

Public Spaces Of Tehran; **Official Repression, Subversive Alternative**

by

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Abstract

The idea of democracy, in Western societies is inseparable from the public space. As an accessible space for all, public space provides a realm for everyday activities, social interaction, communication, and the practice of democracy. However, in a country under the governance of a totalitarian regime, concepts like open dialogue, freedom of expression and debate, democratic encounter, and free social interaction are often suppressed.

In Tehran, authorities dominate the official public spaces of the city. Surveillance and repression are vividly imposed on the everyday lives of citizens as well as the public spaces of the city. Therefore, a constant defiance and struggle has become characteristic of the lives of most Tehrani citizens, especially the youth. Through this struggle, citizens of Tehran have re-appropriated ordinary spaces of the city into a stage for practicing everyday activities and their rights to the city.

This thesis is a study of Tehran's public spaces and the role of both citizens and authorities in their creation. Official public spaces of Tehran are constantly monitored and subjugated by authorities, whereas subversive spaces offer alternatives for citizens to practice what has been repressed in official spaces.

The defiance and struggle for rights, as it is manifested in the spaces of the city, is documented.

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to my family, and to all who struggle for their rights

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PROLOGUE

Before beginning my thesis study, while wondering about the potentials and possible outcomes of conducting research on Tehran's public spaces, my main concern was whether or not something could be designed at the final stage. When I started the research, I had no specific subject in mind; all I had in mind was its relevance to Tehran and the public spaces of the city. Knowing that the turbulent Tehran has a vast ground of potential opportunities to work on, I thought of many different choices: proposals for designing sustainable and playful public spaces, restoring the historic core of the city into a massive public area, proposing spaces for social interactions, improving women's engagement in public spaces, and so on.

Nevertheless, at the very early stages, when I was trying to focus on each of these subjects, I faced a frustrating truth: those proposals could never be accomplished in Tehran. Bearing in mind the authoritarian system, omnipresent government, social inequalities, and cultural paradoxes that are clearly visible in Tehran, most proposals for a democratic and civil form of public space would simply be unrealistic and impractical in the current society. I realized that my image of Tehran was that of a utopian city, where the social orders are not so complex, where there are at least some sorts of rational regulations under which people can benefit from the simplest human rights and freedoms, where there is not so much corruption in administrative systems, and — so very hopefully — where there is a civil society that benefits from democracy. One might argue that these are not qualities of a utopian city, because there are many cities in the world that have all these characteristics and they are taken for granted by the citizens there, since they are regarded as the essential elements of their society. Sadly, that's not the case for Tehran.

Before I came to a conclusion about the subject matter of my thesis, and as I was planning a trip to Tehran in 2009 to hopefully find my subject, the controversial Iranian presidential election took place, and post-election incidents shook the city and changed all my perceptions. The courage, solidarity, and harmony of the people in the streets, regardless of their social, economic, and cultural background, were phenomenal. The possibility of change was visible in every corner of the city in a way that could not be avoided, even if, for me, it was projected only through videos and images constantly popping up on social networks such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. This vision was amazingly beautiful, surprising, and very powerful. The utopian image

was not merely a dream anymore. I could clearly see that the waves of change were forming on the streets and rooftops of my city. After a year, those waves seemed to have been suppressed, and the path for a major shift seems to be a quite long one, but I believe it is still something inevitable.

Apart from the post-election incidents, my trip itself was full of surprises and an uncanny sense of nostalgia. The places where I grew up, the concerns with which I used to live, the fears that I used to have, and the issues that were parts of my everyday life all seemed somehow not quite normal anymore. Being away for a few years — not too long to forget and not too short to neglect the differences — made me perceive all the spaces that I used to occupy and all the activities that I used to do differently. I was surprised to discover a constant defiance and subversion in most of the everyday activities that I used to do while living as a youth back in Tehran — which is still ongoing in the everyday lives of my friends who are still living there.

The main idea of this thesis is rooted in my realization that the lifestyle I used to have and the spaces I used to occupy had a very different quality than what I experienced in the West. In a society where loud laughter or holding hands can be counted as a crime, social interaction and public life are defined differently. Moreover, spaces are created and occupied in a distinctive manner. What I learned during this thesis journey was that, no matter how restrictive the situation is, nor the extent of the limitations put in place by authorities, citizens will always find creative solutions, and will struggle to obtain their rights.

This thesis is about the struggle of the citizens of Tehran for their rights to public spaces of the city and everyday life practices. It is a research and documentation of public spaces of Tehran and the role of both citizens and authorities in the creation of such spaces. The significance of this work is the study of the issues that an authoritarian regime can cause in terms of public spaces of the cities and also the examination of the tactics (in forms of spatial arrangements) that residents — through their defiance and struggle — have created to subvert the imposed restrictions and practice their everyday activities.

Throughout its history, Iran has been mostly governed by a dictatorship. Although the dynasties and regimes have changed over time and a constitutional revolution has led to the establishment of a parliament, and even though today the country is officially called a republic, the notions of surveillance, control, suppression, and governmental domination have not yet been eliminated from Iranian society. There have been a few periods of exception in Iran's history, but such concepts as open dialogue, freedom of expression, debate, democratic encounter, and free social interaction have not been beneficial and favourable to the authorities and have therefore been often suppressed.

Tehran, Iran's capital and the subject matter of this thesis, is a city full of paradoxes and dichotomies at different levels, from the spaces of the city to the individual lives of its citizens and their interactions. In the current theocratic and authoritarian governing condition of Iran, many everyday activities and social relations are labelled as crimes, and have been severely suppressed. This, obviously, affects the public lives of citizens and their use of public spaces.

Public space, as a space accessible to all for everyday activities, social interactions, communication, and, most importantly, the practice of democracy, plays an important role in civil societies. However, in a

totalitarian society, where many everyday activities are considered illegal, the nature of public space is very different from what it is in the West; there are no truly open and accessible spaces for all members of society, and what public space there is provides no democratic stage for social interaction and expression.

I approached the research with the question of how — despite governmental controls, censorship, segregation of spaces, fear of the moral police, and restrictive rules — public life happens in Tehran. The first thing that I have done in this thesis is categorizing public spaces of Tehran into two very different types: official and subversive. One, with the most visibility in the city, has fulfilled the totalitarian state's desire for domination, manipulation, and control over the everyday lives of its citizens to portray its power and authority. The other is an outcome of the struggle over very basic rights and everyday activities.

I have then intended to study and document the strategies that the Iranian state has used to stabilize its authority, and the tactics that have emerged from the defiance and struggle of its citizens, in relation to the public spaces of the city and spatial arrangements. Since official public spaces are dominated by hard-line restrictions, limitations, and suppressions, perpetual defiance and resistance can be considered as main characteristics of the everyday lives of most citizens. Consequently, citizens of Tehran (especially the younger generation), in order to defy the restrictions that are imposed on them, and in an attempt to participate in the public life of the city, have created their own types of spaces, which are labelled “subversive public spaces” in this thesis.

To have an in-depth observation and understanding of public space in Tehran, I had to be both an insider and outsider. An outsider's vision is manipulated by only having access to the official spaces — monitored, controlled, and Revolution-dominated spaces. But an

insider, who cannot accept the limitations of the official spaces, finds a temporary solution in the alternative and subversive spaces. The official and subversive spaces of the city are inseparable, existing in parallel to each other, and are in constant dialogue. I had to be and do the same. I had to observe and document the paradox of both types of public space in parallel to give an impression of what public space and public life is truly like in Tehran. The different vignettes of the city have been put together to set up a dialogue between official and subversive public space in Tehran, a constant conversation.

This thesis is a study of both official and subversive public spaces and of the domination and representation of power, as well as citizens' participation, in the creation of public space in Tehran, using unique and spontaneous methods. It is about the methods, such as gender segregation, imposed dress codes, and behavioural rules, constantly visible in spaces of city, that a totalitarian regime has employed to dominate and control the lives of citizens, as well as spaces of the city. The thesis is also about unconventional happenings in familiar spaces. Places like living rooms, rooftops, streets, cars, and basements have been re-appropriated and become the ground for many uncommon usages. It is about the alternative spaces: subversive spaces of defiance produced under censorship, pressure, and suppression. It documents the informal creation of public spaces — the spaces produced by their users.

This work offers subjective explorations of public spaces of the city and provides multiple perceptions of how public life and social interactions happen in Tehran. The aim is to study both the official and subversive public spaces and to understand space and everyday life under suppression and totalitarianism in Tehran. There are many writings and documents about the struggle and defiance of youth in Tehran. I wanted to understand this defiance as it is manifested in spaces of the city and the relationship between public spaces, their creation, and this defiance, and the role that this rebellion and the demand and cry for the rights play out in the creation of spaces.

This struggle for the rights, in the form of space, is documented.

[Thesis Structure]

The thesis material is presented in four main sections. The first chapter gives insight into the thesis: how the research started, what references are used, and how the idea of this thesis was shaped. The second chapter is in the form of a timeline; the third and main chapter is entitled “The City Montage,” which is presented in two subchapters, and the last part is the Manual. Each of these chapters has a different layout and presentation appropriate to its content.

Encounter

This section mainly consists of what has driven this thesis into its current shape and lays the foundation for the rest of the thesis. It starts with a study of public space and the importance of social interaction and citizens’ rights to the city. Then, the role of authorities in the production and domination of city spaces is explored, and finally, the public spaces of Tehran, the resistance and defiance of its citizens, and their contribution and participation in the creation of public spaces of the city are discussed.

Tehran’s Narrative Timeline

The second chapter is presented in the form of a timeline, describing the link between historical, political, and social events and the urban development of the city. In the course of history and social events, it will be explained how the public life of Tehran has changed since its formation as a city and as a capital. This chapter describes mainly the evolution and history of the formation and transformation of the city and its public life in a narrative format. Only the events and changes that have been influential in either the social or urban orders of the city are discussed. These key points are presented as they relate to the crux of the thesis — the public spaces of the city and the social life of its citizens.

The timeline introduces the key moments and events that shaped the city as it stands today. It prepares the reader to understand the current situation of Tehran. The contemporary condition of public

space — official and subversive — after the Revolution is discussed in detail in the next chapter. The timeline format allows the key points to be understood sequentially and in relationship with each other. We will see in the next chapter how the key public spaces of the city have formed the collective memory of citizens and how such spaces are re-appropriated for same the usage over time.

The City Montage

The main chapter of the thesis contains information in the form of text, photographs, quotations, maps, and personal experience to reveal the public life of Tehran's citizens. The thesis argues that public spaces in Tehran can be categorized into two different types: the official and the subversive public spaces. These two coexist and are in constant dialogue within the city. Just like the spaces themselves, the two main components of this montage could not be separated into two distinct chapters.

- The Official City

Official public spaces in Tehran are intensely controlled and dominated by the totalitarian regime's objectives. They are missing very important characteristics of public space: accessibility for all, the allowance of free individual expression, and the providing of a ground for social interaction. Therefore, official public spaces in Tehran are far from being true public spaces. This section explores the contexts out of which the current social and spatial issues have emerged. It delves into the current situation of the official public spaces, those spaces that are produced and maintained by authorities, in Tehran after the Revolution to represent the power of the state and manipulation of the everyday activities of citizens.

- The Subversive City

As the state imposes suppressions and limitations on the official public spaces, citizens of Tehran struggle to obtain their rights to the city and its public spaces, and over their own individual lives.

The constant defiance and resistance in everyday life has produced unique types of spaces as alternatives to official public spaces in the city. The subversive section of the city's montage explores these alternative spaces that have emerged as a result of citizens' struggle for their rights to the city and its spaces.

The Manual of Defiance and Subversion

This chapter takes the format of a manual: a documentation of subversive spaces in Tehran that have not been documented in regards of to spatial features. The three sections of this chapter, which are in booklet format, document and analyze the most common categories of alternative and subversive public spaces and actions in Tehran. What is remarkable about them is that they were born out of the necessity of social interaction and public life, and as a struggle and defiance. They are produced and organized by citizens in different times and social conditions. What is valuable about these spaces is that they are practical and essential in the daily lives of the citizens of Tehran.

ENCOUNTER

Presently, Tehran is about to explode — in size, density, and population. It is a capital metropolis with an immense diversity of neighbourhoods, social classes, and urban policies. Although Tehran is located in a region with more than six thousand years of history, culture, and civilization, the city itself had almost no real significance until it became the capital of what was then called Persia in 1785. It has very little heritage left from that ancient culture. After the Arab conquest in 636 AD (the beginning of the Islamic era) and the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century, Iran was constantly involved in many civil wars, losing land and witnessing changes in dynasties, all of which helped to make the country more and more isolated from the Western world's cultures and social movements.

It was not until the late Qajar dynasty and the early Pahlavi period (early twentieth century) that Iran was exposed to a modernizing, Western culture. The height of the transformations occurred during Pahlavi's period, with Reza Shah's modernization plan. In 1936, inspired by Ataturk's reforms in Turkey, Reza Shah attempted to import many aspects of Western culture into Iran, despite disagreement from many religious leaders. Tehran, as the capital, was specifically targeted to become the symbol of modernity within the country before the Islamic Revolution. From the 1960s onward, while trying to maintain its Islamic characteristics and structure, the city experienced rapid growth and expansion, facing the consequences of significant challenges in the form of war, social movements, and finally, a massive revolution.

After the 1979 Revolution was hijacked by hardliner fundamentalists,¹ something that has happened to many other great revolutions (Russia, Egypt, etc.),² the focus of the theocratic and authoritarian government shifted from democratization to Islamization of the country on both the individual and state levels with the intention of eliminating all signs of the modern, Western culture, perceived as manifestations of evil. What then followed can be best described as

a chaotic situation. On one side, this chaos involves the revolutionary government and its supporters trying to abolish every means of westernization, and ensuring its hard-line and authoritarian existence by controlling all aspects of the citizens' everyday lives. On the other side, those in opposition and defiance — with the younger generation as a majority — hope to have a democratic, civil, and secular society.

The chaotic situation in Tehran is visible in both social and administrative policies, as well as in the city's spaces and urban planning approaches. During the twentieth century, the city was under the influence and practice of many Western architects and urban designers. The effects of all these different approaches and urban policies are scattered throughout the image of the city. Looking at Tehran is like observing a chaotic miniature of the world. One can find an unbalanced mix of different urban approaches gathered in a dense and interwoven city. This mix ranges from North American peripheries, European boulevards and dense two-storey buildings, slums, Islamic schools and mosques, ancient historical sites, Middle Eastern bazaars vs. ultramodern shopping malls, high-end condominiums vs. handmade shelters, complex highway networks vs. narrow and winding rural alleyways, and even mountains and deserts.

“With all its contradictions and inconsistencies, contemporary Tehran is a city built by its inhabitants, but not in a great social participation. They have built self-centeredly and as a kind of avoidance of social participation and urgency.”

Arash Mozaffari³

Although Tehran had been under the influence of diverse Western and traditional urban planning methods, what has extensively shaped the city as it is today is its urban citizens and social events. The Allied invasion of Iran during the Second World War caused an enormous influx of rural dwellers from all around the country to Tehran. The need for housing led to huge and improper developments and constructions fuelled by extensive bribery, fraud, and violation of city regulations and building codes.⁴ In order to establish their existence as citizens of the city, the new mass of inhabitants started building in illegally occupied or confiscated properties of the city.⁵ This has contributed to the chaotic situation that Tehran is facing today.

Tehran has been also referred to as a city of paradoxes by many contemporary architects and scholars. In *"Paradoxical Tehran,"* an interview with a number of famous Iranian architects published in *Domus* magazine, Darab Diba, Shahab Katouzian, and Kamran Afshar Naderi, along with others, explained the paradoxes of the modern and traditional in both the culture and spaces of the city, and the lack of true public space.⁶ In *"Tehran: Paradox City,"* Soheila Shahshahani⁷ talks about Tehran's Comprehensive Plan (TCP) and the fact that, despite urban regulations, many illegal constructions were built in the city. She also discusses the paradoxes in administrative systems and urban policies.⁸

This constant dichotomy and paradox, which plays a crucial role in the creation of the spaces of the city, is present everywhere, from infrastructures to very basic individual lives. One example of this is the considerable dichotomy in the behaviour and appearance of people in public and private spaces of the city, and also the way that the most private spaces turn into public space, which will be explored in the following chapters. In short, the status quo of Tehran is tumultuous. However, despite all these undesirable aspects and issues, Tehran attracts the most immigration in the country and is considered the most attractive city for many Iranians, both the ones who desire to move there, and those who had to move away from it and wish to return.

The very first set of questions that propelled this thesis forward focused on how public space and social life have been defined in a city such as Tehran, with all the paradoxes for which it has been criticized. What role does public space play in the society? How are the public spaces of the city being produced? And most importantly, what is the role of its citizens in creating such spaces?

[A Note on Resources]

When I started my research on Tehran, I found that there are quite different portraits of the city painted by scholars, writers, critics, and authorities. The Iranian government, with its monopoly on the media, shows a city with citizens proud of their nuclear energy program, wrapped in chadors, robes, and turbans, and devoted to martyrdom and sacrifice for the state, while at the same time participating in mass pro-government rallies and elections. No sign of any dissatisfaction, defiance, or subversion is ever shown within the official representation of the city. The Western media, on the other hand, projects a vision of Tehran subjugated in terms of politics, limitations, difficulties, restrictive rules, and — above all — destructive nuclear ambitions. In the form of documentaries, news pieces, and commissioned writings, an image of Tehran is publicized in which people are terrified by the state's restrictions and policies, impatiently waiting to be rescued and liberated by the so-called 'enlightened' West. Some scholars have argued that these kinds of images of Tehran are part of a project to manipulate the minds of Western citizens (mainly within the United States) such that they will be less opposed to a hypothetical future attack on Iran.⁹ In contrast, there are numerous resources emphasizing Persian and Islamic art and architecture published by both Iranian and non-Iranian scholars. While these works portray a noble and comprehensive history, they tend to emphasize the aesthetic aspects of individual elements and buildings and historical developments in the city, with a focus on the periods prior to the early twentieth century.

The most recent scholarly works published in Iran about Tehran detail historical developments in the city by focusing on the history of buildings and urban progress up to the 1979 Revolution. The few works covering the current situation of Tehran, although very valuable in portraying the urban narrative and issues regarding city planning, do not give any image of the public life of the city, and are merely descriptive documentations instead of critiques. While I could not find many resources about the current city's issues, public

life, and social studies from Iranian scholars who reside within the country — not surprising due to the censorship, restrictions on publication, and lack of freedom of speech — I discovered Iranian researchers and writers who do not reside in Iran (willingly or by force), such as Shahram Khosravi, Kaveh Basmenji, Hamid Dabashi, Roxanne Varzi, and Maziar Bahari, whose writings have not been published inside Iran. There has been a new wave of studies and writings in the past decade among scholars outside Iran — mostly in an academic context — who have studied and criticized the current situation in Tehran. What these texts have in common is a revelation of the struggle and defiance that is latent in the everyday actions of citizens — mostly the youth. Moreover, they criticize the intense level of restriction, censorship, and dictatorship that rules in Tehran (and Iran, in larger scale). Although I have referenced the history of urban development and social events from the resources published in Iran, I have based my main argument about the more realistic images of the city mostly on the resources that are published outside Iran.

Throughout the text, I have supported my arguments with courageous and impressive works of art, such as drawings in Marjane Satrapi's graphic memoir *Persepolis*, Mana Neyestani's cartoons, Shirin Neshat's powerful visual art, and lyrics from underground music groups, that portray the imposed limitations and the resistance and struggle that have become part of daily life in current Iranian society.

Although I have referred to Iranian sources for urban descriptions and socio-cultural subjects, in order to study public space, its role in society, and the value of everyday activities and social interactions, my resources are mainly Western (these concepts are not often discussed freely inside Iran). Among my Western resources are texts about half a century old on democracy, public space, and everyday life matters; however, I believe they could be applied to contemporary Iran, since in some matters — for example, the replacement

of theocracy with a liberal, secular, and democratic state — Iran has not yet come to its age of enlightenment.

In order to achieve a better understanding of the status of public space and social life in Tehran, I studied the concept of public space and its method of creation, as well as the importance of social relations and interactions. I also studied citizens' rights to the city (such as the World Charter on the Right to the City, the United Nations Human Settlement Programme [UN-Habitat], and UNESCO projects). The argument employs Henri Lefebvre's concept of space as a social product, and it continues by signifying the importance of the practices of everyday life, democracy, and public space.

[Thesis Perception of Public
Space]

Social relations, the rights to the city and its spaces, and the importance of social participation are crucial for this thesis, as I consider them very important factors in our lives as urban dwellers. Our experience and involvement in city life comes from the quality of public spaces that we occupy. Public spaces, as accessible spaces for all, should provide a ground for social interaction, communication, expression, and participation in society.

There have been many studies, theories, and writings about public space, each using different characteristics to define public space. For this study, my focus was on those qualities of public space that relate to citizens' participation, contribution to democracy, and everyday life activities. Everyday life and public space cannot be separated from each other. Everyday activities are important in cities as they are dominant actions that shape social values, and public space is needed for their practice, as well as to engage with differences and benefit from the existence of other people.

In the form of a diagram, I have categorized my understanding of public spaces and the qualities that have been crucial in shaping this thesis.

Thesis Perception of Public Space

What Is Learned, Understood and Represented as Public Space

Public space is a Representational space

Dynamic
Representation both demands and creates
A place wh
Contain all the ordinary objects of daily lif

Public space is crucial for demanding the right to the city

The place of citizenship , an open space where public affair and legal disputes were conducted
Hartley
a space everyone has the right to be present in

A struggle
The right to the city is like a **CRY** and

Public Space provides a stage for Social Interactions

A space people go for individual and public actions
Stage for social interactions
Space in which humans interact

A social space
Public space is theatrical - to see and be seen -
Hannah Arendt
A gathering place

The idea of Democracy is inseparable from public space

Public space occupies an important ideological position in democratic societies. The notion of urban public space can be traced back at least to the Greek agora and its function as: the place of citizenship, an open space where public affairs and legal disputes were conducted...

Don Mitchell

Public space is a ground for practicing everyday activities

Contains ordinary daily life
Space for sharing
Space in which humans interact
Situational
Expressive and communicative

Created by actions of users

It is an artifact

Public space is the space of representation and comes to be defined by the patterns of the people who use it

Common

Created for humans by humans

Active

Alive

Henri Lefebvre

Public space – like the right to the city – is always a negotiation

Don Mitchell

a demand

Public space is meant to represent the claim for the right to the city

Collective

Meeting place for strangers

Public space is where social interactions and public activities between all members of “the public” occur

Free interactions between strangers

Public space is the space of the public

Public space is an universal abstract space in which democracy occurs. Public space is material, constitute an actual size, a place within and from which political activity flows...

Jürgen Habermas

Democracy manifests itself within public space

Public spaces are essential for practicing democracy

One of the main components of civil society

Public space allows us to experience the existence of others and to discover their insights

Ali Madanipour

A space for everyday practices

Exposed to all

Public space is OPEN and ACCESSIBLE to all

How and where should people encounter each other? How important is the space that is produced for social interaction? Marcel Henaff and Tracy B. Strong (2001) begin their book *“Public Space and Democracy”* by stating that one of the earliest references in Western culture to the importance of a space for people to meet appears in the second book of the *Odyssey*, before the agora is introduced. When Telemachus wants to gather a group of people, one of the three qualities he names of a place for assembly (meaning somewhere to gather a number of people for the purpose of a public meeting) is that “it is brought into existence by someone calling for it, it is created by the actions of human beings. It is a kind of space that human beings make for and by themselves.”¹²

Historically, public space has been a space where people would gather for debates, while providing a medium for social interactions. The question is how public space, as a space where people can interact socially, is produced. In his book *“Production of Space,”* Henri Lefebvre (1991) argues that space is a product that is socially created. He defines three perspectives on space: first, spatial practice (perceived space); second, representations of space (conceived space); and third, representational space (lived space). Representational space, as Lefebvre argues, is the space of the users and inhabitants that is “lived through its associated images.”¹³ It is alive and can contain all the ordinary objects of daily life, and it also “embraces loci of passion, of action and of lived situations.”¹⁴ It is lively, active, and dynamic, and it might be “directional, situational or relational.” Representational space is space for inhabitants and is the space in use, whereas representations of space are planned, controlled, and ordered spaces. In addition, Mark Purcell (2003) states that lived space “represents a person’s actual experience of space in everyday life.”¹⁵ He has concluded that the production of space can be in accordance with its representations.¹⁶ Thus, what seems crucial in the production of space, and especially the representational space,

[Space and Social Relations
-
Representational Space]

“(Social) space is a (social) product”

Henri Lefebvre¹⁰

is the everyday activities and lived experiences of its producers, or in other words, the social life and social interactions of those who occupy such space.

For Lefebvre, the city itself is also an act of making, or oeuvre, “a work in which all its citizens participate.”¹⁷ Lefebvre saw the city as a mediation between far (society and its institutions) and near (“relations of individuals in groups of variable size”) orders,¹⁸ which is a social reality made up of relations. If the city is an act of making, it will need actors and actions to produce it. Basically, the oeuvre is a social reality which cannot exist without the acts and relations of its producers, namely, the urban dwellers.

Lefebvre and, later, Don Mitchell (1995) have tried to demonstrate the idea that social relations and interactions can indeed create spaces and even cities. The very notion of producing urban space cannot be separated from people and their use of space, and the social relations that are bound to it. Social relations and lived spaces are inseparable. Mitchell also asserts that “public space is socially produced through its use as public space.”¹⁹ Therefore, public spaces, as representatives of the general idea of space, are also produced by the actions of its users. Social relations and lived spaces (representational spaces) are tied together in the everyday lives of city dwellers.²⁰ For Mitchell, “the logic of representation demands the construction or social production of certain kinds of public space.”²¹

“By claiming space in public, by creating public spaces, social groups themselves become public.”

Don Mitchell¹¹

This idea of a space (a representational space) that is produced by its users is crucial to this thesis, since I was trying to understand the role that Tehran’s citizens play in the creation of city spaces, and also because social interactions, everyday life, and the relationship between citizens, everyday spaces of the city, and the manner in which they are produced was the key spark for undertaking this research. I also think that the subversive public spaces that are introduced in this thesis, which the citizens of Tehran have produced, are examples

of representational spaces, because they are situational, created by people and their own occupation and usage, and alive, and based on social interaction and everyday activities.

The significance of everyday activities is the other idea central to this thesis. Many contemporary scholars have argued that practicing everyday activities is essential to urban life. Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau (1984), Margaret Crawford (1999), and others argue that everyday life and space cannot be separated from each other. It is through lived experience that such concepts as space, public life, and citizenship are redefined. Crawford explains that everyday activities are determined by the concept of everyday space. She believes that "existing in between such defined and physically identifiable realms as home, the workplaces, and the institution, everyday urban space becomes the connective tissue that binds daily life together."²² Moreover, Eugene J. McCann (1999) suggests that "social theories such as Lefebvre's discussion of the social production of space both inform and are informed by the material circumstances of everyday life."²³

[Everyday Life Practices]

Interestingly, Lefebvre authored a three-volume book, entitled "*Critiques of Everyday Life*," which analyzes, criticizes, and considers the simplest elements of society and everyday life. According to Lefebvre, human behaviours are not just inconsequential aspects of life; they are rather dominant actions that have shaped social values. He argues that the social space of everyday life is vitally important, offering "a "critical opportunity to engage with difference and to develop an understanding of the world."²⁴ McCann argues that "Lefebvre's constant attention to everyday practices of life makes his work applicable to discussions of urban public spaces in which large numbers of day-to-day activities are performed."²⁵

In “*The Practice of Everyday Life*,” de Certeau introduces two concepts in spatial practices: “strategies” and “tactics.” While strategies require specific places under the control of authority, tactics rely on time, and appear in situations that are not under control.²⁶ He categorizes many everyday activities as tactics and explains that those who employ tactics are always on watch for opportunities and tricks to manipulate and subvert the imposed power in the constant struggle for obtaining their rights.²⁷

Everyday activities range from interacting with strangers, sharing information, and being involved in social life, to the very routine activities of city life; they happen in spaces that are “socially produced.” Thus, the practices of everyday life activities are essential to our social and city life. The practices of everyday life also become essential in the production of spaces, especially the production of public spaces of the city where social interactions are vital.

However, in Tehran, many aspects of everyday life cannot happen in the public spaces of the city, since they are considered criminal in hardliners’ moral classification and are met with restrictions and punishments. In “*Young and Defiant in Tehran*,” Shahram Khosravi (2008), an associate professor of anthropology, contextualizes de Certeau’s “tactics” in the lives of Tehran’s citizens. He states that for some everyday life activities in Tehran, the tactics that people employ are enabling them to survive oppressive restrictions.²⁸

The concept of the right to the city, originated by Lefebvre more than forty years ago, has recently been reintroduced in academia and social movements. In a joint project, UN-Habitat and UNESCO have raised concerns about the rights of city dwellers. A number of conferences and meetings have been held in an attempt to raise awareness about various fundamental rights. Independent, civil, and non-profit international organizations, such as the World Urban Forum and the World Social Forum, were founded in 2004, in addition to a World Charter for the Right to the City.

Lefebvre argued that citizens of the city have a right to the city's spaces that they occupy, and that that right is "like a cry and demand" and should be demanded by the city's citizens.³⁰ He also stated that these rights and the demand for them are "part of the process of producing space."³¹ Don Mitchell (2003) argues that the "right to the city is dependable on public space,"³² and public space is crucial to the demand for the right to the city. The rights to the city must be practiced somewhere, in a space, and that space should be produced and maintained in such a way that the rights "can exist and be exercised."³³ Lefebvre points out that city dwellers have "the right to oeuvre,"³⁴ and that the right to participation and appropriation are implied in the right to the city, which includes the "right to freedom, to individualization in socialization, to habitat and to inhibit."³⁵

"The right to the city is like a cry and a demand"






Henri Lefebvre²⁹

"A component of public space is the history and experience of citizenship. Citizenship is a multidimensional and dialectic relationship between the state and the civil society. This multidimensional relationship is in essence conflictual, and these conflicts render historical character to public space."

Clara Irazabal³⁶

Next two pages are a brief description of the rights to the city.

Legend for the Rights to the City:

-  UNHABITAT and UNESCO
Urban Policies and the Right to the City, Rights, Responsibilities and Citizenship
-  The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
-  World Charter of Rights to the City
-  Henri Lebevere - Right to the City
-  Don Mitchell - Right to the City

All persons have the right to freedom and integrity, both physical and spiritual. Cities should co-ordinate the actions of individuals or institutions of any nature

Difference creates struggle, as people compete

As its primary purpose, the city should exercise a social function, guaranteeing the rights of its inhabitants

What makes a space public—a space in which cry and demand for the rights to the city can be heard? A group or another takes space and through its actions makes it public. The act of representing oneself in public and creates space

Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association

All persons have the Right to the City free of discrimination based on gender, age, health status, or other characteristics

Reducing poverty, social exclusion and urban violence

Being public

RIGHT TO ASSOCIATE, GATHER, MANIFEST, AND TO DEMOCRATIC USE OF URBAN PUBLIC SPACES
provide and guarantee public spaces for this effect

Streets and parks and other public spaces

The right to the city is a vehicle for urban change, in which all urban dwellers are urban citizens. For substantive citizenship, citizens must claim rights of participation and allow others the same right

Cities should constitute an environment of full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, equity, and justice. All persons have the right to find in the city the necessary conditions for the full development of their personality

Transparency, equity and efficiency in city administrations

It is the collective right of the inhabitants

Citizenship is defined to include all urban inhabitants, conferring two central rights—the right to participate in the production of urban space and the right to appropriate it. Appropriation includes the right to access, occupy and use space

Public space is produced through dialectic of inclusion and exclusion, order and disorder, rationality and irrationality

Cities should guarantee mechanisms so that all persons have access to effective and transparent information and communication technologies, their use, and their periodic up-dating

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression

The city is an oeuvre – a work in progress

All citizens have the right to participate in local political life through the free and democratic election of representatives

The right to the city is a collective rather than an individual right since changing the city inevitably affects all its inhabitants

Governments are responsible for the effective application and defense of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of all persons

The 'right to the city' is different from 'rights in the city' — it does not grant specific rights, but the right to access in liberty and freedom the benefits of city life; it also confers responsibilities on all citizens

Cities should guarantee the right to free and democratic election of local representatives, the right to be heard and audiences on issues relevant to the city

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought

commit to establish protection guarantees that assure that these rights are not violated by
over the shape of the city, terms of access to the public realm, or the right to citizenship
seeing for all its inhabitants full usufruct of the resources offered by the city
heard-is often not its preordained publicness. Rather, it is when, to fulfill a pressing need, some
one's group to a larger public creates a space for representation. Representation both demands
ation
The role of public space is crucial in defining the right to the city
, income, nationality, ethnicity, migratory condition, or political, religious or sexual orientation
it demands heterogeneity — as the city is a place where encounters, with difference thrive
PUBLIC SPACE: All persons have the right to associate, meet, and manifest themselves. Cities should
spaces have been used for the purpose of assembly, communicating thoughts between citizens
; it creates space in which citizens can define their needs but, in order to appropriate
nt.
Everyone has a right to life, liberty and security of person
liberties, assuring the dignity and collective well-being of all persons, in conditions of equality,
their political, economic, cultural, social, and ecological realization, assuming the duty of solidarity
ants of cities The right to the city implies the rights to uses of city spaces, the right to inhabit
to participation and to appropriation. Participation allows urban inhabitants to access decisions
the public spaces of the city should be used prioritizing social, cultural & environmental interests
quality and irrationality, violence and peaceful dissent Right to the city is like a cry and demand
at public information. For that purpose, actions should be developed to promote access for all
Liberty, freedom, equity, social justice and the benefit of the city life for all
n which all citizens participate Recognition of diversity in economic, social and cultural life
lection of their local representatives The city is public, a place of social interaction & exchange
vitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization
political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental human rights of all citizens
enables all inhabitants and communities — whether women or men, established residents or
ities on city inhabitants to support governments in facilitating those rights
27
realization of plebiscites and popular legislative initiatives, and equitable access to public debates
, conscience and religion Participation and respect in local democratic decision making

Clara Irazabal (2008) argues that the concept of citizenship is in constant connection with the right to a public space, and that people can only become citizens of a city by participation and negotiation over the use of public space.³⁸ The question thus becomes, who has the right to the city? The right to the city is a right for all the citizens of the city — those who inhabit and occupy the spaces of the city. Purcell claims that, in Lefebvre’s conception, those who “inhabit” the city have all rights over it other than enfranchisement, which is based on “national citizenship,” and that the right to the city empowers its urban inhabitants and is earned by the routines of everyday life practices in the spaces of the city.³⁹

“Because the right to the city revolves around the production of urban space, it is those who live in the city — who contribute to the body of urban lived experience and lived space — who can legitimately claim the right to the city. The right to the city is designed to further the interests ‘of the whole society and firstly of all those who inhabit.’”

Mark Prucell⁴⁰

In analyzing Lefebvre’s idea of the right to the city, Purcell mentions that this right for urban inhabitants involves two principles: the right to participation, and the right to appropriation. This means that the citizens should contribute and participate in the production of urban and public spaces. Furthermore, they should be able to physically occupy, access, and use the urban spaces. They should be capable of physically occupying the urban spaces.⁴² Lefebvre’s right to the city implies that the decisions and components that produce urban space should be in harmony with the rights of its inhabitants and their everyday activities in the city. Likewise, those who inhabit the city should participate in producing spaces that will

“Citizenship has been expanded to encompass cultural claims, human and local rights, and significantly, the rights to the city”

Clara Irazabal³⁷

meet their everyday needs. Mitchell talks about representation and public space, arguing that representation demands a space;⁴³ hence, a space for representation, in which groups and individuals can make themselves visible, is essential for society.

The right to the city is not granted in all societies. In Tehran, many everyday acts cannot happen in public spaces, which are infused with hard-line restrictions. The right to the city and its public spaces has not only been granted, but has been actively suppressed. However, citizens have indeed been involved in contributing and participating in the creation of public spaces of the city, but in subversive ways. The “cry and demand” of citizens and their struggle to claim their rights to everyday activities, interestingly, have created alternative spaces for practicing their rights. These subversive spaces are spaces that emerged from this struggle.

“Not only is appropriation the right to occupy already-produced urban space, it is also the right to produce urban space so that it meets the needs of inhabitants. Because appropriation gives inhabitants the right to ‘full and complete usage’ of urban space in the course of everyday life”

Mark Prucell⁴¹

“In the tradition of Western thought, the very idea of democracy is inseparable from that of public space”

Henaff and Strong ⁴⁴

Public space has been always a stage for citizens to share information, to communicate, and to interact socially. Public space in the form of ancient Greek agoras reflected a designated space for people to exercise their freedom of expression and the pleasure of debate, while being socially active. Hence, many critics have argued that public space and democracy have an irrefutable connection. Henaff and Strong argue that democracy and public space in Greece exhibited essential features: “All that appear in public can and must be seen and heard by all. Nothing concerning the public domain may be secret. Democracy manifests itself within the space; the public expression of its being resides in its very being. Democracy is the sensate life of the community.”⁴⁶

It is in public spaces that people have the chance to interact with each other and find a stage for the expression of different thoughts and ideas. With the presence of public spaces and the social life associated with them, cities would be an ideal stage for practicing democracy. Hannah Arendt, an influential political theorist, sees public space as a political stage with a theatrical quality. She divides public space into two distinct models: agonistic and associational. The associational model she introduces engages ordinary citizens in the representation of a democratic and associative political space.⁴⁷ Seyla Benhabib, in analyzing Arendt’s theory of the associational model, states that, based on this model, public space is not a space in an institutional sense; it is where freedom can appear.⁴⁸ However, in Tehran, this associational model, and the theatrical stage, is used to showcase the domination of authorities — it is not a space for the engagement of citizens in free, democratic encounters.

“Public spaces spring from the need for room for people to gather in true democratic tradition”

Jan Gehl⁴⁵

“The visibility of power is not an accident: it is, as Hobbes knew, the very stuff of power”

Henaf and Strong⁴⁹

It is understood that cities, especially their public spaces, are essential for practicing democracy and the right to the city for their citizens. What, then, is the role of governments and authorities in the public spaces of the city? Referring to Hegelianism, Lefebvre argues that “historical time gives birth to that space which the state occupies and rules over.”⁵¹ Henaff and Strong, an anthropologist and a political scientist respectively who have written about democracy and public space, state that the very notion of power is its visibility.⁵² Likewise, Arendt’s idea concerning the theatricality of public spaces suggests that public space can be a great stage for showcasing the power and domination of the authorities. Lefebvre has also posited that every society produces its own space, and if a society fails to do so, it loses its identity.⁵³

“Every society produces a space, its own space”

Henri Lefebvre⁵⁰

There is no doubt that cities and, especially, their public spaces are some of the most important elements in which the policies of government are applied. Authorities, by producing and dominating their own spaces, consolidate their existence. However, spaces produced by authorities and governments might not always include participation from citizens, and might not always be a representation of their citizens’ rights to the city. Mitchell argues that, while people always occupy spaces, rights to them are not always guaranteed.⁵⁴

What can be summarized from the Western theories here presented is that space is a product and city is a work of participation, an oeuvre in whose production all citizens participate. Space for representation — a space in which groups and individuals can make themselves visible — is the essence of the everyday lives of citizens in cities. What makes such a representational space public is the lived situations and actions of those who occupy it and perform everyday activities in it. Public spaces are essential for the practice of everyday activities and for the maintenance of democracy in cities. It is important that the production of public spaces of the city involve the actions and interactions of its citizens — those who live in

the city and participate in everyday activities of the city. City public spaces, besides being a ground for the social lives of citizens, are also a theatrical stage for authorities to demonstrate and enforce their power. On the other hand, citizens have a right to the city. This right, if not guaranteed, should be fought for, and this struggle for rights, this cry and demand in the form of actions and social relations, will produce public spaces.

Nevertheless, in a city such as Tehran, which is dominated by restriction and dictatorship, the participation of citizens in public life and spaces is much different from that in Western countries. My main objective is to illustrate and document how, in a city where many rights are not granted, citizens partake in the creation of public spaces, how they are represented in the public life of the city, and, most importantly, what type of spaces could be produced through the struggle and demand for rights.

“Here in Iran we don’t have public space as it is understood in Europe [west]. Perhaps this is because the city was the place of king and not a polis. There is no agora here, no place where people can go and meet up.”

Shahab Katoozian⁵⁵

[Public Space in Tehran]

Although it is not completely true that “there is no place where people can go and meet up” in Iran, the country’s public spaces are unable to operate as they would in western countries. Iran had been ruled under monarchical dictatorship until 1979, and theocratic dictatorship since then. Under the totalitarian regimes, libertarian social interactions and democratic encounters had never been endorsed; therefore, the need to dedicate spaces to such encounters diminished. Since the seventh century and by the Muslim

conquest of Iran, the cities' structure had been an adaptation of Islamic architecture merged with Iranian culture. Although the cities had a few Islamic public elements, such as mosques, marketplaces, and religious schools, those have never truly been spaces for social interactions and democratic encounters. Almost all public spaces of pre-modern Iran had been used either for announcements from representatives of the kings' court and religious leaders, or for national and religious rituals.

The notion of public space, as a space where people could assemble to practice democracy and exchange ideas, benefiting from each other's existence, was not present in pre-modern Iran. However, from the 1920s onward, culture, urban planning, and social life experienced a major ascendant shift. With modernization plans, many aspects of western culture entered the country and specifically its capital, Tehran. With changes in society and culture, public spaces as understood in the West were emerging into the city's structure. However, the spaces of the city were not occupied in a true democratic way until late 1970s. It was then that public spaces in Tehran played important roles in the history of Iran, the most important one arguably being the Revolution itself. Streets and squares turned into places to demand and struggle for rights. For a few years, Tehran's public spaces turned into the most important grounds for social gatherings, rallies, protests, and the struggle of citizens to have their voices heard.

The social movements demanding freedom, independence from colonization, and a civil and democratic state, which led to the Revolution of 1979, was later hijacked by hardliner theocrats. From the Revolution onward, it has been the representations and ideologies of government that have dominated the spaces of the city, and thus, they have not been true representations of peoples' needs and rights.

I should go back one more time to Lefebvre and his statement that a revolution and a society produce its own space,⁵⁷ and Henaff and Strong's declaration that "the visibility of power is not an accident: it is the very stuff of power."⁵⁸ In Tehran, the domination and visibility of power and the fact that the Revolution has produced its own spaces throughout the city are vivid mostly in the public spaces of the city. In the early years after the Revolution, many forms of western and modern public spaces, such as cinemas, entertainment centres, bars, social clubs, and many more, faced stagnation and suspension. During the war between Iran and Iraq (1980–1988), city public spaces turned into sacred spaces for endeavouring against the enemy.

Although the development of public spaces accelerated after the war, they were intensely subjected to control and limitations.⁵⁹ Today, Iran is governed by an authoritarian government that tries to excuse and hide its dictatorial manner behind the abuse of Sharia laws. Since the government's rules and regulations are very restrictive, many of the normal, everyday activities of Tehrani citizens contravene the authorities, are counted as criminal, and are intensely suppressed. Azam Khatam (2005), states that an ideological morality, with roots in the Revolution, has been applied to public spaces.⁶⁰ Since the Revolution, many public spaces have been gender segregated, and social interaction and encounter have been cut to a minimum, with any gathering and socializing considered a threat to the government.

[Spaces of Government
-
Limitations and Restrictions]

“A revolution that has not produced a new space has not realized its full potential”

Henri Lefebvre⁵⁶

Public space in Tehran during the last two decades has been exclusively defined by authorities' expressions and ideologies. In this thesis, the term "official public spaces" refers to those spaces that are produced and maintained by authorities — spaces that have been produced or repossessed to represent the power of the state and the manipulation of the everyday life activities of the citizens, especially the young. The very basic requirements of democracy and public space — debate, free expression, and free interaction — are denied in Tehran. Therefore, the existence of public space, as a stage for practicing democracy and the right to the city, becomes questionable. With the involvement of politics in the symbolism, imagery, and representation of public spaces, social interactions have been suppressed extensively. With all that has been learned about public space, official public spaces of Tehran are missing very essential characteristics of public space, and are failing to deliver the true notion of public space.

[Resistance and Defiance in
Everyday Activities]

In a city such as Tehran, where official public spaces are produced and overregulated by authorities, what is the role of citizens in the participation in and production of spaces? Where do citizens practice their everyday life in Tehran? Where is the cry and demand over rights? What has been the collective behaviour of citizens as a result of the policies forced on them? And how do the citizens, especially the young, engage in the social life of the city?

It is apparent that public spaces in Tehran have been transformed into stages for control over the everyday acts of citizens and for promoting and amplifying authorities' dominance and power. Many activities that are routine and everyday in the West are suppressed extensively in the name of preventing moral crimes. Official public spaces are constantly under the surveillance of morality police forces. Therefore, many challenges exist for the citizens of Tehran in

their everyday lives. Appearing in public itself can be troublesome and results in many difficulties and issues for citizens, especially the indomitable youth. The manner in which one presents oneself in society, their actions and interactions, and the simplest practices of everyday life can result in arrest and subjection to financial or even physical punishment.

Don Mitchell states that “public space has long been a place of exclusion, no matter how much democratic ideology would like to argue otherwise.”⁶² This marginalized group in Tehran is basically whomever challenges the state and authorities and questions their everyday rights, and mainly includes the younger generations of Tehrani residents. The term “Third Generation” (which will be discussed in depth in the third chapter) refers to those who were born after the 1979 Revolution. The age classification of this group, for the purposes of this thesis, is mainly those under thirty-four, consisting of 68 percent of the total population of Iran.⁶³

This generation of Tehran’s youth labels itself too modern to utilize traditional and religious public spaces, such as traditional tea houses, squares, and mosques, for communication, discussion, and debate. And contemporary official public spaces do not provide a ground to socialize, communicate, and practice their everyday activities. In a democratic society, presence in public spaces encourages social interaction and communication and should provide an opportunity to practice the right to freedom of expression and action. However, in Tehran, many of the daily activities of young people in public spaces are not considered legitimate. There is, therefore, always a culture of defiance and resistance — growing stronger every day — in the daily activities of the youth in Tehran. There is an ongoing and invisible battle between youth and authorities for the right to pursue normal, daily activities that are labelled cultural and moral crimes in Iran.

“Individual acts of defiance and cultural escape are dominant aspects of young people’s social life.”

Shahram Khosravi⁶¹

Many scholars have argued that the current youth culture is based on defiance. Tehran's youth defy and resist the authorities, the generational gap, and traditional culture. Shahram Khosravi (2008) dedicated a chapter in his book, *Young and Defiant in Tehran*, to this "culture of defiance." He argues that, while many national festivities, gatherings, and everyday life activities of the young have been counted as crimes, the culture of defiance is vivid in most of their actions and everyday activities, even if they do not intend to be defiant. In *Tehran Blues*, Kaveh Basmanji (2005) also talks about cultural crime and the rebellious nature of the younger generations in Tehran. Hamid Dabashi (2007) also argues that in modern Iran, resistance is part of the culture, and is greatly visible in poems and other writings.

These acts of defiance and resistance are not organized, institutional acts, but simple, individual acts of everyday life intended to represent defiance and subversion to authorities and cultural barriers. Despite suppressive socio-political conditions imposed by the state, the youth in Tehran are struggling to obtain their rights to occupy the public spaces of the city, to have free social encounters, and to practice their everyday activities, in a place where the simplest everyday activities are considered rebellious and subversive.

[Alternative and Subversive
Spaces]

As has been demonstrated, public space is always a negotiation, and the cry and demand for the rights — the struggle — is producing space. In a society such as Tehran, where official public spaces are unable to provide a stage for true citizen participation, the struggle and demand for rights has indeed created alternative types of space. As was stated earlier in the text, Khosravi believes that the young generation of Tehran, the "Third Generation," has created its own spaces and "tactics" for subverting the adult culture.⁶⁵ And it is very clear to me that the spaces that the "Third Generation" is producing — and that I used to occupy as well — are produced as a form

of defiance and struggle to obtain the rights that have been denied to them.

“Theatricality demonstrates its subversive power when it leaves the theatron and begins to wander. At that point, it is no longer confined by prevailing rules of representation, aesthetics, social, or political; its vehicle is irreducibly plural and even more, heterogeneous...that turns up in the most unexpected places”

Henaff and Strong⁶⁶

For Arendt, public space is a space of appearance, and can be re-created by individual's political gatherings and actions. It exists wherever the actors (citizens) gather for discussions about public concerns.⁶⁷ This space is created by actions, and one of the main features of action is unpredictability, because it is a manifestation of freedom.⁶⁸ Since the official spaces of the city cannot provide a space for appearance for all citizens, the subversive spaces become associational spaces, created by the actions of citizens.

Khatam also supports the idea of these alternative spaces by stating that “control over legal public spaces had created this tendency in youth to look for ways to create their own types of spaces without the control from above.”⁶⁹ These alternative spaces have resulted from the struggle for neglected rights to very simple, everyday life activities. The spaces that the younger generation has produced are providing a ground for interactions, encounters, and the practice of everyday activities. Over the years, this generation has found ways to circumvent the restrictions and limitations and struggle to obtain their rights.

In this thesis, subversive public spaces refer to spaces that the citizens of Tehran, especially the youth, have produced for themselves, so that despite the suppressions and limitations imposed on them, they would have some ground to practice their rights to the city

“The violence of power is answered by the violence of subversion”

Henri Lefebvre⁶⁴

and their everyday activities. These alternative spaces for subversion emanate from very ordinary spaces, such as basements, living rooms, rooftops, and streets. Rights have to be exercised somewhere, and these ordinary spaces provide the space for that exercise. What authorities consider a subversive act in Tehran would be a normal daily activity in the West. Therefore, subversive action and spaces in Tehran are only subversive in the context of the current, oppressive government.

With all that has been studied and written about public space, I can conclude that the official public spaces of Tehran are missing very essential characteristics of public space, and are failing to deliver the true notion of public space. As was stated earlier, it has been said that Tehran is built by its inhabitants; its chaotic urban planning has been the result of self-built, not planned, housings. Since 1979, it has been the Revolution that produced its own spaces — the official public spaces. And I can add that today, the younger generation of Tehran's citizens is indeed producing and building the spaces of their city. The Third Generation's defiance and rebellion is shaping alternative types of public space in Tehran: the subversive public spaces. These alternative spaces are produced by ordinary citizens of the city as a cry and demand for their rights, and as spaces for representation.

Tehran is deeply polarized, in both social and urban aspects.⁷⁰ While northern Tehran is mainly inhabited by the affluent and middle classes, the southern and far east-west neighbourhoods are mainly populated by lower- and middle-class citizens and immigrants. As will be discussed in depth in the next chapter, this polarization has affected the distribution of both the official and subversive public spaces of the city.

In the next chapter, I will start exploring the history of public space and the social events that have been critical in shaping the city and its spaces as they are today. In the following chapters, I will explore and analyze both the official and subversive public spaces of Tehran, and the role of both authorities and citizens in creating them.

Tehran was once called the city of plane trees and it was possible for a traveler to complain about the density of trees and gardens around it, hiding it from visitors, who were searching inside these green walls hoping to unveil some reminder of the exotic and sleepy orient of a magical past. Now Tehran is a giant metropolis which has devoured its green borders and whose two revolutions and many more upheavals this century have changed the city and shaken the world around it. Nevertheless, it still remains a city hidden from the outside world, enwrapped within what appears to be a new clothing made from a political and ideological fabric. But, we may wonder, does the city reveal itself to its own inhabitants, or are they too visitors, entangled within a labyrinth, a complex web of places, people, and events? *Ali Madanipour¹*

TEHRAN'S NARRATIVE TIMELINE



LOCATION



ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

1,648,195 SQ. KM
(LAND+WATER)

AREA

AFGHANISTAN
ARMENIA
AZERBAIJAN
IRAQ
PAKISTAN
RUSSIA (WATER BORDER)
TURKEY
TURKMENISTAN

BORDER COUNTRIES

IRANIAN
(SOME PREFER PERSIAN)

NATIONALITY

61% PERSIAN
16% AZERI
10% KURD
6% LUR
2% BALOCH
2% ARAB
2% TURKMEN
1% OTHER

ETHNIC DIVERSITY

27.4 YEARS
MALE: 27.1 YEARS
FEMALE: 27.6 YEARS

MEDIAN AGE (2012 EST.)

78,868,711

POPULATION (2012 EST.)

SUPREME LEADER
AYATOLLAH KHAMENEI

PRESIDENT
AHMADINEJAD
(2009 FRAUD ELECTION)

COUNTRY LEADERS

~~THEOCRATIC (ISLAMIC)
REPUBLIC~~

**AUTOCRATIC
DICTATORSHIP**

TYPE OF GOVERNMENT

RELIGIOUS LEGAL SYSTEM
BASED ON SHARIA LAW

LEGAL SYSTEM

FEBRUARY
1979

ISLAMIC
REVOLUTION

MAJOR POLITICAL SHIFT

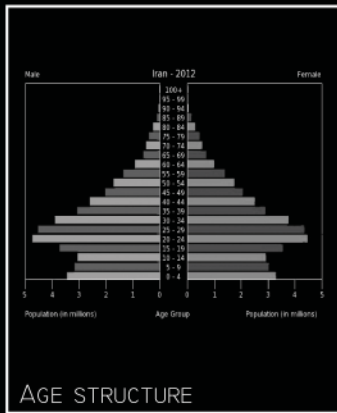
98% MUSLIM
SHIA 89%
SUNNI 9%
2% ZOROASTRIAN
JEWISH
CHRISTIAN
BAHA'I
0% ATHEIST
(DEATH PENALTY)

OFFICIAL RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

URBAN POPULATION
71%

GROWTH RATE
1.9%

URBANIZATION (2010 EST.)



AGE STRUCTURE

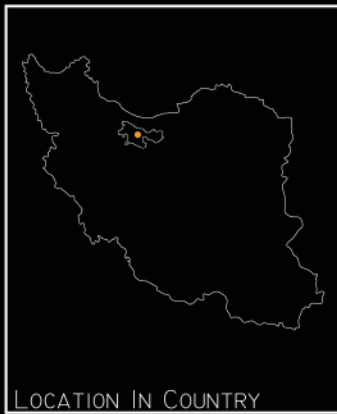
\$997.4 BILLN

PER CAPITA: \$13,100

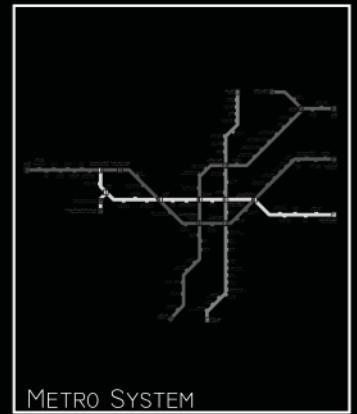
GDP (2012 EST. IN US DOLLAR)

IRAN

COUNTRY PROFILE



CITY
730 SQ.KM
 METRO
1,274 SQ.KM
 AREA



URBAN
8,791,378
 METRO
12,223,598
 POPULATION (2012 EST.)

YEARS	PERCENT
0-14	30.7%
15-64	64.5%
65+	4.7%

POPULATION DEMOGRAPHY

10,327.6
 /SQ.KM
 POPULATION DENSITY

TEHRANI
 DEMONYM

MOHAMMAD-BAGHER
GHALIBAF
 MAYOR

**MARCH, 20
 1785**
 DATE BECAME CAPITAL

1916	----	3.6
1926	----	3.6
1936	----	4.1
1946	----	2.9
1956	----	4.5
1966	----	5.7
1976	----	5.2
1986	----	2.9
1996	----	1.1

POPULATION GROWTH RATE

% OF POPULATION
5.8
 UNEMPLOYMENT

1,190-1,700
 METERS
 ABOVE SEA LEVEL
 ALTITUDE

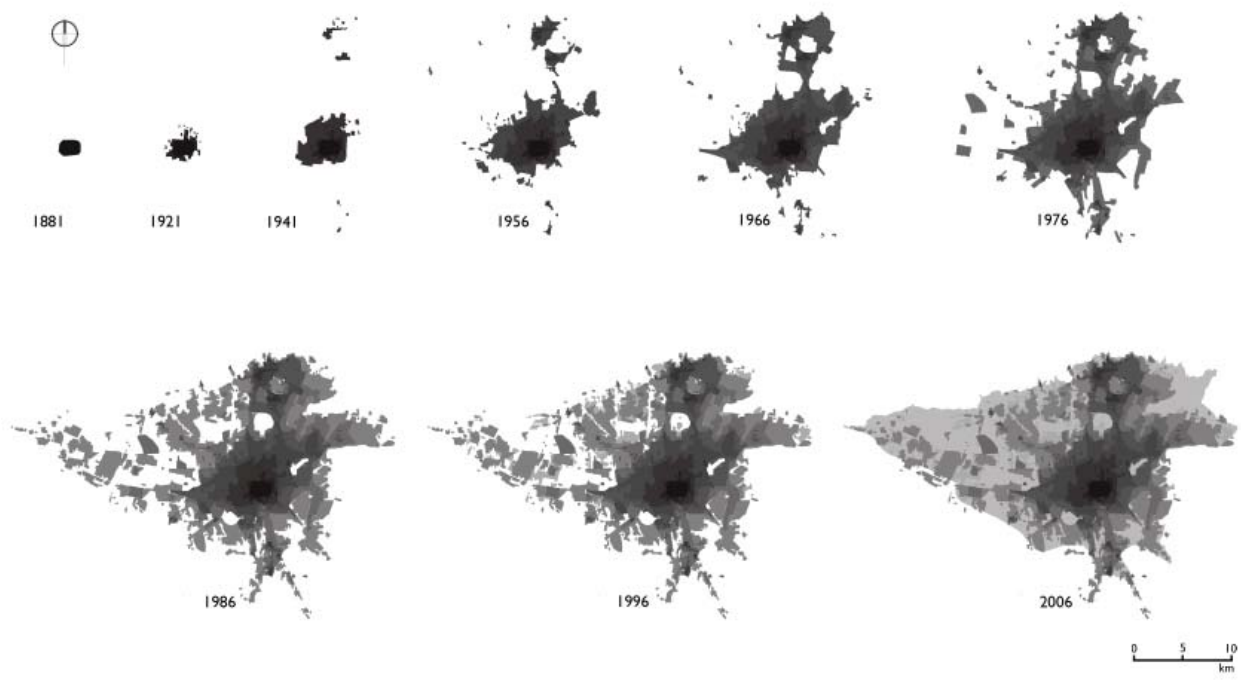
3.5 GMT
 TIME ZONE

ANNUALLY
213 MM
 MONTHLY
18 MM
 AVERAGE PRECIPITATION

ANNUALLY
16.7°C
 WARMEST(JULY)
36°C
 COOLEST(JANUARY)
-1°C
 AVERAGE TEMPERATURE

TEHRAN

CITY PROFILE



Ever since it became the capital of what was then called the Persian Empire (today's Iran), Tehran has been in constant crisis, from political and cultural aspects³ to spatial propositions. The Western world experienced the Renaissance in the seventeenth century, and by the nineteenth century, it had passed into the contemporary era and had flourished under the Industrial Revolution and civil changes. Iran, however, due to the incompetence and ignorance of its rulers, had been kept far behind these international movements and developments. Many scholars have stated that the modern era of Tehran (and Iran in larger scale) only dates from the early twentieth century, with the fall of the Qajar dynasty, when the country was exposed to Western culture. The treachery of the Qajars, throes and turbulence under the Pahlavis, and the corruption, bribery, and bureaucracy that have become routine aspects of administrative Tehran all together have affected the lives of the citizens as well as the spaces of the city.

“Mapped out within three concurrent empires (the Ottomans, the Safavids and the Mughals) and coveted by three competing colonial powers (the Russians, the British, and the French) Iran entered its modern history divided in its political disposition and fragmented in its cultural identities.”

Hamid Dabashi²

The history of Tehran can be studied in three major periods. The first is the pre-modern city, when it was a small, walled market town, with a traditional-Islamic structure. The second period is the extensive modernization era, which was started by the Pahlavi dynasty in early twentieth century. And the last period dates from the 1979 Revolution to the present. Over the course of two hundred years, since its allocation as capital, Tehran has transformed from a small (4.4 square kilometres), enclosed village of about fifteen thousand people to a metropolis of nearly 13 million. However, the society has been under a constant dictatorship, and concepts such as surveillance, repression, and censorship have been dominantly visible in public spaces of the city.

This chapter presents a timeline of the transformations that Tehran has undergone since its emergence as a capital through historical, social, urban, and public narratives. The timeline documents urban and social transitions pertinent to this thesis — only those events and developments that have had a significant influence on the formation of Tehran and its public life as the city it is today.

Fig 2-3. Tehran's Growth Map

This map shows the urban growth of Tehran from 1881 to present.

[Pre-Modern City and Public Spaces]

The earliest historical reference to Tehran is in a travel diary written in the eleventh century, when it is mentioned as a small village, known for its fine pomegranates and gardens.⁵ It boasted a strategic military location due to the mountains on its northern side and the desert on its southern side. However, the primary reason for the development of Tehran was its proximity to the ancient city of Rey, a city with six thousand years of history. Rey was not only a strategic point of connection between the east and west of the large empire of Persia, but was also located on the Silk Road, a trade route running across Asia that connected the Far East to Europe. The Mongol invasion in 1221 AD left the city of Rey in ruins, and subsequently, Tehran inherited some of its importance. Rich possibilities for farming, gardening, and hunting drew the Safavid king Tahmasb's attention to a small village called Tehran in around 1550.⁶



Fig 2-4. Tehran's Location in Silk Road

In 1553, King Tahmasb of Safavid dynasty ordered the first official act for urbanizing the village, which involved the construction of walls and battlements around what was named Tehran. The fortifications had 114 towers (the number of chapters in the Quran) and four gates.⁷ The enclosed area, which was about 440 acres (4.4 square kilometres), included gardens, farms, a bazaar, the citadel, and three residential neighbourhoods. The bazaar was located at the heart of the city centre and, during the emergence and expansion of the city, it became the main centre of occupation, activity, and trade.⁸ Other than this initial move turning Tehran into a city, nothing of value in terms of urban change or development was accomplished for nearly three hundred years during the Safavid and Zandieh dynasties. The city followed the traditional pattern of Iranian-Islamic cities, with few public spaces, which were used mainly for religious and national rituals.

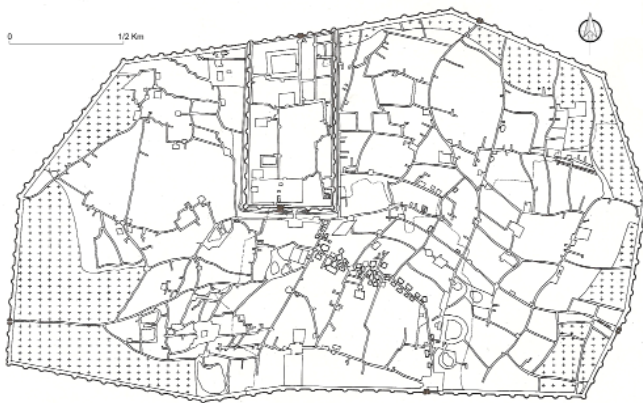


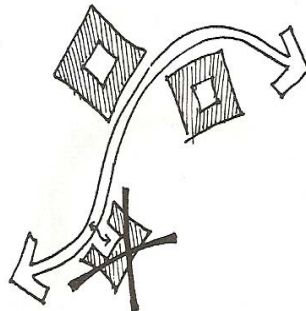
Fig 2-5. Tehran's Earliest Map, Created by Berzin in 1852

Tehran in the sixteenth century had a very simple linear structure. The main elements of the city (the citadel, the grand mosque, and the bazaar)⁹ were all aligned along the city's only axis, which stretched between the two main entrance gates.

Other than the few open public squares, the urban structures at this time are best described as introverted. This reflects both the Islamic and traditional architecture of the period. Personal life and the importance of privacy had driven building design to this extremely introverted style. Houses did not have openings to the outside world and all hallways and corridors led to interior spaces and a central courtyard. It was only after passing through twisted and winding pathways that the transition from exterior to interior space would be completed. In pre-modern Tehran, structures were extremely confined and heavily inscrutable, and open spaces were off the main axis and enclosed with built elements.

Fig 2-6. Introverted Buildings along the Main City's Axis

Most elements of the city had an introverted structure, with no direct openings to the main axis.



As mentioned earlier, Iran was very isolated, and remained far behind international movements during the Qajar period. In pre-modern Tehran, public space was not a very tangible concept. Women, in particular, did not have a very active presence in public spaces of the city. Traditional housing systems were defined by how the private space would be protected and hidden from public view through the use of high walls and an inner courtyard. The interior space of houses and the inner courtyard belonged to the women, and any space outside the house was considered to be the domain of men.¹⁰ There were very few places that women could access outside these inner spaces.

After the Islamic conquest of Persia, from 637 to 651 AD, it took some time for the majority of the population to convert to Islam. Although the country had turned Islamic, Persian culture and language were not lost. An Iranian-Islamic culture was the outcome of the adaptation of Islamic codes. Like most Islamic cities, the main public elements of old Tehran followed the Islamic order. A few urban nodes attached to the main city axis could be called

public spaces. Two urban squares, one in front of the Arg (citadel) and the other in front of the bazaar, along with bazaar, were the main public foci of the city. These two squares, which were formed along the main axis, connecting the Arg to the bazaar, were the meeting places for men to interact with each other and with authorities.¹¹

The bazaar, religious places such as mosque and takieh (building or a space used during the commemoration ceremonies for the death of Imams and religious leaders), Hamam (public bath), Madreseh (religious schools), ghahveh-khane (tea/shisha house), Caravan-sara (roadside inn), zoorkhaneh (traditional Persian sport venue), meidans (public squares), and some public gardens were all that could be called public spaces in traditional Tehran. Most public spaces of the pre-modern city were without question male-oriented. The presence of women in public spaces was neither religiously nor culturally pleasant or acceptable.¹²



The Grand Mosque

The Jame'(Grand) Mosque can be termed as the most important public space in old Tehran. Alongside the religious practices, other main roles of the grand mosque were social, political and public gatherings. It was from here that the city was controlled, the new rules and orders were announced, political gatherings were formed, and the place where the ruler would meet with people. Every Friday, men would gather for the Friday noon congregation prayers at this Mosque and to initiate involvement in the public life of the city.



Meidan Arg (Arg Square)

This square, in front of the governmental Arg, was a place for people to gather and receive announcements from the rulers and authorities. It was one of the very few public spaces in which women could be present.



Sabzeh Meidan

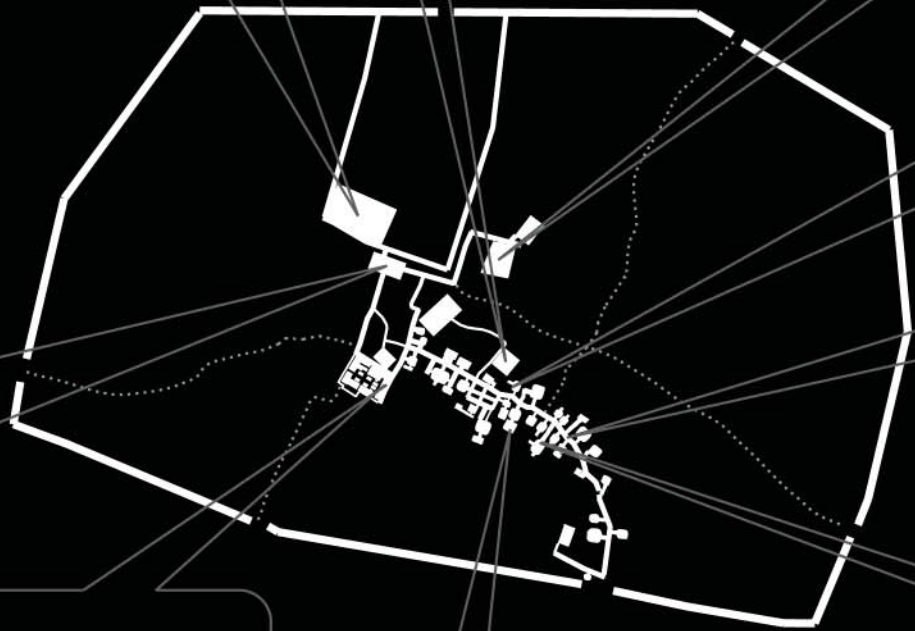
This massive open space in front of the bazaar was also one of the main public spaces of old Tehran. It was occupied by Iranian and foreign merchants for the trade of goods. It was also used for religious ceremonies like Ashoora.

Caravan Sara

Caravan Sara is best translated as roadside inn. Caravan Sara functioned as an overnight stop for travelers, providing shelter for them and their animals. Additionally, it was placed next to the bazaar to provide space for merchants and their goods. The inner courtyard of the Caravan Sara provided sufficient space both for resting animals and the trading of goods.



Pre-Modern Tehran
Main Public Elements Of The City



Zoorkhane

Zoorkhane is best defined as a traditional sport center, exclusively for boys and men. Specific manners and rules had to be followed for admission into these centers.



Madreseh (religious schools)

In the Islamic era, religious practices were undertaken in mosques. Gradually a separate space next to the mosque was dedicated to more complicated education and science activities. These spaces eventually turned into schools which had small rooms located around a central courtyard. These rooms were used both for individual practices and also residences for students. Traditional religious schools were, like most public spaces of pre-modern era, men's spaces.



Hamaam

"Hamaam" referred to a form of public baths, separated for women and men. Going to Hamaam was quite a ceremony. It was one of the very few public spaces that would be of value to women. Women from the same family were able to book specific days at the Hamaam for themselves and they would make preparations to spend anywhere a single to a few days there, not only bathing, but socializing and enjoying time away from the home. They could also receive traditional massages and body purifications.



Bazaar

The bazaar, formed along the main axis of the city, indeed was the most important public aspect of the pre-modern era. Although its main function was trade, the presence of attached elements such as schools and mosques amplified its role as a diverse complex for cultural and social happenings. Bazaar was the main stage for social interactions and meeting points of different sections of society.



Ghahve-khaneh (tea house)

In Qajar's period, the Ghahve-khane became a popular space for men to gather, drink tea, smoke Shisha, and generally socialize. The tea house played a significant role in the social life of the men of this period. It was one of the few places that men could gather for non-religious practices. Some traditional heroic storytelling and poem reading would also happen in Ghahve-khane.



[Tehran's Emergence as the Capital]

March 20, 1786, is a date that changed the destiny of Tehran and started a new era in the development of both Tehran and Iran.¹³ It was then that the first king of the Qajar dynasty, Agha-Mohammad-Khan-E-Qajar, chose Tehran, still a village, as the capital of the Persian Empire. At that time, Tehran was considered a relatively poor city with a traditional Iranian-Islamic architecture and layout. Houses were built with adobe, and winding, narrow alleyways could only accommodate horses and mules as means of transportation.

The enclosed city at this time could be divided into four main components: the governmental complex (the Arg), the economic centre (the bazaar at the heart of the city), religious elements (two mosques along the main axis), and residential areas (four neighbourhoods).¹⁴ The population was slightly over fifteen thousand, which consisted primarily of courtiers and soldiers. The remainder of the population was mainly made up of merchants and artisans, as contrasted to other villages and cities, where the main focus was agriculture.¹⁵ Therefore, the bazaar was truly the most important feature of the city, after the Arg.

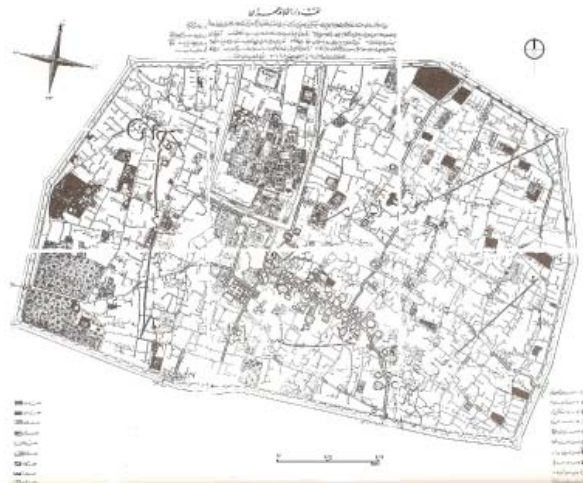
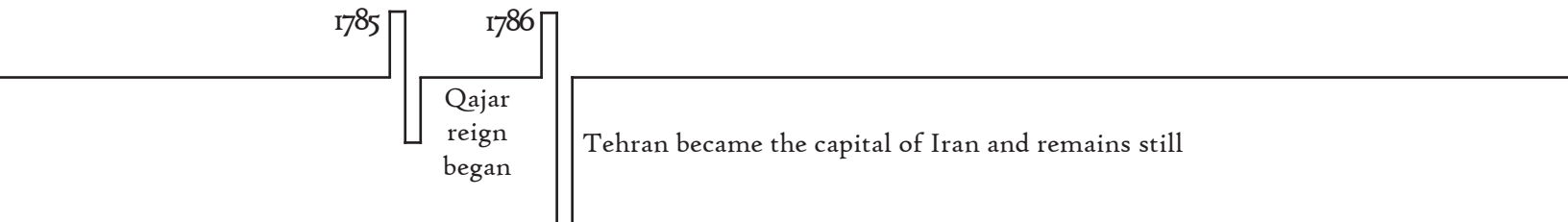


Fig 2-7. Tehran's Map in Early Qajar



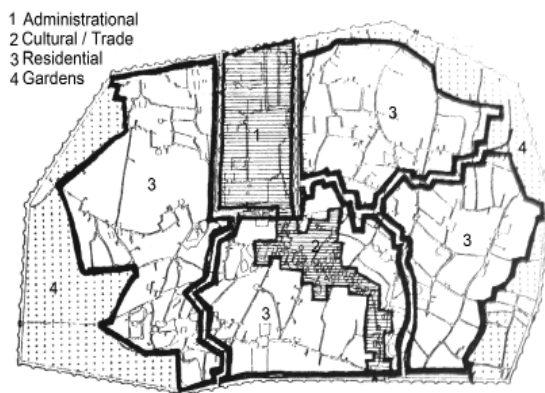


Fig 2-8. City's Structure in Early Qajar

The walled city had four main sections, each with a very specific functionality.

The Qajars came to power around the time of French Revolution, and while Europe was experiencing massive social and intellectual upheavals, Iran had a feudal economy with medieval social stratification, and intellectual debates and social movements were not a concern for any except the few in the scholastic class.¹⁶

Although Tehran's transformation into a capital was a major step towards its reform and improvement, the rate of development was very slow in the first sixty years of Qajar reign. At the beginning of their monarchy, the Qajars were still very dependent on their tribe, and spent significant time away from the city. Slowly, the city gained more attention, mostly from traders involved in the bazaar. Due to an increase in population, the necessity for more than one public square emerged. The city's urban spine, which was linear at that time, began to branch out to new, scattered centres along the main axis. Some public elements, such as squares and mosques, were created, and were connected to the main axis by way of secondary roads. The same phenomenon can be seen in the structure of the bazaar. New rows of stalls were added to the main row and merged with the surroundings.¹⁷ Although open spaces were included in the newly built elements of the city, the overall pattern remained introverted.

[Naser-Al-Din Shah
Main Qajar's improvements]

During the rule of the first three Qajar kings, the city frequently expanded upon its initial development. However, in the fifty-year rule of Naser-Al-Din Shah, major changes in the structure of the city occurred, which began an important phase in city's development and growth. These changes were the deconstruction of old walls and the construction of a new, larger battlement. Due to Tehran's rapid growth, extensive construction, and the popularization of the urban lifestyle, the area within the city limits began to fill up. Some royal palaces, gardens, and embassies and foreigner's houses were built outside the city's limits. Fortifications from the Safavid era were demolished and a new one, consisting of twelve gates to the outside and surrounded by a moat, was built.¹⁸



Fig 2-9. Tehran's Plan as *Dar-Ol-Khalafeh-Naseri*

The city grew extensively, and the interior area of the city reached twenty square kilometers. The new city wall, which had an octagon shape and was called *Dar-Ol-Khalafe- Naseri*, was modelled after that of Paris.¹⁹

Naser-Al-Din Shah became king of Iran

1848

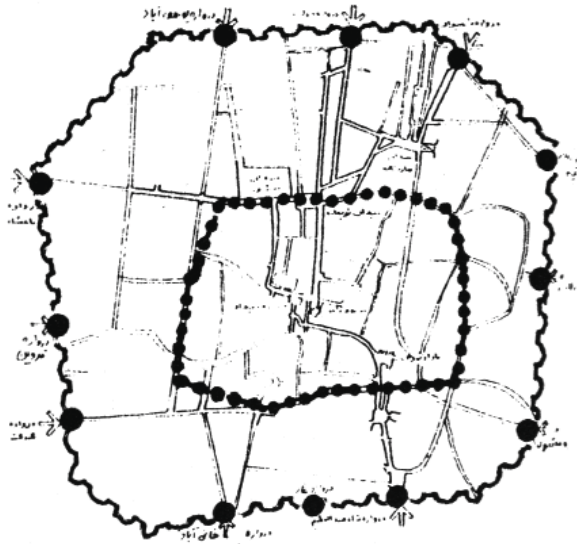


Fig 2-10. Diagram of the City with Fortification, in Comparison to Early Qajar's Enclosed City

From 1848 to 1921, the city had an area of nineteen square kilometres, almost four times larger than the older structure.

The ruling king, Naser-al-din shah, made frequent visits to Europe and had a very good relationship with France. He was strongly influenced by European capitals and, as a result, he supported initiatives for the development of Tehran with the help of French planners. The city changed its face due to the Shah's influence and lost its more traditional appearance. As Tehran was exposed to Western concepts of urbanism, major social and urban transformations began.²⁰ By the end of Qajar's power, Tehran had a population of 150,000.²¹

At the beginning of this era, the city's structure was still linear, with only one main city centre. Over time, new centres, connected to the original urban spine, began to form. These centres were connected via newly built roads, creating a multi-“centred” city.

1849

Construction of Dar-Ol-Fonoon school began and was completed in two years

The dense, interwoven structure of the city also changed. The ratio of empty spaces to occupied spaces increased. New complexes were not accessed through a series of narrow alleyways, as before; instead, these complexes were built around large, open spaces. These squares were similar to the patterns of the piazzas of Rome, but were not much in use as a public space. From the mid-nineteenth century, Tehran slowly lost its traditional characteristics and became exposed to Western culture.²² Nevertheless, most buildings were still introverted, with a central courtyard.²³

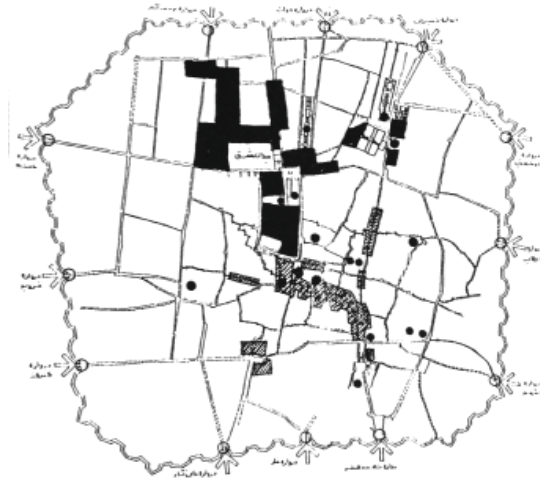


Fig 2-11. Main Public Spaces of the Naseri Period

A major development that transformed the structure of the city happened in the street systems through the introduction of motor vehicles. The dense, compact structure of narrow alleys, which were organic and disorganized, were reconstructed and replaced with wide, straight streets. As well, a few streets were built on a north-to-south line, parallel to each other. These changes typically occurred in the northern parts of the city, while the southern part, which contained the bazaar, remained virtually untouched.

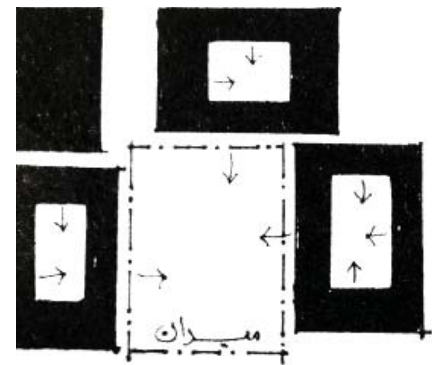


Fig 2-12. New Emerging Squares

The emergence of large, open squares changed the confined, interwoven structure of the city.

1890

Tobacco Riots; the king was forced to withdraw trade allowances granted to Britain after mass protests



Fig 2-13. Emergence of Shops with Windows Facing Streets

One of the major changes in this period was the emergence of European-style boutiques in the streets of Tehran. Unlike the bazaar, these shops had glass windows opening directly to the street,²⁴ in stark contrast to the traditional architecture, which focused on introverted, confined, and enclosed buildings. These boutiques increased the presence of people on the streets, as well as their involvement in the city's public life. Moreover, in northern streets and around the newly built squares, new institutions began to rise. Banks, hotels, hospitals, telegraph houses, and, perhaps most important of all, the Dar-ol-Fonoon school, based on the model of Western universities, were built. The new structured and modern neighbourhoods in the north of the old town boundary attracted new aristocrats, European residents, and foreign embassies.

The Constitutional Revolution, and the gatherings and protests that were held, all happened in the newly built squares and open spaces of the city. For the first time in the history of Tehran, public spaces were occupied for opposition and social encounters.²⁵ These events and gatherings, which led to the establishment of a parliament, were the starting point of revealing the connection between social movements and public space in the traditional society of Tehran the in early twentieth century.²⁶

This was the beginning of the polarization of social classes, which has formed the most important feature of the city ever since. Changes in street structure and the emergence of open public squares and new, modern buildings, followed by the increased influence of a European lifestyle and culture, caused a shift in the confined, traditional lifestyle. The city was on the verge of entering a completely new era, in contrast to its isolated existence.

1907

Constitutional Revolution

The Constitutional Revolution of Iran, which was the first of its kind in the region, was the beginning of the modern era in Iran, when the absolute monarchy of the Shahs turned into a constitutional monarchy. The period from the Constitutional Revolution to the end of World War I served as a transition period from the old, traditional, medieval times into the period of modernization. New groups of liberal and educated classes emerged as a bridge between working and religious classes and authorities.

1914-1918

World War I

Although Iran declared neutrality, it was a scene of heavy fighting during World War I. Between the start of the war and the end of the Qajar Dynasty, a profound change in popular culture occurred.

From the 1920s to the 1940s, as a result of immense financial gains from international trade and the oil industry, political and economic changes took place in the capital. Tehran became an industrial-administrative centre. A new bureaucratic middle class emerged and injected their wealth and capital into the city's economy. As a result of this newborn social class and their need for leisure, new activities, and new spaces, the old structure of the city began to vanish, and the city began to adopt a new, more modern identity. As a result of rapid growth, from 1930 onward, organized plans were made to extend the city beyond the pre-existing, confining city walls. The demolition of the city's medieval walls began in 1932 and was completed in five years. Growth and development in the city completely changed at this point. Renovation was prioritized in governmental planning.²⁷



Fig 2-14. City's Map after the Destruction of Walls

By 1921, the area of the city reached twenty-four square kilometres.

Coup d'état, resulting in a change of power from the Qajars to Pahlavi's monarchy.

1921

When the coup happened, control was handed over to the military. The chief aim was to keep society away from any democratic and social groups. Military-based mayors were selected, resulting in massive development of the city without any plan, while organized schemes became visible in the Pahlavi monarchy.

1923

Reign of Pahlavi dynasty Began

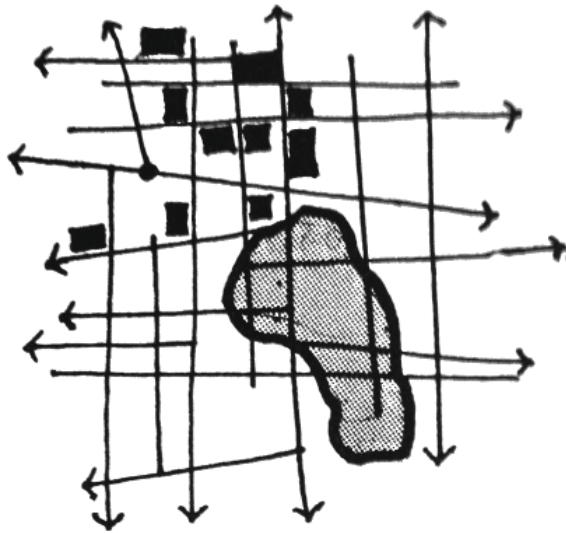


Fig 2-15. Emerging Network of New Straight Streets

The most prominent feature of city growth in this era was the introduction of wide streets and boulevards, modelled after European cities, which cut through the dense, traditional structures and connected the city with an organized, geometric pattern. These streets made transportation much easier. At important intersections, wide squares were designed for open public spaces and easier car movement. Such squares and streets cover 9 percent of the entire city.²⁸ Squares were introduced at the junction of the main streets, and this took away from the centralized nature of the city, which had had only one main square at the time of *Dar-ol-Khalafeh*.

The appearance of the new middle class and the subsequent financial gains resulted in a massive increase in the number of motor vehicles in the city. As a result, roads and paths had to be extended and adapted. One of the important improvements in Reza Shah's modernization plan was his strategy of an "open matrix where goods and services could flow easily."²⁹ He also envisioned a network that would accommodate all means of modern transportation.

April 1926

Reza Khan was crowned the first king of the Pahlavi dynasty. He was determined to modernize the country and develop a national public education system.

1930

A law was passed to limit the height of residential buildings. Additionally, shops were required to have open glass windows facing the streets, in contrast to the closed, introverted style of traditional Iran. These new requirements applied to the bazaar and other local stores.

1932

Iran dedicated the national budget to building new ministries in Tehran, and the city became the true political and administrative capital of the country. From 1932 to 1937 the city's walls were demolished; Tehran was no longer a walled city.

The linear structure of the city, with its branches to a few scattered nodes, changed entirely into an open matrix with several nodes. The perpendicular pattern of streets introduced new, scattered centres. The structure of built spaces changed from an introverted to an extroverted style, influenced by European architecture. The unorganized mesh structure of the city changed into a planned, chess-like pattern of streets and buildings. The external facade of buildings became important, and new buildings were constructed directly by the main roads and streets of the city. Streets become important elements, whose role was to form new neighbourhoods with new, programmatic functions. By the end of Reza Shah's period, the area of the city grew two and a half times, reaching forty-six square kilometres.

Fundamental improvements to the city in this period included the construction of the railway, water pipeline system, and wide streets, copied from nineteenth-century European cities, and the installation of telephone and telegraph lines. Landscaping in general and factors such as decorative elements and the importance of aesthetics in building elevations changed the face of Tehran very quickly.³⁰

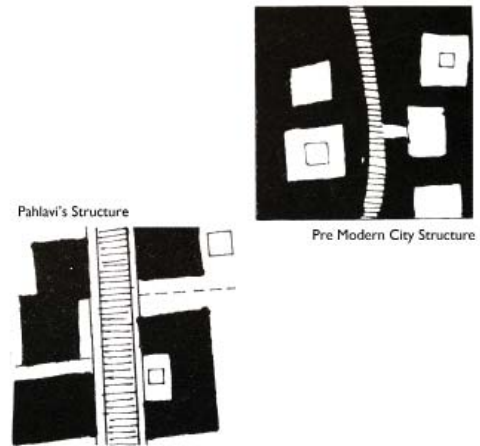


Fig 2-16. Comparison of City's Structure

One of the major changes in the structure of the city during the Pahlavi period was the appearance of openings in buildings along the main axis, in contrast to the introverted structure of the Qajar period.

1934

Tehran University is established. It brought a new educational system in complete opposition to the clerical educational system. Whereas Tehran University was completely under the control of Shah's regime and secular and foreign instructors, the religious schools were completely under the control of clerics

1935

André Godard designs the National Museum of Iran In Tehran. It was the first building to be solely dedicated as a museum in Tehran

The same year women win the right to be admitted to Tehran University

During Reza Shah's reign, when Iran benefited from the oil boom, a new middle class emerged. There was also a significant increase in international relations. Many students were sent abroad to be educated, assisted by government grants, and many foreign teachers were hired to bring Western culture to Tehran. The new educated class, along with the booming middle class — and also the growing foreign population of the capital — were now familiar with and eager to experience the Western way of life, and demanded new cultural, educational, and recreational public spaces.

The importation of Western concepts of governmental and cultural buildings and public spaces, which were not present in traditional Iran, started in Tehran. Cinemas and theatres were introduced and became highly popular during Reza Shah's period. Some streets were built with the singular purpose of leisure — shopping and walking. Along these newly constructed streets, Western-style public spaces and buildings emerged, including cinemas, universities, public libraries, cafés, social clubs, boutiques, shopping passages (similar to Paris's arcades, in contrast to the old bazaar), luxury restaurants with Western cuisine, and many hotels. Buildings such as ministries, banks, airports, and embassies were also introduced to the city. The newly built neighbourhoods had nothing in common with traditional Tehran. Although many citizens supported these changes, those with stronger ties to tradition and religion did not. The modernization plan also affected how people appeared in public spaces. People were highly encouraged to switch to Western-style clothing and fashion, as opposed to the traditional Iranian clothes. Reza Shah also initiated a project that prevented women from wearing their traditional veils in public. This shift towards a Westernized appearance generated criticism from non-supporters. The society was slowly being divided into two very different camps.³¹

27 Jan 1936

This date marks a significant point in history in the tradition of compulsory unveiling. Veiling of women in public is banned by the Shah, which played a significant role in the desegregation of women. Supporters of this law agreed that the veil held women back from physical exercise and the ability to be involved in society. This day marked an increased focus on the rights of women and developed the appearance and involvement of women in Iranian society.

August 1938

1939

The national railway system was opened from Tehran's station

The construction of Pahlavi (today Vali-Asr) Street began. It became the most important and longest street in Tehran.

[Second Pahlavi reign – End of king’s monarchy]

In 1941, the second and last king of the Pahlavi dynasty took power. During World War II, Reza Shah was forced to step down by the British and was exiled because of his relationship with Germany. Power was transferred to his son, Mohammad-Reza Shah. During the first years of his rule, the city grew and changed vastly. However, it was not comparable to what happened after the war ended. Although Iran officially remained neutral in the war, there were significant effects. Extreme famine and food shortages occurred throughout the country, especially in small villages. As a result, many villagers flocked to bigger cities, particularly Tehran. It was the beginning of massive growth for the city. The population of Tehran doubled in only a decade, passing one million,³² and its size reached fifty square kilometres around 1956. However, the aftermath of the war continued drastically for many years. By the end of Pahlavi’s reign in 1979, Tehran exceeded 515 square kilometres in size, ten times greater than it was at the beginning of Mohammad-Reza Shah’s reign. Mass migration to Tehran and extensive non-planned residential construction were major characteristics of this period.

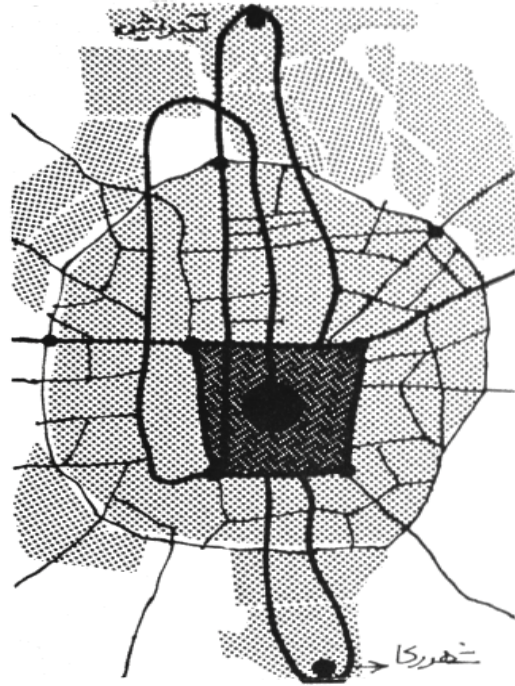


Fig 2-17. City’s Expansion in Second Pahlavi Period

1940

1941

The first public radio, Radio Tehran started to work with an 8 hour program schedule per week.

This year marked the second Pahlavi monarchy. 22 year old Mohammad-Reza Shah became king after his father was exiled to South Africa.

Following World War II, when the influx of migrants intensified, the middle and upper classes moved more and more towards the northern neighbourhoods of Tehran. The vast number of immigrants from villages and the working class, who flocked to the city looking for jobs, resulted in the construction of many low-quality houses in the southern neighbourhoods of Tehran. These neighbourhoods were located close to factories and workshops on the outskirts of the city. Some industrial offshoots became surrounded by houses and slowly formed new neighbourhoods, which ultimately became connected to Tehran. On the other hand, the orchards and gardens in the northern part of the city, which had been the main characteristic of that area, were given over to housing for the upper class. Low-quality suburbs and outskirt slums around the city fractured the figure and body of Tehran and intensified its polarization, which had begun during the reign of Reza Shah.

By moving to northern parts of the city, the upper and middle classes separated their work area from their residential area. In two decades, from the 1950s to the 1960s, the slow separation of urban functions began. Offices and businesses concentrated in the central area around old Tehran, while industrial centres extended from the southern parts to the eastern and western ends. The residential concentration took two very different directions. The northern city, modern and clean, was far from the compressed and high-density poorer southern neighbourhoods. The contrast of form and demographics also brought about cultural differences between the two parts of the city. The marginalization of poorer populations and the creation of slums around Tehran tore the contiguous figure of Tehran in every direction.

1951

The nationalization of oil by Prime Minister Mosaddegh

The nationalization of the British-owned oil industry was one of the most vibrant events in Tehran's history. The purpose was to transfer oil wealth from foreign companies to urban and public areas. It brought significant wealth to the citizens and the capital. The foremost result of this new wealth was in people having more free time to spend in the city's spaces, which increased the demand for entertainment and recreational activities. To address these needs, many Western public concepts, such as bars, cabarets, and discotheques, were introduced to the public life of Tehran.

1953

Black coup d'état. The CIA and British intelligence joined forces to overthrow the democratically elected government of Mosaddegh. The coup failed, but the pro-Shah army united after a few days and defeated Mosaddegh. Shah returned to power and Mosaddegh was sent to exile.

Tehran grew from the south to such an extent that it connected to the old city of Rey, which had mostly been deserted. From the north, it reached the Royal Gardens, which had originally been far away from the city and were used by the royal family for summer vacations. Since this growth had already reached the mountain hillside, no further northern development was possible. The city began expanding in a west-east direction. To accommodate the growing population, many residential complexes were built in the western and eastern ends of Tehran. These complexes were strictly residential, with only a few public elements. Although the city grew in all directions, the service and recreational centres remained primarily concentrated in the core of the city.

The White Revolution was a program launched by the late Shah of Iran for social and economic modernization and further secularization. It consisted of a series of reforms in nineteen categories, with “Land Reform and Abolishing Feudalism” and “Urban and Rural Modernization and Reconstruction” being the most relevant to Tehran. The plan was to gain popularity for the Shah among farmers and the working class by eliminating feudalism and giving some shares of property ownership to those who worked on them. This resulted in previously rich landowners moving to the city when they had to sell their lands. One of the other reforms, the “Nationalization of Forests and Pasturelands,” resulted in settling the nomads once again into the cities, especially in Tehran. The unemployment rate rose, the gap between the northern and southern neighbourhoods became larger, and social polarization widened.

1958

SAVAK, the secret police, is established. US and Israeli intelligence officers helped the Shah to set up Iran’s intelligence organization to act against political activists. SAVAK was the first such organization in Iran. Until it was annihilated right after the Islamic Revolution, it was believed to be responsible for violent suppression and the torture and execution of political prisoners

1963

The
White
Revolution

1963

The Ayatollah Khomeini, a popular nationalist cleric, started to challenge and criticize the Shah, which resulted in his exile to Iraq

The second half of the Pahlavi dynasty was marked by social and political upheavals. The nationalization of oil in 1950 enriched the country, and Tehran became an oil capital. This event attracted many well-to-do families from other cities, who moved to reap the benefits of the booming capital. Mohammad-Reza Shah followed in his father's footsteps in westernizing Tehran, and with the wealth that oil brought to the country, this was easily achieved. Various activities in the city were introduced, which in turn fuelled another wave of immigration to Tehran. The introduction of new entities such as parks, sport complexes, and European-style shopping centres made Tehran a very tempting city in which to live. Recreational and entertainment centres such as sport clubs, bars, cafés, cabarets, and discotheques, which were in deep contrast to the few traditional, limited public spaces in the pre-modern era (such as the bazaar and tea houses), extensively attracted the young population.

With an increase in administrative and official jobs, the presence of women in Tehrani society became very different from all other cities in Iran. The increase in leisure, public spaces, activities, and women's movements were also important in changing the participation of women in city life. While in most villages and smaller towns in the country, the presence of women in public spaces was still taboo, in Tehran, their presence and daily involvement in city was becoming more and more visible.

The nationalization of the British-owned oil industry was one of the most vibrant events in Tehran's history. The purpose was to bring the oil wealth from foreign companies to urban and public areas. It brought significant wealth to the citizens and capital and had a direct effect on the city's spaces and architecture. The foremost result of this was that it allowed individuals to be financially able to acquire motor vehicles, and this led to a change in the city's structure to accommodate them. This further resulted in wealthier people having more free time to spend in the city's spaces and increased the demand for entertainment and recreational activities. To address these needs, many Western-style public concepts, such as bars, cabarets, and discotheques, were introduced to the public life of Tehran.

1967

The building of City Theatre, the largest performance centre in Tehran, was begun. Construction was completed in five years.

1968

TCP – Tehran Comprehensive Plan

The first urbanization plan for Tehran was approved in parliament in 1968. It was a 25 year project and was developed through the cooperation of Iranian and American urban designers. However, due to the Revolution and the ensuing war, this plan was never accomplished and it was set aside.

[The Islamic Revolution
Forward]

The Islamic Revolution, the last classic revolution of the twentieth century, was led by clerics with strong support from the masses (at the beginning, before it was taken over by hardliners), who were unsatisfied with the dictatorship and imperialist policies of the late Shah. Social polarization, the Shah's dictatorship and his autocracy, his objective to gain independence from foreign interference in government, the huge gap between Islamic traditions and practices, and the westernization of the country were the main reasons for demanding change. Many groups and parties with different ideologies opposed the Shah, but none except Khomeini was successful in uniting the people. Although there had been hope for change towards a civil and democratic society, the leader of the Revolution demanded a non-secular and theocratic Islamic republic, which was supported by a referendum. Before the revolution, Khomeini was supportive of different political parties, which led to his popularity. However, after becoming the leader of the established Islamic Republic of Iran, the shift toward theocracy began and that was when the revolution was hijacked. The Revolution eliminated the interference of foreign governments in the politics, society, and economy of Iran. Consequently, the country slowly became isolated from international movements and Western values.

Today, more than 15 percent of Iran's total population lives in Tehran, and more than 40 percent of the national economic activities take place there. The city has expanded 250 kilometres in an east-west direction and 50 kilometres from north to south. It is the most population-dense city in Iran, with more than 13 million people occupying a metro area of 1,274 square kilometres.³³

This year is marked by a series of protests, riots, and mass demonstrations started by urban guerrilla movements and clerics against the Shah's authoritarian rule and alienation from the clergy. In response, the Shah enforced martial law.

1971

The Azadi Tower at Azadi Square was completed. It became the symbol of Tehran and the main gathering place for demonstrations and protests.

1978

September 8, 1978

Black Friday was the day on which the Shah's army opened fire on protesters in Tehran's Jaleh Square, killing and wounding many. The reactions to this event were a turning point for the coming revolution.

October 1978

Cleric Khomeini flew to France and directed the Revolution from there. Demonstrations in Tehran became increasingly violent.

“ Eleven years after the Tehran Comprehensive Plan, in 1979, the Islamic Revolution shook the city. Two measures were of prime importance in forming the face of the city in the years to come. One was an oral decree by Khomeini that all Tehranis had the right to possess a house. This ignored the city limits set by the TCP and, overnight, small houses were built on the outskirts of the city. The second was the government’s decree, in 1989, after the war with Iraq that different sectors of the government had to become economically self-sufficient. This encouraged the municipality to allow, and then fine, illegal buildings. Fines thus became permits and buildings were constructed in ways that were not permitted by law. Pollution, traffic congestion and accidents thus became facts of daily life.”³⁴

Due to huge social shifts and rapid changes in authority in the last few years of the Pahlavi dynasty, the city’s development has been disregarded. The Eight Years’ of war with Iraq began less than a year after the Revolution, as the new government was settling in. As a result, most of the attention and energy of the country was directed towards the war, survival, and away from urban developments. At the same time, migration to Tehran from those cities affected by the war intensified, and not much consideration was given to accommodating this huge influx of people. In a few years, many scattered neighbourhoods sprang up, and many small villages around Tehran were swallowed into the city. After the war, low-quality corporate apartments multiplied throughout the city without any proper urban planning. At present, little is left of Tehran’s old quarters. Instead, modern high-rise buildings dominate the city’s skyline, and new multi-story apartments are replacing the few remaining old houses at a rapid pace. Traditional architecture style of residential buildings has almost vanished completely.

February 1, 1979

January 16, 1979
Shah flees Iran. He and his family are forced into exile.

February 11, 1979
The royal regime collapsed
Khomeini returned to Iran from France. He was greeted by several million people in a huge demonstration in Tehran.

April 1, 1979
By a national referendum (not giving people any other choice) and under Khomeini’s guidance, Iran declared itself a theocratic republic by Islamic guidance, and the name of the country changed to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Khomeini became the Supreme Leader of the country.

After the Revolution, the right of land ownership was granted to the common public. This was made possible by oral declarations that whoever nourishes a land will be the owner. This led to massive building and construction in all directions, and with no limits. Residential buildings mushroomed everywhere, even in tiny, empty spots, with no intended or designed plan. Individuals, builders, and contractors rushed to the city after the war to cash in on such opportunities.

Other very dominant aspects in the image of the city after the Revolution and the war were the formation of housing cooperatives and the creation of low-quality residential complexes (satellite periphery approach) around and at the edges of Tehran. Most of these complexes belonged to governmental institutions trying to accommodate their employees in the same area for control and safety reasons.

During the period of 1980–1988, the Iran-Iraq War, Tehran was the scene of repeated Scud missile attacks and air strikes against random residential and industrial targets within the city, resulting in thousands of civilian casualties. Material damage was repaired soon after each strike. Tehran attracted war refugees by the millions.

After the Revolution, the clerics and supporters of hardline religious theocracy became empowered. The focus was to eliminate all Western and non-Islamic concepts and places. All the bars and social clubs were shut down. Music and cinema were also on the blacklist for several years, and only religious and revolutionary anthems could be heard. Compulsory veiling was enforced, and sex segregation of public spaces began again. The entertainment and leisure streets, which used to create a lively and vibrant downtown, became vacant and desolated. What used to be the centre of entertainment and social gathering now existed only in memory.

September 1980

Saddam Hussein invades Iran and begins the 8 year Iran-Iraq war

August 1988

Iran accepts a UN peace treaty which leads to a cease-fire and ends the Iran-Iraq war.

1989

Khomeini dies in June. Ayatollah- khamenei was chosen by an assembly of experts as the national religious leader. Hashemi becomes the president and wins the re-election in 1993, for 8 year presidency.

One of the major steps that the city council took towards the creation of acceptable public spaces was the project of *Farhangsara* (cultural houses), which at present are widespread throughout all neighbourhoods of Tehran. These cultural houses were created to provide youth with an acceptable space to spend time outside the home and in society. There are numerous programs and classes operated out of these cultural houses, with a focus on Islamic practices and some arts-and-crafts classes.

In recent years in Tehran and some of the other major cities in Iran, a shift towards more underground and culturally subversive activities has taken place, since legal public spaces are subject to very firm and hardline Islamic codes. Some Western-style and urban social activities and spaces that entered the popular culture could not be erased from society by the forced closure of such places. Socializing, music, movies, performances, and public interaction between opposite genders in general is increasingly occurring in private spaces.

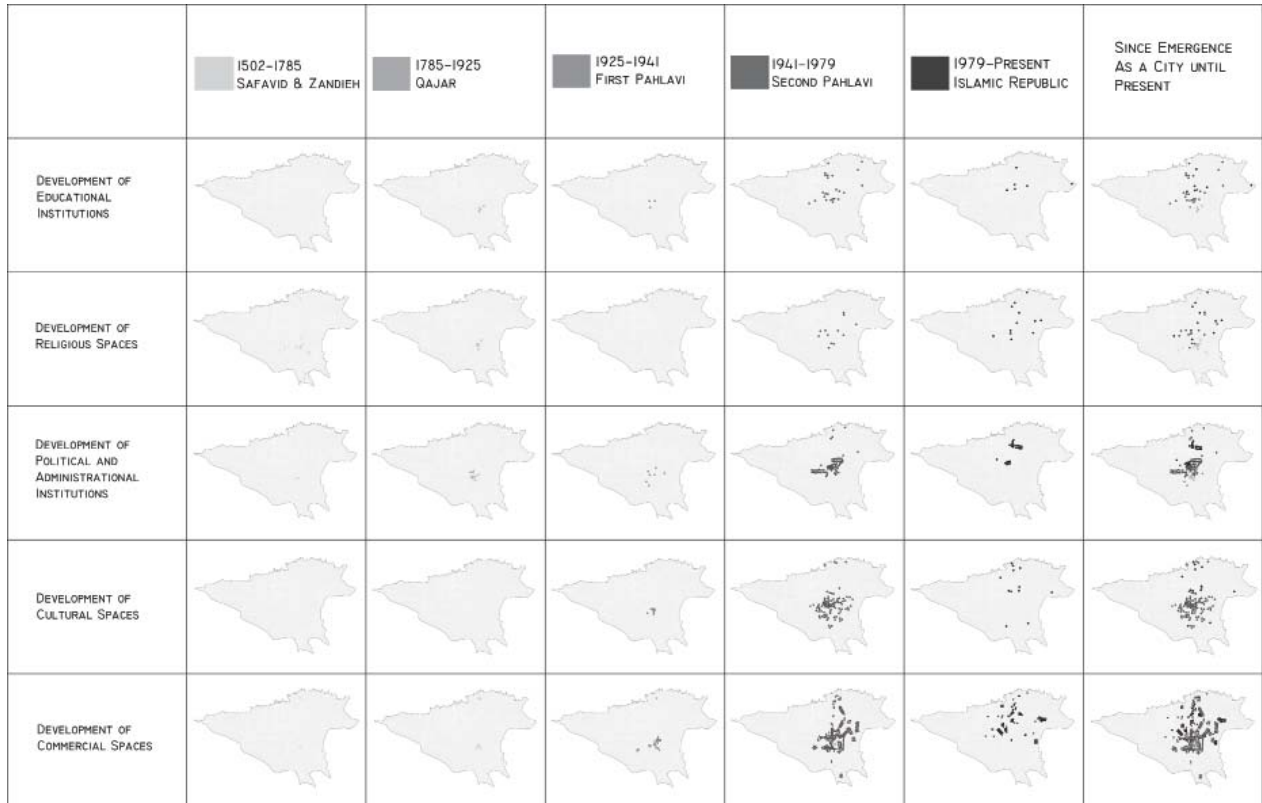
All public spaces are now monitored by the morality police, who have the power to arrest anyone who is not following the Islamic codes. All the places that provided a setting for acts that went against the moral code were shut down. For young people today, the issue is to find private spaces where they can gather freely without fear of arrest. There is no possibility of free and democratic public space among the younger generations who live in the city. Especially for young women, appearance in public is a serious risk that most would rather not take, instead spending time in private gatherings and underground events.

July, 1999

Students at Tehran University demonstrated against the closure of the reformist newspaper Salam. This was the first massive protest of the government's policies after the Revolution. Clashes with governmental security forces led to six days of rioting. More than a thousand students were arrested.

June 12, 2009

After Ahmadinejad was declared to be the winner of the presidential election, supporters of the Reformist candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi went to the streets to protest. The rival candidates challenged the result, alleging vote-rigging. It was widely believed that the election had been majorly manipulated. The next day, the largest protest since the 1979 Revolution shook the streets of Tehran. Protests continued for a few more days, at least thirty people were killed and more than a thousand arrested in the waves of protests that followed.



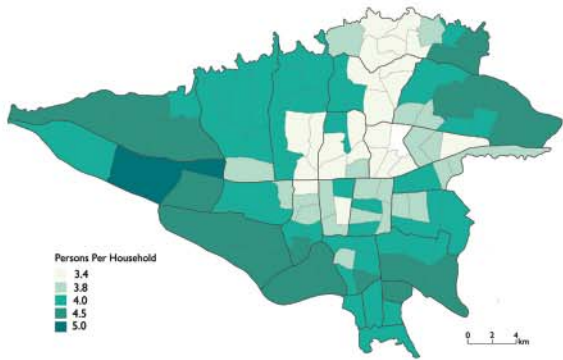
[Social Polarization]

From a small, 4.4-square-kilometre city in 1785, Tehran has grown into a metropolis of 686 square kilometres. Although Tehran became the capital more than 220 years ago, for almost 140 years, not much was done to develop the city, and the society was still in a traditional-medieval era. By observing the development of the city's spaces and institutions over time, it is apparent that the city's main developments started from the 1920s, in Pahlavi's reign. For about sixty years, Tehran was targeted to become the administrative and industrial hub of the country. Enriched with oil money, Pahlavi's kings imported many elements of Western culture and public spaces into Tehran. Yet most developments took place around the city's centre and towards the northern neighbourhoods. The unbalanced development of the city and its institutional and public spaces has intensified the south-north social disparity and a cultural gap.

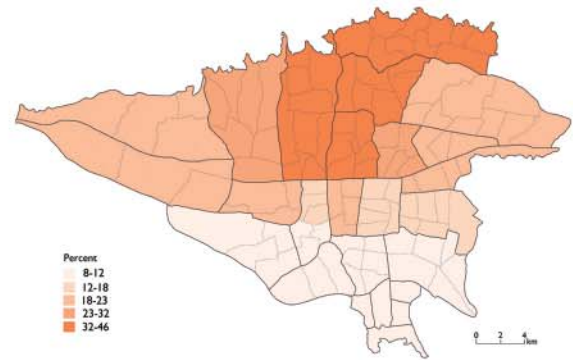
Many believe that the main spark for the 1979 Revolution was the growing gap between social classes — poor and rich — and the need to reduce the polarization to an acceptable degree.³⁵ Pahlavi's modernization plans and the oil boom enriched many who worked in international relations and the oil industry. Many of those individuals chose to reside in Tehran. Those who immigrated to Tehran in search of improved standards of living encountered a deep inequality in income levels and resources. Today, more than thirty years after the Revolution, the gap has not vanished; in fact, it has become increasingly more dominant.³⁶

Fig 2-18. Evolution of City's Public and Governmental Institutions

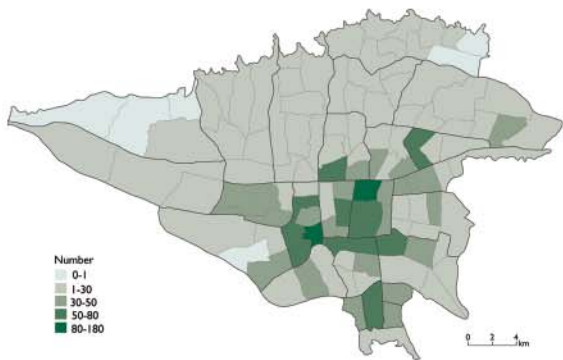
These maps confirm the unbalanced distribution of facilities and public spaces throughout the city.



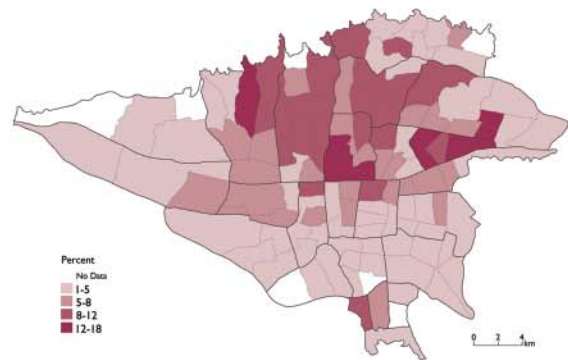
Average size of Household
Person Per Household



Population with Higher Education
Percent



Distribution of Mosques and Religious facilities
Number



Concentration of Schools and Nurseries
Percent

Tehran became a polarized city in regards to both social classes and the aggregation of functionalities throughout the city. This polarization manifests itself in education, quality of life, social interactions, and public and everyday life. In social aspects, there is a relatively larger degree of freedom in the northern parts. There is more pull in the northern, more educated, and secular classes towards the West. As a result, the young in these classes have more liberal relationships with their cohorts. There is also a better social life and more public interactions in the north, which results in the improvement of collective knowledge and social understanding.

Although modernization plans turned the old village of Tehran into a modern city, retrograde theocratic authorities diminished and suppressed most means of westernization in the early years after the Revolution. In the next chapter, the current aspects of the official public spaces of the city, and also the creation of unique types of alternative space, will be discussed. And, as will be documented in the Manual chapter, we will see that the polarization and inequality has affected the spread of subversive behaviour in the city; subversive and alternatives types of activities and spaces are seen primarily in the northern section, and are an aspect of the middle and upper-middle classes.

Fig 2-19. Social Polarization in Tehran

These maps clearly show the unbalanced, polarized society of Tehran.

THE CITY MONTAGE



Throughout its tumultuous existence as Iran's capital, Tehran has been subject to massive transformations and social changes. Events such as wars, revolutions, changes in dynasties, shifts in government, and rapid growth and modernization have all contributed to the transformation of this large, highly populated, chaotic metropolis. Changes in governments and their policies, besides affecting the social lives and everyday activities of citizens, have also caused many shifts in public spaces and the public life of Tehranis. Official public spaces of the city transformed from traditional-Islamic spaces in the Qajar period to modern, Western-style spaces in the Pahlavi period. During the eight-year war with Iraq, city public spaces turned into sacred spaces for mourning, public funerals, and solidarity against the common enemy.

As was explored earlier, Iran has been constantly ruled under dictatorship (through different dynasties and governments). Therefore, the concept of public space as a space for practicing democracy, social life, and everyday activities has been mostly suppressed and seldom formed a part of social culture and life. In recent years, public spaces of Tehran, rather than being open and democratic spaces for social interaction and the practice of everyday life activities, have turned into spaces of control, surveillance, and domination by hardliners. Consequently, the modern history of Tehran has been filled with examples of the resistance and struggle of its citizens against the authorities. This struggle and resistance is also visible in the spaces of the city. This thesis has categorized the public spaces of Tehran into official and subversive spaces. This chapter explores these two inseparable and interwoven types of public spaces and their coexistence in the city. It also documents the characteristics and qualities imposed on society that are crucial in the formation of public spaces of Tehran as they are today.

Fig 3-1. Tehran's Density

Massive constructions in Tehran in illegally obtained lands took away most of the city's famous gardens and green spaces.

In a society where government is a reflection of the people, the city (and its public spaces) would also be a reflection of the government and their constituents. However, in a place where the government and the people are two opposing fronts, definitions of freedom — of thoughts and actions — are vague. Official public spaces of Tehran, in the last few decades, have been spaces only for hard-line authority's expression and domination, and not for citizens. In the early years after the Revolution, many public spaces faced stagnation and suspension, and all types of westernization were terminated.² Control, limitation, and surveillance have been the main priority for authorities, and the ideological morality that has been applied to official public spaces has its root in hard-line principles. The 1979 Revolution of Iran has indeed realized its full potential and produced its own spaces.³

Official public spaces of Tehran are not truly public; they are not open and accessible to all, they do not provide a ground for democratic assemblies and encounters, they are not produced by the actions and everyday lives of their users, they do not allow social interaction and public activities for all the members of Tehran's society, and, above all, they do not provide a ground for exercising the rights to the city.

“Domination is realized through arrangements of space. Space is fundamental in any exercise of power”

Shahram Kkhosravi¹

“No, no, not that bomb. This bomb is hiding in plain sight -- in high schools, universities and coffee houses. It is a bomb that is ticking away under Iranian society, and over the next decade it will explode in ways that will change the face of this Islamic Republic. It’s called here, for short, “The Third Generation”

Thomas Friedman⁴

The term “Third Generation,” which was more or less used in public debates and was popularized after Thomas Friedman’s article “Iran’s Third Wave”, appeared in the New York Times in 2002. It refers to the generation born after the Revolution, and represents the largest age demographic in Iran. After the Revolution and during the war, abortion was banned, and families were encouraged to have more children, receiving coupons and subsidy goods for each head in the family. The population of country has increased from 33 million in 1976 to more than 74 million in 2010.⁵ Although the rate of population growth has slowed, according to the 2006 national census, 68 percent of the country’s population is below thirty-four years of age,⁶ born after the 1979 Revolution. This generation represents what the clergy hoped would be “children of revolution” or, as Khomeini called them, “an army of twenty million.”⁷

According to Khosravi, the “First Generation” refers to those who were in their twenties or older during the Revolution, who made the Revolution happen. They had experienced a westernized and more secular urban life under the rule of Shah in a relatively expansive economy, which resulted from the oil boom. The “Second Generation” is composed of those who were in their teen years at the time of the Revolution, who have vague memories of the pre-revolution period. Their youth was spent in eight years of war with Iraq.⁸

The Third Generation, however, has no memory of the Revolution, but experienced the war with Iraq (1980–1988) at a very young age, and has experienced all the changes that resulted from the Revolution firsthand.⁹ They have grown up under the rule of the Islamic regime, and extensive restrictions have been enforced upon them — restrictions in education, access to information, and national TV programs. This generation has experienced brutal social repression. Most of their behaviours and everyday activities have been criminalized by the authorities, and they have been under intense control and media censorship. However, with globalization and the widespread use of the Internet, this information-age generation has been exposed to the outside world nonetheless.

Since many activities and even the most basic everyday rights of citizens of Tehran (in particular the Third Generation) are faced with suppression and restriction in official public spaces, people have created their own spaces: alternative and subversive spaces. This young generation has grown up under oppressive laws controlling every aspect of their everyday activities. Control over official spaces of the city has created the tendency in youth to produce their own types of spaces for exercising their rights without control from above.¹⁰ They have become experts in finding ways to subvert and push back against the rules and limits.

The public life of the city, for the younger generation, does not happen in the official spaces of the city. By producing alternative forms of space, the public life of this generation happens in movement and defiance. The alternative public life of Tehran is composed of spontaneous “tactics” to struggle against and challenge the hegemonic social orders, and the defiance of the Third Generation is visible in the ways they have produced their own spaces. These alternative spaces

[Subversive Alternative]

for subversion emanate from very ordinary spaces, such as basements, living rooms, rooftops, and streets, which are transformed into subversive spaces to provide a ground for the rights that have not been granted in official public spaces.

Today in Tehran, life happens in parallel and simultaneously in both official and subversive spaces of the city. Yet the quality of public events differs greatly, depending on where they happen. The official and subversive spaces of Tehran coexist in the city, and could not be studied separately. The following pages demonstrate how current official Tehran and its public spaces do not truly represent public space.

OFFICIAL CITY



[Cultural Crime]

***Strange times, my dear!
And they chop smiles off the lips
And songs off the
mouth
Joy should be hidden in the
closet***

Ahmad shamlou

Ahmad shamlou was an Iranian poet and writer arguably the most influential poet in modern Iran. Considered anti-Islamist and westernized by the clerics of Revolution, his publications were banned for many years.

Fig 3-2. Forbidden in Tehran
Image by author

Many normal, everyday activities are considered cultural crimes in Tehran and are officially forbidden.

Although Iran has always been ruled under dictatorship and its people faced with restriction, it was only after the Revolution that a new type of crime entered the penal code. Under Reza Shah of Pahlavi's modernization plan, Iran reached out to westernization and distanced itself from the morals of Islam. The amenities and spaces of modern Western city life came to Iran. A large budget was allocated to sending students abroad and involving them in the global culture, so that they could bring back their experiences and promote the Western lifestyle. The nightlife of Tehran, social encounters, and involvement in the public life of the city were strongly promoted and eventually became highly popular. The government line was to modernize and westernize Iran.

However, after the Revolution, all forms of popular Western culture were not only banned, but severely prosecuted. In the first years after the Revolution, most places that promoted and engaged citizens in social relations and democratic encounters, such as bars, luxury restaurants, social clubs, music studios, and similar entertainment outlets, were closed or burned down; such businesses and activities were criminalized. In the early years after the Revolution, the radical hardliners declared that the root of all problems and dissatisfactions in society were the result of cultural invasion and westernization, so most things like movies, music, and books that (the hardliners believed) went against Islamic code were banned. There was great censorship on what was publicly allowed. In particular, "all forms of modern culture were banned and the entire industry of popular culture went underground or in exile."¹¹

In an attempt to de-secularize the judicial system, many new penal codes were established. Chapter 18 of the Islamic penal code covers "Offenses against Public Morality" and "Crimes against Chastity and Public Ethics." As a general rule, everything related to Western culture — considered a threat to the Islamic rule by extreme Islamists — is criminalized under this code. Violating the code often

Islamic Penal Code of Iran

Article 637 – Any man and woman who are not married and who commit a crime against public morality, excluding adultery, should be sentenced to flogging (99 lashes). If one of them did not consent to the crime, then only the one who initiated the crime should be punished.

Article 638- Anyone who explicitly violates any religious taboo in public besides being punished for the act should also be imprisoned from ten days to two months, or should be flogged (74 lashes). Note- women who appear in public without a proper hijab should be imprisoned from ten days to two months or pay a fine of 50,000 to 500,000 Rial (\$50 - 500 USD).

Article 639 – The following people should be imprisoned from one to ten years, and in the case of category (a) the property should be confiscated according to decision of the court. a) Anyone who manages a property where activities against public moral take place; b) anyone who encourages people to violate public moral.

Article 640 – The following people should be imprisoned from three months to one year and pay a fine of 1,500,000 to 6,000,000 Rial, and also be flogged up to 74 lashes, or any of these punishments. c) Anyone who publicizes any picture, text, photo, drawing, article, newsletter, newspaper, movie, or any other thing that violates public morals; d) anyone who is included in the circulation of the above items.¹³

What can be considered as cultural crime

- Wearing colourful clothing during the ritual national mourning
- Socializing with unrelated members of the opposite sex
- Holding hands / physical contact with unrelated members of the opposite sex
- Listening to foreign music
- Watching uncensored foreign movies
- Alcohol
- Parties
- Wearing makeup
- Playing loud music in cars
- Having or reading uncensored books
- Having long hair (for men)
- Wearing shorts (for men)
- Eating in public during the month of Ramadan

carries a sentence of corporal punishment or prison. These crimes range widely, from a woman wearing a hijab improperly or speaking to a member of opposite gender in public, to a man wearing short sleeves or colourful shirts, to listening to Western music or watching foreign movies. This code causes legal problems for seculars, and especially for the Third Generation, who cannot see their daily activities as crimes. Therefore, most of what they would normally do on an everyday basis is sent underground and labelled as defiant, rebellious, and resistant.

“Cultural crime appeared in post revolutionary penal law as a new term for breaking Islamic rules. Such crimes are seen as violations of the collective sentiments of Muslim community and result in different kinds of sanction, mostly in form of physical punishments. ... According to Islamic practices, unlike adults, youth are all passion and therefore have an inclination to crime. In the post revolutionary Islamic order the collective cultural experience that youth represent is seen as a central intersection of culture and crime. The anxieties of the theocracy are expressed through “moral panic” which led in practice to the criminalization of a large part of youth culture”

Shahram Khosravi¹²

There is no explicit definition of such cultural crimes. The range of activities and behaviours that are included in the penal code is related to many factors. For example, during the tenure of the reformist president Khatami, many things that had been considered illegal were tolerated. Some scenes that were definitely troublesome to hardliners were then part of a daily scenario that happened around the city with no suppression. This range also varies according to the seasons, or at special times like national and ritual holidays. Basically, whenever and wherever the possibility of more people becoming involved in public activity increases, the rigidity and confrontation increases. On certain occasions, the focus of confrontation changes as well. For instance, during protests, the focus is on suppressing the protesters, and therefore no one is arrested because of an improper hijab or for holding hands.

Although the overall atmosphere became more relaxed after the reformist president Khatami's election in 1997, it changed again, and now new forms of terror, harassment, and violence have been introduced. The latter began after 2005, when Ahmadinejad was elected, and reached its highest apex after 2009's post-election incidents. These illegal behaviours — what are referred to as crimes — does not have the slightest commonality with what is referred to as a crime elsewhere in the world. What are referred to as crimes for this generation would be considered normal, conventional behaviour in most Western countries.



POLICE

وفاقی انتظامیہ
پلیس السیٹ اٹلان

[Moral Control]

“Iran’s repressive system of controlling people’s dress, behaviour, and personal lives violates fundamental rights.”

Joe Stork, Middle East Director at Human Rights Watch ¹⁴

Since the authorities’ intention is to control everyday aspects of people’s lives, public spaces, as spaces that are supposed to be gathering places for socialization and collective experience, have turned into places of control exerted by the government. The authorities have tried to strengthen their dominance over the spaces of the city by every means.

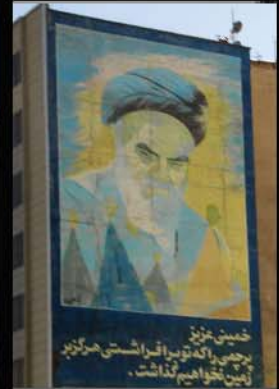
A model of moral police, called comite in Persian, was created. They are usually found in places where people congregate for leisure, such as malls, parks, and streets. These police forces are often not dressed in uniform. There are vans close to main squares, popular malls, food courts, and cinemas to round up people in the crowd whom the comite accuse of cultural crime. Along with the presence of comite, most public space is also under the control of Basij — volunteer moral police forces from hard-line Islamist movements. Such control and policing contributes to the domination of power and lessens the presence of citizens in official public spaces of the city.

“As an effect of Islamic rule, social space has been partly transformed through attempts to strengthen moral control. Public places are turned into arenas for preventive demonstration of punishment and are constantly scanned by agents of the regime for transgressions and cultural crimes”

Shahram Khosravi¹⁵

Fig 3-3. Moral Control in Tehran

Official public spaces of the city are occasionally turned into stages for public punishments, such as hangings or whippings, of those opposed to the government and Islamic rules. These people have been accused of cultural crimes, sentenced, and punished in public to create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation in the general public.



[Power of Image]

“In Khomeini’s Iran the concept of the image functioned as more than just a sign; it was an actual actor on the political stage. Those in power knew the strength of the image to foster belief... The image was a site of special power.” Roxanne Varzi¹⁶

One of the other powerful ways that a dictatorship controls the lives of citizens is by inducing the fear of being under constant watch and control. Other than the massive presence of moral police and Basij volunteer members, what are most dominantly visible in the public spaces of the city are murals of Ayat-Allah Khomeini, the leader of the 1979 Revolution, and Ayat-Allah Ali Khamenei, the current Supreme Leader, in enormous paintings, prints, and posters. Roxanne Varzi (2006), believes that, in the years of revolution, the image of Khomeini played a role as important as himself, and that the image secured his power.¹⁷ In the early years after the Revolution, his image could be found hanging on walls in many houses. Khomeini and Khamenei’s presence through their images is always visible in most public spaces of the city, from streets to concert halls, classrooms, museums, cinemas, parks and squares, and many more.

Khomeini’s fierce and penetrating gaze, accompanied by slogans and propaganda for revolution, is always present in the spaces of the city, reminding the citizens that no disobedience is tolerated and that they are under constant supervision. There is no escape from the gaze of the Revolution’s past and current leaders in the public spaces of Tehran. Their domination, and their hardline policies that affect the everyday life of the citizens, are visible throughout the city and its public spaces.

Fig 3-4. Power of Image

By dominating the public spaces of Tehran with images of leaders, the notion of control from above is always strongly present in the city and over the everyday lives of citizens.

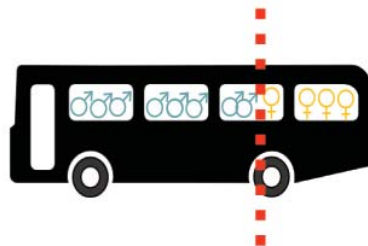
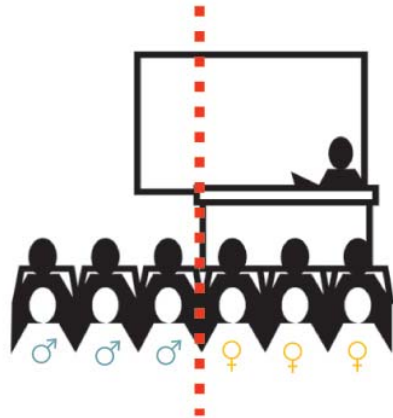
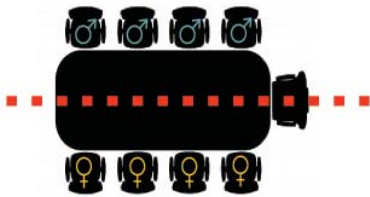
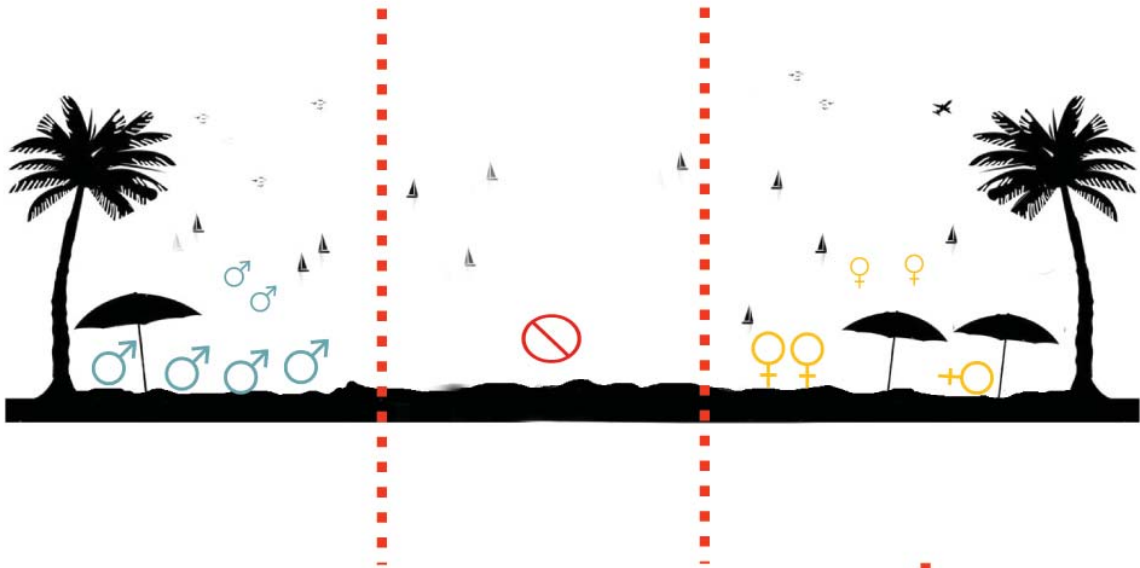


[Gender Segregation of Public Spaces]

Another powerful limitation in official spaces of the city is the gender segregation that was imposed on society early after the Revolution, and more intensely after the war with Iraq. Gender segregation is strictly enforced in many public spaces, and in those areas where it cannot be imposed, other forms of supervision exist. The most obviously segregated spaces are schools, public transit, pools, sports complexes, hairdressers, and even the queues formed in front of bakeries and grocery stores. Even at many public gatherings such as weddings, funerals, meetings, conferences, and Friday prayers, there are divided sections for males and females.¹⁸

Fig 3-5. Gender Segregation
Shirin Neshat, Fervor Series, 2000

Shirin Neshat is an Iranian-born artist residing in New York. Although she left Iran to continue her education in the United States around the time of the Islamic Revolution, her work is influenced by current issues in Iranian society, such as gender issues and social, cultural, and public behaviour changes that have occurred since the Revolution. She is also a supporter of the Iranian green movement.



The gender segregation that is imposed on most public spaces of the city creates many limitations for couples and groups consisting of mixed genders, and reduces their presence in the official spaces of the city. Many daily activities for those groups are not possible in official spaces. This intense segregation is one of the main reasons behind the struggle to create alternative spaces in a society where the official spaces cannot provide a ground for many everyday activities.

Fig 3-6. Gender Segregation Diagram
Image by author

THEN CAME 1980: THE YEAR IT BECAME OBLIGATORY TO WEAR THE VEIL AT SCHOOL.



WE FOUND OURSELVES VEILED AND SEPARATED FROM OUR FRIENDS.



[Compulsory Veiling
And
Dress Code]

After the Revolution, in 1983, the wearing of the veil was made mandatory by Parliament, and for the first time in the history of Iran, rules prescribing the proper outfit for appearance in public spaces were encoded in the penal law. Parliament enforced a mandatory dress code on both women and men. For the first time in the history of Iran, rules prescribing the Hijab as a proper outfit for women were made law. These rules did not only limit women; men also have to follow certain rules.¹⁹ Appearing in public without the proper outfit may result in fines, lashing, and a prison sentence.

As a consequence of gender segregation and the compulsory dress code, appearance in official public spaces of the city is always troublesome for some groups, including non-married couples, and secular individuals. The compulsory veiling and dress code limits many activities and the appearance of youth and more secular citizens in the official spaces of the city.

Fig 3-7. Compulsory Dress Code
Marjaneh Satrapi, 'Persepolis'

Marjaneh Satrapi, in her graphic memoir *Persepolis*, portrays her childhood in Tehran before and after the Revolution. Although she was young at the time of Revolution and spent parts of her youth in France, her story, feelings, and memories of life in Tehran are shared among many.



[Indoor - Outdoor Dichotomy]

“In Iran you have to separate form from content; what is seen is not what it is”

*Naser Farokhi*²⁰

The Third Generation that Khosravi, Friedman, and many other sociologists speak of is faced with a stark dichotomy. This generation has experienced intense restrictions in school, university, and the media, and, on the other hand, has been exposed to an extremely different world through private spaces, satellite TV, and the Internet. The intense gender segregation, imposed veiling, and moral control have caused a huge difference between public and private spaces in Tehran.

When in public, people need to follow the orders and restrictions that have been imposed on them and be proper citizens according to hard-line rules and morals. In Tehran’s official spaces, the true identity of many citizens has to be cloaked in order to avoid the consequences of being charged with “moral crime.” However, in most private spaces, away from the control and restriction of authorities, their real identity can exist. The dichotomy of life in public and private spaces has taught the younger generation to lead a dual life: one in the official spaces of the city without getting in trouble, and another one in the spaces that they have created.

“The citizen’s contrasting behaviour in their public and private spaces is yet another defense mechanism against an intruding government”

*Maziar Bahari*²¹

Fig 3-8. Duality
Shadi Yousefian

Today in Tehran, many are forced to live a dual life, one indoor and one outdoor. Many young artists reflect this dual life through their art pieces.

Despite all the restrictions, regulations, and intense controls over the public spaces of the city, some of the official spaces can be used as spaces for both authorities and citizens. Although most official spaces are constantly monitored, citizens have found ways to co-opt them for their activities. Semi-official spaces are those that function as both official and subversive public spaces.

Streets

“Revolutionary events generally take place in the streets. Doesn’t this show that the disorder of the street engenders another kind of order?” Henri Lefebvre

In a city such as Tehran, people are always in the streets, either in cars or as pedestrians. Due to the lack of public spaces, streets have turned into the main realm for citizens’ social and cultural exchanges and everyday life practices. Despite the numerous iconic landmarks scattered across Tehran, when Tehran citizens were asked about the most important and preferred public spaces and locations of the city, most named squares and streets.²² Streets and squares have represented different aspects of a public space, and occupation of the network of connections in the city occurs in many ways. They have acted as a scene for both everyday life practices and extraordinary events, such as protests and rallies.

Although streets in Tehran are not excepted from the domination of government power in the official spaces of the city, in some particular streets and during some specific hours, the streets became the stage for subversive activities. For example, during the national and

pro-government rallies, the streets accommodate the masses the same way they do for protests and opposition rallies.

Since the constitutional revolution, this polarization of activities has amplified. If one wants to buy some books, there is a specific street dedicated to bookshops, and cinemas, and theatres, and Western-style hotels, and many streets have a market for one particular commodity. Dedicating one particular street to a specific purpose has caused an unbalanced spread of activities in the city, and has also affected the moderation of public spaces throughout the city.



Fig 3-9. Streets Typology

Café/Coffee Shops

The culture of the café as a meeting place is fairly new in Iran. The closest equivalents in traditional Iranian culture would be the tea houses, which are largely male-dominated places. The modern coffee shops began to appear in Tehran primarily in the northern parts — wealthier, more secular — of the city approximately ten to fifteen years ago, and became extremely popular among the youth. They were strongly criticized by Islamic hardliners and there have been many attempts to shut them down. Those that became popular among the youth have been shut down on moral grounds at least once, yet despite all these attacks, they continue to mushroom everywhere. They can be classified as existing in between legal and illegal public spaces.

Shopping malls

Before the modernization attempts for the city had taken place, the bazaar was the main centre for trade and commerce, and was an integral part of the city. In the nineteenth century, the shopping and retail system slowly changed. Middle-class Tehranis, who had a fair amount of purchasing power thanks to the oil boom and who were drawn towards modernity, now needed a different experience of shopping than the traditional bazaar. Gradually, boutiques and walk-in shops emerged in some streets between 1940 and 1950. Later on, around 1960, a new shopping style was introduced in Tehran, called passazh. Although the western style of shopping first arrived in Tehran in the 1940s and found its way into the mass culture, the bazaar still had the primary role in trade and specialty goods. In other words, passages and malls are seen as extensions of the ba-

zaar, in such a way that the bazaar does not lose its centrality and importance. The goods traded in each type of centre are different, and each has their own clients.

The bazaar is rarely used for leisurely walks or aimless hangouts, whereas one of the main functions of passages and malls is for window shopping and flâneur. The bazaar is male-dominated and is a place solely for the purpose of trade. Shopping malls are one of the few places where gender segregation cannot be applied, and, therefore, they attract many young people.

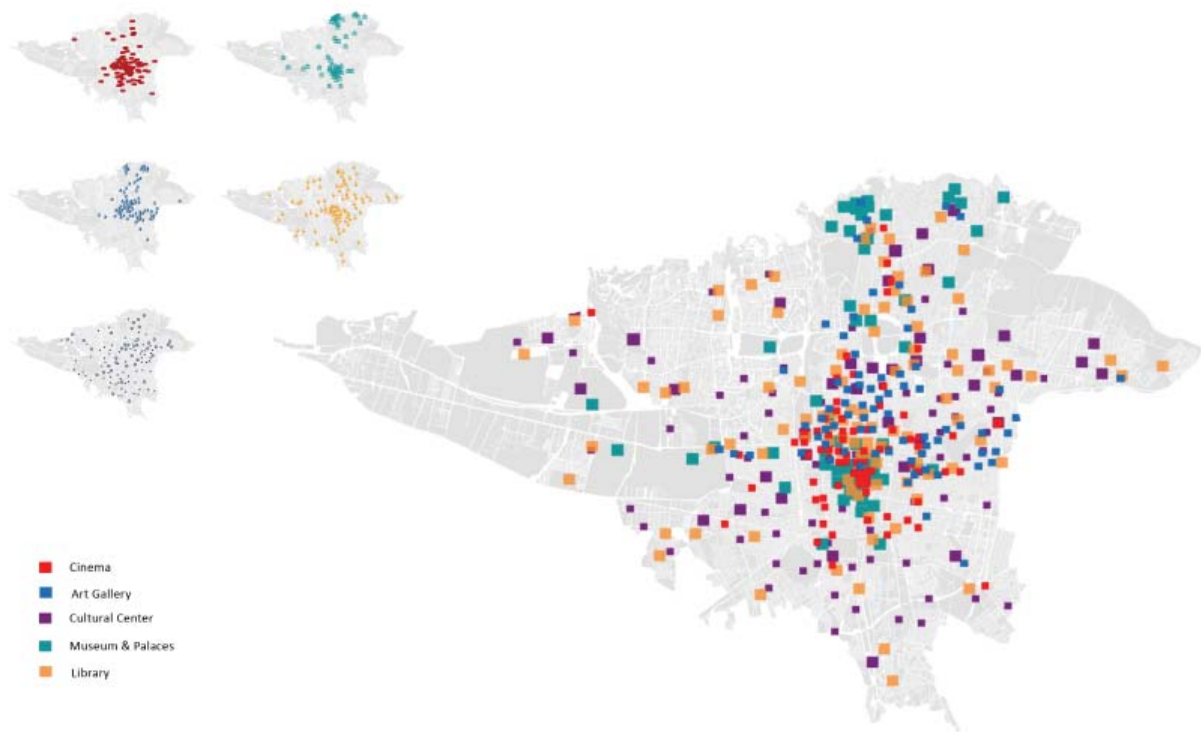


Fig 3-10. Official Cultural Public Spaces of Tehran

Most facilities and public spaces in Tehran are concentrated in the central neighbourhoods. The exceptions are libraries and cultural houses, which had been constructed mainly after revolution. Since most Western-style leisure and entertainment facilities faced closure after the Revolution, in an attempt to provide the youth an alternative, the cultural houses began appearing in most areas. However, the gender segregation and moral control that is applied to them limits their users.

SUBVERSIVE CITY

As was explored, the Third Generation has experienced brutal social repression. Most behaviour has been criminalized by the authorities, and the young have been under intense control and media censorship. However, due to the involvement of this generation in a global context and their contact with the cyber world, they have received a huge amount of information through the Internet and satellite TV. A great deal of this generation's everyday actions are prohibited by the Islamic authorities. As a result, illegality and subversion are mundane, everyday issues for this generation. Getting arrested or spending the night in jail for not behaving as they should is a phenomenon that most of them have experienced at some point in their lives. They usually have stories of how, in some instances, they have escaped from or duped the police.

These illegal behaviours and what are referred to as "cultural crimes" do not have the slightest commonality with what is referred to as a crime elsewhere in the world. What is referred to as illegal would be considered normal, conventional behaviour in most Western countries. This generation is deprived of even the most basic, everyday rights, and they are faced with suppression. In response, the Third Generation has created its own spaces. They have introduced new definitions of public and private life. Public activities are brought into private spaces. Many of their social interactions have been brought underground. They use new means of communicating, and generally, acts of subversion and defiance form part of their daily lives.

The concept of public and private is dealt with differently. Events that take place in private spaces are regarded in the context of the city as part of an illicit lifestyle and a type of resistance. The children who grew up in this period are used to this concept, and they can turn private spaces into stages for protest and obstinacy against the government.

As Shahram Khosravi, in *'Young and Defiant in Tehran'*, states:

“These everyday practices enable people to survive the oppressive structure of society and achieve limited practical kind of autonomy. People create alternative spaces for social action and ideas.”

There has not been much consideration for the young generation of Iran and their needs in the past two decades. Youngsters are not visible in public, as might be expected by the demographics. Most public appearances of the youth happen in universities, which are also repressed. Downtowns traditionally are assumed to be populated by the youth, but that is not the case in Tehran. The most visible appearance of younger generations in the city is in their cars. Where most of the young generation can be found is in underground movements, which will be discussed in this and following sections.

“Perhaps we have substituted public space with movement: in car, on foot, shopping ... but a place where people can linger, where they can stop and contemplate city life, such as the piazza in Siena...well... that is missing. This is a very real problem which we need to tackle.”

Shahab Katouzian ²³

Mana Neyesani
Iran



[Defiance and subversion]

Prior to the Revolution, as in most other countries, young adults would turn to public spaces for socializing, dating, or watching movies. Presently, most of these activities occur in private spaces.

A subconscious, defiant culture of resistance was born. The government challenges the most basic rights and all attempts to obtain these rights. There is an invisible battle going on between the young and the government, without either party planning in advance for it. The government is attempting to enforce its restrictions, and the youth are resisting the pressure.

Many everyday activities typical of youth in other countries are classified as crimes by the Islamic state. When Tehrani youth mingle with members of the opposite sex at a party, they do not do this as a conscious act of resistance. Yet, in partaking in such activities, they in effect reject the position the regime attempts to impose upon them, whether they intend to or not. There is a distinction between resistance as a deliberate, organized response to state oppression and the practice of defiance as a spontaneous, uncoordinated, everyday challenging of the social order. There are two models of resistance. One is through everyday acts of the individual, and the other is the model we have been recently observing, which includes the student movements of *kooye daaneshgah* (a series of protests and unrest that happened in a street where dormitories of Tehran University are located) and shouting “Allah-o-akbar” off the rooftops, or street demonstrations. Despite the differences in form, all these actions attest to a dissatisfaction with the status quo, and reflect a proclamation on new needs and demands. Basements, living rooms, cars, and even streets become the settings for actions of defiance, the sites for the expression of the right to freedom and choice. Individual acts of defiance and cultural escapes are dominant aspects of young people’s social lives in Tehran.

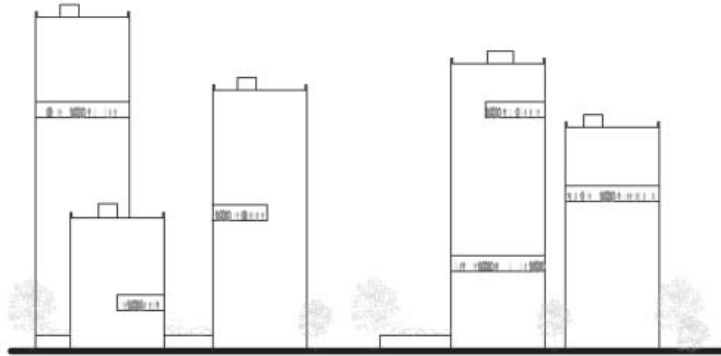
Fig 3-12. Dominoes
Mana Neyestani

Mana Neyestani, now based in Paris, is one of the most famous Iranian cartoonists. He is currently illustrating for the Iranian exile media *Radio Zamaneh*. In his cartoons, he reflects the most recent issues and political matters of Iranian society. His political cartoons circulate massively on Facebook, especially after the 2009 election.

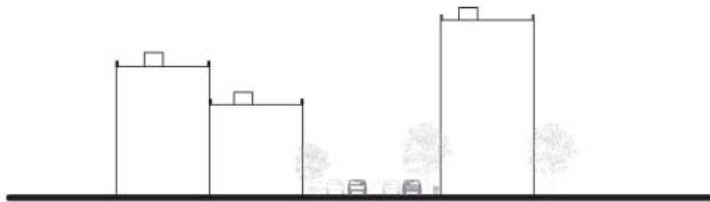
[Subversive Public Spaces]

Subversive Public spaces of Tehran, which are spontaneously produced by citizens, happen in very ordinary spaces of the city. Streets, basements, living rooms and rooftops of the city occasionally turn into a stage for struggle to obtain the right to practice everyday activities which are faced with suppression in official spaces of the cities. The next Chapter, The Manual, is an exploration into the subversive spaces of the city and their ways of production.

Fig 3-13. Subversive Public Spaces



House Parties - Public happens in Private Space



Dor Dor - Public happens in Movement



Protest- Public happens in Opposition



Rooftops - Public happens in Solidarity

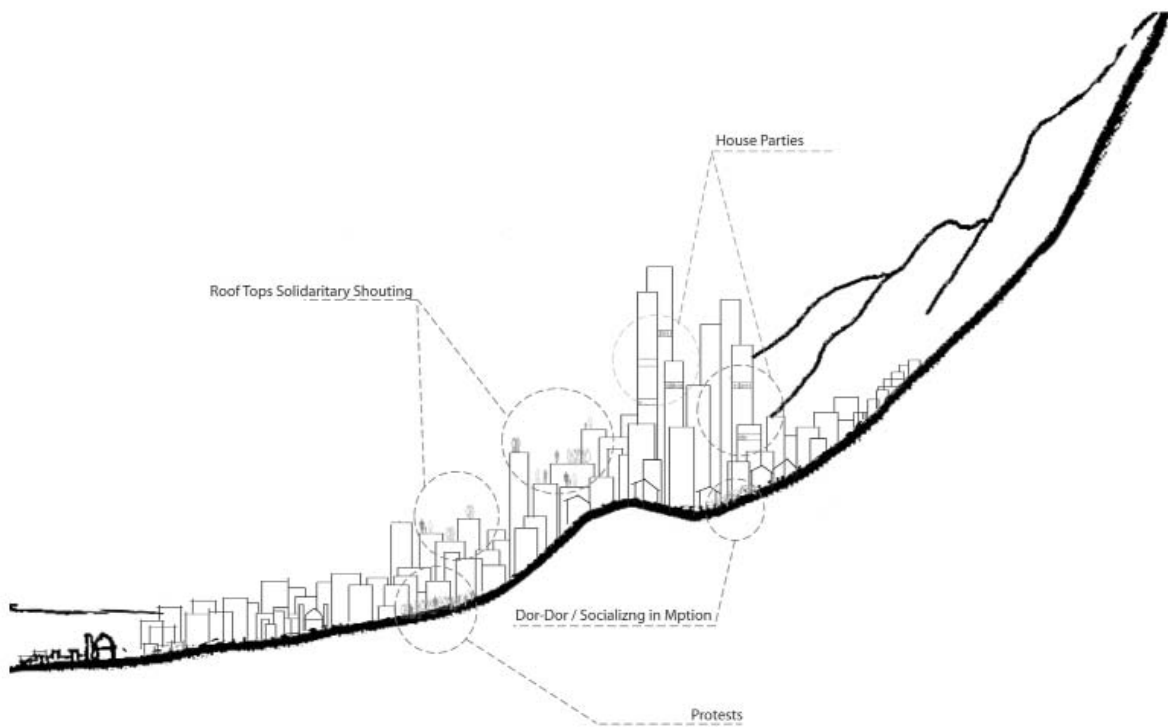
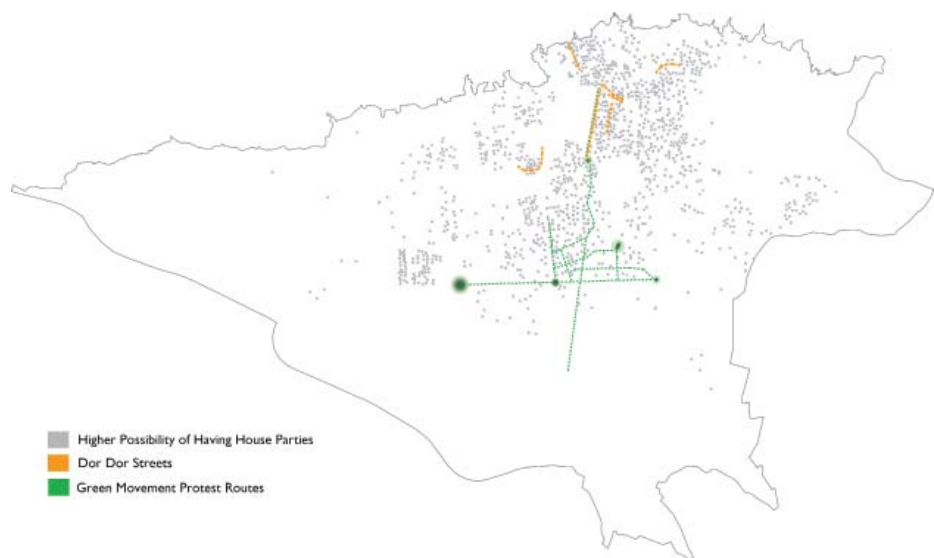


Fig 3-14. Schematic Section of Tehran's Subversive Public Spaces



Probability of witnessing a subversive space is much higher in the northern Tehran. Due to social polarization, northern Tehranis are more secular and affluent. The sizes of apartments, greatly affects the possibility of house parties. Dor Dor streets are mostly close to shopping malls or commercial streets. Protests take place in the two main axis of the city, due to their accessibility and visibility.

Fig 3-15. Probable Subversive Map of Tehran

THE MANUAL OF DEFIANCE AND SUBVERSION

As was explored in the previous section, “The City Montage,” legal public spaces in Tehran went through many changes after the Revolution. Through moral controls and restrictive orders, many daily activities of the citizens of Tehran have been considered criminal and suppressed. There is not much space available for relaxed, free social interaction and communication in the legal city.

The subversive spaces are substitutes for what is missing in public life. They are the spaces created by citizens to struggle for the right to everyday life activities and social interaction under conditions of suppression. These are spaces created in the context of the current situation to obtain everyday rights.

The production of these spaces is spontaneous, and they are all situational. Public space and public life, for the citizens, happen by transforming ordinary spaces of the city into situational events and spaces. What they all have in common is that the rhythm of these spaces changes extensively when they are used as subversive spaces. Tehran’s streets, living rooms, rooftops, and basements are made public spaces by the citizens.

On January 7, 2011, on most news websites in Iran — not for the first or the last time — the headlines read:

Tehran's police: **mixed-sex parties are counted as a CRIME and police will oppose parties in which religious limits are not met.** In the content of the news it was mentioned that “usually alcohol is found in such parties.”¹

[House Parties]

Hormozgan news, July, 29, 2010:

159 people (80 boys and 79 girls) in improper and vulgar situation, got arrested in a night party in a villa around Tehran. There has been an increase in garden parties held nightly in marginal urban areas around Tehran. there is a huge transition in moving house parties to **marginal gardens** since the party organizers feel more secure in marginal gardens.

Tabnak, December, 4, 2010 :

Last night police officers, **identified several parties** in northern Tehran. Judicial steps were taken and dozens of youth were arrested. In one of these parties, 50 people got arrested among which **several famous soccer players** in country's Premier Leagues were seen. According to our correspondent, party guests' condition was extremely vulgar and repulsive. All arrestees with complete record, were delivered to judicial system.

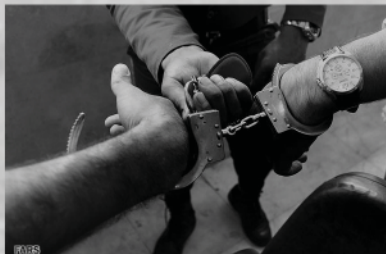


BBC Persian, March, 29, 2008:

Human Rights Watch criticized the incursion of the Iranian police to private spaces. Human right watch organization accused the Iranian authorities of "intense harassment and arbitrary detention" referring to police raiding private parties for "**immorality**". Joe Stork, deputy director of Middle East and North Africa at Human Rights Watch, said "**When police routinely break down doors to enforce a brand of morality, it means a line has been crossed to invade people's privacy at any time.**"

Farad news, September, 28, 2009:

Two famous cinema actors got arrested last night in a house party in Tehran. Investigations are ongoing to find the reasons of their presence in such a place.



Alborz , May,8,2010 :

48 boys and 32 girls were arrested last night in an improper mixed-sex party in Tehran.

TABNAK, MAY, 7, 2010:

LAST NIGHT **80 GIRLS AND BOY** GOT CHARGED AND ARRESTED FOR ATTENDING A NIGHT HOUSE PARTY WITH **IMPROPER CLOTHING**. MOST OF THE ARRESTEES WERE NOT IN A NORMAL MOOD AND CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF FOREIGN AND HOMEMADE ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES WERE DISCOVERED.



Bultannews January, 17, 2011:

Morteza, 28, after seeing the moral corruption officers in the house, in an attempt to escape from the window, falls from the 3rd floor and loses his life.

In Iran, parties are raided under in name of "fight against moral corruption"



Asr Iran news agency, August 20, 2008

Young girl participant in a house party in Tehran **suspiciously died in a fall from a window** on the sixth floor of a high rise in Elahieh ...Friday night, police were informed of a house party and when they got to the reported apartment, they realize that two young men, introducing themselves as combat forces for moral corruption, have already entered this apartment and started to arrest people and collecting the alcoholic beverages before the party attendances get the chance to discard them. The police forces didn't have the judicial permit to enter; therefore they were only watching those two young men when suddenly came a loud scream. Subsequently they found out that a girl had fallen ...Party attendants said that one of those two young men came out from the room that the girl has fallen out of , but the young man stated that the girl was drunk and jumped out ... the case is under investigation

Greater Tehran general security police chief:

everyone is encouraged to call 110 and **collaborate** with police to introduce and **report** the night parties where 'religious code'

Aftab News, Sept, 15, 2010:

60 girls and boys got arrested in a night party. Police Officers in search of the place have found drugs and alcohol. Fifty of high class guests' cars had been detained and taken to the police parking. The party host could not be found; he had left the party with some of the guests before the arrival of police. Further investigations to arrest the organizers continue.



The lights are dimmed and the room is dark. There are flickers from candles placed all around. The rays of colourful light from the laser-light projector dance on the ceiling. People are jumping up and down to a selection of the latest Western and Iranian hits that the DJ is playing. At first glance, this might resemble a nightclub in any corner of the world. All the elements are in place: a DJ, a dance floor with a full, jumping crowd, loud music, laser lights, the latest fashions, alcohol, and the flirting that is abundant in the air.

Fig 4-1. A House Party in Tehran



But when you are looking around, there are couple of unexpected objects that you would not found in a regular night club.

At your left there are couple of cozy armchairs with a girl is sitting on one

And a chandelier?

A coffee table on the dance floor with a Kleenex box

There is a painting hanging on the wall behind the DJ

Here is Tehran...

But you are not seeing chadors, scarves and manteaus. Instead, you see girls in miniskirts and short dresses wearing lots of makeup. Unveiled, highlighted hair is freely flying in the air with every beat of music. Boys and girls are mingling freely, chatting, holding hands, drinking, and dancing. This is a night party, but not in a club. There are no bars and clubs in Iran — not since the Revolution. Instead of rigid concrete, the dance floor is covered with Persian rugs. There are a couple of adorable family photos on the coffee table, tableaus on the wall, floor lamps, a sofa, and armchairs all around. This is not a discotheque; this is a house party in the living room of a three-bedroom apartment in a residential tower in affluent northern Tehran.

There are no bouncers and no cover charges — instead, lots of great homemade food and free alcohol. The parents are away to visit their relatives and everything is ready for a night full of excitement and fun for sixty to eighty young boys and girls, who have no other place to go to party under the rules of the Islamic regime.

In a corner of the room, behind a table, the DJ is rocking the dance floor. But instead of playing with turntables, he is dragging and dropping the audio files on his laptop. He has downloaded the latest hits on MTV from torrents, and some Los Angeles-produced Persian dance music from bia2.com (copyright is rarely observed in Iran). He also has a collection of new, underground Persian hip-hop and rap, which he randomly squeezes between the other hits. The guests grind and twirl against each other, completely satisfied with his collection.

The room is filled with smoke. Here and there you see sparkles; a boy is lighting one cigarette on his lips for himself and another for the girl dancing next to him. It's not yet forbidden to smoke indoors in Tehran. There are more than sixty people dancing and smoking in this four-by-six-metre living room. Windows are covered and cannot be opened; the sound cannot escape the room, lest it attract some unwanted attention. The ceiling is no higher than that of a regular apartment. There is virtually no air to breathe. But that does not seem to concern the crowd, who are free to do what they are banned from doing elsewhere. There is no other choice: either stay and not breathe properly but have fun, or just go home.

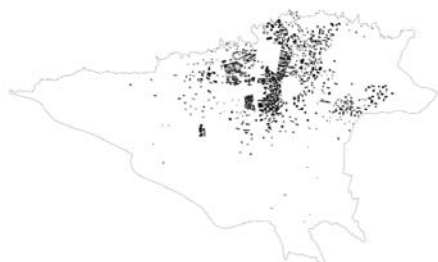
There is a huge crowd waiting around the bar to get drinks. The bar is actually a dining-room table on which, despite the alcohol ban, you can see lots of foreign-brand bottles. Usually the host provides good alcohol for all the guests. The most popular drinks are Absolut Vodka and Jack Daniel's, which can be purchased through connections and "the guys" from the black market, or just by walking around in the Armenian neighbourhood and attracting the attention of an alcohol smuggler. Other than brand-name alcohol, smuggled beer, and spirits, what is widely abundant is a homemade Persian spirit called *Aragh* which is very strong (80–90 percent alcohol) and usually taken diluted with juice.

Fig 4-2. Schematic Maps of Possible Locations for House Parties

These house parties are getting more and more popular in Tehran. They are everything that a young person could want for a night of fun. And, in some respects, they are even more exciting than parties in the West. At these parties, unrelated people of the opposite sex mingle, the Islamic dress code is not followed, and there is always plenty of alcohol. Everything about these kinds of parties is strictly prohibited. There is always a great chance of the moral police raiding such parties and arresting the attendees. A few years ago, if the party was raided, what awaited the guests was two to three nights in jail, a lashing, and a fine to pay. Nowadays, the police can easily be bribed, and nothing serious would happen if they showed up at the door. Bribery is a persistent theme; money can buy the jail time and lashes, and no one complains. Obviously, bribery would not work for the more extreme hard-line Islamist police, and the loyal ones. When attending one of these house parties, all the fears, doubts, and anxieties about the chance of getting arrested, mixed with excitement and drunkenness, make for an extravagant experience.

[WHERE TO FIND THE HOUSE PARTIES]

Mid size 2-3bdr apartment (120-150 m²)



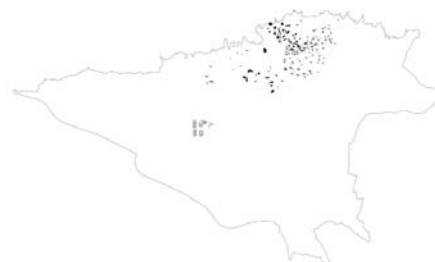
Found in typical residential blocks in mid- and north town, these kinds of parties are the most common and widespread.

Luxury and/or large apartments in Modern highrises (140-210 m²)



There has been a boom in high-rise construction recently. These are becoming very luxurious and popular.

Individual houses and Villas (130-250 m²)



This type can be found both in northern Tehran and the suburbs. They have an enclosed yard and usually a pool.

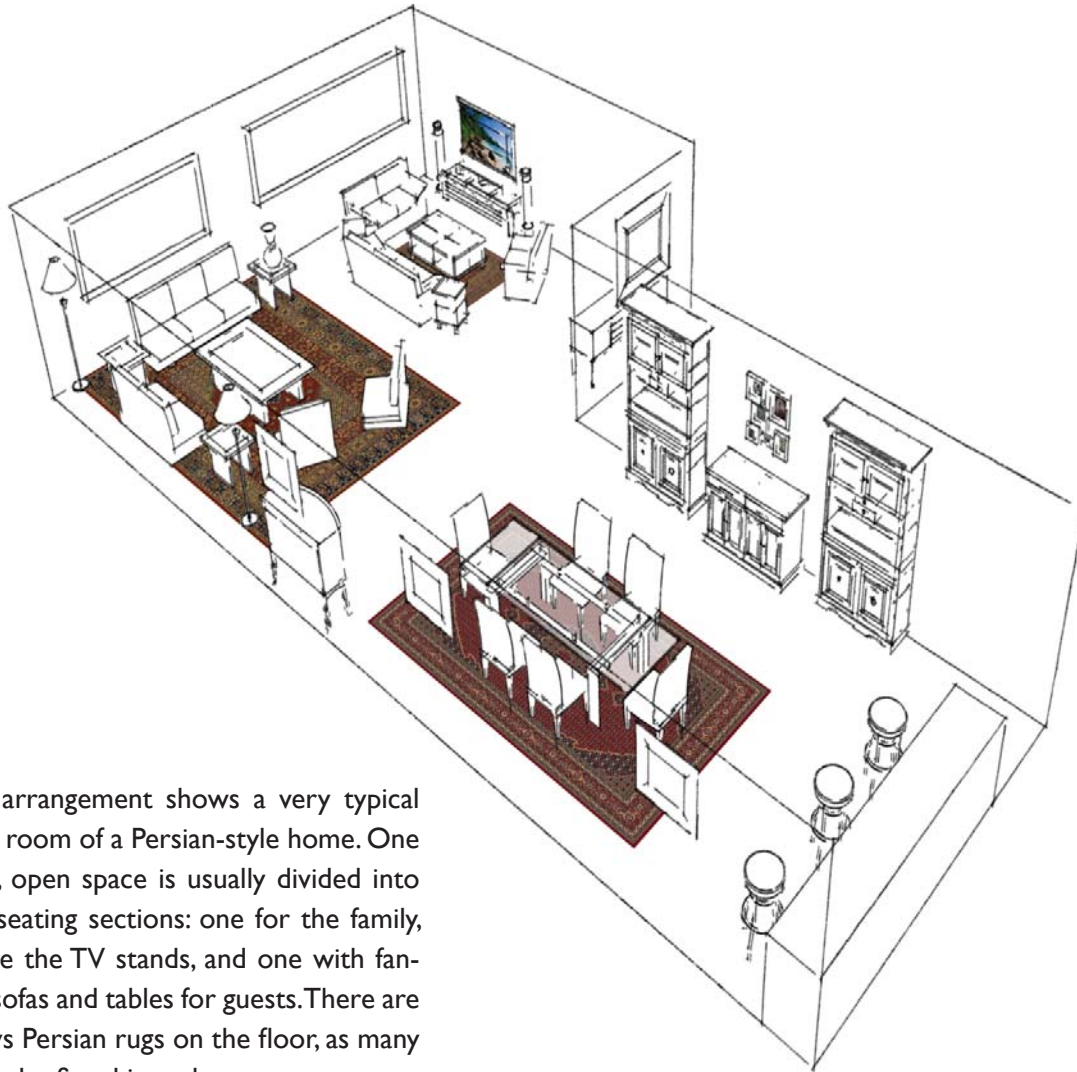
* These maps show the dispersion of each type of house parties and the possibility of seeing that certain party type in the context of city.

[WHERE NOT/NEVER TO LOOK]



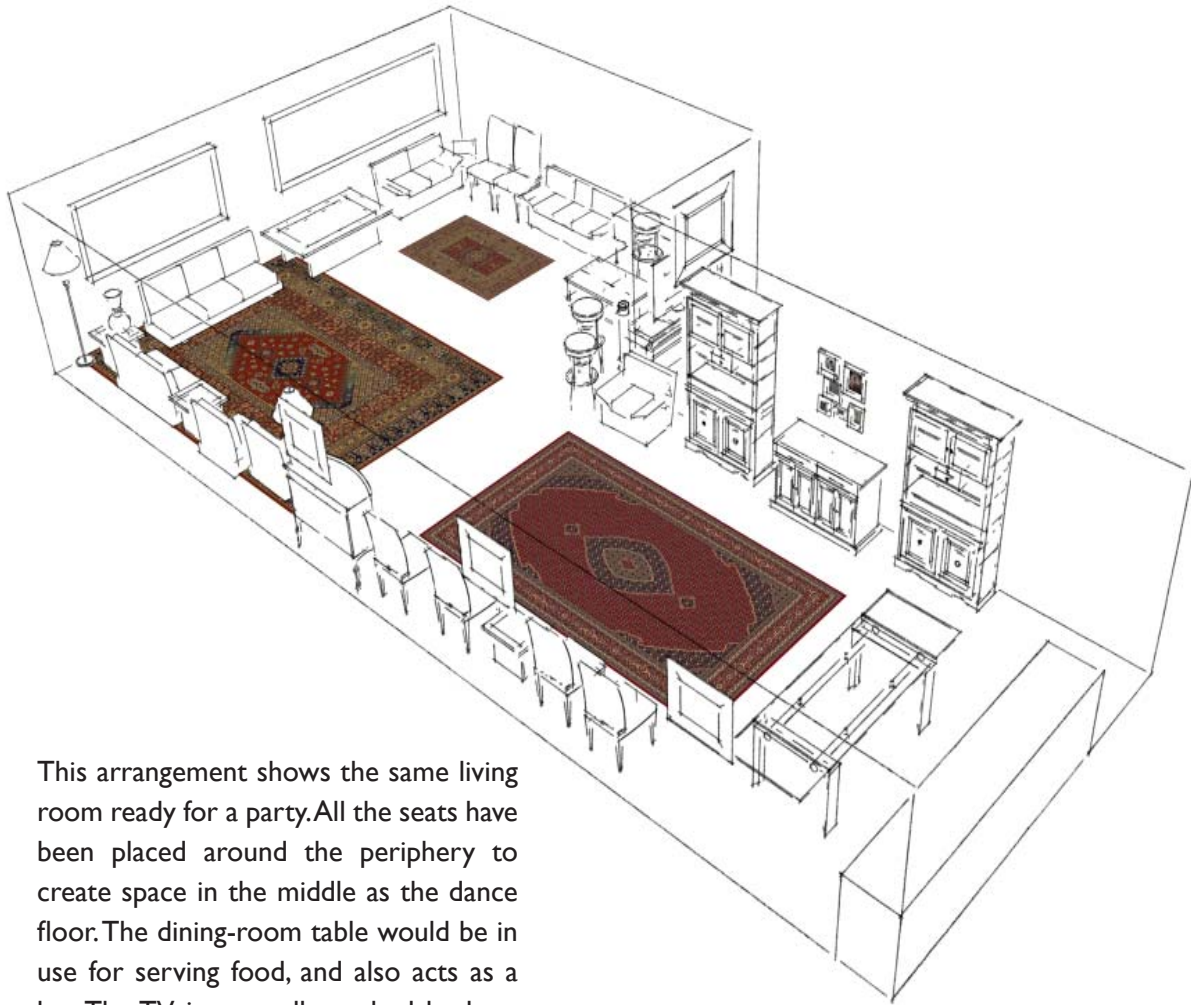
- The southern and far east parts of Tehran are usually occupied by immigrants from rural villages with very religious background. Other than that, the apartments are usually too small for throwing a party.
- Some northern parts like Jamaran which are older neighbourhoods are home to political and governmental figures.
- Residential complexes which belong to governmental organizations and their workers like air force residential complex, sepah, etc.

[BEFORE - TYPICAL IRANIAN HOUSE IN NORMAL MODE]



This arrangement shows a very typical living room of a Persian-style home. One large, open space is usually divided into two seating sections: one for the family, where the TV stands, and one with fancier sofas and tables for guests. There are always Persian rugs on the floor, as many as can be fitted into the space.

Fig 4-3. Living Room in Normal Mode



This arrangement shows the same living room ready for a party. All the seats have been placed around the periphery to create space in the middle as the dance floor. The dining-room table would be in use for serving food, and also acts as a bar. The TV is normally pushed back to a corner out of reach, and the DJ set would be placed close to the TV, in case the sound system is not available. In that case, laptops would be connected to the TV and the TV itself used as the speakers

Fig 4-4. Living Room in Party Mode

[SPATIAL ENGAGEMENT OF A PARTY IN URBAN CONTEXT]

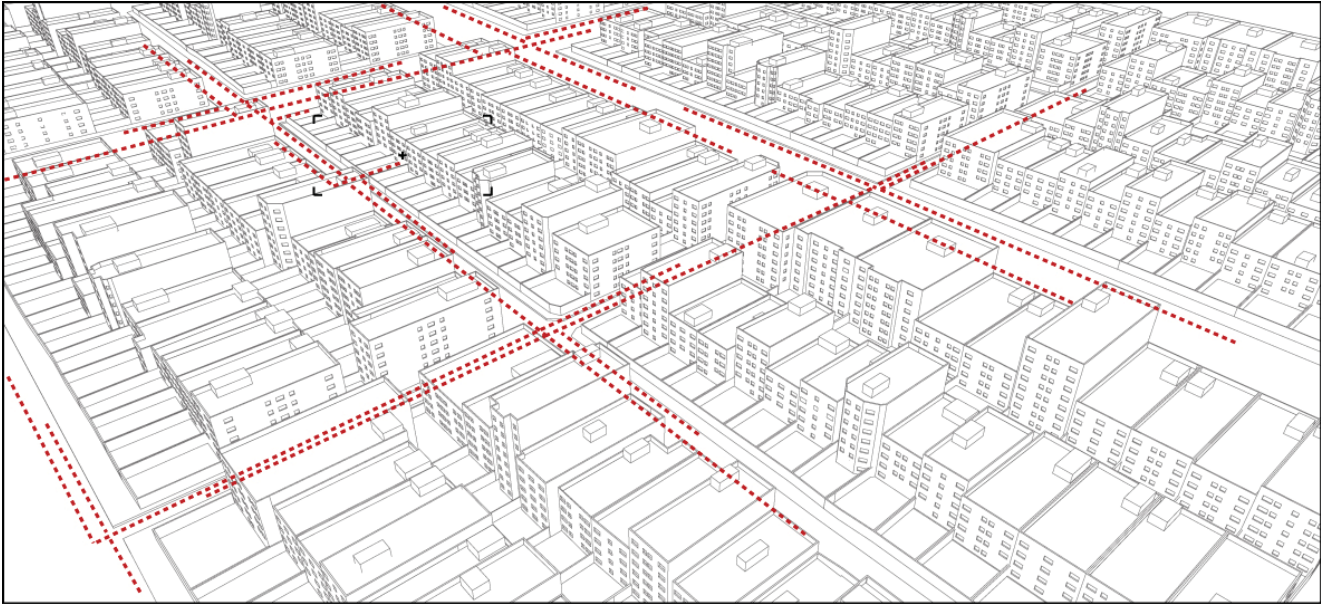


Fig 4-5. Spatial Engagement: Large Scale

[SPATIAL ENGAGEMENT OF A PARTY IN BLOCK SCALE]

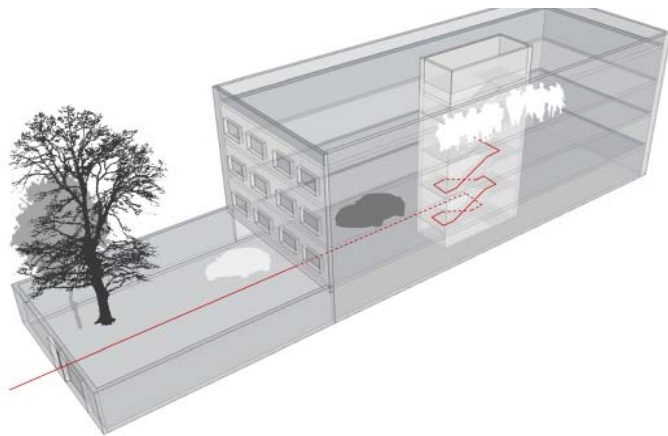
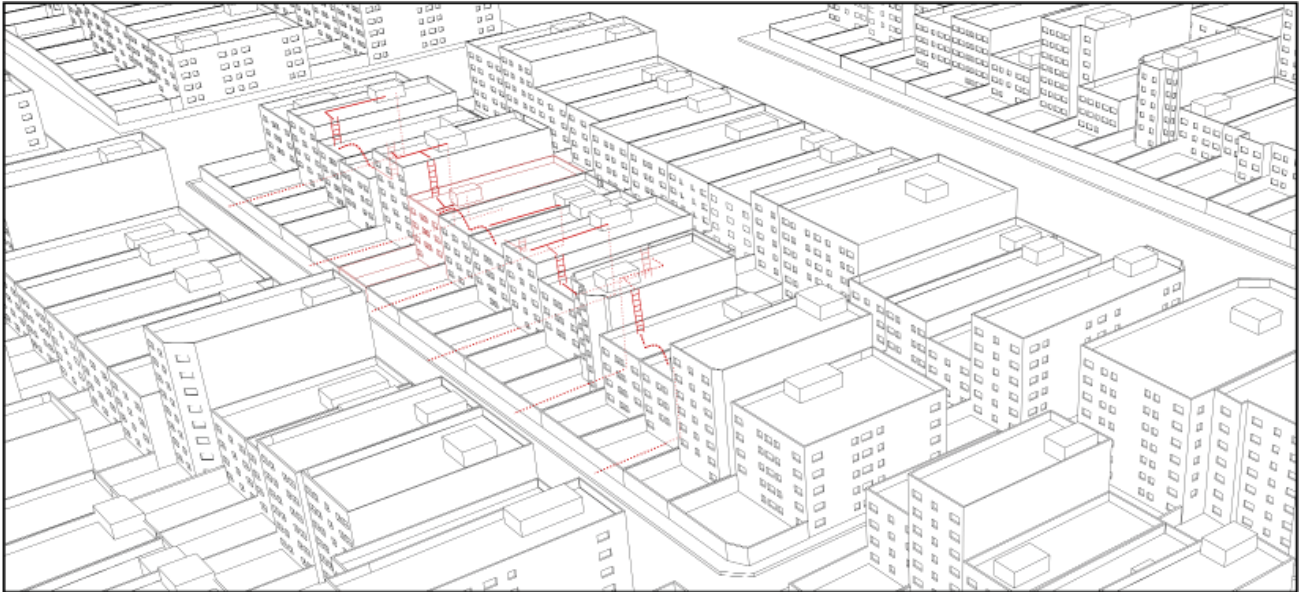


Fig 4-6. Spatial Engagement: Small Scale



If morality police raid the party, rooftops can be used to escape. Since the buildings are normally attached to the side facades, jumping to another building is normally doable.

Fig 4-7.Potential Escape



[DorDor]

Cars in traffic generally have a starting and an end point, with a pre-determined route between. But in Tehran, in certain streets at certain times of the day, the scenario is totally reversed. There is no starting or end point; cars just go in circles up and down the street, making U-turns and continuing the action for several minutes or even a few hours. Normally, drivers would try to find ways to reduce the traffic jam and get out of it as soon as possible, but in these streets, making a traffic jam and getting stuck in it is nothing less than the main objective.

In an interesting phenomenon in Tehran, the borders between public and private space merge in Dor-Dor activity. Dor-Dor is a public activity accomplished with a private object in motion. This social activity happens in movement through the city on certain streets. Cars, as private objects, bring the private and personal space into the public space, and then get involved in a unique social happening.

Traf•fic -Merriam-Webster
Dictionary-
-noun, [tra-fik]

The movement (as of vehicles or pedestrians) through an area or along a route

Fig 4-8. Number Exchange in Cars

What is Dor-Dor?



Dor-zadan, in Farsi, literally means making turns and U-turns. But *dor-zadan*, which is mostly replaced with the shortened version *Dor-Dor* in youth parlance, is an adventurous, joyous, and exciting social action occurring in a car — the higher the model, the better the experience. *Dor-Dor* is an amazing phenomenon that combines concepts like leisure, making new friends, collective behaviour, and communication skills and patterns. *Dor-Dor* provides socializing, fun, music, excitement, escape from boredom, and a tangible energy that will always remain in the memory of those who have experienced it.

According to Lefebvre in *Rhythmanalysis*, the elements of each city possess a certain order and rhythm in everyday life: “It is found in the workings of our towns and cities, in urban life and movement through space.”² Each street has a rhythm, which changes throughout the day and night. But there are certain streets in Tehran whose order and rhythm dramatically change at certain hours of the day. They behave differently in terms of traffic and routine street activities. The time it takes to pass through these streets can vary from five minutes to a few hours. If you went to Iran-zamin Street between eight a.m. and six p.m., you would observe all the typical signals and rhythms of daily traffic and everyday life. But if you went to the same street in the evening, especially Thursday or Friday night, it would look like a totally different street, with the rhythm completely changed.

You would see cars going up and down the street multiple times. What is notable about these cars is that the passengers in half of them are all boys and the other half all girls, between eighteen and thirty years old, and everyone looks perfectly chic, as if they were going to a party or a fancy nightclub. But no; do not forget that there are no bars or nightclubs in Tehran. They are not driving to get to their destination. Driving is their destination. Headscarves are thrown as far back as possible and highlighted hair from beneath what is left of them blowing in the air.

But why? Nowadays, going around the streets is a perfectly normal and commonplace way of meeting people and spending time for the youth of Tehran. Boys and girls come to these streets to check each other out and essentially flirt, simply because there is nothing else they can do to overcome their boredom, especially at night. Not everyone gets invited to parties every night, so they need to have alternatives, and the dor-dor perfectly provides the stage for socializing and finding friends.

Fig 4-9. Dor-Dor in the Streets of Tehran



When and where?



There are a few streets in Tehran that are famous for dor-dor, among which four have well established their place. They are all in the northern, affluent part of Tehran: Iran-zamin, Fereshte, Jordan, and the recently added Andarzgoo Streets.

When car traffic subsides in the south of Tehran, after the evening rush hour, the life of the northern streets just begins to peak. Dor-Dor, which starts in the early evening, can last for hours. Nights on these streets are lively throughout the year, but summers are especially busy. That is when car windows are rolled down and the stereo music pumping through the loudspeakers fills the air. This turns the streets into moving discotheques. With the windows down, it is easier to see inside other cars. Some even prepare for this by decorating their cars with top-of-the-line books and CDs, putting them in a place visible from the outside, to show off. Therefore, in addition to the cars themselves, their interiors and the drivers' personal belongings get involved in the city's public space.



This phenomenon happens in circumstances under which listening to foreign music can be considered a crime, and socializing with the opposite sex can lead to getting arrested. Playing illicit music in cars is considered sound pollution and is usually fined, and sometimes such cars are seized for as long as a month. Police are seen in these streets quite often to seize and tow away such law-breaking cars. Those who get arrested are usually discharged after a night, since the charges are not as serious as drinking alcohol or dancing. The police occasionally become picky, blocking roads and checking inside all cars that pass by. If the passengers do not reside in the vicinity and do not produce a good excuse to be on that street, they will probably get into trouble.



Dor-Dor Type One

Traffic jams, especially when all the cars around you are full of young people, good music is heard everywhere, and socializing and flirting flow in the air, can be very amusing. It's almost seven in the evening. You call on some same-sex friends, pick them up, and go to one of those famous streets in northern Tehran. Many other cars with young people around your age are heading in the same direction. Hundreds of cars get onto a not-so-wide street, and here we go: there is a huge traffic jam already. There are more cars coming and they all have one objective in mind: making the traffic worse and getting stuck in it, so they can befriend and have some quality conversations with members of the opposite sex.

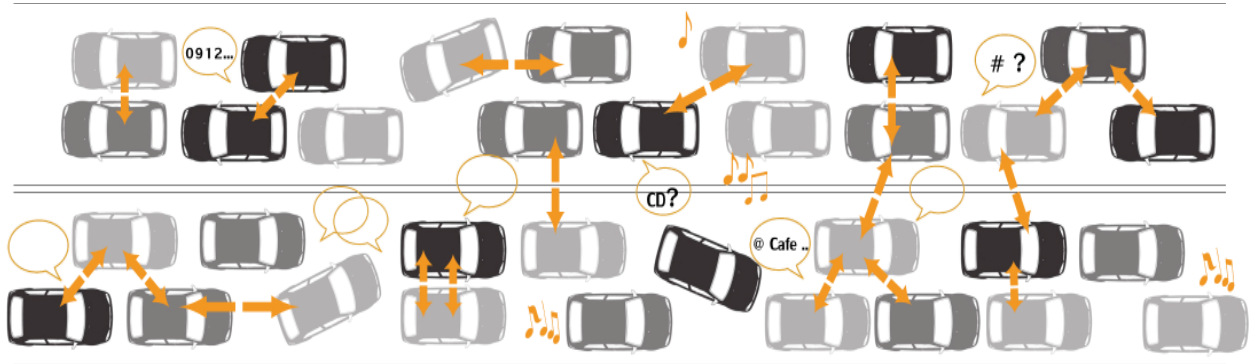
Fig 4-10. Making Traffic: Dor-Dor Type One



Dor-Dor Type Two

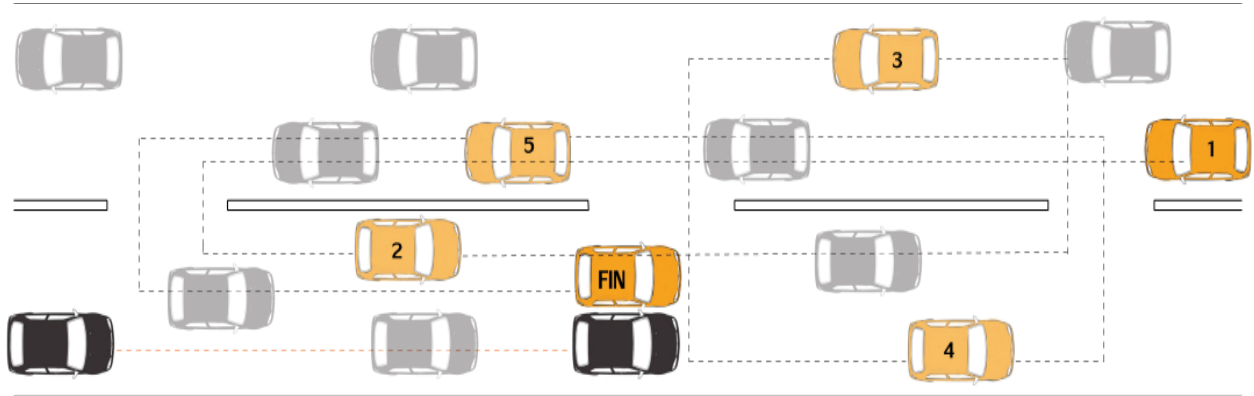
To better understand this type, let's focus on that BMW SUV coming from the north. There are three boys in the car, with the windows down and very loud music playing. A few minutes later, you see the same car from the opposite direction going north, and then again going south. And now they have found what they were looking for! They get next to another car that is carrying three girls, with the windows all the way down. They start talking. They are creating a traffic jam behind them, but none of the other drivers seem upset about it. They keep talking ... no luck. You see the same car going back and forth again and again, and this time they capture the attention of a different car, with two girls as passengers. And there they go: numbers are exchanged. The girls are following the SUV, probably to a coffee shop or a quiet street where they can talk. What you have witnessed is happening in all the other cars that you see here. They have all come here to meet their future boyfriends or girlfriends. You can also see some boys standing right next to their parked cars. They have a better vantage point on the street and the cars; as soon as they find some potential new friends, they get into their cars and start the same scene.

Fig 4-11. Dor-Dor Type Two



1. Head down to the desired street but be sure to check the time
2. Try your best to contribute to making the traffic jam worse, by changing lanes constantly and breaking frequently
3. Get stuck in the traffic
4. Play good music in your car
5. Roll your windows all the way down
6. If you have a specific car in mind, try to get next to it by changing lanes
7. Start the conversion — One of the newer ice-breakers is to ask if he or she has a good CD to give you, since you are tired of yours.

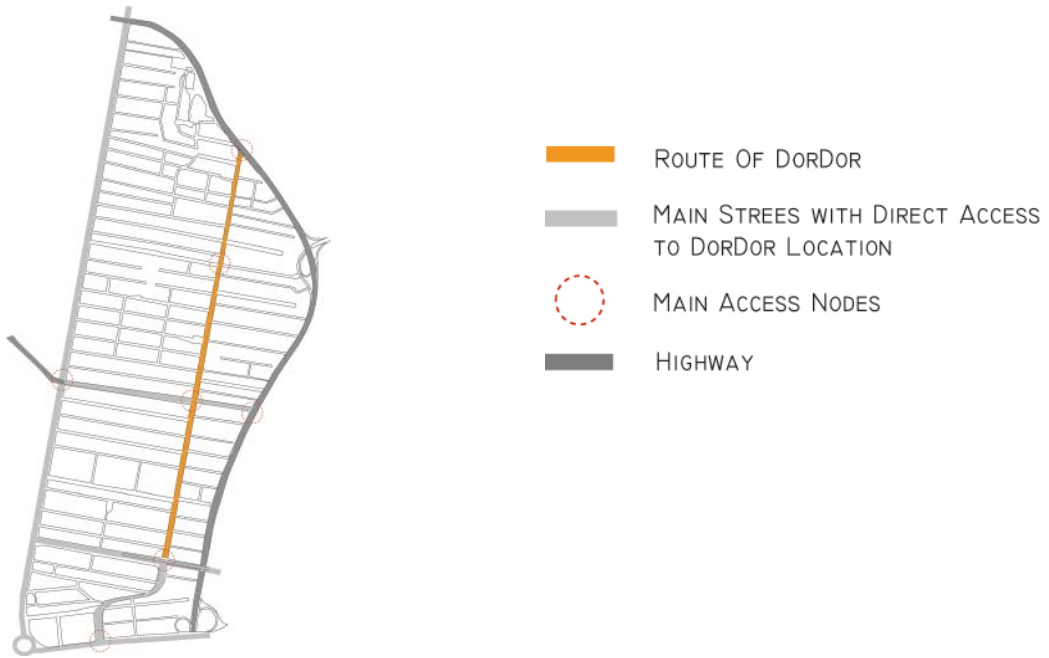
Fig 4-12. Diagram of Type One Dor-Dor



1. Head down to the desired street but be sure to check the time
2. Start your route at the beginning of the street
3. Go all the way down, then make a U turn and come back, this time make a U turn at a different location
4. Continue the U-turns whenever possible; you should have a good view of the other cars.
5. Play good music in your car
6. Roll your windows all the way down.
7. When you find your possible future mate, turn around as soon as you can and get next to his or her car.
8. Start the conversion

Fig 4-13. Diagram of Type Two Dor-Dor

[JORDAN (RENAMED TO AFRICA) BLV.]



[IRAN-ZAMIN AVE.]

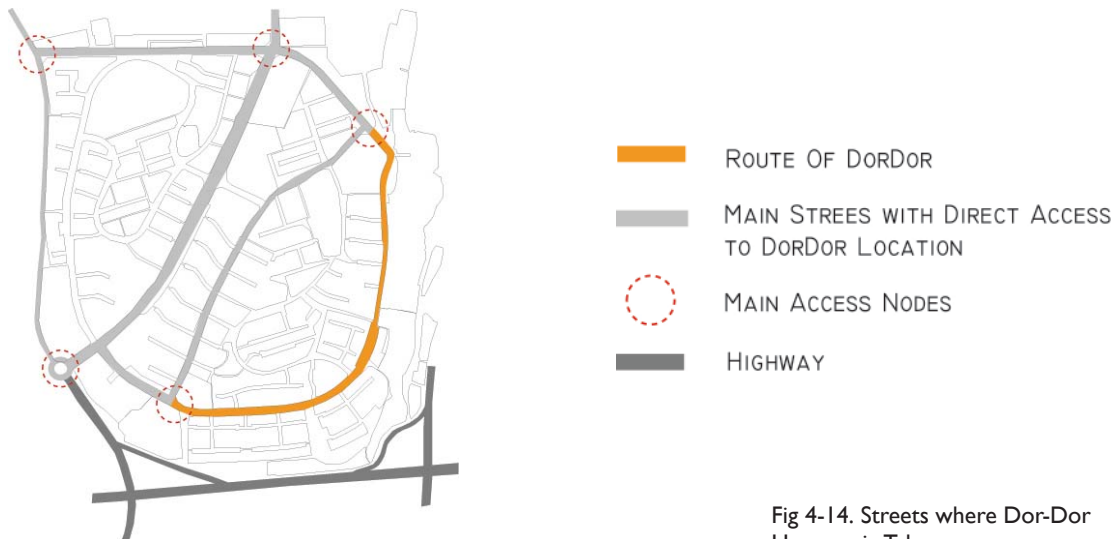


Fig 4-14. Streets where Dor-Dor Happens in Tehran

[FERESHTEH AVE.]



- ROUTE OF DoRDOR
- MAIN STREES WITH DIRECT ACCESS TO DoRDOR LOCATION
- MAIN ACCESS NODES
- HIGHWAY

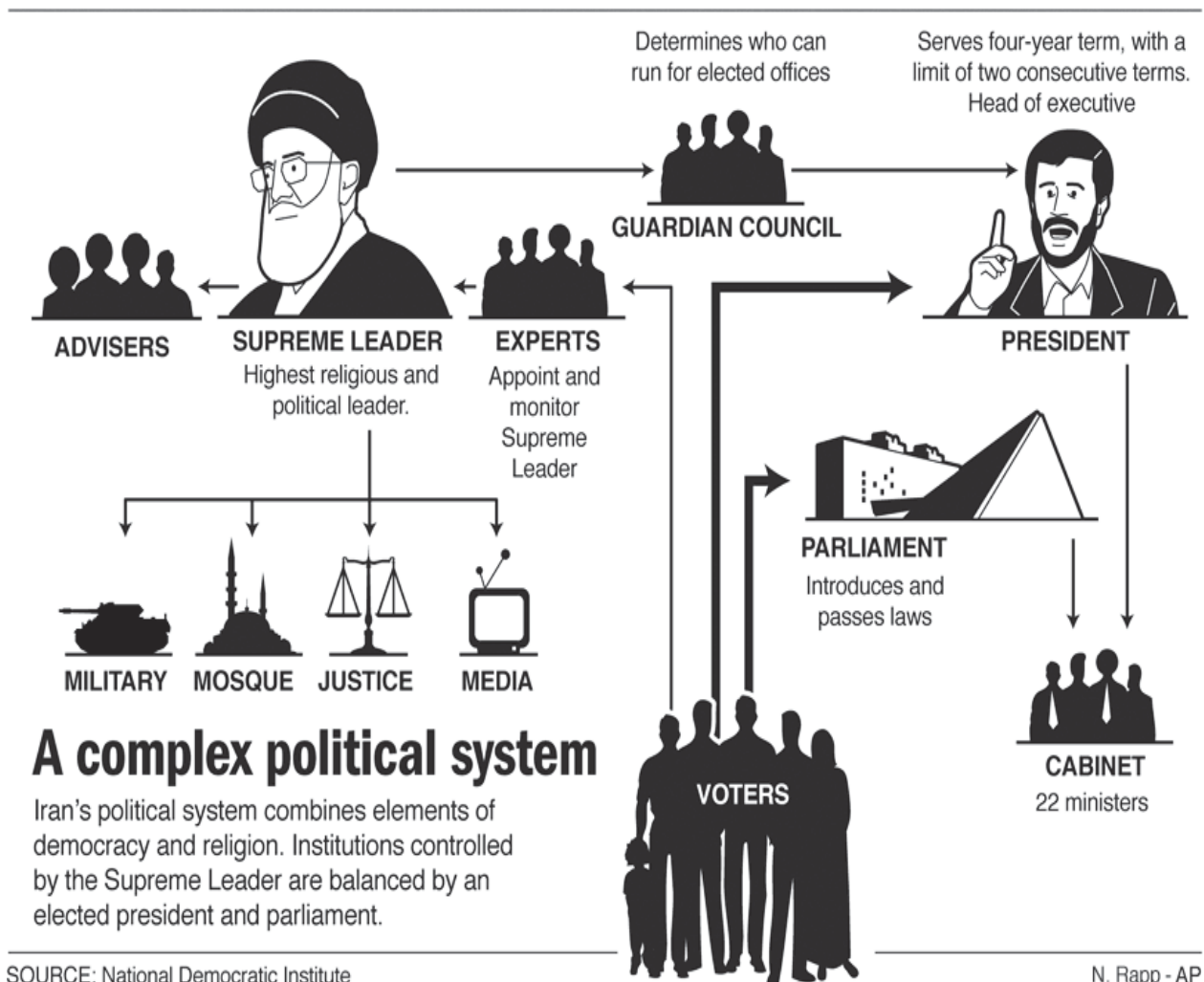
[ANDARZGOO BLV.]



- ROUTE OF DoRDOR
- MAIN STREES WITH DIRECT ACCESS TO DoRDOR LOCATION
- MAIN ACCESS NODES
- HIGHWAY

**WHERE
IS MY
VOTE?**

[Protests and Rooftops]



A complex political system

Iran's political system combines elements of democracy and religion. Institutions controlled by the Supreme Leader are balanced by an elected president and parliament.

SOURCE: National Democratic Institute

N. Rapp - AP

[Before election]

Presidential elections in Tehran are one of the very few events held on an urban scale that encourage citizen participation through candidates' campaigns. Elections are not particularly democratic, as the candidates are pre-screened and filtered by the Guardian Council — a twelve-member, hardcore Islamic body, to which six are appointed directly by the Supreme Leader and the other half with his indirect supervision. The elections essentially offer the citizens nothing more than a choice between bad and worse. Despite all this, the elections bring some excitement and change to the major cities of Iran, and Tehran in particular, for a period of a few weeks. In 2009, however, this change and excitement had a different character. The city was experiencing something much greater in scale. There was an unfamiliar hope and enthusiasm among the supporters of two of the 2009 presidential candidates, Mousavi and Karoubi. Mohammad Khatami — an ex-president popular among the youth, middle-class voters, and the educated populace — had registered to run in the election, only to later withdraw in favour of Mousavi. Mousavi had been a prime minister during the war with Iraq. Khatami's decision to withdraw from the election brought the attention of the young to Mousavi. For the first time, state TV organized debates between all four candidates. The whole city was talking about the debates, and how they did not want Ahmadinejad to be the president for another four years.

Fig 4-15. Political System in Iran

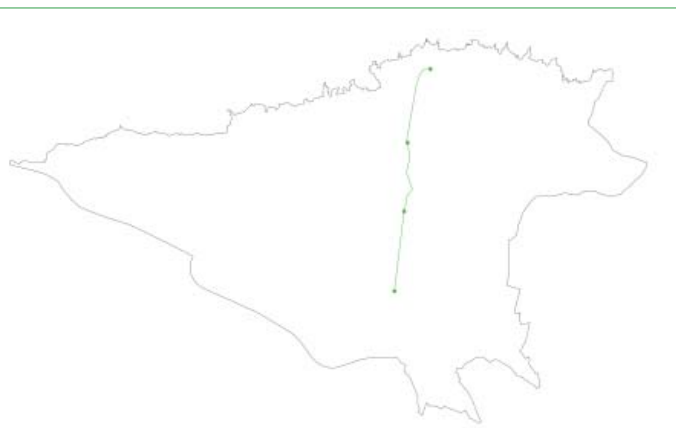


Fig 4-16. Tehran's Longest Street

Vali-asr Street was chosen as it symbolizes all the strata of society along its route from north to south. The aim was to attract the attention of all the layers of society, in contrast to Ahmadinejad, who mostly had the support of poor, religious, and working-class voters.

Mousavi's campaign, which was supported by the reformists and the most popular political figures, soon turned into a full-blown public movement. For the first time in Iran, a colour became the symbol of a campaign: the colour green, the symbol for those who are Seyed (descendants of Mohammed the Prophet), became the colour of Mousavi's campaign, and later became the colour to represent the Iranian uprising for freedom and democracy. Numerous public conferences were held as part of the reformist candidate's campaign. Conspicuous participation and support from the young completely changed the character and quality of the pre-election era. On June 8, a human chain of about twenty kilometres was formed along the famous Vali-asr Street from north to south, with green signs and ribbons demonstrating support for Mousavi. This was the largest social gathering in support of a presidential candidate in Iran to that date. It was estimated that between two hundred thousand and three hundred thousand people were on streets that day.

Fig 4-17.Green Human Chain 2009

Friday, June 12, 2009, was the date of the tenth presidential election, which is now also referred to as the June coup d'état. The surprising result, which came the next day from the interior ministry, indicated that, with 24 million votes (or 63 percent of the vote), Ahmadinejad had won the election. This announcement was met with fierce opposition from the other candidates and a significant portion of the population. The veracity of the election was in doubt. Many political analysts called the election a coup.³

[What happened after election]

Beginning a day after the election, many protests and demonstrations were staged to protest against the large-scale manipulation of votes and fraud in the election. Slogans and chants, in the early days, were only in regards to the fraud and rigging of the election, and people were only demanding a re-election with better handling this time.

On the following Saturday night, the police and the plainclothes militia attacked a university dorm, leaving five students dead and many more injured, and taking away many under arrest. The day after, on Bloody Sunday, June 15, people went to the streets again, this time to protest the heinous atrocities against the students. This was reported as the largest anti-government protest in Iran's history, after the Revolution of 1979. Several people were killed. Basij started to shoot people, violence began to erupt, and a different phase of resistance and dissent began. People had only been protesting against the results of the election, but after that Sunday, political mourning and protest started over those who were killed during protests intended to be peaceful. The slogans changed from "Where is my vote?" to "They killed our brothers and sisters because they asked, 'Where is my vote?'"

Every day of the following week, peaceful, silent protests occurred, and exactly a week after the election, Iran's Supreme Leader, Khamenei, said during the Friday prayers that "the shed blood and lost lives are upon those who encourage such protests, and it is best to follow the law if there are any complaints against the election." The day after the speech, two of the candidates, who had been referred to as opposition leaders since the election, asked for another round of demonstration. It was on that day that Neda Agha-Soltan (the girl whose last moments were captured on an amateur cell phone video and spread extensively on social media as an icon for the struggle of Iranian protesters) and more than twenty other protesters were killed.⁴

From then to now, the movement has carried on with ups and downs. The opposition has held many protests and demonstrations, and they have all been brutally cracked down by the government. Mass arrests of dissenters and government critics began, and the dictatorial, totalitarian face of the Iranian government was exposed in the international arena.

The uprising in Iran, which is said to have since inspired similar protests in the Middle East and north Africa, is known as the Green Movement. The Green Movement refers to the series of events that occurred after the presidential election. Green as a colour was chosen first for Mousavi's supporters, but after the election, it became the symbol of unity and dissidence against dictatorship.

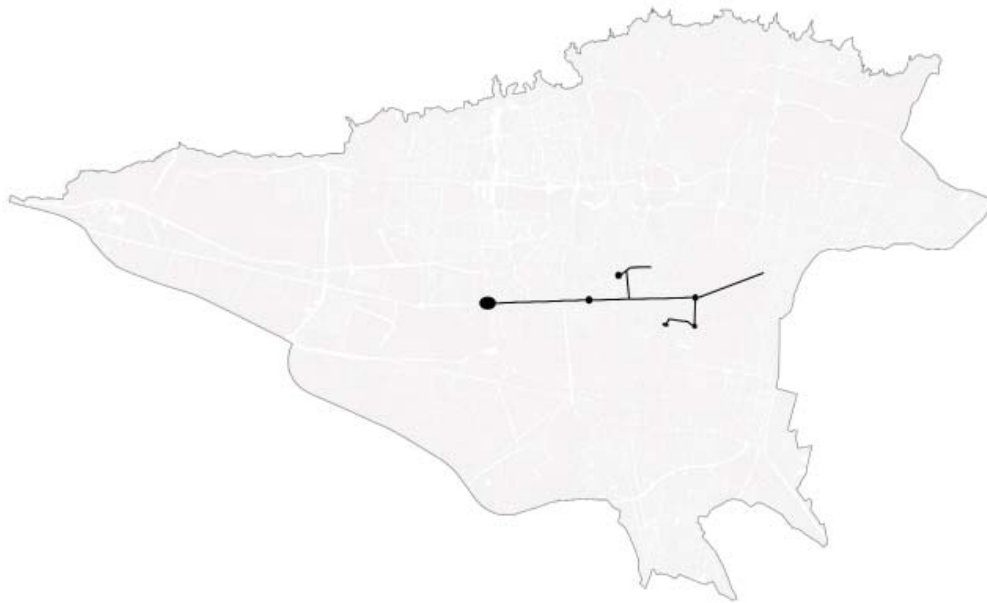
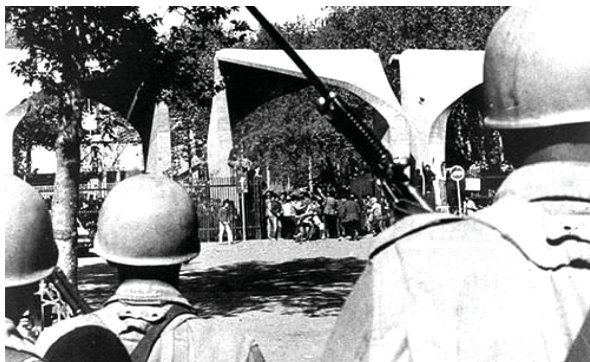


Fig 4-18.Route of Protests in 1979



1979 Tehran University Entrance

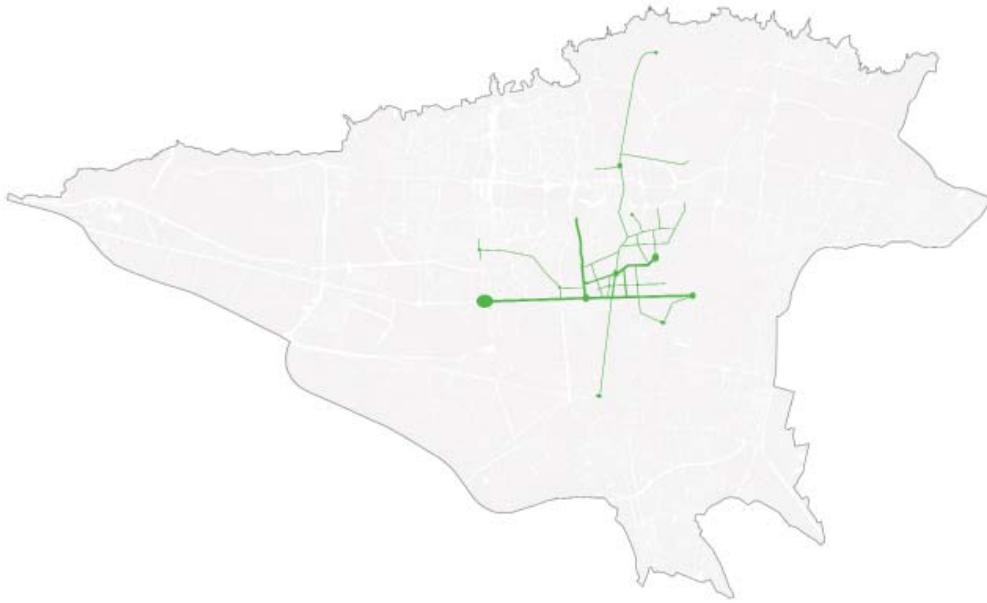


Fig 4-19.Route of Protests in 2009



2009 Tehran University Entrance



1. Gather with your friends in a residential street where security forces and plain clothes militia are less likely to be seen.
2. You should have some placards and slogans ready.
3. Double check that you and others have all the necessary stuff.
4. Encourage as many people as possible to join.
5. Form a bigger group on the way to the main street.
6. Head toward a monument or a street which is symbolic or is well known in the collective memory of the group.
7. Try your best to be safe and help whoever you can.

Fig 4-20. Protest Arrangement Diagram

[Rooftops]

The aftermaths of the 2009 election, led to creation of another form of subversive space in Tehran. When the peaceful protests in the streets turned into violence and were severely suppressed by authorities, many Tehrani citizens, in a spontaneous act found an alternative way to show their opposition and solidarity.

When official spaces of the city, could not provide a space for collective expression, people resorted to their private rooftops and have turned them into an arena for solidarity and showing their opposition. For months after the election, every night at 10 pm, when the main national TV channel broadcasts the state news, rooftops of Tehran were scene to an extraordinary solidarity among those who believed that the election was rigged. Every night, people would go on their rooftops and shout “Allah-o-akbar” (God is great) or “we are all together” for about ten to fifteen minutes since it was much safer being on the rooftops than on the streets.





Fig 4-21. Rooftops Diagram

Due to the lack of a safe public ground for gatherings, meetings, and debates, the rooftops of Tehran at ten p.m. after the election would turn into a ground for citizens to demand their rights to expression, opposition, and solidarity.

Fig 4-22. People Shouting on Rooftops

AFTERWORD

My initial studies of Western theories of public space, social relations, the right to the city, and, most significantly, the importance of social participation in the creation of public spaces were the starting point of this thesis. Writing this thesis was both instructive and very hard for me at the same time. Comparing all the limitations and fears that I used to have just appearing in official spaces to what I experienced in the West, and sorting through what I learned from piles of books and writings about public space and social life, were not easy tasks. On the other hand, remembering the excitement of being in such spaces and situations that were considered illegal — and not getting arrested — brought back nostalgic feelings of satisfaction.

For me, there is no doubt that everyday activities, behaviours, interactions, communications, and public life are essential elements of city life. Consequently, a city's public spaces, as accessible spaces for all, provide a platform for participation in its public life. Public spaces enable citizens to be exposed to and benefit from the existence of others. Additionally, public spaces also provide a ground for participation in society. By providing a stage for individual expression and social interaction, they become a realm for the practice of democracy. In Western culture, public space is inseparable from the idea of democracy;² civil liberties movements gather in public spaces to discuss, organize, and plan actions and demonstrations. As city dwellers, the citizens have a right to the spaces of the city. The rights to assembly, public gathering, appearance, and freedom of expression, communication, inhabitation, occupation, and presence, all are practiced in city spaces, and especially the public spaces.

However, the public spaces of Tehran, for myself when I was living there and many others today, are associated with control, fear, suppression, and domination. They do not provide a space for citizens' representation, let alone for social interaction, communication, and democratic encounter. Due to their great visibility in cities, public

“What makes a space public—a space in which cry and demand for the rights to the city can be heard—is often not its preordained publicness. Rather, it is when, to fulfill a pressing need, some group or another takes space and through its actions makes it public. The act of representing one's group to a larger public creates a space for representation. Representation both demands and creates space.”

Don Mitchell¹

spaces provide the perfect stage for an authoritarian government to establish its domination and display its power. Since the Revolution of 1979, the government has tried to monitor and control the public spaces of the city and the citizens' appearance, behaviour, and representation in that realm by any means necessary. Imbued with intense limitations, censorship, and restrictions, they are far from providing a stage for social interaction, the practice of citizenship, individual expression, visibility, and involvement in society. The authoritarian state has indeed created its "own spaces"³ and has implemented a wide range of policies to ensure that public space acts as a platform from which to display the domination of its power and control the citizens.

There is a widespread monitoring presence in the official spaces of the city. Through brutal enforcement and dictation of moral codes and rules for the appearance and behaviour of citizens in the public realm, there is no space left for individual opinion and representation in such spaces. Signs of this control are visible throughout the city; wall paintings, posters, flags, and banners are constant reminders of Revolution values, and what are considered acceptable behaviours. Moreover, the gender segregation policy limits the appearance of citizens in the spaces of the city. It is not possible for groups or couples of different genders to use recreational spaces together, to sit next to each other in meetings and classrooms, or even to take public transit together.

The constant surveillance and suppression applied to the city's public spaces and individual lives bring about an ongoing defiance and struggle in the daily lives of many citizens of Tehran, especially those in the younger generation. This defiance in the younger generation is not an organized, institutional act of resistance, but simply everyday acts that circumvent the imposed limitations and collectively indicate objection to suppression. The totalitarian authorities prevent the official spaces of the city from providing truly public domains

for the citizens. Therefore, in their struggle to obtain their rights and play a role in the participation in and production of the public life and spaces of the city, citizens of Tehran have created their own types of spaces: spaces of subversion and defiance. Subversive public spaces in Tehran stand in for what is missing in the official public spaces: spaces for social interaction, representation, and freedom of expression, and a ground for practicing everyday activities.

These subversive spaces, which are seen in ordinary spaces of the city, are spontaneous and temporary. Ordinary spaces of the city, in specific times and circumstances, turn into spaces of defiance and struggle. Social and public activities, regardless of the restrictions imposed by authorities, take place in these alternative spaces that people have created subversively. Private spaces such as living rooms change into spaces for social interaction, communication, and the exchange of information. Underground basements turn into a platform for otherwise forbidden music concerts and studios, as well as self-expression. Rooftops and streets become spaces for solidarity among citizens and demonstration against authorities. Cars and streets provide grounds for socializing and interacting publicly.

I think that these subversive spaces in Tehran are close to Lefebvre's idea of representational space, since they are created by people's actions and they represent the spaces of everyday life. These spaces are also what de Certeau introduced as tactics, since they are situational and created through ordinary, everyday acts, and they subvert the imposed limitations and restrictions. What is valuable about the subversive public spaces of Tehran is that they are good examples of citizen participation, and representations of their role in contributing to the creation of public spaces. Also, they are practical and feasible with minimum effort — important in the present situation, where no other option is available. Moreover, their occurrence in ordinary spaces of the city and their transient nature make them hard to be tracked down and restrained by authorities.

The subversive public spaces provide evidence that representation not only demands a space, but creates one. However, they still come out of ordinary spaces of the city. The spaces that authorities have tried to dominate turn into sites for demanding and obtaining rights, as well as spaces for performing daily activities, through citizen subversion. For example, the streets and boulevards of Tehran, despite heavy control, turn into alternative spaces for socializing with strangers and exchanging information, and also a stage for solidarity, expression, and opposition.

Although the subversive spaces are alternatives to official public spaces of the city, they cannot be a true replacement for public space. While they work temporarily as alternative spaces to provide a ground for social and public interaction and freedom of expression, which are denied in official spaces, they are still faced with many limitations. They are still not accessible to everyone, and lack the visibility that a public space provides.

The significance of this thesis is in identifying and studying two categories of public space in Tehran, based on the way they are produced. The official and subversive public spaces of Tehran coexist and often coincide with each other, and both are crucial in forming the public culture and life of the city. While official public spaces offer a stage to demonstrate the domination of state power for authorities, subversive spaces are alternative and representational spaces for citizens to practice their rights.

This thesis contributes two very important ideas, not only for cities under dictatorship, but for all cities. First is the importance of the existence of public space as a representational space, and second is the human capacity to appropriate spaces in order to address their rights. The existence of subversive spaces cannot be interpreted as evidence that public space does not matter, since people can create alternative spaces to obtain their rights and needs. Rather, I think

that the creation and existence of subversive spaces in Tehran amplifies the importance of social relations and public spaces in city life. The need for public space, as a social space for interaction and democratic encounter, is strong enough that it has been the inspiration for creativity in the creation of such alternative spaces.

It is not known or predictable, when or if the public spaces of Tehran will become truly public, but until then, the city's streets, rooftops, basements, and living rooms will continue to bustle with activity and life.

Epilogue

When I left Tehran, I realized that public space plays a very important role in shaping our memories and experience of a city. It also plays a very important role in everyday life, daily activities, and participation in the social life of a city. My experience in the public spaces of Tehran was very different from what I experienced in the West.

Studying the matter of public space in Tehran, as a city in transition to a global culture and (hopefully) a democratic society, emphasized the importance of public life, social relations, and the participation of citizens in society and the creation of public spaces.

On my defense day, many interesting subjects were discussed, and issues were raised regarding public spaces in other countries such as Egypt and Jordan. These discussions suggested a broader scope. The constraints that I documented of official public spaces in Tehran are not limited only to Iran; they can also be seen in many other Middle Eastern cities. However, among non-Western cities, I am most familiar with the situation of public space in Tehran, because I grew up there.

It would be very interesting to study the issues of public space in other Middle Eastern cities, as well as any city under dictatorship. Also, it would be very instructive to expand upon the issues that a non-democratic government can impose on the daily life of its citizens.

Hichkas, meaning “Nobody,” one of the pioneers of underground music, is often referred to as the father of Persian rap. He sings about social problems and issues of the younger generation. Unsurprisingly, he never got official permission to record or distribute his music.

His song “A Good Day Will Come” is considered to be his reaction to the incidents after the presidential election in 2009.

یه روز خوب میاد
هیچکس

یه روز خوب میاد
که ما هم نکشیم، یه هم نگاه بد نکنیم
با هم دوست باشیم و دست بندازیم رو شونه های هم
آها، مثل بچه گیا تو دبستان

هیچ کدومونم نیستیم بیکار
در حال ساخت و ساز ایران
واسه اینکه خسته نشی اینبار
من خشت میزارم، تو میمان
بعد این همه بارون خون
بالاخره پیداش میشه رنگین کمون
دیگه از سنگ ابر نمیشه آسمون
به سرخی لاله نمیشه آب چوب
مونن اذان بگو
خدا بزرگه بلا به دور
مامان امشب واسمون دعا بخون

تا جایی که یادمه این خاک همیشه ندا میداد
یه روز خوب میاد
که هر ج و مرج نیست و تو ثلثو غیا
به جا فحش به هم شیرینی میدیمو زولیا بامیه
همه شنگولیم و همه چی عالییه
فقط جای رفیقامون که نیستن خالییه
خون میمونه تو رگ و
اشنا نمیشه با آسمون و آسفالت
دیگه فواره نمیکنه، لخته نمیشه
هیچ ملاری سر خاک بچه نمیره
خونه پناهگاه نیست و بیرون جنگ
وای از تو مثل بم و بیرونم
یا اصلا مثل هیروشیما بعد بمب
نمیدونم، دارم آتیش میگیرم و اینو میخونم
پیش خودت شاید فکر کنی نیوونم
ولی یه روز خوب میاد، اینو میدونم

راستی، وقتی یه روز خوب میاد
شاید از ما چیزی نمونه جز خوبی ها
تالمن و خراب نیست، همه چی امن و آمان
کرما هم ققلکمون میند و میشیم شانروان هه
آسمون به چه قشنگه، کنار قبر سبزه، چمنه
هیچ مغزی نمبخواد در ره
فقط آگه صبر داشته باشی حله
دست اجنبی کوتاست از خاک
نگو اووه کو تا فردا
آگه نیودم میخوام یه قول بدی بهم
که هر سربازی دیدی، گل بدی پیش
دیگه هیچ مرغی پشت میله نیست
هیچ زن از اده ای بیوه نیست
دخترم بابات داره میاد خونه
آره برو واسه شام میز بچین

'A Good Day Will Come' (English Translation)

by HICHKAS

A good day will come
When we do not kill each other / We won't look at each other badly
We will all be friends / and walk with our arms on each other's shoulders
Oh, just like our childhood in grade school

None of us will be left without a role
In building and development of Iran
Just so that you will not become tired
This time I will place the mortar and you the cement
After all the rain of blood
A rainbow will eventually be seen
The sky wouldn't be clouded with rocks
The gutter will no longer run red like tulips
Moazzen sing Azan (Islamic call to prayer)
God is great, problems will be far away
Mom! Sing a prayer for us tonight

As long as I can remember this land always gave us a Neda*
A good day will come
Instead of all the chaos, when it is crowded
We will trade sweets with each other instead of insults
We are all happy and everything is good
We just miss our friends who are not here with us (anymore)
Blood will remain in veins
And will not become acquainted with the sky and the pavement
It will not become a fountain / It will not clot
No mother will have to visit to grave of their child
The home will not be refuge while there is a war outside
I'm internally destroyed like Bam*
Or even like Hiroshima after the bomb
I don't know, I'm burning while I recite this
You might think to yourself that I'm crazy
But a good day will come, I know this

By the way, when the good day comes
All that may be left from us to remember will be our good deeds
Things are not broken and dangerous, we are safe and sound
The worms tickle us and make us happy, Hah
The sky is so beautiful, By the grave is the green grass
No brain would want to leave
But if you only have some patience everything will be solved
The hands of outsiders will not reach us
Don't say "oh, tomorrow is so far away!"
If I'm not here I want you to make me a promise
That you give a flower to every soldier you see
There are no longer any birds trapped behind bars
Liberal women are no longer widows
My daughter your dad is coming home
Yes, go set the table for dinner

End Notes

Chapter I - Encounter

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Chapter 2 - Timeline Narrative

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