

Original Research Article

A Street Landscape Reading

Mashhad's *Bala* and *Paein Khiaban* as Entrances to Imam Reza's Holy Shrine

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Abstract | As the first intervention on an urban scale, Bala Khiaban (the street above the buried Imam Reza's corpse) and Paein Khiaban (the street below the buried Imam Reza's corpse) were built in Mashhad and they created an east-west axis to the center of the holy site. Since it has always played an important role in the spatial structure of cities and the imaginations of inhabitants throughout history, this axis has always been the focus of all administrations. However, interventions made in recent decades, particularly since the second Pahlavi to the present, have disrupted the urban texture, structures, districts, and systems that govern it, displacing locals as the true beneficiaries of this texture and causing several social, cultural, economic, and other issues.

The present paper is an inferential study that examines different resources from three historical eras to read the landscape of these two streets: Pre-Pahlavi (including historical documents and intellectual works), Pahlavi (historical and urban documents), and Post-Islamic Revolution (historical and urban documents as well as in-depth interviews). This research uses a landscape approach to investigate the significance of the streets in the spatial organization of Mashhad.

According to the studies, the characteristics of the landscape in question served a single purpose in relation to each other in a harmonious manner prior to the urban interventions of the first comprehensive plan in the Pahlavi era. Despite the current period's crisis and its repercussions on the street's form and physical features, the public perception as the viewer is always so superior to the matter that the street landscape still exists to some extent and can be revived through some interventions in its main function. As a result of the research, it was discovered that the street in issue has typically been seen as a sublime axis associated with the concept of pilgrimage.

Keywords | *Street landscape , Mashhad, Bala Khiaban, Paein Khiaban.*

Introduction | Due to its dominance over Sanabad, Tabaran, and Tus settlements, Mashhad became Khorasan's heartland. This city, which has been for over a thousand years, expanded as the result of the Shiites' eighth Imam's sacred grave. The city's central and focal core was built in the center of the Imam Reza shrine, which attracted devotees and pilgrims from all over the country and the world, increasing the city's population. Mashhad has

undergone several interventions in addition to this aspect as the city's most distinguishing feature and the inevitable urban growth that comes with an increase in population. The construction of Chaharbagh Street, also known as Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban, which began at Bala Khiaban Gate (Qouchan Gate) and continued to Paein Khiaban gate after passing through the Old Courtyard next to the holy shrine, was the first and most important urban intervention in Mashhad during the Safavid period

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(Monajjem-Yazdi, 1987). The construction of this street and the Old Courtyard as a large-scale intervention in the city, creating a dynamic and vibrant pathway consisting of natural elements such as water and trees, has been extremely effective in reinforcing the shrine as a focal point in the city's space organization, and thus improving the city's landscape and quality. The city has played a very essential part as well as a structural role in the construction of the urban texture by creating one of the most important axes to the holy site.

Over time, this axis has played a key role in urban growth and has remained consistent as the primary axis of the city, carrying the semantic weight and collective memory of the city as a true and identity axis for inhabitants, as well. However, in recent years, urban planners, regardless of the structural and identity role of this axis, with extensive interventions in the central and historical context of the city under the guise of renovation and reconstruction of the texture around the shrine, has disrupted its system and reduced drastically its qualitative aspects.

The goal of this research is to read the landscape of Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban as Mashhad's original and identity axis, as well as to uncover their function in the thoughts of the viewers, to come up with the finest solutions for improving the street landscape in the current time.

Hence, the following research question is addressed: What role have Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban streets played in the spatial arrangement of Mashhad from the past to the present, and what changes have occurred?

To answer this question, the following hypothesis is put forward: This axis appears to have had an integrated order prior to the interventions of the second Pahlavi period to meet the pilgrimage conditions, but the interventions from the Pahlavi period to the present have destroyed its role and purpose.

Street landscape

The process of human contact with the city is referred to as "urban landscape." Therefore, humans not only have an impact on the structure of the city's visual landscape through their actions and activities, but interaction with the urban landscape also influences inhabitants' behavior and mental perception (Lazarevic, Kekovic & Antonic, 2017, 4). Although the urban landscape was initially defined in terms of the objective aspects of the city, the associated definitions were eventually finalized as the science progressed. Thus, the urban landscape may be described as residents' perception of the city concept over history, who have developed a meaningful interaction with the natural and artificial bodies of the environment, which plays an essential role in their ongoing rational lives (Mansouri, 2010). Due to the sheer complexity

of the city's dimensions, a systemic approach has been developed as a scientific instrument for evaluating and recognizing the city's distinguishing features. Among these attempts are some studies on urban space organization, which establish the street as the primary characteristic of city development (Atashinbar, Mansouri & Sheibani, 2013). Spatial organization is a sort of order in a city from the standpoint of residents in space and their collective environment. This systematic distribution will represent the general functions of each unit (koohsari et al., 2017, 5). To put it another way, a spatial organization in an urban context is a dynamic event arising out of ongoing changes and evolutions in the city environment, which is often affected by changes in urban identity and influenced by the emergence of new appropriate elements and factors (Lenzholzer, Klemm & Carolina, 2018, 4). In this context, it is important to take notice of interventions within the scope of the urban spatial order. The street is the main element of urban structure and a subsystem in urban spatial organization. It consists of a diversity of components that make it an open complex system that follows the principles described below:

- Street is a whole.
- The street elements are interrelated.
- Street order shows the relative positions of elements.
- Streets are made up of subsystems that are hierarchically related (Atashinbar, Mansouri & Sheibani, 2013).

In the eyes of the public, the street landscape is a combination of different dimensions encompassing the whole street. A street landscape is a system of elements made up of all the elements within the system, which is an interpretation of the street landscape and an indication of the powers that produce the street (ibid., 99).

Methodology

In adopting a holistic and qualitative approach, this research will assist in reading the landscape and discovering Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban roles in the spatial organization of Mashhad. From the landscape perspective, two approaches are developed to gain the perceptions of the space viewers: 1. Designing a questionnaire and analyzing it, as well as interviewing the space's main users; 2. Through examining intellectual works (e.g. movies, photographs, poetry, travelogue, etc.) concerning the axis in question throughout the time. Here, both are employed to discover the public perception. Here is how this research reads the landscape of the streets over three time periods: 1. Pre-Pahlavi era by studying historical documents and literary works like travelogues, etc; 2. Pahlavi era by studying historical works and existing urban documents; 3. Post-Islamic revolution era by studying urban documents and resources as well as in-depth interviews with the streets' users (Fig. 1).

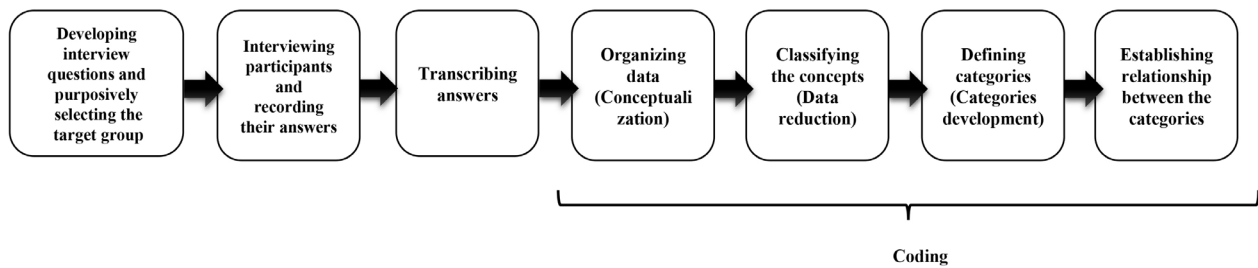


Fig. 1. A qualitative method of resources extraction of Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban through interviews. Source: Lak & Jalalian, 2018.

Both are employed to discover public perception. In fact, the present study is an inferential study that seeks to discover the role of the street in the spatial organization or the street landscape by analyzing various sources in the three historical periods mentioned. Qualitative research deals with the text. The data were gathered through interviews and observations and then were transcribed. As soon as the transcriptions were ready, we needed to develop a method for interpretation. There are several ways to approach the data and distance ourselves from the transcribed data. To sum up, the research process is both a path from theory to text and a forward path from text to theory. In both approaches, visual and verbal data are collected and analyzed in accordance with a specific research design (Flick, 2018).

A timeline of interventions in Mashhad's urban landscape with respect to Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban axis

• First period: Pre-Pahlavi

The timeline of urban interventions in the central core of Mashhad is examined as a whole to understand the landscape of the city as a whole and to ensure that the study of Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban is incomplete without examining the central core of the city. Mashhad emerged and flourished because of the devotion to Imam Reza, the eighth Shia Imam martyred by Ma'mun Khalifa Abbasi in 817-818 (Imami, 1958). Up until the Mongol invasion destroyed large cities such as Tus and Neishabour in the seventh century, there was not much growth in the city, but after that, the foundations for its growth and development were laid. We can mention, for instance, the construction of Goharshad Mosque in the Timurid period, which served to upgrade both *Astan-e-Quds* and the city. Safavid's rule and the formalization of Shiite religion by Shah-Ismaeil Safavid contributed to the rapid growth of the city. The main fence of the city, as well as Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban leading to the two gates of the same name, were built during this time. One of these two streets leads to the bottom of the foot of the Imam's shrine, and the other leads to the top of the holy shrine (Curzon, 1983). Rezvani writes: "Among his

[Shah Abbas Safavid's] most notable achievements was expanding the Old Courtyard, re-building Khajeh Rabi's tomb, and building Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban in Mashhad." The construction of this street in Mashhad, after Harat and Qazvin, was the third experience of street construction in Iran. In 1607, a permit was issued for its construction which lasted until 1614. Due to a rise in Mashhad's population and the occurrence of water scarcity during these years, this new street was transformed into one of the city's most important and attractive urban elements by digging aqueducts and adding Golsab spring water to them, flowing water in this three-kilometer street, and planting trees on both sides of this stream (Rezvani, 2015). In the year 1611, this street was embodied as intended in the original plan. This street "was 22 cubits wide and 2,800 cubits long" (Seyyedi, 1999). Although Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban brought about massive changes in urban texture by separating the intertwined complex of houses, alleys, and bazaars into straight lines, the overall urban structure remained intact (Behravan, 2001). Mashhad's reputation and glory were boosted to many new heights following the election of Nader Shah Afshar and the choice of Mashhad as the capital (Lockhart, 1968). The overall structure of the city during the Qajar period may be described as a series of marketplaces and roadways going to the holy shrine and connected to the gates. Due to the link between the Tus and Marv axis, this construction reinforced the city's districts by connecting them to the holy temple complex through alleyways and marketplaces (Nezami, 1975), (Fig. 2).

- Reading the landscape of Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban Axis using historical documents and literary works

In his book *Izz al-Din Ali Ibn Athir Jarzi* writes that a companion of Shah Abbas II composed a poem about the Chaharbagh Street in Mashhad during her stay in Mashhad:

*"Thanks to Shah Abbas II who embellished this street with a stream as a milk way
Historic mansions and almond trees are on either side of the street."*

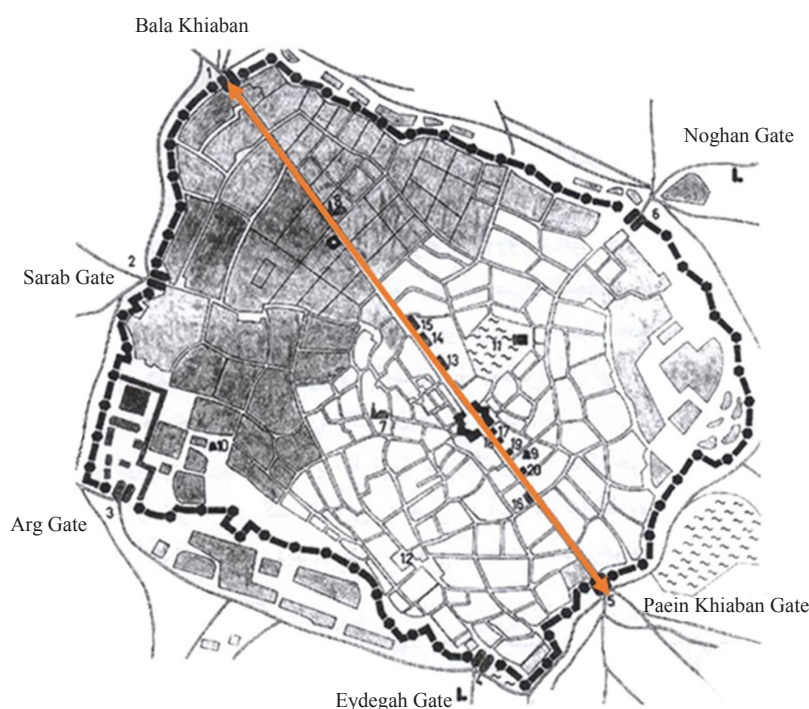


Fig.2. A photograph of Mashhad and Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban Axis in 1857. Source: Seyyedi, 1999.

How beautifully and wisely a stream like a belt winds its way through the city

So well-described from where one can simply find the way to heaven” (Jarzi,1972).

Reading the texts in the next era, where they all refer to the conditions of their time and the landscape in question, is fascinating. Ármin Vámbéry, a Hungarian tourist, arrived in Mashhad on November 22, 1863, and then wrote in her travelogue: “Along Paein Khiaban, a long and wide street, we walked to the Sharif courtyard in Mashhad. The wide stream that winds its way through the city and is lined with beautifully shaded trees provides a lovely perspective; in fact, it is this feature that has helped Mashhad become one of Iran’s most attractive cities. It is interesting to witness the diversification of Asians and Shiite believers that fills the streets and makes them so lively... Several hundred steps from the shrine are filled with strange sights and sounds. Men in huge crowds stand along sidewalks or in front of shops, on either side of the street or in the street, carrying their goods on their heads, shoulders, or arms, and walk through the crowds... Throughout the day, these people move around the city and enter or exit its gates. In the meantime, what is important is that the pilgrimage proceeds with agility and uniform utterance of words. “Pilgrims who have completed their pilgrimages are told, “May God accept your prayer,” while those who are at the point of entering the shrine are told, “Keep me in your

prayers” (Vámbéry,1993). MacGregor, a Scot, described Mashhad Street (Chaharbagh) as follows: “Among the most distinctive features of Mashhad is a street that is completely straight and has water flowing through it. In this water, people bathe, wash their clothes, and drink” (MacGregor, 1989). Curzon, a British statesman, compared Mashhad’s Chaharbagh Street to the Champs-Élysées but from the Easterns’ point of view. “It is called a road (or boulevard) and it is as glorious to the people of the East as the Champs Elysees”. “Through the street, there’s a canal... It is believed that the canal’s edge, the street’s floor, and the stairwells were formerly constructed of stone. On both sides of the canal, sycamore, mulberry, elm, and willow plantains used to be planted sporadically. The market stores on either side of the sidewalk are quite fascinating, as are the trees on either side of the walkway” (Curzon, 1983).

• Second Period: Pahlavi Dynasty

The city of Mashhad maintained its Qajar-era form at the start of the first Pahlavi period, although the development of new streets and squares was on the agenda owing to the introduction of new urban planning regulations from 1310 to 1320. A street named Tehran was built to the south of the holy site, while a street named Tabarsi was built to the north. Finally, during Pahlavi’s second period, these four streets were linked by a square known as Hazrati. For the first time, the traffic circle and the four main streets influenced the body-like

texture on a wide scale in favor of the vehicle during this period. The city's medium-sized district structure, on the other hand, is still loyal to its historical and organic roots (Nezami, 1975), (Figs. 3 & 4).

According to ancient records, the stream in the center

of the street was open and its running water was used before the "1940s". From those years onwards, "while renovating the pavement of Safavid Old Courtyard was covered with octagonal white stones on the stream. The municipality also chopped down trees on both sides of



Fig. 3. Chaharbaq Axis of Mashhad and its surrounding usages in the first period of Pahlawi, Source: Screen shot from the documentary "Amnesia" (2017) Directed by Hassan Akhoundpour.



Fig. 4. Bala Khiaban in 1941. Source: Haghighatbin et al., 2010.

the stream in 1966, and the Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban from its original Chaharbagh, which had its origins in Mashhad's ancient past, became an ordinary street (Mahovan, 2004 Quoted from Haghighatbin, Ansari & Pourjafar, 2010).

In 1971, for the first time, a comprehensive plan was developed for the city of Mashhad, which is known as Khazani. The Boor Boor consultant designed the rebuilding plan of anything around Imam Reza's shrine in 1952 and 1953, at the commencement of the second Pahlavi period, which corresponds to a sequence of socio-political developments. The spatial and structural system established in the Boor Boor plan still relies on the existence of a roadway that emphasizes the presence of important features. Automobiles are typically regarded to be the first priority on streets. Hazrati Square, on the other hand, is built on the same radial construction in the first Pahlavi (Pajoheshkade-ye Samen, 2018), (Fig. 5).

• Third period: Post-Islamic Revolution

The implementation of the Boor Boor plan was almost halted when the Islamic Revolution broke out in 1978, and the green space around the shrine remained. After a decade, Iran Housing Company created a restoration plan for a 50-hectare area surrounding Hazrati Square in 1988, and as a consequence, Hazrati Square design was done in terms of performance at the lower level, so that northern-Southern and west-east accesses in this region were done from this axis (Pajoheshkade-ye Samen, 2018), (Fig. 6).

According to the second comprehensive design of Mashhad developed by Mehrazan consultant in 1993, the center of Mashhad is of special significance due to the presence of the holy shrine of Hazrat Reza, but it is also sensitive to pressure. This is a serious condition due to high population density and transportation, as well as rapid changes in physical texture. Following Mehrazan's plan as well as the ex-minister of housing and urban development's letter to the Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, Tash Consultant Company proposed a renovation and restoration plan for the 360-hectare area surrounding the Holy Shrine Complex in 1995; this company determined that the existing texture needed to be demolished, deconstructed, and replaced with a new structure. Following the Article 5 Commission's decision on the modification of the restoration and reconstruction plan on February 24, 2000, a series of executive actions were implemented over 10 years, resulting in significant changes in the area's structure and socio-economic structure (Pajoheshkade-ye Samen, 2018). Hassan Akhoundpour's ethnographic and critical documentary "Amnesia," directed by Hassan Akhoundpour and produced by Samen Research Institute in 2015, depicted the consequences of the texture renovation plan surrounding Imam Reza Shrine; the director expertly displayed the current landscape of Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban by selecting the right scenes and camera angles (Fig. 7). Figure 8 shows the Timeline of urban interventions in the center of Mashhad City.

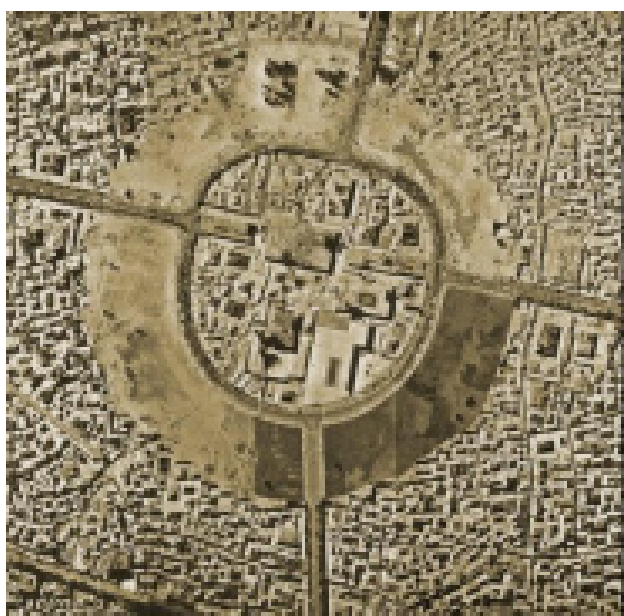


Fig. 5. Restoration of the Texture around the Holy Shrine in 1975 based on Boor Boor plan. Source: Pajoheshkade-ye Samen, 2018.

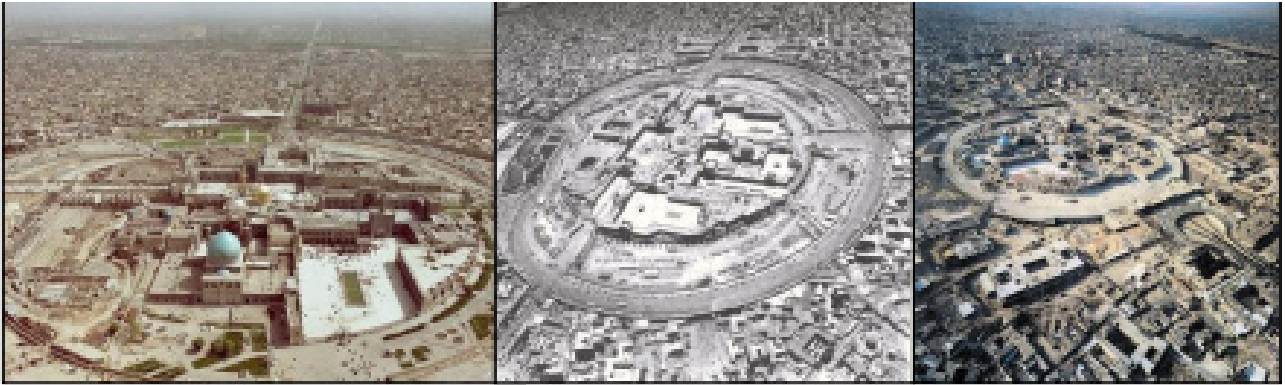


Fig. 6. Development trend of Holy Shrine Complex and Construction of an underpass surrounding it, Source: Pajoheshkade-ye Samen, 2018.



Fig. 7. Bala Khiaban Axis to Holy Shrine after the implementation of the plan renovating the texture around the shrine. Source: Screen shot from the documentary "Amnesia" (2017) Directed by Hassan Akhoundpour.

Reading the landscape of Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban after the Islamic Revolution through in-depth interviews

This section of the study focuses on organizing data (conceptualization), classifying concepts (data reduction), explaining and connecting the categories presented by the interviewees (categorizing). The process of extracting themes and categories from this part indicates that generally, space viewers have experienced the meaning of Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban in the form of five general notions, as shown in Figure 9. The variation in users' spatial perception is a notable and thought-provoking issue from the viewers' perspective. Bala Khiaban has been the center of

cultural, social, and economic life in Mashhad from the past to the present, and pilgrims are to cross this street to reach the holy shrine. Bala Khiaban link to Shohada Square as a point of access and commercial exchanges has always been etched in the memories of the public, prompting interviewers to recommend this street as a good spot to buy souvenirs. More importantly, Bala Khiaban, from Shohada Square toward the shrine, is primarily utilized by pilgrims, but the western part toward Tohid Square (Qouchan Gate), is more linked with Mashhad's residents. Paein Khiaban is mostly known for its historical Hosseiniyehs, traditional bathhouses, the houses of scholars and authorities, Bazaars, and halls around. The pilgrims to the shrine

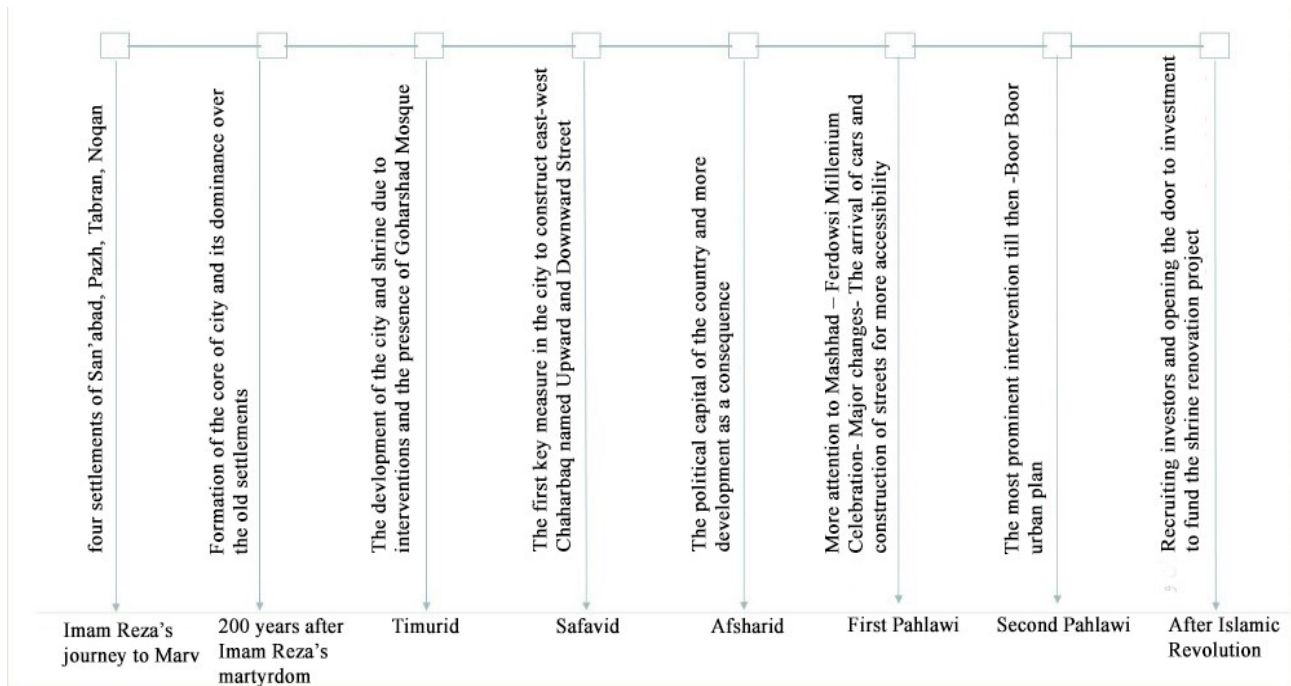


Fig. 8. Timeline of urban interventions in the center of Mashhad City. Source: Authors.

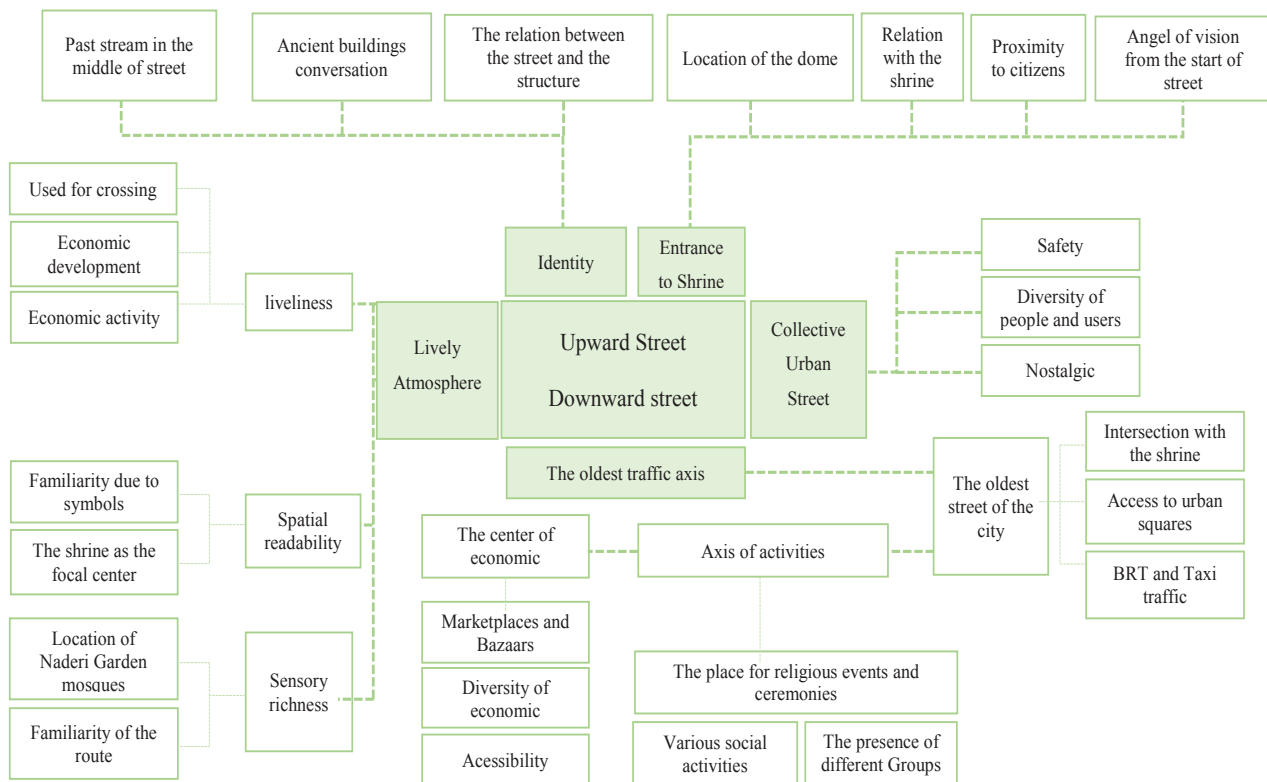


Fig. 9. Semantic model of Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban. Source: Authors.

have been accentuated due to their proximity to the shrine and the visual link between Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban with the eighth Imam's threshold, which from the audience's perspective seems visually the same in both streets. The disappearance of the historical texture at Paein Khiaban and a portion of Bala Khiaban has made these two streets unidentified and unauthentic in the minds of the viewers in that the most important memories of the neighbors related to the old bazaars, residents displaced from the textures and theological schools and Hosseiniyehs, have been demolished. Moreover, the lack of liveliness of the new constructions connected to Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban, especially Sharestan, and the excessive loads have, as well as the fragmentation of extensions all this space seem austere to viewers.

The findings of this study, which were based on a qualitative approach and content analysis technique, considered the five effective notions associated with a place: urban mass street, shrine threshold, the oldest axis of traffic, lively space, and identity (Fig. 9).

Discussion

Data were grouped based on three historical periods after researching historical sources, reading travelogues and intellectual works, and assessing the contents of interviews with individuals regarding Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban in Table 1.

It is deduced from the theoretical underpinnings as well as historical and field research that in each of the three periods of Pre-Pahlavi, Pahlavi, and the time following the Islamic Revolution, the landscape of Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban was different, and the perceptions of the audience varied as well, depending on the interventions made in the texture and this axis. We'll examine the street landscape in each period separately in the following sections. The holy shrine was considered the first step in the creation of the city in the Pre-Pahlavi period, and a cohesive texture encompassing marketplaces, neighborhoods, and bazaars, among other things, established a single, organic system and an identity zone independent of the texture with the holy shrine as its center. Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban, which connected the city's two gates to the square, were erected during the Safavid period, at the same time as the building of a city square near the Imam's grave, which later was named the Old Courtyard. All of these elements came together to form an identity space and an autonomous whole that worked in perfect harmony with one another and could not be divided in any manner. This space changed gradually from the early Pahlavi period, when new urban planning policies and initiatives were implemented,

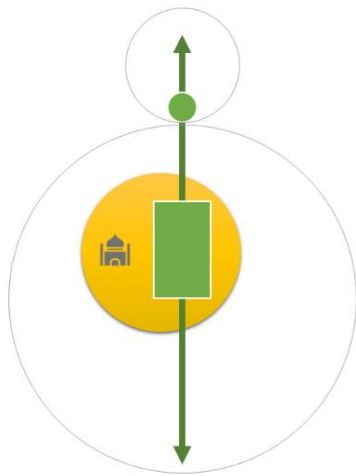
such as the building of Arg Street and the Mojassameh square. In actuality, Bala Khiaban was separated from the previous space, which was connected to the shrine and the city center, and established a new space after being cut off by the city's new street. As a result of these interventions, the city center and core of the city shifted from the holy shrine to Mojassameh square (Shohada Square). Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban, along with the holy shrine, formed a whole unit and space. Thereafter, for the first time, the holy shrine was split from the unified fabric and system, with the creation of Hazrati Square (a square for driving automobiles around the shrine) and new streets, as well as encircling green vegetation around the shrine. In Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban, preparations for automobile crossings were conducted. As a result, the space was separated into three sections: Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban, as well as the holy shrine. Following the Islamic Revolution, urban interventions parallel to those of the Pahlavi dynasty, but larger and more unrestrained, obliterated the surrounding texture, such as the creation of green vegetation around the holy shrine, converting small buildings into big commercial buildings and hotels. As a consequence, multiple and distinct spaces were established (Fig. 10).

Conclusion

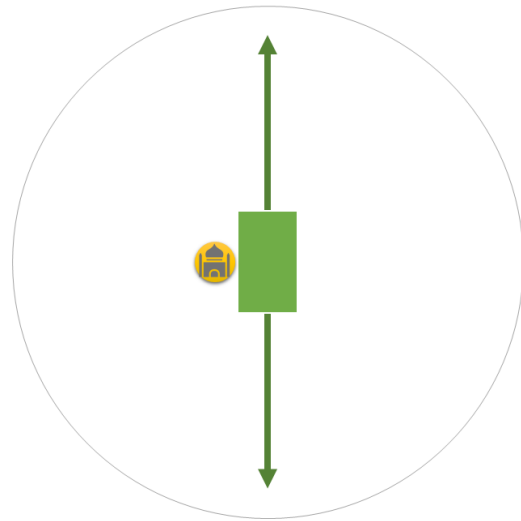
Before the extensive interventions of the surrounding texture of the shrine, the unifying thread of all the elements examined at Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban throughout time was to pay attention to a center and identity that made it the threshold to approach the sanctuary of Imam. Water axis, gardens and trees, slope axis, dimensions, space scale, and other features and components of the landscape have always been in accordance with the sacred matter of pilgrimage. In reality, this axis is always associated with sight, since it reaches the point of attention of the eighth Imam's shrine. In other words, throughout history, the sacred notion of pilgrimage has been the most essential factor in all activities, behaviors, and interventions, and this concept has physically constructed a balanced "transcendent axis." The analysis of the investigated axis reveals that interventions in the modern era, particularly in recent years, have mostly concentrated on the objective characteristics of space, while the mental dimensions and meaning of space have been overlooked. The fact that the disintegration of the physical constituent elements and the street-forming activity in the contemporary period has disrupted the components in this system that have always acted in the same direction. The components that make up the street as a whole, on the other hand, do not act

Table 1. Categorizing the summary of studies according to historical periods. Source: Authors.

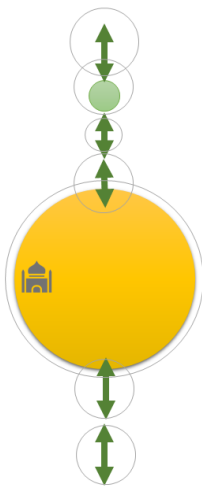
Historical Period	Historical resources	Literary resources / Urban documents	Analyzing the contents of interviews / Urban documents
Pre-Pahlavi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Creating the foundation for the city's growth and development, or building the Goharshad Mosque during the Timurid era Constructing the main fence of the city and two entrance gates in the Safavid period Constructing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chaharbagh Street (Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban) in Mashhad as the first major intervention in the city during the Safavid dynasty - Organically and uniformly forming the texture of the neighborhoods surrounding the shrine; - Existence of hierarchical system of neighborhood, market and holy place - Organic system in texture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating a dynamic and vibrant axis using water and trees as natural components - Two rows of sycamore trees along the main street which is lined with stores, gardens, and residences. - Mashhad is distinguished by a fully straight roadway through which water flows, through which people bathe, wash their clothes, and utilize 	
Pahlavi	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The city's physical development and the demolition of the ancient barrier of Reza-Khan's two periods - Construction of Arg Street as a new city at the intersection with Bala Khiaban and the creation of a square called "Mojassameh". Modification of the canal of the water axis to change the construction of Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban - Construction of new streets such as Tehran and Tabarsi - Construction of Hazrat Square - Renovation of the old Safavid courtyard paving with white octagonal stones and covering the river in the courtyard - The arrival of the automobile and the transformation of the streets into boulevards for car crossing - Cutting down trees on both sides of the street's stream and covering it in 1345 - Encircling the holy shrine with green vegetation and separating it from the city for the first time 	-
Post-Islamic Revolution	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Underpass construction - The start of the endeavor to renovate and rebuild the texture around the shrine, as well as the breakdown of the organic texture system - Extensive demolition of houses and migration of indigenous inhabitants - Construction of buildings regardless of local architecture Conversion of small residential buildings into big commercial buildings and hotels - Loss of residents' sense of belonging - Increasing vehicle transit traffic



The first Pahlavi



Pre-Pahlavi



Post-Islamic Revolution



The Second Pahlavi

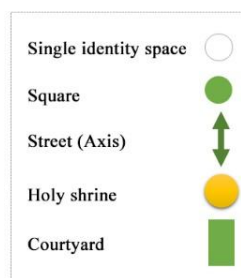


Fig. 10. Identity space and the order system governing the street in different periods. Source: Authors.

in accordance with the goals of this single whole, and each component operates without regard for the whole and is independent of it, resulting in a change in the system's general order and the relationship between the elements in general. Indeed, the subsystems that make up the street should act hierarchically in line with the overall purpose of the system. As a result, the landscapes of Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban have been entirely altered in recent years, and their function and role have been significantly diminished. In fact, during the Pre-Pahlavi period, the identity space of Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban, as well as the holy shrine, played a role as a whole, forming an organic order of relations between them, and it is the community and public opinion that cause the formation of relations between urban components during this period. Similarly, the unified organic system was increasingly split into different spaces depending on ruling systems during the Pahlavi period. In reality, the result of the forces controlling the urban components moves from social forces to governing forces throughout this period. Following the Islamic Revolution, and particularly in recent years, a unified system has been unable to be developed, and separate and numerous spaces have emerged, with less order discernible between them. In fact, the result of the ruling forces and the orderly order forms the landscape of the street and the area in this period, as it did in Pahlavi, but the difference from the previous period is that there is a confrontation between the ruling and social forces in the current situation which has resulted in numerous conflicts of interest (Table 2). There used to be harmony and even a balance between the formation of the body and activities, and the neighborhood and pilgrims played their roles in harmony and balance. Nowadays, particularly during the last 20 years, the materialist and economic profitability are dominant, causing the city to deteriorate and the residents as the main agents in the texture, to be ignored. Despite the crisis and its damage to the street's physical body, the power of perception, or the standpoint of human, has always prevailed over matter, ensuring this street's mental meaning remains intact. Accordingly, the axis of Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban could be considered to

function as a transcendent axis that draws the attention of the viewer. One of the most significant and original streets in the city, this axis should be the center of any intervention to improve the city landscape based on the street's importance to the cityscape. As well as revitalizing Mashhad's identity, it will add a new dimension to the city's fabric, since the identity of a city is its most essential component. In reality, the most striking aspect of every cityscape is a trait that is well-known in the viewer's minds and senses. This means that any action that enhances this aspect will have a significant impact on the entire city. To begin the design, it is necessary to assess and recognize the landscapes of Bala Khiaban and Paein Khiaban. Urban landscapes are defined by symbolism and signs that create a sense of space. It is feasible to create interventions that are suitable to the identity of urban space by understanding the meaning of urban space in the thoughts of residents (landscape reading) and in the structure of the city. In other words, the audience's experience and perception may be used to develop, revive, and improve the semantic quality of today's mainly meaningless urban settings, resulting in the creation of a feeling of a place as the outcome of constructing dynamic and successful locations in Iranian cities. Measures like revitalizing the original water axis (Naderi), revitalizing vegetation and texture, adjusting the movement of vehicles and pedestrians by allocating a significant portion of the street to pedestrian facilities and public transportation, and using clean and up-to-date public transportation can be taken. As illustrated in Figure 11, the conceptual plan for the street section is presented. In general, it can be concluded from a study of the role and landscape of streets in the contemporary period that the general policy of the second Pahlavi period and the period following the Islamic Revolution in street management was nearly identical; they divided the streets from a single unit into smaller ones, distorting the view of the street. In addition to the axis described in Mashhad, Valiasr Street in Tehran is an example of such interventions. The explanation for the second Pahlavi period's and post-Islamic Revolution's identical attitude and strategy can be found in implementing the comprehensive plan. In sum, the modernist approach

Table 2. Summary of the ruling system of the Khabayans. Source: Authors.

Period /Components	Pre-Pahlavi	Pahlavi	Post-Islamic revolution
Identity space	Unified	Multiple spaces	Numerous spaces
Relation type	Organic	Organic-ruling	Ruling
The result of forces	Community	Community- government	Government

to the street's comprehensive design simply ties it to the functional zones of the modern city. This approach peaked in the years following the Islamic Revolution, when the street was just used as a traffic route. The absence of a defined strategy, which is the outcome of the tension between the modernist idea of the comprehensive plan and the ideological view of urban administration following the Islamic Revolution, might be regarded as the cause of this increase (concepts such as justice-oriented city, Islamic city or ...).

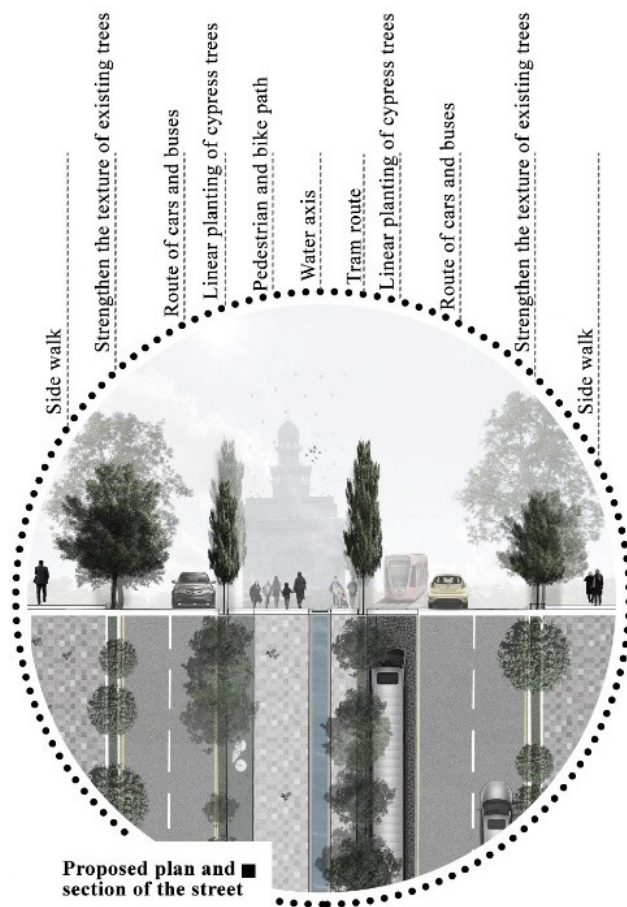


Fig. 11. Plan: section cross and perspective of the conceptual plan of Bala Khiaban. Source: Hosseinzadeh, 2019.

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