

# Informal Neighborhood Center Landscape (Case Study: Shemiran-e-Now Informal Neighborhood)

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**Abstract** | Investigation of the neighborhood center landscape enables objective-mental recognition of the cultural, social and contextual aspects. The present study has been conducted during April, 2017, based on a qualitative method using interviews, observations and content analysis so as to investigate the details and interpretations of Shemiran-e-Now informal neighborhood center in Tehran from the perspective of the residents. The landscape research on these neighborhoods lacks a well-established background and it contributes to subjective recognition in this area. The results indicated that the informal neighborhood landscape is composed of the residents' social coherence and collectivity, a trans-local bazar and traffic bifurcation and all of them triply support one another. Although it has been figured out in the observations that the quality of life space is very poor in this neighborhood, the circulation of the religious activities and prosperity of the transactions have revitalized Shemiran-e-Now neighborhood center landscape.

**Keywords** | Landscape, Neighborhood Center, Informal Neighborhood Landscape, Shemiran-e-Now

**Introduction** | From the perspective of city builders, urban neighborhoods enable a network of communications and functions based on predesigned plans using the spatial system and background skeleton. Such interventions as creation of a network of passageways, combination of the functions, regulation of the spatial hierarchies, and creation of public areas as the social relations grounds and strengthening of the main passenger pavements are the preps that serve the formation of the urban neighborhoods and neighborhood center communications (Habibi, 2003). But, such an important issue can be actualized when the neighborhood development is based on a predesigned program. Thus, the neighborhood center in informal neighborhoods can be excluded from this rule because these neighborhoods come to existence in the urban body

due to the exceeding of urban housing demand to supply and in a completely spontaneous and self-growing manner. Therefore, the research on informal neighborhoods, while being of a special nature, is an exploration of self-propelling realities stemming from informal people communities and housing market mechanism (Shafia, 2013).

While including natural and manmade indicators, the landscape of a neighborhood is also influenced by human indicators and with all its characteristics like green walls, symbols, signs, equipment and so forth, the landscape of an urban neighborhood is also influenced by collective and individual incidents as well as human memories and activities (Faizi & Asadpour, 2013). The structure of a place can be investigated piece-by-piece and interpretations can be achieved via subjecting it to analysis but these separate components can never transfer the real meaning and concept perceived by the residents of such places. The thing that grants nature to a neighborhood center or a square or

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a public space is the existence of a public atmosphere in the place and it is the element unreachable via breaking down a structure to its constituent elements (Partovi, 2010: 77).

Landscape investigation becomes more fascinating when the construction of the neighborhood and its development are not preprogrammed and essentially spontaneous. In other words, the entire elements related to the neighborhood landscape should have been formed based on unstructured interventions and completely independent from any program. This is a type of development that is envisaged by some researchers as a challenge before the sustainable urban development (Sadeghi & Naghdi, 2006) and the fact they are centers of social harms and cultural problems should be emphasized while there is another narration claiming that informal neighborhoods are the products of the creativity and innovation of the low-income class of the cities and that it has somehow made up the urban planners' underactivity hence it is essentially wrong to consider them as faulty and marginal (Shafia, 2010: 47-53).

The reason for such different perceptions and notions of the researchers can be sought in the way they approach informal neighborhoods. This view angle has made them distance away from the existent realities due to their lack of expertise and not taking residence in these neighborhoods. Therefore, the narration of an informal neighborhood's landscape is something more than the narration of a city specialist or a non-resident citizen of these neighborhoods. So, the subjective, objective and subjective-objective aspects existent in the landscape of an informal neighborhood center has to be considered as imagined by the residents. According to the fact that the informal neighborhoods are always envisioned as urbanization problems and there are attitudinal shifts of different kinds observed in these neighborhoods during the past two decades, it is practically and, simultaneously, scientifically necessary to perform exploratory and field studies for the perception of the new aspects of landscape. Thus, the present article is a research report regarding Shemiran-e-Now informal neighborhood in Tehran. The study uses a qualitative method to find an answer to the question as to what does the landscape look like in the informal neighborhood center? Next, the study method, findings and results are presented after which discussions will be put forth regarding the study theoretical foundations.

## Theoretical Discussions

### Urban Landscape

Urban landscape is not a profession of imposing concepts and symbols to the residents and the urban context but it is the knowledge held by the city dwellers that has been formed in the course of history due to the relationship between the natural and artificial contexts and their combination

as perceived by the city residents (Mansouri, 2010). Thus, while being connected with the objectivities, they narrate the mentalities that have become synonymous and amalgamated with these objectivities.

Thus, the urban landscape is not solely the thing that is seen rather it is an approach to seeing and describing what is seen (Atashinbar, 2009 b). The constituent indicators of urban landscape can be divided into three sets, including the emotional space of landscape, cultural space of landscape and urban ecology. By emotional space, the thing is intended that is seen and perceived via the human senses. Cultural space that is born out of the open spaces, resorts or similar cases paves the way for the creation of social interactions and people-based relations and it is closely related to the sensory space. Such two aspects as emotional and cultural spaces are intensively influenced by the human beings and the memories created in space but urban ecology supplies the environmental comfort and it deals with how to make an urban space tolerable (Sheibani, 2010). Therefore, a city landscape incorporates the entire cultural, historical and sensory elements formed and readout in the course of time (Türkyılmaz, 2016).

Landscape perception is directly associated with the duration of time an individual is present in a city and the perception obtained by a tourist or a guest of the city is surely a mere representation of his or her textural and superficial experiences (Mansouri, 2010). Landscape is the part of environment wherein an individual ties his or her perceptions to the physical aspects of land and, in fact, it is the embodiment of human-relationship with the peripheral nature from the past up to now that makes it a history to be retold (Mansouri, 2004). Therefore, landscape is the stratified and complex narration of history and nature altogether and it signifies the interactions between the human beings, environment and the nature; so, it is emotional, perceptual and contextual in nature (Hanachi & Eshrati, 2011). That is why a landscape, upon being changed or destroyed, causes sadness and grief in the local community. While shaping the context and texture of the city, landscape becomes persistent and stable with the residents' memories and its formation occurs in a gradual pace and it undergoes evolutions in the human lifecycle (Habibi, 2010). Therefore, knowing the holographical and multidimensional value of landscape is of a great importance in providing for a better understanding thereof. Urban landscape is consequently a combination of city components, its internal activities and the residents' memories and mentalities of it. Hence, a trivial event that has happened at the side of a square in the city and caused a change in its shape might be so valuable to the residents of the city that they are found never willing to the reconstruction and destruction of it. That is because the transformation might be associated by them to a common and valuable memory. But, can any unfamiliar passerby comprehend such a value?

### The Landscape of an Informal Neighborhood

Such concepts as migration, unstable residence and numerous textural and social changes strike the mind when it comes to informal neighborhood. The neighborhood's being situated inside the urban texture enables the visualization of such attributes as high density and low quality of life along with intra-city migrations (Irاندوست, 2010), (Fig. 1). In opposite, landscape is a tablet narrating the historical manuscripts left from the people's memories on the urban environment and the issue, upon entering the highly crowded and low quality informal neighborhoods, features a diverse array of complexities. The notable point is that different social groups under various titles are residing and busy constructing in these types of neighborhoods for their special characteristics. There are groups that while being characterized by various motivations, abilities and tendencies have different perspectives towards the informal neighborhoods and they delineate a practically different landscape for them. Therefore, the landscape of an informal neighborhood can be the product of an apparently low-quality texture along with a combination of collective memories in various temporal layers because there are various social groups incumbently or voluntarily residing them and performing customization in them to earn money

or solve their housing problems (Kazemiyan, Ghorbanizadeh & Shafia, 2012). The landscape of an informal neighborhood can be considered as a cultural event in the temporary urban landscape that, besides its entire rapid environmental changes, accommodates social interactions featuring an identity that can be narrated and recognized (Cheshmeh & Karimi, 2011). The investigation of an informal neighborhood's landscape is a sort of narratology and description by the residents of their emotions and perceptions about the neighborhood that is per se giving a narration of their memories, events, interactions and attachments within a subjective-objective format. Since the urban landscape's indicators are endless and nested one inside the other, reading and narrating them is, as well, a time-consuming task that is sometimes very implicit and subjective (Tabibiyan, 2003). Thus, the expression "being the child of one's own time" should be taken into account in order to reach a correct conception of the identity of an informal neighborhood's landscape and the identity should not be solely sought in the past. In the interrelationships of the human beings residing an informal neighborhood, landscape can be visualized as the period of time starting somewhere in the past and continuing to the present and it encompasses four factors, namely neighborhood's texture, meanings and



Fig. 1: Shemiran-e-now, an example of the informal neighborhood center. Source: www.ilna.ir.

concepts, dynamic temporal ground and, finally, social life of the citizens (Atashinbar, 2009 a). The landscape offered of the neighborhood's tourism by the host community or the residents of the informal neighborhood is a manifestation of live and occasionally temporary realities of a neighborhood. While adding to the recognition of the researchers about the urban neighborhood's landscape, the identification of the landscape helps them understand the factors considered and accepted by the residents or the host society in a confrontation between the tourist (the city residents included) and the host society. The narration presented by the hosting society of the informal neighborhood can be an orifice for the perception of the real narration of these neighborhoods that has been less dealt with.

### Shemiran-e-Now Informal Landscape

The World Bank knows informal neighborhoods as the unseen parts of the cities that are free of high-quality urban constructions and living standards (World Bank Group, 1999-2000). To enter the discussion on these neighborhoods, the best thing is putting the prejudgments and rushing decisions aside because labelling a group of public communities for the geography of their life zones and lifestyles is a nonscientific approach to the issue. Generally, the informal or self-growing neighborhoods can be realized as the manifestation of unprincipled urban development caused by informal market pressurization of the urban land prices that has become capable of showing up within the format of local context through finding a proper ground. The present study investigates Shemiran-e-Now neighborhood positioned in District 7 of municipality and zone 4 of Tehran and restricted till 2014 by Lavizan forest park, Transportation Company parking lot and air force's base from north, south and west, respectively (Kazemiyan, Ghorbanizadeh & Shafia, 2012). But, the observations show that the access to the so-called neighborhood to this neighborhood has become easier by the construction of Hemmat Highway in the north and transformation of the parking to a passageway in the south. Based on the reports offered by Arse Consulting Engineers, the neighborhood accommodated a population rate equal to 13872 households in 2006 and it was considered as one of the highly crowded neighborhoods in the region (Arse Consulting Engineers, 2009). Ethnological studies indicate that there are at least three different groups involved in making constructions in this neighborhood each with its own specific motivations, abilities and tendencies. Thus, the visage and landscape of the so-called neighborhood is in a process of unplanned daily and nightly change (Kazemiyan, Ghorbanizadeh & Shafia, 2012) granting a complex identity to the context and activities of the neighborhood due to the varying economic interests, survival of young households and emigration of new ethnic groups to the neighborhood. But, the idea that what type is the landscape in Shemiran-e-Now neighborhood from the perspective of these neighborhoods' residents is the question that has been merely institutionalized in their memories and minds.

### Study Methodology

In terms of its philosophy, the present study is an interpretive research considering its paradigm and it is fundamental in terms of orientation, deductive in terms of approach and qualitative in terms of its nature. The study has been conducted using library research and field data with an emphasis on survey strategy (Danaeifard, Alvani & Azar, 2013). The primary objective of the present study is to discover and figure out a phenomenon that has been left unnoticed by other researchers up to now. Thus, the data collected through interviews have been classified and simplified using two types of open and axial coding so that the recognition of the relationships between the topics can finally enable the recognition of the theoretical structure related to the landscape of informal neighborhood's center. The coding and codes' classifications are based on Strauss and Corbin's guidelines for the construction of the data-based theories (Corbin & Strauss, 2012: 108-127) (Strauss & Corbin, 2013: 123-169) (Khaki, 2013: 210-227) (Abolmaali Hosseini, 2011: 402-413). The reason for choosing the qualitative method is that the prior studies have underlined its effectiveness for landscape research (Saif Al-Dini, Rahnami, Farhoudi & Jafari Mehrabadi, 2014). The present study aims at studying the landscape of Shemiran-e-Now informal landscape center and semi-structured interviews were designed to achieve the so-called goal. The library research and background information gathering provided for the extraction of a theoretical pattern based on which the study questions were proposed. Thus, table 1 summarizes the concepts, aspects and indicators that have been utilized for getting the present study done. It is noteworthy that it is not customary in qualitative research to offer theoretical framework or conceptual model because these studies essentially deal with extraction of lean theoretical concepts from the field of study (Flick, 2009: 13) and (Abolmaali Hosseini, 2011: 402-413). So, the framework offered herein solely serves the researcher's guidance and it has only been used in the study path as a navigator.

Thus, the study questions were proposed in a general, expandable and comprehensive form so that they might be identifiable in a previously undefined process of new field data research. The study questions are as follows:

Primary Question: How do Shemiran-e-Now informal neighborhood residents, as hosts, perceive the neighborhood center landscape?

Secondary Question: What part of Shemiran-e-Now informal neighborhood is considered the center by the residents, as hosts? The location selected by the majority of the respondents as the neighborhood center concerns textural and objective examination. The idea that what characteristics have made the center be chosen by the residents in touristic terms has been exploited in the analysis. In the meanwhile, the residents' perceptions of the center and their descriptions and expositions have been utilized in the form of coding in the construction of the study theoretical pattern.

Table 1: Study Framework . Source: Author.

Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Indices
Residents' perception of the informal neighborhood center landscape	Objective details	Natural Manmade	Green coverage and trees of the neighborhood center Elements associated with the context of neighborhood center (land uses, streets and so forth)
	Intellectual interpretation (subjective)	Interrelatedness of the details	Perceived function and relationship of the components as an overall view of the neighborhood center
	General perception (subjective-objective)	Identity, memory and meaning	Memory, identity or meaning narrated (according to the entire senses) of the neighborhood center that is somehow dependent on the texture

To gather the data, theoretical saturation was taken into consideration meaning that the newly collected data should not add any other topic to the raked issues when the researcher finds the sampling sufficient (Corbin & Strauss, 2012: 108-127). Since the neighborhood area is extensive, ten trained interviewers were positioned in various parts of the neighborhood and performed interviews and recorded the voices to collect the required data to be reported to the person in charge of the research. Thus, each of them delivered 15 recorded interviews and, after omitting the unacceptable ones, eventually 123 interviews were approved. Assuming that the neighborhood center is the location of the essential interactions and identity sample of thereof, the study questions were designed assisted by the local people and experts. Table 2 demonstrates three sets of primary questions according to the mental, subjective-objective and objective aspects of the landscape.

Therefore, the recorded interviews were transcribed in separate files following being collected in a preliminary phase and each interview was assigned with a unique code. Then, the interviews exts were reviewed and the main codes related to the neighborhood center were extracted and a general classification of the elements of informal neighborhood's center was obtained. So, the interview data were analyzed in this stage and the codes repeated more than five times by the interviewees regarding the neighborhood center were highlighted. In the end, a general primary categorization of the important subjects was obtained. According to the multiplicity of the categories, a combination of them was constructed considering the existent commonalities. Therefore, the categories featuring conceptual

commonness were placed in the same group as purged classes. Then, these purged classes were mixed two-by-two and a constant comparison of them provided for the extraction of the interpretations. Therefore, in this process, 8 main pivots were converted to 5 purged classes and this led to the extraction of 4 interpretations that were reduced eventually to 3 general interpretations due to the commonalities of the paired pivots. The interpretations enabled the identification of informal neighborhood's landscape.

### Literature Review

The role of the murals in various aspects of urban landscape was investigated in a study and it was demonstrated that three aspects, named pleasantness-unpleasantness, excitement-tranquility and domination-submission, play a role in the determination of the individuals' emotional reactions and affective quality of the environment (Nadri, 2015). Ravadrad and Mahmoudi investigated the mental landscape of Tehran during a 45-year period of Iran's cinema in a study. They examined two groups of movies, popular and elitist. The results showed that a negative urban landscape has been displayed in all the movies (Ravadrad & Mahmoudi, 2016). Ahmadi et al explored the urban landscape in regard of the effect it has on the residents' satisfaction. The results indicated that there is a significant relationship between people's awareness of the urban organizations interventions and their satisfaction of the landscape (Ahmadi, Pourahmad & Hataminejad, 2014). Ebrahimi Dehkordi concluded in a study titled "Houraman touristic region with an emphasis on the cultural landscape

Table 2: Questions asked from the interviewees . Source: Author.

Question asked	Question objective
Where is the center of your neighborhood?	Finding the viewpoints of the residents regarding the center of informal neighborhood and figuring out where is the neighborhood center as viewed by them
Why do you know this place as the center of your neighborhood?	Gaining access to the investigable mental and objective details of the neighborhood center
How do you feel when you think about the neighborhood center?	Gaining access to the subjective-objective aspects of neighborhood center and recognition of the general perceptions of the neighborhood center

readings” that the relationship between the human, rituals and nature has caused the formation and reinforcement of the landscape. In the foresaid study, landscape was divided into three sets: natural focal (contextual), behavioral (artificial) and ritual (symbolic). It was also found out that the cultural-ritual landscape of the region has been shaped by the collocation of textural and behavioral elements (Ebrahimi Dehkordi, 2014). In a study on the temporary urban landscape, Cheshmeh and Karimeh concluded that this short-term urban landscapes can provide for the interaction between human and environment and human and human creating a sense of belonging and attachment to the environment, creation of memories and creation of meaning in textural aspect. This landscape can provide the interaction between the citizens, creation of security and finally citizenship concept (Cheshmeh & Karimi, 2011). Rastandeh concluded in a study of the rural space of Zagros that the natural bedding of the ground causes the formation of fundamental characteristics of cultural landscape subject to the cultural considerations of the local residents and it can be reminded as a special privilege and advantage of a region in comparison to the other regions (Rastandeh, 2009). In a study on Istanbul, Türkyılmaz concluded that landscape investigation not only provides for an embodiment of the historical and emotional background of the residents but it is also dependent on the present time and the current and temporary activities taking place therein (Türkyılmaz, 2016).

### Study Findings

According to the results obtained from the interviews, 98% of the interviewees knew Pakdaman square and the four streets leading thereto as the neighborhood center. The center features such a background as the existence of a fountain and water withdrawal stand, a place for revolutionists’ collective interventions before Islamic Revolution, a place for soldiers’

dispatch during the imposed war, a place for business, bus and taxi stations and finally the place for the gathering of the mourners of Imam Hussein (PBUH). Therefore, Shemiran-e-Now neighborhood center can be described as summarized in table 3.

After classifying the interviews and breaking them down into highly repeated keywords, the following axes were identified in the section related to the landscape details:

1) Neighborhood center is a highly crowded and high density place.

*"It was less crowded 35 years ago. The people did not use to be like this Now, there are people from 72 ethnicities residing ... the people come out in large numbers after six when it becomes a little cooler ... Shemiran-e-Now is always crowded ... (in the old times) there were not so many cars and less population. Now there is a large population and a lot of cars and the people frequently come and go ... this is why it is called center ... (it is called center because) ... there was once a good small mall, it was crowded, the people frequently came and went, (though it has declined recently a little) ... (my first feeling about it is that) it is a crowded place "*

2) Neighborhood center is the shopping center and all kinds of goods can be found for reasonable prices therein.

*"It is all shops, you see. It is crowded right there. The people are more active there. It is a shopping center ... yeah; it is a shopping center ... that depends on what you want to buy? Everything is ten to twenty TOMANS cheaper than Plasco and Tirazeh ... it has become a commodity exchange market, you see; it has become like Imamzadeh Hassan. The majority of Haft Hawz shopkeepers have moved their stores to this place ... They mostly come from regions outside the area (for buying something). Nobody buys from his own neighborhood. Here is a trade center you see ... You can find anything in it, everything, such as butchery, poultry. Whatever you need, you will find in*

Table 3: Neighborhood center description according to landscape elements. Source: Author.

Landscape indicators	Sub-indicators	Description
Objective (manmade) indicators	Walls and shells	Polluted stream wherein the sewage water is flowing
	Quality of the furniture available in neighborhood center	Devoid of any welfare equipment and furniture on the neighborhood center path
	Pavement accessibility	Relatively suitable pavement for pedestrian along with priority given to the vehicles
	Pedestrian’s traffic status	High density and congested during all day hours
	Vehicles’ traffic status	High congestion of vehicles and permanent traffic
	Attendance capacity	Featuring a high attendance potential due to the existence of shops and religious places
Objective (natural) indicator	Presence of distinct element	The existence of a square that is reconstructed once every several years and the existence of an old mosque on a street leading to the square
	Green space rate	The existence of at least 10-year-old trees alongside the pavements in newer parts and the existence of trees over 20 years of age in older parts
Mental indicators	Featuring a historical background	The existence of religious and public memories

here. Like Tehran's main mall"

3) Neighborhood center is the place where everyone knows each other and the place where daily visits take place.

"It is called memory, you see ... Standing under the shade and spending time with old friends ... It was highly crowded and it has become more crowded nowadays. The locals all know one another here these days ... It is a place where people are mostly poor ... That is why the population is very high ... Everybody knows each other ... Here, we are considered somehow as locals based on an account and nobody minds the others' business; it depends on who you are, of course "

4) Neighborhood center is the focal point of holding social religious ceremonies.

"We always go to that mosque during the night. It is a very good place ... The last Wednesday of the year, they hold celebrations here and you do not dare to go to the square even. You would think it is a war zone ... On the last Wednesday night, there are many things in the neighborhood [laughs] ... They used to install (scaffold) here ... and cover it with a green tent for Tasou'a and Ashoura rituals".

5) Neighborhood center as a place where there is different kinds of social harms (drug dealing).

"There was nothing more than fight and vandalism here ... fights happen here and they beat each other severely ... There are many addicts (laughs). Anybody who wants to buy drug goes ... and gets ... its security ... (pauses out of unsureness) ... is enough, yeah. But, well! You should be careful "

6) Neighborhood center as a place named after the martyrs (once before Islamic Revolution and once afterwards).

"(The neighborhood center) has been named after a martyr from this same region ... No, he has been martyred somewhere around the square, This is why it has become center (of the

neighborhood), (Neighborhood center) has been named after two martyrs, Pakdaman (brothers) were martyred during the war (Fig.2) ... May God have mercy on their souls ... This is why the square has been named Shahid Pakdaman ... (The neighborhood center) is called Pakdaman for the martyr who had the same name ... Yeah, they were three brothers all three of whom were revolutionists and murdered during the fight with Shah's regime. They rose up when the tanks came into Shemiran-e-Now (This is why) the square is called martyrs square".

7) Neighborhood center is the place that has become the today's neighborhood center for its historical background.

"That is because it has been desert all around here, my grandfather says ... (It has had) a water tank and (they brought in water) from it ... from the beginning, the square is the oldest ... it has been there from long ago ... it is the first square they have constructed here (that is why it is the neighborhood center) ... because it has been there since the old days (it has become neighborhood's center) ... "

To achieve a comprehensive interpretation of the indicators extracted from the interviews, the octet axis were investigated in terms of the commonalities and it led to the extraction of five purged pivots as explained in table 4.

8) Neighborhood center is a place where the passageways intersect and it is highly congested.

"It is crowded, really crowded. First of all, there is no rule. The cars are parked doubly and triply and the traffic jams continues to the end of the street ... Also, there is a large deal of traffic ... That is for the bazar ... (Neighborhood center) is considered as the main route ... Because the perimeter is rather closed here or it is completely surrounded all around it and it has become more like a plaza (and a place for commuting). ... we have a lot of



Fig. 2: Pakdaman Brothers Sq. in Shemiran\_e\_now neighborhood. Source: [www.newspaper.hamshahri.org/id/39099](http://www.newspaper.hamshahri.org/id/39099).

Table 4: Combining the axes and extracting the purged pivots. Source: Author.

Code	Cases	Meaning	Indicator type
A	1, 2, 3, 5,8	Neighborhood center as the place with the highest population density and daily activity	Cultural space of landscape
B	3, 4	Neighborhood center as the place with the highest public and religious-oriented activities	Cultural space of landscape
C	4, 7, 8	Neighborhood center as the place that includes the largest number of memories	Emotional space of landscape
D	2, 6	Neighborhood center as the place with the highest rate of economic activities	Cultural space of landscape
E	5	Neighborhood center as the most frequently visited place	Cultural space of landscape

memories from Shemiran-e-Now ... the problem of congestion (it has always been there) "

To attain an interpretation of these axes, the next phase presents a pairwise investigation of them. In the end, four interpretations were concluded as explicated in table 5.

According to the fact that the commonality and solidarity interpretations can be amalgamated in social terms, three primary interpretations were eventually identified. Thus, while a good trans-local market has been established in the neighborhood, it can be said that it has been substantially aided by the social commonalities and solidarity and the neighborhood's residents have played a large part in the booming and formation of the marketplace considering their commonalities and similar financial affordability. On the other hand, the existence of traffic junction and the trans-local marketplace mutually strengthen one another and the value of the traffic junction has been increased and it has become more populated due to the presence of the trans-local bazar and, on the other hand, the congestion has become intensified in this junction. It is noteworthy that the high coherence and commonality of the residents and the neighborhood's being the center of traffic have resulted in a higher congestion and value of it and, of course, it has also been followed by unfavorable social outcomes and adverse environmental effects. Wherever the local economy is found booming, a large deal of traffic should be expected. Demand for various types of products, especially drugs, is one negative outcome of the intensifications. Fig. 3 illustrates the relationships between the aforementioned interpretations.

Thus, it can be concluded that the center of informal Shemiran-e-Now neighborhood is the place featuring a high social density of various social groups with high solidarity and commonality in which a scene of economic activity and traffic is continuously portrayed. This centrality has become mixed with the public religious memories due to the residents' high level of religious beliefs and their tendencies for face-to-face contacts that enables a religious-economic narration thereof. The contextual space and the service facilities of the neighborhood may not be in an optimum level, but these social memories and actions have provided for the domination of the positive mentalities over unpleasant objectivities such as economic difficulties, social disorders and boring congestion have not been able to stand such pleasant mentalities like resistance and martyrdom, affiliation and accompaniment of the neighbors.

### Discussion and Analysis

The present study findings indicated that an optimum narration can be extracted of the neighborhood landscape similar to what has been conducted by Ravdarad and Mahmoudi, if systematic and interpretive method is employed (Ravdarad & Mahmoudi, 2016). Moreover, in confirmation of the visual and objective studies, it was determined that the short-lived urban landscapes can lead to the corroboration of the social interactions. Additionally, this study affirms that the textural situation and accessibility of the space plays a role in shaping a landscape (Cheshmeh & Karimi, 2011). In the meanwhile, in confirming the findings by Ebrahimi Dehkordi, the present study indicated that the religious and ideological indicators have an undeniable effect on the formation of the landscape of a residential area (Ebrahimi Dehkordi, 2014). However, the present study also approved that the local economic activities and identical income level of the households are also influential on this issue. Furthermore, in confirmation of the results obtained by Türkyılmaz indicating that the neighborhood landscape is an issue connected to both the past and the present, the current research paper determined that the neighborhood landscape originates from the past but its evolutions and current status have to be narrated and analyzed based on the facts that access to water and revolutionists' activities and other factors, as the background, eventually led to the taking place of economic and social activities in the neighborhood's landscape (Türkyılmaz, 2016).

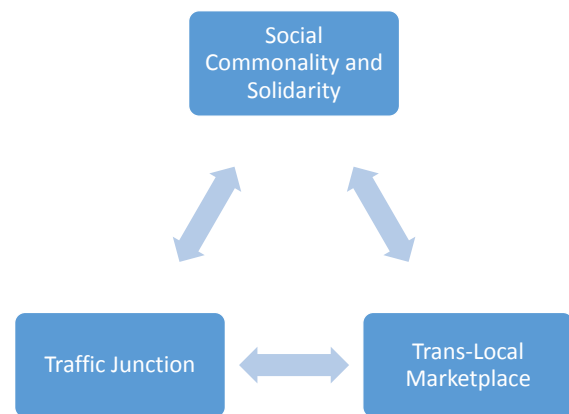


Fig. 3: Conceptual model of the informal neighborhood's landscape. Source: Author.



Table 5: Interpretation of the reduced details. Source: Author.

A-B	Population density in the neighborhood center leads to the formation of religious and people-driven activities. Thus, it can be interpreted
B-E	that the people in this region enjoy a high level of religious beliefs and they are greatly inclined towards public participation hence they
D-E	possess a high social solidarity.
A-C	The high population density of the neighborhood center has been accompanied by the formation of common memories in this place.
B-C	Therefore, it can be interpreted that having shared thoughts (fighting against Shah or participation in war) and belonging nearly to the same social class (predominantly workers) have been the causes for such a happening. Thus, it can be said that the neighborhood residents also possess many social commonalities.
A-D	The high density of the neighborhood, on the one hand, and the low rent prices, on the other hand, has caused the prosperity of the business in the neighborhood center. These business entities have been launched partly by the entrepreneurs residing the same neighborhood and their offering of products in their immediate periphery and partly due to the prosperity of the marketplace. Thus, it can be interpreted that the circumstances have resulted in the formation of a trans-neighborhood bazar or commodity exchange market in the neighborhood center which has per se led to the economic prosperity, diversity of goods and products in low prices. The low prices are partly resulted from low rent price paid for the business places and partly as a result of market regulation based on the financial affordability of the laborer household. These conditions justify the entry of the other neighborhoods' residents to this neighborhood for shopping.
A-E	Intersections and the closed nature of the western sides of the neighborhood have transformed it into the primary exit resulting in a high congestion therein. So, it can be interpreted that the neighborhood center is also the traffic junction of the neighborhood, as well.

## Conclusion

Due to the high population threshold and the multiplicity of the social groups that accommodates, Shemiran-e-Now informal neighborhood has paved the way for the creation of a vast domain of activities and interactions. Religious roots and less urbanized life pattern have caused the neighborhood center to become a space for showcasing friendships and neighboring relationships that reach their peak of religious manifestation on special occasions such as holy months of Muharram and Ramadan. The large amount of population and the medium and weak economic status of the households have directed the neighborhood business entities towards selling low-price products and acquiring profit via selling a large volume of goods. This has caused the creation of a special merit for the region and the neighborhood has been transformed to a place for exchanging goods for reasonable prices. Thus, the natural traffic of the neighborhood has been intensified by the commutation of nonresidents visiting the region to meet their needs as a result of which the neighborhood center has been transformed into a traffic juncture. It seems that the informal neighborhoods feature a combined landscape that is composed of traffic junctions, commonalities and social solidarity and commodity exchange market due to their high population threshold, financial abilities below the city level and a less-urbanized lifestyle. It has to be pointed out that the amount of the memories, especially the public memories of the residents of these neighborhoods, has led to delineation of a different landscape of the neighborhood. This is a feeling that, even with any spatial and functional disorders, intensifies the sense of attachment and tendency for continuing residence in the neighborhood. It seems that the informal neighborhood's landscape, while being a perceptual and analytical concept, can be used as a means of recognition for the selection of urbanism programs. The informal neighborhood residents'

use of such a sense of attachment paves the way for increasing the residents' capacity for the improvement of their residential conditions. In response to the primary study question as to how the neighborhood residents perceive the landscape of Shemiran-e-Now neighborhood center, it can be stated that they know the center as the connective point of their social interactions, business and traffic and a place where they can buy their daily needs, meeting the local residents and establishing ideological formations and holding religious ceremonies. In responding to the secondary question that what part is considered as the neighborhood center by the residents, the background and the age of the neighborhood's centrality and its textural history can be pointed out. The central core of the neighborhood development and the center for supplying household's water, though having been changed in its nature, it has not yet lost any of its functional and substantive benefits. In other words, the center has played functional roles demanded by the accumulation of the residents during every period of time and it has been the focus of the neighborhood's gatherings as demanded by the social needs of the individuals residing it. Having been a center for water access, revolutionists' gatherings, religious ceremonies, economic activities, sales and purchase, traffic and convenience are matters observable in the evolution trend of the neighborhood. It is noteworthy that three current indicators, namely social commonality and solidarity, trans-local marketplace and traffic junction, that, if changed, can influence the nature of Shemiran-e-Now informal neighborhood's center from the perspective of the residents. Thus, the image depicted by a host of the neighborhood landscape s/he is residing is rooted in the social evolutions and social density that have covered the old and ragged texture of the neighborhood with a beautiful shell and cover for the discernment of which by the guest society, it is largely necessary to narrate and transfer these concepts correctly and accurately.

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