

History of shaping urban imageries in Tehran projected by Iranian political powers, in the light of the existence of oil in Iran.

(Urban history of Tehran based on political history of oil in Iran)

Keywords: Urban imageries, Capital cities, Monumental buildings and urban development, Political powers, Oil, Tehran, Iran.

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Area of Research: History of urban development



Research Summary: National leaders have long used capital cities to document and reflect their political ideas and powers by projecting a positive image of their city. In Iran, Despite the political transformation from the westernizing regime of second king of Pahlavi (1941-1979) to the Islamic republic (1979 to present), the consecutive governments consistently used their political power and strategies to control the imagery of their capital city and its reception in both national and international contexts as a means of accruing their international pride.

Since 1950s Iran is considered as a country that the existence of oil and oil's economic condition has played an important role in gaining its political powers. By observing closely what the different regimes have built in specific eras of oil boom or the oil slump of Iran, we can learn about the political statuses of the country in global contexts. After the oil nationalization in Iran (1953), which led to the process of oil boom in 1970s, Shah Pahlavi, the king announced a series of reforms with the intention of modernizing and transforming the country into a global power and as part and reflection of that process, the Shah initiated a number of urban projects in the capital city. At this period, the policies in monumental architecture and urban development were mostly upon the ideals of creating an influential expression of the new power of the Pahlavi kingdom of Iran in international contexts. Continuously, After the 1979 Revolution, Iran underwent important political shifts that translated into the need of novel urban imageries and new visions of urban representation of Tehran based on Islamic governmental policies. Likewise the last period, new policies mostly tended to create a visual imagery as monumental places and buildings for the pride of the capital. Most diverse attitudes to previous regime were regarding cultural religious genuineness of Islamic Iran, creating spaces to refashion the city as the capital of an Islamic Republic.

Tehran, the capital of Iran, worked as "cultural presentation" of the ideas of power that helped to communicate the message of Iran's political status, to the international contexts and beyond. It stands as an example for continuities and ruptures of the efforts and strategies of Iranian's governments to develop the capital in the process of shaping Tehran's imageries, civic memories and its global city status. Exploring the process of the extensive political and ideological shifts and their different expressions in opposing design languages for the development of Tehran in the light of the existence of oil behind all of the political powers, this research tries to demonstrate that how political decisions (based on economics of oil), for symbolic and monumental buildings are important forces in shaping capital urban imageries of Iran in national and international contexts.



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Main Question:

Q1. How political powers have shaped urban imageries of their capital cities as their country's media icons and symbols in national and international contexts?

Q2. In the process of modernization in Iran, how the consecutive governments gained their political powers and in which architectural and urban forms they have presented their powers?

Q3. What was the role of the existence of oil of Iran in urban development of the capital and in its symbolic presence?

Q.4 By observing monumental buildings in Tehran, what can we learn about its political powers statuses?

Deliverables: *Study of Urban history of Tehran based on political history of oil in Iran*

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