"Hosseiniyeh"; An In-between Space in the Iranian Traditional Cities

"Hosseiniyeh"; İran Geleneksel Kentlerinde Bir Ara Mekân

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Öz

Bu çalışma, geleneksel İran şehirlerinde bir mahalle meydanı olan Hosseiniyeh'in sosyo-mekânsal rollerini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmanın hipotezi, Hosseiniyeh'in hiyerarşik kentsel yapı içinde bir "ara mekân" olarak çalıştığıdır. Aradalık kavramı, çatışan alanlar arasındaki karşılıklı ayrılık ve bağlantı durumlarını destekleyen mimari nitelikleri ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Ara mekânlar, kentsel alanların bütünleşmesini koruyan temel unsurlardır. Modernist planlama sonucunda bu ara mekânlar yok olunca önemleri ortaya çıktı. Ara mekânları gerçek bağlamda yeniden düşünmek faydalı olacaktır. İran'ın tarihi şehirlerinin organik kentsel dokusunda, "Hosseiniyeh" kamusal (Çarşı) ve yarı kamusal alanlar (mahalle) arasında bir geçiş alanı olarak oluşturulmuştur. Eşsiz kentsel konumu ile bu mahalle meydanı, uygun bir ara mekân örneği olabilir. Şii Safevi devleti döneminde (1501-1736) geliştirilen Hosseiniyeh'nin ana işlevi, İslam dünyasının tek tiyatro gösterisi olan Ta'ziyeh için bir mekân olarak hizmet etmekti. Bu çalışma, Hosseiniyeh'in mimari niteliklerini ara mekânın teorik çerçevesine dayanarak değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Meydanın mekânsal özellikleri ve mimari bileşenleri, ara mekânın çeşitli durumlarıyla karşılaştırılmıştır. Bulgular, tarihi meydanın bir ara mekân niteliklerini karşıladığını göstermektedir. Sosyal ve işlevsel olarak farklı iki alanı birbirine bağlayan Hosseiniyeh, bir kamusal alanın sonunu ve bir yerleşim bölgesinin başlangıcını gösteren bir ara kentsel mekândı. Meydan, kendine özgü sosyo-politik karakteriyle Şii kimliğini korumuş ve kentsel birliği pekiştirmiştir. Bu çalışma, gerçek kentsel bağlamda bir ara mekânın nasıl işlediğinin anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Ara Mekân, Hosseiniyeh, Ta'ziyeh, Geleneksel İran Şehri, Mahalle Meydanı*

ABSTRACT

The present study aims to analyze the socio-spatial roles of Hosseiniyeh, a neighborhood square in traditional Iranian cities. The hypothesis of the research is that Hosseiniyeh acted as an in-between space within the hierarchical urban structure. The notion of in-betweenness reveals architectural qualities that support the reciprocal states of separation and connection between conflicting realms. In-between spaces are the key elements to preserve the integration of urban areas. When these intermediate spaces disappeared as a result of modernist planning, their importance was revealed. It is useful to reconsider in-between spaces in the real context. In the organic urban fabric of Iranian historic cities, "Hosseiniyeh" was configured as a transitional space between the public (Bazaar) and the semi-public realms (neighborhood). With its unique urban location, this neighborhood square can be an appropriate case of the in-between space. Developed during the Shiite Safavid government (1501 to 1736), the main function of Hosseiniyeh was to serve as a venue for Ta'ziyeh, the only indigenous theater engendered by the world of Islam. The present study aims to evaluate the architectural qualities of Hosseiniyeh based on the theoretical framework of the in-between space. The spatial characteristics of the square and its architectural components are compared with the various states of the in-between space. The findings illustrate that the historic square meets the qualities of an in-between space. Connecting the two socially and functionally different areas, Hosseiniyeh was an intermediate urban space that indicated the end of a public realm and the beginning of a residential district. With its specific socio-political character, the square protected the Shiite identity and reinforced the urban unity. The present study contributes to an understanding of how an in-between space acted in a real urban context.

Keywords: *In-between Space, Hosseiniyeh, Ta'ziyeh, Traditional Iranian City, Neighborhood Square*

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INTRODUCTION:

In contemporary cities, the modernist planning approach has led to the emergence of isolated buildings settled in massive empty areas. The residual spaces between buildings are supposed to be the place for social and recreational activities; a dream that has never been realized. Roger Trancik named the large undesigned areas as "lost spaces" which are located "away from the flow of pedestrian activity" in the city and gradually become "no-man's-lands" (Trancik, 1991). The architectural features of the space between buildings are neglected and this resulted in the "life around but not between buildings" (Gehl, 1987). The status of architecture has been reduced to some self-referring and disengaged objects which define nothing. The notion of in-between space was considered by Teams 10's architects like Aldo van Eyck (1968) as a tool to criticize the modernist approach in the 1950s and 60s. They scrutinized the theoretical aspects of in-between spaces to explore its concrete forms. The dense and compact urban fabric of Islamic cities was an inspiration source in these terms. The concepts like "Casbah" refers to spatial organizations in which the in-between space has a significant role (Oggiano, 2016).

While modern cities suffer from the discontinuity of urban spaces, it can be helpful to evaluate examples of in-between spaces in the real context. A hierarchical spatial organization was established among the main elements of Iranian traditional cities: mosque, bazaar, and neighborhood. In its introverted culture, the spaces between public and private realms had a significant role (Tavassoli, 1990; Soltanzade, 1993; Ramezani & Hamidi, 2010; Balilan et.al. 2011). A high level of social interaction among neighbors occurred in the transitional spaces where inhabitants could manage both needs of privacy and social contacts at the same time. These semi-public and semi-private areas "established a specific network where symbolic messages are exchanged" (Ramezani & Hamidi, 2010). This structure had a high potential to generate various forms of in-betweenness (Balilan, et al. 2011). The Bazaar, Friday Mosque and important governmental buildings were located at the center around which the neighborhoods were configured (Soltanzadeh, 1993). In an organic pattern, the main streets connected the gateways to the city center. Stemmed from the main streets, the secondary network configured the structure of residential areas till the narrow cul-de-sac alleys. A mosque or a bath were usually existed in each neighborhood to serve the inhabitants. Gradually, an open area was produced next to the buildings that acted as a semi-public realm. In the 16th century, this area was reconstructed as a square, named Hosseiniyeh, to serve a new religious function (Tavassoli & Bonyadi, 1992, 125). Although, in modern cities, the total area of public lands inarguably dominated the private, it makes no contribution for the urban life. Studying traditional spaces like Hosseiniyeh provides the opportunity to reconsider urban elements that linked the areas with each other.

In Shia Islam, the mourning ceremony of Muharram has an important socio-cultural status. The ceremony consists of many activities which are set up to commemorate an event that constitutes a significant part of Shiite identity. They mark the anniversary of the Battle of Karbala when Hossein ibn Ali, the grandson of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, was martyred in 680 AD. The ceremony was often hold in mosques and buildings called Takyeh. The Safavid rulers, who established Shia Islam as the formal religion of Iran for the first time, were looking the ways to legitimize the new government. Pulling the mourning ceremony outside into urban spaces could make a more effective impression on the society. Ta'ziyeh, a dramatic reconstruction of the event of Karbala, was developed and popularized by the supports of the Safavid kings. It turned out to be a complex melodrama that had strong presentational potentials. It was planned that the splendid play to be watched by more people. The irregular neighborhood square was reconstructed as a congregation hall. A new type of geometrical square with a unique socio-political importance was built to spread Muharram ceremony

in the neighborhoods. Although the performance of Ta'ziyeh was hold once a year, the square's name, Hosseiniyeh, came from it. The present study argues that Hosseiniyeh had a particular physical character to act as a transitional space between the public realms of the city center and the semi-private domains of the neighborhood. It becomes a threshold that implies the end of one territory and the beginning of another one. The identity of the neighborhood was reinforced by Hosseiniyeh that articulates its relationship with the city. Hosseiniyeh has not been ever studied in terms of its specific urban location. The intermediary role of the square to link other urban elements makes sense in the contemporary urban design practice.

1. Methodology of the Study

The present research is a case study that aims to deeply analyze the configuration of a specific urban element in Iranian traditional cities. The notion of in-between space is used as a theoretical framework to evaluate the spatial qualities of Hosseiniyeh. The framework is created based on the concepts proposed by Aldo van Eyck (1968), Christopher Alexander (1977), Jan Gehl (1987), Salingaros (2000), Narongpon Laiprakobsup (2007) Stavrides (2010) and Stevens (2007). An analytical study is done to recognize the spatial characteristics of Hosseiniyeh. Then, various states of in-between spaces are corresponded with them to understand how Hosseiniyeh acted. Analyzing the relationships of the square with other urban elements is important to understand its urban role. Therefore, Hosseiniyeh needs to be considered in the city level. The architectural features of the square have also the potential to make in-between situations. In the block level, the spatial components of Hosseiniyeh such as archway and articulated edges are evaluated.

Historical research is required to investigate the socio-political aspects behind the formation of Hosseiniyeh in the 16th and 17th centuries. The librarian sources related to Iranian urbanism are considered to understand how much important Hosseiniyeh in the urban structure of traditional cities was. The architectural features of Hosseiniyeh and its relationship with other urban elements are analyzed. The historic maps are provided from internet sources and the archival records of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Municipality of Naeen, and Municipality of Zavareh. The morphological features of Hosseiniyeh are compared with the spatial characteristics of the in-between space.

2. The Notion of In-between Space

The in-between space is an architectural idea to provide the physical and conceptual ground for the reconciliation of conflicting realms. The significance of in-between space is its potential to make meaningful relations through which a new type of space is generated. A wide range of in-between spaces can be considered in different scales: from a threshold at the entrance of a building to urban space as an intermediate realm. According to Aldo van Eck (1968), the in-between space is supposed to provide a gentle transition between the conflicting areas such as inside-outside or public-private. Various forms of spatial relationship can be illustrated by three configuration patterns which are presented in the diagram below (Figure 1).

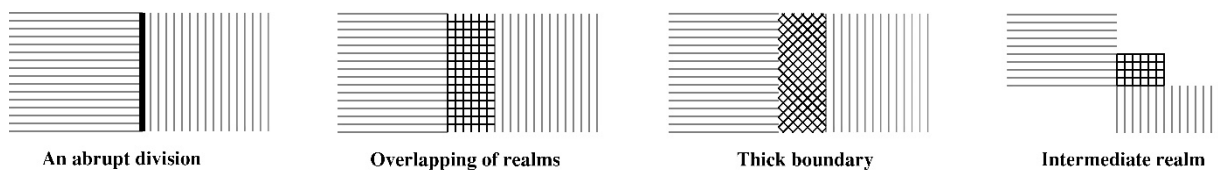| An abrupt division | Overlapping of realms | Thick boundary | Intermediate realm |

Figure 1: Various forms of spatial relationship (source: the authors)

When the co-existence of opposite forces is not possible, a rigid boundary divides them totally. It makes "an abrupt division" with no possibility for a reciprocal relationship. A wall with a door on it

provides no transitional realm, and in-between space cannot be created in this condition. It makes no contribution for social activities and negatively affects the character and function of spaces. By overlapping the juxtaposed realms, the in-between space that contains the features of both sides can be generated. Two realms penetrated the boundary mutually to extend their own characteristics on the other side. This coexistence is explained by van Eyck as "twin-phenomena" like the seashore where two ecosystems, land and sea, meet. Twin-phenomena indicates a kind of equilibrium that is established between natural forces "in spite of compete and conflict between them" (Van Eyck, 1968).

The thick edge is another form of the in-between space that "weave in and out and allow activities to be in or on the boundary," thus the connections between indoors and outdoors are increased (Alexander, 1977). Contrasting to a thin solid wall, the building's "edge with thickness" is capable of encouraging outdoor life with places to linger. "Soft edges" is another term that refers to the boundary with a thickness that allows social activities to take place (Gehl, 2011). In order to make the urban environment more animated, in-between spaces need to be presented as "interactive edges" by which the space attracts various human activities.

"A city of thresholds" is an idea that refers to "a network of intermediary spaces" which present opportunities for encounter with otherness and activate negotiations and inventive transformations (Stavrides, 2010). A threshold refers to a recession or extension at the entrance of buildings like a porch and a colonnade. Jelokhan was an Iranian threshold formed by the designation of private property for the public favor. The more important the building is, the larger is its Jelokhan. Soltanzadeh states that the presence of Jelokhan makes the entrance of a building more important, inviting, and distinct from the street, square, or wherever the building was located (Soltanzadeh, 1993). Jelokhan of Shah Mosque in Nagsh-e Jahan Square of Isfahan presents the idea of threshold in the city level. It represents the spatial condition for emancipation in public life (Stavrides, 2010).

Figure 2. The entrance of Shah (Imam) Mosque in Nagsh-e Jahan Square of Isfahan (source: Soltanzadeh, 1993)

"Liminality", a Latin word that means threshold, is another notion that presents by Stevens (2007) to refer a state of "looseness" and "suspension". No particular activity is supposed to be done in the liminal spaces. They provide a physical stage for a wide range of playful activities that "frames escape from social convention and the exploration of new possibilities" (Stevens, 2007).

Intermediate realm, another form of the in-between space, is explained by Salingaros as "some glue", which couples to urban elements in order to connect them (Salingaros, 2000). Although the main function of the intermediate realm is to connect realms nearby, the importance and spatial character of it can exceed the realms nearby. The in-between space has no single function in this condition. It becomes an "undesignated space that can develop into places responsive to two or more sets of conditions at the same time" (Laiprakobsup, 2007). Acting as the neighborhood center, a congregation hall, and a local market, Hosseiniyeh becomes an intermediate space that has the potential for multiple functions.

Regarding its spatial features, the main criteria to be an in-between can be summarized as:

1- Being a multi-functional and "undesignated space" instead of restricting with a single task
2- Being among the two or more physically and functionally different domains that is the state of "twin-phenomena"
3- Avoiding rigid and solid boundaries that necessitates "the edge with thickness" or a "soft edge"
4- Providing a gentle transition by overlapping the territories of two realms or creating an "intermediate space"

These features are considered as the criteria of in-betweenness by which Hosseiniyeh is evaluated.

3. The Socio-political Importance of Muharram Ceremony

Open public spaces like Forum, Agora or plaza were rarely existed in Islamic cities. The socio-political relations and the lifestyle of Islamic community produced introverted spaces as the courtyard of mosques or Madrasah. Hosseiniyeh was a new type of urban space to emphasize the importance of a religious ceremony. Shortly after the prophet's death, the Islamic community was divided into two branches as the conflict existed to choose his successor. Shia believed that Imam Ali, the cousin of the prophet, and his sons including Hossein should be the spiritual and political leaders of Muslims. In spite of the deep dissensions, a Shiite community that is distinguished by its own rituals and collective memory did not exist before Hossein's death (Nakash, 1993, 161). After the battle of Karbala, Hossein's sufferings and martyrdom have become a powerful symbol to fight persecution. This symbol established "long-lasting moods and motivations among Shias, reinforcing their Shiite communal sense and distinct sectarian identity as distinguished from the Sunnis" (Nakash, 1993, 161). Hossein's martyrdom has been regarded by Shiite, as "the model for self-sacrifice in the way of God, a revolt against wrong-doing and oppression." (Ayoub, 1978)

The day of Hussein's martyrdom was Ashura that is the tenth of Muharram (the first month of the Islamic calendar). Interestingly, Ashura had had a long history in other religious traditions before Islam. Ashura had been a day for fasting in the Jewish community. The term of Ashura derives from the Hebrew word "āsōr" which was referred to as an "elaborate rite of purging both sanctuary and nation on the occasion of the Jewish New Year" (Ayoub, 1978). The fact that Hussein happened to die on a day when the god was celebrated is just an accident. However, it could be a good opportunity for Shias to further symbolize the event. Therefore, Ashura turned out to be the commemoration ceremony of a religious hero. It has been considered as a source of identity that privileges the status of Shiism doctrine. "Perhaps no other single event in Islamic history has played so central a role in shaping Shia identity and communal sense as the martyrdom of Hossein and his companions at Karbala" (Nakash, 1993, 161). The Shias have regarded Hussein as the prince of martyrs who died to preserve Islam. His martyrdom characterizes an honored sacrifice in the eternal contest of the right against wrong, and the justice against misconduct.

Abbasid rulers were the first who found it useful to bestow their patronage on the rites of Ashura that was also called Muharram ceremony. In the 10th century, the first types of Hosseiniyeh were built in Baghdad, Aleppo, and Cairo. They were some middle-size buildings for gathering of people who participated in the Muharram observances. In the 11th century, by Buyid dynasty, Muharram ceremony was declared as a public mourning. Parades were organized on the streets and squares, Bazaar were closed, and building facades covered in black. (Chelkowski, 1977). In the 12th century, the mourning ceremonies of Muharram were held throughout Iran, and both Sunnis and Shias participated in them. The greatest stimulus for the development of Muharram ceremony as a popular religious and artistic phenomenon came with the rise of the Safavid Empire in the early 16th century. Under the

Safavid dynasty, Shia Islam was established as the state religion and was used to unify the country, especially against the Ottoman Empire and Uzbeks.

In the Safavid period, "the Muharram observances received royal encouragement; commemoration of Hossein's martyrdom became a patriotic as well as a religious act" (Chelkowski, 1977). From a socio-political perspective, Muharram ceremony acts as a means of legitimacy for the Safavid rulers. The annual ceremonies of Muharram became a significant part of Shiite identity, and it "acquired the status of a national institution" (Beeman, 1981). From then on, the "remembrance of Hossein" has become an essential practice for the Iranian governments which have based their legitimation upon Shia Islam. It was during the Safavid dynasty that Ta'ziyeh, a theatrical genre, was produced and popularized. Ta'ziyeh was a dramatic performance where the main themes and hagiographic tales of the Karbala's event were represented. It was created to artistically dramatize the religious symbol of Hossein's martyrdom. Peter Chelkowski believed that "Ta'ziyeh is the only indigenous drama engendered by the world of Islam. The Ta'ziyeh of Iran is ritual theatre and derives its form and content from deep-rooted religious traditions. But although it is Islamic in appearance, it is strongly Persian, drawing vital inspiration from its special political and cultural heritage" (Chelkowski, 1977). Chelkowski believed that the form and content of Ta'ziyeh originate from a pre-Islamic tradition in Persian culture. Celebration of deceased heroes and the theme of being eternal through sacrifice had long existed in the ancient Iranian culture. This can be traced in an old form of storytelling performance called "Naqqali" within which some Iranian ancient legends such as "the death of Siavush" or "the kill of Sohrab" were presented. Naqqali is the most specific form of performing arts in Iran, and most probably Ta'ziyeh originated from the art of Naqqali-Khani (Kiani Bidgoli, & Fatehi, 2019).

4. The Necessity of a Congregation Hall for the Ta'ziyeh

The Safavid Empire can be recognized as a remarkable period in the history of Iran after Islam. A powerful government was established which "prolonged the older political and cultural tradition of Iran and endowed the country and its peoples with a unique character of historic significance, Iranicisation of Persian Islam, which has in part endured even up to the present day" (Roemer, 1968, 198). Shiite ideology, which was officially recognized, contributed Safavids to distinguish Iran from other Islamic states. The architecture was also used as an expression of power to elaborate external symbols of the government.

Both "Naqqali" and "Ta'ziyeh", the two Iranian performing arts, reached their peak during the Safavid era. Naqqali had a poetic content which was generally performed in coffee-houses for the purpose of entertainment. However, in the case of Ta'ziyeh, the aim was totally different. Ta'ziyeh was the representation of an event that was referred to as an important source of identity for the Shiite community, so it had a strong social and political potential. In order to use this potential, Ta'ziyeh should be seen by as many people as possible to leave a symbolic effect on them. "The emblematic nature of events remembered and recited contribute to a figural view of history in which they foreshadow and, in a sense, explain and justify, the later sufferings inflicted on the community and the sacrifices borne by them" (Beeman, 1981, 372).

Figure 3: The theatrical performance of Ta'ziyeh in Hosseiniyeh (source: iqna.ir/fa/news/3748579)

Unlike the other religious rituals which are carried out inside the mosques or any other buildings, Ta'ziyeh was decided to be performed in open urban spaces. The central courtyard of the main mosques provided an appropriate place for large religious rituals like Friday prayer. However, regarding the Islamic principles, entering mosques has some preconditions which put a limit on the inclusive use of it. It was intended that the Muharram ceremony became a public activity with the participation of all citizens, so the mosque was not suitable. Additionally, the clergy initially had not a very positive approach toward the theatrical performance of Ta'ziyeh which partially recalled some themes from the pre-Islamic Persian culture. Under the royal patronage of the Safavid rulers, the play evolved into a complex melodrama. Such a splendid play needed an appropriate place that was named Hosseiniyeh.

In its history, Hosseiniyeh has had various forms and names. Its forms vary from country to country as an independent small building, a large room inside a private house, a temporarily covered area, or a small open public space. The initial form of Hosseiniyeh had been constructed as the buildings annexed to mosques to accommodate visiting participants in the major cities of Baghdad, Aleppo, and Cairo by the end of the tenth century (Ayoub, 1978). The present study focuses on a particular form built in the traditional cities of central Iran. In this case, Hosseiniyeh is the main component of a neighborhood square including a mosque, public facilities such as a cistern, school, and a public bath. The active participation of inhabitants in the re-enactment of the Karbala was vital for reinforcing their distinct Shiite identity and collective memory. Through performing Ta'ziyeh in such a public space, Muharram ceremonies were more popularized. Constructing a powerful spiritual base, the annual remembrance becomes a part of the socio-cultural practice of the Shiite community.

5. **The Spatial Characteristics of Hosseiniyeh**

The urban structure of traditional Iranian cities was a hierarchy of domains beginning with a private dwelling unit, continued with semi-private spaces under the control of immediate neighbors as cul-de-sac alleys, semi-public realms of the neighborhood center and the main public spaces of the city (Tavassoli, 1990). Hosseiniyeh in this hierarchical structure is a transitional area that articulates the relation between public and semi-private realms. It acts as an intermediate realm which interacts and couples the two juxtaposed areas. Naeen and Zavareh are two traditional Iranian cities that include good examples of Hosseiniyeh. Located in the central part of the country, these cities have remained away from the rapid modernization of the last decades, and their overall urban structures have been maintained almost intact.

Figure 4: The urban structure of traditional Naeen, (source: the authors)

Naeen is a medieval town which was developed in the 16th century when Isfahan was the capital of the Safavid Empire. The red color in Figure 4 presents the covered bazaar as the most public realm of Naeen that began from one of the main gates of the walled city. The city had four gateways on the four cardinal directions. In a linear form, the bazaar extended through the heart of the town where the inner castle and the Friday Mosque existed. It became the urban spine from which the main streets stemmed into the neighborhoods. The old Naeen had seven neighborhoods each with a central complex that comprised of Hosseiniyeh and other urban facilities which met the requirements of inhabitants. (Tavassoli, 1990)

The initial form of neighborhood squares (Hosseiniyeh) was a relatively wide space beside a public building or at the intersection point of main passageways (Rezaei Badafshani, 2007, 138-48). It did not have a specific geometric form and was used for casual gatherings by the inhabitants (Figure 5). During the Safavid period, regarding the socio-political importance of Muharram ceremony, the neighborhood square was transformed into a congregation hall named Hosseiniyeh. Among the labyrinthine alleys of the neighborhood, Hosseiniyeh has its own specific character. Its geometrical form was a response to the need for a public "room" which was unique in urban spaces of traditional Islamic cities.
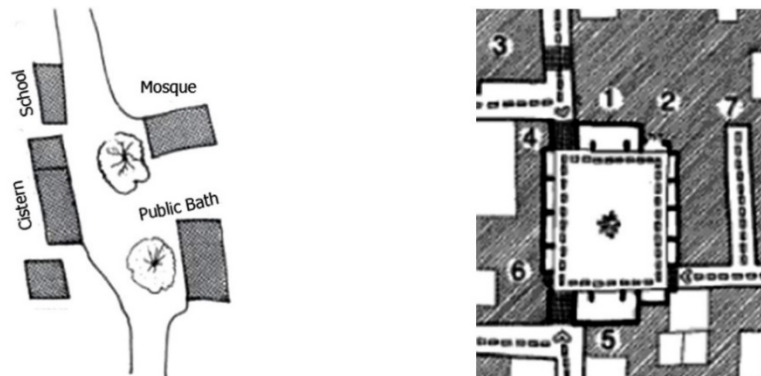

Figure 5. The initial form of Hosseiniyeh and its evolution to a rectangular form in the 16th century (source: Rezaei Badafshani, 2007)

Hosseiniyeh is an urban space which presented the characteristics of an interior courtyard. The surrounding edges of the square were articulated by consecutive deep niches which formed some covered seats (Figure 6). They provide a place where spectators can sit and watch the play that is performed in the middle of the square. Hosseiniyeh was probably the only public open space in the Islamic city without specific military, commercial or administrative functions.
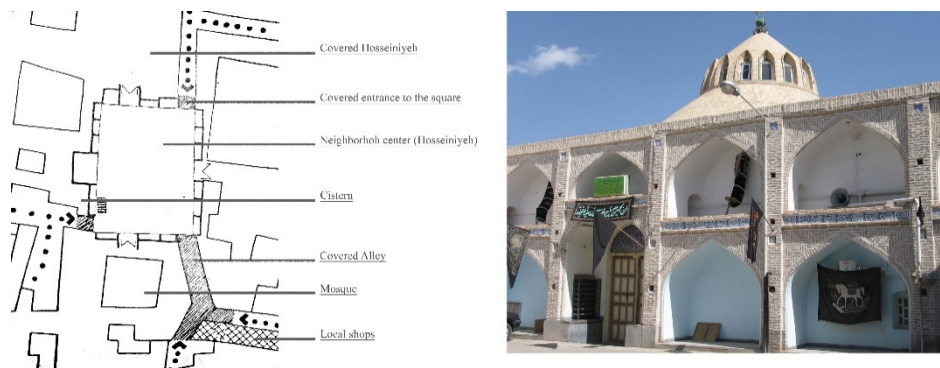

Figure 6. The Hosseiniyeh of Kalvan in Naeen and its public facilities (source: the authors)

The entrances of Hosseiniyeh were punctuated by archways to increase the sense of enclosure inside the square. The archways "marked the end of one activity or one kind of place, and the beginning of another" (Alexander, 1977). A feeling of transition into a new space was emphasized as the archways make the sense of hereness and thereness (Figure 7). They indicate leaving of one realm and entering to another. Therefore, it sent a message to the aliens to prevent their entrance and increase the security of the neighborhood. These architectural elements are in accordance with the specific function of the Meydan. Hosseiniyeh is a turning point between the socially and functionally different realms, bazaar, and neighborhood, to form a static space that acts as a public meeting ground. These spatial characteristics of Hosseiniyeh created a sense of belongingness and reinforced its symbolic meanings for the inhabitants.
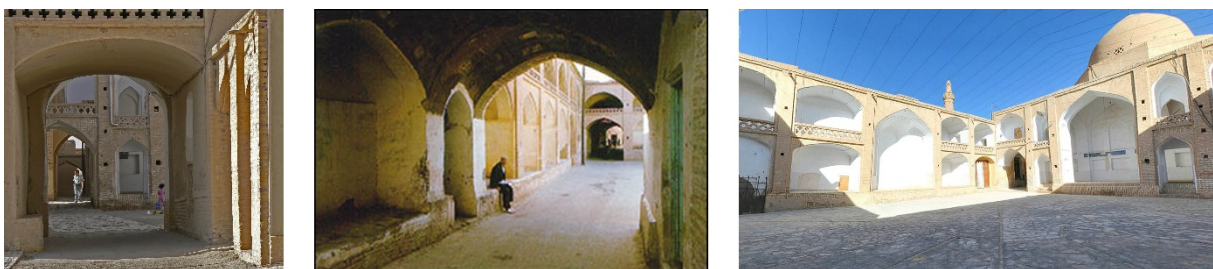

Figure 7. The archways at the entrances of Hosseiniyeh of Cheheldokhtar in Naeen (source: http://naeincht.ir/)

The design of such an open public square enhanced the dramatic interplay between actors and spectators. The main action took place on a stark, curtainless raised platform in the center of the square. Around it, there was a narrow circular band of space used by the performers for sub-plots and to indicate journeys, the passage of time, and the change of scene. It is a flexible open area which accommodates assemblies of people and mourning groups once a year for a religious theater and in other times it becomes a communication square where neighborhood's residents can meet and do shopping. Hosseiniyehs "are permanent in skeleton but are temporary and varied in application" (Rezaei Badafshani, 2007).

Neighborhoods in traditional Islamic cities had their own social structure with a certain degree of autonomy. The physical characteristics of a neighborhood center expressed the identity of its inhabitants. Hosseiniyeh became a landmark of a neighborhood to be distinguishable from others. The figure 8 presents a typology of neighborhood squares in different cities of Iran. The red color marked the visually dominant building which may refer to a mosque, a covered Hosseiniyeh, a temple, or a school (Madrase). Other public buildings are depicted in grey color and the residential buildings are shown by the hatch (Figure 8). Generally, Hosseiniyeh had a rectangular form with the proportions that are very close to the golden ratio. The long side of each Hosseiniyeh is approximately 1.6 times the size of its short side.
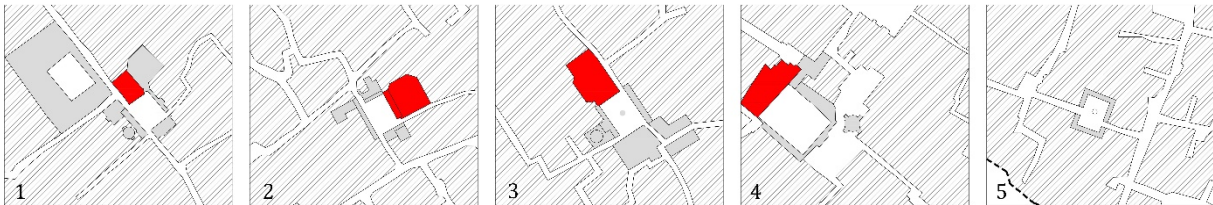

Figure 8. The morphological features of neighborhood meydans in various traditional Iranian cities; 1- Darbe Masjed, Naeen 2- Panjahe, Naeen 3- Kalvan, Naeen 4- Shah Abdol Gasem, Yazd 5- Bala, Meybod (source: the authors)

The fifth plan in figure 8 is the Hosseiniyeh of a small neighborhood in Meybod city that has no particular public buildings. It just included the small scene in the middle and articulated edges. The square linked the main street to the neighborhood and therefore, acted as an intermediate space. The form and scale of Hosseiniyehs differed regarding their functions and the situation of their neighborhoods (Figure 9). Most of the squares served as a local market for the inhabitants of the neighborhood.

Figure 9. Hosseiniyeh Shah Abdol Gasem, Yazd and Hosseiniyeh Bala, Meybod (source: meybodcivil.ir)

Zavareh is another Iranian traditional city located in the central part of the country very close to Naeen. A complete type of Hosseiniyeh that presents the spatial characteristic of the in-between space has existed in the city. Bozorg Hosseiniyeh of Zavareh includes both the covered and open areas in which the Muharram ceremonies could be conducted in all seasons (Figure 10). The open square links to the bazaar from the north-west corner, and the covered part connects the neighborhood's street from the south-east corner.
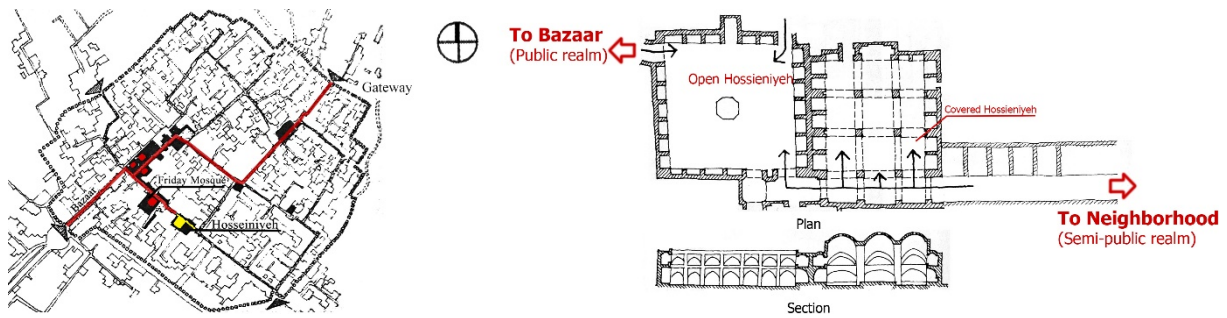
Figure 10. The urban structure of Zavare and the Hosseiniyeh of Maydan-e Bozorg (source: the authors)

The covered part of Hosseiniyeh is a semi-open area that is actively used by the inhabitants. The enclosed character of the open Hosseiniyeh is reinforced by the turbine form of narrow streets. The two-story articulated edge continues over the street and acts like the gateway that increases the enclosed character of the square. The niches along the edges of Hosseiniyeh are the platforms on which people gather to watch the ceremonies that are performed in the middle of the open space. Leaving the semi-dark space of Bazaar and entering into the light square of Hosseiniyeh creates a feeling of demarcating the end of one realm and the beginning of another. The square acts as a turning point between the Bazaar as the main public realm and the neighborhood as the semi-public realm of the city (Figure 11). The critical relationship of socially and functionally different areas was articulated by an intermediate space. In the urban structure of Zavareh, Bozorg Hosseiniyeh simultaneously separates and connects two domains to make a third kind of space that is an in-between space. Hosseiniyeh got the potential to be a multi-functional place for socio-religious activities. It played an important role in the neighborhood to be identified as a meaningful and distinguishable urban element.
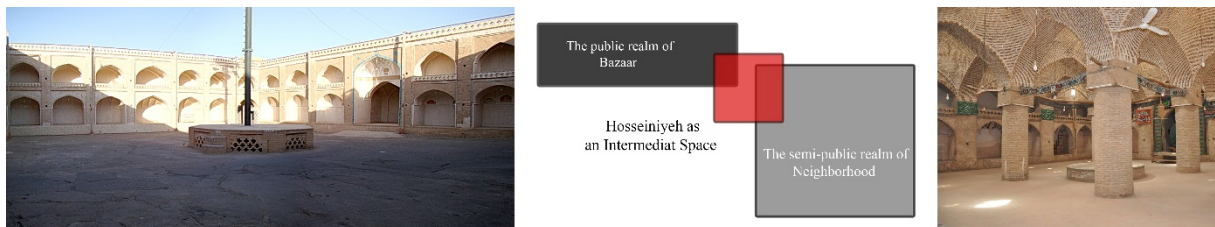

Figure 11. The covered and open Hosseiniyeh in Zavareh as an intermediate space (source: Right: the authors; Left: http://naeincht.ir/)

Table 1 illustrates various states of in-between space that provide a theoretical framework to evaluate the spatial characteristics of Hosseiniyeh. The square with its intermediate urban location and the components like archways and deep niches produced several in-between situations. The findings show that Hosseiniyeh had spatial qualities that embodied each state of in-betweenness at least from two aspects.

Table 1: Evaluation of the spatial characteristics of Hosseiniyeh based on the various states of in-between space (source: the authors)

Spatial Characteristics of Hosseiniyeh / Various States of In-between Space	Urban location	Function	Archways	Deep niches	Explanation
Twin-phenomena	⊗	⊗			The coexistence of public and private realms simultaneously
Edge with thickness - Soft edges		⊗	⊗	⊗	The deep niches that articulated the edges for sitting and watching the play – a thick edge that allows appropriation and linger
Intermediate space	⊗	⊗			Linking the two conflicting domains of Bazaar (public) and the neighborhood (semi-public) by a third space (Hosseiniyeh)
Threshold		⊗	⊗		Punctuation of the entrances by archways to mark the beginning of a new territory (neighborhood)
liminal space - Undesignated realm		⊗		⊗	Without a particular task the square was responsive to various sets of conditions: the scene of a theater, the neighborhood center, local market etc.

CONCLUSION:

By the urban modernization movement, cities have lost the spatial continuity and a clearer distinction is made between public and private space, "with fewer ambiguous, semi-private, or semi-public spaces in between" (Dennis, 2008, 145). Elimination of spaces in-between has negatively affected urban life when giant leftover spaces make serious functional interruptions among areas. The notion of in-between space has been considered by western scholars to criticize the modernist urbanism. The present study argues that there were valuable examples of in-between spaces in the hierarchical structure of traditional Iranian cities. Hosseiniyeh, as a case study, was a semi-public neighborhood square between socially and functionally different urban elements: the residential district and the bazaar. A significant religious role was given to the square that totally changed its architectural features. By a well-defined form and the articulated edges, Hosseiniyeh was prepared for the theatrical performance of Ta'ziyeh. The square received a unique spatial character which reinforced the neighborhood identity subsequently. Hosseiniyeh is evaluated based on the theory of in-between space. It is revealed that the historic square had the qualities to be an in-between space.

The present study argues the architectural features of Hosseiniyeh that contribute to a deep understanding of the in-between space. Studying the concrete forms in a real context gives the opportunity to consider the social aspects of spaces. Hosseiniyeh presented an in-between space with a powerful social, cultural, and political background. A city needs intermediary spaces to make gentle transitions between public and private realms. Although it was a small neighborhood square, Hosseiniyeh had a significant role in the spatial continuity of Iranian traditional cities. It can provide a configurational pattern to be used in the current urban design practice. Similar studies can also be conducted to explore new forms of in-betweenness in the urban structure of other Islamic countries.

Compliance with Ethical Standard

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