THE CHANGE OF MORPHOLOGY AND FUNCTION
OF PUBLIC SPACES.

CASE STUDY OF LATAKIA SINCE FRENCH
MANDATE TILL 2010

Master Thesis

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Hereby I declare that I worked out this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature, and I did not present it to obtain another academic degree.

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Abstract:

This thesis explores the history and the practice of making use of squares in Syria in 20th century, particularly in the Syrian coastal city: Latakia. The thesis mainly focuses on the period from the beginning of the twentieth century till 2010. The thesis understands squares as a kind of urban public spaces in cities, which have a tradition ever since the Ancient times, and correspond to the Mediterranean concept of the city. It examines their morphological and functional transformation throughout history, analyzes the squares of Latakia and assets them according to special criteria for successful squares which have been articulated by occidental urban planners and architects.
Abstrakt

Tato diplomová práce zkoumá historii a praxi ve společenském používání náměstí v Sýrii ve 20. století, a to zejména na příkladu největšího syrského přístavního města: Latakie. Práce se zaměřuje především na období od počátku dvacátého století do roku 2010. Tato práce chápe náměstí jako druh urbanizovaných veřejných prostore ve městech, která mají tradici už od starověku, a odpovídají středomořské koncepci města. Autorka zkoumá jejich morfologickou a funkční transformaci v celé historii a posléze analyzuje pět významných, morfologicky a funkčně odlišně profilovaných náměstí Latakie a klasifikuje je podle zvláštních kritérií pro úspěšná náměstí, která byla formulována v dílech západních urbanistů a architektů. Sama se pokouší o funkcionalní typologii náměstí. Zajímá ji jak proces modernizace proměňuje vnímání úspěšnosti prostoru náměstí z pohledu architekta.
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Introduction

Urban squares as a kind of public places are part of the city urban form. Indeed, they are not only voids or leftover areas between buildings, but a place for static activities where social interaction takes place. Furthermore, they provide opportunities for relaxation and relief, contribute to reinforcing the public realm and add livability and attraction to the city.

Squares are not new elements in city planning projects. In fact, they have been historically central to the development of urban centers meant as places where people can meet, trade, celebrate. They took different images throughout history, from the Greek Agora and Roman Forum to squares in modern times. The question is, however, whether their morphology and function are similar or different in various civilizational contexts.

To explore the presented statement, the thesis will firstly analyze the works of urban theorists such as Lewis Mumford, Camillo Sitte, Kevin Lynch, Rob Krier, and several others, who significantly contributed to the research of urban squares by offering different approaches to their development. They did so particularly by studying their functional transformation which started in Europe as church plazas, meeting and market places; later they became more civil by adding new activities and amenities. In addition, the authors studied the morphology and transformation of their shapes, forms and sizes in each period. The scholars’ analysis should provide information about approaches to the construction of urban public spaces, which are one of the key elements of the city design, and formulate the most important principles. Thus, by using their works, we can extract the main criteria of successful squares and their role in the development of the European urban planning in several aspects; social, cultural, economic, political, aesthetic, and identity forming.

Secondly, the thesis examines the transformation of the meaning and image of public spaces in Syria as a Mediterranean country in the Middle East which has its roots in Antiquity starting more than 2000 BC. Public spaces in cities have been transformed
during the Arabic rule which started in the 7th century and in the times of the Ottoman rule from 16th till the beginning of the 20th century. Another important transformation was carried on during the French colonial period from 1920 till 1946. The instability of the early postcolonial period was not favorable to urban investment. Only in the 1970s the so-called Correction Movement could succeed as the Syrian state became stabilized. To explain better the morphology of cities, the thesis gives a brief overview of Syria’s history and of crucial moments in its social life, which have influenced the organization, meaning, and image of public spaces.

Thirdly, the thesis applies the extracted criteria for functional typology of urban squares in Latakia, a coastal city in the west of the country. Latakia is important because it is the main port in Syria with a central location that links the country’s major cities: the capital Damascus and the economic and industrial center Aleppo. It also is located very close to the border with Turkey in the north. Therefore, Latakia is on the main road for trade and tourism between the two countries. Last but not least, one could mention that the city has a moderate climate which makes it a good place for outdoor public spaces.

The study focuses on the period from the beginning of the twentieth century till the year 2010. The period of the French mandate was chosen as the starting point because it transformed the shape of social life in Syria. Moreover, the French have introduced principles of modern architecture and a new theory of urbanization that offered completely new types of public spaces. The last decades of the twentieth century were equally influential in urban development; for this reason we conclude the analysis by the turn of the century, the year 2010 respectively. The study analyzes the design principles of urban squares and examines their meaning and their performance in a city which lost its older parts while imitating the modern design trend. Additionally, it also asks about the rules or specific concepts.

The research wishes firstly to reveal new knowledge about the organization and social meaning of public squares, and about the tools which were used by urban planners in traditional public spaces in the past as a form of identifying common morphological characteristics in order to better understand the performance of contemporary ones. The second aim of the thesis is to identify the new tools, related to nowadays new
lifestyle, which necessarily creates new functions. The third task is to offer ideas and Proposals to city planners in Latakia: to reveal the preferred attributes of future users of Latakia’s squares by ensuring that public spaces will be effectively used by people. Indeed, it can provide useful design principles by which projects of squares in Latakia can be revised to become more responsive to the users’ preferences and perceptions. Furthermore, it may assist designers in understanding the needs of people and the way they distribute themselves in public spaces. It wishes to provide them with useful design principles by which Latakia squares can develop in the future.
Chapter I: Architects and Urban Planners on the Concept of Public Space and Squares

This chapter explores the theoretical discussions about the square concept in the context of public spaces. It introduces the definition of Space, Place, Public Spaces and Squares. Indeed, it is necessary to define these terms and give a clear idea how they are applied in the presented study since all these are commonly used terms in different disciplines that primarily deal with the issue of space. For this reason, it is essential to take the other concepts that are tied to it into account.

1-1- Definitions:

1-1-1 The Space:

The question about the meaning of the concept of “space” suggests that it is multi-layered term which can be answered from different perspectives. The difficulty with space as a term derives from the simple fact that it is widely used and has broad meanings in different disciplines, be it philosophy, psychology, geography, sociology, mathematics and physics. Ali Madanipour, who is currently a professor of urban planning at Newcastle University, argues in his book: Design of Urban Space that the perspectives that come from these other disciplines cover a wide range of issues, including “seeing space as a physical phenomenon, a condition of mind, or a product of social processes” (Madanipour, 1996). The French sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1901–1991), who developed the most influential framings of space as both social and physical construct, offers another insights.

In his book The Production of space,” Lefebvre sets out a three-fold perspective on space that incorporates physical, mental and social elements. The first one deals with representations of space, or conceptual space which is related to knowledge, signs, codes, and to ‘frontal’ relations where most planners and architects feel most comfortable as it is the space of drawings, images and city plans. The second one, representational space, or lived space, focused on space associated with symbolic values created by residents linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life. The third perspective then is spatial practice which embraces
production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation, or ways in which spaces are used through patterns of everyday life. (Lefebvre, 1991:33)

In the last three decades, the concept of public space has been redefined within the context of urban space development, and in order to understand public spaces we need to study the urban spaces and places.

1-1-2 Urban Spaces

Many scholars interested in studying the city and its urban planning have identified urban space with a number of different perspectives. The American urban planner Kevin Lynch (1918-1984), for example, in his most influential book *The Image of the City* identified cities and the urban space through the famous five elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. He related these both to the physical form and the symbolic values. Lynch claims that all these elements together provide a complete image of the city: “districts are structured with nodes, defined by edges, penetrated by paths, and sprinkled with landmarks . . . elements regularly overlap and pierced one another.” To sum up, Lynch emphasizes that public spaces are the significant nodes and landmarks in the cities. (Lynch, 1960: 48-9).

Rob Krier (June 10, 1938) a Luxembourgian architect and urban designer, also applied the physical approach to city structures in his book *Urban Space*. He identified space as having a physical shape. In his opinion, to perceive external space as a urban space, it is necessary to have a clear legibility of its geometrical criteria with aesthetical qualities. Otherwise it will be any space or void between buildings in towns and other localities. (Krier, 1979:15)

1-1-3 Place

Beside discussions dealing with the issue of space, the question of place is likewise a significant notion that needs to be considered within this context. It is a part of space that is occupied by a person or a thing and, consequently, is endowed with a specific meaning and value. According to Madanipour, for instance, the place is the sensual experience of space. He also states that “if space is allowing movement to occur, place provides a pause”. (Madanipour, 1996:23)
Furthermore, the British geographer John Agnew, for example, argues that places cannot be understood within the limited dimensions of architecture or physical geography. Rather, Agnew states that the variables that characterize places are multivalent. He offers three elements, or scales, by which it is possible to understand the phenomenon of place. These are location, sense of place, and locale. According to Agnew, “location” reflects that a place can be understood as a geographic area encompassed by the objective structures of politics and economy. In this sense, places are linked together. By the term “sense of place” he means the local “structure of feeling” that pervades being in a particular place. This dimension of place includes the inter-subjective realities that give a place what conventional language would describe as “character” or “quality of life.”

Between the objective location, and the subjective sense of place, Agnew establishes a middle ground, or what he entitled “locale” “This quality of place is the setting in which social relations are constituted. Locale includes the institutional scale of living to which architecture contributes so much: the city, the public square, the block, and the neighborhood. By understanding the concept of place as a dynamic process that links humans and nonhumans in space at a variety of scales, one might get beyond the opposition between those who see it as a set of objective structures and those who see it as a set of romantic myths tied to subjective experience (Moore, 2001: 434-435).

In addition, the Norwegian architect Norberg-Schulz defines the concept of place as “something more than abstract location a totality made up of concrete things having material substance, shape, texture and color”. He was a key theorist of the Latin concept of the sense of place as “genuis loci”. He described it in his book Genuis loci: Toward a Phenomenology of Architecture as representing the sense people have about a place as a sum of all physical as well as symbolic values in nature and the human environment. (Norberg-Schulz,1979:6). However, apart from these physical properties, the contemporary American landscape architect Roger Trancik who worked on urban design theories and the author of Finding Lost Space associates the concept of place with cultural and human characteristics. Stressing the contextual meaning based on the cultural or regional scope of the space, it shows it as an element which turns space into a place with a unique character. “These intangible cultural aspects of place are fundamental for people to develop themselves, their social lives and their culture” (Trancik, 1986:112-113).
1-1-4 Public Space

The term public space can refer to the distinction between privately-owned or state-owned property. It can also refer to those areas beyond the privacy of the home that consist of places which are accessible and usable for all the citizens and that can include the ones which are under private ownership. Finally, people can represent and be collectively considered as “the public” and, therefore, be considered as the general users of public space. However, what constitutes the public is very different across societies, places and times (Smith and Low, 2006:3). Social changes and spatial configuration of the contemporary city have radically altered the role of public space and the inherent public sphere in the set of the urban dynamic. Thus, the form and image of these spaces developed gradually according to the needs of the modern life. Public spaces are significant because they are the vivid part of the city structure, they provide avenues for movement, for communication, and a common ground for enjoyment and relaxation. The ability of public spaces to educate and offer knowledge is also their significant aspect, particularly when those spaces play an important role in the history of the city and the social life of its citizens (Madanipour, 2003:229). Despite the changing nature of modern neighborhoods and communities, public spaces are still an essential part of life because they provide opportunities for different people, both young and old, to experience a variety of human encounters.

Types of space needed in a city are varied: the setting for a civic building, principal meeting places, places for great ceremonial occasions, spaces for entertainment around buildings such as theatres, cinemas, restaurants and cafes, spaces for shopping, shopping streets, arcades and markets, spaces around which offices are grouped, spaces of a semi-public nature around which residential accommodation is arranged, and, finally, spaces associated with urban traffic junctions. (Moughtin, 2003: 87). Accordingly, public spaces consist of both indoor spaces, which include arcades, halls of railway stations, public buildings, interior of shopping malls, and outdoor spaces which on their part include streets, squares, parks, sport grounds, etc.

This study aims at focusing on urban public spaces which include outdoor spaces, particularly squares which belong to the fundamental types of public spaces and contribute to the city designs as the central elements. They are considered as assets for
urban renewal and new developments, economic incentives, public health and well-being, image of the city, mobility, and conviviality.

1-1-5 Urban Square/Plaza

Plaza is a Spanish word which, according to the Longman dictionary, means the following: a public square or market place surrounded by buildings, especially in towns in Spanish-speaking countries. Besides it can also be a group of shops and other business buildings in a town, usually with outdoor areas between them. According to the Dictionary of Architecture and Building Construction, Plaza is a public square that is usually centrally located in cities in Spain and in communities of Spanish heritage. While in vernacular architecture or American colonial architecture and derivatives especially in the south, often supported by columns or posts. This Dictionary offers yet one term of Italian origin, Piazza, as an open public space or square surrounded by buildings. (2006:723,742).

Consequently, a square, or plaza, is an open or empty space in a city or town which has social activities. It is both an area framed by buildings and an area designed to exhibit its buildings to their greatest advantage. It is one of the most important elements of city design, embodied in its urban fabric. It is possibly the most important way of designing a good setting for public and commercial buildings in cities. This has led some writer to equate architectural grouping of buildings with and identical to plaza design.

Many urban planners mentioned the importance of squares in city planning and their roles in people’s life. The Austrian nineteenth century architect Camillo Sitte studied the Middle Ages and Renaissance squares and argued that there still existed a vital and functional use of the town square for community life and also, in connection with this, he highlighted the link between square and surrounding public buildings. Kevin Lynch found the node to be one of the elements by which a city is recognized and understood. In short, the node is an important element which gives the city what could be called “imageability” or a strong image. In fact he says: “Nodes are points, the strategic spots in a city which an observer can enter, typically either junction of paths, or concentrations of some characteristics” in other words nodes are “the conceptual anchor points in our cities”(Lynch,1960:75). Here again in his book Good City Form Lynch emphasized that a urban square is the “activity focus” in the center
of dense urban areas. Moreover, he stated: “It will be paved, enclosed by high density structures, and surrounded by streets, or in contact with them. It contains features meant to attract groups of people and to facilitate meetings” (Lynch, 1981:443).

Similarly, Rob Krier who deals with urban space through a physical perspective puts the square into the very center of city design together with streets. He emphasizes the importance of its location and function connected to the square in order to generate activity for twenty-four hours a day (Krier, 1979:19).

In addition, the Austrian architect Christopher Alexander, who was mostly interested in historical texts dealing with architecture, makes the same point: “Every whole must be a ‘center’ in itself, and must also produce a system of centers around it”. Alexander is convinced that the center tends towards a symmetrical arrangement, especially towards so-called bilateral symmetry, similar to that of the human body. In a like manner, the German historian Paul Zucker focused on the analysis of public squares as an important element of city design because they create a gathering place for the people to socialize, providing them with a shelter, and freeing them from the tension of rushing of traffic and the noise of streets. (Zucker, 1959:1)

**1-2 Squares and Their Historical Background**

Public squares are related to time and space. They came into existence at a certain period from the Greek time. During their life span, they underwent a significant transformation or even disappeared depending on the social and economic circumstances and growth of the population.

This section gives an overview of squares mostly in the European cities within the major historical periods since the first urban formations including: the Greek Agora, Roman Forum, Medieval Town squares, Renaissance and Baroque Squares, and finally the 18th and 19th century squares.

**1-2-1 The Greek Agora**

The Agora was the dynamic center of the Greek city and the meeting place for secular transactions, usually located on a low level to separate it from the temple precinct where a lofty meeting place was dedicated to sacrifice and prayer to the Gods. The division of functions took place almost from the early Greek time. Agora was mainly a platform for political gatherings, but its role gradually changed into a center for marketing. As usual, the market was a by-product of the coming-together-of-
consumers who, on their part, had many other reasons for assembling, not merely because of doing business. In addition, its oldest and most persistent function was that of a communal meeting place to discuss public affairs and to listen to great philosophers of the time. The American historian Lewis Mumford in his book *The City in History* defined the agora as “a place of assembly” where the town folk gathered and the purpose of gathering in this context was to decide whether a murderer had paid an adequate blood fine to the kin of the murdered man. The elders, seated on polished stones in the midst of the hallowed circle, gave their decision. From the seventh century on, the economic function of the agora continued to expand with the introduction of the gold and silver stamped coins as a new exchange medium (Mumford, 1961:175-176). Principal shopping facilities and meeting place were in the Agora, especially for the political discussions. To sum up, the Agora was what made the town a polis (city in Greek). (Zucker, 1959:31)

It is about time to move to the second point which deals with the morphology of the Agora. The early Agora had an amorphous and irregular form, it was an open space, used for public purposes, but not necessarily enclosed. Zucker, for example, says that the adjoining buildings were often thrown about in irregular order: here is a temple, there a statue to a hero, or a fountain; or perhaps they were in a row, a group of craftsmen’s shops, open to the passer-by; the middle the temporary stalls or stands could have indicated market day when the peasant brought his garlic, greens, or olives to the town, and picked up a pot or got his shoes mended by the cobbler.

Agora was usually located in the heart of the city or as close as possible to the harbor in port towns. The geometrical form developed from irregular to obtain a more regular shape, usually square or rectangular. (fig.1) Paul Zucker indicates that tendency toward regular form became more evident in the space, in contrast to earlier times, that it can be conceived as a distinct configuration, a "Gestalt" and an enclosed space. He further claims that the Agora was surrounded by colonnades or porticoes around the individual temples in stoas that sheltered and unified the vicinity of the market space. These porticoes created the monumental expression of the Agoras “public character” in the Greek cities. (Zucker, 1959:37).
Thus Agora was a public square in the Greek time with regular shape located in the center and served as a meeting and market place and played a political role as an assembly place for taking decisions.

1-2-2 The Roman Forum

Roman cities had a rectangular layout and a gridiron plan, but what distinguished their form was its axial type with two main streets (cardo and decumanus) crossing in the middle of the city. This crossing point appeared as the usual or the ideal place for the Forum. It was conceived as the Roman equivalent of the Acropolis and Agora (Mumford,1961:241).

The Forum was the foundation of a common market place and the symbol of the community of citizens. Furthermore, it was the place of assembly which was also used in the early days for athletic and gladiatorial contests. The temple was an essential part of the Forum as its sacred area (Mumford,1961:257). The major architectural elements representing the public character in the Forum were the Senate, the Basilica, other public buildings, innumerable shops and crowded tenements. A continuous colonnade unified the variety of the buildings surrounding the Forum (Zucker, 1959,45).( see fig.2)

The well-known Roman Architect Vitruvius (80–70 BC - 15 BC) wrote about the design of the Forum that it “should be proportionate to the number of inhabitants, so
that it may not be too small a space to be useful, nor look like a desert waste for lack of population.” (Moughtin, 2003:87).

![Figure 2. Roman Forum – Rome](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Le_Forum_Romain_(Rome)_%(5981353320).jpg (saved 20/09/2013)

### 1-2-3 The Medieval Town Square

In general, according to various architects, medieval towns cannot be described only through their two dimensional pattern since they also had a third and fourth dimension. The first two dimensions were the layout and the ground floor while the third dimension can be translated through edges and through movement in space. The fourth dimension was the transformation of the town in time, i.e. when the functional and aesthetic relationships came to life.

To understand the plan of the medieval town one must take into account the determinant elements of its structure, especially the disposition of nuclear components, the castle, the abbey or friary, the cathedral (church), the town hall, and the guild-hall. However, one building may be taken as the key structure in the medieval town plan, and that is the church (Mumford,1961:351). First and foremost, a great church was central to the town in every sense but the geometric one. Since it hosted large crowds during the rituals, it needed a forecourt to provide for an entrance and exit of the worshippers. For this reason, it was possible to find the market-place either spreading in front of the cathedral, or opening a wedge or a square
for itself nearby. Indeed, one must not assign to these places the same values they have today: while the market might have been occasional, it was the church whose services were constant and regular. In towns of organic growth, the market-place would be an irregular figure, sometimes triangular, many sided or oval, saw-toothed, curved, seemingly arbitrary in shape because the needs of the surrounding buildings came first and determined the disposition of the open space (Mumford, 1961:352-353). In towns, which were planned, like bastides in southern France or colonization towns in Central Europe, the square was in the middle, it was rectangular, and it hosted the Church, the Town Hall, and the market (see an example in figure 3 below).

Figure 3. Piazza del Campo – Siena – Italy (saved: 26/02/2014)


1-2-4 The Renaissance Square

Towns of the Renaissance, unlike their medieval counterparts, were developed and based on special town planning. Zucker, for instance, writes that the theoretical thinking and aesthetic consideration begin to influence the creation of individual parts and of the town as a whole during the Renaissance (Zucker, 1970:99). Public squares are characterized by their geometric shapes since the Renaissance. They became more organized compared to the medieval ones. Some of medieval squares changed their character completely through monuments which were erected during the Renaissance.
like for example the Piazza di St Giovanni e Paolo in Venice and the very enclosed square with its rectangular shape Annunziata square in Florence.

For the Italian architect and philosopher Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472), the first theoretician of city planning in the Renaissance period, “the central domed building is a chief monumental structure of a town, and the concept of the square is a central point with radiating streets”. This became later the symbol of Renaissance architecture. He likewise suggested that “there ought to be several squares laid out in different parts of the city, some for the exposing of merchandises to sale in time of peace; and others for the exercises proper for youth; and others for laying up stores in time of war. (Zucker, 1959:101)

There had to be a lot of squares to satisfy the needs of specialized markets - one for gold and silver, another one for herbs, another for cattle, yet another for wood and so on. Merchants trading with each of the mentioned products needed to have their particular place in the city with their distinct ornaments. (Moughtin, 2003:87)

Starting in the Renaissance period, the aristocracy built palaces in the city and was also often represented on the squares.

Figure 4. Annunziata square – Florence
The most famous Renaissance square; example of enclosure
Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Piazza_SS_Annunziata_Firenze_Apr_2008_%2810%29-Piazza_SS_Annunziata_Firenze_Apr_2008_%289%29.jpg (saved: 26/02/2014)

1-2-5 The Baroque Square

The baroque squares visualized the spatial understanding of the baroque city planning. It was an era of “grandeur images” regarding the kings orders of building super-scale palaces, gardens and plazas in order to emphasize their power and authority over the citizens (Zucker, 1959:144).
The Michelangelo’s Piazza Campidoglio in Rome is one of the early Baroque examples that best represents the plaza concept of the period. This square was topographically isolated even though it had no religious elements compare to the previous examples in ancient Greece for instance. Indeed, both the acropolis and the medieval cathedral had significant religious features. It newly represented a civic institution in the Baroque period. In fact, a whole baroque concept of the "dynamic motion in space" was introduced. The Italian sculptor and architect Michelangelo (1475 –1564) envisioned the piazza di Campidoglio (fig.5) as a monumental stage for all artistic means to create the impression of gradually increasing volumes which frame the space in between.” (Zucker, 1959:145-148)

![Figure 5.Piazza Campidoglio](http://www.laboratorioroma.it/ALR/Campidoglio/campidoglio.htm (saved:26/02/2014))

**1-2-6 Classicism of the 18th Century**

It is no exaggeration to say that the 18th century initiated the transformation in the shape and design of squares. It is possible to observe that new shapes were added to the catalogue of city square forms. Architects and builders of the time used the principle of a circle, opening crescents or semi-circular as well as the square form of plaza. In addition, green spaces and gardens had a great influence in the new urban form. This idea influenced the outlook of squares especially in England as they became planted. Moreover, this period saw the adulation of nature that became essential as architects felt that it was kind of an obligation to plant every free space.(Zucker,1959:199)

The effect of the crescents and squares in for example Bath as an English city was quite original and it serves as a good example of the 18th century squares. The city of Bath’s squares represent developed spatial units and topographically fixed points of a
three dimensional reference. They were partially enclosed and the buildings have a unified façade; thus, the squares became more defined by architecture, but also by nature, the sky and its expansion within various topographical units (Zucker, 1959:205). The Royal Crescent square in Bath was such a new type in urban space, semi-circular or semi elliptical, building combined with landscape elements. Another famous square is the King's Circus Square (see figure 7) located also in Bath very near to the Royal Crescent (see figure 6). The square under scrutiny has a new fashionable round form and was planted the middle.

Figure 6. Royal Crescent square, Bath
http://blog.zoopla.co.uk/2010/09/ (saved: 24/04/2014)

Figure 7. King's Circus Square, Bath
http://www.bathparadeguides.co.uk/tours/bath/ (saved: 24/04/2014)
**1-2-7 Nineteenth Century Squares**

During the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the industrial revolution caused radical transformation in urban design and planning. In addition, it was accompanied by spontaneous and unprecedented urbanization. The growth of cities was accompanied by the establishment of new transportation means - railways serving new industrial areas offering work and stimulating labor migration. The growing urban population meant, in particular, a serious shortage of housing for the working class in industrial cities and, consequently, serious social problems. A larger participation of women in social city life and their needs and interests were also new and brought about shopping streets, arcades, etc. All of these factors stimulated changes in the image of the city and its public spaces.

According to the French philosopher and art critic Francoise Choay, who wrote a book on modern city planning, urbanism of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century can be divided into three periods: regularization, the application of the so-called progressist model, and the Garden City.

**1-2-7-1 Regularization (or so-called Haussmannization)**

Regularization is a word derived from Baron George Haussmann\textsuperscript{1}’s name means to regularize a disordered city. In his case, Paris was the object for the regularization of the city in the industrial age. It was the most systematic example of regularization application and served as a model example for the majority of the other cities.

The author of the transformation of Paris, Baron Georges Haussmann was supported by Emperor Napoleon III who for security reasons wanted to put an end to riots by destroying the medieval structure of Parisian streets and replacing them with broad arteries along which the police could assemble and charge.

In addition, problems connected to traffic flow were given priority. For this reason, Haussmann decided to destroy some parts of the city while other old streets were simply widened. The overall network of arterial connections constituted what Haussmann described as a kind of a general circulatory system which he subdivided

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\textsuperscript{1} Georges-Eugène Haussmann, commonly known as Baron Haussmann (1809 –1891), was the Prefect of the Seine Department in France, who was chosen by the Emperor Napoleon III to carry out a massive program of new boulevards, parks and public works in Paris, commonly called Haussmann’s renovation of Paris.
into hierarchized tributary systems, each organized around plaza, which was no longer a place in itself but a traffic node. The enclosed plaza of the old order, a haven sheltered from traffic, was suppressed. Within the network of streets designed for traffic flow, he created a hierarchy of planted areas, which he further divided into four categories: promenades like the Champs-Elysees, squares, the model which Napoleon III had brought back from London, and public gardens laid out in a romantic pattern (the most successful of these were the Mountsouris and Buttes( see fig.8)- Chaumont parks) (Francoise Choay,1969:18-19).

In the period in concern, some works applying the regularization pattern took place also in other European cities, but without such a huge amount of demolition as was in the case of Paris. This was so in order to create an opening in the old urban fabric like Trafalgar Square in London (see figure 9). (Francoise Choay,1969: 21)

Figure 8. Buttes-Chaumont park plan -1867

Source:(Choay,1969:48)
1-2-7-2 The Progressist Model

Choay suggests that the progressist model was the first movement in urbanism attempting to create a modern urban space. The progressist spatial pattern is not based on the continuity of solids, but on continuity of voids or empty spaces in which constructed elements burst apart. Air, light, and greenery became the symbols of progress, and the dispersal is considered essential for physical hygiene.

The Welsh social reformer and one of the founders of utopian socialism Robert Owen (1771–1858) for example, arranged the dwelling of his model towns designed for 1,2000 inhabitants. He put particular emphasis on square areas which were, moreover, planted with gardens in the center and surrounded with 600 hectares of land (see figure 10).(Choay, 1969:32)

The importance of empty spaces and greenery, together with the division into independent functional units of two thousand like Owen’s square, leads to a loss of urban character in the progressist agglomerations.(Choay, 1969:98).
The Garden city model was founded by the English urban planner Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928). He took a societal and public health issues into consideration by integrating social advantages and healthy conditions of the rural areas in the city. Garden cities were intended to be planned, self-contained communities surrounded by so-called "greenbelts". Furthermore, they were to contain proportionate areas of residences, industry and agriculture. His ideal garden city would house 32,000 people on a site of 6,000 acres (2,400 ha), planned on a concentric pattern with open spaces, public parks and six radial boulevards, 120 ft (37 m) wide, extending from the center. The garden city was to be self-sufficient and when it reached the population limits, another garden city was to be developed nearby. (Choay, 1969:107).

The garden city model as can be seen from the picture below (figure 11) is a ground plan of the whole municipal area, showing the town in the center. Figure 12 represents one section or ward of the town, will be useful in following the description of the town itself—a description which is, however, merely suggestive, and will probably be much departed from.
Figure 11. The Garden city model

http://urbanplanning.library.cornell.edu/DOCS/howard.htm (saved:05/05/2014)

Figure 12. One section of the Garden city

http://urbanplanning.library.cornell.edu/DOCS/howard.htm (saved:05/05/2014)
1-3 Squares: Evaluation Criteria According to Their Morphology and Function

This part of the presented thesis reviews theories and issues of relevance for the analysis and evaluation of public squares. Moreover, it sets out criteria to be used through the research. The theories have been studied after they came into being by different scholars who have, on their part, significantly contributed to the literature dealing with the questions of square in different periods, from medieval squares till the contemporary ones, mainly on the basis of analyzing western cities. The authors in concern highlighted and identified the major elements and tools that are, according to them, the key to create functional squares in cities. Various strategies were applied in the past, and their analysis should help us to understand the performance of contemporary squares better. Based on the mentioned approach, the study also attempts to identify new tools related to the contemporary new and developed life which necessarily creates new functions.

There is a wide range of works dealing with the question of squares. Some studies for instance, deal with the success of urban squares and for this reason they focus more on the so-called physical approach. They do so by discussing the shape and the morphology of the square. Among these, one could mention scholars such as Rob Krier, Paul Zucker, Raymond Unwin, etc.. Other experts in the file put emphasis on the so-called psychological approach. William Whyte and Jan Gehl would be the most significant authors in this group. At the same time, most of recent studies combine both the physical and psychological approaches. After their study I reached the conclusion that the criteria for a successful squares should be studied while highlighting both the morphology and function. Criteria which are presented in this section are the basis for analyzing and assessing the squares selected as case studies in the last chapter.

1-3-1-Morphology

Squares influence people aesthetically. Indeed, by affecting their minds and senses, they may become inviting and attractive. Moreover, their morphology and design can influence people’s behavior and make them adapt themselves to their surroundings. The contemporary architect Christian Thomsen (1998:103) remarks, when talking
about the ambiance of cities, that: ‘Architecture without sense appeal makes people moody, grumpy, at first emotionally unsatisfied and then physically ill’.

This part of the thesis introduces attributes related to morphological and physical aspects of the urban square as a form, size and visual complexity. It is an attempt to arrive to some basic morphological principles for successful squares.

**Squares shape and form:**

Rob Krier (1979), for instance, worked on a morphological study with respect to the geometric patterns. In addition, he developed a typology of urban squares. According to Krier’s study, there are three major square shapes: squares, circles or triangles. These shapes can be modified through angling, segmentation, addition, merging, overlapping and distortion. Furthermore, the can have regular or, in contrast, irregular forms which might be open to the environment or closed by walls, arcades, colonnades from the streets around, etc.(Krier,1979:23).(see fig.12)

![Figure 13.Squares shapes](image)

The first row of the picture shows the basic and almost regular forms, the pending table illustrates the modifications of the regular shape and its transformation into irregular form. Source: (Krier,1979:23)
Additionally, the shapes can be modulated by a variety of sections and in various elevations which in turn influence the quality of the space. Although many public spaces in British towns, for example, are called ‘squares’, they very rarely are these as they often are an incremental result of their medieval origins. Christopher Alexander, in his work on morphogenesis, also notes that natural forms are hardly ever rectangular, let alone square. It must likewise be of significance that many of the most popular pieces of architecture (such as Gaudi’s Barcelona, the Opera House in Sydney, the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao or the ‘Gherkin’ in London) are curvaceous. (Shaftoe, 2008:75)

The shape and morphology of squares changed in different periods for many reasons depending on different urban planning styles. Scholars have considered public squares’ design to be successful as they generate a sense of enclosure which can be controlled by their boundaries. These is in line with attractive and welcoming buildings that became focal points that have their own identity, allow a variety of seating, represent well-designed landscaping elements, including art work, green spaces, water and more.

1-3-1-1 The Sense of Enclosure

A significant point about the form of squares was made by Camillo Sitte in 1889 in his seminal work which was, more precisely, aesthetic criticism of late nineteenth century’s urbanism. He entitled his work City Planning According to Artistic Principles. His main point dealt with the so-called sense of enclosure. Sitte states that “the main requirement for a plaza, as for a room, is the enclosed character of its space” (Sitte, 1965:32). The enclosure of space can be translated in the way that the square becomes as an outdoor “room” which has clear edges and frames and, consequently, have a sense of place, the center. In addition, the English architect and town planner Sir Raymond Unwin (1863 –1940) believed that this enclosure was fundamental because it not only offered a frame and background to public buildings. For Unwin, a complete sense of enclosure was not necessarily a result of a continuous frame of buildings.

The keys to enclosure in squares according to these authors are:

a) How the streets enter the body of the urban square: Only one street on each corner of the square should be used and if more corners are needed, they must be
connected at different angles. Sitte even presented his own ideal of how to lead streets from the plaza in such a manner that from any point in the square there would be no more than one view out.

Unwin, in his work, agreed with Sitte. He believed that the enclosure effect achieved by traditional squares was the result of connecting streets and squares. He thought that from the entry point where someone would be standing, one should not get an extended view of another street. Therefore, the streets were not meant to break the line of buildings. Keeping that in mind, Unwin wrote the following: "In many cases, the line of streets is slightly broken at the junctions, the continuation of the opposite side of the road not exactly opposite to the previous line of the road. In this way, many of the street vistas would be closed by buildings." (Unwin, 1909:60).

b) The treatment of corners: The more open the corners of the square has, the less the sense of enclosure exists, the more built up or complete they are, the greater the feeling of being enclosed. A further strengthening of the sense of enclosure is achieved by a complete building up of the corner. Alternatively, the corner can be closed by using an arch for completion. The Italian architect Andrea Palladio (1508 – 1580), who is widely considered to be the most influential individual in the history of Western architecture, declared: “Arches give a very great ornament to piazza that are made at the head of streets, that is, in the entrance into the piazza.” (fig.13) (Moughtin ,2003:95)

c) The surrounding buildings affect the degree of enclosure: This includes the nature of the enclosing buildings’ roof line, their heights in relation to the size of space, the degree of their three-dimensional modeling, the presence or absence of a unifying architectural theme and the overall shape of the space itself. The enclosure is progressively diminished if the variations in the height of the buildings are excessive.

d) The dome of the sky is the ceiling for the plaza: Zucker believes that the height of the sky above a closed square is imagined as three or four times the height of the tallest building on the square. This lid or dome connected to the square appears to sit more securely when the roofline is more or less of equal height and length.

e) The harmonious proportion of height to width: The mentioned is represented in the relationship between the height of buildings and the width of squares. However, it is difficult to determine the exact relationship that ought to exist between the
magnitude of a square and the buildings which enclose it, but clearly it should be a harmonious balance. An excessively small square is worthless for a monumental structure. A square that is too big is even worse, for it will have the effect of reducing its dimensions. (Sitte, 1981:26)

![Figure 14. Annunziata square arch: one corner of Annunziata square is closed with an arch. Source: (Moughtin, 2003:95)](image)

1-3-1-2 Focal Point and Identity

Like Sitte, Unwin's views on urban design led him to investigate the morphology of urban squares. Unwin believes that public squares act as important reference points in the structure of cities. He points out that for an urban square to become a “genuine center where people are likely to congregate” (Unwin, 1909:187), which is his criteria used to measure the success of urban squares. Moreover, an important aspect is to be at the focal point of the main traffic lines, or very near to those points, to avoid the danger of being deserted and therefore deleterious.

Unwin was one of the first authors to notice that the location of urban squares in the urban fabric, which he referred to by lines of traffic, is important for their performance. Indeed, if squares are in an isolated and under-populated location or in a location difficult to access, it will not thrive however well-designed it might be. For this reason, it should be easily accessible by foot with narrow surrounding streets in
which the traffic moves only slowly. On the other hand, the square can become a
reference point when it has a specific identity. The concept of square identity is
directly related to symbolic roles of a plaza by giving the public a common images of
their cities. Historically, a fountain, sculpture or a great building such as a cathedral,
city hall or library, can be used to give the square a strong image like the majestic
Trevi Fountain in Rome, Duomo on the square in Florence, etc. Today, creating a
square that would have a significant image is a big challenge. Yet, it is necessary
especially, especially when the square is located in the center.

1-3-1-3 Edges
Edges are created by the buildings which line the square. The function and types of
these buildings and their architectural themes are important. They can either increase
the quality of the public space in concern, or diminish it. Clearly, facade design needs
requirements such as attractiveness, variation, details and more. If buildings are varied
and offer many services, the urban environment becomes more inviting and enriching.
Thomsen points out that “Architecture without sense appeal makes people, moody,
grumpy, at first emotionally unsatisfied and then physically ill” (Thomsen, 1998:108).
All details on buildings affect the success of squares, especially those details that are
to be found on the ground floor level. This is exactly the point where the building and
the town meet. Furthermore, it provides an important link between different scales of
the building and, consequently, between buildings and people. It serves many
purposes depending on the building’s location, its function and the surrounding space.
strong sense of connection between the urban square and the ground floor of
surrounding buildings make the square more attractive. Management tools for the
ground floor, including the shape and function, define the relationship between public
spaces outdoors and private spaces indoors. As public spaces and buildings are to be
treated as a whole, the ground floor façade must have a special, welcoming and
attractive design. This close encounter architecture is vital for good squares,
especially in the case of small ones, because the view angle will be closer and all the
details will be seen – that means not only the ground floor façade but display
windows and shops interior as well. Last but not least, it is important to mention that
to see the whole building one needs to stand in quite a distance.
1-3-1-4 Street Views

Good visibility of the square for its users can be achieved by a careful arranging of walls and plants in order so that they do not screen or block off the plaza from the street. Firstly, locating the plaza at or as close as possible to the street level, preferably no more than 1.0 m above or below street level, is desirable. It can be argued that people prefer to be at street level rather than on raised decks or sunken plazas. (Gehl, 2003 and Whyte, 1980)

Secondly, a plaza may also make use of distant views of mountains, the sea or other landmarks, such as special buildings and monuments. All of the mentioned constitute a significant advantage. It should be borne in mind that what is seen from the distance depends on the viewing angles dictated by the human eyes. This means that pedestrians have to stand at quite a distance to see the whole building. Therefore, the view distance should be taken in consideration during the design process. Indeed, architects and planners should leave enough distance in front of the major building which is designed to be a focal point or landmark in the square to see it entirely (for a better understanding, see Figure 14).

![Figure 15. Effective viewing distances](image)

The figure explains the view of the building according to our location in the space.

1-3-1-5 Landscape
The quality and quantity of decorative elements, like fountains, green areas, street furniture, are important for ensuring that squares would be successful. They can offer a pleasing environment that provides a sense of well-being. Focal points in the landscape can be achieved by changing the color, the form or the texture. People generally feel comfortable by experiencing natural elements in landscapes. Different kinds of plants (trees, shrubs, flowers, grass, etc.) can be used in the design of urban squares for different purposes: aesthetics, shading, or visual screening. Plants also help to soften the strong and sometimes disturbing effects of hard surfaces or sharp lines. In addition, flowering plants may also add variety to the environment under scrutiny in terms of color and scent. In fact, plants can be the background of a monument or focal attempting to emphasize its visual effect. Similarly, water surfaces are landscape elements commonly used in public squares to create a focal point or aesthetically pleasing views. Water surfaces create a more relaxing and tranquil environment while fountains, cascades and other running water surfaces add movement, vibrancy and dynamism to the space. Designers should also care about pavement materials by designing durable, aesthetically appealing and comfortable ones.

In a like manner, a significant element in squares landscaping is seating which make it possible for users to view, observe, and enjoy the environment around them. Without it, fewer people would use the space. Additionally, one could mention it is possible to distinguish between primary seating, like benches and chairs, and secondary seating, like stairs, planted-bed edges, etc. The choice, their design, distribution, and orientation are important to let people interact with the space. Therefore, the space view and orientation should be taken into account while planning the placement of seats on the square.

1-3-2 Function
Historically, open urban area public spaces always existed, and they were very important. They served different purposes, for example the development of the city.
Bit by bit, squares acquired more and more functions and played many significant roles in the political, religious, commercial, and leisure life of the community.

1-3-2-1 Social Role
Public spaces are open to all, regardless of ethnic origin, age or gender, and as such, they represent a democratic forum for citizens and society. When properly designed and cared for, they bring communities together, provide meeting places and foster social ties of a kind that have been recently disappearing in many urban areas. These spaces shape the cultural identity of an area, are part of its unique character and provide a sense of place for local communities. Thus, the process of social learning provided by plazas is initiated by this. Moreover, squares are the places where people with different norms, behaviors and cultures come together and learn about their community (Shaftoe, 2008:12-13).

1-3-2-2 Economic Role
The economic role of squares belongs among the most significant ever since the Greek agora. Squares were, are and will be primary locations of commerce and economic activities (Whyte, 2009). Indeed, sales refreshments, markets and commercial facilities are good investment to generate financial benefits and attraction points that invite people for the square and make the place where they are located more popular visited.

1-3-2-3 Political Role
Plazas, according to the contemporary English urban planner Shaftoe, when used as gathering spaces available/accessible for everyone and belonging to the “public” they are locations of democracy. They offer a convenient place for political participation and public discussions in order to give voice both solidarity and dissent. At the same time, they provide ground for political demonstrations. Last but not least, Shaftoe states that “demonstrations, pamphleteering and soapbox orations are so important for grassroots democracy.” (Shaftoe, 2008:15)

1-3-2-4 The Symbolic Role
Symbolic roles associated with squares were commonly known throughout history. Indeed, the symbolic meaning is one of the most significant element for the city squares, they can add a sense of dignity to urban life and provide places at which to
pause. Symbolic meaning is directly related to the concept of identity. According to Kevin Lynch (1960:8), for example, “identity represents a particularity of an object in the whole context, with the meaning of individuality or oneness.” The awareness of people about the identity of their surrounding environments is strongly related to architectural and urban forms and the meanings they attribute to them. The identity can be reflected in the square through its historical importance, location, its name, or by a symbolic sculpture. For instance, Piazza San Marco in Venice, the Spanish Steps in Rome or the Trafalgar Square in London are regarded as the public images and landmarks of their cities.
Chapter II

A Brief History of Syria and Its Urban Development

This chapter offers a brief overview of Syria’s history, its urban settlement and crucial moments in its social life which have influenced the organization, meaning, and image of public spaces. It is important to understand the country’s history to understand and explain better the morphology of cities. The chapter focuses on the idea and the image of public spaces in the Middle East. In addition, the special case of Damascus is analyzed in order to examine the development of this idea after applying the modernization theory at the beginning of the 20th century, i.e. during the French Mandate in Syria. On top of that, the postcolonial period is likewise taken into account.

2-1 Syria

Modern Syria is called the Syrian Arab Republic. It is a country located in the Middle East, in Western Asia, and bordering the Mediterranean Sea to its west. It shares borders with Turkey to the north and west, Iraq to the east, and Jordan and Palestine to the south, and Lebanon to the southwest. It is a country of fertile plains, high mountains and deserts.

Syria is located in one of the most ancient regions of human civilization, and for thousands of years many different and great civilizations and cultures developed from or invaded the area. Syria was known an unstable area in its whole history. It has often been under the sway of powers from outside, be it Romans in the Ancient Times, Mongols, Crusaders or Islamic warriors in the Middle Ages, the Ottomans in the Early Modern and the French in the Modern times. These powers always influenced the organization of society, and, furthermore, initiated transformations in structure and culture. As a consequence, the symbolic forms of the cities in Syria changed.1

Syria is the home of diverse ethnic and religious groups, including the Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians, Christians, Druze, Alawite, Shias and the Arab Sunnis who
constitute the majority of the Muslim population. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that Syria is the place of coexistence of differences. Syria’s rich history and its population diversity created specific different categories and the country’s inhabitants contributed to the remarkable spiritual and intellectual flowering that still characterizes Syria’s cultures.


2-2 Syria’s Urban Settlement
The national capital of Syria is Damascus which is considered to be the oldest inhabited capital in the world. It is situated in the southeast on the banks of the Baradā River. It is the national headquarters of the country’s government, diplomatic community and, last but not least, it is the main center of education and culture. Located between the Orontes and Euphrates rivers, Aleppo is Syria’s largest city and trade and light-industry center. The Mediterranean port of Latakia is surrounded by a rich agricultural region. Yet, it is possible to find some industry there as well. Because of its seaside location, the city is also a major tourist center.
Ten centuries of Greek and Roman rule left an urban mark still visible in the towns of Latakia, Palmira and Buṣrā al-Shām. The urban tradition of Islam appears in such
cities as Damascus or Aleppo. The continuation of old commercial and religious interests enabled the mentioned cities to maintain their economic and cultural supremacy during the four centuries of Ottoman rule. Then during the French Mandate these main cities expanded and became modernized. Afterward the independence and the period of rapid urbanization in the 1950s and 60s, rural to urban migration abated somewhat. However, after 1970 the country became stable and cities became more attractive and witnessed a big population growth.

2-3 Public Space in the Middle East

The cities of Middle East have a long urban tradition. A dramatic urban change took place in Middle Eastern cities: several cities underwent a period of what was later entitled as modernization of the late Ottoman rule. It took place in the 19th and 20th century. Some cities were changed under colonial and mandate rule and others as a result of nationalist projects later.

There was strong control of the relation between the public and private realm in Islamic cities in the Middle East during the Ottoman rule. The town of Medina, for instance presents itself as a closed web of buildings, streets, lanes and active people (Bianca, 1991). The mosque was the center of the social life and, consequently, the square was formed around it. Markets and commercial activities were located near the mosque and social life flourished in the area as well.

The streets and squares of Medina constitute transitional zones to the private realm, i.e., to the houses. Markets and the activities taking place within markets need an extremely varied and specific stylization of behavioral and action patterns for communication, business and other issues (Figure 16). As a consequence, they create the public sphere (Bahrdt,1983: 616).

According to Islamic rules, separation between genders is clearly visible. In the past, only men could go to outdoor public spaces of the market and the streets while women stayed indoors in dwelling houses with an inner courtyard.

A big urban and social changes took place during The French Mandate period. These changes and transformation under scrutiny were the result of population growth and the need for a new kind of transportation (trams, automobiles). This created new thoroughfares and new districts and with a special infrastructure. On the other hand,
this urban transformation occurred also because of political reasons as these cities were seen in terms of “colonialism” and as “colonial cities.

Figure 17. Sketch for the main elements in the Islamic cities
Source: (Moughtin, 2003:95)

While some scholars criticized the role of colonial powers in Syria in the past, there has been a marked tendency towards viewing this modernization exclusively as a kind of a gift from Europe. (Nielson, Pertersen,2001) Indeed, the colonial powers stood behind creating parks for the population for example as well as boulevards and meeting places. In contrast, urbanism was used as a political instrument during the French Mandate period in order to establish a bond between the local people and the mandate and to diminish hostility.

**Damascus’ Urbanism and Public Places during the French Mandate**

The first master plan (see Figure 17) for Damascus was prepared in 1935 by a French company headed by the renowned French urban planner René Danger (1872-1954). Danger was mostly concerned with the regulatory plan of the city which included issues such as hygiene, infrastructure and embellishment. (Nielson, Pertersen,2001)
Figure 18. Master plan of Damascus

The plan was finally released only in 1937.

The black area is the old the gray lines are the French plan

Source: (ETH Studio Basel, 2009:13)

According to Fries (1994), Damascus belongs to the field of experimentation of French urbanism, Participating in the Plan to integrate in the "universal idea of modernity" (Fries, 1994: 313). Although the urban fabric of Damascus had already undergone profound modifications, inspired by European models during the Ottoman rule, the master plan faced resistance from the city which had “organically” developed for the past thousand years. (Lababedi, 2008: 34).

While the French urban planning followed Ottoman precedents, it distinctively produced colonial social effects. The French amplified Ottoman efforts to expand new civic centers and build new extramural quarters. In Damascus, this led to the polarization between the “modern” and “traditional” city. The French settled and Europeanized the Salhiya quarter northwest of Marjah square, where their barracks,
Officers’ Club, and lycées were located. Syrian urban elites were attracted to the district’s modern amenities. Together with the French they developed a lifestyle distant from that prevailing in the old quarters they left behind. The relationship between the domestic and public space changed as well. Elite families, for instance, left behind their households built around internal courtyards for villas and apartments built on wide avenues. There, they took pleasure in gardens built outside the home or strolled in newly created public parks and along sunny boulevards. Some men belonging to the elite adopted the habit of taking walks and picknicking in the public with their wives, although others frowned upon the practice.

Figure 19. Cartoon from Al-Naqid Syrian Magazine –Marjeh Square

Changing pattern of urban public spaces increased the opportunity for men and women to meet. Source: Al-Naqid 1 (10 July 1930) the back cover.

Modernization was reflected in constructing new public gardens and squares like for example the Al Marjeh Square,(see figure.19) which became the node of the city’s telegraph and tramway line and featured the Serail (government palace), a large police station, a hospital, a multi-story office building, and several hotels. To the east of the square, new covered bazaars were built, most notably the extensive Hamidiya Market (Suq al-Hamidiya) that stretched to the Umayyad Mosque. To the west of the square,
the Hijaz railway station and Victoria Hotel came into being. New theatre and cafes offered night entertainment, including music, circus acts, and dancers. In the late 1910s, café singers became the entertainment choice among Syrian and Lebanese elites. (figure.21) (Thompson, 2000:177)

Figure 20. Marjeh square location on the border of the old city and part of the modern neighborhood –source : (ETH Studio Basel,2009:39)

Figure 21. Marjeh Square with the former Ottoman memorial for Telegraphy from 1907 designed by an Italian Architect Raimondo D’Aronco crowned by the model of the Hamidiye Mosque at Yildiz (Constantinople).

Figure 22. Al-Marja Square plan: with cinemas, theatres and cafes.  
(Source: Thompson, 2001: 171)

Figure 23. Al Marja Square in 1930
French architects sought to preserve and contain the “traditional” city within the old walls. They carefully restored old monuments like the eighteenth-century ‘Azm Palace and routed automobile traffic away from the old quarters. Reciprocally, popular leaders in the old quarters asserted a new conception of “traditional” life there to be protected from French influence. It was in these quarters, for example, that Islamic populists built their schools. Customary processions on religious holidays, especially the Prophet’s birthday, took on a new political meaning as defiant assertions of a life resistant to colonial interference.

In the modern part of Damascus where the French built a new neighborhoods, the absence of the landmarks in the centers or at the end of the alleys was remarkable because they built their broad new streets not in an existing structure, but on a green field. They didn’t have any existing structure as a landmark in the intersections and many of these new centers remain empty even today. Some have been upgraded through the dislocation of the old monuments (fig.23) and this can be considered as one of the reasons why the most monumental plan of Danger was more sensed on the site plan than on its third – dimensionality.

Figure 24. Maisat Square: the small mosque with a red cupola has been moved to Hutten square by the French. Source: (ETH Studio Basel, 2009:87)
The Postcolonial Period in Syria (1947-2010)

Three different stages can be identified throughout the so-called post-colonial period. These are: early independence years, the socialist period of the 1970s, and the transition period of the 1990s. Syria became a fully independent country in 1947. During the early years of independence, the government had to deal with big challenges and obstacles ranging from political instability to rebuilding and running a new country. Moreover, many conflicts occurred between different parties, each propagating its own ideology.

This change of political and economic machineries led to the gradual diminishing of public spaces creation in the cities of Syria. As a result of urban expansion, they became cities without squares. The absence of a wise urban planning led to the fragmentation of city centers and to squares that are mostly voids, vacant spaces or transportation nodes.

Afterward, during the 1960s, the Ba’athists, who were organized in the Al-Ba’ath political party, and the communists preferred modern plans for Syrian cities instead of keeping and expanding the Islamic city model which was preferred by conservative parties. However, the modern plan was applied in all Syrian cities in order to allow Syria to become a modern and secular country. This modern plan had been produced for the major Syrian cities by the French urban planner and the director of the urban planning service in Syria, Michel Ecochard. He arrived to Syria in 1932 during the French Mandate period, and rose to prominence after serving in various official positions. His plan gave priority to transportation infrastructure and to the restoration of historical buildings.

In 1970, Syria witnessed a turning point in its history as the political conflict between leaderships ended by the so called “The Correction Movement”. It was in this period when the government applied the socialist planning model. In Damascus, the new

model was emphasized through building straight wide streets, tree-lined avenues, multi-stories residential buildings surrounded by private gardens sometimes with commercial activities on the ground floor, and, last but least, some villas also came into being.

From the 1990s, the new movement in design and zoning, the same as new technologies and transportation and the cities expansion due to the population growth led to a shift in the nature of public spaces which, on their part, became more dominated by cars leaving a very little space for social life.
Chapter III

Latakia: Case Study

Latakia is the principal port city of Syria, as well as the capital of the Latakia Governorate. In addition to serving as a port, the city is a manufacturing center for surrounding agricultural towns and villages. According to the 2004 official census, the population of the city is 383,786 inhabitants.

3.1 Early History of Latakia

Latakia port is thought to be one of the oldest ports in the world. Archeological artefacts indicate that the port in concern was inhabited in the Stone Age period, and then was used by Phoenicians sailors who built the city of Ugarit (see figure.24), which became a major terminus for land travel to and from Anatolia, inner Syria and Mesopotamia. It was also a trading port serving merchants and travelers from Greece and Egypt.

Ugarit was also important culturally as a center of learning. Indeed, it is a place where the first alphabet in the world came into being. The excavation works of Ugarit indicate that it had a fortification and a main gate in its western part. The city itself consisted of the Acropolis on the hill surrounded by the residential area; the Royal Palace was separated from the rest of the city. In the fourth century BC, i.e. in the Greek time, the port of Latakia was home to a huge naval fleet belonging to the Ancient Greek state.

When Greek power declined, the settlement became part of the Assyrian Empire, later falling to Persians, later to be taken by Alexander the Great in 333 BC following his victory in the Battle of Issus over the Persians. That marked the beginning of the era of Hellenism in Syria. In 323 BC, after the death of Alexander, northern Syria fell under the control of Seleucus I Nicator who founded the city of Laodicea, future Latakia, which became one of the main centers of Geek culture. It became a major port and in 64 BC, when the city became part of the Roman province in Syria, the city
flourished again. It was the commercial center between east and west.

During the expansion of Islam powers, Laodicea fell to Islam in 638 under General Abu Ubaida during the Caliph Omar ibn al -Khattab rule. Laodicea was known to the Muslims as al Ladhiqiyah, or Latakia. However, many of Latakia’s great public buildings were already in ruins by then. Afterwards, in 1097, first Crusades reached Syria. On 19 August 1097, twenty-eight ships from Cyprus occupied the city. Latakia became known as “La Liche,” covering an area of 220 hectares (0.85 sq miles) and consisting of three separate parts. The port, originally an open bay with marble quay stones laid by the Romans, remained an important commercial center. The town prospered, and the previous continuous line of fortifications vanished. Twin castles, which dominated the town, stood on two hills. In the time of the Crusades times, a sizable Muslim population the same as some Franks and a large Greek Orthodox community lived together. Two Greek Orthodox churches remained intact: the Church of the Virgin Lady and the Church of St Nicholas. Later, the town was devastated by earthquakes of 1157 and 1170. On top of that, attacks on the port by Imad al din al zanki took place. Although the city in the time of the Crusade was unstable and was always a battle field, it became an important commercial center, linked especially with Italian cities. In 1188 Saladin arrived before the walls of Latakia and forced the Crusaders to capitulate two days later. (Ring,1994:451)
3-2 Latakia during the Ottoman Rule

Latakia came under Ottoman control after 1516. It was part of so-called Ottoman Syria. It lost its prominence as an important city. The city continued to decline in the sixteenth century when it gradually became a small dependent village. The general type of houses was built with stone. They had two floors with an exterior staircase and courtyard. However, everything was destroyed because of the earthquakes with the exception of some mosques, churches, several khans and covered markets.

In the early eighteenth century Latakia was governed by Yasin Bey and subject to the Sanjak of Tripoli, but a major uprising in the town resulted in removing the family from power. This period marked the city by several endowments; however, only few of these survived until this day, like for example the Al Jadid Mosque. It was erected by the Ottoman Governor of Damascus between 1733 and 1743. The earthquake of 1823 caused serious damage to the city of Damascus as well as in the other coastal areas of Syria. The Ottomans did not pay much attention to the quality of residential housing, only to mosques, hamaams (public bath) and khans (caravanserai). This explains why so little preserved from the Ottoman period. (Ring, 1994:454)

One of the significant buildings that were built in the Ottoman period survived and was later transformed into the National Museum of Latakia which was built in 1886 near the seafront of the city. It formerly housed the residence of the Governor of the Alawite State. Originally, however, it was originally a 16th-century Ottoman khan, known as Khan al-Dukhan, meaning “The Khan of Smoke,” as it served the trade with tobacco. The khan historically served not only as an inn, but it also contained private residences.

Although Latakia was not important for Ottomans, and they let the city decline, the port itself remained extremely active and economically valuable. After the Beirut State was established in 1888, Latakia became part of it as its northern town. This new position did not increase the importance of Latakia. When it comes to urban history of the period, Latakia is largely omitted. Authors tend to focus on important cities, like Aleppo and Damascus. By doing so, they confirm its secondary position in the Ottoman province.
The French Mandate period (1920-1947)
At the beginning of the twentieth century, Latakia was a small town with a population of 7,000. It was ruled from Beirut. After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, the town found itself under the French mandate established in 1920. Latakia became the capital of the autonomous territory of the Alawites, with a government under the authority of the mandatory French administration. In 1922, this territory, composed of Latakia and the city of Tartus, became the State of Alawites and was integrated into the Federations of states. (Ring, 1994:455)

In December 1924, the French General Maxime Weygand announced the secession of the State of Alawites, which was proclaimed independent in the following year. In 1930, a fundamental law created the government of Latakia. (see figure.26) After that the city began to grow. By 1931 its population reached 20,000 inhabitants. In addition, in 1932, a plan for a new deep-water harbor was proposed. (Rind, 1994:455)

The government of Latakia was incorporated into Syria in 1936, but it benefited from special administration under the authority of the Syrian government. In the same year, the French were authorized to station troops in Latakia for five more years. The French quickly restored the port facilities by rebuilding the north and south moles and
deepening the harbor from two to six meters in order to promote commercial activities between France and the Levant.

Figure 27. Northern view of Latakia and its port, 1935

http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/syria_0039-7946_1952_num_29_1_8421

Figure 28. View of Latakia 1930 and Sheikh Daher quarter seen on the right

3 known as the Eastern Mediterranean, is a geographic and cultural region consisting of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Cyprus and part of southern Turkey.
Figure 29. View of Latakia streets which lead directly to the sea
Source: www.delcampe.net (saved 30/03/2014)

Figure 30. Latakia Port in 1935
Source: http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/syria_0039-7946_1952_num_29_1_8421 (saved 30/03/2014)
Figure 31. Road Map shows the major roads that connected Latakia with other cities during the French Mandate.

Source: Nantes Archive: Gouvernement de Lattaquié: Fascicule sur le Nivellement de la région côtière de: Lattaquié-Djebel-Banias: Carte d'avancement des travaux du Cadastre, carton 1AE/118/344
The urban transformation in Latakia was achieved during the French Mandate period. Firstly, major regional roads that connected Latakia with other centers like Beirut or Alexandretta were constructed.

Figure 32. Latakia map during the French Mandate


Secondly, they dried up the marshy area in the vicinity of the town and focused on the modernization of the layout of the whole city. During the French administration period, the town turned out to be one of the most modernized cities of the Eastern Mediterranean. The city was embellished with a major thoroughfare, a public garden, a tourist hotel, well-conceived houses and streets with planted trees (see figure.32-33 below). (Acikgoz, 2008:86)
In 1939, Latakia again became the capital of the autonomous territory of the Alawites. Indeed, it was once again separated from Syria but only for several years. It was integrated again in June 1944 following the Proclamation of Syrian Unity, which was confirmed in 1947 by the Proclamation of Independence.

Figure 33. Saint Batarni Public Garden

Figure 34. Hotel Casino and Al Batarni Garden
Figure 35. Street “Rue de la Residence” with the French Saint Alex Monument.  

Figure 36. Map of the West Coast of Latakia and AlBatarni Garden during the French Mandate period. Source: Nantes Archive carton 1AE/118/354
3-4 The Early Independence Period (1947-1970)

When the independent state was established, most of the urbanization work in Latakia was carried out in the field of transportation and trade. Accordingly, an extensive port project was proposed in 1948. The construction work of the Port of Lakatia began two years later, in 1950. Aid in the form of a US $6 million loan came from Saudi Arabia. By 1951, the first stage of the construction was completed, and the port handled an increasing amount of Syria's overseas trade. Moreover, a new highway was built to link Latakia and Aleppo and the Euphrates valley in 1968 and, furthermore, it was supplemented by the great railway line to Homs.

3-5 Latakia during the Period of Big Urban Changes (1970-2010)

The period of 1970-2010 was a time of political stability. It was in these years when Lakatia witnessed a remarkable urban transformation. The whole image of the city changed and became more promising. The port gained even bigger importance after 1975 because of the troubled situation in Lebanon and the decline of Beirut and Tripoli ports.

This big urban change turned Latakia from a port city to a more cultural and touristic city. On top of that, it affected the city’s growth, people’s social life and the nature of public spaces. In the early seventies of the last century, real steps began to encourage tourism activities in Syria by establishing tourists facilities. Several resorts constructed on the beach in Latakia in 1981 such as: Le Meridian, Côte d'Azur resort.

Figure 37. Le Meridian  
Source: http://syriahelp.com/PageDetails.aspx?ID=c44a1863-6d05-40f2-8834-21a632eee837 (Saved 30/04/2014)
In 1987, Latakia was chosen to host the Mediterranean Games and for this reason great sport facilities were built just north of the city called Latakia Sports City complex (see figure.35). The complex was designed by the Polish architect Wojciech Zablocki who designed several sport centers in Poland and abroad. The sport city includes an Olympic-size stadium with some 45,000 seats, a diving pool, a covered swimming pool, and an Olympic-size swimming pool, as well as a tennis club with eleven courts and a yacht club. It also included many outdoor areas and gardens which are open to the general public. After the event took place, the sport city became the home of a major annual festival. The festival is held between 2 and 12 August every year and includes cultural events, sports competitions and musical concerts.

![Figure 39. The Sport City Complex](http://www.esyria.sy/elatakia/index.php?p=stories&category=todayimg&filename=201111210900011) (Saved 20/03/2014)

As a result of the population growth and the rising interest in education, the University of Latakia was founded in 1971. It was renamed in 1975 to Tishreen University (Tishreen means “October” in Arabic; the name was chosen in honor of the victory in the 1973 October War against Israel). University cultural life was one source of the transformational power. It helped to transform people through experience and knowledge and it had a deep impact on society in general.
Tishreen University design has an open plan with an image of a living organism, a mobile program that behaves like an organic process that has the opportunity for growth by adding more buildings in the future. The structuring elements of this
university were a network of pedestrian paths, parks, department buildings with a patio inside, cafes, a cinema and a library. As a result, this university, with its innovative architectural design, added a modern image to the city which is completely different from the one of the old city center. It also helped to develop new notion of the social life by offering new functions and activities, and by creating more public places.

From the beginning of the twenty first century more urban transformation of Latakia was caused by infrastructure and transportation which has played a dominant role in the city’s morphological change. There was a shift from the closed urban fabric to the fragmented urban fabric which diminished the production of public spaces in the city. Starting in 2002, there was a big change in the general view in Latakia, especially in the transportation and road system after building a new tunnel and bridges, and because of the unwise urban planning all the city squares became voids, unattractive green spaces or transportation nodes.
3-6-The Morphology and Function of Public Spaces in Latakia.

This part introduces the urban squares in Latakia city. The methodological framework is structured in order to analyze the squares in reference to specific criteria related to their morphology and function (I extracted them from my theoretical study and are mentioned in the chapter one page:31 ). The study aims to reveal the users’ and decision-makers’ perception of a “good” urban squares in Latakia. This will allow a better assessment of the feature that constitute a better urban squares in a way public users can experience and get advantages from it.

The tools which will be employed to do this study are: Direct observation, maps and photos, ranking on a point scales. The evaluation criteria grouped in the tables below (1-2). Once the data is collected, the space will be evaluated based on each individual criteria to determine how well the space met those criteria. Evaluation will be recorded according to the three following point scales:

- Poor
- Fair
- Good

The two proposed aspects of analyzing square.
Table 1-Form, morphology and design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enclosure</th>
<th>Focal point &amp; Identity</th>
<th>Street views</th>
<th>Edges</th>
<th>Landscape</th>
<th>Seating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 2-Function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Economical</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Symbolic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 42. Map of the study cases squares
The red spots are the studied squares and the dashed red line border the old city

Case studied squares:
3-6-1-Sheikh Daher Square
3-6-2- Ugarit Square
3-6-3-Al-Yamen Square
3-6-4-Old Municipality Square
3-6-5-Mar-Taqla square
3-6-1-Sheikh Daher Square

1-The History of Sheik Daher Square:
At the end of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, the area which is known now as Sheikh Daher Square was an area outside the old city walls, free of any urban elements. It was used functionally, part of it served as a cemetery, and it was also used as a market for selling horses and animals in specific times.iii

![Figure 43. Sheikh Daher location Map](image)

Because the area is located adjacent to the old city wall at the gate known as the gate of Antioch (the place between Shaikhdaher Mosque and Qwatly Street entrance), which is the entrance to the city from the north, other kinds of markets were held there as well. In addition, some individuals used to offer their services to visitors from time to time, for example offering a khan (a hostel) or work as roaming vendors. They did their activities while sitting on stone benches which were located in the south side of the area and were probably leaning to the Wall of the Sheikhdaher Mosque, which, on its part, was standing there on the edge of the old city already several centuries.iv

The first building on the square was built by the Al Ajaan family on the western edge of the area. It was based on the European-Mediterranean style of two-story brick
houses with a roof and a terrace on the second floor; the house overlooked the eastern part of the square. The building was later replaced by new the so-called “Oriental Hotel”, which exists even today. The upper floors function as a hotel, cafés and shops on the ground floor. Perhaps the first usage of the area as a square stems from this building. Moreover, in 1879, Syria’s governor, Medhat Pasha, chose the terrace of Al-Ajaan family house to pronounce a speech to the people of Latakia who gathered to listen to him, while he was announcing his response to the request to create a province, with Latakia being its capital city. (Alssari, 1987:50)

After the square was built, it became a tradition, kept by politicians and leaders visiting the city, to read their speeches to the public from the mentioned terrace of the building in concern. The last time when it was used for political purpose was when the Syrian President Nazim Qudsi made his speech in Latakia in 1961.

The square had the same form and the function until the entry of the French to the Syrian coast after the defeat of the Ottoman Turks at the end of the First World War in 1918. The French thought to convert the area into a public park. This was meant to be the first step to make an urban change in the region. Firstly, they removed the cemetery and made advantage of a number of old trees that were in the center of the area. The second intervention and stage in creating the square was constructing the so-called Jool Jamal School (see figure.43). The building, erected in 1924, draw the northern border of the square. Till this day, perhaps the rectangular shape of the square suggested that the French master plan intended to create a park, not actually a square. However, the plan was later transformed according to new needs, or to be more precise to the development of the functional usage.

After the building of the Jool Jamal School was finished, many other buildings were constructed to fit the shape the square:

It is necessary to mention the Al Ajaan Mosque in the northwest corner of the square. Then more buildings appeared in a straight form which constituted the western facade of the square (today, several popular cafes are located here). In the thirties, the southern facade of the square was built stretching from the entrance to Hanano Street till the beginning of Qwatly Street. This didn’t change till today; it has been used functionally throughout the years as hotels and housing. In the beginning, the shops
were used to sell bus tickets and as a departure place for public vehicles heading to other cities in Syria and Lebanon. This continued till the mid-1980s. Another transport departure place was in Marjah Square in Damascus in the same period in the first part of the 20th century (see chapter 2).

As for administration, the square played an important role. The French established a military headquarters building at the beginning point of the south-eastern corner of the square. Yet, as a result of expanding the square, the building was demolished. In addition, the French also built a police department in the northwestern side of the square. The current construction came into being in the late 1940s.

At the end of the 1940s, the functional usage of the space took the following form: On the west side of the square it is possible to find a roundabout, a junction point for three streets. The roundabout was embellished with memorials, such as the model of harbor leverages or an item in the shape of a military missile (see Figure 41).
The eastern section of the square is a rectangle of dense foliage and it was seen more as a park than actually a square. Some commercial activities and services took place there as well, like itinerant barbers, roaming shoe cleaners and roving vendors. It likewise hosted a tourist center in its far eastern end in the 1950s.

There was no significant change in the outlook of the architectural surrounding of the square since the late 1930s. Residential buildings of that time still exist the same public buildings (i.e. the Jool Jamal School, Al Ajaan Mosque). Functionally, it lost its administrative role, however, kept some of its commercial activities. With the spread of public transportation, the square became the node of the network. In addition, first hotels in the city were established here, some of these are in place to this day. Last but not least, coffee shops were still part of the square activities. Commercial activities varied on the square over the years.

- Two big structural changes of the square took place:
  1- First of these was in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It meant digging a huge shelter or refuge in the part of the square facing the entrance of the Jool Jamal School led to cutting old trees. it was probably at this very moment when the square lost its function as a park.
  2- The second change was the overall organization of the square for hosting the Mediterranean Games in 1987. This event gave the square its current form.
However, the square began to lose its importance and impact of the citizens of Latakia in the 1980s. New neighborhoods appeared relatively far from the city center and, consequently, several administrative buildings were moved out of and far from the center. Nowadays, the square has become a transit point rather than the location of
middle classes housing, a place for their activities or a place for social and political aspects of the city.

2-Shaikh-Daher Squares Criteria According to Their Morphology and Function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Form, morphology and design:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enclosure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Focal Point &amp; Identity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Street views</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landscape</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quality Rating**
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
Figure 48. Plots functional use plan
Drawn by the author.

Figure 49. Perspective illustrating the buildings heights
Drawn by the author.
Figure 50. A recent photo of the Sheikh Daher Square
Source: http://www.panoramio.com (saved10/02/2014)

Figure 51. Jool Jamaal School after renovation
Source: http://www.panoramio.com (saved01/02/2014)
Figure 52. The Al-Ajaan Mosque with popular cafes on the ground floor.
Source: http://www.panoramio.com (saved01/02/2014)

Table 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function and use:</th>
<th>Social milieu</th>
<th>Economic role</th>
<th>Political role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is just a reference point and traffic junction node for the natives. There is a popular market, which is for the lower social strata and popular cafes for men. As a result, it lost its function as a meeting point or festival place.</td>
<td>A small popular market which also sells refreshments, hosts roaming vendors and shops is here. It is not an attraction point for visitors. It is not the final target; people pass it to get to close shopping streets.</td>
<td>It lost its political role as a place for demonstrations. The statue of the ex-president as the representation of power is located here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions and Recommendations for the Sheikh Daher Square:

According to the ranking points and evaluation criteria, the Sheikh Daher square needs a lot of maintenance work and renovation or redesigning. Nowadays, it is not well-used, nor attractive.

I recommend the following:

- The only building that could be counted as a landmark or a focal point is the Jool Jammal School because of its historicity. It has been renovated recently. To make it more attractive, changing its function from a school to a more representative building that could provide the square with numerous weekly events could help. These events would encourage people to visit it more and create a sense of community.

- The square ground plan should be changed to become more attractive and more united with multi-functions by adding more food choices and food vendors, well-designed cafes that would open to all genders, the popular traditional cafes could be kept with some renovations. These additions should encourage people to stay on and around the square.

- It would be advisable to improve the design of the landscape by 1) better lighting quality, coverage and design; 2) improving the vegetation design and distribution which would give the square more life; 3) providing the square with various seating elements.

- It is necessary to strengthen the identification of the place through memory plaques and small sculptures. This square lacks iconic elements highlighting its history. Consequently, it lacks identity which would be inviting for visitors, even though it has a central location and a long history.

- Since it is a large square and very central, its function of a traffic point can be kept in one part of the square and leave areas for pedestrians with a good accessibility and attractive landscaping furniture. Last but not least, I suggest the area in front of the Jool Jammal School would be a proper area for doing so.
3-6-2-The Ugarit Square

History
The Ugarit Square is part of the old city. In the time of the Romans, it was a Forum, which was used as a market and meeting place. During the Ottoman rule, squares were served mainly for economic activities. At that time, the Ugarit Square was used as a market for selling food products, and this function is its main function till now. In the popular discourse it is even nicknamed Bazaar Square. The square also leads to the souq, a covered market which the Ottomans called the Bedestens. In addition, it also hosts an open market. The historicity of the place is highlighted by such buildings as the Khan Al-Hanta (1726), Al Jadid Mosques and hamams (public bath).

Figure 53. Latakia during the Ancient ages with the Ugarit Square in the crossing point of the two main streets (Cardo –Decumanus) in the Roman times

Khan Al-Bazar with the covered market

Source: www.delcampe.net (saved:15/05/2013)

Khan Al-Hanta dates back to 1726. It was built as a hostel for wheat vendors who used to sleep in the upper rooms; animals slept in the stables located on the ground floor. Today this building has a different function. It became a warehouse and a place for manufacturing metals and some marine tools. The owner seeks to convert the Khan after restoration works to a place with a cultural function, and to open a coffee shop in its rather large courtyard with a fountain in the middle to make it open for tourists.
2-Ugarit Squares criteria according to the morphology and function

Figure 56. Ugarit square
Source: http://www.panoramio.com/photo/56323889 (saved: 15/02/2014)

Figure 57. Ugarit square Google map
Table 5: Form, Morphology and Design:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enclosure</th>
<th>It has a specific shape, but at the same time many streets enter to the square. Buildings and street furniture are not well organized. The visitor may feel lost.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focal point &amp; Accessibility</td>
<td>It is a focal point because of its location in the center of the old city and because of its market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street views</td>
<td>The square is not taking any advantage of distant views because there is no special view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edges</td>
<td>The square is surrounded with different kinds of buildings and different styles in a very chaotic way. All the historic buildings like the Mosque and the Hamam need renovation to become attractive and to rise the quality of the place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape &amp; seating</td>
<td>It has a fountain in the center embellished with the old Bacchus columns, which were located originally in a different place and have been moved here</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Function and Use of the Ugarit Square

The main role of this square is the economic because of the food market and, on the second level, of the transportation junction. A social role is missing in this case. Markets with farm produce are a good example of a social place, and research shows that people have a lot of social interaction in markets compared to supermarkets. However, this social interaction is limited for specific categories of people. Moreover, people usually buy their stuff and leave, they do not spend time here because there is no attractive view to encourage the people to stay and it does not offer any seating. These factors participated in absence of the social function and make it decline into desolation and misuse. On the other hand, the square is not big enough to accommodate events like political demonstrations or festivals.
Conclusions and Recommendations for the Ugarit square

According to the ranking points in Table.5, everything is missing in the case of the Ugarit Square. Indeed, it does not meet any point from the evaluation criteria in such a way that we can say that the square is in a very bad condition. It has some positive elements in the form of historical buildings, however, these need renovation work to put them back on track and make them play a vital role in making the place more interested.

I suggest the following:

- The square has a great location in the middle of the old city, and leads to the Old Municipality Square. Therefore, redesigning the square would revitalize it. It should also partly keep its economic role as a market place with a special and united design by making a division between different kinds of products.

- Landscaping elements should be developed. Vegetation and water elements could be added to enhance the place’s quality. Street furniture would help to make the square user-friendly.

- Add design elements or art work or symbolic icons in the middle of the square related to the old city Ugarit to connect the two together. Panels, plaques, signs narrating the history of the city would be especially desirable.

The square has positive elements, and thus a potential to become a lively place, provided it would obtain suggested innovation.

3-6-3-The Al-Yemen Square

The Al-Yemen Square is a traffic-dominated circle, or roundabout, a very congested square altogether. It exists solely to move the big flow of traffic like a road island or a car-dominated environment. It links the entrance of the city with the city center and with the sea. Moreover, it leads to the main bus station. It is surrounded by the Main Train Station, a very big cemetery, and two big sport gymnasiums. Given its location, this square should be more attractive; it could be the first view for the visitors who come to the city by train or by bus.
It has a full circular shape with peripheral fountains and green spaces. It likewise has several benches; however, these are mostly used by the elders and the homeless. The view of the square is crossed by a huge traffic bridge. It is difficult for a pedestrian to approach the square because it is overwhelmed with traffic. Only the brave few manage to cross with the speeding cars around. There are pedestrian underground pathways, but they are not very practical.

![Google map of Al-Yemen Square](image)

**Figure 58.** Google map of Al-Yemen Square

The landmark that is visible from the site is the Al-Maghriby Mosque which is a historical building dating from the Ottoman time, overlooking the whole city from a higher hill, with an incomparable view and wonderful architecture. Although the mosque can be viewed from the square, full advantages have not been taken from this
historic building. The view of the mosque, especially at night, could be better framed through making the visual relation between the mosque and the square clearer by creating some attractive paths and stairs with a good design and lights that would invite people to recognize the mosque.

The square has no particular relationship to the surrounding buildings. In addition, the relation between the height of the building and the size and the width of the square is not achieved because buildings that are located there vary in their shapes, heights and functions. Furthermore, many streets that enter to the square make it very open and reduce the sense of enclosure.

Figure 59. Al-Yemen Square view

Source: http://www.mgtrben.net/portal/showthread.php?t=1302 (saved 15/02/2014)
Figure 60. The bridge in Al-Yemen Square
Source: www.Travel4arab.com (saved 15/02/2014)

Figure 61. The Al-Maghriby Mosque
Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ST3EcMJcm2o (saved 15/02/2014)
Table 6: Form, Morphology and Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enclosure</th>
<th>Highly fragmented, not enough enclosure and no clear boundaries.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focal point &amp; Identity</td>
<td>The square is a focal point of main traffic lines. It does not provide adequate spatial elements that contribute to the space’s identity or to the interest of potential users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street views</td>
<td>No special street views, the square is partly blocked off by the bridge. Moreover, it does not have any distant views or landmarks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edges</td>
<td>Surrounded mostly by streets, lacks clear edges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape &amp; seating</td>
<td>It has organized, but not interesting vegetation and water elements. They only complete the shape of the roundabout. Street furniture is not attractive enough.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion and Recommendation for the Al-Yemen Square

Its fundamental design as a sunken hard space surrounded by traffic means that it will never be the right place for gathering or social interaction. Its main function is being a transportation node. It can keep this function; however, it could be more interesting as a conceptual piece than as a usable public space. Some changes should be made in order to make it more attractive. For example, adding more interesting landscape elements or adequate spatial elements could help. These would contribute to the space’s identity and the city image.
3-6-4 The Old Municipality Square

The Old Municipality Square is located in the old part of the city. It contains the old Municipality building and some shops and markets. From the square, five passages in the traditional style of Arabic cities depart. They serve local commerce. The square is perceived and used together with the passages as one neighborhood. The renovation initiated by the Municipality of Latakia was executed on the basis of a rehabilitation project which was accomplished in 2010. (Wehda Newspaper -25/5/2010 –No 7296)

The Renovation Project

The rehabilitation included the old Municipality Building and the neighboring area, including the square and the alleys. It was done in the historical style in order to make the area a tourist attraction. The head of the City Council of Latakia said that the project aimed at reviving the historical heritage and architecture of the city and at presenting the Municipality Square and the surrounding area to city dwellers and visitors as an example of traditional culture. The square and the surrounding neighborhood contributed effectively in the revival of handicrafts and oriental events by providing an appropriate environment for them.

The goal of the project was to create new investment opportunities for owners, real estate investors, shops and homeowners and to improve life conditions and revitalize their activities. To make advantage of their properties effectively it is necessary to convert them into cafes or restaurants.

The head of the City Council encourages investments in the Municipality building to open it for tourism while preserving the diverse architectural heritage. The reconstruction respects its historical qualities as well as cultural and economic values.

Their study was based on starting from the location to the seven gates overlooking important streets and squares in the city. They renovated the unique buildings and added some new functions and facilities: (see figure.61)

1-The rehabilitation included renovating the facades of buildings by scraping mud which was on its surface, and by installing the Sandstone. The next stage was the restoration of old stone arches and door frames, cornice and stone portals.
2- The project planned to add some amenities like benches on the squares and a fountain for embellishment.

3- They added a café on the roof of the Municipality building.

4- They wanted to turn some of the buildings into traditional hostels or café.

5- They decided to create a café for traditional games, shops for selling souvenirs to serve tourism, etc.

6- They renovated the covered souk (see figure 57)

7- It also likewise decided to divide passages for market purpose. Each of these should sell different products (i.e. to be different souks) like shoes, fabric, traditional clothes, handicrafts, etc. One of these alleys leads to the old and historic “The Lady Church”

Figure 62. The renovation study of the Old Municipality square. The map shows the plan of the square with the Municipality building on the left with its café on the roof. The square leads to five passages each one selling a different kind of product.

1- Fabric souk 2- Shoes souk 3- Traditional cloths souk 4- Wool souk 5- Linens souk.

These five alleys end with seven gates.

Source: The complete study by Suhail Dayoob Office – Municipality of Latakia
Figure 63. The Old Municipality square Night view
Source: http://www.panoramio.com/photo/68084934 (saved 13/03/2014)

Figure 64. Old Municipality square
Figure 65. The Old Municipality building after renovation
Source: The complete study by Suhail Dayoob Office – Municipality of Latakia

Figure 66. Buildings in the square area after renovation
Source: Municipality of Latakia
Table 7: Form, Morphology and Design:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enclosure</td>
<td>The square has enough enclosure because of its small size and its surrounding buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focal point &amp; Identity</td>
<td>It is located in the historical urban fabric of the old city and in the main shopping center of Latakia. It is designed more for pedestrians and has a good relation with its neighborhood. The seven gates open to it to the Ugarit and Sheikh Daher squares.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street views</td>
<td>It has a nice view because the square is surrounded by historical buildings which were recently renovated and united.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edges</td>
<td>Ground floor facades have a special and welcoming design after renovation and all the buildings have a united design.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Landscape & seating            | Pavement material is comfortable and has a good color. There is a fountain in the middle embellished with some symbols of Latakia’s Ancient history.(see figure.66)
Seating: the renovation study included seating elements like benches, but it was not applied to the site. Consequently, when people want to have a rest, they have to sit in the local cafes which are private, not public spaces. |
The social function: At the Old Municipality Square, we still observe quite a low level of social interaction; it is not a meeting point or a place for exchanging information, ideas and experiences. In contrast, it is a shopping center for a special kind of products, so people go there for shopping. The other facilities like the new cafes and restaurants did not become active after the reconstruction. The instability created by events of the so-called Arab Spring in Syria in 2011 turned the public spaces to not being secure. We cannot thus have any effective results of evaluating the square by the general public.

3-6-5 The MarTaqla Square
The MarTaqla square is located in early twentieth-century residential area next to the city center with an access to the sea to the west. It is surrounded with residential buildings that vary in their height and design. Close to the west is the current Municipality building. It has a big green area with Saint Taqla holy shrine in the middle which gave the square and the neighborhood its name.
The cemetery and the church of Saint Taqla counted as one of the most important religious and historical monuments in Syria. In the subterranean layers there is a Roman cemetery in rock with part of the hall and vault of the original church. The latest discoveries in the cave showed that Latakian Christians in the first century AD held meetings, prayed and baptized in the cave. People of Latakia, both the Christians and Muslims honored this holy shrine by visits, vows and prayers, and blessed themselves with holy water dripping from the rock. Even today they still flock to the cave. Indeed, they visit the cave and church which was re-built in 2007. It is believed that the water was given to Saint Taqla in reward for her prayers. It flows both in the summer and winter from the roof of the cave carved into the rock. Due to the importance of the shrine, the Department of Antiquities and Museums in Latakia renovated the site and revived it in order to invest its archaeological potential and to attract tourists. (see figure.71)

Negative elements of the square are that it is surrounded with streets from all sides. This limits its accessibility for pedestrians and do not encourage their safe and comfortable movement and gives priority to the traffic. In addition, it is not a well-designed space although it occupies a large area. It lacks of a busy gathering point such as playground or vending cart..etc. Moreover, there is an arbitrary distribution of landscape elements; the provided vegetation is lacks variety, little seating is available
only in the northern side of the square without any relation to the shrine in the south. Even though the square has a symbolic landmark which could serve as a focal point, it failed to provide the users with an environment that would encourage them to visit and stay in the place. Among these would be for example programing events and the supply of amenities like street furniture. The renovation and maintenance process done recently included only the shrine without any study for the whole site. As a result, the shrine itself is hidden in a way that it is hardly recognized and cannot serve as a focal point.

Social role: The square mostly used by old people and sometimes by homeless as all the squares and parks in Latakia and that doesn’t encourage people to spend time there or visit the square because they feel unsecure.

Figure 70. MarTaqla square with Saint Tagla square marked with dashed red line

Source: http://www.panoramio.com (saved 30/04/2014)
Figure 71. The shrine of Saint Taqla
Source: www.facebook.com/LatakiaPhotos (saved 30/04/2014)

Figure 72. The northern part of the square
Source: http://www.panoramio.com/photo/86358749 (saved 30/04/2014)
Table 8: Form, morphology and design:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enclosure</th>
<th>The square doesn’t have enough enclosure because of its big size and the varied buildings heights.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focal point &amp; Identity</td>
<td>It is located near to city center and close to the sea shore and the city water front, with a shopping Mall nearby. It has a significant identity because it was named after the St. Taqla whose shrine is located in the center of the square.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street views</td>
<td>It has a nice view because it is surrounded with plants and trees even though they are not organized well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edges</td>
<td>The buildings were built in different periods that they don’t have a united or harmonious design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape &amp; Seating</td>
<td>In addition, it is not well-designed space although it occupies a large area, there is an arbitrary distribution for landscape elements; the vegetation provided is lacking in variety, few seating that are in the north side of the square without any relation with the shrine in the south.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion and Recommendation for the MarTaqla Square

According to the Table.8 and the ranking points The Mar Taqla square has several positive points that help to turn it to a good square but it needs some additions and more organization.

I suggest the followings:

1-Since the square is big enough it can accommodate different kinds of activities. Therefore, the square should be provided with: playground, water elements, refreshment kiosks, benches…etc. Activities can participate in revitalizing the social interaction and creating economical benefit.
2- New mall and an office building were constructed recently near the square in the south. The square should benefit from this by having clear visual and physical connection through providing attractive passages between the square and the mall.

3- Since the shrine is on a low level lower than the street level, the surrounded area should be wider to permit a full view of the shrine and make it more representative. We can create several levels in the design of the square to focus on more focal points.

4- Cut the car traffic in one small part in the southern west corner and in this way we can provide good and safe connection for the pedestrians between the square and surrounding.

5- Good selection and use of furniture and materials.

6- Put some signs that refer to the shrine and explain its historical importance. The signs design and distribution should be carefully studied in a way that become as a part of the square design not in the way they put the advertisements signs in the square seen in the (figure.72) which destroy and block the view.

7- Encourage investments in the surrounded building ground floors by opening more attractive cafes or shops that people can stay more in the area and entertain themselves.
Conclusion and Final Recommendations

During my study of the main squares in the city of Latakia I have applied the historical and architectural perspectives. These helped me to proceed in my study since the historical approach was essential to understand the physical and physiological transformation of the squares. Equally, the architecture perspective helped me to analyze the squares technically and reach to my final conclusions and recommendations.

The squares of Latakia were analyzed and evaluated according to the main criteria that I extracted from my theoretical study which ensure a successful square composed of morphological aspects, such as the sense of enclosure, focal point and identity, edges, landscape, street view. Then the functional aspects which are social, economic, political and symbolic. In the end I have arrived to the formulation the functional typology.

The study tools based on: direct observation, maps and photos, ranking on a point scales. I wished to make some surveys and questionnaires to ask people about the favorable kind of public places for them and what kind of activities they like to do in these places, but unfortunately the complicated, unstable and unsecure situation in Syria in this period prevent me from doing this survey.

After this study I discovered that most of Latakia squares were and are not successful and need a lot of renovation and revitalization. They transformed in their shape and function through the long history of the city and lost their meaning and social values. The spaces devolved into a disorganized, free-for-all roundabout that limited pedestrians to the perimeter edges, useless, fragments of open space floating in a sea of asphalt and heavy traffic.

Many factors and circumstances affected this big decline in using these squares and the degradation of their shapes and image became reality. In fact, the main reasons for this decline were the growth of the population, the increasing number of cars and the bad design and management of streets in a way that squares are no longer places for conversation and social interaction. They became dominated by cars and that led to the loss of traditional social life on the square. Furthermore, the absence of regular maintenance work for buildings and street furniture as well as the uncoordinated street
equipment, signs and furniture turned public spaces into an unattractive destination. In addition, there is a consciousness in using the squares by people who do not care about the issue of public property. Last but not least, it should be borne in mind that the absence of special iconographic elements in Latakia squares is so remarkable although the city has a very long history full of symbols from Ugarit till the last international event which is the Mediterranean Games in 1987 could not help in adding them on scene.

The following recommendations might help the designers in Latakia to produce good quality public squares. They need to improve the users’ experience around the squares, encourage them to stay longer and make them more conscious of using the square facilities. It also can contribute to improving the image of the city by making these squares more attractive and more representative:

1- The large number of cars that pass the street does not mean that the space is being used. Indeed, it is not important that cars are there, but people are not. In the case of good squares, pedestrians should always come first and cars only second. Therefore, road geometry should be carefully studied and improved to reduce speed limits instead of encouraging speeding. In fact, speed reduction through a contextual and sensitive road design, including traffic calming, is desirable. Among other useful things, one could mention timed lights for pedestrians, no vehicles, slowly moving traffic, and a near location of transit stops. A square surrounded by lanes of fast-moving traffic should be cut off from pedestrians and deprived of its most essential element: people.

2-Designers should take into consideration in all user categories, including all genders and different age groups by designing a dynamic and adaptable environment that would satisfy and attract them.

3-The quality of the place can be reflected by the ratio of women who go there. Women are more discriminated against than men as to where they can sit; they are more sensitive to annoyances, etc. In general, women spend more time casting various possibilities. Women tend to make use of the square when good amenities are provided, such as café and the like. According to Whyte, if a plaza has a markedly lower than average proportion of women, something is wrong. (Whyte, 1980:18).
4-Many disciplines should participate in the public spaces production process because, generally, urban planners, architects and traffic engineers focus solely on their buildings and streets networks. In fact, their goal is only the shape of facades or transportation problems; they do not take into account whether they might destroy the community. Indeed, they do not care about the other disciplines which concern in social life and people’s needs. Accordingly, this disregarding and carelessness of community produces space only for cars. As a consequence, this will deprive the city from being vivid and convivial and turn their spaces somewhat machines. Once we know what people expect from public spaces in order to fulfill their social experience, it is just a matter of providing them with the amenities to satisfy their expectations. For this reason, public spaces are bound to be successful.

5- Revitalizing the commercial role of Latakia squares will make them a place for selling and buying a variety of goods. This appears to be a significant tool for maintaining economic benefit. Moreover, there should be a special and attractive design for the vending structure (stalls, kiosks, etc). They should look clean, colorful, united and compatible with shelters and shades. By doing so, they would contribute to the identity and character of the place.

6-The need for more concern about the public realm from stakeholders, attracting them to build a better and more attractive environment for inhabitants, is likewise desirable. Intervening in the public spaces of cities can be seen as a way how to enhance citizens. It is also a process that would help to improve and renew the image of the whole city and create new tourist industry.

7-Squares need, as any other structures, regular maintenance in order to sustain their look, shape and usage. This includes regular cleaning, repairing and painting of the street furniture, regular gardening and plant care. This maintenance is the responsibility of the municipality and its management. By doing all this, people would sustain public spaces and become more conscious when using them.

8-Good architectural design plays a significant role in creating and shaping attractive public squares because they are the edges of the space and they participate in
improving its image and identity. Buildings should have a good design and be multi-functional to enhance the liveliness of the neighborhood.

9-Public art should take place in squares as well. They can have various indications ranging from political, cultural, social or aesthetical. They would contribute in giving the place an identity and a specific image. They might also provide shelters or seating places depending on their design. Public art includes sculptures, monuments, fountains, seating with unique designs and many more.

10-Good and well-designed lighting is a significant tool how to attract people to the squares. Lighting should have a special strategy and vision and it should ensure safety and security. At the same time, it should focus on special focal points like buildings, monuments or fountains, etc. Using different colors is also desirable.

11-Since the squares are a place to stop, in contrast with the streets that are by nature a movement place, it was necessary to provide the squares with enough seating with various designs. Wise distribution of seating is at hand. That includes primary seating, like benches and chairs, and secondary seating like stairs, planted-bed edges, grass, etc.

12- Adding some warm and soft elements is also desirable: vegetation, greenery, wood, and gravel are the new formal elements defining public spaces offered by the Mediterranean urban reality.

13-Linkages and accessibility: Squares should be a connection point that links all the open spaces close to one another. This creates a dynamic pedestrian network, and makes them more useful, more visited and more accessible. The linkage can be achieved by devices such as passages, bridges, tunnels, steps, ramps, etc.

14-Flexibility: Squares need flexibility so that the design can be easily changed. Changes and some additions can help to make the deserted square more alive and a more successful gathering place. The usage of squares changes during the course of the day, week, month or year. Anderson observes: “the design of a city must be regarded as an ongoing process, one that people need time to become acquainted with” (Anderson, 2002:112).
15-Use and concept: A good new space builds a new constituency. It stimulates people into new habits and activities, and provides a new path to and from work, new places to stop by, etc. Therefore, squares require a program of use and new concepts. This should be determined as a part of the overall design process because the way that the spaces are used is very important for the general image and the mentality of the city. New amenities can change the way of life for many people. If they are alone, lively places are the best place to go.

16-The configuration of shops, cafes, restaurants, businesses and private dwellings, the same as civic, religious and institutional buildings around the square provide diverse reasons for people to come to the square. It increases the opportunity for meetings between friends and neighbors.

17- Citizens should show more consciousness and awareness and respect in using public spaces by keeping them clean, suggesting new events and activities. They should also be open to realize that a different vision of what transportation exists.

18- Informal activities or a small retail offerings that attract people to linger longer in a space, such as newspaper kiosks or coffee stands, can encourage visits by more people for longer periods.

19-Market design: They bring together all types of people to share the space, including low income groups who, on top of that, are given an entrepreneurial opportunity with little capital investment. While they declined with the rise of supermarkets, urban markets are reemerging across the developed world as viable alternatives that help preserve the surrounding farmland, stimulate the local economy, and invigorate surrounding neighborhoods. Furthermore, they contribute to public health by providing fresh and affordable food. ( urbantimes.co,01/05/2014)

The presented thesis showed that squares sometimes cannot have all the functions together. The purpose of one square can be different from another one. This depends on the square’s location and size as both might affect the kind of activities the square is associated with. Therefore, understanding the square area, the pedestrian and cars movement, buildings and all the elements are essential for developing a program and a general concept.
The analysis of functional types of squares identifies five categories:

1. The event square: a square that is designed to be used intensely during various events, but is empty when there is nothing to do. Every city needs a place for events, but people do not feel pleasant on a big and empty event square. Usually large squares with administrative and public buildings might be suitable for festivals and national celebration activities. It can also be a focal point for meeting since it is big enough to accommodate some social activities.

2. The spatial square: a square that is in front of a building to create a view of the building. These (mostly little) squares give historical centers their typical identity.

3. The traffic square: traffic squares dominate cross points and parking areas. These areas are primarily designed for the practical use of squares and not for the spatial effect of the urban volume.

4. The urban square: a square where people meet, want to stay on, drink something at a terrace or just sit down on a bench or wall. Urban squares are the social points in the urban structure.

5. Market square: squares near commercial activities can be used as meeting the same as market places.

6. The multiple-function square: this combines several functions in one urban space.
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