Finding lost spaces A suitable approach for lost identity & places Historic contexts

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ABSTRACT

With a glance to historic contexts, it is obvious that their formation and lives are based upon a historic, cultural, social and environmental process in a harmonized situation. But loosing the identity and place in historic contexts has faced with lots of ignorance and lead to their further problems and forgetting any principles and criteria of urban planning. Any creation of modern spaces in compliance with contemporary condition, increasing of Civic engagement and social, economy, and development of breathing space and renovation of lost memories are various efforts for lost identity of historic contexts through finding out any lost spaces and creating more fixed conditions in identity values of cultural-historic contexts and life soul in these factors.

INTRODUCTION

Our historic cities with thousands years after their creation are included in human being cultural heritage. Today cultural heritage are subject to serious threats while the modern life style and also great growth of population are effective on this process as well.

Historic contexts are the result of many years of interaction of human society and natural environment. They are valuable treasures of human being and nature interactions. Industrialization process of human societies accompanied with removal of any dependency of human being on nature and empowering by technology in the field of human life, are various reasons for changing the appearance of cities and their development process.

Traditional context-historical, undeniable fact that cities are the historical background. It means a part of city which was the place of coming & going of people in the past and also materialistic & spiritual life of them. In other words, “Urban old contexts are innovative and live places for better understanding of human situation in the world and its connections with the past. It means a place for environmental changes and changing of considering present & future lives” [1]. Unfortunately at present conditions, the appearance of cities is changing in a non-stop process and without any further thinking about streets and other technological conditions of modern life.

Traditional contexts are under threats more than before. Critical identity of architectural & urban space is the obtained results of these threats at historic cities of Iran.

This is because historic context are self-coordinated in nature. Since they are formed like different organs of body through the time, their including elements are connected to each other for completion of each other. Fabric space of these contexts is spatial organization of last generations’ life and a sign of serious and competence civilization. In fact, it is the same thing which is presented under the title of Identity today. (Farokh Zenouri, Bita, 19).

Identity crisis is a subject presented in 1971 up to now. The most obvious samples of identity crisis at historic cities of Iran are spatial separation of architectural & urban elements from minor to major criteria.

As the central points, most of these historic parts lost their functions and most of them are close to destruction and fall. Therefore, any ignorance of them will cause their collapse except for little number of historic buildings with tourism attraction.

By the way, architectural elements and current urban spaces at historic contexts lost their efficiency due to various reasons. Then, it may cause their destruction and oldness in a wide scope and fall of their fabric quality.

Identity means any meanings obtained through mental feelings by human beings out of their daily presence and wide scope of social relationships. Such a, presence and communication need a place for further formation. Places are major centers of our world experiences. With a glance to Iranian cities, it is obvious that most of old
cities are subject to destroy and lost their identity. There are quick and sudden changes while these contexts could not comply themselves with time situation.

Methodology:
In this research, we are intending to evaluate various concepts and theories about lost spaces “Roger Trancik” in a general classification. Then, we will present relevant reasons of any formation of lost spaces at cultural-historic context. Upon finding out these lost spaces and renovation of them through the life soul, we may create their connections with new life.

Layout method of space and searching for a mental image of old contexts in minds of people and other social, economic and environmental studies through questionnaire and interview besides other thinking and guidelines are assisting us to find out lost spaces in cultural-historic contexts and further renovation of their lost identity of them.

2-Lost spaces:
In a general classification we have lost spaces divided into two groups of material & conceptual. (Roger Trancik)

2-1-material lost spaces:
It means one set of lost spaces which in fact occupied real spaces and are obvious within three following groups:

Fabric (Building mass), it means a present building but has lost due to lack of suitable application
Areas that are in the public domain and the remained urban lands between mass and buildings without special territories and limitations Except for their ownership, it means any buildings with special territories and limitations and also recognizable from other urban lands without suitable applications

2-2-Conceptual lost spaces:
These spaces are related to a special characteristic of a space. Although, they are not clear but they have special position in the mind of citizens including two groups:

A) Forgotten values: It mean important characteristics, qualities and buildings were available at old cities and today there are just their memorable elements and/or nothing more. Perhaps there is only an index for further naming of the place.
B) Hidden values: When there are weak physical qualities of a space in responding to human needs, it is assumed as a lost space.

Real reasons of any formation of lost spaces in cultural-historic contexts:
According to the historic notes and documents, most of historic contexts of Iran cities have various development periods with some works and/or collections added to the previous context without any damages to it. Such a process was permanent up to the beginning of current century but due to the entrance and performance of urban development patterns and establishment of streets at urban contexts which may return back to 1925, not only there is a lack of attention to the history of cities but also it was caused separation of them. Therefore the streets made the context of cities in different forms including crescent and ….

Then most of these places attracted the commercial units in next decades and as a result they considered as serious rivals for primary origins of historic contexts.

As a result, external development of contexts was started and most of major residents changed their life place into these new centers. Besides the oldness of residential contexts, there were some public buildings including baths, motels and … which lost their major functions due to some replacement servicing units most of them had no more functions and were subject to fabric oldness (Materialistic lost spaces).

On the other hand, neighborhood convenience centers lost their activities center and communicative ways had no more roles among districts and also stem of contexts. (Conceptual lost spaces). Generally we may specify real reasons of formation any lost spaces in historic contexts as follows. Therefore the mentioned factors were the start of loosing spaces in historic contexts in a way that they lost their live and activity and they have become as a concern for urban managers or urban planners.

Theory finding of lost spaces:
There are three viewpoints in this case as follows. These three theories are different from each other but they are effective in relation to explain urban space as well.

Figure-ground theory:
The most important issue in this theory is any relation between mass & open spaces. If it is possible to understand any dialogues between mass and space, we may notice that spatial network has a successful function.
But if there is not a harmonized relation among them, all their parts will be separated from each other and they will be exited from concerned framework and the result is a lost space.

**Linkage theory:**
linkage theory means an organization of lines for connecting different parts of the city to each other.

**Place theory:**
The base of this theory is urban spatial planning based upon good understanding of humanistic-cultural properties of space. People need some fixed systems of locations for growing their social & cultural life as well (Rahimi, Nour Taghani).

Upon submission of finding out any lost spaces, we may explain above-mentioned theories in cultural-historic contexts and their further problems as well.

**Evaluation and finding out any lost space in historic contexts for renovation:**

**Figure-ground theory:**
Compression of building mass and lack of space are major problems of historic contexts. There is a relation between building mass compression and absorption of population, activity and pollution especially air pollution. The real meaning of density is not just fabric density but population density, automobile density, information density and activities density against total country.

There is not a specific territory between pedestrian/motor ways in old contexts and it was just specified with a water way for this purpose. The coming & going of pedestrians are under the effects of additional commercial & servicing applications to the sidewalk.

The other reasons for further affects on mass and space in old context is changing in needs of residents and their life style. Old context could be in compliance with traditional life style but after modernization and further consequences in life style, they could not satisfy the masses.

With compressed building making in contexts, there was no more facilities for innovation and development of space although some of public spaces have required potential in the form of urban spaces in local and district spaces through maintenance, composition and regulation.

**Building mass, occupancy rate of land, composition and suitability of urban spaces:**

Historic contexts which are mostly the first concept in formation of cities and created through different historic periods in organic and … forms, are suffering from compression and lack of open spaces inside themselves. Current open spaces are also formed among building masses in different forms and due to various factors. Therefore due to the lack of specific dialogue between mass and space and combined spatial structure, they are considered as lost spaces.

Furthermore, in other historic context and upon destruction of homes due to oldness, they were out of use due to open spaces among building masses.

Although, there are some humanistic competencies between dimensions, size of streets and other spaces in historic contexts, but their compression and involvement of context are unable to satisfy new changes and population growth.

**Linkage theory:**
As it was stated before, linkage theory means a collection of lines for connecting different parts of city to each other. Unfortunately the mentioned parts are very wide in old contexts and we may connect these parts with a suitable urban planning to each other. Also with a suitable spatial organization it is possible to find out lost spaces in old contexts and release historic context from corruption.

In this part, and with regard to field obtains and face-to-face meetings with public persons and evaluation of air photos of different years of old contexts we may consider any spatial connection among various elements (including city center and neighborhood convenience centers through major ways) and combination of three attitudes for more exact and detailed study.

Finally after above-mentioned considerations, we may provide a suitable planning with the same linkage theory and of course with regard to other theories including linkage theory and pay attention to mass and spaces.

**place theory:**
Since people are in need to have fixed systems of locations for continuation of their social & cultural life and just pay attention to fabric problems in historic context with ignoring any understanding of humanistic-cultural properties by users, will make it difficult to renovate historic contexts, therefore pay attention to social, humanistic and cultural properties of space in old contexts may enable us to find out lost spaces for betterment of public life quality as well.
Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to identical elements in historic contexts and introduce complete concepts. Regarding any evaluation of memorial elements and since it has been combined with place feeling (place theory) and belonging feeling, we may search various elements by benefiting from obtained information and made interviews with residents and perhaps nice memories of them.

Finally, with a special attitude about urban planning, we will judge any harmony, identity and memories of plan limitations as well.

<table>
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<th>Cultural – Historic contexts of lost spaces</th>
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<td>Materialistic factors of lost spaces</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Loosing primary application of most constructional elements of old context and lack of replacement of new activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Considerable level of various applications of empty, damaged and abandoned areas</td>
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<td>• Loosing applications of most historic context skeleton elements</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Development of context and current districts due to development of crescent-form ways</td>
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<td>• Unusual constructions and in contrast with specifications of the concerned context</td>
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<td>• Leaving residential units due to the immigration of residents of primary context</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lack of presence of any pulse spaces with suitable fabric form</td>
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<td>• Supremacy of building mass to space and lack of open spaces</td>
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| Conceptual factors of lost spaces            |
| • Lack of suitable definition of entrance space into context |
| • Lack of effective centers throughout neighborhood |
| • Lack of public spaces in aerial & local criterion for adolescents, old persons and women |
| • Lack of a suitable definition for suitable limits for registered buildings as cultural heritage |
| • Lack of replying of context to the new necessities of residents and lack of interests in residing |
| • Reduction of any belonging feeling of old residents and their exit from contexts |
| • Increasing of presence of weak levels in concerned contexts due to cheap price of properties in this territory |
| • Lack of visual differences in neighborhood passing ways |

**Conclusion:**

Since historic contexts have great potentials and practical facilities due to their natural & historic situation which due to the lack of compliance with today needs are suffering from various corruptions, therefore finding lost spaces (with mentioned detailed explanations) could specify old contexts as well. Such a viewpoint could be applied for executive guidelines and policies in minor and major goals.

Followings are major concerned goals for cultural-historic context with regard to the relevant theory & finding lost spaces:

**Major goals:**
- Maintenance & enrichment of historic-cultural identity with tourism concepts
- Making safe residing at concerned context with betterment of fabric & physical indexes
- Revival & renovation of old context through increasing the quality of city spaces and supplying of facilities

**Minor goals:**
- Following minor goals are considered for applying of above-mentioned major goals for interfering in historic contexts:
  - Historic: Maintenance of historic values & spatial revival and their function
  - Fabric: Betterment of fabric-physical indexes and prevention from increasing old spaces
  - Social: Maintenance of public society accompanied with training & increasing participation mode
  - Economic: Maintenance & enrichment of commercial & operational centralization in a city
  - Townscape & image: Increasing freshness and harmony of old contexts
  - Spatial structure: Maintenance and development of forming the structure of city center
- Finally with regard to all three theories of lost spaces and finding out major /minor goals for renovation of old context we will find a suitable planning for creation of urban spaces as well.

**REFERENCES**


