

Investigating the Criteria of Utility in Social Spaces of Isfahan in the Safavid Era

Case Study: Social Spaces of Historical Texture of Isfahan*

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Abstract | Today, social spaces have become a Emancipation way from mechanical life, high speed, and Enormous potential for attracting citizen and tourists, to increase the level of participation and vitality of cities, along with their impact on the surrounding urban texture has been proven in many successful global examples, for this reason many urban professionals and managers in recent years have emphasized the necessity of building, recreate and equip Iranian cities with these types of spaces

The present study aimed to evaluate social spaces existing in the historical texture of Isfahan, as one of the ancient and historic cities of Iran, during the prosperity of one of the governments that focused on urban planning, and this paper also examines the weaknesses and strengths of these types of spaces.

In the first step in the present study, urban space, public space, and social space have been defined and the presence of these spaces in historical texture, and also social spaces of Isfahan in the Safavid era have been described. Then, based on experts' opinions on the definition of social space, prominent social spaces of Isfahan have been evaluated. In the next step, elites of this field helped us explain the components of assessment and conduct a survey, and their consensus on the spaces was evaluated so that at the end, to develop a more accurate model of utility criteria of social spaces in historical textures can be proposed.

Keywords | *Urban Space, Public space, Social space, Historical Texture, Isfahan.*

Introduction | The weakness of the contemporary structure of Iranian cities in providing spaces for the people's ordinary gathering and lack of production of public spaces in order to increase the presence of people is a serious problem, and it has kept socialization indexes of Iranian cities in a poor condition.

Today, most of the Iranian cities, unfortunately, lack social spaces for realization and enhancement of civil life. Social

life in today's city is random and occurs on the margins of different functions of the city (Mansouri, 2001).

Building social spaces in the form of plazas, parks, big bazaars, touristic streets, and big squares in European and North American countries in the recent century has Substantially contributed to presence, vitality, and has improved the sense of attracting of belonging people to cities, tourists and thus, resulted in preserving and promotion of the culture of each region significantly. But in contemporary Iran, the struggle over how to realize these spaces, despite the great and glorious culture and

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civilization of the past, has turned into a complicated situation.

In other words, it can be said that Iran in the face of this issue is caught in a dilemma between localization and globalization. And it's a dilemma between tradition and modernity, while many still do not have a clear understanding of these concepts and this has caused neither Iranian culture continues uninterruptedly, nor other cultures to be fully recognized (Saremi & Ali Asl, 2016, 99).

Research question

Looking at the existing examples of Iranian social spaces, it comes to mind that a considerable part of these spaces are related to previous centuries and are the historical textures of Iranian cities.

The ancient and historic spaces of the Iranian cities belong to the people of that country, with their special and unique physical elements that have been preserved from its history and identity. These spaces due to their historical identity and concept of originality always attract foreign and domestic tourists from other cities and countries.

Isfahan, as one of the historical and touristic cities of Iran, contains many social spaces most of which belong to the Safavid era. Paying attention to this point and trying to analyze the structure of these spaces in the historical texture of Isfahan of the Safavid era can help today's architecture and urban development to reproduce social spaces based on Iranian-Islamic identity and culture. In this regard, the question arises whether we can obtain criteria consistent with Iranian cities' structure for evaluating the quality of Social spaces constructed in contemporary cities by evaluation of the components of social spaces in historical texture ?

Review of literature

Analysis, evaluation, and examination of social spaces in Iranian cities are issues that have received much attention in recent years due to the need for urban upgrading. Most of these studies have only focused on one aspect of social space evaluation, historical texture development capacities, or evaluation of social space of sample urban spaces (sometimes historical).

Among these studies, the book titled "Urban Space in Historical Textures of Iran" by Soltanzadeh (1993) has categorized such spaces into roads, bazaars, square, gates, entrances, entrance spaces, and bridges and has investigated them in different cities of Iran.

Mahmoudi and Chelgavani (2013) in a study entitled "Evaluation of Urban Space Quality Components on Utility of Pedestrian Touristic Routes, Case Study: Prioritization of Pedestrian Touristic Routes in the City of

Isfahan" have prioritized pedestrian routes of Isfahan on the basis of the utility of public spaces.

Shoja'i and Partovi (2015) in their study titled "Factors Affecting Creation and Promotion of Sociability in Public Spaces with Different Scales in Tehran, Case Study: Public Spaces of Two Neighborhoods and One Area in District 7 of Tehran" have explained the factors affecting creation and promotion of socialization in public spaces by considering different scales of public spaces in Tehran. In the most recent study, Ranjbar, Azarm, and Kazanovas (2019) in "An Exploration of the Nature of Urban Spaces Transformation in Iranian Historical Cities, Case Study: Isfahan" refer to the most important forces influencing changes of urban spaces. These forces include the government, the state, people, events, technology, environment, and time. Also, based on analysis of macro-structural changes in Isfahan, it is understood that transformation of Isfahan has shifted from general changes of the city in the center of it to poles of development of urban spaces outside the city, which has created the impact of two counteracting forces on the transformation of the totality of the city.

Research method

The research method in this study is descriptive-analytical. It is a descriptive study as it describes and categorizes urban space, public space, and social space. In some parts of the study, the analytical method was used to examine the parameters affecting the evaluation of social spaces of historical texture and to analyze them.

For the evaluation of social spaces existing in the historical texture of Isfahan, as the case study, field method was used. Data collection tool in this study was the evaluation of the criteria and a questionnaire filled by elites in architecture and urban development. The questionnaire was designed to measure the criteria and sub-criteria of physical, functional, and cultural parameters in public spaces and to evaluate these spaces. Observation and evaluation of spaces was performed by the researcher several times during different hours of the day in order to separately score the questions proposed in the questionnaire. Satisfaction-Importance rating (SI) was used to analyze the questionnaire test, which was one of the most used methods in similar studies. This method is a unique tool that enables users and residents to express both satisfaction and importance factors in decision making about each environmental quality

Definitions and theoretical foundations

In order to provide a proper definition of social space, we need to describe urban space and public space.

• Urban space

Urban space is, in fact, nothing but the space for the daily life of citizens that is consciously and unconsciously perceived every day on the way from home to work (Pakzad, 1997, 32). Urban space is also an organized and regular structure that provides a physical context for human activities and is capable of providing a platform for carrying social relations and cultural goals (Sheikhi, 2001). Urban public space includes formal squares, roads, streets, as well as vacant and marginal lands. This includes all spaces that accept public access or use, whether publicly owned or privately owned, shared or indefinite. It is a source of public property, but its boundaries may change over time (Brown, 2006, 10).

• Public space

Tibbaldes considers all sections of urban texture to which all people have physical and visual access as public space. Thus, the streets, parks, and squares of the city are extended to include the buildings that enclose them and determine their boundaries. So, this space is the most important part of our cities. This is where most human contacts and interactions take place (Tibbaldes, 1992, 1). In fact, what distinguishes public space from non-public space is having the following three important characteristics: 1. being free of charge; 2. no time constraint on access to the space; and 3. the ability of all social groups to use the space regardless of gender, age, race, and other factors (Magalhaes & Trigo, 2017, 6).

Public space is where citizens are present. "We see public space as common land where people perform a ritual and functional activities that link a community together, whether in the process of normal routine life or in periodical festivals" (Carr et al., 1992, xi).

Oldenburg describes the experience of daily life in three areas: "the first space (residence), the second space (work), and the third space (social life, recreation, and leisure)". His emphasis is on the necessity of living equilibrium in these three territories as a desirable living experience. Although the first and second spaces are considered identity-giving factors, the third space provides the ground for the creation of social territory (Oldenburg, 2001).

• Social space

The third space, as the place of social life and public space, empowers citizens to take advantage of these needs and incentives to provide social realms in communications with familiar and alienated individuals. The third space includes a variety of public spaces that accept communities that have gathered happily and voluntarily away from home and work, and are mostly casual and informal (Oldenburg, 1999, 16). Social spaces are part of open and public spaces that are somehow a reflection of the nature of collective life. Therefore, the basic requirement for understanding a public space as a social space is to engage in social interaction.

Therefore, in the present study, we rely on the part of the definition of public space and urban space that has been expressed in the sense of the third-place spaces and refers to social space. Finally, it can be stated that urban space involves public space; and in public space, there are suitable spaces for living, working and social life that have been defined as social space or the social living space (third place), "places where the most interactions and communications among citizens take place and form the main ground for citizens' functional and ritual activities" (Andalib, 2010, 18).

• Social space and historical texture

Historical texture is the initial core of any city. Castles, citadels, fortresses, and what has been built as the city's initial core in ancient times (before the Qajar era) are called historical texture. In other words, it is the texture which "it is a texture that holds the legacy of centuries-old urban planning from the beginning to the present." (Shama'i & Pourahmad, 2005, 85).

Historical textures are identified on the basis of these four parameters, 1. historical values; 2. social values; 3. scientific values; and 4. aesthetic values (Habibi, Pourahmad & Meshkini, 2007: 68-72).

The typology of social spaces in Iranian cities indicates the diversity of these spaces in terms of its social scale and its relation to common practices of the same scale.

Typology of social spaces in Iranian cities indicates the diversity of these spaces in terms of its social scale and its relation to common functions of the same scale. The front porch of schools, the courtyard of mosques, the yard of inns, the city squares, and the city gates, are social spaces that fulfill their diverse functions in meeting the needs for which they have been built. Beside that they are among the social spaces that the Iranian community has achieved when searching for its social living place. The authenticity of the community leads to the emergence of social spaces at various levels, and these spaces realize and reinforce the idea of socialism (Mansouri, 2001).

Considering that a significant part of historical public spaces of cities are located in historical textures, understanding the social values in the constitutive criteria of the historical context, and the importance of the culture and climate, and given the high power of memory element among citizens, it can be said that this environment has a very high capacity to attract the city's people and tourists (Fig. 1).

• The criteria for the measurement of social space based on the definitions and opinions of experts

Social space can be assessed as a high quality public urban space only when its users have a good and satisfying perception of the space and consider it their own, to the extent that they feel joyful, alive, secure, and self-prospering because of being there. This quality is

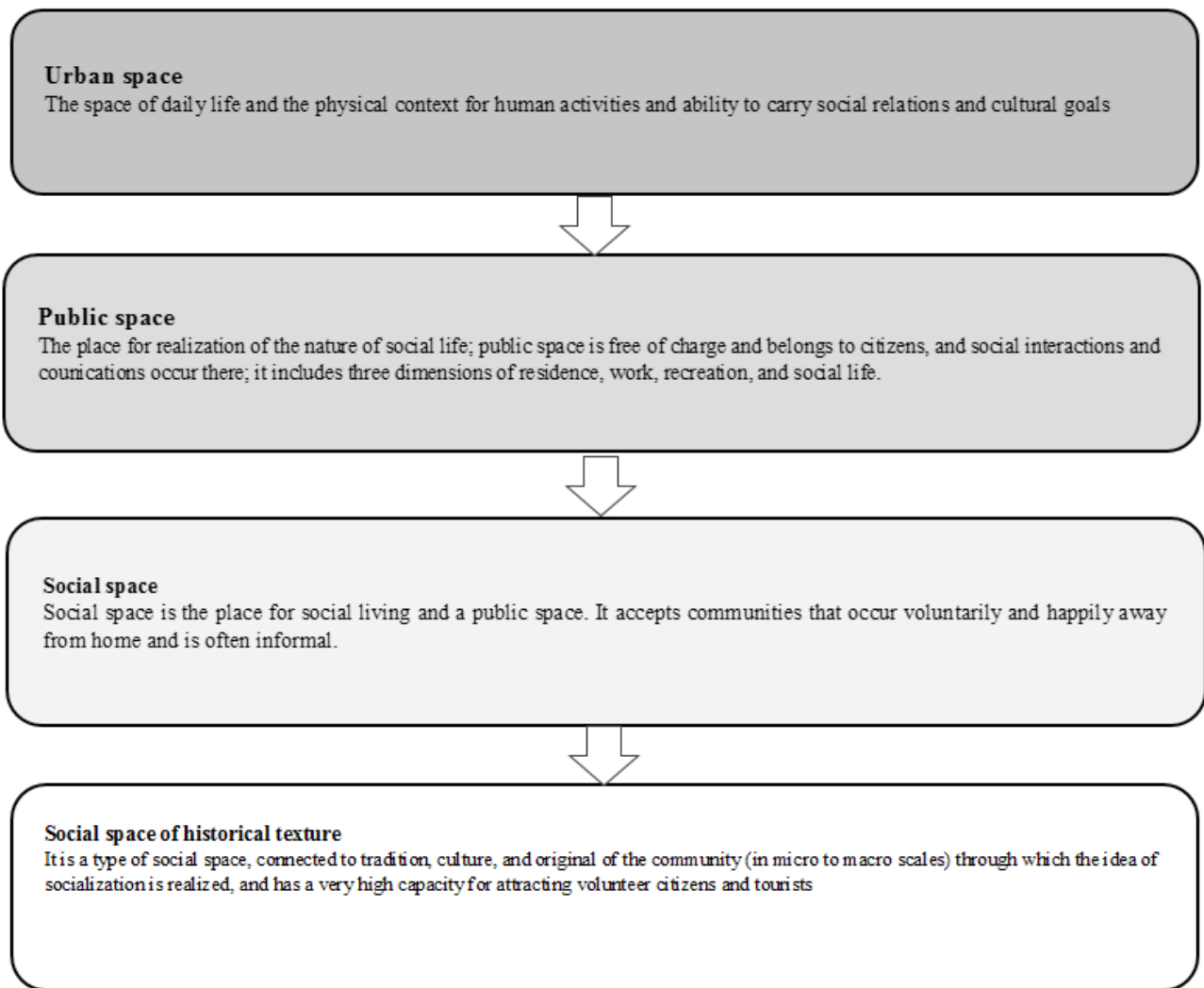


Fig. 1. Semantics of social space with a definition of public space and urban space. Source: authors.

achieved through physical-spatial, activity-social, and symbolic indices of space (Mehta, 2014, 58). So, it can be said that the higher is the quality of social space, the more successful it is.

Gehl divides all types of human activities in public spaces into three major groups and believes that by measuring these activities, the success of a public space can be evaluated: 1. Essential activities that occur under any circumstances and without attention to qualities of the physical environment because people are forced to do them; 2. Optional activities (urban leisure) that occur when climatic conditions, attractiveness, and invitation by the surrounding environment are present; 3. Social activities that occur when people travel in the same spaces; things like watching, conversation, experience of facing others, and so on. A good city offers a wide range of voluntary activities (Gehl, 2011, 11).

In terms of work, a successful public space has three

characteristics: 1. meeting the needs of users; 2. being democratic; 3. suitability for social activities (Carr, Francis, Rivlin, & Stone, 1992). Mehta, based on studies by Carr et al. (ibid.) and Gehl (1987) has proposed a model with five main components including inclusion, activities, comfort, security, and enjoyment (Mehta, 2014, 57).

The mode of activity and the social-physical manifestation of social space is not merely the product of today's actions of city authorities and users of the space but is the result of traditions that have settled down over time and have led to the present conditions. The processes governing social spaces originate from the context of history and in fact, face evolutions under the influence of today's activities based on policies and mechanisms (Proshansky, Fabian & Kaminoff, 1983, 59). Social space is a high-quality public space that needs to have some physical, social, and semantic features to be able to be proposed as a commercial brand for visitors. Quality of a space or place includes its social environment,

civic traditions, cultural facilities, and recreational opportunities (Reilly & Renski, 2008, 13).

In fact, we can summarize the qualitative indices affecting the social space by summing up the factors mentioned by Gul, the components of space success of the Carr, the Mehta's model, and the influence of traditions and social behaviors in the Social space into three categories; Physical, functional, cultural and the sub-criteria of each index can be explained based on the opinions and definitions of experts and scholars as described in Table 1.

• Isfahan city in the Safavid era: the arena for the emergence of historical social space

City is the place where community emerges. It is a space in which a concept called community with all its dimensions is realized. One cannot imagine a community without their social living space. Community is not the sum of people standing beside each other; rather, it is a group of humans that are interrelated in a regular system and their functions occur in a space called city (Mansouri, 2001). Up to the Safavid era, the main structure of the city of Isfahan was on the basis of the bazaar, and it had the role of giving continuity to economic, cultural, political, social, and religious life. In the era of Shah Abbas I, it was decided to transfer the capital from Qazvin to Isfahan due to its strategic and geopolitical position. Isfahan at that time, though large and prosperous, did not deserve the centrality of the great empire of the Safavid dynasty. Therefore, at that time, they decided to expand the city toward the south (Shafaqi, 2000, 35). During that period, at the same time with the construction of Chahar Bagh, a new square was built next to the old square which had an important economic, social, political, and religious role and became known as Naghsh-e Jahan Square or Nov Square. In this way, the connection between Chahar Bagh development axis, as the second city axis, and the Isfahan bazaar, which until then was the main axis of the city, with all routes from gates of the city ending there, was established.

Selection of study areas

When searching the urban texture of Isfahan to select the studied social spaces during the Safavid period, it is necessary to define the types of architectural space; the issue that Dr. Flamaki has addressed in his book "Formation of Architecture in the Experiences of Iran and the West": "Artificial spaces containing the concept of human architecture that express his culture are divided into three categories of spaces: first, home, as a confined space of human living; second, temples and churches and mosques, as spiritual-individual and individual-collective human places; third, squares and bazaars, as the place of daily social life of humans" (Falamaki, 1992, 17).

According to the classification by Soltanzadeh (1993) of urban spaces of historical texture, the classification by Dr. Falamaki, as well as considering diversity of scale and topicality of social spaces of historical texture of Iranian cities, to analyze the aforementioned texture, spaces such as bazaar, square, street, bridge, neighborhood, and religious centers are considered by the present study.

• Bazaar

Before the Safavids, the bazaar of Isfahan was as a line in a north-south direction, and after Shah Abbas's decisions for creating urban reforms, urban developers of the Safavid era focused on bazaar development in the south direction in their urban planning, and in this way, caravansaries, saras (inns), bazaars, and other economic elements emerged beside each other (Shafaqi, 1999, 63). Qeysarieh Bazaar (Fig. 2) includes a network of bazaar lines such as Zargarha (goldsmiths), Mesgarha (coppersmiths), Tofangsazha (gunsmiths), Kafshdoozha (shoemakers), Araban (Arabs), Kolahdoozha (hat makers), Ghanadha (confectioners), Samavarsazha (Samovar makers), Shahi (the king), and Gheysarieh, along with intersections such as Naghashi (painting), Ali Qoli Agha, Shiraziha, and Ajori. The most important bazaar of Isfahan is Qeysarieh Bazaar and from the Safavid era until now, it has been a link between Naghsh-e Jahan Square and the Old (Kohneh) Square. This bazaar, in addition to being a

Table 1. Summary of the criteria for measuring the social space of historical texture based on definitions and opinions of experts and scholars. Source: authors.

Triple indices		Criteria of defining social space	
Physical	Open and half-open public space	Accessibility for public at all times	Valuable and identity-carrying architectural body
Functional	Democratic space	Sociability	Space for recreation and leisure (essential, optional, and social activities)
Cultural	Capability of accepting voluntary activities	The place for emergence of urban traditions and cultures	Attracting tourists

communicating road, had been a place for offering urban services as well as holding cultural, social, religious and other events (Shafaqi, 2006).

• Square

The initial criteria for designing a space to facilitate production, trade, and public service delivery were prerequisites proposed by religious, economic, political, and recreational functions, and dictated how traditional squares and bazaars had to be formed (Ebrahimi, 2009). In this regard, Falamaki believes that the concept of square in Iran has been influenced by piazza which is a more or less broad place which is formed in diverse forms geometrically regular or irregular derived from assemblage of buildings that each symbolizes a social, cultural, and religious symbol or are milestones of the city's interests and needs, and almost always are formed in the central parts of the habitat (Falamki, 1992, 67).

With the transfer of the capital to Isfahan in the Safavid era in the eleventh century AH, there was a need for a square that could have a prominent position in the city; a structure that, given the history of the Old Square, as a centralized and symbolic place, could summarize the main elements of power at that time in the form of a totality (Shahabinezhad & Aminzadeh, 2012, 28). The formation of the square-bazaar structure somehow led to the structure of administration and representation of governmental power and controlling of major trade of the capital and the government (Fig. 3).

• Street

It seems that the correlation between the word street and the structure of the Iranian garden and its connection with the water element is one of the main roots of the formation of this concept in Iranian culture (Mansouri, 2016). According to Nazem al-Atebba, this concept includes any straight, wide, and long alley around which there are trees and flowers, and has the same goal as alleys and streets (Nafisi, 1976).

The special approach of the Safavid era to street as a garden-like urban space transformed Chahar Bagh Street (Fig. 4) into an urban space which played the main role in spatial organization of the city, since the streets of the Safavid era, in addition to having a main formal function as recreational routes, in later periods provided the ground for city development out of the old texture. Although the construction of streets within the city and as an urban space is not an innovation of the Safavid era, but benefiting from its mental concept as a spiritual and sensational space, especially with the forms prevalent in the Iranian gardens, is just dedicated to the Safavid era (Atashinbar & Motadayyen, 2018, 75).



Fig. 2. The portal of Gheysariyeh Bazaar on the north side of Naghsh-e Jahan Square. Source: author's archive.



Fig. 3. Position of the main square in urban texture. Source: www.isfahannama.ir

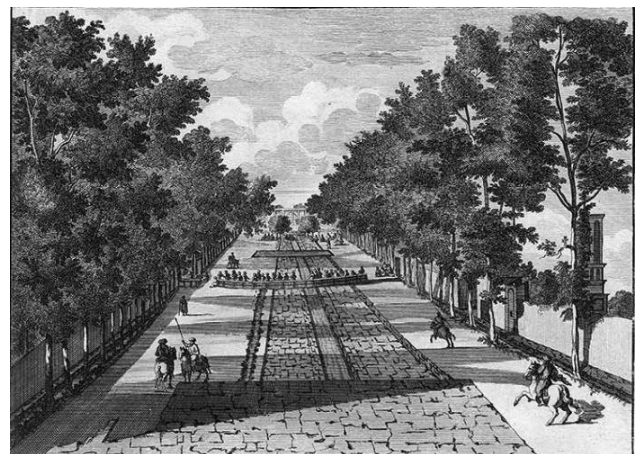


Fig. 4. Isfahan's Chahar Bagh Street in the late Safavid era. Source: Brun, 1718.

• Bridge

Moving from one point to another, generally over water or valley, which is generally associated with height difference or danger, has been the most important function of bridges in cities.

In Iranian bridges, the above-mentioned combination was evident with special services. One of them (given the climatic conditions, water scarcity, the need to control and direct water) is a combination of a bridge with a dam (Hami, 1993, 19).

During the Safavid era, Zayandehrood River was located in the southern part of Isfahan's urban texture, and in addition to supplying the water needed by the city, was itself an important factor in the construction of bridges, determination of the quality of lands, and the reason for the formation of the city and construction of palaces.

The bridge considered in the present study is Khaju Bridge that was built during the reign of Shah Abbas II in the southern part of Old Chahar Bagh of Isfahan (Aminabad) (al-Isfahani, 1988, 44). Providing traffic, bazaar, and entrance gate to the city, and the king's dam and palace have been among the most important functions of this prominent bridge in Isfahan of the Safavid era (Fig. 5).

• Neighborhood

A set of houses in Isfahan which were generally interconnected and having tall independent walls concentrated neighborhood units along an alley. A set of those alleys ended into a square, intersection, or bazaar as the center of the neighborhood (Qasemi, 2018, 107). Formation of neighborhoods based on the ethnic, religious, guild, and sectarian differences and formation of kinship links had been among the most important variables in the construction of old Isfahan neighborhoods. The new neighborhoods that formed alongside the previously built neighborhoods often represented religious trends. An illustrative example of



Fig. 5. Structure of Khaju Bridge. Source: www.isfahancity.com

this developmental event is the Jolfa Neighborhood of Isfahan at the time which was formed by forced migration of Armenians in the Safavid era and their settlements in the south of Zayandehrood and has followed the development pattern of the city. Construction of Jolfa Square based on the pattern of neighborhood centers, church fronts, and public buildings had been one of the most important aspects of manifestation of social spaces of this neighborhood in various scales.

• Religious centers

After the arrival of Islam in Iran, the Arabs, who had little capitals for their religious symbols, benefited from the Sassanid religious patterns by making some changes in meanings and used them in mosques' space. Given that Islamic State was born in the city and given that the establishment of this state for the first time occurred in the mosque, the Jame' Mosque became one of the main features of the city (Habibi, 2008, 42).

Jame' Mosque was considered the most central place for individual and social activities of every Muslim and, in addition, the courtyard of Jama' Mosque, due to the shortage of public spaces at this period, played the role of public space. The role of Jame' Mosque in the Islamic period varied with the rise of different governments and depending on their power (Mashhadizadeh Dehaghani, 2011, 279).

Shah Mosque (Jame' Abbasi Mosque or Imam Mosque) of Isfahan was built by the order of King Abbas I of Safavid, in the middle of the southern side of the newly-built Naghsh-e Jahan Square by the architecture of Master Ali Akbar Isfahani as the new Jame' Mosque of Isfahan (Hillenbrand, 2017, 151). This mosque was constructed with the goal of building a new Jame' Mosque for the city based on a four-porch pattern and manifesting Shia symbols along with asserting the power of the Shia kingdom of the Safavids against Ottoman Empire. The function of this mosque in the Shabestan, the schools, the courtyard, and the front porch as an urban public space has been remarkable throughout history.

Evaluation of Isfahan social spaces based on the criteria for the evaluation of historical texture social space

In order to determine the success rate of the aforementioned six spaces, according to the Table of criteria for evaluating of social space in historical texture, Each of the spaces is evaluated and the impact of the indicators on the texture of Isfahan Safavid period is examined (Table 2). Based on these, the supremacy of the above spaces can be arranged as follows:

1. Naghsh-e Jahan Square (25*)
2. Jolfa Neighborhood (24*)
3. Shah (Imam) Mosque and Khaju Bridge (22*)

Table 2. Evaluation of selected social spaces of Isfahan based on the criteria for evaluation of historical texture social space from the viewpoint of definitions by scholars. Source: authors.

Name of the space	Measurement criteria								
	Physical			Functional			Cultural		
	Open and half-open space	Public accessibility at all times	Architectural value	Democratic space	Sociability	Recreation and leisure time	Acceptance of voluntary activity	Emergence of urban tradition and culture	Attracting tourists
Gheysarieh Bazaar	**	*	***	**	**	**	*	***	***
Naghsh-e Jahan Square	***	***	***	**	***	***	**	***	***
Chahar Bagh Street	**	**	**	**	**	***	***	**	**
Khaju Bridge	***	***	***	**	**	**	**	**	***
Jolfa Neighborhood	***	***	***	**	**	**	***	***	***
Imam (Shah) Mosque	***	**	***	*	***	**	**	***	***

- 4. Chahar Bagh Street (20*)
- 5. Gheysarieh Bazaar (19*)

Evaluation of Isfahan social spaces: based on the elites’ criteria and the questionnaire test

In order to determine the percentage of the impact of the above mentioned social spaces and to determine the strengths and weaknesses, a questionnaire was designed and the buildings were rated, and finally, they were analyzed in combination and their results were used. Given the criteria for measuring social space, first, an interview was carried out with an elite community consisting of 44 architecture professionals (Teachers and students of MA and Ph.D. levels of Architecture) aged 25 to 48, including 35 women and 9 men, with 23 ones had Masters’ degree, 19 ones had Ph.D., and 2 ones had bachelors’ degree; and the criteria for sociability were defined under the three criteria for measurement of social space (Table 3).

Then, a questionnaire consisting of 19 questions was designed, the first of which relates to the overall quality

of the building as a utilized social space, 6 questions are related to physical components, 6 to functional components, and 6 to cultural components. This questionnaire was completed by the aforementioned elite community in order to identify and prioritize the criteria affecting the quality of social spaces in Isfahan in the Safavid era.

Questionnaire analysis method based on IS method

In this study, the satisfaction-importance analysis method was used to analyze people’s views. In this questionnaire, responses of the respondents were Rated on a scale including very much, medium, low, and very low scales. The respondents were asked to indicate their amount of agreement or disagreement with these terms. After completing the above steps, the questionnaires were reviewed and their information was extracted and analyzed by a quantitative method. The collected data were analyzed after the initial monitoring, correcting and coding. It should be noted that in the data encoding stage, in order to

infer and determine the qualitative level of satisfaction with the social space, test scores of 1, 2, and 3 were used as low satisfaction rate and scores of 4 and 5 as high satisfaction rate (Table 4).

The method for calculation of satisfaction and importance based on the responses of the respondents is as follows:

The below equation is Satisfaction-Importance statistical analysis method (ETC Institute, 2009):

$$0 \leq IS \leq 1 \text{ and } IS = I(1-S)$$

In this formula, I represents the percentage of importance

and S represents the percentage of satisfaction. The percentage of importance is calculated by the sum of very much and much response percentages, and the percentage of satisfaction is obtained by the sum of percentages of satisfaction indices of very much and much.

The ideal state is when the amount of satisfaction-importance is equal to zero, which means complete satisfaction. When the amount of satisfaction-importance is equal to one, it is concluded that from the viewpoint of

Table 3. Sociability indices of social spaces of cities based on the triple measurement components. Source: authors.

Main components	Sociability indices from the viewpoint of the interviewed elites
Physical components	Benefitting from diversity and adaptability of different spatial forms fitted to different needs of citizens
	Benefitting from diversity and adaptability in 24-hour use and in different weather conditions
	Existence of attractive architectural elements to create vitality and create a relative attraction for space
	Beautiful outlook of the space body through the quality and color of materials and frequency and diversity
	Benefitting of the social space from a human scale
	Benefitting from vegetation and natural elements in the social space
	Benefitting from urban furniture fitted to the social space (formally)
Functional components	Benefitting from organic order in form and composition
	Spatial contrast and creation of diverse visual scenes along the route
	Dynamicity of social space with diverse applications
	Adequate services with the possibility to replace them
	The amount of flexibility and diversity in activities (in time and type of the function)
	Ability to monitor the space and control traffic and prevent crime
	The amount of attention to the public needs of citizens in the space
Per capita of natural spaces such as green space, water and ...	
Cultural components	Existence of public parking lots according to the social space function
	Level of pedestrian access and non-interference with automobile space according to the space function
	Benefitting from playing and recreational spaces for spending leisure (for different age groups)
	Creation of spaces for dialogue, public events, and group games
	Creation of spaces for meeting between people and exchange of ideas between them
	Holding public ceremonies, social and religious rituals, etc.
	Holding cultural and artistic functions in social spaces
	The social space being located in the identity context (bazaars, downtown, etc.) and creating the sense of belonging
	Benefitting from cultural and artistic elements

Table 4. Indices for the evaluation of satisfaction in the questionnaire components. Source: authors.

Questionnaire component	Very much	Much	Medium	Low	Very low
Satisfaction index	5	4	3	2	1

all respondents, the considered issue should be prioritized (ibid.).

Analysis of results

Analysis of the questionnaire results shows that in the evaluated buildings of the Safavid era, given the higher rank (lower value of IS), physical components had more impact on the audience, followed by functional and then cultural components.

- Physical components have the highest impacts on the audience, and these include, respectively:

1. Spatial contrast and existence of diverse visual sequences;
2. Optimal organic order in form and composition;
3. Quality and diversity of colors and materials;
4. Attractive architectural elements;
5. Attention to human scales and proportions;
6. Ability to use the space 24-hours in different weather

- Among the criteria of functional components, the highest impacts on the audience have been by the following items, respectively:

1. Separation and non-interference of the space with the automobile route;
2. Dynamicity of social spaces and diverse functions;
3. Existence of diverse and flexible spaces;
4. Existence of facilities for spending leisure time for different age groups;
5. Existence of security and prevention of crime in the space;
6. Attention to the general needs of citizens.

Among the criteria of cultural components, the highest impacts on the audience have been by the following items, respectively:

1. Sense of belonging and a desire to stay in the complex;
2. Existence of cultural and artistic elements;
3. Meeting and social interaction with other people;
4. Holding public events and social and religious rituals;
5. Holding cultural and artistic events;
6. Existence of playing and conversation space in the complex.

- In an overall look to the studied criteria, the ones that received the most attention (strengths) were as follows, respectively:

1. Spatial contrast and existence of diverse visual sequences in the complex;
2. Optimal organic order in form and composition;
3. Quality and diversity of colors and materials.

- A quick perusal of criteria in literature, the following criteria had the least impact (weaknesses) respectively:

1. Attention to the public needs of citizens;
2. Sense of security, ability to monitor the space, traffic control, and crime prevention;
3. Ability to be present in the building at night and in different climatic conditions.

- The most influential spaces from the viewpoint of the audience, respectively, were:

1. Imam Mosque, Jolfa Neighborhood;
2. Naghsh-e Jahan Square;
3. Khaju Bridge;
4. Chahar Bagh;
5. Qheysarieh Bazaar.

Conclusion and recommendations

By comparing the results of effective social spaces, evaluating social spaces of Isfahan historical texture in the Safavid era by using the opinions and definitions of experts and scholars (See Table 2), performing the questionnaire test and analyzing it based on Satisfaction-Importance method, it was found that, according to definition and hierarchy of transition of urban space to public space and social space, the first condition of supremacy of social space is realized in the body in which the building is built, namely, appropriate urban space; after that, proper function of the building in urban space means realization of appropriate public space in the city; and provision of community, sense of belonging, and volunteer activity in the form of cultural components will mean the realization of social space.

On the basis of these two methods of comparison, the table of the components of the measurement of the quality of the communal space of the historical context can be explained in terms of the hierarchy of realization of urban space, public space and communal space in order to provide an appropriate measure of the utility of contemporary urban space.

We matched and comparison these methods of analogy, and the table of components of measuring of the quality of social space in historical texture, It can be explained in terms of the hierarchy of realization of urban space, public space and communal space in order to provide an appropriate measure of the utility of contemporary urban space as (Table 5).

Table 5. Components of the Social Space Desirability Assessment in the Historical Context in order to provide the appropriate measure for evaluation of contemporary social space; an integration of experts' definitions of social space and the criteria derived from the questionnaire test. Source: authors.

Triple indices	Evaluation criteria of historical texture social space		
Physical (realization of urban space)	Open and semi-open public space in the optimal and organic order of the texture	Public accessibility at all times	Attractive architectural elements, valuable and identity-having body of architecture
	Provision of diverse visual sequences	Quality and diversity of materials and color	Human scale
Functional (realization of public space)	Democratic space for all gender, age, and religious groups	Sociability	Quality of leisure space for all age groups
	Separation and lack of interference with automobile route	Functional flexibility and diversity in the space	Spatial security
Cultural (realization of social space)	The ability to accept voluntary activities (playing, events, conversation)	The place for the emergence of urban traditions and culture	Attracting tourists (citizen, domestic, international)
	Social gathering place for different groups	Accepting cultural and artistic elements	

Footnote

*This article is taken from Babak Barkhordar's doctoral dissertation entitled "Recreation contemporary public spaces based on the embedded identity in the historical context of safavid Dynasty, Isfahan, Iran", conducted by Dr. Leila Zare and consulted by Dr. Seyed Mostafa Mokhtabad, on 2020/02/10.

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