Street, Landscape and Courtyard: Study on the Essence of Public Space in Islamic Built Environment

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Abstract

This paper explores the elements that shape the public spaces in Islamic cities. A sharp contrast has been highlighted between early era of Islamic cities and contemporary era. The main characteristic of public space are accessibility and usability for all citizens. However, current developments, primary observed in cities, suggest the loss of a clear distinction between public and private space. Space with public functions like mosques, courtyard and bazar are changing in character are spreading. This study focuses on three major components such as street market, landscape and courtyards. Further study in this regard are suggested to explore the characteristics of public spaces in Islamic cities in depth in order to compare among regions, cultures and different time periods.

Keywords: Public space, social control, security, urban studies.

1. Introduction

Urban or city planning is technical and political process of protection, use of land, the environment, public welfare and also the design of urban environment. Urban environment was divide a few sections such as air, water and the infrastructure passing in or out of urban areas like communications, transportation and also distribution networks (Gole, 2002). In Islamic city, the important activity in mosque is congregational, by that it will show the commitment of the Muslim community and solidarity. Then, the commercial and administrative activities were built on the centre of city planning. The Islamic city planning was divided equally between the quarters where the Arab settlers were first used. The urban areas also were divided based from the religion and their nationality (Kent & Myrick, 2003).
The Islamic city was surrounded by wall to provide defense strategy and also to protect by sand laden desert winds. The entrance of the city will be a large gate with the commercial activities along the roads. The retail and small factories was located side by side, then they will produce a different product in a same areas. The Islamic school located at the centre of mosque, mostly known as madrasa and funded by tenant near of the school such as book selling, book binding and others. The commercial centre or street market located around the main gates would be easier for buyers from residential areas. The location would affect the road circulation during the activity. Near of this street market, it would have a public prayer in a small size to give the facility for residential and business people (Ibrahim, 1998)
The simplicity elevation of Islamic city streets was applied along the building with a few of openings, but inside of the building, the rich architectural details and ornamentation was apply based from owner desire. There are several public spaces in Islamic city such as mosques, school, pool, ablution the centre of courtyard and library (Gole, 2002)

2. Methodology

The study used method of literature and observations studies to several the public spaces in Islamic city. This study also combined with all data relevant literature related to the main analysis.

3. Discussion and finding

Based on analysis and assessment that found type of public space in Islamic city.

3.1 Street market

In Islamic city, the street market was located in the narrow street between two buildings or more. It would serve as a place for business product such as tailors, butchers and also shoes makers. Usually, the street market in Islamic city known as "souk" but in Spanish version it will know as "zoco" synonyms with plaza. The activities of market will be conducted between buyers and sellers in bargaining. This

street market will be work a seasonal at a set time that will be permanent, monthly or weekly. For example, the Souk Ukadh was conducted during pre-Islamic times in an era between Mecca and Ta'if, it still remain until this day. The souk will be conducted an open spaces during the day and the sellers would bring the stalls and remove it at night, usually the space only for the first person come. The souk normally divided into different section depend on types of product such as gold souk, spice souk, fabric souk, books souk, leather souk and others. This sections would help buyers to compare the price of product without wasting time to walk all the spaces (Herzog, 2006)

Figure 1: The images show the situation during street market event at Doha, Qatar and the different between food souk and souvenir souk.
Source: *http://sonyaandtravis.com/souq-waqif/* (2010)

3.2 Landscape

Generally, Islamic garden is a place for rest and view for remind of paradise. In Al-Quran, the God have promised those believers the garden for the life in paradise. In Islamic city, there are a few famous garden which is Taj Mahal in India, Generalife and Alhambra in Spain. These garden have a similar character of design and element such as water element and shade from tree. These element will be design based on symmetrical layout outside and inside of the building. Compared with English gardens, which are design for walking, the function of Islamic garden would be as a place for rest and contemplation (Sylke, 2008)

Figure 2: The figure show Islamic garden at Taj Mahal, India produce peaceful ambient and a place for rest before people enter the building.
Source: *http://www.hdwallpapers.in/taj_mahal-wallpapers.html* (2015)

3.3 Courtyard

A courtyard is an enclosed area that often an enclosed space that open to the sky without any cover by a roof. Usually this area often the primary meeting or gathering places for some purposes, leading to the other meaning court. Courtyard spaces have many benefits in care communities have the potential that can provide opportunities for sensory stimulation, socialization and meaningful activity for the people. The benefits of passive engagement with courtyard space include increased socialization, environmental stimulation meanwhile increased exposure to sunlight and improvement in older adults coping strategies. Connection spaces physically and visually make spaces

in the courtyard area relate to each by interlocking the spaces. As with interior common spaces, the ability to control social interaction and privacy is important in courtyard space (Ibrahim, 1998; Mirmobiny, 2018)

Figure 3: Courtyard are more prevalent in temperate climates, as an open center court can be important aid to cooling building in warm weather. A huge courtyard surrounded by arched at Sultan Ahmed Mosque, Istanbul, Turkey.
Source: *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sultan_Ahmed_Mosque* (2015)

4. Case study

4.1 Alhambra

Alhambra at Granada, Spain is a different building in that era like the planning layout, decorative facade, the garden and the water fountains. The intimate spaces ware built at human scale to apply the elegant and inviting to visitors. Alhambra was built by Nasrid Dynasty in 1232 until 1492 and it was a last Muslims to rule in Spain. Muhammad Ibn Yusuf Ibn Nasir is an important person that give a power to build the great Alhambra by starting the court complex on a first planning design. The function of this complex as a residential for the ruler, the citadel, barracks for the elite guards and also a palace. The space will connected by paths, gardens and a huge gates to provide a safety issues. From the Alhambra architecture, the public spaces inside of that complex such as courtyard with symmetrical fountain and the garden. This place will allow a public people to release tension, to feel the harmony and to create a gathering space (Mirmobiny, 2018).

Figure 4: The images show the symmetrical fountains with shrubs beside it. The static reflection create a calm feeling in this space.
Source: *http://visitworldplaces.com/alhambra-palace.html* (2015)

4.2 Sultan ahmed mosque

A historical building as a mosque in Istanbul, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque is popularly known as Blue Mosque because blue tiles interior adoring the walls of the interior. During the rule of Ahmed, it was built from 1609 to 1616 as a madrasah and a hospital. But the main function still used as a mosque. The significant design of Sultan Ahmed Mosque has one main dome, six minarets and eight secondary domes. Sedekar Mehmed is an architect come up the ideas of his master Sinan aiming for overwhelming size, majesty and splendor. For the interior spectacular design is the mihrab which is made of finely carved and sculptured marble with a stalactite with a double inscriptive panel above it. The exterior of the court is about as large as the mosque is surrounded by a continuous vaulted arcade.

Figure 5: The Figure above show the most elements in interior of the mosque which is made of finely carved and sculptured marble.
Source: *https://chrisbergere59.wordpress.com* (2015)

4.   Conclusion

For the concluding this article, we put the following suggestion to make people appreciate Islamic public spaces. More Muslims are coming out in public worldwide, as Muslims this making religious sharing different perspectives .The Islamic public space offers people a stage of visibility, including those who do not share the values of majority and those who do not enjoy the same rights of citizenship.

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