

Public Squares and Their Potential for Social Interactions: A Case Study of Historical Public Squares in Tehran

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Abstract : Under the thrust of technological changes, population growth and vehicular traffic, Iranian historical squares have lost their significance and they are no longer the main social nodes of the society. This research focuses on how historical public squares can inspire designers to enhance social interactions among citizens in Iranian urban context. Moreover, the recent master plan of Tehran demonstrates the lack of public spaces designed for the purpose of people's social gatherings. For filling this gap, first the current situation of 7 selected primary historical public squares in Tehran including Sabze Meydan, Arg, Topkhaneh, Baherstan, Mokhber-al-dole, Rah Ahan and Hassan Abad have been compared. Later, the influencing elements on social interactions of the public squares such as subjective factors (human relationships and memories) and objective factors (natural and built environment) have been investigated. As a conclusion, some strategies are proposed for improving social interactions in historical public squares like; holding cultural, national, athletic and religious events, defining different and new functions in public squares' surrounding, increasing pedestrian routs, reviving the collective memory, demonstrating the historical importance of square, eliminating visual obstacles across the square, organization the natural elements of the square, appropriate pavement for social activities. Finally, it is argued that the combination of all influencing factors which are: human interactions, natural elements and built environment criteria will lead to enhance the historical public squares' potential for social interaction.

Keywords : historical square, Iranian public square, social interaction, Tehran

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