

## Reference List

---

- Bani Masoud, Amir. (2010). *The western architecture, origins and concepts*. Tehran: Honar-e-Memariy-e-Qharn publications.
- Golkar, Kourosh .(2007). The concept of liveliness quality in urban design. Sofeh Publications, 16<sup>th</sup> year, No. 44.
- Khastou, Maryam. Saeedi Rezvani, Navid. (2010). “Factors affecting the vitality of urban spaces”. *Journal of Hoviyat-e-shahr quarterly*. No. 6. Spring and Summer 2010. (63-74).
- Knirsch, Jurgen .(1941). *Urban squares, architecture and design of open spaces*. Prof. Fereydoun Qharib (2009-2013). Tehran: University of Tehran.
- Lashkari, Elham. Khalaj, Mehrshad (2011). “Sidewalk as a field for creating liveliness, identity and collective memories (case study: Marvi alley in Tehran)”. International conference of pedestrian life in the city. Tehran: Tehran beautification organization. 98
- Lynch, Kevin, translated by Prof. Manouchehr Mozayeni 2008, *The image of the city*, Tehran University publications.
- Madanipour, Ali. (2012). *Public and private spaces in the city*. Tehran: Tehran University.
- Mansouri, Maryam sadaat. (2015). Aesthetics of collective spaces, assessing beauty in three spaces of Tehran, *Manzar Journal*, (63)30: 62-69.
- Miller, Sam, translated by Mohammad Ahmadi Nezhad & Mehrnoush Fakharzadeh, (2001), *The design procedure*, Tehran, Khak publications.
- Motalaei, Najmeh. Ranjbar, Ebrahim (2010). Qualitative management of collective spaces, Trafalgar square in London. Qualitative management of collective spaces pattern, *Manzar Journal*, (7)2: 31-33.
- Qhasemi Esfahani, Morvarid. (2004). *Where are we from? Giving identity to residential textures*. Tehran: Rouzbeh publications.
- Shadi, Azizi. (2012). Reproduction of the Qhale Morghi lands. Investigating the capacities for the formation of monuments and memorials in free and flexible open spaces.
- Soltanzadeh, Hossein (2006). *Urban spaces in historical fabrics*. Tehran: Cultural research bureau.
- Zandiyeh, Mehdi. (2015). City symbols a reminder of cultures, traditions, and collective memories. Tehran beautification organization. Notes and articles. (<http://zibasazi.ir>)

square exacerbates the dominance of the building (ibid: 52) and the San Marco square makes a space in front of the Basilica. The development plan of piazza San Marco was finished with the construction of the library and municipality on the northern side of the square. Nowadays a great number of tables

and chairs are arranged neatly and orderly for international visitors and the enthusiasm, infatuation and attractiveness of this square has still remains. Around this square there are coffee shops and restaurants, with live music and many stores for shopping (Table 5).

## Conclusion

---

According to the field surveys carried out in this research regarding some squares in Italy we can say that the dynamism and vitality of these squares has been maintained from the past to the present and only the factors that have created them are different or in other words their performance has changed throughout these years.

In different periods of the Roman history, squares were vibrant with different approaches. This difference was because of the behavioral system dominant at the time of their creation with different approaches based on their historical era. For example, in ancient Rome the main approach for the formation of squares was governmental and squares were mostly vibrant because of the activities that were produced by the government for people. In the middle ages and Gothic era that feudalism and church were considered as two main elements, most squares were created because of peoples' religious activities. With the passage of time, during the Renaissance period and after that the unity of the religious community, shattered the west and presented the

modern age and so the power of the society and dynamism factors is obtained by the members of the community and so the community system will a hundred percent become social and human. Nowadays thought and policy in urban management in dealing with historical squares in Italy has maintained the historic frame of these squares from the past and prevented them from being fragmented. Therefore, the historical memory has remained in these places and people can experience and sense the atmosphere of the previous generation and with participating in functional and ritual activities connect the past and the present. With these proceeding that have led to the continuation of urban life and because of the various activities taken place in these squares in accordance with the present state, such as doing artwork and juggling, holding competitions and ancient festivals, the existence of service spaces, and restaurants around the square and with social security for citizens and tourists, they are known as vibrant spaces.

## Endnote

---

\*This article describes the discovery-based learning based on research activities in Europe trip in 2015.

public amphitheater and coffee shops restaurants and eateries have all surrounded its upper margin like balconies of a theatre. Local people and visitors hang around in the square, converse with each other and sit on the pavement like sitting on grass in warm afternoons (Table4),(Fig. 3).

**Piazza San Marco, Venice**

The San Marco square is the richest and yet

most daring example of a square complex and was created in the first half of the sixteenth century. During the great Renaissance era the square was renovated and designed as the official gateway of the city entrance. Similar to the Capitol square, this square was also used as a place for greeting foreign government officials. Transferring the church to the Basilica square and attaching it to the

Table 5. Vitality factors of Piazza San Marco (Venice) based on expert viewpoints and field observation. Source : author.

S q u a r e name	Useful congestion of people	Historical identity and memory	Legibility factors of the environment	Social security	Social interactions	Sense of belonging to a place
<b>Navona square (Ancient Rome)</b>	The gathering of - locals and tourists in different hours of the day	Oldest enclosed - square Existence of - Sant' Agnese church Existence of - Pamphili Palace	Existence of - springs Existence of - fountains Presence of - painters Presence of- jugglers Riding carriage - Pause/movement - spaces	Having - social security	Restaurant - Coffee house - Market - Microeconomics-	Carnival cel- ebrations Water games- celebrations



Fig. 4. Dynamism in San Marco square, Venice. Photo :Zahra Bahrololoumi, 2015.

a pattern from the Gothic era (ibid: 25). In fifty years the whole medieval square was constructed and is experienced relying on the dynamics and contrast between its horizontal and vertical design elements (ibid: 27). In the middle ages traditional Palio became common and from 1656 each year competitions were held in it and has continued until now. A dangerous and A dangerous and

exciting horse race competition that because of it each year a festival is held throughout the square. This competition (Palio) connects all the 17 neighborhoods and their whole population together. Therefore, the Piazza Del Campo is a vibrant and independent urban sign and will remain the undeniable heart and center of social life forever. Nowadays this square looks like a large

Table 4. Vitality factors of Piazza Del Compo (Siena) based on expert viewpoints and field observation. Source : Author.

Square name	Useful congestion of people	Historical identity and memory	Legibility factors of the environment	Social security	Social interactions	Sense of belonging to a place
<b>Navona square (Ancient Rome)</b>	- The gathering of locals and tourists in different hours of the day	- Oldest enclosed square - Existence of Sant'Agnese church - Existence of Pamphili Palace	- Existence of springs - Existence of fountains - Presence of painters - Presence of jugglers - Riding carriage - Pause/movement spaces	- Having social security	- Restaurant - Coffee house - Market - Microeconomics	- Carnival celebrations  - Water games celebrations



Fig. 3. Dynamism in the Del Compo square, Siena. Photo: Zahra Bahrololumi, 2015.

Table 3. Vitality factors of Piazza Campidoglio (Rome) based on expert viewpoints and field observation. Source : Author.

Square name	Useful congestion of people	Identity and historical memory	Legibility factors of the environment	Social security	Social interactions	Sense of belonging to a place
<b>Del Campidoglio square (Ancient Rome, Gothic)</b>	-The gathering of locals and tourists in different hours of the day	- Bronze statue in the square - Statues of ancient Rome - Existence of two old perspective palaces towards the forum - Located on the Cathedral axis	- Stairs on the square entrance - Statues -Pause/movement spaces - Type of cover and flooring - The environment flooring design	- The political heart of Rome that is secure.	- Mass parades on special occasions	- Existence of museums - Perspective



Fig.2. Dynamism in the Capitol Square in Rome. Photo: Zahra Bahrololoumi, 2015.

used for formal occasions. On the other two sides of the square are, the Capitol museum (former new house) and the musicians' palace (former mayor house). In fact, by changing the form of the Campidoglio in Rome, Michel Ange created the first enclosed and full collective square in the new era (Knirsch, 2013: 15), (Table3), (Fig.2).

### **Piazza Del Campo, Siena**

The main form of this square, semicircular and shell—like, is referred to a map from 1218 when Siena was a Roman colony and a forum was located on the present situation of the square. Later in this Deep Valley, where 3 streets meet together a market was built as a rendezvous and similar to the first forum in Rome. During 1288- 1309 the city palace was built in the square according to

Table 2. Vitality factors of Piazza Navona (Rome) according to experts and field observations. Source :Author.

Square name	Useful congestion of people	Historical identity and memory	Legibility factors of the environment	Social security	Social interactions	Sense of belonging to a place
<b>Navona square (Ancient Rome)</b>	- The gathering of locals and tourists in different hours of the day	- Oldest enclosed square  - Existence of Sant'Agnese church  - Existence of Pamphili Palace	- Existence of springs  - Existence of fountains  - Presence of painters  -Presence of jugglers  - Riding carriage  - Pause/movement spaces	-Having social security	- Restaurant  - Coffee house  - Market  -Microeconomics	-Carnival celebrations  -Water games celebrations



Fig.1. Dynamism in the Piazza Navona, Rome. Photo : Zahra Bahrololumi, 2015.

generalized. Nowadays tourists, local people, shop owners, and artists actively participate in the games and celebrations (Table2),(Fig.1).

**Piazza Del Campidoglio (Capitol), Rome**

The Capitol hill is one of the seven hills that Rome was built on and mostly recalls the ancient Rome (ibid: 47). In the middle ages a castle was built there and later the market, city council, senators’ palace and square were built. The square is open towards the Mars square and on the other hand turned its back from the new medieval town and

forum in an unfriendly state. this hill was a stage for many political events throughout the middle ages. In the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century an appropriate plan was executed on the hill which the materials and color of the pavement reinforce this artwork. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Campidoglio square was the stage for holding official events and public gatherings (Knirsch). This square was a quite artistic masterpiece that is known as an extremely dynamic external space. This square is inspired by politics rather than religion, is located on the axis of the Cathedral and senators’ palace and is

and provoked great sensitivity towards more suitable urban design. This topic also includes the improvement of quality in cities (ibid: 103). So for returning cities back to being vibrant, individual, and having identity, the need for designing and creating open spaces and places for spending time, thinking, observing and introspection was strongly felt similar to centuries ago.

Currently, for the access of citizens to urban environments, standardization for the new quality of cities that have formed residential and commercial areas with designing public and private spaces and squares and locate the public open space on its center of gravity. This is why urban squares must connect with their surrounding, background, and history because memories create identity and squares as geographic locations are directly related to the identity of place (ibid: 25).

### **Studying vitality in some of the squares in Italy**

For identifying vitality and dynamism of today's Italian squares that are part of the free and flexible public spaces we must study the activities taken place in them. Various activities are classified into active and non-active categories. The active category includes sports and games using balls, running, walking, cycling, and horse riding and the non-active category includes resting, reading, sunbathing, shopping, eating (Azizi, 2012:20). Alongside these diverse and unplanned activities, various historical monuments and memorials can also be seen that have helped to individual and collective memories such as kings, queens, wars, and conflicts. Memorial monuments that are located in flexible public spaces, play a great role in creating a sense of durability, places and developing individual and collective behaviours. Because collective

memories alone are not capable of transmitting to future generations, these physical memorable elements such as monuments play an important role in reproducing memories in the city.

Also, the longer presence of people in these squares, in addition to the space dynamism, leads to the values and hidden attractions in the environment and an increase in peoples' perception and generates a sense of trust, identity, cultural and historical continuity and social life for the citizens (Lashkari, 2011).

After studying the historical process of squares from the past until now we can see that squares gradually gain an effective role in the set of urban organs and have had great impacts on the formation and spatial organization of the city based on different historical periods.

### **Piazza Navona, Rome**

This square is located in the center of Rome the capital city of Italy and is known as the oldest enclosed square of the ancient Rome. This place was used as an Arena from the Roman era till the year 86 AD and after that in the 15<sup>th</sup> century it was used as a public market and a specific place for holding celebrations. In the Baroque period this square was transformed into a stage for Roman celebrations and an ideal and pleasant place for the Romans to live and disport (Knirsch, 2009: 16,17). Nowadays each year on the fifth of January the Befana feast is held in this square. This square has many coffee shops and restaurants and artists, painters, acrobats, and jugglers gather there throughout the day. Water game celebrations and spectacular carnivals in the Naovona are very famous. Saint Agnese church and Pamphili palace are located on the west side of the square. With the Pamphili family settling in the square and construction of palaces this place became the best spot for living in the city of Rome qua living or disporting in it became

by dense buildings on the edge of the streets or in connection with them that leads to attracting different groups of people and providing necessary facilities for social interactions (Soltan zadeh, 2006: 86).

### **History and approach of the Italian squares formation**

Long ago before the formation of modern streets, “squares” played the main role in the urban lives of people in ancient Rome. Square or Piazza (Italian), is referred to as open spaces that were a place for the formation of social gatherings. By studying the historical process of designing squares in ancient cities we can see that in different historical periods, according to spatial and temporal necessities Italian squares have had different roles and functions. These periods are as follows: 1. Ancient Rome, 2. The middle ages, 3. Renaissance.

1. **In the Ancient Rome era**, square or forum were attractive places for people which attracted them with holding races, championship competitions, games and markets (Knirsch, 2009: 23). The Roman squares never lost their function as an urban open space in any form they were built and considered as the center of religious, economical, and administrative activities, the beating heart of Roman cities and as a miniaturized figure of the Roman city center (Bani Masoud, 2011: 76).

2. **In the middle ages**, this period starts from the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century. Feudalism and church were two main elements of the middle ages that their relations have had specific impacts on cities. The main and important elements of cities in this era are as follows: religious spaces, commercial spaces, and governmental spaces that play a key role in organizing and locating squares. Despite the specialization of the space and their functional separation, public spaces were greatly used for public life. The city square was decorated with

fountains, monuments, statues and other artwork and was used for public celebrations, parades and exchange of goods and services (Bani Masoud, 2011: 225).

3. **In the Renaissance**, this movement collapsed the unity in the western religious society and its biggest accomplishment was in the outlook of human towards the world (ibid:147). During the Renaissance era symmetry and balance of the Romans was revived once more and according to Alberti (1988), square is nothing but an enlarged intersection that provided space for supplying goods and playing shows (containing theatre, circus, and the gladiator stadium), and nothing but a square that is enclosed with stairs” (ibid:227).

Therefore, European squares were sometimes used as a place for supplying goods and at times had a governmental, tribunal or religious space. Actually we can consider three dominant approaches based on its construction period. These three approaches are as follows: 1. Governmental approach 2. Religious approach 3. Cultural-social (human) approach.

### **Policy making in the design of contemporary Italian squares**

In later periods, with the passage of time many old squares with rich traditions and historical buildings transformed into trite traffic intersections and lifeless and boring parkings and in the early seventies of the twentieth century a paradigm shift led to new objectives and flows emancipating old urban spaces. As a consequence, actions took place for the modification, reconstruction and repair of public open spaces which means public squares and passages (Knirsch, 2013: 95). This type of urbanism and policy making in urban management, has prevented the destruction of many important squares maintained them



Table1. Standards of contemporary theorists for identifying and creating vitality in public places. Source : Author.

Theorists	Factors and criterion of vitality in public places
Charles Landry	Useful congestion of people/ diversity/ accessibility/ security and safety/ identity and distinction/ creativity/ connection and cooperation/ temporal capacity/ competition
Kevin Lynch	Long term presence of people in the environment Holding national and regional ceremonies in the environment Existence of specific urban components in each area and their easy recognition (legibility) Presence of security every time in the environment at all times (social security) Promotion of collective memories and citizens' perception in the environment (sense of belonging to the environment)
Sam Miller	Establishment of proper connections with somatic elements of the environment for perceiving the place (environmental legibility)
Carmona	Presence of different people and over crowdedness in the environment throughout the day
Paumier	Accepting a large number of people Attractor and producer of pedestrian activities Creating commercial activities in its surrounding, especially edible services Designing space elements according to its capacity The scale of the place to the extent to avoid losing the closeness of the space
Najmeh Motallaei	Freedom of citizens in using the place (flexible space) Creating great opportunities in the environment for recreation and social interactions Doing activities without incitement and formal plans (social interactions)
Morvarid Qhasemi Esfahani	Creating the sense of belonging to a place
Mohammad Taqhi Rahnamaei	Presence of people in the environment Attractiveness of the environment (sense of belonging to a place) Effectiveness of the environment on the human mind (legibility)

we can say that some of the factors are common between them and finally come to a conclusion that the criteria for creating and identifying lively environments are:

1. Optimum density of people in the environment (peoples' presence), 2. Existence of historical memory and identity in the space, 3. Creating legibility for every environment, 4. Establishing social security, 5. Presence of social interactions in the environment and 6. Sense of belonging to the space.

### City square

Squares are part of the urban culture and civilization and one of the most important public urban spaces that have been the basis for the social life formation from a long time ago and always had various and multiple functions. Kevin Lynch has defined the western countries squares as places for gathering of activities that are placed in the heart of compact urban spaces. These squares are for pedestrians and surrounded

activities can be seen (Khastou, 2010: 66).

In "The Image of the City" by Kevin Lynch it is said that cities are vibrant and alive with factors such as mores, traditions, cultures, and ceremonies that bring few, many, or a large number of people together. So the major city squares and spaces are locations which carry out national and regional ceremonies and are reminders for memories and the past using national symbols. These spaces that include index symbols and have been a great host for citizens and their ceremonies and have always made good memories in peoples' minds for years (Zandieh, 2015). In other words, legibility exists in these spaces. Legibility of a city means that we must be able to recognize the city components easily and link them together in our minds in a coherent form (Lynch, 2004: 94). Legibility has an undeniable influence on the design of organizing somatic spaces and is one of the most significant criteria of vitality. This subject is very important especially for foreigners because they need to conceive the place without any previous arrangements (Miller, 2000: 139). Elements such as flags, lawns, intersections, billboards, illustrated windows, pillars, gateways, edges, limits, and ... . These signs make us aware of ownerships, situations, dependence on different groups, hidden functions, goods and services, proper behavior and many other things. This is part of the meaning that is called legibility.

Another way for providing a dynamic and vital environment is creating a sense of belonging to place which ensures a process so people could enjoy different sensory experiences in relation to different opportunities (Qhasem Esfahani, 2004: 98).

The presence of safety in public spaces is among important factors in enhancing space attractiveness and vitality, that is a qualitative criterion and increases the quality of the

environment that based on several principles, emerge and persist in a society (Carmona, 2003: 101).

Being lively depends on how much people use public spaces and if they are capable of being ability dynamic and flexible (Motalaei and Ranjbar, 2010: 2). Some characteristics of flexible public spaces is that they are not pre-planned, citizens have complete freedom in using them, they create opportunities for leisure and social interactions and are outside the daily schedule of peoples' lives (Azizi, 2012: 20). In the «Creating a Vibrant City Center» book by Paumier he has defined the influential elements of a successful and lively public place as follows. The location: the position of a successful public space should be in such a way that it can accept a large number of people; it also has to be near retail centers so it could attract people and develop pedestrian activities. The size: the scale of a successful public space has to have the capacity to host collective recreation and events but not be too large to lose the closeness of the space. Location planning: creating a live and people friendly atmosphere is possible when around that place is surrounded by retail shops, restaurants and coffee shops. Location design: the design of a place has to increase the space capacity for attracting and conforming the activities. In this regard we can mention items such as suitable seats, flexible land use, convenience, compatibility and high quality and at the same time being simple. Charles Landry, has studied the concept of liveliness as follows; he considered 9 effective factors for identifying a vibrant and viable city: useful congestion of people, diversity, accessibility, security and safety, identity and distinction, creativity, connection and cooperation, temporal capacity, and competition (Kastou, 2010: 66), (Table1).

According to the subjects mentioned by theorists

## Introduction

Public spaces of a city are the manifestation of collective lives in cities that gives entry permission to citizens and people of any stratum (social class), age, race, and guild without any limitations, and provides appropriate space for their gatherings. When we are present in a common place alongside others we are able to gain experience by observing our surroundings among people and so establish a connection with past or even future generations (Madanipour, 2012: 226). This event can occur in spaces like public squares, parks, and other flexible public areas. On the other hand, the liveliness concept has a special place in this topic. Liveliness is attributed to an urban system which helps peoples' physical, mental and social health and residents' personal progress and related to favorable urban spaces that create and reflect

spiritual and cultural richness. Henri Lefebvre believed that vitality and dynamism of urban environments is dependent on the presence of identity and meaning in everyday life. (Stenberg 1991).

Thus we must consider that the goal and subject of this article is not analyzing spaces as public environments but the specific aspect of study is analyzing the reason of their vitality. The existence of historical memory of the city or people in flexible public spaces like Italian squares can be one of the main reasons of their vitality throughout history until now. The research method used in this study is descriptive, analytic, and analogical and the data collection method that is used in this study is observational and field collection. After defining the terminologies, the result of this research aims on analyzing liveliness indices in few Italian squares.

---

## Public space

In the 1980s, especially in Europe, public space was a concept and solution for the social and urban crises and was used to pacify social relationships and develop a sense of belonging to a common set. These crises consist of value insignificance, isolationism of social groups and violent behavior (Mansouri, 2015: 63). In reality, in public spaces, connections are formed between individuals so they can understand each other and build relationships.

Public spaces are places where we can experience the experiences of previous generations, we can stand where they stood and look at the same place that they looked at. These experiences can be generalized to future generations that may have similar experiences through spatial and organizational continuity. So public space means

“a common context that people can carry out functional and ceremonial activities and leads to a bond between them”. (Madanipour, 2012: 246).

## Liveliness in public spaces

Liveliness of public spaces takes place through the interaction between the city and citizen. This quality is not a product that has been created with a one-time or sudden action, but rather a process of continuous creation (Golkar, 2007: 66-75).

In the urban dictionary of Robert Cowan, vitality in a city is the reflection of congestion in different times of the day and different parts of the city. In these spaces the presence of diverse groups of people (in terms of age and sex) in a large time span throughout the day which their activities are mainly demonstrated as social or selective

# Reasons of Vitality in Italian public spaces throughout history until now\*

Zahra Bahrololoumi

M.A of architecture. Qazvin Azad university, Iran.

Zahra.bahr@gmail.com

## Abstract

---

The biggest factor in the vitality of collective spaces is the presence of public in that square and their interaction together. In the past, squares have been one of the most important urban spaces that have been a basis for the formation of social life. In fact, Italian squares were not all considered as collective and public spaces with one unified approach. Actually, they gained their dynamism and vitality based on their period of construction and the main approach of that time. Overtime, and in the coming future, urban management policies made about historical Italian squares has led the continuity of urban life and nowadays these squares are known as vibrant spaces.

Thus we can conclude that factors which effected the gathering and presence of people in these squares in the past were different and changeable based on the time they are constructed. Nowadays these factors are flowing but their structural role is stable. According to the findings of this article useful congestion of people in the environment, the presence of legible elements, social safety, social interactions and sense of belonging in the urban environment are the factors of liveliness and the peoples' gatherings in public areas and especially Italian squares.

## Keywords

---

Social spaces, liveliness, Urban management policies, The historical memory of the city.