in a way the state of exception constituted. The camp, according to Giorgio Agamben, is not an extension of the law like the prison, but rather a space that is extra-territorial to the law—a space where the law is suspended. While the encampment emerges out of the nature-state and moves towards the city, therefore fulfilling a proto-political role, the camp marks the disintegration of society into the state of exception. The domestic space, as a camp, creates a condition in which the division between private and public is suspended. In this way the aforementioned process of neutralisation that guarantees the life of the state, can only be achieved momentarily. As Schmitt insists, neutrality could not be maintained due to the inevitable return of the repressed human inclination toward conflict. Taking the example of European states, he writes ‘Europeans always have wandered from a confliction to a neutral domain, and always the newly won neutral domain has become immediately another arena of struggle, once again necessitating the search for a neutral domain.’ In fact it is precisely
this process of neutralisation (secularisation) that aimed at ‘separating the life from its form,’ activated the life in reclaiming its autonomy. Thus it turned into its counter-project, caught in a cyclic process.

This process is held in place by such conflict, maintaining a state of the ‘antithetical’, which animates history and keeps it ‘alive’. In this sense, conflict produces projects whilst celebrating the differentiation of forces. In moving towards a stability, it produces another conflict in a dialectical manner. The recurring sequence of ‘project, conflict, and counter-project’ is an evolutionary process; it progresses through series of reforms and radical improvements while a hasty interruption is seen to lead toward totalitarianism, revolution, or an absolute disorder. Presupposing an active conception of citizenship, however, affirms the possibility of the sovereign state as ‘human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory.’ The state, as the sovereign entity, constantly performs his authority by being in- and deciding on the exclusion. This is why sovereignty presents itself in Schmitt in the form of a decision on the exception: the decision is not the expression of the will of a subject hierarchically superior to all others, but rather it represents the inscription within the body of the nomos of the exteriority that animates it and gives it meaning.

Faith takes place in situation of struggle. Once the city lost its delineated borders it turned into seamless inhabitable structures. What emerges in this condition is the proliferation of the inherent tension. The sphere of sacred life (domestic space) becomes the epicentres of the power relation, where life constantly resists being neutralised by any power. In such a condition faith becomes the lived subjective commitment to an infinite demand. The Urban form is still not only shaped by these courses of action but also accommodate the antagonism, through their ever changing spatial configuration; it provides possibility of achieving a political form-of-life, vita activa, in a perpetual process. In fact today, as Robin Evans would say, the desire for sanctuary is with us once more.
INTRODUCTION

1. While historically the ultimate aim of a good urban condition was to provide happiness through protection and security, in modern time (after middle ages), an ideal city form is what that enhance the productivity through the mechanism of management and control.

2. It has been widely discussed under categories of Spatial Segregation, Right to the City, and Failure of Modernist Urbanism, etc. For more readings please check the books by urban scholars such as Edward Soja, Seeking Spatial Justice (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); David Harvey, Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution (London: Verso Books, 2012).

3. In the Edgeless Cities, Robert J. Lang characterises our contemporary urban condition, as a new, dispersed and edgeless metropolitan form with low population density and high car dependence. He reads this phenomenon as a direct result of networked society, embraced by interconnected and decentralised economic activities, various means of transportation and high-speed data transmission. He claims that in a market-base society edgeless cities are inevitable urban entities; they spread over the nation, although the general shape is difficult to define because of their lack of definite boundaries. See Robert J. Lang, Edgeless Cities: Exploring the Elusive Metropolis (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003).

4. Massimo Cacciari distinguishes two historical paradigmatic urban forms in relation to the idea of citizens or the subject they host or produce: the Greek polis and Roman civitas. In both examples the idea of citizenship is defined by specific spatial device; in the polis it was through nomos, the wall of the city as well as household, that the citizens of the Greek city were marked and excluded from the other. In civitas (the etymological root of the word city), it was terminus that appears as an active producer of space; by separating the urbs from the pomerium it delimitate the territory where the Roman law (lex) can be applied and the Roman citizenship could be defined. See Massimo Cacciari, la Città (Villa Verucchio: Pazzini Editore, 2009).

5. This logic opens the possibility of retaining the ‘political’ by addressing the urban form, whose
parts, in Agamben’s words, ‘always appear to us as separated and connected at the same time. If one follows this analogy too closely, everything becomes identical; if we avoid it, everything scatters to infinity.’ Giorgio Agamben, *The Signature of all Things: On Method* (New York: Zone Books, 2009), 30.

6. See Aristotle’s *Politics*, Book I.


9. The Greek word for law, *nomos*, derives from nemein, which means to distribute, to possess (what has been distributed), and to dwell. Schmitt adds, ‘it also means division and distribution of what is taken; and finally, utilisation, management, and usage of what has been obtained as a result of the division.’ Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth* (New York: Telos Press, 2006), 351.


11. ‘For the relation of the First Cause (God) to the other existents is like the relation of the king of the excellent city to its other parts.’ Al-Farabi, *ibid*, 237


17. Schmitt, *ibid*.

18. ‘And this kind of dominion, or sovereignty, differeth from sovereignty by institution only in this, that men who choose their sovereign do it for fear of one another, and not of him whom they institute: but in this case, they subject themselves to him they are afraid of. In both cases they do it for fear: which is to be noted by them that hold all such covenants, as proceed from fear of death or violence, void: which, if it were true, no man in any kind of Commonwealth could be obliged to obedience.’ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), 122.

19. Drawing on Foucault, Agamben defines paradigm as a singularity that belongs to a group (*examplar*), but at the same time, it defines the group – ie, an example that produces knowledge through bypassing the dichotomy between the general and the particular.

22. This condition is visible in the Greek gods of each island.
23. Rousseau, *ibid*.

CHAPTER 1

2. This event is briefly described in the Quran (17:1): ‘Glory to (Allah) Who did take His servant for a Journey by night from the Sacred Mosque (Mecca) to the farthest Mosque (Jerusalem), whose precincts We did bless, in order that We might show him some of Our Signs: for He is the One Who heareth and seeth (all things).’
3. “Wall” here does not carry a defensive implication such as fortification; it is an apparatus of separation, which divides the space in order to define it and thus produces space through marked edges.
4. The Essenes were a sect of Judaism founded by the “Teacher of Righteousness” in the mid second century. They believed that theirs was the only true form of Judaism, and separated themselves from the main body of Jews. In *Solomon Temple*, Hamblin and Seely wrote that Essenes ‘believed that the proper authority to officiate in the Temple had been lost when the office of High Priest was taken from the house of Zadok in the crisis leading up to the Maccabean revolt (168–165 BC). Consequently, the Essenes refused to participate in Temple worship under what they saw as the leadership of illegitimate priests, who used an improper calendar and had an inadequate level of cultic purity. Thus, even though the Temple still existed, the Essenes at Qumran viewed their own community as the true Temple, “a House of Holiness for Israel,” and they shaped all their activities to reflect the ritual at the Temple: they prayed each day at the time
of the daily sacrifices, for “prayer rightly offered shall be an acceptable free-will offering.” The Essenes are thus the first Jews to understand that their community...could act as a substitute for the Temple in Jerusalem.” William J. Hamblin and David Rolph Seely, *Solomon Temple, Myth and History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007), 54–55.

5. Neither the morphological category of the Middle Eastern cities nor the fragmented geographical and historical case studies have succeeded in theoretically placing the Islamic city as a formal category within architectural discourse. Regardless of certain valid results of time- or geo-specific case studies, because of the wide differentiated territory taken by scholars as the Islamic Empire, it is nearly impossible to find genuine assumptions that exclusively define the notion of the Islamic city as such.

6. The word paradise (*pairi-daæza*) literally and originally means ‘walled (enclosed) estate’; it insists on the idea of the wall as the ‘divider of space’ when it defines what does or does not belong to the dominant power (the owner). The wall here is not a defensive wall; the word *daæza* is rooted in a verb that means ‘to construct from the earth’ or ‘to be made of clay.’ It divides and separates, and therefore it produces space. The original description of Paradise in the Avesta explicitly illustrates an image of an earthly place. It signifies and has the sense of a dwelling place, defined by an earthen enclosure – the place where one eats and wears clothes, the place that one should live: the city. For more information, see Chapter 2, ‘Spaces of Sovereignty; Persian Garden and the Idea of City’.

7. Only in modern times has ‘medina’ been used to describe a ‘sovereign state.’

8. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt noted, ‘the Greek word for law, *nomos*, derives from *nemain*, which means to distribute, to possess (what has been distributed), and to dwell. The combination of law and hedge in the word *nomos* is quite manifest in a fragment of Heraclitus: *mazusibai chre ton demon hyper tou nomou teichos* [the people should fight for the law as for a wall].’ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 63.

9. The community of faithful (*ummah*), as it is described in the Quran, is the Islamic society that lives under an Islamic state, whose only unifying principle is faith in the Islamic ideology and its political manifestation. This concept is a divine commandment and a definite mission assigned by God, who commands Muslims to be a social totality, the *ummah*. Since the very beginning of the formation of the Islamic state, in a very political move, the concept of the *ummah* was delegated to abandon the relationship to the land, which is in the idea of nation.


11. For example, here is a description of the invasion of the island of Cyprus, noted in al-Baladhuri’s *Fotuh al-Buldan*: ‘In the year 654, however, the Cyprians offered ships as an aid to the
Greeks in an expedition in the sea. Consequently, Muawiyah invaded the Island in the year AD 655 [...] and sent to the island 12,000 men of those whose names were recorded in the register (who therefore received stipends) and erected mosques in it. Moreover, he transplanted from Balabakk a group of men, and erected a city on the island, whose inhabitants were assigned special stipends until the death of Muawiyah.’ Ahmad ibn Yahya al-Baladhuri, *The Origins of the Islamic State*, trans. Philip Khuri Hitti (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916).

12. Several primary sources compose this literary geography. *The History of al-Tabari*, written AD 890–900 by al-Tabari, a Persian scholar and historian who went to Baghdad in order to study under the most prominent scholars of that time, is one of the critical sources because al-Tabari lived in all early Muslim cities, including Kufa, Basra, Wasit, and Baghdad; his descriptions are assumed to be fairly accurate. *Futuh al-Buldan*, or *Book of the Conquests of Lands*, was written in the ninth century by al-Baladhuri, a Persian historian and geographer who was born and lived in Baghdad. The book is interpreted in this research as a critical document because al-Baladhuri recorded the political ideology of the Islamic state in relation to the foundation of cities. It has been translated in English as *The Origins of the Islamic State*. *Kitab al-Buldan*, or *Book of the Countries*, was written in AD 891 by al-Yaqubi, who was a Sunni historian and religious scholar with sympathies towards Shi’a scholarship. He gives a reliable account of Islamic provinces and cities and of many foreign states. *Mu’jam al-Buladan*, or *Dictionary of Countries*, was written in 1228 by Yaqut al-Hamawi, who was Greek, but sold at the age of five as a slave to a Muslim merchant in Baghdad. The book is a literary geography, which covers the history, ethnography, and myths of the Islamic cities investigated here.

13. The term ‘Caliph’ (derived from Arabic *Khaliﬁah*) generally refers to the rulers of the Islamic Empire after Muhammad. They are political successors of the Prophet who executed the Islamic law and managed the life of the Muslim community. In particular, Caliph refers to four successors selected as the rulers of the Islamic community following the death of Muhammad in AD 632. The first four Caliphs were Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali. The issue of Muhammad’s successors is one of the fundamental points of division between Shi’a and Sunni Muslims.

14. The Caliph Umar wished to send troops to those places and to keep guards on the roads. Having summoned Orweh Ibn Uthah, he said, ‘Since the Most High has given us victory, I wish to be master of the road between Amman and Ahwaz that no aid may reach the Persians from thence. You must therefore take soldiers and proceed thither, and build a town large enough for you and all the Muslims with you.’ Ibn Uthah took 116 people with him and set off to go to the place pointed out by the Caliph. Mohammad Jarir al-Tabari and J. P. Brown, Al-Tabari’s Conquest of Persia by the Arabs, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 1, no. 4 (1849): 455.

15. Al-Baladhuri, for example, says of a group of people (possibly Persians) known as the
Asawira, who had accepted Islam and moved to Basra after its foundation, that ‘their khitta were marked out [khuttat, or claimed] for them; then they settled.’ Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1983), 275.


18. In reply, Umar (the second Caliph) ordered Sa’d (his chief commander) to find a more habitable place to which the Muslims could migrate and which they could use for meetings. Sa’d chose al-Anbar, but there they were plagued by flies, and he had to find yet another site. Sa’d sent Hudhayfa and Salman to search for it, and they settled on Kufa. Al-Tabari and Brown, *Al-Tabari’s Conquest of Persia by the Arabs*, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol.1, no. 4 (1849): 455.

19. The origin of this component in fact goes back to the Sassanid architecture of the palaces and temples. Even in the orientation of the mosque-palace complex in the early Islamic cities, they followed the Persian (cosmological) directions, which made them functionally problematic; the direction of qibla in most cases was wrong (i.e., the early mosque of Kufa, the first mosque of Wasit, and the mosque of al-Mansur in Baghdad).

20. The architect was a Persian from Hamadan (Ekbatana), named Rouzbeh, the son of Bozorgmehr. Rouzbeh approached the governor, Sa’d, with the offer to design a palace as well as a great mosque, which he would then join together. Al-Tabari and Brown, *ibid*.


22. Today, these ambitions are the very reason that the Kufa mosque still exists on the same ground. However, the site has been drastically reconstructed. Excepting the alignment of the buildings and the overall dimensions, nothing that can be considered as part of the original plan has survived. What remains of the original mosque almost functions as a series of shrines of Shi’a martyrs from early Islamic periods. Over time, the site lost its original spatial organisation as the city-centre for daily activities, but it has maintained its fundamental role as an active Shi’a political spot in Iraq today.


25. Archetype here is taken as ‘the examples that are neither specific nor general form, but singular formal event that serves to define the possibility of a milieu of forms.’ Pier Vittorio Aureli, *City as Political Form: Four Archetypes of Urban Transformation*, *Architectural Design* 81, no. 1 (2011): 32–37.
26. Two terms have been commonly used by the early Islamic historians: *khitta* and *iqta*. The verb *khatta* is used in descriptions of cities like Kufa and Basra; *aqta’a* is used in describing a more organised system such as that used in Baghdad and Samarra. The difference lies in who makes the decision. *Khatta* denotes the act, by a resident, of claiming and controlling land with the ruler’s permission; if the decision is made by someone else, especially a central authority, then it is *aqta’a*. For an extensive discussion, see Jamel Akbar, Khatta and the territorial structure of early Muslim towns, *Muqarnas* 6 (1989): 22–32.

27. Yaqut relates that when the Prophet came to Medina, he ‘allotted the people the houses and dwellings; and he marked them out (*khatta*). In this case, the Prophet both bestowed and marked out the land for the community of faithful and defined its boundaries.’ Jamel Akbar, *ibid*, 24.

28. This model, for example, is visible in the reconstructed plan of the governor’s palace and the great mosque of Wasit, the third city that was founded in the Mesopotamian land by the Islamic state. It was located in the middle of the other important cities of the time to function as an administrative capital of the Islamic Empire in AD 703. The organisation of Wasit followed that of Basra and Kufa; a mosque-palace was located in the middle of the plan, while the concentric structure ordered the expansions around the core.

29. Grabar has claimed that according to the Quran, the mosque ‘is not necessary a building for the new faith (Islam); it is merely a place which is generally defined as belonging to God.’ In fact a *masjid* (mosque) exists wherever one prays. Oleg Grabar, The Architecture of the Middle Eastern City from Past to Present: The Case of the Mosque, in *Middle Eastern Cities*, ed. Lapidus (Los Angeles: Berkeley, 1969), 26–46.


31. *Iwan* (*ayvan*) here refers to one of the most consistent features of Iranian architecture, which can be traced back to the pre-Islamic architecture of Persia and Mesopotamia. It is a large vaulted hall, which is walled on three sides and connects the courtyard to the exterior or the main hall. Like a triumphal arch, it is mostly associated with the representation of power; its decoration, monumentality, and alignment make it the distinctive part of a building. In the most elaborate plans, iwans are used to emphasize the two main axes of the building. The four-ivan composition therefore appears in most typologies, such as the house, mosque, caravanserai, *madrassa* (religious school), and palace.


33. Caravanserai is a compound Persian word, caravan + *serai*; ‘caravan’ derives from the indo-European root *kara*, which appears in Old Persian as ‘war’ and ‘army,’ while the second part, *serai*, shares its roots with *tra* and *terminus*, meaning ‘boundary.’ The other terms, such as *rabat* or *ribat*

34. The term ‘camp’ derives from the Indo-European verb *kam* or *kamp*, as to ‘bend’. *Ibid*, 207.

35. He was actively involved in advising the ruler’s construction projects, apparently designing some unusual siege engines during his campaigns and his governorship of Tabaristan and also building a palace for himself at Amul, the capital. He was fully aware of the circular Sassanid cities, especially Gur and Darabgird, as mentioned in Christopher I. Beckwith, *The Plan of the City of Peace*, *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* 38 (1984): 143–164.

36. Many scholars, including Creswell, have suggested that the circular plan of the Sassanid cities of Gur (Firouzabad) and Darabgird influenced the plan of Baghdad during al-Mansur.


42. In the Greek and Roman model, the plan defines the totality of the city, while in the Islamic model it is the very archetype that comes first and holds the gene of the city; it expands, extends, and reproduces itself on the territory.

CHAPTER 2

1. In the Islamic text paradise (*Al-Firdaws*) is differentiated from the gardens of heaven while they frequently appear in the whole Quran text as *Jannah* (lit. garden). It has been quoted from the Prophet Muhammad in *Dur al-Manthur* ‘Heaven has hundred levels and among these ranks between the earth and the sky, paradise is the most prosperous place.’ In Quran, paradise occurs two times in the whole text. The first is in *Al-Kahf* (18:107) ‘Lo! Those who believe and do good works, theirs are the Gardens of Paradise for welcome.’ And in the *Al-Mumenoon* (23:8-11) ‘And who are keepers of their pledge and their covenant, and who pay heed to their prayers. These are the heirs, who will inherit paradise. There they will abide.’

2. ‘These are the limits [set by] Allah, and whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger will be admitted by Him to gardens [in Paradise] under which rivers flow, abiding eternally therein;
and that is the great attainment.’ (4:13); ‘Allah has promised to the believers -men and women, Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever, and beautiful mansions in Gardens of Eden. But the greatest bliss is the Good Pleasure of Allah. That is the supreme success.’ (9:72).


6. Xenophon’s Anabasis, Book II, 146.

7. The term Paradise occurs only three times in the New Testament: First in Luke 23:43, ‘And Jesus said to him: Amen I say to you: This day you shall be with me in paradise.’ The second one is in the second Corinthians, St. Paul describing one of his ecstasies tells his readers that he was ‘caught up into paradise’ and the third appearance is in the Apocalypse 2:7, where St. John, receiving in vision a Divine message for the ‘angel of the church of Ephesus’, hears these words: ‘To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God.’ The first two are explicitly associated with the concept of heaven and they apparently replaced the term, however the third occurrence signifies the image of the ‘Garden of Eden’ as it appears in the Book of Genesis.


9. The Islamic way of life is defined based on two main sources of Islamic laws (orders) and the life of the Prophet and his representatives and true companions (rules).

10. For more information on the early Islamic cities and the idea of medina, see the Chapter 1 of this dissertation, ‘Camp of Faith: Medina and the Idea of the Islamic City’.

11. The community of faithful (ummah) is the Islamic society that lives under an Islamic state, whom their only unifying principle is the faith in the Islamic ideology and its political manifestation. This concept is a divine commandment and a definite mission assigned by God, who commands Muslims to be a social totality, the ummah. Since the very beginning of the
formation of the Islamic state, in a very political move, the concept of ummah was delegated to abandon the relationship to the land, which is in the idea of nation. It appears in Quran (21:92) when God addresses the community of faithful. ‘Verily, [O you who believe in Me,] this community of yours is one single community, since I am the Sustainer of you all: worship, then, Me [alone]!’

12. The first Islamic cities were built in the Mesopotamia, which was part of the Sassanid Empire at that time, and not in Arabian Peninsula.


17. During the state of war one of the common ways to conquer cities was to control the upstream of the rivers that served those cities. In Bishapur perhaps one of the reasons that the Sassanid King did not rely on the river to provide water for the city was this strategic purpose. He connected the moat to the river, but he separated the drinking water network from the river stream and constructed an extensive qanat structure.


19. The Achaemenids had a keen interest in horticulture and agriculture. Their administration greatly encouraged the efforts of the satrapies toward innovative practices in agronomy, arboriculture, and irrigation. Numerous varieties of plants were introduced throughout the empire. See Charles D Morris, Xenophon's Oeconomicus, The American Journal of Philology, vol. 1, no. 2 (1880): 169-186.


21. For more information on Pasargadae see David Stronach, The Royal Garden at Pasargadae:


23. Happiness of mankind appears as *šiyāti martyahyā* in the Old Persian. The word *šiyāti* (happiness) appears in Modern Persian as *šãdi*. It is the divine power (the sovereign state, the emperor), which should re-establish this happiness throughout the empire by literally constructing the ‘perfect model’. According to Achaemenid inscriptions, it is the King’s (the emperor’s) duty to restore the lost happiness of mankind. It has been written in Darius’s tomb (*Naqš-i-Rostam*): ‘The great God is Ahura Mazda; who created the earth; who created the sky; who created mankind; who established happiness for mankind; who made Darius the king…’ See Bruce Lincoln, À la recherche du paradis perdu, *History of Religions*, 43 (2003): 139-154.


26. *Hana* means, literally, ‘an old man;’ *Zaurura*, ‘a man broken down by age;’ *Pairichta-khushdra*, ‘one whose seed is dried up.’ These words have acquired the technical meanings of ‘fifty, sixty, and seventy years old.’

27. Patrick Healy, *La Difesa della Natura*, notes for the exhibition organised by F.I.U Amsterdam in 52nd Venice Biennale.


30. ‘Not only later Islamic sources, but also Middle Persian sources attest to the intense interest in the city-building projects of the Persian kings.’ Touraj Daryaee, *Sasanian Persia: The Rise and Fall of an Empire* (New York: I.B.Tauris, 2009), 135.

31. Mainly along the borders of the empire where they were confronting the enemies.

32. In the Seleucid Empire, *'polis’* was the dominant type in the region, whilst during the Parthian period, defensive purposes turned the capital cities into military camps. Therefore, in these eras, economy and war were the organising forces behind the city form: The grid structure of the polis and the position of the citadel by the outer defensive wall, are the most common patterns of (capital) cities.

33. Mohsen Habibi, *Az Shar ta Shahr* or *De la Cite a la Ville: Analyse Historique de la Conception Urbaine et son Aspect Physique*, In Farsi (Tehran: University of Tehran Press, 2003), 28.
34. Habibi, ibid, 31.
37. The city of Takht-e Soleiman (Solomon’s throne), Gur, Darabgird and Ctesiphon are the best examples of this type, spread throughout the empire.
38. Although the circular plan originated in the Parthian period, it was developed and promoted as the ideological model in the Sassanid Empire.
39. ‘This title, often inadequately translated as “Shining Glory”, clearly embodies an Iranian concept of inalienable kingship and God-given charisma.’ Dietrich Huff, *Ancient Iran from the Air*, 86.
41. Dietrich Huff, *Ancient Iran from the Air*, 84.
42. Dietrich Huff, ibid, 85.
43. The ending word -gird, can easily be misunderstood; philologists have long treated this ending not as meaning ‘round’, but as kert or ‘built’: hence Darab-kert (built by Darab or Dara). Dietrich Huff, *ibid*, 104.
45. ‘Khosro I built a series of walls, in a similar fashion to Hadrian’s Wall in northern Britain and the Great Wall of China. The Persian walls, however, were built on the borders of the four sides of the empire. One was built in the northeast, along the Gorgan plain to defend against the Hephthalites, one in the northwest at the Caucasus passes, one to the southeast, and one to the southwest called the ‘wall of the Arabs’ in southwestern Persia.’ Touraj Daryaee, *Sasanian Persia: The Rise and Fall of an Empire* (New York: I.B.Tauris, 2009), 29.
46. The Greek term *nomos* originally refers to demarcation and appropriation; a kind of barrier
that separates. It later appears as synonym for law and order. ‘The nomos in all its uses describes an order of some kind, which differs from other words for “order”, in the connotation that this order is or ought to be regarded as valid and binding by those who live under it. In other words, nomos is a norm both in a descriptive and in a prescriptive sense.’ Martin Ostwald, *Nomos and the Beginnings of the Athenian Democracy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 20.


48. The name of Baghdad is presumably a compound Persian word; Bagh means God and Dad denotes the act of founding. Baghdad then would have signified the city ‘Founded by God’ or the ‘City of God’.

49. ‘This day was chosen by Nowbakht because, at that moment Jupiter (the most fortunate planet) was presided over the birth of Baghdad.’ Charles Wendell, Baghdad: Imago Mundi, in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 2 (1971), 122.

50. He was actively involved in advising the ruler’s construction projects, apparently designing some unusual siege machines during his campaigns and governorship in Tabaristan, and also building a palace for himself at Amul, the capital. He was fully aware of the circular Sassanid cities, especially Gur and Darabgird as mentioned in Christopher I. Beckwith, *ibid*, 143-164.

51. A general assumption out of various accounts that described the foundation of the City of al-Mansur, indicates that Khalid was responsible for the planning of the city, however he was accompanied by a group of architects who were developing design and construction of the buildings. Four frequently mentioned figures are Abd Allad ibn Muhriz, Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, Imran ibn al-Waddah and Shihab ibn Khathir.

52. Many scholars, such as Creswell, have suggested that the circular plan of the Sassanid cities of Gur (firouzabad) and Darabgird influenced the plan of Baghdad during al-Mansur.

53. According to Creswell, the most reliable dimensions of the city is given by Herzfeld, who following al-Yaqubi’s description, suggests a circumference of 20,000 cubits for the Round City. Therefore the diameter of the circle must have been around 6368 cubits or 3300 metres. See Keppel Archibald C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, Part II (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1940), 7-8.

1979), 132.


56. Unlike other city-camps of early Islamic period, which were mostly occupied by the Arab tribes who were transplanted from the main Arabian land, in Baghdad the inhabitants chose to live there voluntarily.


59. A distinctive point about Baghdad, in comparison to the other cities of the time, was the presence of police instead of the army. The police was tasked to take care of the organisation of the city as well as the citizens, not as a militant force but more as a governing body.

60. In the quadrant of houses on the south side, that between the thoroughfares leading respectively to the Basra and Kufa Gates, the Caliph built his great prison called Matbak, standing in the street of the same name, ‘constructing it with well-built walls and solid foundations,’ and until the reign of Mutawakkil, grandson of Harun al-Rashid. This remained the chief prison of Western Baghdad.

61. The cause of the removal of the markets from the arcades is described by al-Tabari: The Emperor of Greece had sent one of his Patricians on an embassy to al-Mansur, and before the envoy was dismissed back to Constantinople, the Caliph ordered his chamberlain Rabi to conduct the Greek over his new capital, namely the Round City, then recently completed. So the envoy was shown over all the new buildings and palaces, and was taken up on the tops of the walls and into the domes above the gateways. At the farewell audience, the Caliph inquired what the Greek had thought of the new city, and he received these words in reply: ‘Verily (said the envoy), I have seen handsome buildings, but I have also seen that thy enemies, O Caliph, are with thee within thy city.’ For explanation he added that the markets within the city walls, being always full of foreign merchants, would become a source of danger, since these foreigners would not only act as spies for carrying information to the enemy, but also being domiciled in the markets, they would have it in their power traitorously to open the city gates at night to their friends outside. Pondering over this answer, the Caliph al-Mansur– as the chronicle says– ordered the markets to be removed to form suburbs outside the various gates. Guy Le Strange, *ibid*, 65-66.

62. The first siege of Baghdad between the troops of al-Amin and al-Ma’mun, who fought for
taking the throne after their father’s death, the walls of the city were demolished. Except some buildings like the Prison and the Great Mosque, most parts of the buildings were abandoned and the city of Baghdad started grow mainly on the East bank of Tigris with new palaces, mosques and institutional buildings. However the life of Abbasid Baghdad came to a dramatic end in 1285 A.D. by the Mongols’ invasion.

63. However at the beginning of the 20th century, due to archaeological explorations, historians and archaeologists confirmed some of the spatial features of the City of Peace, it was mainly through the text that the city has been portrayed. In fact like any other ideal city, the City of Peace, has emerged from the literary accounts. In the way it lived the distinction between the reality and the imaginary disappears and it became an ideal model which even inspired philosophers and thinkers; indeed it was not by chance that al-Farabi completed his most celebrated manifesto on the ‘excellent city’ during his life in Baghdad. See Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Farabi, The Perfect State or Mabadi’ Ara’ Abkal-Madina al-Fadila, Richard Walzer (tr.) (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1985).

64. By extensive use of planning apparatuses and setting up regional institutions such as state-founded caravanserais, diwans and courts, Safavid kings aimed to administer the empire at large.


66. Nevertheless, the very archetype of the Safavid meydan can be placed in the continuation of some distinctive examples just before the formation of the empire. It was built according to a traditional model, which may be traced in historic records showing other meydans, such as Meydan-e-Sa’adat in Qazvin and Sahib-Abad in Tabriz.

67. For example to calculate the distance between two cities the position of the palace or temple (the centre) was taken as the reference point and not the gates of the city.

68. ‘In the Sassanid period the Square is a place where bazaars open up […] this space is not shaped as a ‘planned’ element of the city.’ Mohsen Habibi, ibid, 34.

69. This comprehensive project is comparable to similar urban interventions in Rome by Pope Sixtus V, which had been launched just a few years before.


73. ‘For the relation of the First Cause (God) to the other existents is like the relation of the king of the excellent city to its other parts.’ Al-Farabi, *ibid*, 237.


75. This fact has been challenged recently by discovering new archaeological evidences about the ‘Jiroft Civilization’ in the central Iranian desert. See for example Yousef Majidzadeh, *Jiroft: The Earliest Oriental Civilization* (Tehran: Printing and Publishing organization of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, 2003).


80. ‘When life and politics -s originally divided, and linked together by means of the state of exception that is inhabited by bare life - begin to become one, all life becomes sacred and all politics becomes the exception.’ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 86.

81. ‘A life that cannot be separated from its form is a life for which what is at stake in its way of living is living itself. What does this formulation mean? It defines a life –human life – in which the single ways, acts, and processes of living are never simply facts but always and above all possibilities of life, always and above all power (potenza).’ Giorgio Agamben, *Means without End: Notes on Politics*, Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino (trs.) (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 4-5.


84. In his book, *The Highest Poverty*, Agamben brings an example of the monastic life, where he argues that it is not only the divine rule, which designates the lives of the monks, but also it is precisely the way that these monks live which shapes the monastic rule. The monastery is a house (habitat) that accommodates a particular form of life and, and also it is the way of living (habitatio). Giorgio Agamben, *The Highest Poverty: Monastic Rules and Form-of-Life* (Stanford:
CHAPTER 3

1. The Greek word for law, nomos, derives from nemein, which means to distribute, to possess (what has been distributed), and to dwell. Schmitt adds it also means division and distribution of what is taken; and finally, utilization, management, and usage of what has been obtained as a result of the division. Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth* (New York: Telos Press, 2006), 351.

2. ‘How extraordinary that, in the expansion of nomos from house to the polis, it retained its linguistic relation to the old “house”– it was not called national- or polito-nomy, but eco-nomy.’ Schmitt, *ibid*, 239.


4. One of these historically wrong assumptions is segregation of the genders in a house. According to undeniable examples, introverted and veiled spaces– associated with private life of a family– in the courtyard house existed before Islam, however due to its spatial compatibility with the new faith, these characteristics became emphasised after establishment of Islam.

5. ‘You may see, in some archeological work, the representation of this hut, the representation of this sanctuary: it is the plan of a house, or the plan of a temple. It is the same spirit that one finds again in the Pompeian house. It is the spirit indeed of the Temple of Luxor. There is no such thing as primitive man; there are primitive resources. The idea is constant, in full sway from the beginning.’ Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* (New York: Dover Publication Inc., 1986), 69-70.


8. The focus of this study is the territory of central Asia and Near East, which used to be the living ground for early indo-European tribes. Despite its local sub-terrains, this land, stretched between Himalaya and the Mediterranean Sea, is mostly characterised by semi-arid landscape, with harsh climatic condition. These continuous fields were the birthplace of certain dwelling type, which is broadly named as courtyard house, but significantly different from, for example, Chinese courtyard house or Roman domus.


15. ‘Zoroastrian is a religion which demands to be thoroughly lived; and, being so lived, it could be transmitted faithfully from one generation to the next, upheld, it is true, by a hereditary priesthood, one of the most conservative in the world, but very much the trust and possession also of each individual believer.’ Boyce, *ibid*, 4.

16. The Hebrew word *shekinah* is derived from the verb *shakan* ‘to dwell’ used to described God ‘dwelling’ among Israel in his Temple or Tabernacle (Exod. 25:8, 40:34). Post-biblical Jewish literature began to substitute the word *shekinah*—the ‘dwelling/presence [of God]’—for the name of God, It generally referred to the presence of God in the cloud in the wilderness, the glory that filled the Tabernacle and the Temple, or the glory of God that left the Temple before its destruction in 586 BC (Ezek. 10-11). William J. Hamblin and David R. Seely, *Solomon Temple, Myth and History* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2007), 61.

17. ‘Before I find a place for God, mishkanot (dwelling-places) for the Strong One of Israel.’ Psalm 132:5.

18. *Shekinah* is a feminine noun, and is sometimes understood as a female personification of the divine.

19. For example it is used to describe the house of the believers in paradise: ‘He will forgive for you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow and pleasant dwellings (masakin) in gardens of perpetual residence. That is the great attainment’ (61:12); or describing an earthly condition ‘Say, [O Muhammad], If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings
(masakin) with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and jihad in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people’ (9:24).

20. Hamblin and Seely, ibid, 61.


23. ‘Adjacent to the courtyard, they [Zoroastrian houses] had another room, mostly open which was used for ceremonies and for religious functions. This room was separate from the room with the fire, but had a small hearth in the floor where a fire could be lit if necessary.’ Sanjoy Mazumdar, Control and Cities: some examples from Iran. Master Thesis (Cambridge: MIT, 1981), 193.


26. Zoroastrian houses had a small room, close to the entrance of the house; it was “the place where a woman sat apart during the first days of menses.” Mary Boyce, The Zoroastrian Houses of Yazd. In C. E. Bosworth (ed.), Iran and Islam: In memory of the late Vladimir Minorsky (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971), 139.

27. Boyce, ibid, 128.

28. The internal courtyards, gardens, underground water channels (qanat), wind catchers (badgir) are some of the techniques that had been employed to make the territory liveable.

29. On the original meaning of Paradise, see Chapter 2 of the thesis, ‘Spaces of Sovereignty; Persian Garden and the Idea of City’.


31. ‘In the case of the rural house, expansion of the living space usually takes over parts of the courtyard, diminishing its size and altering its shape. By contrast, the urban courtyard house usually expands vertically, rarely affecting the size or form of the courtyard.’ Nasser O. Rabbat,

33. There were nine houses for the family and friend of Muhammad (*ahl al-bayt*) of unburnt bricks, and had separate spaces (*hujra*) with partitions of palm-branches, daubed with mud; these chambers are named in Quran (9:24) as *masakin*; see Footnote 19.

34. Caetani in *Annali dell’Islam* points out this fact that the people of *portico* (*ashab al-suffa*) were given a temporary roof only, instead of permanent chambers, because Muhammad considered the building as his own private house, and accommodated these faithful followers as a temporary measure, until room could be found for them elsewhere. Leone Caetani, *Annali dell’Islam*, Volume I (Milano: Ulrico Hoepli, 1905), 439.

35. This architectural layout was further used in planning of new mosques, caravanserais, religious schools, hospital, prisons, and typical urban dwellings in the cities. See Chapter 1.


37. ‘Islamic urban organisation is the physical manifestation of the equilibrium between social homogeneity and heterogeneity, in a social system requiring both segregation of domestic life and participation in the economic and religious life of the community. The city characteristically comprises a tripartite system of public, semi-public and private spaces, varying in degree of accessibility and enclosure.’ Guy T. Petherbridge, The house and Society. In G. Michell (ed.), *Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 195.

38. *Iwan* (*ayvan*) here refers to one of the most consistent features of Iranian architecture, which can be traced back to the pre-Islamic architecture of Persia and Mesopotamia. It is a large vaulted hall, which is walled on three sides and connects the courtyard to the exterior or the main hall. Like a triumphal arch, it is mostly associated with the representation of power; its decoration, monumentality, and alignment make it the distinctive part of a building. In the most elaborate plans, *iwans* are used to emphasise the two main axes of the building, *axis mundi*. The *four-iwan* composition therefore appears in most of the typologies such as the house, mosque, caravanserai, madrassa (religious schools), and palaces.

39. These houses are registered in the Documentation Centre of the Iran Heritage Organisation with the name of the owners or the their inhabitants due to the date of registration, however to
simplify the study, here they are indentified by numbers. These examples cover a vast territory with climatic and topographic differences; House VIII, *Firouz Kouhi House* (registration no. 13563) is located in Tehran, by the Alborz Mountains; to the North East, House XI, *Toosi House* (registration no. 5147) is located in the region of Khurasan, city of Torbat Heydariyeh; in the Centre of the territory four houses are located, in the city of Isfahan, House I, *Ghafoori House* (registration no. 1795) and House VI, *Ahmad Zadeh House* (registration no. 7650), in Shareza, House XII, *Ehteshami House* (registration no. 20017) and in Kashan, House IX, *Ehsan House* (registration no. 12325) located on the border of the desert, While to the South and South East, House X, *Lari House* (registration no. 1827) and House VII, *Tehrani House* (registration no. 6562) in Yazd and House IV, *Elhami House* (registration no. 6115) in Kerman, are representing typologies of the Central Desert of Iran; House V, *Haji Mohayya House* (registration no. 1602) is in the city of Shiraz in Southern region; To the South West House II, *Khalilou House* (registration no. 7907) is located in the city of Dezful, in the Delta Region of the Dez River; and finally House III, *Jalilian House* (registration no. 3042) is in the city of Kermanshah, located the mountainous region of the West Iran.

40. Each house has a folder including the legal documents of the ownership, a preliminary report of the physical condition of the building at the time of registration, photos of the house and measured drawings (sometimes very rough).


42. *Templum* has the same connotation as Greek word *temenos*, to cut off. *Templum* was any place, which was circumscribed and separated by the augurs from the rest of the land by a certain solemn formula. See Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, 45-49.

43. In typical courtyard house typology the courtyard is a place of daily activity, where domestic animals are kept and cooking takes place, however in serai, courtyard has a symbolic and allegorical role.

44. The priority is always having a sizable courtyard.

45. Usually there is no bathroom in private houses, each neighbourhood has its own public bathhouses for the daily use of the inhabitants.

46. In House X the stone stairs was added in the later renovation of the house.

47. Although the division of genders in the house has been mostly addressed as influenced by the Islamic tradition however it can be traced as an inherent spatial configuration of the type.

49. The House III and VI have wooden pitched roofs while the House V is roofed with mud-brick domes and the House X has a beam-supported flat roof.

50. After the Middle Ages, four powerful empires— the Timurid, Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal—dominated most of the Islamic world. Due to the extensive power of the state, wars and struggles were held mostly on the borders of the empire or countries and the cities, especially in the middle land, experienced a relative security. Therefore the defensive function of the walls was reduced to marking out the royal quarter instead of the whole administrative body of the city. On the other hand, growth of the economic activities in the cities, attracted seasonal city dwellers around the previously marked out borders of the cities. Gradually these peripheries became temporary residence of the families or relatives of the merchants and dealers, which later became the birthplace of the non-planned quarters. These new mahallehs were usually named after the head of the family or a chief tradesman and sometimes called after the main business of the dwellers.


52. Map of 1858, drawn by August Krziz, depicts Tehran with four main *mahallehs* (Sangelaj, Oudlajan, Chalemeydan and Bazaar) in addition to the walled royal quarter (*Arg*).


56. The whole internal circulations of the courtyard houses are also part of the internal network. Entrance room of the houses are usually open; it often happens that one passing through an alley and found himself/herself in the middle of a courtyard house.

57. *Hoz-Khaneh* is a semi-underground space, literally means a ‘place of fountain’. This space was mostly located at the joining point of the house to the water network; a fountain was placed at the middle of a centric square or hexagonal room. In the larger houses this space was underneath
of the wind-catcher structure, for cooling down the air circulation. *Hoz-khaneh* was mostly used as part of the underground network of the houses as gathering and meeting room in summer.


59. Gary L. Ulmen in his note on the English translation of *The Nomos of the Earth* relates the etymological roots of the words nomos and nomad: ‘*Nemein* means to take, to allot, or to assign. In Old English, the word *niman* meant to take or to seize, while *nemel*, from which the word nimble derives, meant to seize quickly. From the Greek *nomos* and *nemein* derive such English words as economy, antinomy, nomothetic, numismatic, etc. Of particular interest in this context is the derivation of the word nomad, since *nomos*, from the Greek *nome*, meant capturing, grazing, or wandering in search of pasture, which in German is *weiden*.’ Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth*, tr. Gary L. Ulmen (New York: Telos Press Publishing, 2006) 326.

60. Here Schmitt refers to the Plato’s Statesman ‘In Statesman, Plato distinguishes the shepherd from the statesman: the *nemein* of the shepherd is concerned with the nourishment (trophe) of his flock, and the shepherd is a kind of god in relation to the animals he herds.’ Carl Schmitt, *ibid*, 340.


CHAPTER 4


2. Arendt, *ibid*, 64.


4. The Greek word for law, *nomos*, derives from *nemein*, which means to distribute, to possess (what has been distributed), and to dwell. Schmitt adds, ‘it also means division and distribution of what is taken; and finally, utilisation, management, and usage of what has been obtained as a result of the division.’ Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth* (New York: Telos Press, 2006), 351.

5. ‘How extraordinary that, in the expansion of nomos from house to the polis, it retained its linguistic relation to the old “house”— it was not called national- or polito-nomy, but eco-nomy.’
Schmitt, *ibid*, 239.
7. On one hand, the beliefs of a city’s inhabitants can imply specific definitions through which space is conceptualised and how it ultimately materialises by boundaries. On the other hand, architecture itself can enclose and simultaneously identify these subjects by framing, limiting and forming spaces that articulate the political community (citizenship) and relate to the city; by containing the political subjects, architecture makes them eligible for their civil rights.
9. ‘The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy.’ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 26.
11. Drawing on Foucault, Agamben defines paradigm as a singularity that belongs to a group (exemplar), but at the same time, it defines the group – i.e., an example that produces knowledge through bypassing the dichotomy between the general and the particular. Giorgio Agamben, *The Signature of all Things: On Method* (New York: Zone Books, 2009), 18-31.
12. ‘And this kind of dominion, or sovereignty, differeth from sovereignty by institution only in this, that men who choose their sovereign do it for fear of one another, and not of him whom they institute: but in this case, they subject themselves to him they are afraid of. In both cases they do it for fear: which is to be noted by them that hold all such covenants, as proceed from fear of death or violence, void: which, if it were true, no man in any kind of Commonwealth could be obliged to obedience.’ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), 122.
13. The original frontispiece of the *Leviathan*, engraved by Abraham Bosse (1651), illustrates the sovereign (leviathan) as a king whose body is constituted by the bodies of the citizens, who face away from the viewer and go toward the sovereign.
17. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (California: Stanford University
Agamben develops Schmitt's thesis of the political theology as 'all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularised theological concepts', and pushes it further to define both political paradigms in relation to political theology: the Hobbesian paradigm which 'founds the transcendence of sovereign power on the single God', and the Foucauldian paradigm, which 'replaces this transcendence with the idea of an oikonomia conceived as an immanent ordering'. Then he adds, 'political philosophy and the modern theory of sovereignty derive from the first paradigm; modern biopolitics up to the current triumph of economy and government over every other aspect of social life derive from the second paradigm.' Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government* (California: Stanford University Press, 2011), 1.

18. This period is marked by two political events: the military coup by Reza Khan in 1921, which put an end to 140 years of the Qajar dynasty, and the 1951 appointment of Mohammad Mosaddegh as the Prime Minister of Iran who led the first nationalist government and changed the balance of power in the country. He was overthrown by a CIA-engineered coup in favour of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (the second king of Pahlavi dynasty), who took back the power after three years of intense socialists and nationalists movements.


20. The Pahlavi period lasted 54 years, from the coronation of Reza Shah in 1925 until the Islamic Revolution in 1979. This period is divided in two sections commonly known as Pahlavi I (the reign of Reza Shah) and Pahlavi II (the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah). The official beginning of this era is marked by the parliament announcement of the end of the Qajar dynasty followed by the coronation of the Reza Shah, but in 1921 Reza Shah took power by a military coup and from there, the country was in his control.

21. During the second half of the nineteenth century, there was a fundamental change in the Russian and British strategies to establish power over the Persian territory. While previously military conflict was the common form of invasion, during the rule of the Qajar King Nasser al-Din Shah (1848–96), the establishment of the foreign institutions (such as the New East Bank, established by Britain in 1850, or the Persian Cossack Brigade formed in 1879 under the supervision of Russian officers) proved to be a more subtle and manipulative form of attack, which enabled both countries to send missioners and advisors straight to the Iranian Royal Court.

22. Until 1876, Tehran had been enclosed within a wall built in 1553 Shah Tahmasb.
unchanged structure of the city during this period (1553-1876) is depicted in two maps, known as Berezine (1842), and Krziz (1857).

24. The main streets had been widened, Bazaar was extended and roofed, new caravansaries were built and the water supply greatly improved. In addition the area around Sabzeh Meydan (Market Square), at a crucial nodal point close to the southern gate of the Arg and at the main Bazaar entrance, had been transformed and re-planned. There was also massive reconstruction in the Royal Quarter (Arg).


26. The greatest religious complex of his reign – the mosque and the religious school of Sepahsalar - was built by two of his ministers. Even in planning of these institutions more secular elements were employed: the sanctuary of the mosque was planned as a cross, the pond, which traditionally has a rectangular 2:3 shaped, designed as a circle in the middle of a squared-plan.

27. There was no internal enemy likely to attack the capital, and no external enemy for whom such a defence would pose the slightest difficulty, with the more sophisticated artillery available in the second half of the nineteenth century. See John D. Gurney, The Transformation of Tehran in the Later Nineteenth Century. In: Chahriar Adle and Bernard Hourcade (eds) Téhéran Capitale Bicentenaire (Louvain: Diffusion, Editions Peeters, 1992), 54.

28. Hereafter the construction of the wall by the order of the king the city was to be called as the ‘Dar al-Khelafeh-ye Nasseri’.

29. See Chapter 1 and 2.

30. Gurney, ibid, 53.

31. He was an engineer and officer trained at the Paris Polytechnique, who came to Iran in 1855. He gave lessons on fortifications at the technical school in Tehran and was involved in many sieges. See F. Adamiyat, Amir Kabir va Iran (Tehran: Khwarazmi 1975), 290.

32. Mahalleh is originally an Arabic term indicating the characteristic of residential fabric of the (Islamic) Iranian cities. Mostly a mahalleh consists of agglomeration of numbers of courtyard houses, with specific social and religious or even racial structure. Borders of a mahalleh, in fact is not simply an interruption on the fabric by infrastructure but it is rather a juridical border marking the autonomy of an urban entity. See Chapter 3.

33. For example Dar al-Fonun – Tehran’s polytechnic school– was hosted in a former religious
school in the Royal Quarter (Arg), or in another example the Imperial Bank was placed in the boundary of the neydan accommodating the same architectural language and even the same structure.

34. In 1908 the first two parties were founded, under the names of Popular Democrats and Moderate Socialists. The Moderates, who were in the majority, were nominal socialists (and were supported by the Russians), but the party represented the privileged class: the aristocracy, the rich merchants and a few liberal clergy. They favoured gradual and moderate reform. The Democrats, the party befriended by the British, were a revolutionary party and were often accused by their opponents of heresy and atheism. Both parties rearranged themselves during the First World War and changed directions: in 1921 some members of the old democrat and moderate parties formed a new socialist party. Very soon the latter coalition divided in two fractions: a young communist group in the direction of the soviet Russia; the other group, mostly composed of elder members from former parties, was suspicious of both Britain and Russia and labelled themselves as reformists. The reformists were the majority of the fourth parliament in 1923 when Reza Khan established the new dynasty: Pahlavi. See Amin Banani, *The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961).

35. Here the ‘social mobilisation’ particularly addresses a state of political awareness in the Iranian society during 20’s, which has consequently led to ‘social movement’ in the decades after. This period saw the rise of an urban class, mostly consisted of governmental employees, workers, and intelligentsia through which the political life was exercised (action and resistance). Ultimately by absorbing the masses in 40’s and 50’s, it resulted in shaping of mass movements.

36. In Max Weber’s theory, the project of modernity is characterised in terms of ‘the separation of substantive reason, formerly expressed in religious and metaphysical world-views, into three moments, now capable of being connected only formally with- one another (through the form of argumentative justification).’ Jurgen Habermas, Modernity: an Unfinished Project. In: Maurizio P. d’Entreves and Seyla Benhabib (eds.) Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity: Critical Essays on The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 45.


38. For example on June 6, 1925, the parliament passed a compulsory military training programme that required every male citizen to be drafted at the age of 21 for two years of active military duty, in uniform and under arms. This single law brought with it considerable social changes across
During two years of service, literacy classes were conducted, and attempts were made to provide rudimentary instruction in trades. The influence of urban life on the rural and tribal recruits proved so strong that upon completing their terms they often remained in towns. If they returned to their villages, they brought traces of the West with them: the sanitation facilities of the urban areas undoubtedly impressed them, and their uniform jackets and caps were the first examples of Western clothing the villagers had seen. But more important than these superficial changes were the effects on the young men of exposure to the more secular, Western-influenced morals of the city. See Banani, *The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941*, 55-56.


40. ‘We still have to address a crucial question: why is life, as such, managed and controlled? The answer is absolutely clear: because it acts as the substratum of a mere faculty, labour-power, which has taken on the consistency of a commodity.’ Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary forms of Life* (New York and Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), 83.


42. Banani, *ibid*, 59.

43. Tehran before the late nineteenth century did not have a coherent civil society; the majority of the inhabitants either belonged to the royal families or were of the military forces, nomads or merchants. Although the emergence of early bourgeois class was already rooted in the reforms of the mid-nineteenth century, but it was only during the climax of the constitutional revolution (1905-11) that different classes appeared as political entities.

44. For Reza Shah, the capital city urgently needed tackling; in 1923 he appointed a military general who was his most trusted person, Karim Agha Bouzarjomehri, as the Mayor of Tehran. However the Shah remained very much involved in controlling and directing the architectural and urban projects.

45. The 17.3-km *Pahlavi Boulevard* was constructed to connect the southern part of the old city (later marked by the construction of Tehran Train Station in 1927) to the northern town of *Shemiran*. In the 1930 map, a southern part of the boulevard (almost 5 km) was documented. The *Shemiran Road* was planned and constructed to connect the former *Dowlat Gate* to *Shemiran*, therefore except the enlargement of the street around the *Dowlat Gate*, there other part of the boulevard was not included in the map.

46. It is reported that this neighbourhood was demolished for building a newly planned Bourse of Tehran. See M. Habibi, *et al*, *Az Vornikkhan-e Barn ha ta Andisheh-ye Shabrah ba* or From

47. Wallenstein, *ibid*, 20.


50. Protagonists of this architectural movement were mostly of those Iranian architects, educated in Europe. They later came back to the country and started their practice there. Among them, for example, was Gabriel Guevrekian who studied at Academy of Applied Arts in Vienna, and was one of the founders of CIAM congress along with Le Corbusier and Giedion in 1928.

51. In 1921, following the creation of the High Council of Education, the Ministry of Education adhered to new authorities regarding policy-making, administrative tasks and executive procedures in the reformulation of the educational system, which included professional teacher-training and most importantly, development and construction of the educational infrastructure such as schools, academies, colleges and universities.

52. In 1937, 53 persons, including university of Tehran professors and students, were captured and imprisoned by the Reza Shah’s regime, for taking part in the Tudeh party, a communist group, which was oriented to Marxism ideology. See Bozorg Alavi, *Panjah-o Se Nafar or Fifty-Three Persons* (Tehran: Negah, 2009).


54. The 7 x 30 m grid was the most repeated module, mostly applied to two areas of Abbas Abad and Yousef Abad in the north side of the old centre during the late 30’s. Considering the general north-south slope of the Tehran’s plain, these units were stretched along the streams of water (over ground canals or underground qanats). The proportion of the plot also allowed some sort of levelling of the land by creating platforms.

55. The head architect of the project was Ali Sadeghe, who studied first at the Ghent University and then at the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts (1932-36) in Brussels. There he was influenced by the modern movement and particularly the discourse of minimum housing. Later after returning to Iran in 1937, he incorporated those experiences, i.e. the protocol of CIAM 1929 in his practice of architecture. While Sadeghe’s architectural style was, perhaps, less distinctive than some of his contemporaries, he made significant contributions to the architectural environment of his time;
perhaps his most influential contribution was the promotion of mass housing projects in Tehran as vice-president of the board of Mortgage Bank. Together with Iraj Moshiri, Naser Badie, and others, he established the Society of Iranian Architects (Anjoman-e Architect baye-e Irani-e Diplome) in the mid-40's; where he served as vice-president and then president.


57. For example in the initial plan of the 400-Unit Housing project, a mosque was planned but it was never realised.

58. All the new housing projects were placed just outside the city border, formerly marked by the octagonal wall.


60. *ibid*.

CHAPTER 5

1. Arendt designates three fundamental human activities, each of which corresponds to one of the basic conditions under which life on earth has been given to man: work, labour, and action. Together they constitute the vita active. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

2. ‘Labour is the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body, whose spontaneous growth, metabolism, and eventual decay are bound to the vital necessities produced and fed into the life process by labour. The human condition of labour is life itself.’ *Ibid*, 7.

3. *Existenzminimum* or ‘The Minimum Subsistence Dwelling’ was theorised as a minimally-acceptable living space, density, fresh air, access to green space, access to transit, and other such resident issues to support the minimum condition for life. It became the main theme of the second CIAM in 1929 ‘Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum’ with the focus to be on design solutions to the problem of high rents for the low wage earners. See Eric Paul Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 27-43.

4. For more see Chapter 3 of this dissertation on ‘Spaces of Resistance: From the House of Muhammad to the Iranian Courtyard House’.


7. It had six parliamentary seats in addition to that of Isfahan. It had three cabinet ministries: education, health and trade. Its main newspaper, *Rahbar* (Leader), boasted a record-breaking circulation of more than 100,000—triple that of the semi-official Ettela’at. The party also claimed 50,000 core members and 100,000 affiliated members. It opened branches in seventy-eight towns—in other words, almost every town with a population of more than 10,000. Its May Day and Constitution Day celebrations attracted huge crowds in all the major cities—in Tehran they drew as many as 40-60,000. It also forged alliances with other progressive groups, such as the Iran Party, Socialist Party, and Jangali Party. Abrahamian, *ibid*, 108.

8. Ervand Abrahamian, *ibid*.

9. He later became the General Secretary (1979-84) of the Tudeh Party.

10. His thesis, *Krakenhausbau für Iran* (Hospital Building for Iran) was supervised by Prof. Dr. Benno Schachner and Prof. Hans Mehrtens. He studied possible hospital typologies for the geography of Iran and at the end he proposed a schematic design.


13. Here we should differentiate the traditional Islamic majority of the society and the progressive Islamic leaders and clerics who were active politically. Undoubtedly the Tudeh influenced most part of the Iranian society including the traditional classes, while there were sympathizers among the Islamic groups but Tudeh received critiques, especially in the latter years, from the Islamic
clerics (e.g. Kashani) to be faithless.

14. For example they started to publish a new underground newspaper called Razm (battle) in 1949 and tried to found guerrilla forces.

15. The most popular places for gatherings were the private cafés (e.g. Café Ferdowsi), cinemas, theatres (e.g. Sālārī Theatre) as well as the Tudeh clubs. These places were mostly close to the aforementioned residential projects. For example, one of the Tudeh Party centres was in Nazi Abad close to the Tehran Silo in the south part of the city.

16. For more information on this project see Chapter 4 of this dissertation ‘Politics of Urban Form: Architecture of Tehran, 1921-50’.


18. Bahrambeygui, *ibid*, 120.

19. Iradj Moshiri and Naser Badie together with Ali Sadeghe, Noureddin Kia-Nouri and others were among the founders of the *Society of Iranian Architects* in 1943-44. The *Society of Iranian Architects* was also a politically active organisation that along with the leftist movement during 40's and 50's. It had a central role in mobilising the intelligentsia.


22. For example between 1936-41 Reza Shah ran a movement called *Women Awakening*. This movement sought the elimination of the Islamic veil from Iranian working society. Supporters held that the veil impeded physical exercise and the ability of women to enter society and contribute to the progress of the nation. This move met opposition from the religious establishment.

23. The phrase originally appeared in writings in the early 1890's when Wilhelm II denoted the role of women: ‘Let women devote themselves to the three K's, *die Küche, die Kirche, die Kinder*’ (kitchen, church, and children). The phrase then was used multiple times throughout the 1890's in liberal writing and speeches. In August 1899 the influential British liberal, Westminster Gazette elaborated on the story, mentioning, as well, the 4th ‘K’ as *Kleid* (clothing). This slogan later repeated by Hitler with less emphasise on *Kirche*.


26. After the war the U.S. Marshall Plan and Point Four Programs, along with other financial, technical, and military aid programs from the United States and its allies, produced Iran’s first major encounter with the people and culture of the United States; overnight, these relations replaced the Franco-German liaisons that had developed after World War I. See Nader Ardalan, Architecture VIII. Pahlavi, after World War II, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. 2 (1986): 351-355.


30. The central hub for these activities was the United State Information and Education Centre, located in the Istanbul Street (now Jomhuri). Daily courses on language, home-economic, American history and culture, special department for children education, women club and publication were parts of the wide activities of the centre.

31. Bernice W. King assembled a remarkable Iranian staff that of eight women and two men; all held at least one college degree – five from American institutions, two from European universities, and the balance from Iran. The staff included a specialist in child care and family health, one in family relationships, one in home furnishings, two in general home economics and one in rural education. King also hired two translators, one of whom spoke English, Russian, Persian, French, Turkish and German. Procuring supplies and utensils from Tehran’s bazaars allowed the team to stretch its budget and ensured that they would teach using the same equipment that Iranian families used. See Richard P. Garlitz, *Academic Ambassadors in the Middle East: The University Contract Program in Turkey and Iran, 1950-1970*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, The College of Arts and Sciences of Ohio University (2008).


35. Pamela Karimi, *Domesticity and Consumer Culture in Iran: Interior Revolutions of the Modern Era*

37. The average Iranian family size during 50’s was six persons (parents and four children).

38. The Kuy-e Kan project, completed in 1964 for housing civil servants, comprises 200 houses and 1,000 apartments in large blocks. This also, however, is envisaged as a dormitory suburb although it has its own services and the area is suitable for the development of industry, which has already begun to congregate along the Karaj road. In view of its function, the site so far from Tehran when much open land remains within the city limits is criticised. Planned neighbourhoods and redevelopment within the city would be more advisable. This, however, could only be undertaken by municipal action as redevelopment is not the sphere of the speculator and municipal plans in Tehran rarely reach fruition. In Kan the lack of trees gives the bare appearance of a building site, and there has been little attempt to segregate vehicular and pedestrian traffic. More thought on siting, landscaping and layout in the new suburbs is needed and plans for the provision of a green belt cannot be delayed if Tehran would avoid the physical and social ills of urban sprawl. See Judith A. Brown, A geographical study of the evolution of the cities of Tehran and Isfahan, Durham theses, Durham University, 1965. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/1987/


40. By September 1977 a further thirteen points had been added, including the establishment of a Health Corps, administrative reform, and a workers’ shares programme. Halliday, ibid.

41. All of the initiatives of the White Revolution were regarded as dangerous, Westernizing trends by traditionalists, especially by the powerful and privileged Shiite ulama (religious scholars) who felt highly threatened. Particularly Ayatollah Khomeini on 22 January 1963, issued a strongly worded declaration denouncing the Shah and his plans. This class continued in the months after and finally turned into a mass demonstration on June 5, 1963 (15 Khordad), which was violently attacked by the police and special guard. More than 350 people were killed or wounded in the uprising. The event later on became one of the pillars of the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

42. Abrahamian, ibid, 139-140.

43. Ardalan, ibid.

44. For more details see Art and Architecture 5, Special Issue on Tehran Master Plan (1970).

45. Gruen’s ideal city form, according to Alex Wall, was a Cellular Metropolis, synthesised idea
from the Garden City, Regional Plan Association of America, and his own argument for dense multi-functional cores. ‘Gruen’s city model was not infinite but bounded, not homogenous but with a hierarchy of centres, not a virtual community but a community based on the attraction of public space and public life, and finally, not a continuous but an articulated development, whose component communities by being spatially distinct from each other would retain a local identity within a metropolitan structure.’ See Alex Wall, Citybuilding: from public space to design of the environment, in Auf dem Weg zur nachhaltigen Stadt (Wien: Stadtentwicklung Wien, 2005).

46. Ardalan, ibid.
47. Halliday, ibid, 298.
49. ‘The hubris of men who replace Providence with the plans of their will and the calculation of their interests and who imagine themselves able to force the advent of an earthly paradise in which they would be relieved of having to decide between good and evil and from which the dire emergency would remain banned forever.’ Heinrich Meier, The Lesson of Carl Schmitt: Four Chapters on the Distinction between Political Theology and Political Philosophy (London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 4.

EPILOGUE

3. ‘The exception is what cannot be included in the whole of which it is a member and cannot be a member of the whole in which it is always already included.’ Giorgio Agamben, Homo Sacer; Sovereign Power and Bare Life (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998), 21.
4. Agamben, ibid, 72.
6. Agamben, ibid, 4.
7. Agamben differentiates ‘bare life’ (ζωή) from ‘form-of-life’ (ζωή) and highlights the latter as political: a life that cannot be separated from its form. In this perspective life is defined and


11. ‘Conflict is possible as a structure of difference, and such a structure is only possible as a differentiation of unities, a difference, that is, of bundled differences. Thus, the specific nature of politics is determined by the specific constitution of opposed unities, making the origin of politics already political, already a battle about what constitutes a politically legitimate unity.’ William Rasch, Conflict as a Vocation, Carl Schmitt and the Possibility of Politics, in Theory, Culture and Society, Vol. 17, no. 6 (2000): 1-32.


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**THESES**


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The dissertation explores the political foundations of the city. It positions itself around a definition of the idea of *the political*, which is determined by the specific constitution of opposed entities; a dichotomy between a sovereign body and movements. Subsequently, the research suggests a dialectical reading of the idea of Urban Form, which is built upon the relation between norm and exception, between friendship and enmity, inclusion and exclusion. Departing from this definition, the dissertation stresses on the (constructive) dynamism of opposing forces which motivate or shape a creative tension: the state of antithetical, which becomes spatialised in the form of the city.

This political understanding of the concept of the city has always been entangled with theological polemics. In this dissertation, the very notion of *separation*, that is embedded in theology, becomes the core concept when an ideological power aims at defining itself through the act of exclusion. Walls, enclosures and boundaries are the architectural elements that represent this action. However here the idea of *separation* does not imply a form of *rejection* but rather an *association*. *Camp of Faith* rereads these peculiar urban forms as political repercussions of theological ideas, when the city’s architecture establishes a relationship between power, inhabitants and territory. These spatial configurations mediate the moment of conflict, when opposing forces collide and projects are initiated in a dialectical process. Cities become laboratories of projects and counter-projects. Nevertheless the research’s
ambition rests in the architectural quality of such phenomena, not only reading the architecture as an outcome of a deliberate political act but also when political ideas and ideologies emerge from the very architecture of the city.

*Camp of Faith* relies on the close reading of paradigmatic examples that unfold the theological idea of city beyond the limits of time and geography. Therefore, here, the concern is not so much changing stylistic periods, but rather the issue of continuity; a specific conception of space which has remained constant despite the advent of technological and economic development: reading the city as series of inhabitable walls.
Het proefschrift verkent de politieke fundamenten van de stad. Het positioneert zich rond een definitie van het idee van *het politieke*, dat bepaald is door de specifieke constitutie van tegengestelde entiteiten. Het onderzoek stelt een dialectische lezing van Stedelijke Vorm voor dat is gestoeld op de relatie tussen norm en uitzondering, tussen vriendschap en vijandschap, insluiting en uitsluiting. Voortbouwend op deze definitie benadrukt het proefschrift het (constructieve) dynamisme van tegengestelde krachten, die motiveren of een creatieve spanning vormgeven: de toestand van het antithetische, dat zich ruimtelijk manifesteert in de vorm van de stad.

Dit politieke begrip van het concept van de stad is altijd verstrengeld geweest met theologische polemiek. In dit proefschrift wordt het idee van een *scheiding* op zich, ingebed in de theologie, het kernbegrip wanneer een ideologische macht poogt zichzelf te definiëren door een daad van uitsluiting. Muren, omheiningen en grenzen zijn de bouwkundige elementen die deze handeling vertegenwoordigen. Het idee van een *scheiding* impliceert echter niet een soort afwijzing maar veeleer een *vereniging*. *Camp of Faith* herleest deze eigenaardige stedelijke vormen als politieke repercussies van theologische ideeën, wanneer de architectuur van de stad een relatie tussen macht, bewoners en gebied vestigt. Deze ruimtelijke configuraties mediëren het moment van conflict wanneer tegengestelde krachten botsen en projecten worden geïnitieerd in een dialectisch proces. Steden worden laboratoria van
projecten en contra-projecten. Niettemin ligt de ambitie van het onderzoek bij de bouwkundige kwaliteit van zulke fenomenen, niet alleen door de architectuur van de stad te lezen als uitkomst van een intentionele politieke daad maar ook wanneer politieke ideeën en ideologieën voortkomen uit de architectuur van de stad zelf.

Camp of Faith steunt op een precieze lezing van paradigmatische voorbeelden die, voorbij de grenzen van tijd en geografie, het theologische idee van de stad ontvouwen. Daarom is het belang hier niet zozeer veranderende stijlperiodes, maar eerder de kwestie van continuïteit; een specifieke conceptie van ruimte die constant is gebleven ondanks de opkomst van technologische en economische ontwikkeling; de stad gelezen als series van bewoonbare muren.
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2012: ‘Medina,’ Glossary entry for or the Berlage Institute, ‘The City as a Project’ programme.


2011: ‘Where is Tehran?,’ a Review on Ali Madanipour’s *Tehran: The Two-Speed Metropolis*, for The Netherlands Architecture Institute, NAi (in English and Dutch).

The Etchmiadzin complex is the oldest state-built church in the world. The original basilica was built in AD 301–303 by Saint Gregory the Illuminator, under the Sassanid Empire. Later, in AD 480, the Sassanid governor of Armenia ordered its replacement by a new cruciform church (as the one depicted in the etching).

Source: Published in Chardin, J. Journal de voyage du Chevalier Chardin en Perse (Amsterdam: Jean Wolters & Ysbrand Haring, 1686); Bibliothèque Nationale de France, département Cartes et Plans, GE DD-2987 (6773).
Camp of Faith explores the political foundations of the city. It positions itself around a
definition of the idea of the political, which is determined by the specific constitution of
opposed entities, a dichotomy between a sovereign body and movements. Subsequently, it
suggests a dialectical reading of the notion of Urban Form, which is built upon the relation
between norm and exception, between friendship and enmity, inclusion and exclusion.
Departing from this definition, the research stresses on the (constructive) dynamism of
opposing forces which motivate or shape a creative tension: the state of antithetical, which
becomes spatialised in the form of the city.