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ABSTRACT

The Identity of a City: the Case of Tehran

هویت شهر: نگاهی به هویت شهر تهران

Published by the Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs of Tehran's municipality, this book explores the several elements that express the identity of the city of Tehran.

The work comprises five chapters of which the first four provide the theoretical framework, whilst the fifth consists of a case-study of the identity of Tehran.

The general definitions of identity are provided before the notion of identity in relation to the city is discussed. The book examines the crisis in the city's identity as its traditional structure underwent changes to accommodate Modernity.

Based on archival material, field observation and interviews, the author has determined three categories to establish the identity of a city. These are natural, man-made and human environments all of which are considered to play a role in the constitution of Tehran's identity.

The final chapter is organised around the three categories mentioned above. It gives a fairly comprehensive introduction to the geographical location of Tehran, its natural resources and structure as well as man-made elements such as different neighbourhoods, monuments, holy sites, cultural centres. Towards the end, an anthropological study of Tehran is presented taking into consideration race, language, religion and customs.

Written in a plain language, the book is a good reference both for scholars and for people who require general knowledge about the city of Tehran. The final chapter may be slightly incomplete as it does not refer much to the contemporary (post-revolution) developments of the city. But the book is valuable as it generates discussion on city identity in Iran.

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