



Hierarchy of Cultural Identity in Town Square, Iran

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ABSTRACT

The culture contains components including deeds, beliefs, arts, faiths and other social findings that are inherited through the society and form life context. These social activities are generally being formed within public and urban areas. One of these public areas is Town Square that expands cultural identity within society by users. Hierarchy also helps this study through investigation for ways of areas arrangement near each other. The main research question is how and where cultural areas of Town Square have been formed. In this study we practiced to investigate cultural identity hierarchy within Iranian Town Square to realize this question. This research aims at studying Iranian Town Square hierarchy and to extend and promote their culture. The research method applied in this study is explanatory – analytical and is a kind of field studies. Data collection method is of library and field type through observation and using schemes and figure. The study first introduced literature subject and then practiced to investigate cultural, physical and social activities within Iranian prominent Town Square including yazd, tehran, and Isfahan. In this research, cultural activities position within Town Square and their effects on social stability regarding components like cultural identity, function and framework have been investigated. Results of this paper practiced to provide effective strategies for cultural activities stability and to promote cultural identity.

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Introduction

Town Square in past were served as a place to perform trade transactions and cultural activities that are one of the basic principles applied for traditional arts fit to hierarchy. These arts not only within their structural formation are based on hierarchy principles, but also Mach and coordinate with flowing and reevaluating harmony within world and existence hierarchy which is higher than the material world related to that contract (Nasar, 2001).

Trading areas are one of the major public locations. It triggers people interactions, economic, and cultural promotion within society. Social and cultural capitals, which emanated from a very ancient background compared to economic one may be transferred to latter in certain conditions or make indirectly a reliable basis to heighten wealth. Having trade and social/economic activities as a basic application, Iranian bazaars are considered as perfect samples of urban areas whose economical states are highly affected by cultural/ social capitals. (Pourjafar et al., 2011)

Various aspects and hierarchy including religious, functional, spatial and visual are clearly identifiable within traditional structures particularly religious ones through most parts of the world. Although, scholars and commentators have suggested valuable points in this case, there also is an immense and unknown level of hierarchy within religious areas architecture which is believed to emanate from Iranian religious trends and architectural culture. The goal of this study is to investigate spatial hierarchy within trading areas; cultural areas relations ways within these areas are considered here.

Research questions

1. To what extent Town Square participate to promote cultural identity within society?
2. Do cultural activities affect within Town Square affect social stability?

Cultural Identity and Urban Areas Relation

Any society, with any administration system and any dominant ideology, follows special goals. Indicating these subjective ideas through impression of objective forms is main task of culture. Architecture plays a major role within this permutation process. Structures as a component of architectural culture are supposed to identify a subjective idea through superficial form thereby will turn to an appearance to measure this culture (Groter, 2003). Urban design is considered as very important and sensitive part of citizens' identity. Indeed, urban areas are aspects of life style, kind of vision, and beliefs of that society. Since human activities mainly based on culture, and architecture and also urbanism (dealing with areas containing activities with different frameworks and in fact signify these areas), then it can be concluded that any design methodology wishing to adapt with cultural values of a society within which applied and respect it should be able to organize physical structures design and activities pattern analysis with people's behavioral needs and cultural background. If this is to be realized then city form design and applying it will be real indicator of society culture (Shafie, 2001). Therefore, those city areas would reflect the corresponding cultural identity of a society with two key feature class; physical structures and behavioral - functional pattern conformed to cultural specifications of designing baseline.

Town Square Function

Town Square play various roles including social, religious, relational, and cultural roles which along with their proper combination affect Town Square spirit. Table 1 summarizes Town Square functions.

Table 1. Town Square function survey

Functions	Framework Fit To Function	Way Of Functioning
Social	Furniture Environmental elements Environmental Plants	Aggregation Social
Religious	Environmental elements	The main row of bazaar follows the mosque gate.
Relational	Furniture	Town Square is a passage with Active Members Near main gate of town

Town Square

Urban squares have been traditionally one of the principal social and cultural components of cities and also one of the main pillars of the formation and evolution of Iranian cities. The historic cities have famous squares that are regarded as a part of people's memories and the historic identity of these cities. Arg Square, Sabzeh Meydan, Mashgh Square, and Toopkhaneh Square in Tehran along with Naghsh-e Jahan Square, Atigh or the Old Square in Isfahan, Ganj Alikhan Square in Kerman, Amir Chakhmagh and Shah Tahmasb Squares in Yazd and many other squares all reflect the significance of this urban space in the past. The structure and design of squares were such that they brought a sense of peace to the visitors. This sense of peace was created using different means. For instance, water and light have traditionally had a special position in the Iranian architecture design which was always used in squares to bring a kind of mental and spiritual peace. The Creation of green space, appropriate market allocation, public places, sport spaces, religious sites, and recreational spaces all were used to create a dynamic urban square. The inter- and intraconnection of the square, the creation of attraction and motivation for the participation of people, ease of traffic and transportation, a flexible design, proper management, and the generation of a mental image and identity were the principles that were considered in the design of metropolises' squares. By having a cursory look at the evolutionary course of squares in Iran, we realize the historical background of this urban space in this country. The square has begun to consolidate itself since the Seljukian period. It has created profound and effective concepts in architecture and urbanism in safavid period and has reached its maximum role in the Ghajar period. Nevertheless, it gradually loses its function to the extent that it has lost its identity since the mid years of Pahlavi period and has remained in absolute suspense since the two recent decades.

The current understanding of the square that is unanimously and similarly accepted is as follows: the intersection of some streets in which a space has been created for separation of the mounted movements and is formed with a combination of vegetation cover, water-views, and fountains and does not establish a logical relationship with humans, human movements and the meaningful presence of humans.

The square has no external meaning without the effective and secure presence of humans. Also, without a certain purpose and the presence of humans in these median spaces in intersections, it has neither meaning nor is effective and secure. Yet when we consider the use of Iranian squares throughout the history, we understand that the thing that has been important in the Iranian square was its socio-economic use that has been

significantly greater than its accessibility application. However, the spaces that are currently known as squares have only considered the accessibility use and have left no opportunity for the socio-economic activities.

One of the principles in the building of squares has been and is the attention to the city and their identities. A square should be constructed congruously with the city's identity; otherwise it cannot function as expected. Nevertheless, by taking all these facts into account, not only the identity of cities is not considered in the construction of buildings, but also there is no effort for building and even renovating the current urban public places. As a result, we cannot see the common life of people that is shared in their cities; a common life that creates a single concept that is the real concept of the city and the authenticity and existence of it, as this concept is dependent on the squares and overall on the public places of the city. This manifests itself in many urban squares of Iran: elevated construction at the southwestern side of the Firdausi Square of Tehran, on which the name of the great epic poet of Iran and the world is carved, has eclipsed his statue, a cultural and national symbol of Iranians in the capital, humiliatingly. In addition, by misrepresenting it as a poor statue in an ostentatious manner, it has disturbed the relative proportion of surrounding buildings to impose itself on the visitor before the statue and other parts of the square.

The construction of Jahan Nama Tower of Isfahan near the Naghsh-e Jahan Square could result in the exclusion of this square from the UNESCO list if the cultural heritage and UNESCO did not react timely. The conversion of Tehran's Toopkhaneh Square from an urban square to a traffic node and to an intercity passenger terminal, the destruction of Yazd's Shah Tahmasb Square, the construction of streets through the Ardakan's Hoseini Square, the destruction of Isfahan's Atigh (the Old) Square and the perennial neglect in its renovation, demolition of Yazd's Amir Chakhmagh Square, disregarding the local squares of cities (the district centers) such as Shahshahan and Jolfa Square of Isfahan, etc. are all the mistakes that are difficult to compensate; a heavy cost that is far more than what the urban managers have seemingly gained through these destructions.

Safe Study

Naghsh-e Jahan Square

Naghsh-e Jahan Square is one of the scarce, relatively intact urban spaces of Iran which has been performing at city scale and even further since its construction such that today it is known worldwide [Tavassoli and Bonyadi, 1371, Peterson, 1999]. This square has been built in around 1011 A.H is 510 m long and 165 m wide.

The design idea and the construction of Naghsh-e Jahan Square was proposed and implemented at the time of Shah Abbas I in the southern part of the city as the city center (the city that had been chosen as the new capital of Iran). This center, in essence, **somatically** manifests the improvement of the idea of unity and the liaison between the society's main activities under the banner of religion. All of these activities, whose principal symbols included worship, education, politics, trade, manufacturing, sport and entertainment, were formed at the corner or at the middle of a square called "Naghsh-e Jahan Square". Later, it became well-known and famous as the identity of Isfahan and the identity of the civilization of Iranian Islamic period. In addition, the formation of its skeleton, with its special symbolic elements and meanings, has also played a huge role in its reputation.

Table 2: functions survey and cultural viability condition

Case Study			Title	Factor
Isfahan	Yazd	Tehran		
			Social	
			Religious	
			Communications	
			Distinctions and similarities	
As can be seen form figures social areas are concentrated while economic ones are linear.			social Communicatio	
			Unity and multiplicity	
As clear from figures social areas show continuation and are concentrated. Contact areas contain Transformations and are linear.			Unity multiplicity	
			Continuity and Transformations	
As clear from figures social areas show continuation and are concentrated. Contact areas contain Transformations and are linear.			Continuity Transformations	

Table 3: investigation of cultural identity hierarchy

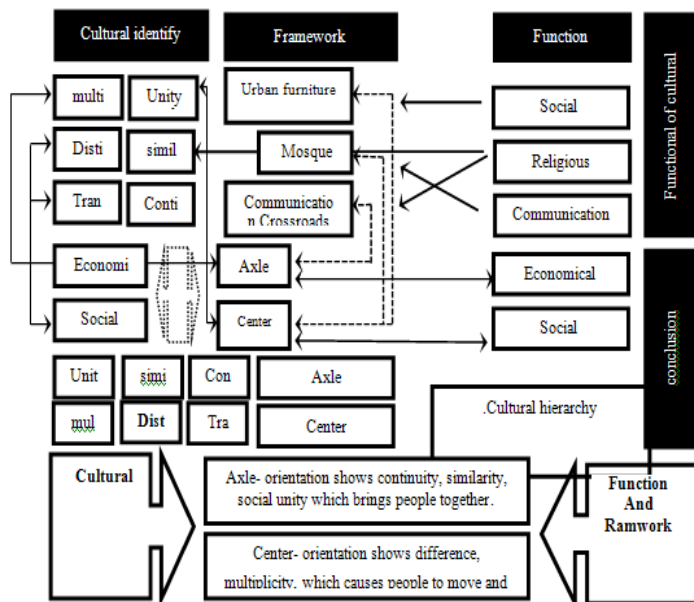
Tehran (AH 1011)		
Yazd		
Isfahan (1274 AH)		
Legend	Social center entrance Communication spaces	

The thing that has been called Caesarea or the Bazaar and has been located at the northern side of the square with a magnificent entrance has included the majority of principal elements of urban activities such as inns, the royal mint, hospitals, mosques, and guesthouses along with Bazaar (and different unions). Yet the focus on commercial, economic and financial activities had not neglect the attention to religious and human values. In addition to the existence spiritual elements, the attention was paid to the modification of financial activities. As an instance, the earnings of Four Bazaars around the Naghsh-e Jahan Square has been endowed to Fourteen Imams (AS) by Shah Abbas the Great in 1017 AH.

Amir Chahkmagh Square

The Amir Chahkmagh complex is regarded as one of the most prominent historic complexes of the Yazd city. It is located approximately at the center of the city old texture and is one of the important strategic points in Yazd. This valuable complex which is the point to which the city's main streets are connected includes mosques, Tekyehs, the monument of Fatimah, Haji Ghanbar marketplace, the traditional Fatima reservoir, and palm and Tekyeh's reservoir of Amir Chahkmagh. This complex is one of the ninth century's a.h. works and Amir Jalal-e din Chahkmagh, one of the commanders and rulers of the Timurid Shahrukh, established the Yazd city when he came to power in Yazd in collaboration with his wife Sati Fatima Khatun with an aim of prospering the city. The founders built a square at the north of the mosque which is still stable and is the center of Yazd.

Table 4: survey and conclusion



Imam Khomeini Square

Imam Khomeini Square (former names: Toopkhaneh Square, Sepah Square) is a historic square located in the center of Tehran. This square has been built at the order of Amir Kabir in 1284 AH and its surrounding buildings have been destroyed and renovated many times. From a long time ago, Toopkhaneh Square has been the center of traffic and transportation in Tehran and also the location of protests and execution of some famous convicts.

Based on analyses performed above, the cultural identity within Iranian Town Square is investigated here. The way of acting cultural activities along with culture ones are investigated based on them.

Conclusion and suggestions:

The main subject of this article is investigation of cultural appearance within Iranian traditional Town Square This subject, regarding performed analyses among above tables, has been

studied based on three elements; Framework, Cultural identity, Function. We conclude with respect to said elements that all cultural activities have been formed within center-oriented areas. Cultural areas have been formed such that is in an axel-oriented path to be able to bring unification though multiplicity. This is one of the aspects of culture within Town Square These analyses show that social areas are formed beside other applications that also are true for Town Square areas in which social activities accompany economic ones. Cultural identity elements are studied here proportionate to economic and social functions.

1. Evolution and continuity. Social activity has appeared in the form of continuity and the economic one like evolution within this element.

2. Similarity and difference. Social activities are formed similarly and introverted, but economic ones are formed differently like Timcheh, hall and row within this element.

3. Unification and multiplicity. Social activities are formed integrated and introverted, but economic one are scattered in bazaar within this element.

All these discussions are assessed in following table in the form of a diagram and provided several suggestions which help to expand culture to public areas including Town Square. Therefore, one can conclude that culture identity requires the connection between cultural activities beside others. This is also true for Town Square in which cultural activities are formed beside economic ones.

Suggestions

1. Cultural activities should preferably be performed in line with other social activities.

2. in order to areas attract people, cultural activities should be performed within focused and center-oriented areas.

3. Trading centers should be nearby or contained cultural areas to cause cultural identity expansion and economic growth.

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