



## The Effect of Urban Development Plans on the City's Old Context

Sedigheh Kalantari and Yaping Huang

*Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan, China*

**Key words:** Urban development plan, old context, Isfahan,

**Abstract:** It is about fifty years that the comprehensive and detailed plans have been the directing instrument and documents for Iranian cities spatial development; and the old context of cities not only became agree or adapted with the prevalence of modern patterns and current urbanism impression of them but also this issue impaired the physical-structural system of the old context and the social and cultural structure of it became unsteady as a consequence. It applied specially about the famous and ancient cities in Iran for its important role in Iran urban system net. The historic core of Isfahan encompasses a large number of valuable buildings and monuments. One of Isfahan urban context features is the water transformation channels that are called as "Madi" which antiquity of this element refers to the ages before Islam. So, this study tries not only to mention the value of such a city element that was very considerable in the past but also evaluate the effects of urban development plans on them. The performed studies are based on descriptive-analytic method and comparative approach. The documentary, library and field interpretation have been used for information gathering.

### Corresponding Author:

Sedigheh Kalantari

*Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, 1037 Luoyu Road, Hongshan District, Wuhan 430074, Hubei, PR China*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Iranian cities that had evolved innately relying on local innovation and creativity have changed during the recent decades and have lost most of their unique features. The historic cores of Iranian cities encompass a large number of valuable buildings, historic landscapes and monuments. These areas are the product of a complex process of interaction between human and physical environment, taking place over many centuries. They are the physical manifestation of local and national culture. Until the early twentieth century the historic cores had been involved in a continuous process of change. Urbanism measures and programs that have begun from

some decades ago regarded the historic urban quarter as obsolete and subject of proposals for clearance and comprehensive redevelopment. This destruction of the historic urban fabric was justified as an attempt for the improvement of the condition and the adaptation of historic area to contemporary requirements.

Isfahan is a historical city, located in the heart of Iran by a dramatic modernization transformations which started in 1920s. The natural features are the most important factors in Isfahan existential causes and city formation. The special and valuable situation of the Zayanderood river as an identity index of Isfahan and the existence of branching Madi (Madi is a local expression means the water stream) and expansion in the urban

context accompanying with other historical elements have established an organic context in the city center. This special and valuable status, the existence of porch small markets, deep and narrow allies, archways and water flowing in the city (Madis) and cultivation of trees around the Madis, passages and sectors are examples of a fruitful experience.

It has been more than five decades of the supplying and utilizing experience of urban comprehensive and detailed plans in Iran. These that aimed at solving urban issues and problems and development of citizen's life not only couldn't help in some cases but also created new problems in the cities. Regarding the usual methods of urban development plans Isfahan have faced with three ratified comprehensive plans and three detailed plans (Anonymous, 1973, 2011) and a districted plan that each one has affected Isfahan physical order.

The current survey tries to evaluate the effect of detailed plans performance in different periods of time about Madis as the prominent elements of Isfahan old context regarding the performed studies in Isfahan detailed plans and using the existing resources in this regard. So, the status of Madis is going to be discussed in Isfahan three detailed plans periods that are before Islamic revolution (Anonymous, 1973), after Islamic revolution and the contemporary era (Anonymous, 2011). In other word the main purpose of this essay is to analyze the status of Madis in the ratified urban plans and the effect of these plans on Madis as the prominent elements of Isfahan old context. The current research is going to answer the question that whether the current situation of Madis is a feedback of the urban plan compositions or the urban plans instructions are composed for Madi conservation approach.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The manifestation of urbanism and scheduling related sciences has caused to the issuance and development of different theories about the city, urban development and its physical-space effects. These theories have been mostly represented in the last 150 years by famous researchers such as Eugene Viollet-le-Duc (1879-1814), John Ruskin (1900-1818), Camillo Boito (1836-1914), Camillo Sitte (1843-1903), Luca Beltrami (1933-1854), Ludico Quaroni (1987-1911), Gustavo Giovanni, Patrick Geddes (1932-1854), Le Corbusier (1965-1887), Lewis Mumford (1895), Kevin Lynch (1984-1918), Aldo Rasi (1931-1997), Christopher Alexander (1936), Constantinos Doxiadis (1914-1975), Richard Rogers (1933) that have attempted to recognition and foundation destruction of the metropolises in relation with the urban plans at different times and through various approaches. The formal plan

supplying has not such a long lasting record and its historical root goes back to the current century initiation. So, the research literature of this subject is affected by the plan's root is newly established and relates to the recent decades. The hypothetical themes and an example of the studies which is done about Iran are drawing a special pattern of spatial-physical and social evolutions of Iranian cities that being troublemaking is its obvious feature.

This survey can be considered as functional research objectively and comparative-analytic methodologically. The information gathering was done through library research (the documents and ratified superior plans) and field interpretation (concrete observations and local interpretation). However, the urban plans and specially in the scope of detailed plans fulfill an undeniable role at least in urban physical formation but their evaluation is not performed in this survey for the variation of including plan criterions, so, in the research process of evaluation and analysis phase the criterions which have the most effect on the Madi function and form have been selected and the selected criterions are investigated comparatively in relation with Madis in different periods of detailed plans.

"The detailed plan is a plan which upon the general criteria of the urban comprehensive plan, the manner of using the urban lands in the level of different urban sectors and accurate situation and area of the land for each of them, the detailed and subtle condition of the traffic net and the accommodation and building density in urban units and the priorities related to the rehabilitation and renovation districts and development and solving urban problems and the situation of different urban factors are specified there and the maps and the specifications related to the ownership are provided and regulated there according to the registration documents". This plan is a legal document of physical space development of the city and has three major components including pathways network, land use and buildings height in addition to the urbanism rules and regulation; on the other hand in the spatial-physical structure of Isfahan, Madis are multidimensional elements that are affected by many factors and have effective role in the quality of the contexts from which they pass through. According to the spatial-physical and social factors that interfere in Madis, the investigation and declaration of their quality according to all factors not only is not possible for the variety of required data and information but also followed by the generalization and superficial point of view risks, so in this study, the identification and investigation takes place based on the main components of detailed plan. In this direction, a specific scope is going to be investigated for the aforementioned reasons. The evaluation and analysis

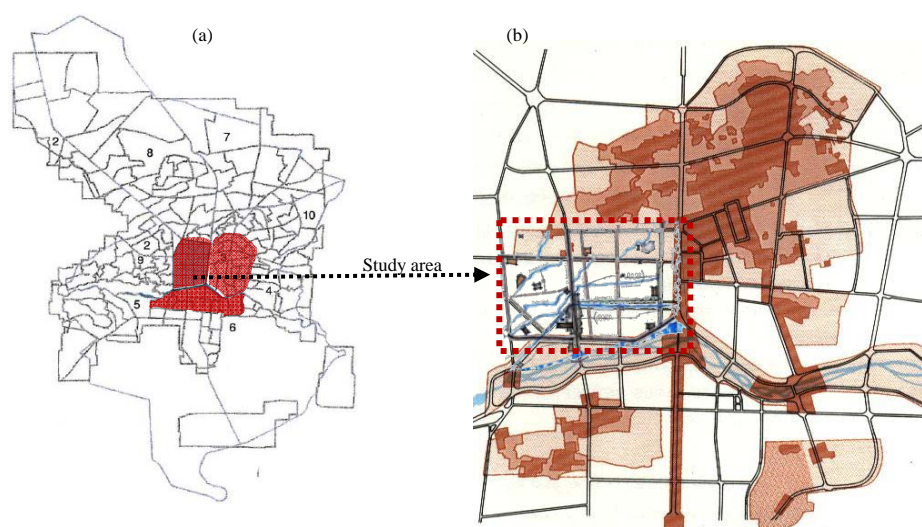


Fig. 1(a-b): Case study, (a) Isfahan and (b) Historic district of city

in this scope is appertained to Madis: Niasarm and Farshadi from Kharrazi highway to Chaharbaq Street and Fadan from Kharrazi highway to Taleqani Street 'as in Fig. 1'.

As it mentioned before Madis can have positive role in the physical structure and spatial organization of Isfahan and their conservation and rehabilitation is an unavoidable affair. In this direction the urban development plans aimed at providing desirable environment and the consideration of Madis by urban programmers and designers is tangible in Isfahan urban development plans but the current situation of Madis has not any symptom of plan's rehabilitation measures and serious conservation. So, for the comprehensive evaluation of the research purpose what we mentioned as the urban development plans in physical evolutions of Isfahan historical context, specially pay to the types and urban plans in scope of ratified urban detailed plans.

**Organic detailed plan (before Islamic Revolution, 1973):** Following the organic comprehensive plan, the duty of supplying the organic detailed plan in the period of before revolution was devolved to the counselor and the organic detailed plan was ratified by the organic counselor engineers in 1973. In organic detailed plan the wide street plan in the historical context district is highly avoided and the accomplishment of the context selection is being in mind. In this plan there is no need to build new streets by limiting the city development and the suggestion of population overflow in the lunar small towns. In the context district the limited accesses through the existing streets are used having more cognition of the sectors span and the establishment of passing ways and main street connection through the sectors is prevented. There are a few cases that the inter sector and regional

passing can be observed through the organizing and widening of main passages and at last the connection to the main streets. The narrow accesses with bellow 12 and 16 m width try to protect the environment pattern and don't damage the houses around too much especially for the compact and fine spun context through representing appropriate cuts in the context. The widening performed in an out axis form preserving valuable buildings and archways. The short accesses end in collaborative parking lots and are used as U-turns, trash gathering place and kids playing ground. The space openings related to the parking lots are presented as a scene or a part of green space considering the received patterns of the context itself. The accesses primarily entered to the sectors aimed at reaching the inhabitant complexes or trade or service centers end in the parking lots and the disconnection of motorists has been propounded after this phase generally. In the organic detailed plan the small local market (sectors' centers) axis span has been evacuated from the motorists but the transformed spaces (parking-wharf) have been predicted near them. The plan emphasizes on the centrality and commotion of the small markets and their rehabilitation and reinforcement through the accesses and the complemented services representation around there and has prevented the scattering of the services in the sectors district or bringing the public services or trade spaces into the streets sides.

**Reconsideration detailed plan (after Islamic revolution, 1993):** Reconsideration detailed plan has been prepared by the Naqshe Jahan Pars counselor engineers. What has the evident appearance in the first stages of this plan is the considerable motorist communication net development and lots of road widening in the city. In the previous detailed plan net crossing through the sectors

were not possible for the limitation in local accesses while in this plan and current situation due to the municipal remained measures the possibility of motorist traffic exists even with the lower speed. In this plan the bound of Madis is free all along it and is seen s pedestrian axis. On the contrary to the previous plan the motorist transfer is not forbidden, here but it is limited to the Madi neighboring houses. The motorway connected to the Madis has up to 6 m width but in the entrance to the Madi path they face with space expansion. In purifying the Madi axis the widening is performed in accordance with its width and only the precious historical houses survived. In this plan the public land use around the Madis are reinforced but a few changes occurred in the sectors scope unless in those places where Madi flows in the urban border. In this case the public land use are added around it; in nonurban axis the public land use are mostly green spaces and sport fields. As the comprehensive plan had emphasizes on the physical appearance of urban axis, the building density and height criterion here is higher than the connected neighboring environment, in a way that these axis organize the physical space of the city being clearly recognized. In this relation the Madi axis in the city have merited this specialty but in other way that means the residential buildings on its both sides have special code in detailed plan. So, by limiting the height and increasing it during a special angle from Madi interpenetrate its dampness to the deeper layers of the city from one side and present a green vale instead of a narrow strait full of trees by opening the cross section of Madi from the other side. On the other hand be able to create a desirable and coherent body in the rout of Madi. The land use are specifically stabilized on the land and special ownership and have not been propounded floating as in organic plan.

**Review detailed plan (Contemporary Era, 2011):** The review plan for detailed plan from the Isfahan municipal-architecture and urbanism deputy district- ratified in 2011 by five counselor engineers (Atak, Bavand, Saravand, Sharestan, and Shahravakhane) charged as district responsible counselor engineers and Naqshejahan Pars counselor engineers as the coordinator counselor engineer. The composition of detailed plan revision is based on permanent development guidelines and principles, social development, organizing the population inhabitant, economic development and prospers of activities in the city, communicating net improvement, environment protection, green space expansion, tourism, and reformation and reconstruction of old historical context of Isfahan. Centralizing all urban plans under the supervision of municipal urban designing organization such as historical context restoration, cultural places, community and cultural centers, sport places, parks and green spaces geometric reform plan, old contexts exhilarating, different elevation intersections, streets, pedestrians, the third chain of Isfahan traffic, urban furniture, Zayanderood river boundaries construction, Madis designing and reconstruction in order to optimizing the plans from quality and design value aspect and decrease in designing costs and performance of projects.

## RESULTS

### Finding: analyzing Madies in Isfahan's detailed plans

**Comparison of obligations and criterions:** First, the identification of the obligations and criterions of each three plans concerning the main components of these plans (land use, buildings height and pathways regarding the Madis is going to be performed (Table 1) and then the changes are evaluated through the maps.

Table 1: Comparing of rules and regulations in relation with Madis

Organic detailed plan (1973)	Reconsideration detailed plan (1993)	Review detailed plan (2011)
<b>Land use</b> The balanced concentration of public services through small markets in the Madis bound and distribution of new services to the surrounding context Appropriate activities with sectors historical functions including health, education and green space needs Parking lot pay toll (20m <sup>2</sup> as one unit surface) by the Madis pedestrian pathways side ownerships according to the detailed plan criterion to municipal in order to gain money for establishing the parking for such ownerships The minimum subdivision area for the residential land use 300 m <sup>2</sup>	The minimum subdivision area for the residential land use 500 m <sup>2</sup> Allowable trade use of the residential land use with the municipal agreements including permitted use of the residential land use with the code M under the condition of dependent activity the maximum area 30 m <sup>2</sup> or trading and services activities in the sectors centers Dedication of code MS to the Madis bound (special residential land use and public services) Public services such as disciplinary official, higher education and technological and professional, educational, medical, parking, tourism, green space, cultural and religious and sport The educational land use includes kindergarten, elementary, guiding, high schools and art school Green space land use includes kids playground, parks, green spaces and play small cities Religious land use includes institute for the intellectual development of children and young adults, public library, exhibition, museum, cinema, theater, mosque, church, the shrines	The trading land use (the daily markets in the scope of the area, district and city) using grocery and exhibition and seasonal market Public green space as major services land use Trading neighbor containing historical value, daily market, commercial complex Authorized trading usage of residential land use pieces neighboring inter district and sectors main passages under the condition of municipal permission

Table 1: Continue

Organic detailed plan (1973)	Reconsideration detailed plan (1993)	Review detailed plan (2011)
<b>Pathway</b> Considering the average density for residential and commercial land use The buildings' height up to 7.5 m Not being obligatory to set back from the ally in the pedestrian passages with <6 m width in the ground floor Coordination of residential density from the aspect of construction level and the height of the buildings with the existing context	The maximum floors for the first row of Madi's frontage is two and for the second row is three floors The maximum number of the floors for kindergarten and medical center is one floor and other public services land use is two floors The maximum number of the floors and the permitted height is for the same boarders areas and it can't be more The maximum number of the floors for the same boarders ownerships with the N 1.7, N 1.12, N 1.10 (the Jolfa historical area, the Takhte Poolad religious cultural complex and historical-cultural areas) is one floor The maximum height for the public buildings in one floor is 5 m and two floors buildings is 7.5 m	In the Madi next pathway traffic up to 6 m width the maximum permitted height of the building from the surface of the path up to the shelter 10.5 m (two floors on the pilot) In the Madi next pathway traffic 6-8 m width the maximum permitted height of the building from the surface of the path up to the shelter 14 m (three floors on the pilot) In the Madi next pathway traffic under 8-10 m width the maximum permitted height of the building from the surface of the path up to the shelter 17 m (four floors on the pilot) In the Madi next pathway traffic 10-14m width the maximum permitted height of the building from the surface of the path up to the shelter 20 m (five floors on the pilot) Setting back with at least 2m from Madi that is impending form the north all the floors without any building construction and as the outdoor places under the owner authorization and addition of maximum one floor with maximum one break up to the ratified height
<b>Building height</b> The drop of passing streets offered by the organic comprehensive plan in this span Maintenance of main and valuable passages Establishment on motorist access in the inexpensive pathways of the context The limitation of total accesses width up to 10 m Setting back just in the cheap passages Dedication of Madis bounds to the pedestrian traffic and preventing from their interruption by the motorists	Building doors with more than 1.5 m width in the impending side to the Madis which is regarded for the pedestrian is not permitted Devotion of around Madis path to the pedestrians and the prohibition of the motorist movement Establishment of limited and not protract paths with maximum 3m width specialized to the emergency transportations in the places that the owners of the plates have the access only through the Madis margin Widening the Madis passing equally from the existing axis except the existence of valuable buildings from architectural and historical aspect Establishment of the bezel in the intersection of the motorists and Madis path pedestrians	Principled separation of the pedestrian and motorist path in a part that is dedicated to the motorist and the establishment motorists and pedestrian bridges on the Madis pathways when is necessary The establishment of at least 1.5 m dent in the afoot entrance of the Madi neighboring buildings Setting back creation up to 2.5 m from inside the ownership block for the places that the owners of the plates have the access only through the Madis margin Prohibition of motorist access establishment from the Madis side in the blocks that have other accesses than the Madis side The link between the Madis paths and the inter sector pedestrian net of the surrounding contexts The priority of the movement path around Madis to the pedestrians and the prohibition of motorist movement except the identified cases Establishment of especial bikeway with at least 2 m width by the differentiation in its flooring along the Madi path and building appropriate parking lot for bicycles in every 500 m Not being obligatory to set back in historical buildings or aging trees in the Madi neighboring Establishment of special path with maximum width for to the emergency transportations in the places that the access is possible only through the Madis axis Establishment of the bezel in the intersection of the motorists and Madis path pedestrians

Fig. 2(a-b): Land use comparison of connection place of Niasarm and Farshadi Madis with Chaharbaq axis, (a) Reconsideration detailed plan and (b) Review detailed plan

**Comparison of land use:** The maps of comprehensive plan that are prepared in a more general scope than the detailed plans shows the dominant land use arena identification as field division. These maps are represented in the form of land use in the detailed plan (Behzadfar, 2011). In Organic detailed plan the land use of the Madis bounds are mostly residential and its changes in this field is completely obvious with other two plans; therefore, the major changes of other two detailed plans are shown here (Fig. 2 and 3):

In addition to the aforementioned residential land use other changes are related to residential land use of Madis intersection with main pathways. The land use transformations related to the Fadan Madi crossing under Sheykh Bahaei Street is one of these differences (Fig. 4).

Aliqoli Aqa sector had been witness of changes regarding its land use during the time that most of them concern about services land use (Fig. 5).

**Comparison of pathways:** The basic of these span pathways net is old axis (Chaharbaq axis and inter sector historical passages), modern urban axis (streets) and

natural axis (Madis). The identification of aforesaid pathways net map of detailed plans doesn't show significant changes; these changes demonstrate the purification of Madi bounds and antecedence to their boundaries were a few with inconsiderable dimension; the accomplished sitting back from Madis bounds are aimed at facilitating the motorist traffic. Establishment of little squares and urban open spaces in the reconsideration plan for detailed plan are other differences of this plan that are not considered in other detailed plans.

**Comparison of buildings height:** The maps comparison shows that the Madis bound has faced with lots of changes concerning the buildings height. The organic detailed plan has considered the height of buildings in the Madi bounds up to two floors (7.5 m) from the ground. It is not comparable with other two plans from this side; on the other side the height identification of other two detailed plans indicates the major inequality. Also the review detailed plan considers the height of the buildings like the organic detailed plan from the ground level while in the reconsideration detailed plan it is from the parking floor. In the review detailed plan the





Fig. 3: Land use comparison of connection place of Niasarm, Farshadi and Fadan Madis with Beheshti street



Fig. 4: Land use comparison of Fadan Madi margin from under Sheikh Bahaei street



Fig. 5: Land use comparison of Fadan Madi pathway through Aliqoli Aqa sector

Madis bound is special residential with two floors height (7.5 m) while in the reconsideration detailed plan despite the emphasis on Madi bound specialty the buildings height are mostly 3-4 floors (14-17 m) and in some cases the increase in height is up to 5-6 floors

(20-23.5 m) 'as in Fig. 6'. The high constructions on the Madis bound followed with the increase in the buildings height, density, the motorist traffic and doesn't indicate the protective approach of the plans (Fig. 6).

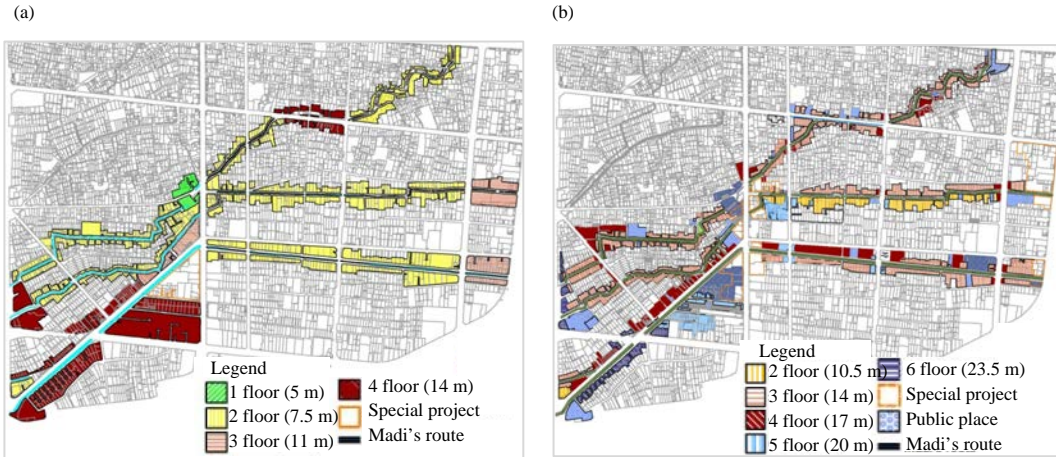


Fig. 6(a, b): Madi's frontage building height, (a) Reconsideration detailed plan and (b) Right review detailed plan

Table 2: The evaluation of detailed plans from objectives and content, methodology and composition and performance

Content and objectives of the plans	Evaluation and composition method	The executing inadequacy and problems
Lack of agreement with Madis conditions	Being state plan and the priority specification by the governing system	Lack of coordination between plans and zonal constructing programs
The assimilation of the detailed plans for the whole city	The interference of responsible personal elegance	The plan's financial and credit not being predicted
The urbanism offered patterns being stereotyped and the plans content lack of appropriateness with the sectors needs	Long distance between the preparation and composition time of comprehensive and detailed plans	Technical employees shortage (human and executive force)
Lack of connection among the three components of population, activity and function	Lack of sufficient attention to the evaluation and composition trend	Lack of people and social institutes participation
Separation of Madis from environmental district in effective components on sectors space organization and function	Emphasis on the assessment of physical suggestions	Centered decision making system
The manner of similar interference in all urban contexts types including historical, ancient, developed and marginal	Lack of executive facilities consideration	The change in the effective components quality coefficients on time passing derived calculations and predictions
Mere attention to physical subjects and issues and ignorance of the third dimension related matters and the quality dimensions of the environment and socio-economic dimensions	Absence of composed system in supervision	Absence of any control lever and criterions in the expedite city development
Lack of attention to the local conditions and ignorance of people participation	Ignoring the role and participation of people in plans utilization	
Non significance of Isfahan immense politics		
Lack of appropriate connection between the counselor engineers and urban management		
Lack of dynamism in the comprehensive and detailed plans and being recognized as absolute		
The criterions being expanded and awkward		
Lack of connection among the studies and designing		

## DISCUSSION

It has been for five decades from the preparation of urban development plans including directing, comprehensive, and detailed; plans aimed at urban coordinated physical development. But they have not been able to achieve their objectives for the lack of scheduling comprehensive system governance on the total country. On the other hand, the origin and entity of these plans shows inconsistencies with Iran land variety and features (Qamami, 1992). The evaluation of Madis current status indicates that there is considerable distance and difference between the reality (current situation) and the images of Madis derived from the plans. These differences are obvious almost in all determined

components-except the main urban pathways-including the buildings height, land use and Madis boundaries pathways. The lack of urban development plans realization is not only in Iran and all around the world the deficiencies of these types of plans are obvious.

Madis are one of the important features of Isfahan that have been able to resistant from the very first day of its formation until now. They have preserved the city life as a coherent generalization in the physical structure and Isfahan space organization under the effect of the Madis economic, social and environmental ruling conditions and specialties as alliance communicating and space coherence axis and were responsible for peoples and inhabitants needs in different human, social and functional dimensions. In the current period the socio-



economic, union and ethnic structures in the past provided the causes of sector's distinction from each other socially and culturally on one hand and the causes of the internal coherence and social and cultural correlation of each sector have been destroyed. Consequently the appropriate physical structures and spaces had been stopped from coordinated changes.

It has been about five decades that Isfahan has systematic detailed plans and all of them have emphasized on Madis values and importance and introduced its bounds as special one and has composed serious criterion and regulations for them. But the Madis problems has become more than before. The high construction issue in the bed of their bounds, fast and easy access of the motorists to the neighboring houses and consequently the persistence on the purification of its bounds and over setting back proportionate to their circumstances are from these problems that are investigated in this survey. Apart from the changes in life style and the evolution of the city living activity the main reason and origin of Madis local functions weakening in the current time can be observed in the urban scheduling methods and techniques deficiencies that are unable to produce and establish functional, social and modern human communications appropriate with the modern relations requirements in the Madis span (Table 2).

## CONCLUSION

From the structural incipient examination of the Isfahan Madis and the analytic point of view in the detailed plans role in their physical discipline is deduced that:

There is no predetermined and unchangeable destiny for the city and its current identity is caused from the long lasting gradual transformation or rather short time fundamental evolutions that are occurred during the time and will continue in future inevitably. The truth shows the implausibility of some claims regarding the historical identity that seems to be updated resisting in front of any type of dynamic changes.

Lowering the dignity of historical heritages and flawing the dynamism of past to present and future connection facilitates the way of ignoring the historical cores of the city.

Astereotyped behavior, regardless of the city incipient movement and the political and social realities brings the defeat by itself. Single-dimensional modernism that is going to establish evolution in the urban structure ignoring the urbanism national and traditions heritages and society cultural evolution cannot work in a way but unconsidered and primarily destructive measures.

Being bounded to the principle of objectivity demonstrates that the composition of objectives must be

done through observing society political structure, the real amount people participation in decision making, the existence of the beneficiaries groups, economic situations, and the role of land, work and goods. The strong character of the city has had a considerable effect on the designing trend and is elegant despite lots of urban plans offers.

The urban spaces in Isfahan have not formed from simple arrange of buildings and axis by each other but each of them are a collection of functional relation and elements that are organized in a body and any flaw to any part of it can ends in its whole eradication. So, although, the penetration in the context has got historical necessity for entering modern elements of city life, this measure must be taken according to structural incipient legality.

Without real vast participation of people while there is a possibility of idealistic elements penetration in the plans optimistically, no assurance exists for the plan's objectives and programs success.

Physical preparations cannot provide required instruments for controlling urban developments. The urban expansion is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that the physical aspect is its updated observable face, so, it is impossible to defeat such a complicated issue successfully with a single-dimensional solution.

Considering the previous plan ideas in the entire modern ideas codification is a positive point that has brought such endurance in the procedure of programming and has compensated the premature invalidity to some extent.

The entity of the plans have been needed to the strong and centered interference of the government in many cases but the responsibility of state institution had been in a way that in many cases people and the city are being impressed by the beneficiaries or victimized by the deliberations. This is the truth is unfortunately not supported by any urban plans and the performance discussion doesn't have any significance there. The separation of scheduling from performance and the custodian organizations for city governing inefficiencies had been always effective in the plan's relative fiascos.

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