

## Providing structural approaches for developing social interactions in urban squares

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**Abstract:** The increase of roadways in metropolitans as well as congestion in high-rise constructs, current landscapes of cities as proximity to tall buildings have been cut off by an asphalt path have been defined as an street. However due to everyday mental stresses the need for making more communicative interactions with nature, other humans and environment found to be a necessity. These fields within last decades have loosed their application because of insufficient attention and care. The present article aims to besides studying concept of urban spaces, stages and various aspects of urban structure appearance in social interactions. As the second purpose, it is going to investigate on urban field and provide a couple of structural approaches in designing these spaces to strengthen social interactions of citizens. The study tracks an interpretive-analytical method and library studies in addition to electronic and printed information used. An appropriate urban field has been designed based on right realization and planning is considered as an urban open space which is a place for movement, stop, rest, and time to enjoy the social interaction. Of one important approach in this article can mention to organizing a variety of applications based on time, temporary exhibition spaces designed to sell and supply goods and furniture design are tailored to the needs of residents.

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### Introduction:

Urban spaces are described as those public open spaces in a city that prepare a bed for social interactions. These spaces, in past, held proper productivity either farcical or functionally. However, in modern age, a couple of important types of urban spaces including fields and streets have lost their function that in city lives, and evidences show that their communicative role has been realized as the one and sometimes only function. In metropolitans in spite of people presence and movement in these spaces during a day due to air pollution, noise, crowd, and dearth of social activities, it's not only pleasant to involve themselves but also they are elusive.

Additionally, not many pleasant urban spaces exist for socially significant events. For instance, in each historical period in the past, there was a public-state field in capital or big cities where most of social, religious, and national ceremonies and celebrations were held over there. Many of these fields designed in an enclosed space form though their modern cousins have no special fabric that could be called as enclosed open space between different and independent buildings. Unlike collective memories of past public spaces such as an field, we can that see absence of public activities as well as dominance of cars on field space have made the main role of this space in creating social passion to disappear.

Meanwhile, building a space in today's cities which is a crossing for some roadways and a space in between for separation of car move with a combination of vegetation and fountain possesses no reasonable relation with human, human movement and significant presence of human caused this problem to pay special attention to. This problem has influenced current conditions of Iranian cities that necessitate recovering of urban spaces like fields.

Therefore, the present study aims to beside investigation on process of fields development in Iranian's cities, through redefinition of this urban space which demands for a new and alternative treatment in prevention of ancient heritage as well as intelligent designing of modern urban spaces provide fabric approaches to reinforce social interactions of citizens with these urban spaces.

### Research background:

City and urban spaces are known as a context for social interactions, various events and every day activities of human in a city. Mechanisms including increase of participation, social interactions, and comprehensive development contribute to expansion of sense of security, identity and social belongings in a community. Social factors such as social ties, social trust, social participation and social solidarity are influential on enhancement of sense of identity and social belongings. The effect of social participation on

improvement of social identity and belongings seem inevitable.

Scholars like Durkhiem, Simel, Parsons, Einglhaert, Patnam, Fokoyama, Saap, Haroud and Hantigton have developed different theories. As an example, Zimel believes that the individual and

society are in an mutual interaction that is the community systematizes human's life can be defined as the objective culture. Believes and symbols become shared and then form our lives. Following table lists these scholars' theories.

**Table 2: scholars with theories of development of social interactions in city**

theories	Book-article	scholars
Arendt argues that, while human life always evolves within societies, the social-being part of human nature, political life, was intentionally constructed by only a few of these societies as a space for individuals to achieve freedom through the construction of a common world.	(1998) The Human Condition	Hannah Arendt
Square is the cause to change of society to community and not just a gathering place of people	Town and square: from Agora to the village green (1970)	Zucker
Pavements the cause of safety and reinforcement of social interactions	The Death and Life of Great (1992) American Cities	Jane Jacobs
Three groups of activities in urban space: necessary, selective and social	(1987) Life between building	Jan Gehl
Emphasis on public aspects of city as the third place (home and work place; the first and second place)	The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons and the other hangouts at the heart of a community (1999).	Oldenburg
Knows the sense of fading social belonging in individuals as effect of social deprivation.	Are rural development programs socially inclusive? Social, inclusion, civic engagement, participation (2008)	Sally Shortall
Through development of interactions the domain of action and decision-making get reinforced.	Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society (1990)	Inglehart

### Review of literature:

Urban spaces not only are places for expression and incident of culture but it provides besides economic exchanges also contexts for culture production and consumption, and exchange of cultural symbols that play the cultural functions as well. Cultural works from one hand have a great and lasting effect on form and function of cities from aesthetic, social, economic and symbolic aspects (Evans, 2001,1) and on the other hand get influenced by other city form and works.

Overall, concerning urban spaces as both sociological and architecture research subject becomes important. In fact, the urban space results from a process of spatial-aesthetical factors intermingled with social variables (in general sense) and tie technical aspect of urban designing to daily environment of city dwellers that are the object of different social events and intentions. Such an approach to urban spaces does not ignore any sociological or architecture aspects of city but it greatly underline reciprocal human and physical complexity. At the same time it opens the

path to implementation of new theories against the prices (Sedigh Sarvestani & Gheisari, 2010).

### Square:

Investigators have considered following five issues in study of fields.

1. Artistic and aesthetical approach: regarding squares as a necessity for achieving favorite physical and psychological quality of city.

Historical approach: analysis and study of urban spaces and squares in historical textures and recognizing their advantages

3. Typological approach: based on body, form, function or other measures of squares various categorical classification of research necessities has been provided.

4. Analytical approaches: identifying the square according to components contribute in supplying criteria for designing and assessment of squares.

5. Comparative approach: identifying current state and comparison of Iranian samples with non-Iranian samples or comparison with samples during time periods and study of changes in space

To mention examples for each approach the following cases are noteworthy. Camillo Sitte, the Austrian planner of aesthetic approach defines square and surrounding street as two species each city should contain at least a couple of instances of these types. He deals with subjects such as closeness, relation between buildings, form and six of square, combination of squares and formation of group squares as well as presence of natural components in square (Asiabi, 2010, P.46).

In his studies, Zucker (1970) regarded squares from historical and typological point of view and divide squares into five types.

1. Closed square which is known as a complete space.
2. A square its space has been directed toward a dominant element
3. A square its space has been formed around a center (core square).
4. A set of squares consisted of multi-spaces.
5. Amorphous square with unknown space

Indeed he believes that two or more types of these squares could be observed in a square simultaneously (Zucker, 1970).

Thiis –Evans et al (1999) typologically examined squares and classified four squares: 1) fields with unspecified direction, 2) fields with specified direction, 3) fields with centralized core, and 5) allied fields.

According to Moughtin (1992) squares based on typological characteristics were identified as closed squares, pre-space, central, synthetic, and limitless (P.99).

According to the above approaches in classification of squares, the Iranian fields are examined based on historical approach and function criterion. This classification suitable for Iranian square focuses on rich content of them. To review verbal meaning of square in Persian language some worthy points are to be mentioned here. In Persian, square means capacity, place or location for something or content to be. Urban square is somewhere for an urban incident. Also, in Persian literature a suffix is added to word square to change the meaning from container to content. As an example, compounds like field of straw sales, field of battle, field of parties, field of property, and field of sales prove this fact that a square was a place for activities. Additionally, words such as running field, field lay out and dragging field in Persian emphasize once more on the notion. Accordingly, urban square defined as a container its content are dwellers and urban events. The notion of field in Iranian culture knows a square a context for incidents to happen and analogy of container and content gives a sense to presence of space and people simultaneously.

In school of urbanization of Isfahan, a square has been defined in three levels of trans- city, inter-city and inter-neighborhood. This school scrutinizes a square from aspects of form, dimensions, scale, degree of integration and replacement in the city. In the guidebook of urban designing in Iran, a few of criteria have been analytically provided which make designing and evaluation of square possible. The present study exceeded historical identification and studied a square, a type of nodes, from urban, neighborhood, and procedural points of view. In this classification two factors of a) scale (neighborhood and urban), and b) function (being ceremonial) dominate. The present research different expectations of each field to be met are developed and explained that follow a set of rules at the same time (Pakzad, 2005).

In summary, Iranian investigators' views against square prove the significance of scale and function in explanation of types, as well as its analysis and assessment, while non Iranian investigators put more emphasis on morphology. This could be regarded as a sign for virtues in Iranian square that focus on content, in-field activities, scale, function and functional hierarchy in city.

In studying of Iranian square either body or social aspect should be taken into consideration. Socially speaking, square and in-field activities a long side with body aspect like form and morphology are going to become important in city texture.

#### **History of urban squares in Iran:**

Square in ancient Iran was built out of the city wall, in front of temples which held totally a religious function for exchange of ideas and decision making (Zareian & Aziz zadeh, 2011). In pre-Islamic cities, square was more an governmental-political space rather than a social space (Moradi, 2003, pp. 119-120). Square, mosque, school, cistern and bath are integrated components of a backbone are interrelated together. Therefore, square finds a special importance as time passes and carries different such functions as sports, religious, business and governmental. It is in this period that major squares are getting to be known as the most significant spot for religious aggregation. They possess a multi-purposes role which public attendance was regarded as the most significant life factor (Zareian, Aziz zadeh, 2011).

Examination of historical process of square in Iranian cities indicates that squares besides other functional and effective organs in city life actively play their roles. From the time of Seljuks on squares became more stable, though in Safavieh period much deeper and more efficient concepts found their way into architecture and urbanism and finally in Qajar era it found its ultimate role. However, within time

passage and in middle Pahlavi squares lost their identity which has been continuing until recent two decades. The most popular spaces in urban spaces of Iran were local markets and squares and the main square served for ceremonial events controlled by ruling party. From intersection of routes leading to city gates some sort of openness that in addition to exchange and business function they were used as a place of public gathering.

Square in Iranian cities were generally a place for gathering of city and suburb dwellers, economic trades, group activities including sports, parades, group awareness and sometimes punishing violators and criminals. Diversity of functions makes us to conclude that in big and crowded cities always there was a central square and small squares were active in neighborhoods.

The exact blueprint of pre-Islamic fields in Iran is unknown, though regarding mentioned functions it could be imagined that ancient square like its other cousins in other ancient communities was next to or in close relation to business place. One or some religious and/or governmental buildings were overlooked or had an access to them. The incomplete information are available on formation of ancient city-state of Mesopotamia and southern Iran about 12 century B.C. indicate that squares were mostly constructed around temples and ziggurats count as political and religious center. These temples surrounded with an open space that governors and dwellers arranged their meeting and performed their business exchanges. Thus, this point of view has been regarded as body function of the primary fields (Ebrahimi, 2005, pp.111-112).

The concept of square in Iran was created in Hellenic-Persian period. This square like its origin "Agoura" becomes a center for cultural, commercial and formal exchanges. All of major buildings and edifices as well as Hellenic-Persian city are settled around this square. But this square is more a place of glaring and credibility of the Seleucid. In Sassanid period a broad wide was constructed in front of sharestan and rabz. This square unlike Greek Agoura was a place for economic trade and roman Forum a symbol of governmental authority. Though, it is a place markets open to it and socio-economic protests takes palace over there. Square is a place for governmental declaration of commands, forgiveness and punishments (Asiaee, 2010, pp.99-100).

More historical evidences about Iranian squares are frequently seen in writings of historians and geographers of after Islam period. The available documents on squares more efficiently describe their plan and function. Defining of space, construction model, and architecture details had been tied with mode of production and traditional socio-political

structure of Iranian cities which keep their survival till modernity appears in Iran.

Traditional squares places in one or more of their side established governmental buildings such as palaces or religious buildings like mosques. Sometimes, due to significance of the city a few shrines or cemetery were settled next to religious edifices and formed a especially local identity square. As examples, grand and historical square –markets can be seen today in some of Iranian cities, are Ganjali-kha square, Naghsh-e Jaha square, and square of Mirchakhmagh in Yazd (, 2005,P.113).

#### **Discussion:**

All of mentioned factor influence on development in squares were a cause for deep changes in social function of squares or in other words lessening their power to hold social activities,weakening cultural and historical identity of cities as well as decreasing visual, environmental and aesthetical aspect of them (Naghi zadeh, 2006, PP.22-23). A summary of these factors are as follows:

- though squares can function as a communicative means for social interactions, due to body changes in their environment such as small proportion of cavalry sidewalks into gutters, different overcrowded due to various factors, the absence (or difficulty) to access the middle space of the field, the lack of space to pause and similar issues

- Possibility of playing a role has been decreased.

- appearance of different pollutions in squares is an issue has minimized environmental quality and its beauty.

- terminlaization or being a neighborhood of terminals has weakened major social and cultural roles. This problem becomes more evident when some of general and cultural application or even holding ceremonies and social and historical rituals get removed from.

- change in role and function of square and their surroundings caused these urban spaces suffer from aggregation and lose their role as a pleasant urban space. In addition, some transportation problems, establishment of activities in their border, inappropriate (and often less) sidewalks, the absence (or difficulty) to access the middle space of the field, the lack of space to pause and similar issues have caused crowd intolerable. In this condition not only citizens have no desire to stay in squares but this condition also forces them to leave it as soon as possible.

- by appearance of cultural and recreational activities such as going restaurant, cinema and parks the function of squares as a place for group activities was changed and these implications were settled around the body or neighborhood of squares. Though

it was effective for improving the role of square for social interactions and activities in condition that first some further facilities like parking lot and needed open space was predicted and second squares served human. But due to absence of these conditions and reduction of old square quality it has been recognized as a serious problem.

-a dearth of appropriate cultural view is another significant negative characteristic of squares.

-imitating western models, an observer's attention is toward middle of square and the center of squares which are enclosed among cars has been materialized. Quality and meaning of these sculptures also are controversial and generally mean. (Naghizadeh 22-23 :1385).

In fact, today perception of square from square identifies as intersection of streets a space for moving cars has been emerged in the middle. Presence of human among this space has neither sense nor effective and safe (Nazari & Reza beigi, 2011,P.153).

#### **Body solutions for developing social interactions in urban squares:**

In this part some solutions for designing urban square will be provided and issues like form function and urban facilities used in the square will be analyzed. At present, even in upmost cities in the world not sufficiently variable park spaces exist. It's possible to integrate characteristics of a square with artistic and recreational features of a park and construct a special type of square. In designing square it's demanding to take into consideration applications and activities may occur in. broader spaces can provide required space for holding exhibits.

After some studies on form of square and developing solutions, it's time for square functioned. On square functions following issues could be considered: square bed should contain various activities inside itself and not to be scattered around. The movements of citizens inside the space cause a lively and actively energetic atmosphere. General applications in body of square should not be limited to official hours, for instance cinema and restaurant are more successful in attracting groups of public. Of some points guarantee longer stay of citizens in urban squares are establishment of various services for meeting individual needs such as pay phone, parking lot, and public transportation. Existing of appropriate services and spare time activities influence on amount of staying time. Diversity of these applications (e.g. restaurant, and coffee-shop),and provided services have absorbed people from different economic classes.

On the other hand, other indirect activities help square to maintain its exuberance. Activities like colportage, and theatrics which contributes

enthusiastic atmosphere around squares. In square spaces the colportage and theatrics need to be included in the assigned space. In a way that it is very easy to access them as well as are out from public crossing. In order to have a non-stop activity in square, it's better for type and distribution of body applications to be less silent and inactivity of bodies do not last for a long time.

Regarding urban facilities used in square it should be noticed that there must be a harmony between body designing of space and elements in use such as (furniture and vegetation). In urban designing of urban square the climate conditions also matter.

For instance, use of fountains and making a communication through touching, playing and movement. The statuses should be place where no to disturb public crossing or causes blind angle. Located facilities in square i.e. bench, lighting, small press and food kiosks, green and natural elements support its daily life. The most salient factor in absorbing people is availability of enough seats. It would be much better to locate different seats in different positions to meet different needs. Another function could be defined for squares are exchange of information. A part of this information is transferred through citizens' interactions and another part via information boards. It's a common picture to see individuals chatting on the latest news. Therefore, location, cross-sectional area, height, human scale, forms and individuals' behaviors seem to be necessary. Of points is significant in flexibility of urban squares, integrity of square space might be mentioned to.

#### **Conclusion:**

All plans and programs are assigned to reformation and reclamation of identity and quality of fields may not often launch due to different economic, technical and cultural reasons. In addition, these plans and programs have been formed according to western patterns and theories which are not included in functions predicted in Iranian body of fields and as a result their implementation bears no desirable identity for the squares. However, to define, reform and establishment of spaces as "urban square" in Iranian cities some points including: explanation of theories based on Iranian world view and culture, classification of characteristics of squares based on visual, functional and identity conformity, determination of function level at present time and knowing their possibilities and limitations, and recognizing the reformation solutions. To mention more also, finding the potential problems and programs, re-identification of cultural, artistic and body values of historical samples, and finally intelligent planning of squares as a significant in a city are important. It's quite natural that all of the above stages must be carried out in an

Iranian cultural atmosphere regarding its ruling atmosphere. Using from import methods and techniques may be economic only after examining the existing principles and values.

Use of a wide survey when a square is going to be designed is highly recommended in order to reflect

users' needs and a trace of local opinions in its designing become observed. This not only respects citizens' opinion in developing urban culture but will also reduce future problems of designing significantly.

**Table 3: efficient body solutions for improvement of social interactions in urban squares**

Organizing different application according to time in a way that we see active points during a day.	1
Designing temporary exhibit spaces for presenting and selling of goods like handicrafts.	2
Designing appropriate furniture in accordance with locals' needs.	3
Changing of neighborhood buildings and constructs functions to public and socio-economic functions.	4
Magnifying body elements leading to group memories, sense of place and mental image of citizens.	5
Designing architecture elements and spaces for creation of mental image, and attraction in square.	6
Programming and designing suitable vegetation of square for having proper shade, and view.	7
Body elements like ground are relaxing and dictate no special behavior which provides citizens creation and efficiency.	8
Bodies are as clear and sensitive as possible that activities in each body spaces give observer visual diversity.	9
Preventing from level difference and breaking the ground.	10
Level of closeness must not make bodies rigid and let the above sky to be seen easily.	11

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