

An Inhabitable Infrastructure:

Rethinking the architecture of the bazaar

The aim of Negar's thesis is twofold. First, it offers a 'theoretical reading' of a historically important architectural entity – namely the bazaar – in order to propose a synthetic understanding of its complexity and to explore the multiplicity of forces and regimes involved in the bazaar's [historical] formation. Second, by conceptualizing the architecture of the bazaar, this thesis explores the relation between architecture and territory, inhabitation and infrastructure in the context of the Iranian Plateau. In doing so, this thesis contributes to the production of an architectural knowledge which encourages a contextual studying of complex spatial regimes and mechanisms as their prime forces for intervention. The notion of the bazaar is complex. Not only does it have implications in diverse disciplines, but it also carries various definitions. Depending on the context in which it is used, the bazaar can be depicted as a place, a form of economy, a social class or a way of life, and thus it can embody the notion of a city, a territory or even it can be expanded to the region known as the Middle East or the Islamic world. Within this wide spectrum of possible meanings, the bazaar has been the topic of discourse in architecture and urban history, as well as anthropology, sociology, economics and political science.

The inherent complexity of the notion of the bazaar is attributable to its intermediate position, i.e. its relation to the territory and various ways of life, its spatial complexity, i.e. a space of movement and a place of public and the collective, and the superposition of different scales between architecture and the city. This implies that research on the bazaar needs to deviate from purely typological or urban morphological studies. Rather it needs to devote simultaneous attention to people as well as the numerous spatial interrelations involved in its formation. This means that an architecture is possible which gives form to the accumulation of complex cultural, social, economic and administrative relations. While it enables connection and integration, it provides scope for confrontation and encounter. The first chapter provides an overview of various conceptions, definitions and perceptions of the bazaar. This chapter will demonstrate that a proper discursive framework that allows us to grasp the spatial complexity of the bazaar is, in fact, missing. While architecture and urban studies have focused mainly on describing and classifying the bazaar's structural and morphological presence, other disciplines have hardly recognized its physical importance in the process of forming various interrelations. This chapter concludes that the bazaar is not simply an architectur-

al object, rather it is an entity which is territorial. This means that the bazaar's formation has been closely related to the ways in which the territory has been managed and inhabited. Subsequently, this research conceptualizes the architecture of the bazaar by revisiting its 'whereness' and 'whatness', using the 'territory' as a theoretical framework. While 'whereness' addresses the characteristics of 'where' the bazaar is historically located, 'whatness' is concerned with what the bazaar is and what it does. In this process, it is important to note that 'whereness' and 'whatness' are closely linked to each other, and they are both simultaneously a precondition and product. The second part of the thesis – which includes chapters three and four – presents an understanding of the 'whereness'. This part seeks means and lenses to open a discussion on territory both as a precondition and product. These two chapters discuss the geographical condition – and what I call the geopolitics of the in-between, through which two kinds of territorialities take form: i.e. the extensive territoriality of the nomadic spatialized through distribution and movement and the intensive territoriality of the sedentary spatialized through managerial knowledge of dehqan to inhabit a land. The coexistence, encounter and assimilation of these territorialities has had an impact on the state-form and the social and economic system on the Iranian Plateau in general and the spatial formation of the bazaar as an intermediate.

The third part of this thesis focuses on the issue of 'whatness'. This part – chapters five and six – re-examines the established knowledge on the bazaar as a physical and spatial entity by experimenting within two kinds of territorialities proposed in the previous chapters. In other words, the bazaar is seen as an assemblage of various territorial regimes rooted in the extensive nomadic territoriality and intensive sedentary territoriality. This not only pertains to the relation between movement and inhabitation, space and place in the bazaar's physical structure, but also in its social and legal organization, topology and logistical system. Thus, the bazaar goes beyond the mere circulation space; rather it is perceived as an infra+structure which is situated within the city and operated as the city's main [public] place. The present thesis examines the possibility of constructing a discursive platform for studying the bazaar as a complex architectural entity. It posits a critical reading of the bazaar's primary spatial idea, suggesting that a territorial reading of the bazaar can provide a valuable alternative lens for looking beyond mere preservation concerns or the purely formal imitations that are normally applied when examining the current condition of the bazaar in Irani-