

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**TRADITIONAL URBAN PERSIAN SQUARE  
AS A SENSE OF PLACE**

**CASE STUDY OF NAQSH-E-JAHAN SQUARE  
ISFAHAN, IRAN**

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any other degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

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## ABSTRACT

Urban squares are active elements of a city, and are continuously changing according to social, economic, and technical conditions. They can be considered ideal places to display artifacts and components that remind people of their shared experiences and what they value as a community having a strong sense of place. Focusing on public spaces is the first step to any study of a city and its society with a strong sense of place. Some traditional urban squares such as Naqsh-e-Jahan in Iran have all the essential elements to create the sense of place for visitors. This research aims to explore the specific characteristics that enhance space quality. In addition, it tries to find the organizational factors in the traditional urban landscape such as Naqsh-e-Jahan in promoting the quality of designed public space through survey with focused on the concepts of sense of place. Mixed quantitative and qualitative research methods were adopted to identify urban squares in Persia, their significance as traditional urban landscapes, their characteristics especially those that increase the quality of urban spaces and create sense of place. Empirical data for quantitative research was collected via a questionnaire survey in Naqsh-e-Jahan square and qualitative data via in-depth structured interviews. The findings revealed that factors such as attention to users and climate and involving all the visitors' sense and attending to physical factors had an effect on increasing the sense of place.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Traditional urban squares in a city are functional places exemplifying public relationships as centers of interaction as well as community places. Urban squares are considered ideal places to display artifacts and memorabilia that remind people of their shared experiences and what they value as a community having a strong sense of place (Karimi, 2002, p.77).

Any study of a city and its society with a strong sense of place should focus on public spaces. The Oxford English Dictionary (1990) describes public space as “generally a places which belong to the general public.” It can be considered a focal point in the city provided by the local or central government that is available and free for everyone to use.

Karimi (2002) notes that until today, the changing of urban public place is one of the most serious challenges affecting both the working order and transformation of spatial places and their functions. He also emphasized that the square was often the centerpiece and essence of public places in ancient cities.

The urban square is an active component of cities and is continuously changing according to social, economic, and technical conditions. The core of the square is its space and function. In fact, it has become meaningful to the city; the collection of elements and components in the area cause it to be labelled “the square” (Tavasoli, 1989, p.123). Most urban squares are suitable locations for open markets, musical performances, political rallies, and other events that require space and a prominent gathering point.

Iranian architecture and urban spaces provides a rich heritage and for research and be very much considered rich in the context of structural design as exemplified by the architecture of the urban square. In general, Iranian architecture displays great variety, both structurally and aesthetically, developing gradually and coherently out of earlier traditions and experiences. With gradual innovations, and despite the repeated