

**Collective Memory, Urban Regeneration and Conservation of Historical Sites  
ChaharBagh Street, Isfahan City, Iran**

Haghighat Bin, Mehdi ; Saghafi Moghaddam, Sara; Nijhuis, Steffen

**DOI**

[10.14456/jucr.2024.6](https://doi.org/10.14456/jucr.2024.6)

**Publication date**

2024

**Document Version**

Final published version

**Published in**

Journal of Urban Culture Research

**Citation (APA)**

Haghighat Bin, M., Saghafi Moghaddam, S., & Nijhuis, S. (2024). Collective Memory, Urban Regeneration and Conservation of Historical Sites: ChaharBagh Street, Isfahan City, Iran. *Journal of Urban Culture Research*, 28, 143-158. <https://doi.org/10.14456/jucr.2024.6>

**Important note**

To cite this publication, please use the final published version (if applicable).  
Please check the document version above.

**Copyright**

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download, forward or distribute the text or part of it, without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license such as Creative Commons.

**Takedown policy**

Please contact us and provide details if you believe this document breaches copyrights.  
We will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

# Collective Memory, Urban Regeneration and Conservation of Historical Sites – *ChaharBagh Street, Isfahan City, Iran*

Mehdi HaghighatBin (Iran),<sup>+</sup> Sara Saghafi Moghaddam (USA)<sup>++</sup> & Steffen Nijhuis (Netherlands)<sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

This study aims to present a regeneration process for historical spaces based on the notion of collective memory. We argue for the necessity of simultaneously studying conservation and rehabilitation policies for restoring and continuing the collective memory of historical spaces. This approach can effectively preserve and shape the collective memory of historical spaces by focusing on preservation and valuing the landscape as a major key between place and humans. The historical ChaharBagh Avenue from the Safavid era in Isfahan serves as a case study. Over time, the social and cultural significance and value of ChaharBagh Avenue as a historical public space and collective memory is diminishing due to inconsistent renewal policies. The study employs a qualitative approach, including field studies and interviews with 32 citizens of Isfahan, to suggest a model for sustainable regeneration and conservation of historical urban sites based on collective memory.

**Keywords:** *Collective Memory, ChaharBagh Boulevard, Urban Open Space, Isfahan, Urban Regeneration, Iran*

<sup>+</sup> Mehdi Haghighat Bin, Asst. Prof. Art & Architecture, Tarbiat Modares University, Iran. email: haghighatbin@modares.ac.ir.

<sup>++</sup> Sara Saghafi Moghaddam, PhD Student, Architecture, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, USA. email: sarasaghafi@vt.edu.

<sup>3</sup> Steffen Nijhuis, Professor of Landscape-based Urbanism & Head of the Section Landscape Architecture, Urbanism, Delft University of Technology, Netherlands. email: S.Nijhuis@tudelft.nl.

## Introduction

### Persian Garden City

This paper focuses on Isfahan's Garden City design and ChaharBagh Street as its main axis. The Persian Garden City pattern is a type of urban planning that incorporates Persian garden elements in the city's design. This approach has its origins in the Achaemenid period. Stronach (1990) believes that Cyrus<sup>1</sup> (600–530 BC) unprecedently aimed to build a garden-filled capital, an idea that all Iran's leaders have favored. In the Persian garden-city model, gardens are the major urban identity and landscape elements on the micro and macro scale (Figures 1 and 2).

This paper aims to propose a method for recreating historical places focusing on Charbagh Street as a case study, with the primary objective of preserving collective memory. Historical sources have noted that the Safavid Dynasty used the urban landscape to express their power and greatness and create shared collective memories for citizens (Haghghatbin, 2016; Lavafi, Sepehri Moghadam, and Habib, 2018; Ahari, 2006). It appears that the garden-city model was used to achieve this goal. Shah-Abbas<sup>2</sup> the Great sought to transform Isfahan, the capital of the Safavid Empire (1501 -1736), into a glamorous city that would attract foreign tourists, merchants, and ambassadors (Shafaqi, 2002) and create a unique collective memory through its atmosphere and places.

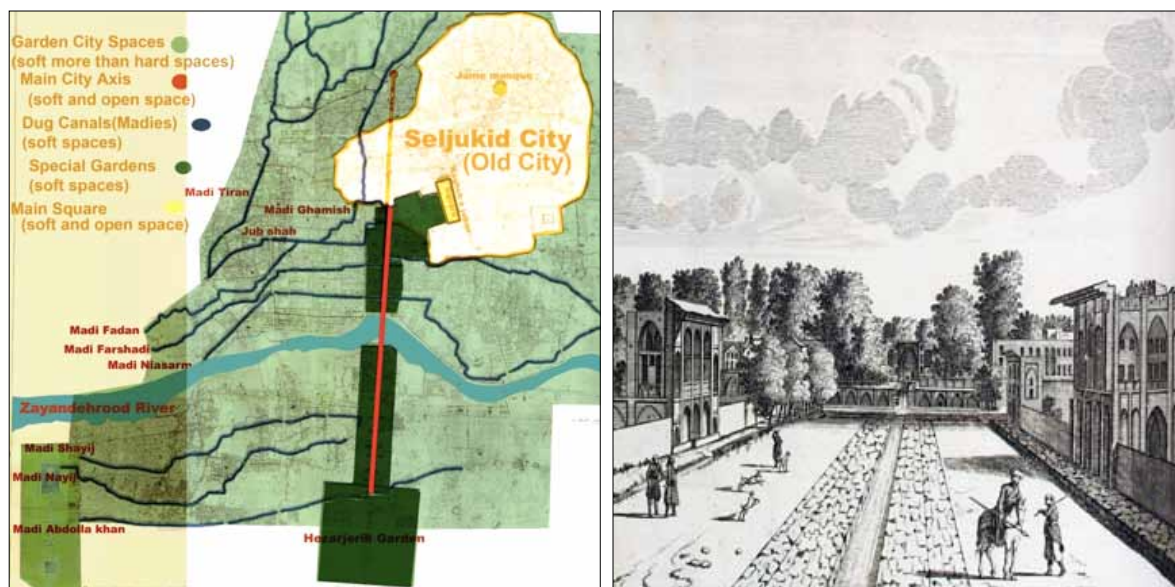


Figure 1. Soft, hard and urban open spaces in Isfahan garden city (Haghghat bin, 2012) and the volume of open spaces in front of building masses in Isfahan garden city (Le Brun, 1718).

### Collective Memory

Collective memories are shared recollections of events among a group of individuals (Mir Moghtadaei, 2009). They shape the social narrative and understanding of a community and serve as a shared subjective guide for navigating the world's complexities (Olick and Robbins, 1998; Crumley, 2002; Misztal, 2003; Gongaware, 2003). Researchers argue that the sense of belonging to a social group is important for memory retention (Misztal, 2003). Additionally, studies have reported that collective memory is deeply rooted in social and geographical factors, as it is shaped by the resources and interactions within a community (Connerton, 1989). The spatial context in which events occur is crucial for forming collective memories. Urban spaces serve as the stage for daily life, events, and incidents; these

experiences shape the memories stored in citizens' minds (Habibi, 1999). The concept of collective memory highlights the connection between memory and social interactions, specifically in the context of public spaces in a city (Saghafi Moghaddam and Cora 2012). So, the context of their formation can be a site for the city's social interactions. Maurice Halbwachs, the pioneer of this concept, suggested that "place and group have each received the imprint of the other" (Halbwachs, 1980) Collective memory is interconnected with the city's public spaces, with the context of these memories acting as a venue for social interactions. The spaces and places hold meaning unique to the group, as each part of the space corresponds to various aspects of the group's society and culture, particularly those most stable aspects (Halbwachs, 1980).

Cities play a crucial role in symbolizing and preserving memories. The urban landscape serves as a symbolic representation of power and memory through civic compositions educating citizens about their national heritage and public responsibilities (Boyer, 1996). Just as a nation's history is passed down through generations, so too are collective memories. The city's residents recall and share the narratives of their community's history. Lewicka notes that urban traces act as "urban reminders" and "mnemonic aids" for the collective memory of the inhabitants. These traces are usually made up of natural or architectural features, including graveyards marked by diverse names, public edifices, and architecture spanning different eras. (Lewicka, 2008).

Collective memories are shaped by activities and events, with urban spaces providing a backdrop that visually represents these shared memories. Figure 2, right, illustrates a model for understanding the dimensions of collective memory, encompassing both the objective characteristics of the place (its physical structure and the activities it hosts) and the subjective aspects (its history and the events that have occurred there). The interplay between individuals, the physical environment, and specific activities and events that take place on particular dates contributes to the formation of collective memory. Through engaging in activities and events at these places on designated dates, people's cognitive understanding is influenced, leading to the creation of new memories.

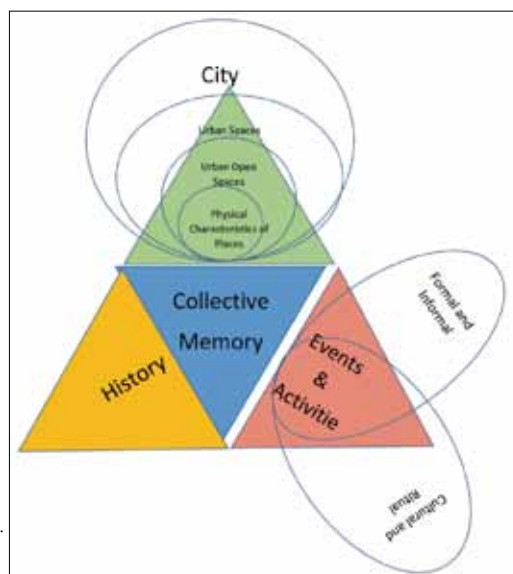
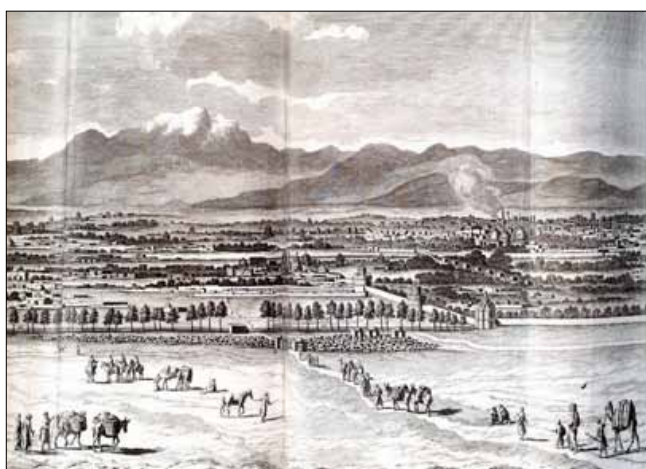


Figure 2. Left, perspective of Isfahan garden city (Le Brun, 1718). Right Conceptual Research Model.

### Regeneration

Urban regeneration has emerged as a distinct policy area since the 1970s, emphasizing the revitalization of economic activity, the promotion of social cohesion, and environmental improvements in areas experiencing decline (Couch and Fraser, 2003). The approach to urban regeneration has shifted from modernist, large-scale changes to prioritizing diversity, sustainability, social equality, and livability as crucial strategies for social and economic development (Gittell, 1992; Henneberry & Rowley, 2002; Smith, 2006; Smith, 2012; Tallon, 2013) (Figure 3).

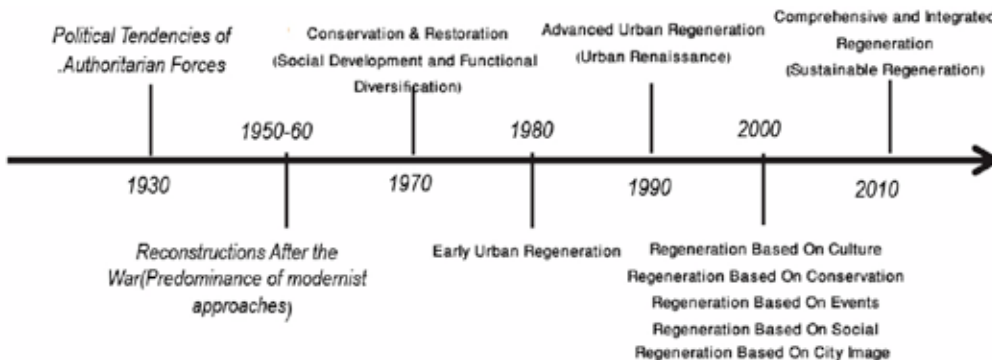


Figure 3. Dominant approaches in time-transition from reconstruction to sustainable regeneration.

Figure 4, based on Clentonio and Dixon's "Urban Regeneration and Social Sustainability" (Clentonio, 2010), outlines the evolution of urban regeneration through various phases: physical development (1940s-1950s), social welfare (1960s), economic focus (1970s-1980s), and local social engagement. They argue that the early 21st century's emphasis on creating "sustainable places" signifies a critical phase in urban regeneration, shifting towards prioritizing "local communities," "sustainable places," and a "social approach."



Figure 4. The Evolution of Regeneration Policies (Colantonio & Dixon, 2010).

This paper studies the Persian garden city concept, focusing on ChaharBagh Street in Isfahan, and its ties to collective memory, urban regeneration, and conservation. It examines the interplay between collective memory and the physical attributes, events, and history of

urban spaces, employing a conceptual framework to analyze this relationship at the case study site (Figure 3). Through semi-structured interviews, the paper identifies spatial elements significant to collective memory and discusses their role in sustainable site regeneration and conservation.

**Material**

The research conceptual model is based on identifying the values that influence the formation of the collective memory of ChaharBagh Street in Isfahan.

**Isfahan**

The Safavid government transformed the old Seljuk<sup>3</sup> city of Isfahan into a garden city by integrating it with the surrounding environment and incorporating elements of nature into the city's design (Figure 1), notably through the integration of the Zayandehrud River and its tributaries to mirror paradise within the city. (Munshi, 1998). Tavernier, a 17th-century traveler, observed in his travelogue that Isfahan resembled a forest from afar, marked by mosque minarets and house trees extending in all directions (Tavernier, 1957) (Figure 1, right).

**ChaharBagh Street**

ChaharBagh Street in Isfahan is recognized as a key component of the garden city, as it reached its peak of perfection as a street in this area (Wilber, 2006). The street's alignment with the river mirrors the Persian Garden pattern, being perpendicular and forming Isfahan's primary structure (Figure 1). Chardin<sup>4</sup> observes the use of varied garden species in ChaharBagh Street's construction and notes that lattice walls facilitated views into the gardens from outside (Figure 5) (Chardin, 1983). The paper utilizes a conceptual model to analyze the interplay of physical elements, activities, and events on Chaharbagh Street during the Safavid era in shaping collective memories, supported by historical evidence.



Figure 6. The initial level of ChaharBagh Street (eskannews, 2019) and Visual cones, signs and spatial hierarchy of Chaharbagh Street (Haghghat bin, 2012).

### Physical Characteristics Affecting the Formation of Collective Memories

Kaempfer highlights the prevalence of tall plantain trees in the region, marking them as a characteristic feature of Chaharbagh (Kaempfer, 1984). Sanson<sup>5</sup> observes that the houses, uniformly shaped and facing one another, feature entrances and forecourt<sup>6</sup> painted with floral patterns and semi-relief branches in gold (Sanson, 1967). Furthermore, Ahari mentions that overhead mansions at the entrance to ChaharBagh Street's body gardens are constructed for observing street ceremonies and events (Ahari, 2006). The trees and the street's layout are pivotal in shaping memorable experiences for visitors, a noted aspect in many descriptions of the area.

### Current Events Affecting the Formation of Collective Memories

1. Business events: Travelogues have mentioned some temporary and permanent commercial activities (such as coffee shops) on ChaharBagh Street, promoting the route's vitality. In his travelogue, Figueroa<sup>7</sup> writes: In addition to houses, or rather landscapes, there are houses, tents and small shops along the road where everything is sold in them. In his travelogue, Figueroa writes that in addition to houses, or rather landscapes, there are houses, tents and small shops along the road where everything is sold in them (Figueroa, 1984).
2. Tourism events: Many tourists have mentioned this street as a notable public walk and wooded public space of Isfahan. Chardin details the street's attractions, noting: "Walking in the evening is very pleasant and inspiring in this street for nine months of the year because the streets and gardens are sprinkled with water and around the ponds are full of flowers during this time" (Chardin, 1983).
3. Another ceremony showcasing the Safavid kingdom's power and grandeur occurred during the king's horse riding and hunting outings. People watched the royal procession along ChaharBagh Street, enjoying views of royal gardens, and experiencing storytelling, poetry readings, and special celebrations. The banks of ChaharBagh's streams and ponds offered prime spots for coffee makers and innkeepers to lay mats and carpets, allowing people to enjoy performances by poets, speakers, storytellers, and narrators (Kaempfer, 1984).
4. Cultural and ritual events: Collective festivities and rituals served as effective strategies for connecting people and fostering closeness with the Safavid administration. Tavernier mentions a Dervish's house on the left side of ChaharBagh, housing sacred relics of Imam Ali (PBUH) and other Shiite Imams under an arch, before which Iranians would bow as they passed. (Tavernier, 1957)
5. Iskander Beig Monshi (1561/62 – 1633/34), a historian at the Safavid court, describes the revival of national festivities under Abbas the Great's rule noting that on one occasion, over one hundred thousand people from various social strata, both lowly and noble, converged on ChaharBagh Street, engaging in water-spraying festivities (Monshi, 1998). Such events served as platforms for national unity and social solidarity renewal. The blend of commercial, touristic, and ritual-cultural activities on this street plays a significant role in shaping its social memories. Nevertheless, the emphasis on events remains a central aspect of this street's significance.

## Historical Development of ChaharBagh Street After Safavid

The period following the Safavids' fall marked a time of altering and erasing the collective memories of this street through physical changes and socio-cultural events, detailed below:

### *Qajar Period (1789–1925)*

The fall of the Safavid government initiated ChaharBagh's decline. Throughout the Qajar era, the city, including its gardens, faced extensive ruin. Ernest Hoeltzer documented the replacement of the street's old trees with new ones after 1869 (Hoeltzer, 1976). Lotfollah Honarfar, citing tourists like Jane Dieulafoy, Pierre Loti, and Henri-René D'Allemagne, noted that ChaharBagh Street, along with other city monuments, was in a dire state during this period. (Honarfar, 1970).

### *Pahlavi Period (1925-1979)*

In 1923, the ChaharBagh axis underwent significant alterations: stairs were removed, ponds filled, and the ground leveled (Figure 6). What was once a pedestrian walkway became a street, forming the city's central axis. During this period, many pavilions and gateways along ChaharBagh Street and within the gardens, either destroyed or severely damaged, were sold off, and new commercial and residential structures were constructed in their place (Ayatollah Zadeh Shirazi, 2007).

### *The Period After Islamic Revolution (1979 until now)*

Since the post-Islamic Revolution expansion of Isfahan, the historic axis of ChaharBagh, alongside the natural-historic axis of Zayandehrud, continues to shape Isfahan's core structure. From 2016, vehicle restriction strategies have been implemented on this street to reduce car traffic and foster a pedestrian-friendly area.

## Methods

In this study, interview tools were used to explore and confirm the various dimensions of collective memory among ChaharBagh Street citizens in the contemporary era. Data collection occurred in two phases, with a set of semi-structured interview questions designed for this purpose, including the following:

1. What are the most important features that you know from the historical past of ChaharBagh Street?
2. What physical or activity features remind you of ChaharBagh Street?
3. What kind of memories and events are revived for you by remembering the name of this street?
4. Which prominent places and elements of this street have effectively shaped your memories? (Please name them)
5. Which current events and activities do you think could be a memory for you and be part of your memories of this place in the future?
6. Which of the current physical features of ChaharBagh Street do you think can be recorded in your mind as a valuable memory?
7. Which of the places, prominent elements, and current events of this street remind you of the history of this street?



Participants in the study were 32 citizens who had lived in Isfahan (at least 15 years). They were selected based on random sampling and were in the age range of 30 to 70 years (see table in figure 7). All the interviews were conducted in person (in full compliance with Coronavirus health protocols). Each interview lasted 35 to 40 minutes. The interviews were conducted in August 2022, on different days of the week and in the period of 19-21 nights.

Total	Gender		Age
	Woman	Man	
6	2	4	30-40 Years
7	4	3	40-50 Years
10	4	6	50-60 Years
9	4	5	60-70 Years
Total participants: 32 Persons			

Figure 7. Table of interviewees' Statistics.

An interpretive analysis method was utilized for analyzing interview outcomes, following Herbert & Irene Rubin (Rubin, 2005) and Bill Gilham's (Gilham, 2000) guidance. Interviews were transcribed, with significant statements highlighted. Key concepts and themes were identified through multiple reviews of the transcripts. Additionally, three experts re-evaluated the highlighted sections using an unmarked transcript, focusing on key statements after understanding the research's nature. Their insights were then compared with the initial analysis. Finally, thematic sections, along with their sub-sections, were organized by major topics and general categories.

### Results

Interview reviews show that participants expressed different collective memory features about ChaharBagh Street. Therefore, the content analysis of the interviews was performed in line with the suggested conceptual model of collective memory and in the form of three main topics: spatial, activity/event, and historical characteristics. Subsequently, meanings derived from the interviews and aligned with the conceptual model were contextualized to the current situation, covering buildings/structures, functions, usages, events, and street landscape.

#### *Spatial Features in the Collective Memories of ChaharBagh*

The physical environment of ChaharBagh Street was pivotal in the research participants' memories, with interviewees highlighting its key elements such as historic monuments, street landscapes, trees, cinemas, commercial complexes, and parks as influential in forming their memories (Figure 8). "ChaharBagh School and Bazar-che Boland are the only historical monuments visible from within the street," noted a 70-year-old male interviewee. Among participants over 40, 78.2% regarded the cinemas and cafes of ChaharBagh as critical physical features etched in their memory, recalling a time when all nine cinemas in Isfahan during the Pahlavi era were located on this street, although only two remain today, with traditional cafes replaced by "van cafes." However, 18.7% felt that "van cafes" would not hold a collective memory of the place in the future. "Good old days...we always

arranged to go to the cinema on Thursdays and Fridays," shared a 60-year-old male interviewee. The street's trees were cited as the most memorable physical element by nearly 84.3% of interviewees, with 56.2% mentioning the commercial complexes, and 81.2% highlighting the boulevard and the paths for walking & cycling under intertwined trees as significant. Notably, 87.5% of these respondents deemed the addition of the middle water axis as an essential feature that, along with the trees, could significantly aid in remembering ChaharBagh Street (figure 9).



Figure 8. ChaharBagh Street in the 1950s (Wisgoon, 2021) and various functions of ChaharBagh St.

#### **Activity Features and Influential Events in the Collective Memories of ChaharBagh**

The interviews showed that the current activities do not help much to revive the memories of this street in people's minds. 87.5% of the interviewees believed that the regeneration of this street as a sidewalk had a positive impact on the local community by encouraging more people to engage in activities like walking and cycling and by helping to preserve the historical memory of the area. However, 68.7% were disappointed with the predominance of fast food, viewing it as detracting from the area's historical and cultural identity (Figure 8). "I do not understand the reason for all these fast foods in this historical zone. These types of things can be found anywhere else in the city!" (A 52-year-old female interviewee). Moreover, 59.3% of interviewees cherished activities like shopping, walking, and sitting under trees as significant memories of ChaharBagh's past.

In comparison, 15.6% mentioned driving around as their main activity, with 37.5% of these individuals citing cinema visits and movie explorations as their primary memories. Meanwhile, 62.5% of the interviewees highlighted the most significant event in ChaharBagh Street as the annual Nowruz<sup>8</sup> Shopping. 21.8% of the participants considered displaying

popular new movies in ChaharBagh cinemas (Figure 8) the most important event in ChaharBagh in the past. "I remember that sometimes new movies cause tumult in ChaharBagh as if all the people of Isfahan had gathered in front of the cinema" (Said 53-year-old male).



Figure 9. Commercial functions and middle water axis of ChaharBagh St.

Ninety- Six percent of interviewees believed that no current events on this street could become part of people's future collective memory. Conversely, 9.3% of participants noted spatiotemporal variations, such as seasonal changes, that impact collective memory: colorful leaves in autumn and spring, and the shade provided by trees in summer, pedestrianize the street.

### ***History and Historical Background of ChaharBagh***

All interviewees recognized ChaharBagh Street as a historical site, yet only 25% knew it dated back to the Safavid era. About 18.7% were uncertain if it was from the Safavid or Qajar era, while 59.3% were unaware of its history, likely due to rapid changes since the Pahlavi period. Responses to the seventh question highlighted a significant disconnect between the street's current landscape and its historical roots. Today's ChaharBagh Street fails to evoke the grandeur of the Safavid era or the modernism of the Pahlavi era, including the luxury, cinema industry, and Persian films that marked its past. According to 78.1% of interviewees, none of the current landmarks or events reflect the street's historical significance, as many commercial centers and cinemas have either disappeared or undergone functional changes.

### **Discussion & Conclusion**

Studies show that people remember the city's history and urban spaces through spatial features, activities, and historical events. Participants in this study expressed different dimensions affecting the formation of collective memory in various ways. Findings indi-

cate that a place's features, including body, activities, and events (objective-wise), as well as the history and its perception (in its subjective essence), are essential in the formation, production, and permanence of collective memory of that place, where memory becomes a subjective element of the place's landscape. The landscape of each place is its interface with the collective memory of the users (Figure 3). This research has shown that the place's physical characteristics and the landscape's objective values effectively produce collective memories. The Safavids used rows of tall sycamores and framing through gardens to achieve this goal on ChaharBagh Street. The gardens' lattice walls along the street and the visual and spatial impact of the garden landscape have also been effective in producing and developing the collective memory of the citizens. On a large scale, planning new parts of the city as a garden city has shown to be effective in creating a collective memory for its residents and visitors from a city with a different physical identity. Monuments, as many scholars, including Rossi (1966) and Boyer (1996) have stated, are the primary feature and physical value that shape collective memories. Monuments –in the main when having a cultural function, such as a gallery- also impact the collective memory's continuity. Such historical structures are mostly referred to as "urban reminders" (Luica, 2008). According to the interviewees, ChaharBagh Street's main and historical elements include the trees, ChaharBagh school, cinemas, and commercial complexes. In its current condition, only the trees (and not the ones that belong to the Safavid era but some trees of the Pahlavi era), ChaharBagh school, and a few cinemas remained. According to Aldo Rossi, as long as monuments are present, they can foster the concept of collective memory, which can act as a reminder of what has happened in the place over time (Rossi, 1966).

The revival of the middle creek of ChaharBagh in contemporary times is a reminder of this street's history during the Safavid period, which to many interviewees, is very effective in creating a collective memory. However, many of them were unaware of its historical identity. Based on the research model, cultural and historical events and the feasibility of revisiting them are other important factors affecting collective memory. Significant historical events of each period are established verbally or in writing by repetition in citizens' memories. Also, the landscape of urban spaces can help to recall and visualize citizens' memories of contemporary and historical events, including cultural, ritual, formal, and informal ones. It seems that the Safavids used the capacity of urban spaces and landscapes to narrate the history and the events of their time for the future and create a collective memory for citizens while increasing their sense of belonging to new urban contexts. Formal events like the king's tour and courtiers and cultural events such as celebrations, rituals, and religious ceremonies held formally and informally have been in this direction. After the fall of the Safavids and during the Qajar era, ChaharBagh Street started its downfall towards destruction and frigidity. All official events affiliated with the court had been shut down. Madame Dieulafoy, who had visited Isfahan between 1881 and 1886, writes about ChaharBagh: This Street is a lively walkway whose exuberant trees were planted during the reign of Shah Abbas the Great. The last centuries have not treated these old trees compassionately. Many of them have dried up, and sad cavities have been produced in them. On the right and left side, the ruins of palaces can be seen, which used to be the residence of nobles and aristocrats (Dieulafoy, 1992). A significant part of the history and, thus, the citizens' collective memory from this street vanished because of the removal of many events and monuments during the Qajar era. The mentioned trend about the Qajar era was continued by Pahlavi too. Still, the main differences are replacing the events related to economic activities with ritual, cultural and social events and weakening the historical identity. The removal and

replacement of many monuments of the Safavid era (such as the Middle Creek, some buildings, and gardens of ChaharBagh's outskirts with new functions in the Pahlavi era and later during the Islamic Revolution) have exacerbated the Safavid history elimination from this street and its associating collective memories. Referring to the concept of "the sense of time," Lynch believed that historic buildings could represent different eras in one city (Lynch, 1972). The policies after the Qajar period, especially in creating spatial frames and structures, have weakened the sense of time and, consequently, the component of history in the collective memory of the citizens of this street.

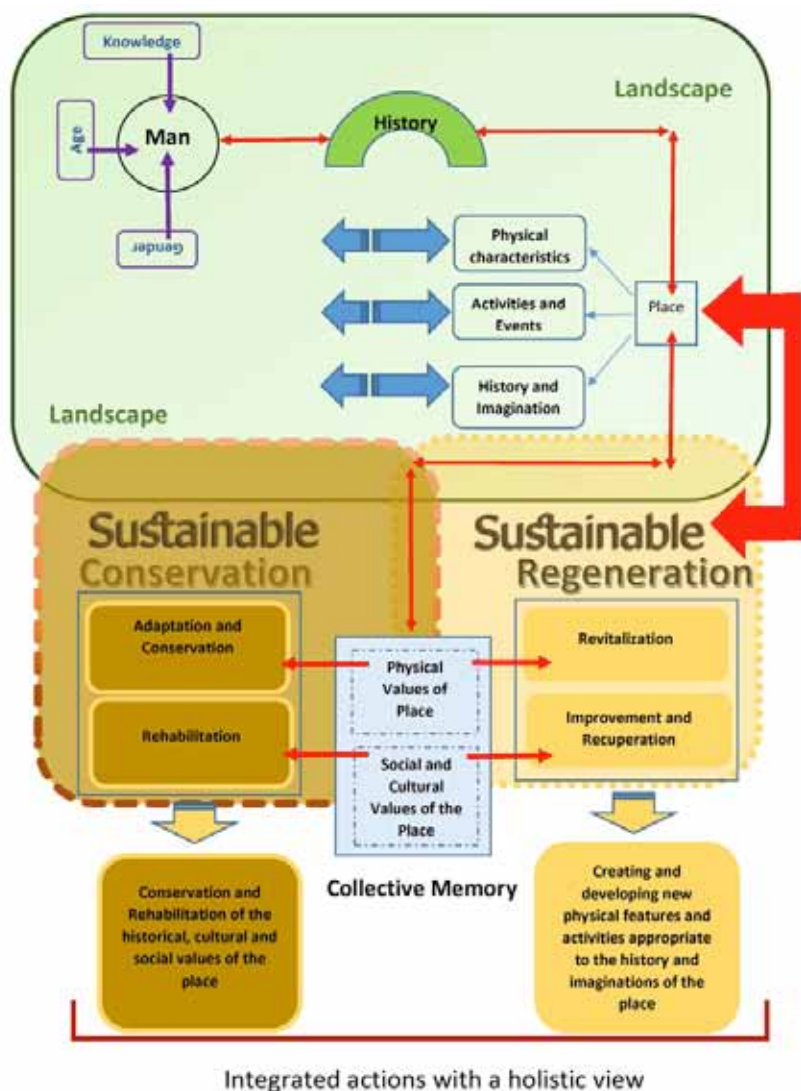


Figure 10. Proposed model related to collective memory in sustainable regeneration and conservation of historical sites.

To accomplish sustainable regeneration in historical landscapes, regeneration and conservation are suggested to be considered simultaneously to preserve and perpetuate collective memories in historical locations (Figure 9). This process can demonstrate substantive and semantic differences while creating basic similarities with the old spatial features. Sustainable Physical and semantic regeneration and physical and semantic conservation should

be influenced by the place's history and physical and socio-cultural values. Increasing users' knowledge through direct and indirect education about the place's history and values is an influential factor in strengthening the relationship with the place and the continuity of the collective memories associated with it. The interventions and strategies for ChaharBagh Street during the Pahlavi and the Islamic Revolution periods have been planned through a unidimensional view and detached from the simultaneous approach (regeneration together with conservation). Besides, ignoring teaching landscape values and developing proper pedagogical approaches together with the history of the place has aggravated the situation, extending the failure. The interviews show that 80% of the interviewees do not consider any of the current actions and monuments in line with this street's story and historical background. Also, 90% of the interviewees believed that no particular event on this street in the current situation could be engaged as part of the collective memory in the future. These results indicate the weakness of conservation policies and the regeneration strategies of this historic site.

This study has aimed to present a process for the sustainable regeneration and conservation of historical spaces like ChaharBagh Street, emphasizing the preservation of collective memory. Our findings underscore the multifaceted relationship between spatial features, events, and the historical backdrop in shaping collective memory. The importance of cultural memories, largely overshadowed by physical and place-based memories, became evident, highlighting a deeper connection to the societal values and shifts across different political eras.

The Safavid era, as a significant period in Isfahan's development, used urban landscapes to manifest power and create a shared collective memory, fundamentally influencing the urban and social fabric of ChaharBagh Street. Similarly, subsequent periods, including the Qajar, Pahlavi, and the era following the Islamic Revolution, each left distinct marks on the urban landscape and collective memory, reflecting the prevailing political and cultural attitudes towards urban development and conservation. These transitions illustrate the complex interplay between design choices and public mood within varying political contexts.

Our proposed model (Figure 9) seeks to bridge the gaps identified in our study, linking physical alterations, cultural significances, and historical narratives to foster a sustainable approach to regeneration and conservation. It underscores the need for an integrated framework that not only preserves the physicality of historical sites but also revitalizes their cultural and social significance. However, the challenge remains in reconciling the modern landscape of ChaharBagh Street with its rich historical layers. The current landscape's disconnection from its historical roots underscores a broader issue in urban regeneration practices — the need for a nuanced understanding of collective memory that encompasses not just the physical but also the cultural and symbolic aspects of urban spaces.

To address these challenges, we propose a multidimensional approach to urban regeneration that considers:

- The preservation of physical elements as anchors of historical identity.
- The revitalization of cultural and social activities that reinforce historical narratives.
- Education and engagement initiatives that foster a deeper public connection with the site's history.

Our study highlights the crucial role of collective memory in sustainable urban regeneration and conservation efforts. By integrating the physical, cultural, and historical dimensions of urban spaces, we can ensure that regeneration practices not only preserve the past but also enrich the present and future urban experience. This approach not only aligns with our proposed model but also offers a pathway to more resilient and meaningful urban landscapes.

### Endnotes

- 1 Commonly known as Cyrus the Great, was the founder of the Achaemenid Persian Empire.
- 2 Shah Abbas was the fifth shah of Safavid Iran from 1588 to 1629.
- 3 The Seljuk Empire or the Great Seljuk Empire, was a high medieval, culturally Turko-Persian, Sunni Muslim empire (1074–1308).
- 4 Jean-Baptiste Chardin was a French jeweler and traveler who was also known as Sir John Chardin. Early in 1666, he traveled via Constantinople and the Black Sea to reach Persia.
- 5 He was a French cartographer came to Iran in 1683 AD.
- 6 It has built over the entrance gate, known as Imarat-i-Sardar (gate building).
- 7 Don García de Silva Figueroa (December 29, 1550 – July 22, 1624).
- 8 Nowruz is the Iranian New Year, which begins on the spring equinox.

### References

- Ahari, Zahra. "Khiaban-e chahar bagh-e Isfahan: Mafhoumi no az fazay-e shahri [Chahar bagh street in Isfahan: A New Concept of Urban Space]." *Journal of Golestan-e Honar* 2 (5) (2006): 48-59.
- Ahari, Zahra. *Isfahan School of Urban Design: The Syntax of Structure Design*. Iranian Academy of the Arts, 2006.
- Ayat Allah Zadeh Shirazi, Bagher. "Delicate and Unique Urban Planning of the Safavid Era." *Danesh-nama* 16 (2007): 19-20.
- Colantonio, Andrea & Tim Dixon. *Urban Regeneration and Social Sustainability: Best Practice from European Cities* Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Boyer, Christine. *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments*. MIT Press, 1996.
- Chardin, John. *Chardin Travelogue (Isfahan section)*. *Negah*. Connerton, P. (1989). *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Couch, Chris, C. Fraser & S. Percy. *Urban Regeneration in Europe*, Wiley, 2003.
- Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

- Crumley, Carole. *Exploring Venues of Social Memory in Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. by M. G. Cattell & J. J. Climo. Altamira Press, 2002.
- Dieulafoy, Jane. *Iran-Chaldea and Susa*. Tehran University Publication. Eskannehnews, 1992.
- Eskannehnews, *An Open End for the Pedestrianization of Charbagh*. Retrieved from <https://www.eskannehnews.com/article/19589> (accessed January 20, 2019).
- Figuerola, García. *Don Garcias de Silva Figuerola Travelogue*. Nashr-e Now, 1984.
- Gillham, Bill, *Case Study Research Methods*. Continuum, 2000.
- Gittell, Ross. *Renewing cities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Gongaware, Timothy B., "Collective Memories and Collective Identities: Maintaining Unity in Native American Educational Social Movements." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 32 (2003):483-520.
- Habibi, Mohsen. "Urban Space, Events, and Collective Memories." *Journal of Soffe*, 28(9)(1999):16-21.
- Haghghat bin, Mehdi, M. Ansari, C. Steenbergen & A. Taghvae. "Innovations in the Charbagh Axis of the Safavid Period." *International Journal of Architecture and Urban Planning*, 22 (2) (2012):79-90.
- Haghghatbin, Mehdi, M. Ansari, M. Bermanian & S. Bostani. "A Study of Effective Elements on Safavid Garden-Cities." *Journal of Hoviatshahr*, 25(2016): 5-14.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory* (L. Coser, Trans.). University of Chicago Press, 1925.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *The Collective Memory* (F. Ditter, & V. Ditter, Trans.). Harper Colophon, 1980.
- Henneberry, John & Steven Rowley. "Development Cultures and Urban Regeneration." *Urban Studies*, 39(7) (2002):1181–1196.
- Hoeltzer, Ernst. *Persia 113 Years Ago*. Ministry of Culture and Arts Publication, 1976.
- Honarfar, Lotf-o-llah. "Isfahan Charbagh." *Journal of Honar Va Mardom*, 96 & 97(1970): 2-14.
- Kaempfer, E. *Kempfer Travelogue*. Kharazmi 1984.
- Lavafi, Mahkameh, M. Sepehri Moghadam & F. Habib. "Recognition of the Concept of the Interaction Between Safavid Square and Royal Gardens." *Journal of Urban Management*, 49 (2018):49-65.
- Le Brun, Charles. *Voyages de Corneille le Brun par la Moscovie en Perse et aux Indes Orientales*. Freres Westein, 1718.
- Lewicka, Maria. "Place Attachment, Place Identity and Place Memory: Restoring the Forgotten City Past." *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 28 (2008):209-231.
- Lynch, Kevin. *What Time is this Place?* MIT Press, 1972.



- Mir Moghtadaei, Mahta. "Criteria for Measuring the Possibility of Formation, Recording, and Transfer of Collective Memories in the City (Case Study: Tehran)." *Journal of Fine Arts*, 10 (37) (2009 AD/1388 SH):5-16.
- Misztal, Barbara. "Durkheim on Collective Memory." *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 3(2) (2003):123-143.
- Munshi, Iskander Beig. *Tarikh-e Alam-ara-ye 'Abbasi*. Donya-e Ketab, 1998.
- Olick, Jeffrey. "Collective memory: The Two Cultures." *Journal of Sociological Theory*, 7(1999):333-348.
- Olick, Jeffrey & Robbins. "Social Memory Studies: From "Collective Memory" to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices." *Journal of Annual Review of Sociology*, 24(1998):105-140.
- Rossi, Aldo. *The Architecture of the City*. Cambridge, MIT Press, 1966.
- Rubin, Herbert & Irene Rubin. *Qualitative Interviewing*. Sage, 2005.
- Saghafi Moghaddam, Sara & Francesca Cora. "STOP [in] Transition - Weaving a Local Fabric Along the TOMI Line.", Thesis in MA, Politecnico di Milano, 2012.
- Sanson, Nicolas. *Sanson-Voyage, ou Relation de l'Etat Present du Royaume de Perse*. Ebn-e Sina, 1967.
- Shafaghi, Sirus. *Geography of Isfahan*. Isfahan University, 2002.
- Smith, Melanie. *Tourism, Culture and Regeneration*. Trowbridge: Cromwell Press, 2006.
- Smith, Andrew. *Events and Urban Regeneration: The Strategic Use of Events to Revitalize Cities*. London: Routledge, 2012.
- Stronach, David. "The Garden as a Political Statement: Some Case Studies from the Near East in the First Millennium B.C." *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, 4(1990):171-180.
- Tallon, Andrew. *Urban Renewal in the UK*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Tavernier, John. *Travelogue*. Sanaei & Taeid, 1957.
- Wilber, Donald. *Persian Gardens and Garden Pavilions*. Elmi-farhangi Publication, 2006.
- Wisgoon, Old photo of Isfahan in the 1350s. Retrieved from <https://wisgoon.com/pin/24773123> (accessed October 8, 2021).