



Article

# The Geographical Nature of The City of Qom and Its Impact On The Societal Diversity of Its Residents in Islamic

Ibtisam Zaidan Odeh Al-Kanani <sup>1\*</sup>, Muhammad Thani Abbas Abayawi <sup>2</sup>

1. Baghdad Governorate / Baghdad Education Directorate Al-Karkh, Baghdad, Iraq
  2. College of Management and Economics, University of Maysan, Maysan, Iraq
- \* Correspondence: [abtsamn338@gmail.com](mailto:abtsamn338@gmail.com)

**Citation:** Muhammad Thani Abbas Abayawi, & Ibtisam Zaidan Odeh Al-Kanani. (2024). The Geographical Nature of The City of Qom and Its Impact On The Societal Diversity of Its Residents in Islamic . Central Asian Journal of Theoretical and Applied Science, 5(4), 245- 256.

Received: April 11, 2024  
Revised: April 29, 2024  
Accepted: July 22, 2024  
Published: August 10, 2024



**Copyright:** © 2024 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

**Abstract:** This research revolves around studying the geographical nature of the city of Qom and its impact on the social diversity of its inhabitants during the Islamic eras. Qom city is characterized by a strategically important location near the Iranian capital, Tehran, and this geographical nature has influenced the diversity of the community and cultures in the city over the centuries. As a prominent religious center in Islam, Qom attracted Muslims from various races and cultures, leading to the exchange of cultures and peaceful coexistence among the population. The city has evolved over time to become an important industrial and economic center, making it home to various industries and a distribution hub for petroleum and fuels. However, cultural and religious heritage remains an integral part of the city's identity, as it is rich in important religious landmarks and historical sites that attract visitors from around the world. Based on this study, it can be concluded that the geographical nature of Qom plays a significant role in shaping social and cultural diversity, and in promoting communication and understanding among the population during and after the Islamic eras.

**Keywords:** Geographic nature, Qom city, societal diversity.

## 1. Introduction

Qom City is considered one of the prominent historical cities in Iran, renowned for its unique geographical nature and strategic importance. Since the early Islamic ages, Qom has witnessed remarkable cultural and religious development, leading to the formation of a unique and diverse societal fabric for its inhabitants.

Situated in central Iran, specifically in Qom Province, the city is regarded as one of the holiest cities in the Islamic world. Its history dates back to prehistoric times, experiencing various historical stages that have left imprints on its identity and demographic diversity. Qom City is characterized by its unique geographical features, nestled in a mountainous valley surrounded by the Zagros Mountain range. This strategic natural location has made the city a major commercial and religious center in the region, attracting numerous trade caravans and pilgrims throughout the ages.

The impact of the geographical nature on societal diversity in Qom City during the Islamic ages is undeniable. The fertile mountainous environment and abundant flowing water have served as attractions for people from diverse cultures, traders, scholars, and preachers alike. These natural conditions have opened avenues for cultural exchange and mutual influence between the local population and newcomers, resulting in a clear cultural, religious, and social diversity in the city.

In this context, we will explore the impact of Qom City's geographical nature on shaping the societal diversity of its inhabitants during the Islamic ages, and how this diversity contributed to the development of social, cultural, and religious life in the city throughout the ages.

#### First Section: Geography of Qom City

Qom, an Iranian city, is one of the foremost cities in the country, ranking second in terms of size and importance. It is renowned as the center of Shiite religious seminaries and the stronghold of scholars in Iran. Iranians refer to it as "The Holy Qom," considering it the main city for Shiite scholars and jurists worldwide. Qom boasts a rich history, having influenced various political, social, and economic aspects in Iran, both before and after the Iranian Revolution.

Qom is among the oldest cities in Iran, evidenced by archaeological findings mentioned by Yaqut al-Hamawi. References to Qom are found in several ancient historical books, and it is inferred from Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* that Abu Musa al-Ash'ari opened it in 23 AH. However, some historians believe its establishment during the Islamic era by the Ash'arites after their migration from Kufa, differing on the exact year, suggesting 83 AH, 94 AH, or 203 AH. Nonetheless, it is evident that the latter claim is inaccurate, as Qom existed before 201 AH, indicated by historical records mentioning its separation from Isfahan – after being administratively part of it – in 189 AH. Additionally, it's narrated that Fatimah bint Imam Musa (A.S) arrived in Qom in 201 AH, passing away 17 days later, and was buried in a place called Bablan, after which constructions proliferated around her noble shrine.

Qom City is situated on the banks of a river bearing the same name, located southwest of Iran's political capital, Tehran, at a distance of approximately 125 kilometers. The city<sup>1</sup> covers an area of 380 square kilometers and serves as the center of Qom Province, which spans 11,000 square kilometers. It is bordered by Tehran from the north, Isfahan from the south, Arak City from the west, and Semnan Province from the east. Qom's elevation is about 930 meters above sea level, characterized by a desert climate with low rainfall.

<sup>1</sup> BAHAR, A. A., & HAMMAD, A. (2021). Economic life in the city of Qom during the Abbasid era (132–656 AH / 749–1258 AD): (historical study). *Al-Adab Journal*, (136), 127–146

---

---

According to 2011 statistics, Qom City's population was approximately 1.1 million people, comprising a diverse community of individuals from various races and cultures.

Qom City occupies a distinctive geographical position in Iran, characterized by several geographical aspects that influence its development, culture, and economy. Here's a description of the geographical nature of Qom City:<sup>2</sup>

- **Geographical Location:** Qom City is located in central Iran, southwest of the capital Tehran, approximately 125 kilometers away. The city enjoys a strategic location on major trade routes between the capital and other cities in Iran, making it a center for commerce and economic activity.<sup>3</sup>
- **Terrain:** Qom City is surrounded by a range of mountains and hills, granting it beautiful natural landscapes and a moderate climate. Part of the city extends on the slopes of hills and mountains, providing areas with magnificent panoramic views of the surrounding region.
- **Climate:** Qom City's climate is characterized by aridity, with high temperatures in summer and low temperatures in winter. Summer months are marked by high heat and severe dryness, while winters are cold and moderately humid.
- **Natural Resources:** Qom City is characterized by the availability of water sources, with several springs and small rivers nourishing agricultural life in the region. The agricultural lands in Qom City are rich and fertile, facilitating the cultivation of a variety of crops.

---

<sup>2</sup> BAHAR, A. A., & HAMMAD, A. (2021). Economic life in the city of Qom during the Abbasid era (132–656 AH / 749–1258 AD): (historical study). *Al-Adab Journal*, (136), 127–146

<sup>3</sup> BAHAR, A. A., & HAMMAD, A. (2021). Economic life in the city of Qom during the Abbasid era (132–656 AH / 749–1258 AD): (historical study). *Al-Adab Journal*, (136), 127–146



Figure (1): Location of the city of Qom

Environmental Diversity<sup>4</sup>: Qom City encompasses a variety of plants and wild animals, enhancing environmental diversity in the region. The city features some enchanting natural areas such as valleys and rocky slopes, attracting tourists and boosting the tourism sector.

### **Second Section: The Strategic Impact of Geographic Location**

The strategic impact of Qom City's geographic location reflects the vital role these geographical factors played in shaping its position as a religious, cultural, and commercial center during the Islamic ages. Here are some points that illustrate this impact:<sup>5</sup>

- **Strategic Location as a Hub:** Qom City's central location in Iran has made it a crucial hub for trade, economic activity, and culture. Thanks to its central position, Qom attracted trade caravans and pilgrims from various parts of the Islamic world, contributing to the prosperity of the local economy and cultural exchange.
- **Strategic Security:** Surrounded by mountainous areas and heights, Qom City has been a secure location militarily, protecting it from invaders and external aggression. The natural protection provided to the city has contributed to its stability and continuity throughout the ages.
- **Natural Resources:** The Qom region boasts important natural resources such as flowing water and fertile agricultural lands, making it suitable for human settlement and civilization development. The city benefited from agriculture, animal husbandry, and handicrafts, which contributed to its economic development and prosperity.

<sup>4</sup> Ahmed Abdel-Jabbar Snobar, & Sharaf Mahmoud Al-Qudah. (2014). Shiism in the city of Qom and its impact on understanding the Imami narrative reality. *Studies: Sharia and Law Sciences*, 163(1548), 1–21.

<sup>5</sup> KHORDADI, J., & SHAHRAD, M. (2015). Of the Framework to culture (determination of the parameters of Islamic city Serve as sustainable city) Case Study: Qom city (capital of cultural of Iran). *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Fen Bilimleri Dergisi*, 36(3), 4093–4107.

- **Access to Major Cities:** Due to its proximity to the capital Tehran, Qom City has enjoyed easy access to major markets, centers of power, and decision-making, making it an important hub for trade and political influence.
- **Religious Centrality:** Qom City's location is considered a major religious center in the Islamic world, hosting numerous important religious sites, temples, and religious schools, making it an important pilgrimage destination for Muslims.

### **Third Section: Demographic Diversity in Qom City**

The demographic diversity in Qom City during the Islamic ages reflects a rich blend of races, cultures, and communities that have settled in the city over time. Here are some points highlighting this diversity: <sup>6</sup>

- **Ethnic and National Diversity:** Qom's history dates back to pre-Islamic times, but its most significant period was during Islam. Historical traditions attribute its founding to Tahmuras. Qom was invaded by Abu Musa Abdullah ibn Qays al-Ash'ari in 23 AH, and during the Abbasid Caliphate, it became a sanctuary for Shia beliefs, hosting many Sayyids who sought refuge there. Qom faced invasions and damage from the Mongols, Timur, and the Afghans. However, during the Safavid era, it witnessed growth. In the Qajar period, prosperity increased, attributed to factors such as the presence of the Imam Reza shrine and the scholarly and religious community. Throughout the ages, Qom attracted diverse communities of various races and nationalities, including Arabs, Persians, Turks, Kurds, Azerbaijanis, and others. These ethnic and national communities exchanged knowledge and cultures, shaping Qom's diverse and rich identity.
- **Religious Diversity:** As a major religious center, Qom City attracted Muslims from various sects and denominations, including Shia, Sunni, Mu'tazila, and others. These religious sects coexisted and exchanged religious and intellectual experiences, influencing the development of religious and cultural thought in the city. <sup>7</sup>
- **Cultural Diversity:** The diverse cultural presence of the city's population created a rich cultural environment, blending arts, customs, and traditions from different cultures. Cultural life in the city was influenced by cultural exchange among the population, leading to the emergence of unique artistic and cultural expressions reflecting this diversity.

<sup>6</sup> Dr.. Alaa Hammad Raja, & researcher Abdel Manna. (2021). Cultural and scientific life in the city of Qom during the Abbasid era (656–132 AH / 750–1258 AD) (historical study). *Al-Adab*, 137

<sup>7</sup> Jassim Mohammed Hayes. (2017). Iranian government of Jamshid Amuzgar, August 7, 1977–August 27, 1978. *Lark*, 9(4), 215–224.

- **Economic Diversity:** Qom City attracted traders, craftsmen, and workers from various social classes and professions, leading to significant economic diversity. Different economic activities such as trade, agriculture, and industry merged in the city, contributing to the enhancement of demographic and economic diversity. The Qom market contains precious artistic treasures and traditional architecture dating back to the Safavid era. The Qom market comprises a group of four orders, the four heads, in the middle of the old town of Qom. The complex consists of two covered orders with a dome. The inner market is an open market. On the other hand, traditional architecture faces the extreme summer heat, winter cold, and desert air in Qom. Ventilation and lighting in the market are provided through valves built in the dome's location. The valves at the top of the dome are circular and are seen on both sides of the heart. The harmonious bright light coming from the dome's ceiling and the roof creates a comfortable atmosphere. Building materials in the Qom market include bricks, mud bricks, clay, and rocks, in addition to the indoor market, the Qom market does not contain a roof for housing, which is considered complex and often devoted to wholesale trade. In fact, the houses themselves remain as they were yesterday, and their number and the extent of the caravans they own represent an economic importance for the market. The mosques in the Qom market maintain their spiritual role since ancient times, in addition to the mosque located near the old market, there are several mosques in the old and new markets, large and small, with short periods to meet the spiritual needs of residents, traders, and customers around the market. The call to prayer is heard as soon as possible for them to perform their prayers. Qom mosques in the market are available Al-Nahhasin Mosque, Mulla Ja'far Mosque, Imam Hussein Mosque, and two other unnamed mosques in the new markets and mosques, as well as wooden mosques, Ridawiya Mosque, and the old mosque (Pamnar) and two mosques in the prayers of the cultural frame (defining the criteria of the Islamic city to serve the sustainable city).<sup>8</sup>

#### **Fourth Section: Cultural and Social Exchange**

Cultural and social exchange in Qom City during the Islamic ages was one of the main factors that contributed to shaping its unique cultural identity and development. Here are some points highlighting the importance of this exchange:<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Rafeian, M., & Zahed, N. (2021). Modeling the Urban Deterioration and Typology in Deteriorated Fabrics' City of Qom. *Human Geography Research*, 53(2), 365–387.

<sup>9</sup> Jassim Mohammed Hayes. (2017). Iranian government of Jamshid Amuzgar, August 7, 1977–August 27, 1978. *Lark*, 9(4), 215–224.

- **Cultural Exchange:** Qom City hosted diverse communities from various Islamic and non-Islamic cultures over the centuries, leading to the exchange of arts, sciences, customs, and traditions among them. The exchange of diverse cultures had a significant impact on cultural development in the city, where different cultural elements merged to form a unique cultural identity.
- **Education and Knowledge:** Qom City was a center for education and knowledge, attracting schools, religious, and scientific centers from various parts of the Islamic world. Scholars and students exchanged knowledge and religious beliefs, leading to the dissemination of thought and knowledge and the development of sciences in the city.
- **Trade and Economy:** Qom City was an important trading center along major trade routes, leading to the exchange of goods, wealth, and cultures between different regions. The city's economic life was influenced by the exchange of goods, services, and technologies, contributing to the development of the local economy and increasing prosperity.

**Social and Cultural Life:** Social life in Qom City flourished due to cultural interaction among its diverse inhabitants. The city witnessed a vibrant exchange of ideas, customs, and traditions, and social experiences and rituals in the city were influenced by cultural exchange, promoting tolerance, understanding among residents, and enhancing social integration.

#### **Fifth Section: Religious and Cultural Influence**

The religious and cultural influence in Qom City during the Islamic ages was prominent and dynamic, playing a significant role in shaping its identity and development. Here are the points highlighting this influence:<sup>10</sup>

- **Women's Clothing:** In the past, women in Qom wore a variety of clothing such as veils, hijabs, scarves, and shawls. Their clothing included shirts, pants, jackets, and blouses made of simple fabrics like cotton and silk, and women divided their clothes between public and private places. In public places, dark colors prevailed, while light colors were preferred in private places. Most women in Qom wore the hijab and veil in public places, and in private places, they preferred shirts, pants, blouses, and skirts. The vast majority of women in Qom believed in wearing the hijab and implemented it, in line with the rules of Islamic dress. Positive outcomes associated with the hijab were promoted, supporting its implementation.

<sup>10</sup> Ahmed Abdel-Jabbar Snobar, & Sharaf Mahmoud Al-Qudah. (2014). Shiism in the city of Qom and its impact on understanding the Imami narrative reality. *Studies: Sharia and Law Sciences*, 163(1548), 1-21.

- **Religious Centrality:** Qom City became a major religious center in the Islamic world, attracting many scholars, religious scholars, and students from various Islamic countries. The city is rich in famous religious shrines, temples, and religious schools, making it an important pilgrimage destination and a center for religious education.
- **Intellectual and Religious Exchange:** Qom City encouraged intellectual and religious exchange among religious scholars and believers from different Islamic sects and denominations. The exchange of religious, jurisprudential, and spiritual ideas had a significant impact on the intellectual and religious development of the Muslim community.<sup>11</sup>
- **Influence on Cultural Life:** The religious influence in Qom City had a significant impact on cultural life, where religious values and traditions were integrated into aspects of daily life for residents. Cultural life in the city flourished due to religious influence, with literature, arts, and sciences thriving under Islamic values.<sup>12</sup>
- **Religious Tolerance:** Qom City served as an example of religious tolerance, where different Islamic sects lived together without religious discrimination or sectarianism. Different religious sects peacefully coexisted in the city, promoting religious unity and tolerance among residents.
- **Impact on Social Development:** The religious influence in Qom City contributed to the development of Islamic social values such as justice, mercy, and humanity. The religious influence promoted cooperation and social solidarity among community members, achieving social balance and stability.

### **Chapter Six: The Geographic Nature of Qom City and Its Impact on Social Diversity of Its Inhabitants in Islamic Eras**

Qom city witnessed numerous developments throughout the ages, eventually becoming an industrial hub due to its strategic proximity to Tehran. Moreover, it became a regional center for petroleum and fuel distribution. This significant development is attributed to the discovery of oil fields in the adjacent area, which attracted many rural inhabitants to this

<sup>11</sup> Mahdi, A., Pourahmad, A., Zarghamfard, M., & Qasemi, S. (2016). Analysis of urban health from a social capital perspective in Iranian religious cities: Qom. *Spatial Information Research*, 24, 689–699.

<sup>12</sup> Hosseini, S. A., Yaghfoori, H., & Hadeiani, Z. (2020). Investigation and analysis of factors affecting the development of physical–spatial structure of Qom city with a futures research approach. *Geography and Development*, 18(61), 247–276.

advanced city, along with new investments in various industries such as textiles, petrochemicals, cement, and bricks.<sup>13</sup>

Arabic was the official language in Qom city until the third century of the Islamic calendar, but there was language diversity between Ajami and Arabic. Today, most of the city's population are Turks, accounting for more than 50% of the population, in addition to the presence of an Arab community within the city.

Qom city encompasses several significant landmarks, including:<sup>14</sup>

- The Shrine of Lady Masumeh, which houses the tomb of Fatimah bint Musa al-Kadhim, considered a significant religious figure. It features a pyramidal dome covered in gold and adorned with Persian inscriptions and motifs.



Figure (2): The shrine of Lady Masuma

- The bazaars in Qom, constituting the bustling heart of the city, divided into an industrial section and another for carpet sales, as well as the Astaneh Square, a large square overlooking the Shrine of Lady Masumeh Fatimah.

<sup>13</sup> KHORDADI, J., & SHAHRAD, M. (2015). Of the Framework to culture (determination of the parameters of Islamic city Serve as sustainable city) Case Study: Qom city (capital of cultural of Iran). *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Fen Bilimleri Dergisi*, 36(3), 4093–4107.

<sup>14</sup> Duaei, K. (2019). Qom after Islamic Neoliberalism: A Narrative of the City in Limbo. *Middle East–Topics & Arguments*, 12, 55–65.



Figure (3): Astaneh Square

- Jameh Jamkaran Mosque, an important religious landmark in the city, following Shia traditions and serving as a place for prayers and supplications.
- Yazdanbana House, a historic residence dating back to the Qajar era, distinguished by its columns, windows, and intricate towers.



Figure (4): Jamkaran

- Namak Lake, a lake located east of Qom city, considered a famous tourist destination in the region.

These landmarks reflect the cultural and historical richness of Qom city, attracting numerous visitors from within Iran and abroad. Its development has been a catalyst for the city's social progress.

#### **Conclusions:**

- Qom city holds a strategically important position due to its proximity to the Iranian capital Tehran and its central location in the country.
- The geographic nature of the city plays a vital role in determining the distribution of the population and the social and economic lifestyle patterns of its inhabitants.

- Qom's location is characterized by significant geographic diversity, situated in a desert region with low rainfall and diverse terrain.
- This geographic diversity influences the lifestyle of the inhabitants and contributes to the diversity of the community and its culture.
- As a major religious center in Islamic eras, Qom city played a prominent role in shaping the cultural and religious identity of Muslims.
- The impact of this significant religious site is reflected in the social diversity of the city's population, where various Islamic sects and cultures converge.
- Due to its prominent religious status, Qom city witnessed significant attraction of Muslims from different races and cultures.
- This social diversity has led to the exchange of cultures and traditions among the residents, shaping a diverse and open-minded community.
- The economic development of Qom city was greatly influenced by the geographic nature of the region, with geographic conditions encouraging agriculture, trade, and industry in the city.
- This economic impact has contributed to attracting more inhabitants and diversifying the local economy.

**Recommendations:**

- Encourage joint cultural events and activities to promote understanding and communication among different sects and cultures in the city.
- Organize workshops and educational events to enhance understanding among youth from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Provide diverse educational and training opportunities for residents, reflecting their cultural diversity and economic needs.
- Enhance advanced education and vocational training in industries and fields of economic significance in the region.
- Invest in developing the city's infrastructure, including roads, transportation, and public amenities, to improve quality of life and enhance communication between different neighborhoods and communities.
- Enhance the provision of basic services such as water, sanitation, and electricity to all residents in a fair and equitable manner.

- Encourage and support small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurship to enhance local economic development and provide employment opportunities for residents.
- Promote local industries, tourism, and sustainable agriculture as primary sources of income in the city.
- Adopt measures to protect the environment and preserve natural resources in the city, such as promoting green mobility and environmental sustainability.
- Provide environmental awareness and encourage eco-friendly practices among residents.
- Encourage interfaith dialogue and understanding among different religious sects in the city to promote social peace and harmony.
- Support joint religious initiatives and activities that foster unity and understanding among different religious sects.

## REFERENCES

1. BAHAR, A. A., & HAMMAD, A. (2021). Economic life in the city of Qom during the Abbasid era (132-656 AH / 749-1258 AD): (historical study). *Al-Adab Journal*, (136), 127-146
2. Dr.. Alaa Hammad Raja, & researcher Abdel Manna. (2021). Cultural and scientific life in the city of Qom during the Abbasid era (656-132 AH / 750-1258 AD) (historical study). *Al-Adab*, 137
3. Ahmed Abdel-Jabbar Snobar, & Sharaf Mahmoud Al-Qudah. (2014). Shiism in the city of Qom and its impact on understanding the Imami narrative reality. *Studies: Sharia and Law Sciences*, 163(1548), 1-21.
4. Jassim Mohammed Hayes. (2017). Iranian government of Jamshid Amuzgar, August 7, 1977–August 27, 1978. *Lark*, 9(4), 215-224.
5. KHORDADI, J., & SHAHRAD, M. (2015). Of the Framework to culture (determination of the parameters of Islamic city Serve as sustainable city) Case Study: Qom city (capital of cultural of Iran). *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Fen Bilimleri Dergisi*, 36(3), 4093-4107.
6. Mahdi, A., Pourahmad, A., Zarghamfard, M., & Qasemi, S. (2016). Analysis of urban health from a social capital perspective in Iranian religious cities: Qom. *Spatial Information Research*, 24, 689-699.
7. Duaei, K. (2019). Qom after Islamic Neoliberalism: A Narrative of the City in Limbo. *Middle East-Topics & Arguments*, 12, 55-65.
8. Hosseini, S. A., Yaghfoori, H., & Hadeiani, Z. (2020). Investigation and analysis of factors affecting the development of physical-spatial structure of Qom city with a futures research approach. *Geography and Development*, 18(61), 247-276.
9. Rafeian, M., & Zahed, N. (2021). Modeling the Urban Deterioration and Typology in Deteriorated Fabrics' City of Qom. *Human Geography Research*