18th AESOP YOUNG ACADEMICS CONFERENCE

Book of Abstracts

Bridging Gaps: Urban Planning for Coexistence

Department of Architecture and Urban Studies – Politecnico di Milano 19-22 March 2024

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TRACK 5

Towards Coexistence: Contested Social & Spatial Landscapes in Transformation

Land Use & Land Rights
Planning & Place Narratives
Borders & Proximities
Place Power, Borders, Migration,
Ecological & Territorial Justice
Ecosystems & Ecology
Place attachment, Placemaking &
Community Empowerment
Critical Landscapes & Critical Mapping

Chairs: **Gloria Pessina** (DAStU, Politecnico di Milano), **Nikos Katsikis** (TU Delft)
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Building Under Shadow of the Oil:
The Formation and Development of Oil Company Towns in Southwestern Iran

Co-authors: **Saeid Khaghani, Rouhollah Mojtahezadeh, Asma Mehan**

Keywords
Colonialism, Colonial Architecture and Urbanism, Oil, Abadan, Masjed Soleyman

Following Darcy's concession in 1901, Britain began oil exploration in the southwest of Iran. In 1908, economic oil was discovered, and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) was established. This company from its establishment was under the influence of the British Government, to extend that, Britain became its major shareholder in 1917 which continued until the nationalization of Iran's oil in 1951. In the meantime, the concession and following agreements prepared an almost autonomous status for the company. Generally, Iran had never been a British colony, however; this status had evidence of colonialism and let the company build the artificial environment in Iran's southwestern, based on its attitudes and values, as well as hierarchical structure, racial-class segregation, and closed society, which experts consider it as a type of social engineering.

According to this, the building formed by the company could manifest the upstream ideas, specifically in towns that were completely shaped by it. Therefore, Masjed Soleyman and Abadan, the two main company towns of the British-owned Anglo-Persian Oil Company, which were quite isolated from other parts of Iran, could be suitable platforms for displaying the company's attitudes and values. Therefore, this research by interpretive-historical methodology, based on both primary and secondary sources from desk research and archival research, investigates the manifestation of the company's attitudes and values in its quiet a half-century (1901-1951) building in Masjed Soleyman and Abadan, in five periods. These periods were shaped based on the most important happens including periods of exploration (1901-1908), formation (1908-1917), primary development (1917-1933), secondary development (1933-1939), and leading to the nationalization of oil (1939-1951). In the first period, there is no evidence of architecture or urbanism, in the second and third periods, architecture, specifically bungalows appeared company values and in the fourth and fifth periods, urbanism especially, garden cities represented company values.