

Original Research Article

Investigating the Spatial Conflict Effect of a Port as a Symbol of Sea-Based Development on the Core and Structure of a Port City (A Case Study of Shahid Rajaei Port and Bandar Abbas City)*

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Abstract | Examining the development of port cities has been highlighted in the process of “sea-based development.” Given their opportunities and capacities for facilitating development objectives, the ports are among the strategic and desirable projects that have been incorporated into land development plans. As a result, they contribute to the prosperity of sea-based industry and trade in a specific geographical area thanks to the increase in sea utilization. The outcome is the production of a tool and machine model that monopolizes the model of city development and its iconography. The concern of this study is the elements of the spatial organization of a port city, including contemporary life within the city, the contextual and physical transformation brought up by the sea-based development within the city, or the context where there is a connection between the city and the ports. This research employed a qualitative method with a descriptive and analytical approach, and data were collected through field observations and library and document studies. The research attempts to investigate the regulatory structural components, including the center, structure, territory, and small groups in the city of Bandar Abbas. As a result of this interaction, the relationships among the elements of the space organization are under threat. The construction of new neighborhoods just to accommodate immigrants has distorted the face of the city and made the urban structure useless. The structure of the city of Bandar Abbas is no longer dependent on the system of estuaries and coastal terraces but on the system of ports and the settlement of the immigrant population. Among these pillars, the core has lost its subjective and conceptual meaning as defined by the sea and has emerged only in the form of a physical thing in the market of the city. The transformation of the city of Bandar Abbas into the hinterland of Shahr-Bandar Shahid Rajaei has turned the communication corridors between the two into service corridors and has faded the concept of the road landscape and weakened the connection with the sea.

Keywords | *Spatial organization of the city, Sea-based development, Bandar Abbas, Center, Structure, Road Landscape.*

Introduction | The symbol of sea-based development in port cities is the establishment of port spaces. The construction of port spaces far from the city has brought port cities into the periodization of city and port developments. “Historical studies explain well the effect of economic growth and developmental

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processes resulting from the activities of railways, ports, mines, factories, and industrial facilities that have affected people’s living standards and the development of urban spaces and confirm that the establishment of textile industries in England, the railway in America, the refinery in Abadan, the port in Khorramshahr, and Bandar Abbas have had a direct effect on the development and growth of geography and urban spaces” (Vedadi, 2008, 88). This has been realized in Bandar Abbas with the establishment of Shahid Rajaei Port on a

domestic scale, which affects the city of Bandar Abbas. Now, due to the importance of ports in the growth of the country's macroeconomics and the opening of the gates of world trade, for about seven decades, one of the strongest symbols of sea-based development in the city of Bandar Abbas is the port of Shahid Rajaei, which is located thirty kilometers away from the city of Bandar Abbas. Now, it is getting wider in development plans and facing the city. This research is in response to the question of how the city port interacts and examines how the elements of the spatial organization of Bandar Abbas city and the current life in it are confronted with the content and physical transformation affected by the development of the base sea within a city.

Research Method

Following an evolutionary reading of what has been done so far about the pathological concept of the spatial organization of the city, we adopted a qualitative method and a descriptive-analytical approach and carried out a physical-spatial structure analysis. This method of analysis uses the synthesis of the city's shaping elements, the description of its characteristics, and the mutual interaction of the city with the sea-based development to provide a clear description of the changes that have occurred. In this regard, with a library study of the concept and characteristics of the spatial organization of the city and the components that give meaning to its general nature, it has been explained that the basis of the analysis of the study sample is Bandar Abbas as one of the most important port cities of the country in Hormozgan province. Examining the conceptual characteristics of the study sample by referring to the maps and field study and observation of the current situation of Bandar Abbas city was done to use them to analyze the hidden negative effects of the sea-based development in the spatial and semantic organization of the city and the manifestations of objective-mental degradation of the city's substance.

Research Background

Part of the available research is on the physical developments of Bandar Abbas city and also the explanation of how Bandar Abbas maritime trade power was projected in historical documents and narratives. Other studies are in the contemporary era, considering the strategic position of the southern coasts and ports, which have opened a new chapter of development. In the 1940s, the construction of a modern port in the west of Bandar Abbas was on the agenda, and after that, Bandar Abbas played a role as a small town for Bandar Madran Shahid Rajaei. Based on the available literature (Dadashpour & Arasteh, 2017), analyzed the spatial relations between the southern ports of Iran and its coastal areas and examined the pattern of spatial structure between the port and the coastal and coastal areas. The results of the mentioned research show that the prosperity of local economies in the areas of the

hinterland has been neglected due to the rhombus-shaped structure of distribution and reception, and the local people of Bandar have not benefited from it (Arasteh, 2019). conducted research entitled "Examining the Role of City-Ports in Regional Development." The results of this research show that, according to the periodization of the development of ports, some spaces are left between the ports and the city. This has distorted the face of the city and reduced the functional compatibility of the city and the port. This research provides a solution to make the network of interaction and spatial communication between the port and the city more efficient by using the space-time compression model. In his research under the title "Actions in the Interaction between the" City" and the "Port". Vedadi sought to investigate the effect of the port on the growth and development of the city and its expansion. The results of his research show that the port is an environmental factor in the city's development, and the management of the port and changing its role from loading to the market will emphasize the concept of a port city and its civility. This research deals with the changes and interactions between the core and the structure of the spatial organization of the city during the period of transformation and development of the ports, in which the nature of the port city of Bandar Abbas has changed into a small port city, and attempts to express the damage caused and explain the disorganized state of the spatial organization in the sea-based development process (Vedadi, 2008).

The Theoretical Framework of the Study

Understanding the city system contributes to understanding the elements of the spatial organization of the city, and "spatial organization is a concept derived from a systemic view of the city and its constituent parts, which considers a meaning for the city beyond the algebraic sum of its physical components and a meaning derived from order, relation, and connection among the components of the city. This concept comes from the collective agreement of the residents on how to shape the city. In this point of view, the constructive elements of the city in each civilization are formed based on a special system and organization that are derived from their similar cultural framework. Therefore, the concept of spatial organization can be considered a cultural characteristic and a sign of identity" (Abarghouei Fard & Mansouri, 2021, 20). According to the existing studies on culture-based city organization, the role of climate in shaping the culture of a region is undeniable, and the architecture of cities is also a function of the cultural system based on climate and geography. Rappaport believes that building methods, buildings, and climatic factors are not primary factors, and the shape of buildings is affected by human understanding of the world, life, culture, religious beliefs, and the way they socially communicate (Rappaport, 2003). Moreover, the formation and development of port cities depend on the centrality of the sea and its dependent climate, and it has had

an evident effect on the distinction and differentiation resulting from the difference in architecture and urban planning of port cities. On the other hand, the concept of sea-based development is also linked to economic development. Throughout history, sea-based economies have been the foundation for the birth and development of the city. Port cities owe their birth to a sea-based economy, and this issue has been reflected in the subjective and objective ideas of the citizens of a port city. In the city of Bandar Abbas, the climate has intervened in the culture of urban planning and considered the urban structure on a macro scale as a function of the Khor (Bay) and terrace systems. To understand the spatial organization of a city based on the available sources, in the Islamic era, the spatial organization of the city had four pillars: “center,” “structure,” “region,” and small areas (Mansouri, 2019). “In a general classification, among the four basic components of the spatial organization of the Iranian city, the center, as a part of its existence, is a necessity, and the other three components, which serve a function, create sufficient conditions for the realization of the entire judicial system of the city. Based on this classification, the position of each component in the general concept of the city in Iran can be expressed based on the following model” (ibid.) (Fig. 1).

It is necessary to know the Bandar Abbas system as a port city, and the history of Bandar Abbas from the beginning of the formation of this port in the Safavid period should be taken into consideration. Shah Abbas made an important contribution by transforming a small spot into an important political, commercial, and social area called Bandar Abbasi and creating a city with the same name (Vosoghi & Habibi, 2007).

Discussion

• Understanding the spatial organization of Bandar Abbas city

The spatial organization of Bandar Abbas City was formed based on the maritime system and the existence of prominent features such as centers, corridors connected to the sea, and activity zones and their arrangements. By analyzing this city from the perspectives of port cities and hinterlands, the relationship between Bandar Abbas City and Shahid Rajaei Transnational Port was determined. Then connecting

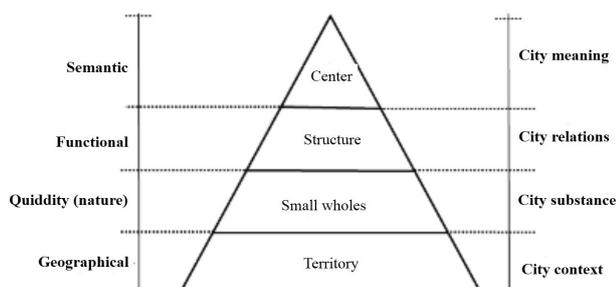


Fig. 1. A schematic representation of the four main components of the spatial organization of the city. Source: Mansouri, 2019, 155.

communication and the way in which the components of the urban spatial organization have been influenced were detailed.

Territory: “Territory is an edge that separates an area with a particular characteristic from its adjacent areas. This special feature can include a specific attribute that can be received by sensory perception or can be the result of establishing a specific and different function from outside the border of the territory. An important condition for realizing the overall concept of the city requires understanding the range of space to which city dwellers have a sense of belonging. In this case, the edge of a place narrates the special meaning of the separation of inside and outside space. The physical crystallization of the territory of the Iranian city can be seen at its edge in the form of a rampart” (Mansouri, 2019, 52). The rampart is one of the indicators of the territory, which was also present in Bandar Abbas both in a natural form (e.g. a mountain) and in an artificial form (e.g. a fortification). In the book “From Bandar Abbas to Jeron,” authored by Sayebani, a part of Taverniehi’s travelogue is given in connection with Bandar Abbas with the theme that “15 years ago, there was not a rampart. At night, they (thieves) might have entered the city and committed theft or fraudulent customs, but since they fenced the city, its importance has increased” (Sayebani, 1998, 66). Now the ramparts do not exist in the form mentioned in the historical narratives. The mountains have also changed their use from territory to mine sites for exploitation.

Neighborhoods: “In the composition of the Iranian city, there are semi-independent units covering the entire surface of the city. These units are called “Mahalleh” (neighborhood) and are the main elements of the city system. Mahallat (plurals of the term neighborhood) serve as a set of interconnected components that are independent in their entirety and existence. These elements, which can be called small wholes, are related to each other and contribute to the centrality of the city through the structure” (Mansouri, 2019, 60). The most famous Mahallats are Bandar Abbas, Dohzar, Shahid Jafari, Soro, Seyedkamel, Naiband, Barke Gard, Pushtshahr, Serah Barq, Kabzari, Tree Sabz, Shah Hosseini, Golshahr, Beheshtbandar, Damahi, Azadegan, Zibashahr, Nakhel Nakhda, Khaje Ata, Kui 22 Bahman, Shemiliha, Sarrig, Sim Bala, Shoghu (Tawheed town), Uziha, Soro and Shashad Dashtagh, Amirabad, and Chaharsaddashtagh.

Center: “The center is a single concept that indicates the essence and main character of the city, which appears geographically. Crossroads, mosques, markets, squares, bathhouses, water reservoirs, etc. are sufficient sources, and social and political events are necessary sources for the formation and continuation of the life of the center. Centrality, by bringing together the main elements and urban functions as the heart and engine of city development, plays an essential role in the existence and unity of the concept of the city. On the one hand, this problem has shown itself in the form of the concentration of various religious, economic, social, and political functions, and on

the other hand, it has stabilized itself by being adjacent and in the center of the communication structure of the city market. It is a place of political-social strategies as well as the cultural crystallization of its audience” (ibid.).

Vastoghi states that the core of the formation of Bandar Abbas began with the conquest of Hormoz Island, the expulsion of the Portuguese, and the removal of all obstacles to the renewal of Iran’s sovereignty in the Persian Gulf. The small and not very prosperous port of Gombroon experienced a new birth, and this small village, in a short period and from a 200-person settlement, turned into a trade center of the Persian Gulf, and it was called “Abbasiyah” or “Bandar Abbasi” due to the services of Shah Abbas I (Vosoghi, 2009). Based on this, it can be concluded that the city of Bandar Abbas, with the nature of a port city in the Safavid era, emerged from the development of a port village named Gombroon and found its spatial organization over time. Since the establishment of Shahid Rajaei Port in the 1940s, this city has played the role of a small port city. As mentioned, the center, which gives meaning to a city, is an abstract and subjective matter. The center in Bandar Abbas is a concept emerging from the sea and embodied in the market with its socio-economic function. A city that is the result of the rural development of a port called Gombroon came into existence “seven years after the conquest of Hormoz and the replacement of Bandar Abbasi; a large market was built for the city, and in this way, a new urban context was created parallel to the coast” (ibid.). It should be said that the centrality of Bandar Abbas is based on the centrality of its market, and the identity of a port city like Bandar Abbas is connected with its surrounding environment.” For example, when talking about a port city, the port prefix expresses the city’s identity through natural components. It means that the city in question is located in a geographical area by the sea. But the character of this port city may be described by other adjectives. For example, it can be called the city of palms and groves, the city of windcatchers by the sea, or the city of dinghies and ships. Here, the groves, which are natural elements of the port city, represent the city, as well as the windcatchers, which are the artificial and architectural elements of the urban space, and the dinghies and ships, which are the elements of the city’s economy” (Komeili, 2009, 174).

Structure: “Iranian cities are the link between the main components of the city, including the rampart, centrality, neighborhoods, and urban complexes. In the absence of such cities, the aforementioned elements are formed in a scattered and unrelated manner and are unable to create a “general” concept of the city. The structure, as a physical element that serves as a communication factor, is often linear and in the form of the city’s main market and its main passages. In some cities, the market was only a part of the structure, and the primary axes of the city’s formation were the important regional roads and the main passage of the structure. By reviewing the descriptions of travel writers and the opinions of city experts,

four main characteristics can be attributed to the structure” (Mansouri, 2019, 59).

The four main characteristics of the structure are 1) its functional role as a communication factor between different parts of the city; 2) its hierarchy in accesses. 3: The connecting factor of the main components and functions of the city in the form of a support. 4: The formation of the continuous flow of life and urban life, which creates a social role in the structure and organization of social life in the city (ibid.).

Bandar Abbas is a coastal city, and its structure follows the pattern of coastal cities. “Usually in coastal areas, coastal terraces cause the division (classification) of areas. In other words, the division takes place parallel to the coast. While in Bandar Abbas city, the role of waterways has been more effective, and divisions have been made vertically (perpendicular to the coast). Therefore, the influence of waterways (estuaries) in Bandar Abbas city is stronger than other dynamic factors, such as sea terraces, and this influence is well evident in the division of the city into different areas. In other words, under such an effect, the different areas of the city have been divided, and the boundaries of the areas have been determined. So, not only the estuaries have influenced the form of the city, but they have also overshadowed the urban divisions (Mahdavi Najafabadi, 2009, 42). “In fact, the largest civilization formed today along the coast of the sea, i.e., Bandar Abbas, is the result of the connection of the old and discontinuous villages and Mahallat of yesterday, which were formed at the intersection of the terrace and the waterway” (ibid.). Fig. 2 is also a representation of the old Bandar Abbas, where the paths and waterways lead to the sea. In fact, the passage in the port city is perpendicular to the sea; as a result, the connection between the city and the sea is formed through its structure.

Now, to investigate the effects of the sea-based development on the spatial organization of this city and to understand the current position of Bandar Abbas in the era of transformation, we need to scrutinize the relationship between Bandar Abbas as a port city and Shahid Rajaei port as a port.

Between “port” and “city,” there is an action and reaction space. The space is created and supported through port and maritime activities and related systems, as well as the provision of labor and land resources and services provided by the city (Vedadi, 2008). The expansion of port and maritime activities lays the groundwork for the development of employment and job opportunities, as well as the circulation of capital and money, in general, the expansion of port, maritime, and coastal facilities and the level of investment can provide the basis for social development and the economy of the city (ibid.).

• The situation of Bandar Abbas in the period of transformation of coastal cities

The period of transformation of coastal cities and port areas, especially in the model of developed countries, consists of four periods. In each period, it has played an effective role in

creating spatial balance in their surrounding areas. In the first and second periods, the functional and physical interaction between the city and the port was two-way and absorbing. In the third period, due to the specialization of ports, the tendency for spatial separation between the port and the city increased, and practically a spatial separation between the city and the port occurred. In the fourth period, which was parallel to the last two decades, the city was leaning towards the port. With this change, managers and developers tried to develop activities from the abandoned spaces between the port and the city that were in line with economic and capitalist goals, and the citizens of the city were the beneficiaries of this development (Arasteh, 2019). Although the generalization of the model of developed countries to the structures and systems of third-world countries reduces the credibility of the issue, it will help to create a comparative context and understand the development model. Therefore, the field observations indicate that the interaction between Bandar Abbas and Bandar Shahid Rajaei is in the third period of transformation (Fig. 3). According to the characteristics of the third period, the necessity of cities for ports has reduced, and global trade has required that wide and linear docks be designed for giant ships. Parallel to that, port activities have occurred outside cities, and abandoned docks and ports without urban spatial activities have emerged. The location of Bandar Abbas has created the mentioned situation in the third period of spatial confrontation. For this reason, it is important to research the way the port and the city interact and how the scale of this interaction affects the two pillars of the spatial organization, including the center and the structure of the city. In the following part, we will explain how the existence of these two pillars will be affected in the third period, and their contribution to the basic sea development process will be discussed.

Explanation of the physical and semantic condition of the core of the city of Bandar Abbas in the third period of the transformation of the city and the port: historical documents indicate that Gambron was the closest core of life to the sea," says the author of Marat al-Baldan in his book (page 2191 of volume Jahar), quoting from Anjoman Aray-e Nasserri that Jeroun was the name of a province near the port of Hormoz,

which is one of the buildings of Ardeshir Babkan, and during the Safavid period, "Shah Abbas the late" built and settled a port that is known as the "Abbasi" port, and the interpretation attributed to Jaroon is still called Jaronat. The root of the word is "Geroun, and "Jeroun" is its verb" (Sayebani, 1998, 54). When it was transformed into Bandar Abbasi during the Safavid era, it introduced itself as a commercial base, and then sea-related markets began to grow in Gombroon. Gombroon's old market took on the role of the core of the city because, as Sadid al-Saltaneh mentions, most of the ships that were going to Basra or coming from there stopped at Bandar Abbasi because the markets there were suitable for selling goods (Seyed al-Sultaneh, 1985). Within the city, there were lots of commercial diversities, various occupations, and population conflicts. The direct involvement of market activities with the inner city port to sell goods also connects the sea-based identity of the city to the subjective and objective perception of the citizens. The elements of the economy of a port city and the livelihood of its residents, which are embodied in the center of the spatial organization of the city and the market square, are sometimes more effective than other non-physical factors, depending on the environmental conditions. "Regarding the variety of economic activities in Bandar Abbas city, an economically and strategically important city, it seems that the role of economic activities (trade and market) has been a more prominent non-physical identity factor than other activities (cultural and



Fig. 2. Paths leading to the sea, old Bandar Abbas port in Taverniye's travelogue. Source: Sayebani, 1988, 61.

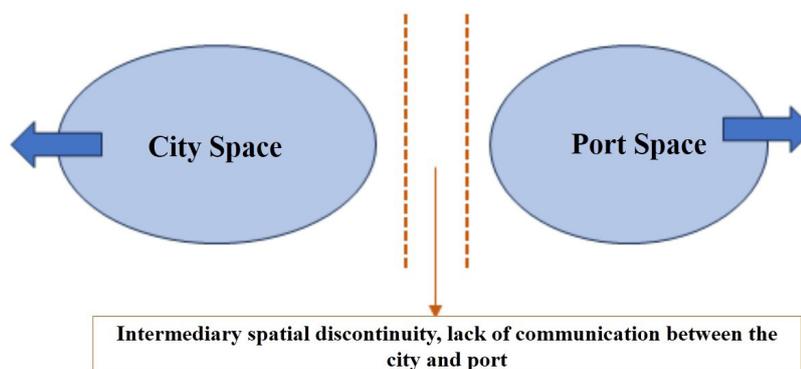


Fig. 3. Location of Bandar Abbas in the third time period of city-port spatial conflict. Source: Author.

environmental customs, etc.), whose physical remains are currently considered the most important element of identity in the city” (Komeli, 2009, 173). “It seems that the scope of identity authentication in Shahrbandar Abbas is directly related to the dominant activity of citizens in the city. That means if the commercial activity in Bandar Abbas is the dominant activity, the citizens associate with this type of activity because they consider commercial and economic values as the primary elements of the city’s identity” (ibid.). Currently, the economic model of Bandar Abbas is a function of the position of this city in the national and regional economies. Although the economic model of Hormozgan province is mainly agriculture and fishing (37% of the total production of the province), Bandar Abbas has a different economic model compared to its wider region. The establishment of military and defense industries, oil and steel industries, and conversion and consumption industries has become the basis for changing the city’s employment structure (Dadashpour & Arasteh, 2017). Now, this statement is true because, according to the third period of city-port interaction in Bandar Abbas, in the current era, the market situation in Bandar Abbas as the center and core of the city in the scattered and wide structure of the city highlights that the city has a significant width physically, and its use of the sea is only limited to local micro-livelihoods such as the fish market of Soro Mahalle, and it is not directly related to the supply of goods imported from the port. This statement has been supported by the isolation of the port space from the city, the migration of port activities from the city, the dependency of the city on the trans-regional and national economic model, and the analysis of the field findings in the hinterland sector: Most of the opportunities are in Shahid Rajaei port, which itself plays the central role of an intermediary in sending goods to the hinterland on the trans-regional level (Fig. 4).

The change in the employment structure of the city from dependence on the sea and the port to dependence on the trans-regional and national economic-industrial model causes a change in the identification and perception of citizens from the single and subjective concept of the city center emerging from the sea in the port city of Bandar Abbas.

• Explanation of the state of the structure of Bandar Abbas city in the third period of the transformation of the city and the port

After the formation of Shahid Rajaei Port, which was a significant distance from Bandar Abbas City, the structural system between the city and the port was dependent on the port system. In general, the main access networks from the port of Shahid Rajaei to the trans-regional points are defined and do not conform to the functional, socio-economic, and hierarchical structure of the city, which is the communication routes between the Mahallat and facing the sea (Fig. 5). Toward Minab and Sirjan, Khor (Bay) Shilat, Khorogrusuzan, Bazaar Complex, Bandar Abbas-

Sirjan Highway, Toward Shahid Rajaei Port, Toward Shahid Bahonar Port.

In addition to that, the findings on the communications corridor section of the port and hinterland show that Shahid Rajaei Port is daily expanding due to its national use, and now Bandar Abbas City and the communication routes to Shahid Rajaei Port are serving the port. For that reason, the landscape of the road and the connection with the sea have weakened the local port-hinterlands connecting route. The expansion of the city and the construction of new neighborhoods to accommodate immigrants have resulted in small units, but urban structures formed based on the connection with the sea do not form a meaningful network because of the spatial organization of the city. In addition, there are rich mineral, oil, and gas mines in the coastal and coastal areas of southern Iran, which ports can adapt well to their industrial activities and support. A clear example of this issue is the proximity of Shahid Rajaei Port to the refinery, the special economic zone of mineral and metal industries of the Persian Gulf, three industrial towns, and a large number of container warehouses and commercial goods, all of which indicate that the ports are productive in connection with the local corridor of the hinterland. Industrial prosperity and activity have been heterogeneous.

The weakness of the port macro-planning and management



Fig. 4. Bandar Abbas old market. Photo: Zahra Amini Mastane, 2023.

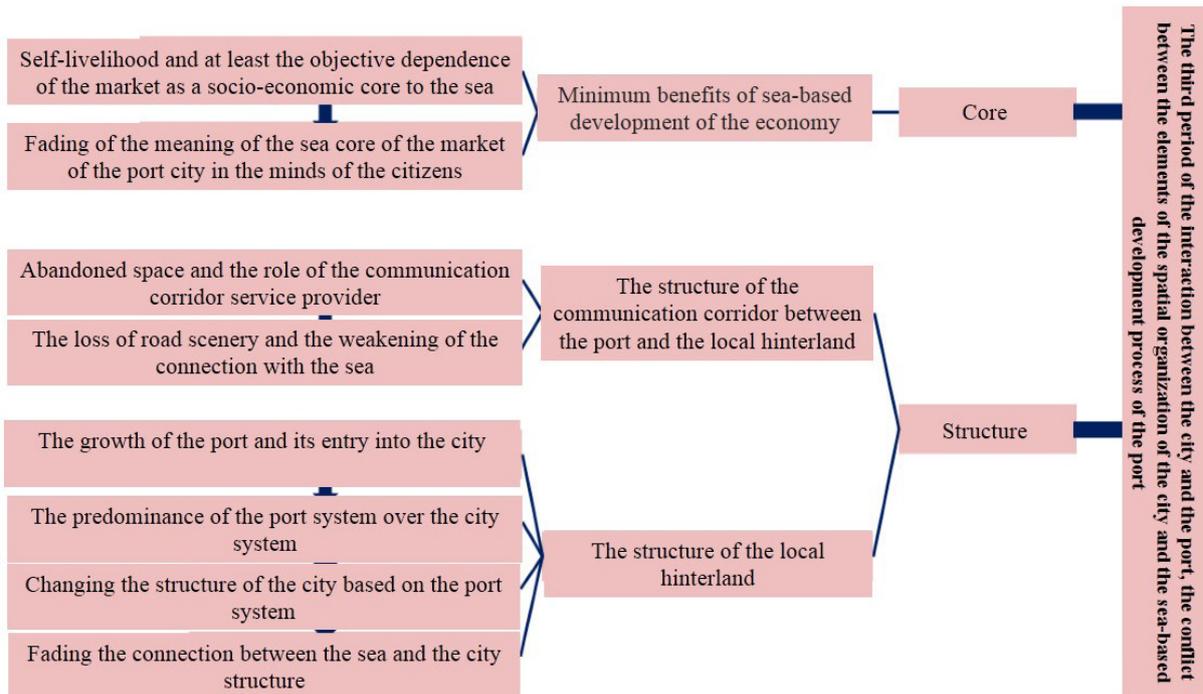


Fig. 6. Conflicting the pillars of the spatial organization of Bandar Abbas and Bandar Shahid Rajaei. Source: Author.

city, as well as on the communication corridor between the two and the middle space, and void the relationship between the port and the city should be clearly explained, and the

relationship between the elements of the spatial organization should be maintained and strengthened. It is one of the most important measures for sea-based development in port cities.

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