

IRANIAN NETWORK OF URBAN MORPHOLOGY: IDEA, ESTABLISHMENT, AND PROGRESS

MAZYAR ABAEE

INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER, RABAT

ABSTRACT

The Iranian network of urban morphology has been established under the supervision of ISUF International by a group of Iranian scholars from different universities and institutes in Iran. Even short, this network has quite a history, from early steps to establishment and from establishment to recent activities. This short history can be expressed as follows:

The Initial steps

More than two years ago, after publishing the article *The study of urban form in Iran*, by Mazyar Abaee, the establishment of the Iranian network was encouraged by Vitor Oliveira (the president of ISUF) and Giuseppe Strappa (the coordinator of the regional networks). The establishment process of the Iranian network began by inviting the scholars who had been mentioned in the article to the founding board. After the initial meetings, the board decided to develop a constitution as the first significant step. When the first edition was made, the board decided to elect the council to finalise the constitution and proceed with the registration. The council, which consisted of five members, including Mazyar Abaee as the president, concluded the constitution and, after the board's approval, sent it to the ISUF president and the regional network's coordinator. Finally, the network and the constitution were registered with ISUF on June 30. Afterwards, the council plans for the yearly vision. The first activities were defined as being in the form of online speeches by inviting the members of the Iranian founding board. The primary approach of these speeches is essential cultivation to introduce urban form using its general meaning, referring to diverse architecture, planning and design paradigms. Finally, the council of the Iranian network is investigating the appropriate ways to transform its founding board into a general assembly by inviting academics interested in the field in its disciplinary manner.

Establishment of ISUFIran

The network was officially established during a meeting in June 2023 with the presence of Vitor Oliveira and Giuseppe Strappa. The network is led by a “society” and its “executive committee” (the second of which is a reformation of the in-

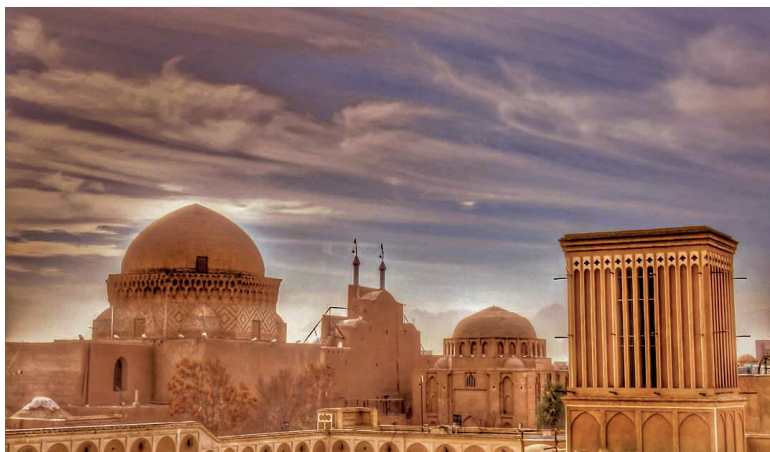


Figure 1. The city of Yazd Landscape, the most preserved brick settlement in the country.

itial council), including Zahra Ahari (society member), MR Noghsanmohammadi (society member, whose thesis on Yazd is the most well-known morphological study in Iran (fig.1)), Eisa Esfanjary (executive committee member), Toofan Haghani (executive committee member), Nasim Iranmanegh (executive committee member), Mahta Mirmoghtadaee (society member), Maryam Mohammadi (executive committee member), Pantea Alipour (society member), Azadeh Mohajer Milani (society member), and Mazyar Abaee (president and executive society member).

Institutional Support

Some of ISUFIran's Activities were supported by the Urban Planning and Architecture Research Centre of Iran (UARC). This institution was formerly the research department of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (currently named the Ministry of Road and Urban Development). It was privatised and recently became a sub-institution of the Iran Tourism Finance Group. Last year, the main support of UARC was holding meetings and online events, and now, it is helping compile the newsletter.

Online Events

During several online meetings, ISUFIran invited Iranian experts on urban form, including Toofan Haghani, Zahra Ahari, Mohammadreza Noghsanmohammadi and Pantea Hakimian. ISUFIran was honoured to host Alessandro Camiz, Tulga Unlu, Olgu Caliskan, Gizem Erdogan Aydin and Dalya Hazar from the Italian and Turkish Network of Urban Morphology. Mazyar Abaee hosted meetings.

Introductory Meeting

An introductory meeting (May 22, 2023) held to present the Iranian network to national and international colleagues. In this event presentations made by Vitor Oliveira, Giuseppe Strappa and Iranian network members and colleagues from Iran, England, Italy, Turkey and South Africa participated in the event (Fig. 2).

Newsletter

Publishing a newsletter suggested by Oliveira in the introductory meeting and followed up by Maryam Mohammadi and Toofan Haghani. ISUFIran Society decided to publish



Figure 2. The international introductory session poster on the Iranian network of urban morphology

the newsletter quarterly, representing the society's and the network's activities to disseminate the place and importance of urban morphology as a distinct domain of knowledge and as an instrument to expand the network's borders.

ISUFIran is currently planning a series of online events that invite Iranian and international colleagues. It is obvious that more disciplined programs, such as international in-person meetings, summer schools, and regional or international conferences, face special political and economic barriers, which the society of ISUFIran has to solve in collaboration with colleagues all over the world.