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Iranian Studies
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ARTICLE

Sites of Disremembering: Narrative Tactics of Remembering the Past in Qasr and Heshmatieh Neighborhoods of Tehran

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Abstract

By applying narrative inquiry and cartographic reconfiguration of two significantly transformed neighborhoods, Qasr and Heshmatieh, in Tehran, in this study we analyze the practice of remembering within the context of memory politics. We aim to critically examine how residents of these neighborhoods, situated near major state security and military facilities, alter their recollections of the past. Inspired by de Certeau's concepts of strategy and tactics, the analysis seeks to identify the narrative tactics employed by interviewees to interpret the often imposed transformations of the area. Our findings underscore the process of "disremembering" as a hallmark of the transformation, perpetuated through constant "replacements." Furthermore, they highlight four layers of transformation in the area, discussed within the framework of significant literature on Tehran's spatial transformation.

Keywords: De Certeau; narrative tactics; politics of memory; remembering; Tehran

In this study we aimed to explore how residents navigate the significant changes implemented by the city planning authority when recounting the history of their neighborhood. Here, history refers not to an objective sequence of events, but rather to people's subjective interpretation of the past. This type of history is closely tied to memory. According to Ricoeur,[1] the act of telling what occurred serves a narrative and interpretive purpose that brings history into the realm of memory. Remembering entails a reinterpretation of the past in the present, as Huyssen[2] has described the concept of the "present past." Therefore, remembering is not a passive process of simply retrieving information from a memory bank, but rather an intentional practice through which the individual consciously recounts the past. Recognizing the intentional nature of memory, this study examined how people interpret the past within the framework of the politics of memory. In this context, individuals selectively narrate the past based on their own values.

This research examined a pattern of change in Iranian cities that, in the usual way of large modernist projects often implemented by the municipality or private sector, is generated by the dynamics between residential areas and large, rigid, strategic state functions. Specifically, the study focused on two neighboring areas in Tehran, Qasr and Heshmatieh, which have developed close to major state security and military facilities such as barracks and prisons. The residents had recently experienced a significant change due to the

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[1] Ricoeur, *Memory.*

[2] Huyssen, *Present Pasts.*

implementation of three major initiatives: the construction of a new highway resulting in the demolition of numerous residential buildings, shops, and public spaces; the redevelopment by the municipality of the large cleared areas left by the vacated Qasr Prison; and the establishment of a large, multifunctional shopping center, Megāpārs, by the private sector on a site previously owned by the army. The prison, which housed numerous political prisoners from the Pahlavi era (1925–79) until the 1990s, was once an isolated area, detached from the city's everyday life. The location where Qasr Prison was constructed was previously a royal palace, during the Qājār Dynasty, and it underwent various transformations as power structures evolved, transitioning from a palace to a military camp, then to a prison, and ultimately to a garden-museum.[3]

Qasr and Heshmatieh were two distinct neighborhoods that gradually developed in the vicinity of Qasr Prison, the Heshmatieh military barracks, and their related functions. In 2003, an agreement between the municipality and the prison's organization[4] resulted in the closure and evacuation of the large Qasr Prison, which covered an area of about fourteen hectares. Qasr was handed over to the Tehran Municipality to turn into a garden-museum. It was envisioned as a key future cultural attraction for the city. Over the next decade, the municipality implemented a new network of roads, public spaces, and landmarks within the cleared site. Additionally, a significant portion of the southern side of the prison was designated for the private sector and transformed into a multifunctional shopping center. These changes, along with the construction of a new highway, restructured the sociospatial order of the area. The Qasr Garden-Museum opened to the public in 2012.

Inspired by the political nature of memory and the intentionality of remembering and forgetting, through our first theoretical lens we aimed to discover how the locals remembered the past after the city planning authority dramatically restructured the area. Applying narrative inquiry and cartographic redrawing, we explored local residents' interpretation of their neighborhood changes in the context of Tehran's transformation. Our goal was to contribute to memory studies in general and Tehran studies in particular. The twin ideas of strategy and tactics of de Certeau's[5] theory were applied as a second theoretical lens. According to de Certeau, the practices (tactics) of everyday life resist the rational, formal, and disciplinary strategies of the production of space. De Backer et al.,[6] adopting Katz's[7] notion of minor theory, consider de Certeau's dual concepts a minor theory that describes how practices of everyday life negotiate, transform, and rework the strategy from within.

Discussion of the political nature of memory in this study takes the biography-of-a-site approach.[8] This approach describes particular sites, considering how various publics negotiate, receive, and interpret their meanings and settings. According to Till, this draws from concepts in key works, such as Foucault's[9] counter-memory, Hobsbawm's[10] invented traditions, Nora's[11] *Les lieux de mémoir* (places of memory), and Halbwachs'[12] social frameworks and topographies of memory.

To understand how everyday life interprets the past, the changes in the studied area were traced through narrative inquiry and the study of historical maps and aerial photographs. The identified themes depict the nature of the transformation perceived by the local

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[3] Karami, "No Longer."

[4] The prisoner's organization referred to is the Iran Prison and Security and Corrective Measures Organization.

[5] De Certeau, *Practice*.

[6] Mattias De Backer, Claske Dijkema and Kathrin Hörschelmann, "The everyday politics of public space."

[7] De Backer et al., "Everyday Politics"; Katz, "Major/Minor"; Katz, "Minor Theory."

[8] Till, "Memory Studies"; Till, "Artistic and Activist"; Till, "Wounded Cities."

[9] Michel Foucault, Film and Popular Memory: an interview with Michel Foucault; Foucault, "Power/knowledge. ed. Colin Gordon."

[10] Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: inventing traditions." In: Hobsbawm and Ranger (Eds.) *The invention of tradition.*

[11] Pier Nora, "Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French past."

[12] Foucault, "Film"; Foucault, "Power/Knowledge"; Hobsbawm, "Inventing Traditions"; Halbwachs, *Collective Memory.*

community. Subsequently, using the framework of de Certeau's concept of tactics and the performative nature of narratives,[13] the identified themes were considered narrative tactics of the interviewees interpreting the past and the changes brought about by disciplinary strategies. In this way, our research also connects with studies in urban planning that advocate for a shift "from grand narratives to small narratives; from narratives of dominant voices to narratives of the underprivileged."[14] As Sandercock[15] suggests, this involves moving toward an "epistemology of multiplicity" and embracing the "story turn" in planning. According to Ameel,[16] there is a paradigm shift that has been tentatively called a narrative or story turn in urban planning practices and theory, emphasizing the significance of language as a conveyor of meaning and power relationships.

From a comparison of the themes derived from the narratives and the authors' direct observations, and without transparency about the decision-making of the city planning authority, it was clear that various spatial alterations had been interpreted differently by the participants. For instance, they expressed positive feelings regarding the new public spaces (the Qasr garden-museum complex), describing a reduced sense of sociospatial enclosure and fewer drawbacks for residents. This discussion situated the research in the second body of literature to which it was intended to contribute, Tehran studies, specifically in two domains. First, the narrated layers and patterns of the area's transformation were examined in the context of the significant literature on spatial policies regarding Tehran's transformation since the Pahlavi era, when a substantial transformation radically replanned the capital, a major step in laying the foundations for modernization and further expansion. Second, we explored how the transformation of public, private, and state ownership in the studied area was interconnected with the spatial policies of the government. Ehsani,[17] considering property a site of political and discursive contention, discussed the ambiguity of public, private, and state ownership in Iran. According to him, the public-private binary diminishes the public in assets under state control, with the government in charge of management as well as the exchange. To explain the concept of ownership in Iran, he referred to the public as "the common": shared assets that encompass collective resources held in the interest of all citizens and future generations equally. By introducing three waves of privatization of public lands—common assets—in postrevolutionary Iran, he discussed how enclosures have been carried out in the name of collective interest and social justice, but have actually benefited the state and specific social groups and beneficiaries. This was done in exchange for support of competing factions within the political establishment and strengthening of the state.[18]

The following section comprises a literature review conducted to integrate the two theoretical perspectives framing the study, including the politics of memory and de Certeau's concepts of strategy and tactics.

Remembering\Forgetting As a Practice of Everyday Life

Memory, the ability to recall the past, is considered crucial to personal identity.[19] According to Ricoeur,[20] memory serves to perceive the distance and depth of time, providing an individual's sense of continuity. By definition, remembering and forgetting are inseparable concepts. We can remember something only if we consider it related to the past. We can recall it to the present—remembering—or leave it in the past—forgetting. Douglas[21] suggests that

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[13] See Peterson and Langellier, "Performance Turns."
[14] Ameel, *Narrative Turn*, 20.
[15] Sandercock, "Campfire." See also Sandercock, "Closet."
[16] Ameel, *Narrative Turn*, 16.
[17] Ehsani, "Politics of Property."
[18] Ibid., 171.
[19] Kenny, "Place for Memory."
[20] Ricoeur, *Memory.*
[21] Douglas, "Forgotten Knowledge," from Minarova-Banjac, "Collective Memory," 24.

forgetting can be seen as "selective remembering, mis-remembering and dis-remembering." In Huyssen's view,[22] because memory and remembering are re-presentation of the past, "the past is not simply there in the memory, but it must be articulated to become a memory." Similarly, Hirst and Stone[23] describe forgetting as a way to make the past difficult to access, leading to the erasure or loss of certain memories that are not included in recounted history; that is, they are not a subject to be re-presented. To understand the agency of memory, we need to consider it a practice: to remember or to forget the past. To explain the intentionality of memory, the literature on memory studies has introduced some patterns, or tactics and strategies, for forgetting.[24]

Literature on the politics of memory describes how stories about the past are always entangled[25] with already existing memorial places. This literature addresses social conflicts and the interplay between power and memory. In this context, the urban landscape and its changes can demonstrate how the politics of memory manifest through space.[26] The political nature of memory transforms it into a tool for exerting power. In this regard, the politics of memory aligns with the concept of identity formation, particularly as a mechanism for the ruling class. Authoritarian regimes aim to portray a cohesive whole—the nation—by crafting master narratives and enduring values about history and memories. Monumental sites can encapsulate these master narratives.[27] Memorials and monuments often reflect the world views of the class in power, with access to social capital for memorializing the past.[28] Just like space, "memory, then, is inherently contestatory."[29] However, the dominant memory can be resisted and negotiated by competing and alternative narratives created by marginalized social groups. For instance, Shin and Jin[30] discuss how people, by rejecting a memorial site created by a totalitarian regime to manipulate and suppress a traumatic collective memory, stripped it of its intended meaning and created a void.

To comprehend how a local community recounts the past in a situation in which they have undergone an imposed top-down restructuring of their neighborhoods, the concept of everyday life and its political potential is helpful. The theory of everyday life was primarily developed by Henri Lefebvre.[31] According to him, "the traditional opposition between the common and the powerful, or between routine navigations of space and top-down planning procedures, can be overcome in a third space where true representation can occur."[32] This aligns with de Certeau's practices of everyday life and strategy versus tactic. De Certeau's framework, particularly his essay "Walking in the City," has inspired numerous scholars to critique the subject position of urban planning and the panoptic disciplining of space.[33] For instance, Hamdan-Saliba and Fenster[34] examined the everyday tactics that Palestinian women employed to cope with various strategies of power (gender, cultural, national, and global) that limit their everyday spatial practices. The study findings distinguished between proactive and nonactive tactics; the former created alternative spaces and enabled the manipulation of social and cultural codes. The latter expressed avoidance of actions, decreasing the sense of belonging to the determined disciplinary spaces.

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[22] Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, 3.

[23] Hirst and Stone, "Unified Approach."

[24] See Connerton, "Seven Types"; and Minarova-Banjac, "Collective Memory."

[25] Sturken, *Tangled Memories*.

[26] See Hayden, *Power of Place*; Alderman "Street Fit"; Mitchell, "Monuments"; Dwyer, "Location"; Dwyer, "Symbolic Accretion"; Till, "Places"; Till, *New Berlin*; and Till, "Wounded Cities."

[27] See Connerton, *How Societies Remember*; Hoelscher and Alderman, "Memory"; Said, "Invention"; Stevens and Sumartojo, "'56 after '89"; Sumartojo, "National Identity"; and Sumartojo, "Commemorative Atmospheres."

[28] Dwyer and Alderman, "Memorial Landscapes."

[29] Terdiman, *Present Past*, 20.

[30] Shin and Jin, "Politics."

[31] Lefebvre, *Production of Space*.

[32] De Backer et al., "Everyday Politics," 242.

[33] See Crang, "Relics"; Collie, "Walking"; and Villani and Talamini, "Streets."

[34] Hamdan-Saliba and Fenster, "Tactics."

Strategy and tactics determine how the powerful and powerless seek to occupy space. Strategy refers to the panopticon and disciplinary systems that use space to control and dominate. It has the power to determine "proper" pace according to abstract models and claims permanent ownership. A tactic is a way for individuals and communities to resist and manipulate the spaces created by strategy. The strategically produced space is a universal and anonymous subject constructed based on "a finite number of stable, isolatable and interconnected properties."[35] The administration of such operations involves processes of elimination, differentiation, and redistribution to organize the city, while rejecting what is not useful as waste products.[36] The concepts de Certeau proposes to explain strategies are comparable to Lefebvre's state spatial strategies, that is, hierarchization, differentiation, and fragmentation.[37] However, tactics have the power to suspend the discipline and symbolic order established by strategies. According to de Certeau, the tactics of everyday life can produce a second poetic geography over the imposed and predetermined geography. This geography is described by sites. Sites are fragmentary and convoluted histories that have been lived in and are filled with the "presences of diverse absences."[38] In this context, the visible spatial order indicates the invisible: the excluded and removed things and hidden meanings that manifest themselves in various and flexible forms. De Certeau postulated an invisible identity of the visible that "can be unfolded but like stories held in reserve, remaining in an enigmatic state, symbolizations encysted in the pain or pleasure of the body."[39]

Methodology

For this research we applied narrative inquiry to explore local residents' interpretation of the past and the transformation of the two studied neighborhoods in Tehran, Qasr and Heshmatieh. The data collected for this study primarily comprised semistructured interviews, narrative mapping, observation, and cartographic redrawing. The research findings incorporate concepts and diagrams to illustrate the perceived area transformations, in connection to the transformation of Tehran. The semistructured interviews involved sixteen participants (eleven men and five women) and were divided into two parts, each focusing on different periods. In the first part, six interviews (codes 1–6) were selected that had been conducted in 2016 as part of a previous study involving one of the authors. The second part included ten interviews (codes 7–16) conducted in 2021 by the authors. All sixteen interviewees had resided in the area for over twenty years, with nine of them (ages 40–70) having lived there since childhood and witnessed decades of change.

All interviews were transcribed and analyzed with two methods simultaneously, thematic coding and narrative mapping. Additionally, the study employed cartographic redrawing to trace morphological changes by comparing visual documents, including ten historical maps (from 1900 to 1976), four aerial photographs (from 1956, 1975, 1989, and 1997) taken by the National Geographical Organization, three aerial photographs of 1964 taken by the Iran National Cartography Center, and seven aerial photographs (from 2000, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2021) exported from Google Earth. All the above documents were rasterized and georeferenced. The combination of narrative mapping and cartographic redrawing[40] made it possible to identify the traces of some removed locations that were not clear in the studied documents, as presented in the next section.

In the following two sections, a brief image of the two neighborhoods is presented. The section after these describes the strategic spatial ordering of the area based on its visible

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35 De Certeau, *Practice*, 94.
36 Ibid.
37 Brenner and Elden, *State, Space, World*.
38 Michel de Certeau, *Practice*, 108.
39 Ibid.
40 See Kap Yücel and Aksümer, "Urban Morphological Change."

physical changes through a comparison of maps and aerial photographs from different years and field observations. Then, the identified narrative tactics are described.

The Development of Qasr and Heshmatieh

Qasr and Heshmatieh, located today in District 7 of the Tehran Municipality, were two historic rural settlements that were established in 1790, during the Qājār era (1796–1925), outside the legal boundaries of the historic city of Tehran, near one of the Qājār palaces (see Figures 1 and 2). The area gave the inhabitants access to an aqueduct, the Qanāt. It also was located near the main communication routes between the historic city and the northern areas (the royal hunting grounds, military camps, villages, and gardens).

When Rezā Shāh Pahlavī (r. 1925–41) assumed control of the state, he wanted to construct a modern state and national identity for Iran. Tehran became the focal point for Pahlavi's modernization efforts. He proposed two key national plans and projects, which included administrative reform (modernizing the state and the economy) and constructing a new network of infrastructure across the entire country (industrialization).[41] The new administrative districts were situated in two locations, the former walled Qājār Royal District and the former military parade ground.[42] One of his main modernization projects was the establishment of the first unified Iranian army of modern times. The national army played a crucial role in consolidating Reza Shah's power by attracting financial resources and increasing the military population through compulsory military service and modern military training.[43] Consequently, the government allocated specific areas of the city for military purposes. It appears, in the area under examination, that the royal sites of the previous dynasty, such as the Qājār Palace and military camp, connected to the city through existing networks, were potential districts for developing new state buildings. Rezā Shāh constructed a modern prison (1929) known as Mārkov Prison or Shahrbānī Prison on the ruins of Qājār Garden, and also built barracks, a police school, and several buildings for the army and navy in the area. Other changes included widening of Shemirān Road (now Shariatī Street), the establishment of a center for wireless telegraphy in the village of Qasr (1924), and the first radio station (1940).[44] As the military installations and their barriers took shape, the residential areas around the two rural settlements mentioned above were growing.[45] During the reign of Mohammad Rezā Pahlavī (1941–79), Abbās-Ābād[46] and the areas around Qājār Palace were developed due to their proximity to the Shemirān Road. Additionally, the government established a large army hospital and a teacher training college in the area. Urban areas with sociospatial differences grew on both sides of Shemirān Road due to the proximity of the southern parts of the study area to the extended city (see Figure 3).

As depicted in Figure 4, over seventy years the two studied settlements completely merged into the city. This transformation can be elucidated by describing urbanization, development, rapid city expansion, and population growth. Studies frequently allude to the expansion of urban areas in Iran, particularly Tehran, into rural areas due to urbanization that has accelerated since the 1960s.[47] After the 1979 revolution, the urban population of Iran surpassed the 50-percent mark for the first time, with more people residing in cities

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[41] Mashayekhi, "Tehran."

[42] Ibid, 109.

[43] See Abrahamian, *Two Revolutions*; Cronin, *Making of Modern Iran*; Abrahamian, *History*; Cronin, "Modernity, Change"; Sheikh-ol-Islami, "Army."

[44] Fayazi, "Historical Textures."

[45] By the end of the first Pahlavi regime in 1941, Tehran spanned approximately 46 square kilometers, which was 2.5 times larger than in the Qajar era. The population surged from two hundred thousand to nearly one million in just sixteen years (Atlas of Tehran Metropolis 2005, from Mashayekhi, "Tehran").

[46] Another resort garden was initially planted in the Qajar era. It was developed as a residential area on the west side of Shemirān Road and merged with Tehran in the Mohammad Rezā Pahlavī era.

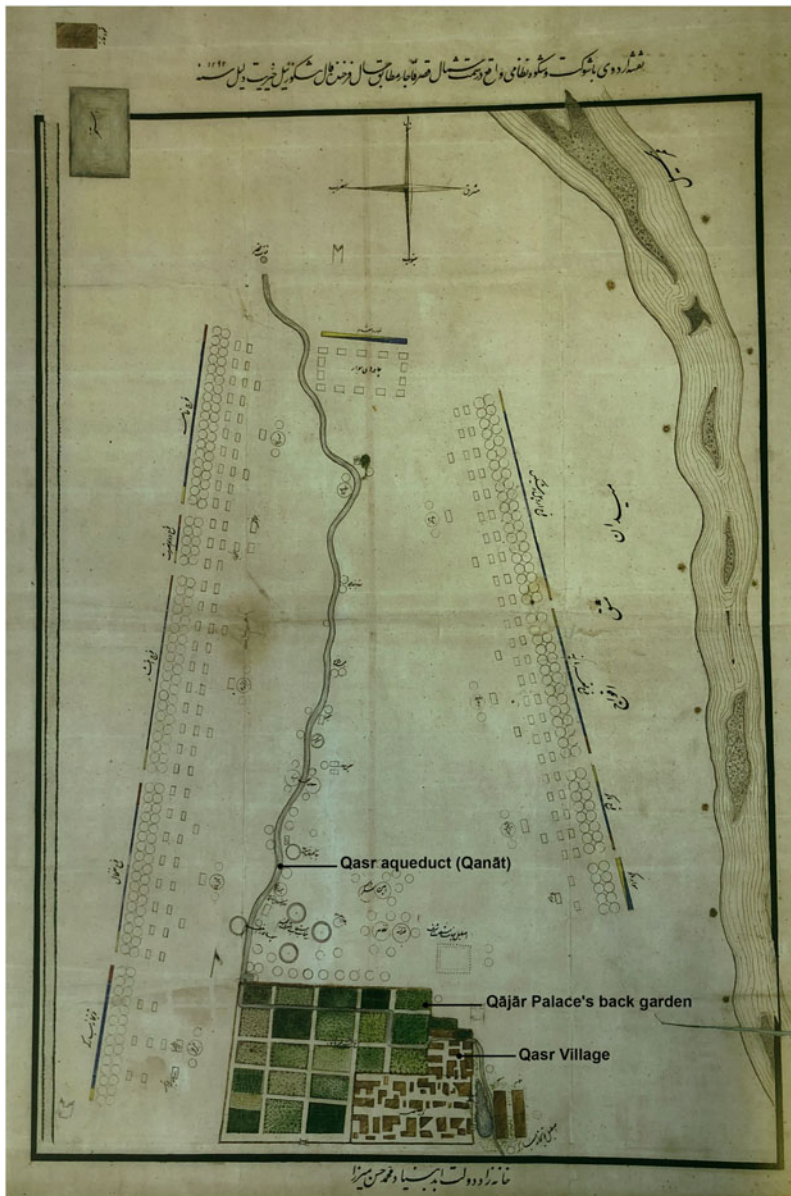[47] See Mashayekhi, "Tehran"; Vahdat-Zad, "Spatial Discrimination."

Figure 1. Map of the military camp on both sides of the Qanāt, north of Qājār Palace in 1875. The map shows Qasr village located next to the palace's back garden. Photograph: Golestān Palace Document Center, in Shirazian, *Tehran Negari*, 23.

than in villages.[48] The assimilation of villages in the vicinity of Tehran is often viewed as a consequence of extensive urban growth.[49] In the *Farhang-e Joghrāfiāī-e Iran: Ābādihā*,[50] Heshmatieh is listed among the villages of Shemirānāt. This village was included within the legal boundary of the city of Tehran in early 1956.[51] The villages absorbed into the city's borders often underwent sociospatial restructuring due to the development policies

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[48] Soltani, *Redeveloping Tehran*, 50.
[49] See Hamidi et al., *Sākhtār-e Shahr-e Tehrān*; Nazarian, "Mantaghe-ye Kalānshahrī"; and Shafiei, "Assimilation."
[50] Razmara, *Farhang-e Joghrāfiāī-e Iran: Ābādihā* , 72.
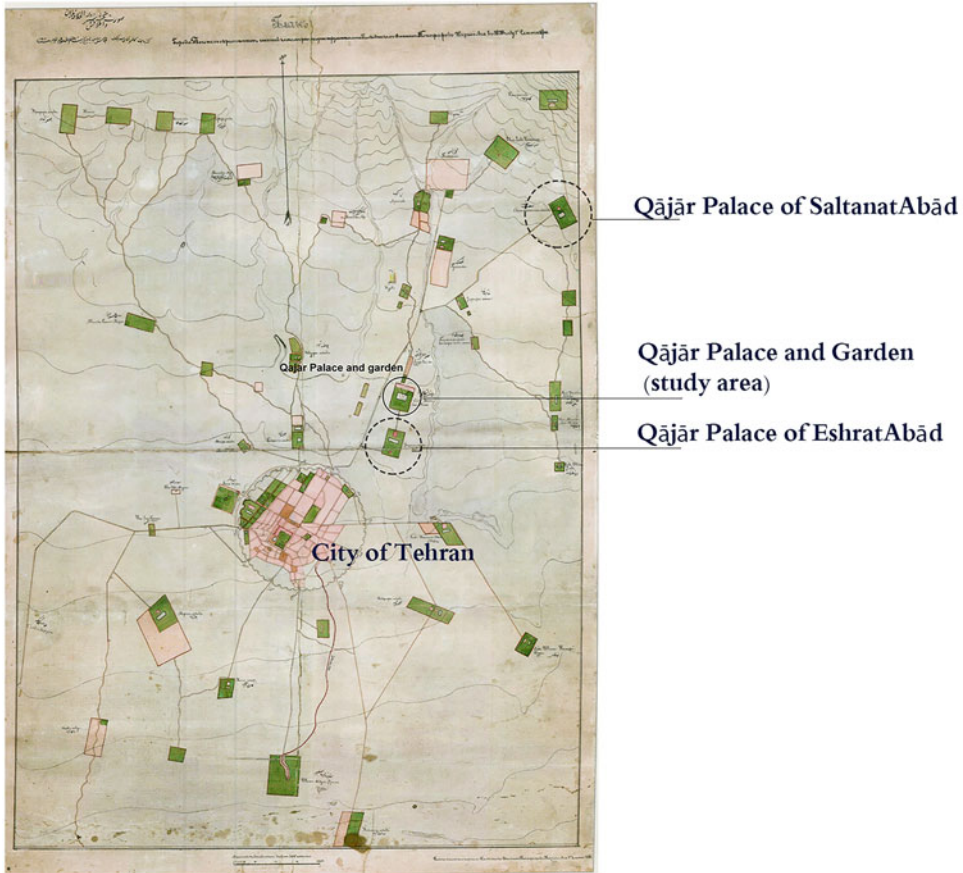[51] Mousavizadeh, "Hešmatiy(yy)e."

Figure 2. Map of Tehran and its surrounding areas in 1890. The circles indicate three of the Qājār Palaces located outside the city limits (the middle one pertains to the area under study). Photograph: Golestān Palace Document Center, in Shirazian, *Tehran Negari*, 26.

of planning authorities and residents' actions in the subsequent decades. "Development" refers to a process of advancement facilitating the "proper" functions of a metropolitan city.

The planning organization developed the first Tehran Comprehensive Plan (1964–68), which envisioned a city and society of high living standards and economic prosperity. The plan advocated decentralization, envisioning Tehran as a metropolis by 1991, comprising ten urban centers separated by vast green spaces and connected by a network of highways. During the 1990s, in the post Iran–Iraq War reconstruction era, Karbāschī, who served as the mayor of Tehran from 1990 to 1998, selectively implemented the pro-growth ideas from the 1968 Tehran Comprehensive Plan that had been disregarded after the 1979 Iranian Revolution.[52] He formulated the second Tehran Comprehensive Plan in 1992 and oversaw the construction of more than three times the number of expressways than had been built throughout Tehran's history.[53] Karbāschī initiated the construction of certain segments of the Sayād-e Shirāzī highway in the 1990s, and its final phase, which included the highway traversing the area currently under study, was completed by Ghalibaf (mayor of Tehran from 2005 to 2017). According to the detailed plan of District 7 of the Tehran Municipality (2006), the understudied neighborhoods were still expected to grow in population, accompanied by increased service and infrastructure.

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[52] Khatam, "Tehran Urban Reforms."
[53] Ehsani, "Municipal Matters," 24.

Figure 3. A section of the 1963 General Map of Tehran. The red color indicates state security and military sites. Photograph: Iran Cartography Center, in Shirazian, *Tehran Negari,* 258–59.

Figure 4. The three Rasterized aerial photographs present the developement of the studied area over seventy years. From left to right: 1956, 1997, and 2021.: (Aerial photograph of 1956 and 1997 were bought from the National Geographical Organization, and the aerial photograph of 2021 was exported from Google Earth).

Figure 5. Sayād-e Shirāzī Highway cut off residential areas. Photograph: Corresponding Author's archive.

Figure 6. Qasr Garden-Museum. Two historic buildings are preserved as a museum within public spaces. Photograph: hamshahrionline.ir.

At the time of this research, the sociospatial changes in the studied area were significantly influenced by the construction of the final phase of the Sayād-e Shirāzī highway (Figure 5); the removal of Qasr Prison, which was replaced by the Qasr Garden-Museum (Figure 6); and implementation of the Megāpārs multifunctional center (Figure 7). These projects were implemented almost simultaneously. As a result of the highway construction, the municipality redefined the borders of the two neighborhoods and administratively combined them as the Qasr-Heshmatieh neighborhood.

From a functionalis perspective, executing these projects enhanced urban infrastructure, expanded public spaces, and improved the connectivity of neighborhoods to the city's transportation network. The projects, by swiftly introducing changes, enhanced the socioeconomic profile of the area, transforming it into a better place to live and invest. As in a ranking of Tehran's neighborhoods based on development and quality of life, Qasr-Heshmatieh has achieved a moderate level, whereas its southern counterpart, Arāmaneh, is classified as an underdeveloped neighborhood.[54] From a top-down perspective with an emphasis on standardization and quantity-driven criteria, imposing infrastructure on the problematic urban areas, serves as an incentive for renewal. As a member of the Tehran City Council stated that the construction of the Sayād-e Shirāzī highway would enable the municipality to demolish a significant number of deteriorating buildings and facilitate the integration of neighborhoods into the city's transportation system.[55]

However, these developments do not pertain to the past. This is why we have witnessed a significant sociospatial restructuring over nearly twelve years in the area under study. This restructuring has been characterized by a series of major projects, such as new transportation corridors like highways, new public spaces like large parks, new structures like multifunctional shopping centers, and symbolic landmarks like the prison museum. The implementation of these initiatives has been made possible through processes that we

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[54] Ahmadi and Jahangard, "Rotbeh-bandi-e Mahalāt-e Shahr-e Therān."
[55] Islamic Republic News Agency. "Bozorgrāh-e Shahid Sayād Shirazi va Imām Alī."

Figure 7. Unfinished Megāpārs multifunctional shopping center. Photograph: Internet. https://es.pinterest.com/pin/403846291565693866/.

have outlined using concepts introduced by de Certeau:[56] the processes of elimination, redistribution, and differentiation. Through application of these processes, the significant physical interventions imposed since 2010 have impacted the previous sociospatial order of the area and the relationship between the present and the past (Figure 8).

Elimination

To implement the new projects, the city authority needed to remove any obstacles. Many houses, social spots, and streets destroyed or cut off for highway construction were places of everyday life. Tracing these places in aerial photographs shows that the removed elements were a result of gradual expansion of the neighborhoods. They may have supported collective images and meanings. The highway's disruption of buildings and alleys created lost spaces and dead ends, which residents considered unsafe. For instance, a small park on Goharī Street was eradicated by the highway, "leading to the remaining area becoming a hub for drug addicts and dealers, especially after the municipality constructed stairs for a footbridge over the highway there" (code 12). Residents of Heshmatieh attempted to persuade the municipality to construct a gymnasium in the vacant space, but it was eventually transformed into a *hosseyniyeh*, a religious gathering place, "although we had a mosque nearby and we did not need another religious place" (code 12).

For the construction of the highway, Sarbāz Street—a previously bustling local street with small stores—and its adjacent buildings were completely demolished. Only a few stores remained in a partial cut-off block. Moreover, most interviewees mentioned the disappearance of the open space in front of the main entrance of the prison, known as Prison Square, where families of prisoners used to wait for hours to visit or accompany an inmate. This square is now being removed to make way for the wide Shohadāy-e Nājā Avenue. One can trace the removal in another way; the prison museum, highlighting the Islamic Revolution of 1979, has preserved specific elements and made material a selective interpretation of history within the spaces of local residents' everyday lives.

Redistribution

Neighborhood centers are the most important platform for the formation and accumulation of collective meanings and memories of a local community. However, in the current situation, the former neighborhood centers have been fragmented and relocated. Goharī Street and Ejārehdār Street, which used to be connected and functioned as local main roads, are now separated by the highway, and Goharī Street has turned into a cul-de-sac. A shopkeeper in Goharī Street said:

> Previously all the cars and public buses that wanted to travel to the center of Tehran passed through this street and we had a good business.... Since it was closed, our neighborhood turned into an isolated neighborhood. (code 12)
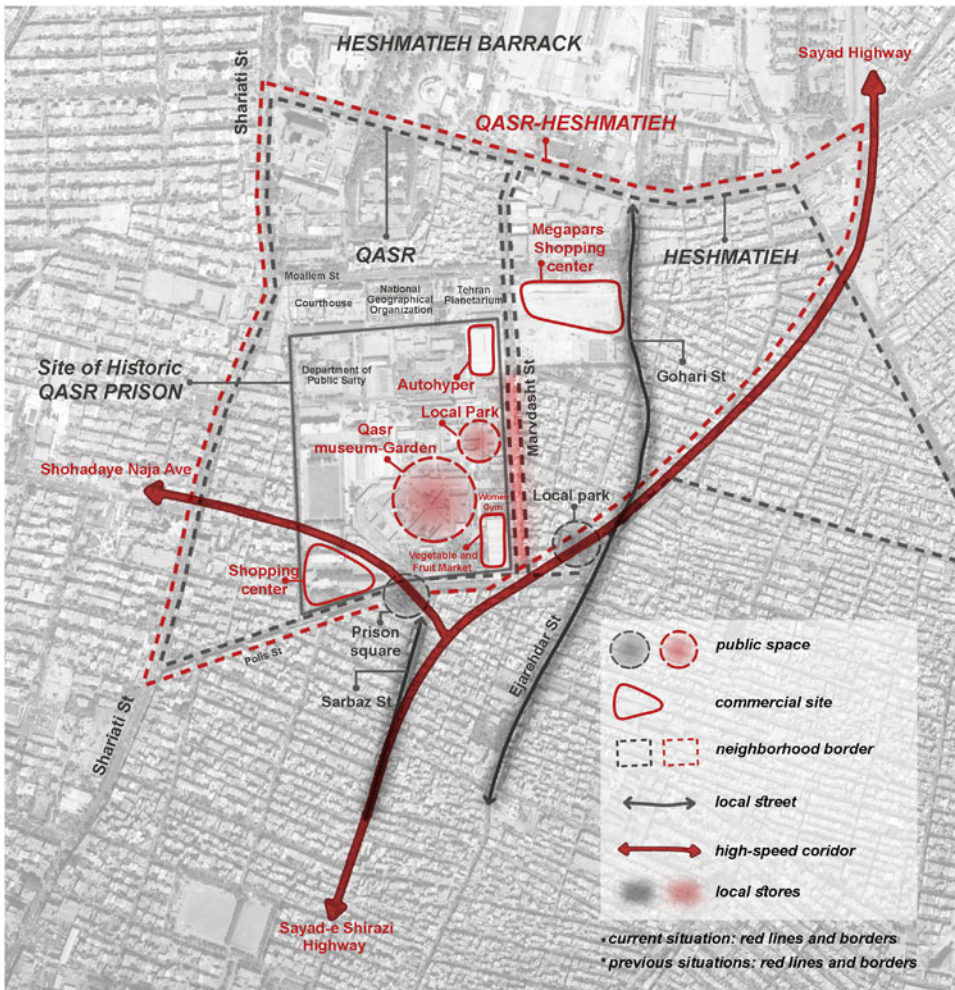
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[56] De Certeau, *Practice*.

Figure 8. Major physical interventions restructured the previous sociospatial order (the map is poduced by the authors).

Local services along Goharī Street, which were small in size, have now found themselves in competition with new, larger complexes established in the redeveloped areas near Marvdasht Street. Marvdasht Street, once a dividing line between residential areas and the prison, has evolved into a hub for neighborhood services. The municipality has constructed a new local park along Marvdasht Street, situated in the northern part of the Qasr Garden-Museum site, which is welcomed by residents as there is no other park in the area. However, residents express concerns about the park's safety for families and children due to the presence of drug dealers who find the large open spaces of the garden-museum site conducive. Another notable addition near the new local park is a covered fruit and vegetable market with its main entrance on Marvdasht Street. This market, owned by the municipality, occupies one of the five sheds that previously served as prison storage, marking the initial phase of the prison's redevelopment. It now serves as a bustling local hub, contributing to the vitality of Marvdasht Street. Adjacent to the market is another shed that has been repurposed as a women's gym following persistent requests by residents. The interviewees emphasized this achievement in the context of the nonparticipatory top-down approach to the projects. According to the interviewees, transforming Marvdasht

Street into a local service hub resulted in an increase in the value of real estate near the street, as well as more renovation of residential buildings and the influx of new residents. Additionally, there are two large unfinished shopping centers, including Megāpārs, at both ends of Marvdasht Street, implemented by the private sector on sites previously owned by the state. Although these centers are not yet operational, some interviewees anticipate that they will lead to increased traffic and a rise in real estate prices.

Similarly, in a larger, zoom-out view, the relationships between the two neighborhoods and the surrounding areas have been redefined by redesignation of the borders. Qasr and Heshmatieh, two neighborhoods with different social and historical backgrounds, are now officially considered one neighborhood by the municipality, split from their southern and eastern neighbors as a result of the construction of the highway. However, because of residents' resistance, each of the neighborhoods has its own neighborhood house:[57] "The city authority tried to merge our Neighborhood Houses, but we resisted. For locals, they are two different neighborhoods" (code 14).

Differentiation

Redistribution of places and boundaries is associated with creating differentiated places and areas. The newly constructed elements function separately, located in the area based on the logic of car access. Also, in terms of functional and physical scale, they contrast with the surrounding fine-grain residential areas. Moreover, the large shopping centers, with more luxury entertainment and services, would primarily support a lifestyle that is different from the residential context. The unfinished project of the Megāpārs shopping center, with about two hectares of area, includes various services such as shops, restaurants, coffee shops, cinema and theater, and offices (Figure 9).

Although the concentration of new service complexes on the redeveloped military sites will promote the socioeconomic situation of Qasr and Heshmatieh, the dense residential areas below the highway remained undeveloped and problematic. Our field inquiries showed that property prices north of the highway compared with those to the south have increased significantly in recent years. Not only have the connections between neighborhoods been cut, but being north vs south of the highway or close to vs far from new services also may lead to significant sociospatial distinctions. An interviewee in Gohari Street said:

> The new facilities promoted the areas near Marvdasht Street, while at the same time our properties declined.. . . My store, which previously cost six to seven million toman, can now be bought for three million toman. But compared to Marvdasht Street, it's much more local and quieter to live in Goharī Street. (code 12)

Stories of Absences

In this section, the themes revealed by the participants' narratives are elaborated. Despite the interventions for area development through extensive restructuring, the interviewees reminisced about their connections to the past. They shared detailed stories depicting their neighborhood as a continuous entity. We identified three themes that captured the narrative tactics employed by the interviewees to describe the changes over time. Through nostalgically giving depth to the past, they recounted events from the distant past to extend the neighborhood's history beyond its current state. By creating a palimpsestic narrative, they presented a multilayered image based on a continuous process of replacement. Last, by bracketing the represented memory they negotiated a selective approach to significant places like the prison museum.

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[57] The neighborhood house is a community-based organization that functions as the connection between the neighborhood and the city authority in Iranian cities.

Figure 9. Goharī Street. Megāpārs shopping center, in the background, contrasts with the small shops and fine-grain pattern of Goharī Street. Photograph: Corresponding Author's archive.

Nostalgically Giving Depth to the Past

Despite similarities with other neighborhoods in the area, residents tended to distinguish their own neighborhoods by adding depth to the past. They created an image consisting of places, people, relationships, and events alien to the present. Part of this narrative referred to the origin of the neighborhood, which was not experienced by the respondent but passed on orally from generation to generation. Emphasizing that "this is a historical area," they often began their narratives 200 years ago, when Qasr and Heshmatieh were small villages near the Qājār Palace: "Originally, the summer palace of the Qājār king stood on this hill" (code 9). According to the stories, the main reasons for the emergence and growth of these two villages were the presence of an aqueduct filled with water (the Qanāt) that passed through this area and proximity to the roads that connected Tehran with the northern settlements (Shemirānāt). Someone said, "The business you are standing in now and the next store used to be a caravansary" (code 13), that is, an inn on the side of the main road where travelers between Tehran and Shemirānāt could rest.

The Pahlavi II era, seventy to eighty years ago, which some interviewees lived through, was highlighted because its image is hidden today because of rapid changes in cities and lifestyles. For instance, they recalled an outdated method of water extraction, specifically the mechanical scooping of water from the aqueduct. They painted an emotional and nostalgic picture, depicting locals who were more connected despite the lack of modern equipment. They described a time when their neighborhoods were "far from the city" and other nearby settlements, surrounded only by "wilderness" and a few "dirt roads" in the distance. They could catch a glimpse of the city "from the rooftops of their houses," or "from the hill where the Qājār Palace once stood, we could see someone returning from the city. No buildings were blocking the view" (code 8). They had to wait for hours for a bus or a car to take them to "the city."

According to the interviewees, population increase in the neighborhoods started gradually during the Pahlavi II era, with the development of the state's buildings, followed by more urban living facilities, such as streets and schools. These changes led to the emergence of two new social groups: the newcomers who arrived to work in the military installations and the families of some prisoners who chose to reside in the area. An elderly interviewee remarked:

> Little by little, more houses were built down the hill with mud and wooden beams. . . . The military families who served here built houses in the Qasr neighborhood to live near the barracks and the prison. Years later, the Real State Registration Office registered their land and gave them a title deed. . . . The army also built rows of single-story organizational houses. (code 8)

The interviewees depicted a scene from seventy years ago, when the region comprised four primary territories. Initially, the Qasr and Heshmatieh neighborhoods were distinct

communities with diverse social backgrounds, yet they were interconnected. During the Pahlavi II era, various urban amenities gradually emerged in the area, such as modern schools, soccer fields, street lighting, public minibuses for transportation to the city center, and a cinema (Cinema Firūzeh). To portray the social environment of their neighborhoods, the interviewees cited the names of notable individuals involved in football and cultural or political activities who resided in this area. One individual expressed the belief that

> During that period, the best footballers and the best gamblers were born in these neighborhoods. . . . In addition, since the political prisoners were imprisoned in Qasr Prison, the atmosphere in this neighborhood was such that many young people became political activists against Pahlavi. (code 9)

The second territory was characterized by military-related fenced structures, such as barracks, office buildings, and a police station. These facilities could expand their area and influence by owning large pieces of land adjacent to residential areas. One individual stated, "My father was advised to purchase a house here, but he believed that these sergeants and colonels would not allow us to live peacefully here" (code 8). The third area, pertained to the military families, some of whom resided in official housing, while some lived in the Qasr neighborhood: "the same soldiers who served here had constructed [homes] and resided there to be close to the barracks" (code 14). Many local residents viewed them as unfamiliar. Nevertheless, "we were friends with their children. We attended the same schools. We played soccer with each other" (code 7). It appears, therefore, that the third area, in contrast to the fenced and off-limits military zones, operated as part of the military properties in its interaction with the everyday lives of the neighborhoods. Last, the fourth territory, characterized by the fenced prison complex, was distinct, isolated from the daily life of the locals, and not integrated with the neighborhoods: "It had no relevance to us . . . the locals avoided going near the prison" (code 7); or "it was our red line . . . no one wanted their children to be seen around the prison" (code 14).

Creating a Palimpsestic Narrative

To depict the area's evolution, the interviewees crafted a layered narrative based on their recollections. In their accounts, the gradual expansion of neighborhoods fades into the background and is accepted as given. Instead, they emphasize a shift that transpired through the recurrence of significant alterations in the form of replacements. These replacements often pertained to specific locations within the military grounds or at their boundaries with residential areas. The most crucial areas of replacement are pinpointed by tracing morphological changes in maps and aerial photographs and correlating them with the local residents' stories (Figures 10 and 11).

In essence, the interviewees depicted a series of significant top-down interventions that resulted in the disruption of existing features to facilitate further development. The results of the interventions remain a lasting reminder of the eliminated, of absence and substitution. The locals recounted the history of the neighborhood as a palimpsest of memories, consisting of multiple layers of recollections in which each layer supersedes the previous one while still retaining traces of the older existence. The act of replacement characterizes the locals' memories of the neighborhood's evolution. They recalled names, locations, and structures along with their past and present states. For instance, they mentioned the towers in the northeast of the neighborhood, recounting the successive transformations that took place (circle 2 in Figure 10). Initially, the area served as a cemetery in which the original residents buried their deceased; then Rezā Shāh, who built the Mesgarābād Cemetery (1295), ordered the collection of graves and forced people to take the dead there. Then, "the cemetery here has been cleared" (code 8): approximately seventy years ago; the military repurposed the cemetery for their needs and in the following years constructed organizational houses for their employees. Subsequently, the military demolished the houses and

Figure 10. Areas of change over time, identified by the authors through narrative mapping and cartographic redrawing.

erected residential towers in the southern section of the area. Most recently, they designated the northern section for the private sector to develop the expansive Megāpārs multifunctional shopping center.

These replacements generally occurred as security and military zones were opened, closed, and frequently reorganized. Consequently, conflicts of interest between these zones and the locals are discerned in the interviewees' recollections. During times of extensive transformations, however, this conflicts becomes more pronounced in the accounts, often signifying the elimination of nostalgic elements: "We had a cinema named Firūzeh where renowned singers performed, or a football field. . . . Also, we had a large modern school constructed by the order of Mohammad Rezā Shāh" (code 9). The interlocuters referred to the small places—"our" spaces—of social life and collective memories that rarely were subject to preservation. These places were often demolished, abandoned, or undergoing construction due to rapid urban expansion and significant interventions. Conversely, "theirs" had been largely preserved or repurposed for further state-related functions. The decision regarding which layers to retain and which to remove mirrored the dichotomy of "them" and "us." The local community had a little influence on decisions regarding certain public spaces in their neighborhoods, such as with their request to convert a shed into a women's gym, primarily through neighborhood houses. The local neighborhood houses in Iran are not autonomous; they operate as administrative extensions of authoritarian city planning, particularly regarding spatial development.[58] Typically, local residents are not involved in decision-making processes, whether related to the demolition of their private or public property for the construction of a highway, or the redevelopment of military sites, which are state-owned properties.

We identified four main layers of sociospatial changes based on replacements remembered by the inhabitants. They were not necessarily chronological layers, as the second and third layers were constantly reproduced. The first layer was the distant past, narratives concerning elements and events unfamiliar in contemporary conditions and not experienced

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[58] See Khatam and Keshavarzian, "Decentralization."

"From the hill where the Qajar palace once stood, we could see that someone was coming back from the city. There were no buildings to obstruct the view."

"Instead of the Revolutionary Court, there were three rows of institutional houses. we were friends with their children."

"The highway provided the Qasr neighborhood with new opportunities, while it was the reason for suppression and fall of prosperity of our neighborhood."

"This mosque used to be in the cemetery."

"the policemen were riding horses. Here was abandoned and unbuilt. They used to patrol with horses, then the area was very safe."

"An architect named Markov built a prison here on the orders of Reza Shah, which was the most famous place of torture of political prisoners in Iran."

"In the prison square, there were always some people waiting for their prisoners to be released from prison or to come on leave. Others had been arrested and were waiting to be taken to prison. It was a very sad atmosphere."

"This was a large park."

"A few shops have remained and the others went under the highway."

"This was not part of the city. It was outside the city gates. It was almost a village."

"We had a cinema called Firuzeh where famous singers used to sing."

legend of areas and buildings

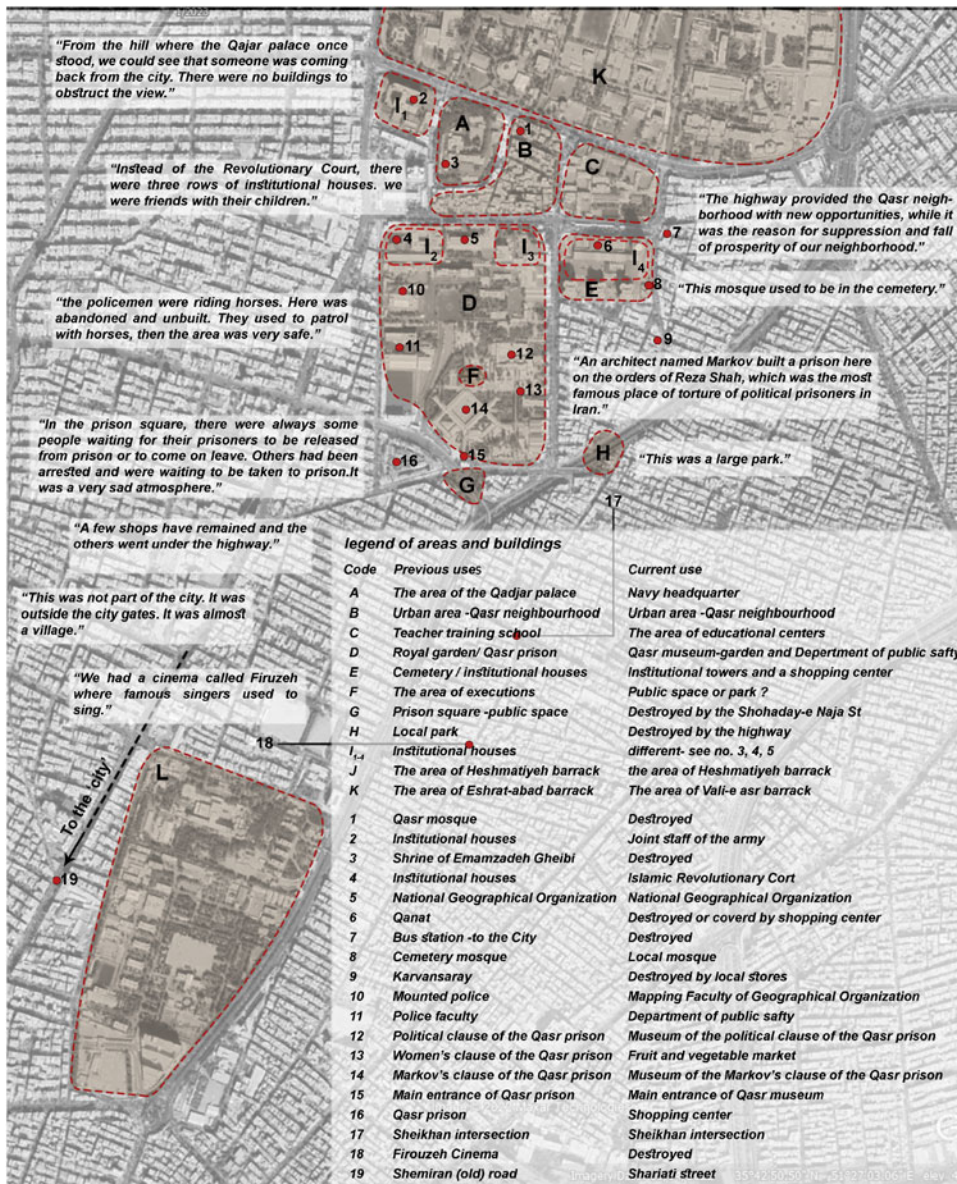| Code	Previous uses	Current use
A	The area of the Qadjar palace	Navy headquarter
B	Urban area -Qasr neighbourhood	Urban area -Qasr neighbourhood
C	Teacher training school	The area of educational centers
D	Royal garden/ Qasr prison	Qasr museum-garden and Depertment of public safty
E	Cemetery / institutional houses	Institutional towers and a shopping center
F	The area of executions	Public space or park ?
G	Prison square -public space	Destroyed by the Shohaday-e Naja St
H	Local park	Destroyed by the highway
I₁₋₄	Institutional houses	different- see no. 3, 4, 5
J	The area of Heshmatiyeh barrack	the area of Heshmatiyeh barrack
K	The area of Eshrat-abad barrack	The area of Vali-e asr barrack
1	Qasr mosque	Destroyed
2	Institutional houses	Joint staff of the army
3	Shrine of Emamzadeh Gheibi	Destroyed
4	Institutional houses	Islamic Revolutionary Cort
5	National Geographical Organization	National Geographical Organization
6	Qanat	Destroyed or coverd by shopping center
7	Bus station -to the City	Destroyed
8	Cemetery mosque	Local mosque
9	Karvansaray	Destroyed by local stores
10	Mounted police	Mapping Faculty of Geographical Organization
11	Police faculty	Department of public safty
12	Political clause of the Qasr prison	Museum of the political clause of the Qasr prison
13	Women's clause of the Qasr prison	Fruit and vegetable market
14	Markov's clause of the Qasr prison	Museum of the Markov's clause of the Qasr prison
15	Main entrance of Qasr prison	Main entrance of Qasr museum
16	Qasr prison	Shopping center
17	Sheikhan intersection	Sheikhan intersection
18	Firouzeh Cinema	Destroyed
19	Shemiran (old) road	Shariati street

Figure 11. Mapping the interviewees' narratives. Source: Authors.

by the interviewees. The second layer comprised the emergence of modern administrative sites of the state, such as the prison and the security and military elements that gradually appeared in the area and established property boundaries in the vicinity of residential areas. In addition to the continuous walls of the barracks and the prison, some large administrative buildings had security fences, today including the Islamic Revolutionary Court, the National Geographical Organization of the Army, and the Department of Public Safety. The third layer was the construction through which the military elements and borders penetrated residential areas. In this layer, the rigid territories of the state's security and military organizations permeated with the everyday life of the neighborhoods, for example, in the form of organizational housing and the establishment of services such as the army chain store ETKA. Army organizational houses appeared in different periods with different morphological patterns.

The fourth layer exhibited the most significant and noticeable changes during the latest period, leading to a substantial restructuring of the area. This phase of transformation involved the introduction of new large-scale projects: two multifunctional shopping centers implemented by the private sector on sites previously owned by the state, the transformation of the prison into the public space of Qasr Garden-Museum and some local services managed by the municipality, along with construction of a highway by the municipality. Despite the closed and nonparticipatory process of the project, the local residents appeared satisfied with the removal of the prison and the new replaced public spaces, although they highlighted the significant disruption and disconnection of sociospatial links with surrounding residential areas caused by the highway construction: "The removal of the prison brought about a very positive change. However, the highway has significantly fragmented the neighborhoods" (code 13). They specifically mentioned streets like Sarbāz and Goharī, which served as local thoroughfares with small shops before the highway was built. A shopkeeper recalled, "Sarbāz Street used to link our neighborhood to Sepāh Square in the southern regions. However, apart from a few shops, all the stores and the street were demolished to make way for the highway" (code 13).

Bracketing the Represented Memory

The Qasr Prison, both its past presence and current absence, was highlighted in the narratives. When describing the area's transformation, most interviewees mentioned the removal of the prison as a significant change, a turning point for the area. They expressed satisfaction with the removal project, emphasizing its positive outcomes. They also pointed out current difficulties that the municipality should address, such as the insecurity of the garden-museum at night and the traffic congestion and lack of parking around the project. However, interlocutors talked about their memories of the former situation (the presence of Qasr Prison) only when prompted directly. They often mentioned the preserved elements of the prison, stating, for instance, "This building was the political prison," "They preserved several watchtowers," and "That was the field of execution and shooting." Even when asked to share their memories, they frequently believed the word "prison" sufficient to evoke the past. As one person remarked, "It's obvious. Prison is prison. Everyone feels bad when they hear the word" (code 10). A respondent mentioned the schools that took children to visit the prison museum: "It may negatively impact their mental well-being" (code 13).

Among the projects conducted in the area over the past seventy years, the conversion of the Qasr Prison into the public Qasr Garden-Museum stands out as the sole project focused on preserving and representing history symbolically. Although recent projects have significantly reshaped the area, the Qasr Garden-Museum was designed to symbolize the modern history of the area with a collection of public spaces that now serve as a popular destination for locals. The museum structures, which include the preserved historic Markov Prison and the building for political prisoners, are situated in plain view of the public. However, the interviewees did not actively discuss them.

After the 1979 revolution, the prison briefly served as a location for the revolutionary tribunal. As the new regime stabilized, the prison housed only ordinary prisoners. This was mainly because the prison became a significant symbol of the sociopolitical struggles of Iranian society under the Pahlavi rule, and the new regime wanted to break away from that era historically. Evin Prison became the designated facility for political prisoners, leading Qasr Prison to gradually distance itself from its past as a political prison.[59] The prison remained operational for approximately a century, until two decades ago. It was a sore spot for the neighborhoods, gradually encroaching on the surrounding areas. According to accounts, before its closure the prison was viewed by residents as a mark of shame and a disruptive presence. Interviewees often recalled the previous state of Marvdasht Street in a

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[59] Soltani, "Reincarnation," 48; Karami, "No Longer a Prison," 420.

negative light, with the prison's walls, towers, and guards. They made efforts to distance themselves from the prison in their daily lives: "The prison was a red line for us . . . no one wanted their children near the prison" (code 14); and "we hurried past when crossing Marvdasht Street . . . we avoided walking by the prison entrance" (code 12). As a result, the prison holds a less prominent place in local memories compared to other aspects of the past.

Local residents appeared to deliberately forget about the prison and strive for a brighter future. They often viewed it as insignificant to the community; the museum symbolized a notable absence in their memories. When we inquired about the museum, the interviewees mostly highlighted the prison's political significance in the 1979 revolution, which shaped the Islamic discourse in Iran's political landscape. They frequently reminisced about the prominent revolutionaries who were held there as political prisoners during the revolution. They vividly recalled the day when, after the revolution, the prison gates swung open and all the prisoners were released, with a crowd gathering outside and people flooding in. Additionally, many interviewees remembered hearing the sounds of executions and gunfire targeting the revolution's adversaries from the prison after the revolution. A woman sitting on a bench in the garden-museum commented about the days after the revolution:

> Every time I visit here, those sounds come back to me. Every night before going to sleep, we were always anxious about someone being executed. Executions took place at midnight and just before dawn. . . . Now, surprisingly, such a place has been transformed into a museum. I dislike it because of those haunting memories. (code 10)

Maintaining the prison as a museum symbolizing the political history of the revolution presented a challenge for the interviewees. Some viewed the museum as a crucial historical archive and found it intriguing, whereas others questioned its selective nature. For the latter group, the museum represented a biased historical narrative that primarily reflected the political and ideological stance of the government, omitting other perspectives. They believed that "the political prisoners still exist," and "the museum aims to endorse a specific political standpoint . . . this is why we choose not to visit the museum" (code 2).

In the current situation, the prison site is divided into two main parts: the northern part is designed as a local park, and the southern section is designed as a monumental garden surrounding the prison museum. These two sections are separated by a difference in elevation and connected only by a few steps and ramps. Our observation indicates that the northern park, equipped with a space for children and families, is more active and connected to Marvdasht Street (Figure 12). The southern garden is adorned with a more formal landscape and historic sites under the supervision of security guards and a museum manager. The

Figure 12. The local park at the northern part of the prison site is equipped with a space for children and families. Photograph: Authors' archive.

Figure 13. Children playing around the museum buildings. Photograph: Authors' archive.

openness of the garden landscape is attested by the frequent scene of children playing football or skateboarding around the museum buildings, including the wooden plank that commemorates the site of executions of revolutionaries during the Pahlavi era (Figure 13). The symbols and the history they represent are not actively integrated into the daily lives of the locals, particularly the new generation, children, and new residents.

Conclusion

In this study, our main goal was to explore how residents of the Qasr and Heshmatieh neighborhoods recalled the past in light of significant spatial interventions implemented over the past twenty years. We specifically focused on locals' narratives about the changes, accompanied by cartographic redrawing, to develop a more cultural interpretation of the two neighborhoods' history. Applying de Certeau's dual concepts of strategy and tactic, we described the visible processes and consequences of the recent top-down projects. We briefly described how the abstract image of a more developed place was embodied by processes of elimination, redistribution, and differentiation. Generally, we can conclude that the megaprojects implemented during the last twenty years have dramatically changed the sociospatial structure of the area, and the active network of everyday life has been either cut off or massively replaced by new spaces. Local service spaces that have remained from the past are still active, but they have a disadvantaged position due to competition with new centers.

Analyzing the narratives of the locals highlighted the tactics they employed to interpret the transformations, often imposed by strategic systems. The interviewees articulated in their narratives the fragmented history they remembered, consisting of structures, names, and places that are no longer present. By remembering the absent and removed the interviewees reproduced the invisible traces of transformations they had experienced and created stories of absences. These stories reproduced palimpsestic layers of time, forming over an initial layer in the Qājār era when the geographically strategic location allowed the possibility of essential infrastructure formation, including the Qanāt system for water supply and management and paths to access the city and other royal districts. This created potential for a strategic royal district, including a palace and military camps, and rural settlements

with access to water, paths, and security related to the installation of a royal district. Through nostalgically giving depth to the past, the inhabitants reproduced an absent distant past and attempted to place the history of their neighborhood within the national collective history. This tactic was often revealed at the beginning of the interviews.

By creating a palimpsestic narrative, the interviewees provided an episodic interpretation of an invisible chain of transformations into the visible, objectively suspending the present. They made the audience imagine multilayered memories. An existing element of the area could only be described in connection with absent ones. Memories of replacement summarize the nature of the transformation experienced in this context. The layers derived from this palimpsestic narration create a foundation for describing the kind of transformation produced in the area. This suggests that although the most notable changes in the area are due to recent large-scale projects, the alterations also carry historical importance. The state's control over land and development in the examined context has been consistently present in different forms over time, despite multiple regime changes.

Two significant historical turning points in the transformation of the area were identified, which can be understood in the context of Tehran's transformation. The first turning point was marked by Rezā Shāh Pahlavi (r. 1925–41), who converted the Qājār Palace site and its surroundings from a royal and rural location to state-owned properties controlled by the government and administrative buildings (see Figure 3). Since then, a considerable part of the area surrounding the Qasr and Heshmatieh settlements was designated for state-relevant sites that were either frozen or retained control over the way the area developed. A form of land government was established through ownership, which continued to expand into the surrounding neighborhoods with gradual large installations. An interviewee pointed to the Heshmatieh barracks, mentioning that they were constructed on a site where his grandfather used to plant wheat before it was acquired by Rezā Shāh to add to the state lands. Alongside the population growth of the city of Tehran, the surrounding neighborhoods were expanding and shaping their intricate, integrated sociospatial structure of everyday life. The establishment of a modern state and central authority led to an increase in the population of state-salaried groups. In the studied area, as related in the interviews, families of army employees were gradually settling in the region.

For Tehran, the two decades following the end of the first Pahlavi era were marked by rapid city growth, particularly toward the north and west.[60] By the early 1950s, Rezā Shāh's son aimed to expedite his father's prewar strategies with a new planning-led system, such as the impactful "land reform" policy that significantly influenced the country's urbanization process.[61] According to the interviewees, the population of the area under study started to increase during this period. In the 1960s and 1970s, both the government and private sector began constructing housing for various income brackets, in line with the planned income group segregation proposed in the initial Tehran Comprehensive Plan.[62] The establishment of organizational housing for military families in the area under study reflected these policies. Moreover, in this era the private spaces of homes also were transforming from one- to two-story structures.

In the 1980s, following the 1979 revolution and amid the Iran–Iraq War, urbanization accelerated. The weakening of state authority and its regulatory powers, along with the populist ideals of the new regime and spontaneous land occupations known as "revolutionary housing," resulted in significant spatial and demographic growth of cities. Ehsani[63] described new postrevolution state institutions, such as the Urban Land Organization and the Housing Foundation that facilitated this massive privatization of public land, as the first wave of privatization after the revolution in the name of distributive justice. Land government was expanded through postrevolution state organizations.

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[60] Madanipour, *Tehran.*
[61] Madanipour, "Urban Planning"; Mashayekhi, "Tehran."
[62] Mashayekhi, "Tehran."
[63] Ehsani, "Politics of Property."

In the area under study, after the initial turning point marked by Rezā Shāh Pahlavi, we observed two additional layers, the second and third, when the state was expanding the boundaries of its land ownership. This expansion involved partial penetration of the boundaries by introduction of functions that were more relevant to the everyday life of neighborhood residents. The second turning point in the transformation of the area was characterized by significant changes in the boundaries of public, private, and state properties due to the implementation of megaprojects, comprising layer four. Our research placed this second turning point in the 1990s, when the modernization in Tehran linked with the imaginaries and practices of modernization under Pahlavi and restructured the city, introducing a new form of governmentalism.[64]

Labeled as "the reconstruction administration," Rafsanjani's government transformed the populist redistributive state of the 1980s toward increasingly neoliberal state capitalism. Initiated in 1987, the municipal financial self rule act[65] projected that the central government budget for large cities would be totally removed in four years. Under Karbaschi, the Tehran Municipality pioneered acceptance of the act's implications in 1989. According to Ehsani,[66] the municipality financed its urban renewal project through privatization of the public space of the urban skyline, in a second wave of privatization. Three-quarters of the municipality's new revenue came from either sale of residential permits that allowed commercial use of public land or by the "sale of density."[67] Karbaschi's strategy was to launch a bold program of urban renewal, simultaneously integrating Tehran's fragmented and disillusioned population through ambitious megaprojects such as cultural centers, highways, and parks. He aimed to reduce the differences between the north and south of Tehran.[68] Financially, the city's most ambitious undertaking was the Navvāb Highway, in a poor southern area, envisioned to link the poor southern part of the city to the northern part and create a major commercial-administrative-residential corridor.[69] In another instance, in 1992, Karbaschi inaugurated the Bahman Culture Complex in the heart of south Tehran on the former site of the notorious slaughterhouse, facilitating a modern urban life for poor neighborhoods.[70] Implementing Sayād-e Shirāzi highway and transforming the prison site into a large public space are examples of top-down renewal patterns that ignored the gentrifying process. In the post-Karbaschi era, despite the conservative approach of the first city council, it was decided to allow the municipality to continue generating revenue by privatizing public space. To defuse the social outcry and political controversy, the municipality shifted its emphasis from supporting luxurious high-rises to selling permits for smaller buildings in deteriorated urban areas with a height of four to six floors throughout the city, a violation of city codes. As one can see, in the initially fine-grain studied area, the small older buildings were gradually consolidated and transformed into larger structures.

The megaprojects implemented in the studied area during the last two decades should be considered in light of the sociospatial policies of the 1990s. The Sayād-e Shirāzī highway has dramatically cut through both private properties (the demolished houses and shops) and the public spaces with collective meaning and memories, such as Sarbāz Street, as well as sociospatial connections. There have been buildings and public spaces that have traumatically disappeared, leaving problematic waste spaces in neighborhoods. Megāpārs shopping center was implemented by the private sector on the site of a historic cemetery, and the Qanāt, a collective asset, was demolished and turned into state property in the Pahlavi era to build organizational houses for the army, and now is owned by the private sector. Almost all the

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[64] See Khatam, "Tehran Urban Reforms"; Ehsani, "Politics of Property"; and Ehsani, "Municipal Matters."

[65] See Khatam, "Tehran Urban Reforms", 154.

[66] Ehsani, "Politics of Property."

[67] The sale of density refers to the sale of permits for increasing the built-up area or construction on a specific piece of land. This density is usually expressed as a percentage of the total area of the land and allows buyers to build more than the usual limit.

[68] Ibid.

[69] See Etemad, *Arzyābī-e tarh-e Navāb*; and Ehsani. "Municipal Matters."

[70] See Amir Ebrahimi, "Az Farhangsarā tā Māl."

interviewees referred to the historical background and demolition at the Megāpārs site, noting the old local mosque as the only remaining historical element, now neighboring the vast Megāpārs center. Among the implemented projects, the Qasr garden-useum has been more welcomed by the locals. An enclosed state property, the previous Qasr prison, which created disadvantages for residents, was transformed into a public space for social interaction and creation of new collective meanings of everyday life. The clearance and redevelopment of the prison can be seen as an opportunity for at least two main stakeholders, local residents and the municipality. From the locals' perspective, it improves the area's image and alleviates the adverse socioeconomic consequences of being neighbor to a prison. Previously, expansion of residential areas near the prison walls, increases in the prison population, and inadequate infrastructure exacerbated the difficulties of living in the area. For example, the discharge of prison sewage and its fetid odor led to discontent and collective protests from residents.[71] For the local community, the removal of the prison was a significant event that may be a turning point that shapes the future of their neighborhoods. Meanwhile, the municipality may see a valuable opportunity for restructuring the sociospatial order in this area of the city. However, the duality of us-them has manifested itself in the case of the Qasr garden-museum too, disrupting the collective history, because the monumental public space promotes a specific state-oriented interpretation of the history. A contested memory or contested collective[72] was produced that sought to disremember alternative interpretations of history.

The locals perceived the public yet still state-oriented monumental space of the garden-museum by bracketing the represented memory. There is deliberately no remembrance of the absent past (the Qasr Prison), and neglect of the present museum, symbolically embodied with a selective interpretation of history by the state. The museum has selectively accumulated, simulated, and presented a dense archive of the Islamic Revolution (1979) in the spaces of everyday life. Because the represented memories of the prison support the metanarrative of the revolution, its function does not need to be in dialogue with everyday life. The political and ideological perspectives of the museum have put the local residents in a position of either agreement or disagreement.

According to the findings of Hamdan-Saliba and Fenster,[73] the first two narrative tactics (nostalgically giving depth to the past and creating a palimpsestic narrative) function as proactive tactics through which the locals create alternative interpretations. By recounting the past, the interviewees produce, by de Certeau's definition, fragmentary and convoluted histories that have been lived in and are filled with the "presences of diverse absences."[74] The third narrative tactic, bracketing the represented memory, describes the nonactive remembering of the prison by the interviewees.

The top-down manner of the city planning authority is constantly reproduced by two processes: reproduction of we-they dualities and disremembering. The two processes manifested in all three narrative tactics revealed themes, especially when the interviewees produced a palimpsestic narrative. What the residents remember about the top-down serial replacements marks a conflict of interest between "ours" and "theirs." Moreover, the strategic discipline has led to massive and rapid changes that approach the past according to the Municipality's priorities. Therefore the top-down changes often have ignored, altered, and eliminated sociospatial structures that were in place. The process of destroying places and the physical traces of memory associated with them and then replacing leads to disremembering,[75] that is, producing forgetting by making it more difficult to remember the past. According to Douglas, one can describe all forms of forgetting—selective remembering, misremembering, and disremembering—as consequences of top-down restructuring projects in

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[71] Iranian Students' News Association.

[72] See Golrokh, "Contested Collective."

[73] Hamdan-Saliba and Fenster, "Tactics."

[74] De Certeau, *The practice of everyday life*, 108.

[75] Douglas, "Forgotten Knowledge," from Minarova-Banjac, "Collective Memory."

the studied area. Our findings highlighted the strategic process of disremembering as a characteristic of the constant top-down replacements negotiated by the locals.

Our research findings contribute to the literature on the relationship between the politics of memory and top-down spatial interventions with three main arguments. First, considering transformation a perceived matter, we extended the concept to the field of memory and remembering. We deepened analysis of the site's transformation by combining narrative inquiry and cartography redrawing. Second, inspired by de Certeau's concepts of strategy and tactics, we discussed the political nature of remembering as an intentional practice of everyday life that negotiates how strategic interventions produce disremembering. We employed narrative as a practice because we believe that studies that rely on profound observation to capture and analyze the spatial representation of everyday practices are important. For example, in the symbolic preservation of traumatic sites such as Qasr Prison, which has been transformed into a museum, we explored how the residents approached the project in their everyday routines. The identified concept of bracketing the represented memory describes the deliberate ignorance of the symbolic function of the Qasr Museum. It also would be beneficial to conduct studies that critically examine how residents influence the transformation of neighborhoods through their actions in shaping and developing their private property within the context of top-down replacement and land government.

Third, given the top-down nature of city authority in Iran, this research highlighted the significant role of strategic state organizations in the sociospatial restructuring of urban areas and, consequently, collective memories. Further study is needed, particularly of the interventions of withdrawal of military uses and redevelopment of cleared sites within existing urban areas. According to an act passed in 1985, military sites are to be withdrawn from cities in Iran. In recent years, there has been planning for redevelopment of brownfields left by evacuated military sites. In addition to the changes brought about by large-scale projects, these areas also are witnessing the transformation of large military sites that were previously isolated islands, concealed and segregated from the everyday life of the city.

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