



Buildings; Ideology and Propaganda Design for Democratization of Space

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There is a very narrow border between Ideological art and Propaganda. When art become a tool for a totalitarian and dictatorship regime to promote one specific idea or lifestyle, Democracy is always missing. Taziye (a religious drama) is one of the artworks which became a tool for the propaganda machine for Iran's regime after the Iranian religious revolution and Tekies (places for performing Taziye) are a good example of such architectural propaganda After the Revolution, the role of Tekies was not just buildings for performing religious drama. These buildings became places for advertising the religious ideology and the Iranian government trying to impress people life style, making architecture propaganda. Nonetheless, people's reaction to the architectural propaganda has changed in the modern world and democracy has become an essential need for people. In this research conversion and rehabilitation as a solution for escaping architectural propaganda is discussed, also considering people's life style and needs to make a democratic space.

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Author's Note

Iraq under Saddam Hussein suddenly invaded Iran in September, 1980, and a war lasting eight years started between them. Nearly all the countries in the world supported Iraq in this war and Iran fought back using all its human forces. This eight-year war was a catastrophe in the 20th century in the entire human history and the second longest war in the 20th century after the Vietnam War, over the Second World War. The point was that both parties killed each other aspiring to go to paradise and this war lasted for eight years according to a religious ideology base on Jihad philosophy. During this war, 213,255 Iranian people died. After the war, the television channels and the media in Iran spoke about the Jihad and the Islamic ideology and always advertised this ideology. As with every war, vast social aspects were influenced by this war in that it was manifested into the arts. The main reason for writing about and working on Ideological art, Sacred art, Propaganda and the way of escaping from it is that particular war, which influenced and shaped my childhood and all Iranian youth.

Glossary

Persian	English
Taziye	A religious drama
Ashoura	The day of <i>Ashoora</i> is a major religious day for Shia Muslims.
Tekye (pl. Tekies)	Place for religious drama
Hosseiniye (pl. Hosseinies)	Another name for Tekye
Takht	There are 2 meaning; Wooden bench & wooden stage
Shah-Neshin	Royal room



Introduction





Fig



Fig 1 & 2: Two paintings of North Korean Artists exhibition in MAK Museum.

In summer 2010, there was an exhibition in Vienna Museum which became a big controversial issue in artistic circles. More than 100 oil and water colour paintings along with traditional Korean ink paintings were brought from Pyongyang to Vienna's MAK Museum for Applied Arts and Contemporary Art show, called Flowers for Kim IL Sung; Art and Architecture from the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea.1 (fig 1 & 2) The exhibition had many critics, particularly on the relationship between the Ideology and Art. Many important art magazines and newspapers published different ideas about this exhibition.2

The main question was the relationship between art and ideology. It was not the first time for ideologists to use art as an approach to represent their ideas to gain people's attention. The impact of using art as ideological propaganda is clearly seen in the Ideology of Communism, especially in the field of literature and sculpture of the former Soviet Union

¹Exhibition Term: 19.05.–05.09.2010, MAK Exhibition Hall , Vienna, more information on: http://mak.at/mysql/ausstellungen show page.php?a id=867

² See Bethany Bell 'sarticle on BBC website; http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10134478 or James Kirchick article in the Weekly Standard; http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/fleurs-du-mal.

as well as in cinema in East Germany.3

However, the question is whether a work of art can present an ideology while being in the service of the essence of art at the same time. This question has always received contradictory responses. Zahra Rahnavard,⁴ Professor of Tehran Art University, states:

Since ideology dictates to people living under it what to do and what not to do, it controls various branches of fine arts strictly and transfers them from the realm of creativity, transparency and honesty, which are the natural places of arts and artists, to the territory of compulsory observance of ruling precepts and tenets and of the artificiality. ⁵

We can ask how ideology and art relate can to each other. If art has a particular ideology that it intends to communicate, at what point does it become propaganda? Was there any architecture propaganda during the history which connected to an ideology? Propaganda and different forms of it became a controversial subject in the twentieth century, especially in ideological regimes such as Germany in the Nazi period. Schulze-Wechsungen, head of the district propaganda office at the Propaganda Ministry Berlin states:

Propaganda is the most modern of weapons. We have suffered under it, we have learned from it. Having learned from experience its necessity, we now use it.

We had to destroy our airplanes, tanks, guns

³ Colin Moore, *Propaganda Prints* (a history of art in the service of social and political change), 2010, p.7.

⁴ Zahra Rahnavard is an Iranian artist and politician, She served as the Chancellor of Alzahra University in Tehran, Iran, from 1998 to 2006, She is one of the opposition leaders in Iran and the Iranian government arrested her on February of 2011.

⁵ Zahra Rahnavard, 'Sociology of Art and the Role of Ideology' in Fine Art Magazine, July 2001, p.10.

and the like, but not the weapon of propaganda. How could we not have used it, which is foolish enough to underestimate its power? We owe our rise to it and will have to depend on it even more in the future. It is a powerful tool in moulding the nature and the thinking of the new, the modern man. ⁶

On the other hand, some socialists believe propaganda is against democracy. Noam Chomsky, in his introduction to Alex Carey's ⁷ collection of essays, states:

The twentieth century has been characterized by three developments of great political importance: the growth of democracy, the growth of corporate power, and the growth of propaganda as a power against democracy. ⁸

As a person who grew up in a country which has a dictatorship and ideological regime (Iran), the author has always had a lot of questions about the relationship between the Islamic ideology, Propaganda, Democracy and Art .The Middle East has always witnessed different religious ideologies in its societies in different forms. Some may know the word *jihad* or *jihadist* war; wars and *jihads* which have caused a lot of disasters, such as '9/11' in New York. This behaviour comes from a source rooted in religion and religious ideology. This ideology believes in hell and heaven and good and evil and considers itself to be god and the adversary to be the devil. The surprising point is that this ideology has penetrated

⁶ Schulze, Wechsungen 'Political Propaganda' in *Unser Wille und Weg (Our Will and Way)*, published monthly by the Nazi Party Propaganda, 4(1934), pp. 323-332.

⁷ The writer of *Corporate Propaganda*.

⁸ Garth S. Jowett & Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*. London: Sage Publications, 2012. p.5.

many religious societies. When a thought turns into behaviour, it casts roots in everything, even in art. Sacred art takes several forms: cinema, music and literature to architecture and visual arts.

An important form of art born out of this ideology is *Taziye*; a theatre about the philosophy of *jihad* which is performed in unique structures called *Takias* or *Hosseinies*. 9

Since the Iranian religious revolution, Iran has had a religious ideological government, and the concept of Taziye became very important for the government .Also the role of Tekies and hosseines after the Iranian Revolution was not just buildings for performing religious drama and religious ceremonies. These buildings became places for interpreting and advertising the religious ideology which made architecture propaganda based on the religious ideology. The question is how the Iranian government uses a building to promote some ideas for its aims and how the Iranian people react and how far they support this architecture propaganda. Is there any way to escape this propaganda without abuse the religious Ideas? Is there any experience of escaping architecture propaganda during the history of other counties? What is the situation with sacred buildings?

The author wants to try to answer all of these questions in this paper. In this research, the concept of ideological art and architecture propaganda will be discussed and analysed. Furthermore, conversion as a way of escaping architecture propaganda and a path of democracy will be discussed.

⁹ Mohammad Mirshokrayi, *Taziyeh and Ashoora*, 2010. P.17.

Chapter 1

Ideological Art, Sacred Art and Propaganda

"mission is the most powerful form of lie." George Orwell 1

The word 'ideology' is defined as "a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy, or which strongly influence the way people behave" 2. An ideology is a set of ideas and was first used in the late 18th century to define the "science of ideas". An ideology can be thought of as a vision, as a way of looking at matters.

Ideologists usually seek simple and affective approaches to convey and express their beliefs to people. As historic experience indicates, art has been a tempting and effective way that many ideologists have chosen to apply to communicate with society and, as a result, there have been many ideological art works.

¹ Mary K. Zenon, *Imitation of Truth*, 2008, p,55.

² Oxford Dictionary, 2003.

"Many artistic theoreticians believe that the aesthetic quality of art on its own and without considering the value of concept cannot be considered as a form of art. However, some believe that beauty is the very basic essence of the art and expressing content comes later therefore some critics see art superior than any ideology." ³

As ideological art has a different identification and cannot represent all the facts of the society but a specific one, individuals cannot criticize and analyse it from all points of views.

There are many kinds of ideologies, such as political, social, epistemological and religious. The art based on religious ideology is called sacred art. Religious ideology and its use in art to interpret religious concepts are only based on two extremes, positive and negative or, in other words, good and evil. There is no moderate status in between and this might be the most important disadvantage of sacred art. This is probably why sacred art cannot present the essence of art which is the aesthetic and realistic quality of the society.

Wassily Kandinsky states that "there is no doubt that the culture and climate in every geographical territory influences the society and its art". However, when an ideology and a dictatorship rule over a society, this would change. It is not only culture and climate which have an effect on art, but leaders and regimes try to use art as an approach to modify the culture and spread their ideologies within the society.

³ Akbar Torshizad, *Inversion of the truth*, Podcast: http://radiokoocheh.com/article/85809. [Accessed 9th December 2011].

⁴ Wassily Kandinsky, *Intellectualism in the Art*, Translator: Houshang Vaziri,,2001, p.47.





Fig 1 & 2:Two different promotional posters were created on WWII. Good examples of propaganda posters.

Fig 2

Shirin Ebadi ⁵, as someone who has spent most of her life in an ideological dictatorship society states, "I hate the ideology and I escape every ideology. I believe that whatever phenomenon based on ideology, cannot find the right way".⁶

When regimes employ art to influence society, propaganda appears. Propaganda is a method of communication that emphasises just one part of a situation and is used by a government or political group to make people agree with them. The subject of each piece of propaganda relates to the political and ideological purpose of the era. It is usually ephemeral and disposable.

In the original meaning of the word, propaganda was a vehicle for religious faith. This was the way in which Pope Gregory XV used propaganda when he founded the "Congregatio de Propaganda Fide" in 1662. It was a defensive action to preserve the true Catholic faith, and an organization was created to carry it out.8

Later, the Marxist and Social Democratic parties in other European countries applied the term in a similar way. (fig 1 & 2 & 3)

Propaganda was a medium for doctrine; a way to help it become accepted and gain a much wider currency.

Adolf Hitler said:

The purpose of propaganda is not to provide interesting distraction for blasé young gentlemen, but to convince, and what I mean is to convince the masses.

But the masses are slow moving, and they

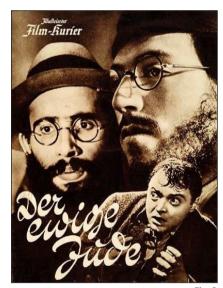


Fig 3

Fig 3: A Nazi propaganda film: This poster promotes the 1940 German film "The Eternal Jew". This movie is about Jews.

⁵ Iranian Nobel Peace Prize Winner in 2003.

⁶ Shirin Ebadi, *The Golden Cage: Three Brothers, Three Choices, One Destiny,* 2011, p.17.

⁷ It means; Sacred Congregation of Propaganda.

⁸ Zbynek Zeman, Selling the War (Art and Propaganda in World War II), p.14.



Fia 4

Fig 4: I want you for the U.S. Army: An Example of propaganda poster in USA during the Word War II. By: James Montgomery Flagg (1877-1960)

always require a certain time before they are ready even to notice a thing, and only after the simplest ideas are repeated thousands of times will the masses finally remember them.⁹

In propaganda, ideologists try to omit some of the facts and then just present the parts which they want.(fig 4 & 5)

Ian Garrick Mason, on the relationship between art and propaganda states that:

...a work of propaganda cannot be a work of art. "Art", as we all know, is disinterested, individualistic, rebellious, and above all, honest. But artwork produced as propaganda is the opposite of this: interested, corporate, obedient, and dishonest. It is nothing more than a tool used to achieve an ideological or institutional goal. 10

⁹ Adolf Hitler, My Battle, 1988, p.251

¹⁰ Ian Garrick Mason, 'The power of art as propaganda', National Post, 2004 p.24.



Fig 5: Another example of propaganda:Tehran US embassy propaganda statue of liberty: The walls of that building are covered with anti-US-murals.

Fig 5

Chapter 2

Propaganda in Architecture

Throughout history, propaganda has shown itself in architecture as has other forms of art. In many European countries, this kind of architecture can be seen. Many buildings were built for propaganda purposes in Italy, Spain, Germany and the former Soviet Union during the past.(fig1)

Many governments use propaganda to strengthen their authority and spread their policies. Governments logically like to be seen as perfect. They want to show their glory and good circumstances of their society, no matter what their actual situations. Some governments and leaders of countries use architecture to show their power and the authorities to their enemies and their followers. Also, sometimes they try to promote a method of living based on their ideologies by using

architecture. They try to influence the culture and the society by repeating and advertising one form and method of construction. There are many examples of this type of propaganda.

Many governments require propaganda to strengthen their authority; In this kind of situation, buildings and monuments are used to show the glory of a regime or an ideology. Using architecture as a propaganda medium has some rules as do other kinds of propaganda art. Professor Norman Davies, a famous historian who wrote lots of articles and books about the history of art in Europe, lists 5 major rules of propaganda:

- A) The rule of simplification: reducing all data to a simple confrontation between 'Good and Bad', 'Friend and Foe'.
- B) The rule of disfiguration: discrediting the opposition by crude smears and parodies.
- C) The rule of transfusion: manipulating the consensus values of the target audience for one's own ends.
- D) The rule of unanimity: presenting one's viewpoint as if it were the unanimous opinion of all right-thinking people: draining the doubting individual into agreement by the appeal of star-performers, by social pressure, and by 'psychological contagion'.
- *E)* The rule of orchestration: endlessly repeating the same messages in different variations and combinations. ¹

These rules also can be found in lots of architectural projects which are designed for a propaganda purpose.

Fig 1 : Palace of Soviets vs. Grosse Halle; Two buildings which designed for propaganda reasons. The left one (Palace of Soviets) located in Russia and the right one (Grosse Halle) belongs to Nazism architecture propaganda.

¹ Norman Davis, Europe: A History, 1996, pp. 500-501.



Fig 2: A model of Adolf Hitler's plan for Berlin formulated under the direction of Albert Speer; North-South Avenue in the New Berlin

During the Nazi period in Germany, propaganda in architecture was clearly seen. Adolf Hitler used architecture as a medium to develop the power of his ideology and government. He adored the Neo-classic style in architecture and he tried to promote this form of architecture. In one of his speeches he states that "our enemies and our followers must realise that these buildings strengthen our authority". Hitler wanted to re-build 30 major German cities to achieve this goal. (fig 2) The Nazi system had its official architects such as Hermann Giesler, Fritz Todt and Albert Speer to work on Hitler's propaganda project in architecture. The Nazi buildings were designed to threaten the followers and subdue the enemies.

Nazi architects worked on projects that used stark facades with columns, pilasters, and clean lines on a massive scale to create a new aesthetic.(fig 3) The new building style would radiate power and domination. At that time, Berlin needed monuments to present a new Germany. ³ Hitler's architects designed a new type of city to fulfil Hitler's desire of showing the glory of Germany. They designed buildings of huge scales to approach this goal. The new buildings in Germany during Nazism were influenced by classical Greece and Rome; they tried an aesthetic of order, using minimal decoration and highlighting straight lines. ⁴

² Adolf Hitler, My Battle, 1988, p.350.

³ Steven Lehrer, The Reich Chancellery and Führerbunker Complex. An Illustrated History of the Seat of the Nazi Regime, 2006, p.32.

⁴ Alex Scobie, Hitler's State Architecture: The Impact of Classical Antiquity, 1990, p.48

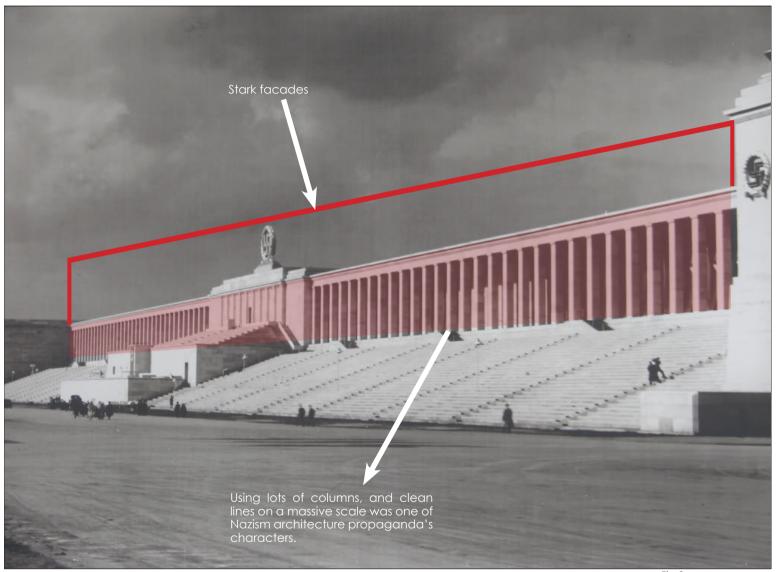


Fig 3: The Nuremberg Parade Grounds, designed for the 1934 Rally by Albert Speer: Some of Nazism architecture propaganda's characters can be seen in this building.

Fig 3

Other famous propaganda in architecture was created in the former Soviet Union. There were two different usages of architecture as propaganda in the Soviet Union based on Communist ideology. "One of the goals of the Bolsheviks was making people work very hard for the bright future".5 The Soviet Union government decided to make lots of buildings for the people to live in. They believed that everyone should have a place to live and to work very hard for the purpose of the Soviet Union which was based on Communist ideology. In the former Soviet Union, the development of socialist architecture was demonstrated by the government to be a political mission in the process of Communist creation. The ideological type of architecture was presented during the earliest years of the Soviet Union. They made lots of block buildings.(fig 4) All had a cubic shape without any decoration and the façades were covered by stone. This method did not cost a lot for the government and it was a fast way to build homes for the big population all over the country.

This style was also used in lots of countries which were influenced by Communist ideology, such as East Germany.

With this style of building, the governments tried to show equality between the people to followers

⁵ Olga Zinovieva, 'City Beat: A Journey into Stalinist Moscow of the 1930s –1950s'. *Passport magazine*, p.20.



Fig 4:Lots of block buildings were built during communism regime in Soviet Union.

around the world.(fig 5 & 6)

Sokolina (2002), an architect, art historian and educator on the architecture of that Soviet Union states:

In the socialist age new models of living space were developed, which architects optimistically attempted to define as spaces of the collective, understood as belonging to the Soviet people as a Whole, that is belonging to "nobody" as a state property where the authorities could control access and monitor behaviour.⁶

Another use of architecture as propaganda in the Soviet Union was during the Joseph Stalin's reign. At that time, Moscow, the capital, was changing its appearance under the process of industrial development and it became a sacred city for followers of Communism around the word. Soviet Union leaders such as Stalin tried to show a positive vision of industrial progress in Moscow's architecture which Stalin called The Rhythms of the New Age . He tried to use art, music and architecture to inspire people to labour and the Communist ideology. He tried to make Moscow a magnificent city to show the power of Communism and also show the industrial progress of the Soviet Union. Before Stalin (1920s), the construction of the Soviet Union was almost devoid of any



Fig :

Fig 5 :One of the block buildings, which was built communism regime in Soviet Union. Yerevan - Armenia.

⁶ Anna Sokolina, 'ARCHITECTURE AND THE STATE: Moscow URBAN CONCEPTS AFTER SOCIALISM', p.91.



Fig 6: These days the exteriors of block buildings have changed. This photo is façade of one of the block buildings, which was built duringcommunism regime in Soviet Union. Yerevan-Armenia.

decoration. However, Stalin wanted to show the power of his empire with the reputable past of Russia with its respectable culture and history. This reason caused him to decide to change the appearance of Moscow. Many architects started to work on some buildings and monuments and the classic style was their choice to show Stalin's idea of the glory of Communist ideology. ⁶

Propaganda in architecture, as other arts, has some effects on society. When we research this issue and investigate the examples, we will understand that the most propaganda in architecture happened during dictatorships, totalitarianism and authoritarian countries. In all of the examples given, two reasons are the cause of propaganda in architecture: first, showing the authority of the government and a regime to their opponents and their followers; and second, presenting the new style and method of living which follows the government's ideology, making people obey that method. It is possible that many interesting and attractive buildings were built during the history of propaganda aims, but propaganda in architecture, as in other kinds of art, is not honest and usually it is imposed on the society and culture. This kind of architecture and the actual circumstances of the people's culture in a society are two poles apart. Architecture as an "Art" should be impartial, suitable for the culture and the society, and above all, honest.

⁶ Olga Zinovieva, 'City Beat: A Journey into Stalinist Moscow of the 1930s –1950s'. *Passport magazine*, p.20.



Fig 7: Moscow Palace of Soviets is one of the most famous unfinished architectural projects in history. The huge building would have become the symbol of the victory of socialism, the symbol of a new country and new Moscow.

Fig 7

Chapter 3

Taziye, Tekye and Propaganda

The artworks which are based on an ideology are usually more appropriate to be used as a propaganda tool. In the ideological countries and societies, this issue can be seen. Most of these countries and societies have a dictatorship consisting of repressive and severe regimes. In these kinds of societies, it is very hard to criticise anything based on that ideology such as art. It is a lot harder in the religious (as an ideology) countries to criticise. In these societies, the religious powers want to show everything as sanctified. *Taziye* is a good example of this issue. It is a kind of theatre based on an Islamic story. It was created in Iran, a country which became a religious country after the Islamic Revolution in February 1979.

What is the Taziye?

Foreigners that have visited or passed through Iran in the last two centuries have always been attracted by a unique kind of theatre in Iran called *Taziye* or *Shabih*. *Taziye* is the ritual theatre of an event that happened in the day of *Ashoora* at the beginning of Islam.

The day of Ashoora is a major religious day for Shia Muslims. It falls on the 10th of *Muharram*, the first month of the Islamic lunar calendar in which Imam Hussein, the prophet's grandson and a small group of his companions, some 72 people, fight a big army and each and every one dies. This way of being killed is highly honoured by Shiites and they believe it is a liberating act. On the day of Ashoora, some Shia men still seek to emulate the suffering of Hussein by flagellating themselves with chains; also the Shia wear black clothes on this day to remember what happened on the day of *Ashoora*.(fig 1 & 2) Shia people and religious leaders think Ashoora is a very important day and people have to remember what happened on that day. They believe Imam Hussein is the "leader of the martyrs" because he was not just the victim of an ambitious ruler. They think the tragedy of Ashoora, when ascribed to the killers, is a criminal and terrible act. However, when ascribed to Hussein himself, it represents a conscious confrontation and a courageous resistance for a sacred cause.1



Fig 1: The Ashoora Ceremony in Tehran, 2004.

¹ Mehdi Nasiri, *Thousand Trees*, 2010, p.17.



Fig 2: The Ashoora Ceremony in Tehran, 2007.

After Islam came to Iran. Tazive became a theatre and a ceremony of the story of Ashoora. However, there was Taziye before Islam in Persia and it has an old history. Taziye means condolence. Taziye and Naggali are traditional Persian theatrical genres in which the drama is conveyed wholly or predominantly through music and singing.² Taziye dates to before the Islamic era and the tragedy of Siavash in Shahnameh. The common theme of the Ashoora and Siavash stories is the hero tale of love and sacrifice and of resistance against the evil. While in the west the two major genres of dramas have been comedy and tragedy, in Persia (now Iran), *Taziye* seems to be the dominant genre. Considered Persian opera, Taziye resembles European opera in many respects.(fig 3)

Many artistic works have been made about this, sometimes with world reputation, one of which is the theatre of *Taziye* that started at the beginning of the 16th century and is still practised and performed today and has even been transported to other places such as India and Central America.³ *Taziye*, as a religious epic theatre, continues to be performed in areas of the Middle East with large Shiite populations in Iran, Iraq, South Lebanon and Bahrain.

Processional forms of this drama are also seen in India, Pakistan and even places far removed from Asia where Shiite Muslim populations exist, such as Jamaica. However, dramatic performances of *Taziye* originated in Iran.



Fig 3: A scene of Taziyeh performance.

ng 5

² Peter J.Chelkowski, *Taziyeh: Ritual and Drama in Iran*, Translator: Davood Hatami, 2004, p.29.

³ Bahram Beyzayi, *Derama in Iran*, 2010, p.114.

It has recently attracted contemporary playwrights, as Peter Chelkowsk states that "it is the most accurate form of drama and the only native theatre offered by the Muslim world".4 There is a long origin in Iran and the neighbouring countries of starting religious ceremonies while mourning the loss of a hero. A very old example of such a ceremony can be the mourning of Babylonians for the death of their gods and the mourning of Persians for the death of Siavash (a Persian myth). Thus Taziye is rooted as many other customs and rites in magical beliefs and the mythical culture. European religious Passions on Easter Day is a geological ceremony rooted in religion and there is also the special ceremony that the ancient Greeks held for Zeus at the end of March in which three poets presented three tragedies for three days, all to signify that every work of art has the glory of its own time. Taziye in Iran is a ritual show whose form and content are rooted in religion. Literally, it means to console someone and to express condolences; the religious essence has never been put aside. This conceptual and mythical ceremony is a collective event that has been played for a long time and people actively participate in it, are dictated by it and it also has its own time and place to perform. However, the mythical concept of that time is different from the time in the calendar. So, Taziye is a way of changing mental beliefs and past events to the present for everyone.(fig 4)

⁴ Peter J. Chelkowski, Taziyeh: Ritual and Drama in Iran, Translator: Davood Hatami, 2004, p.79.



Fig 4: A scene of Taziyeh performance.

Fig 4

Tazive and Propaganda

In Iran, a country which has a religious ideological government, the concept of *Taziye* is very important. Leaders of the regime always try to use the story of Tazive to advertise the philosophy of 'Jihad' to impress people.(fig 5 & 6) Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of Iran during the Revolution, states in his testament that the "Iranian revolution was inspired by Ashoora and the Ashoora keeps Islam alive. We have to remember how a small group resisted the Great Empire. We have to promote it in our society. This is a command".5 Also the current leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei, says of the story of Taziye that "this story shows we have to sacrifice ourselves for Islam and it is our responsibility to promote it in different forms".6

On the other hand, there are lots of criticisms of this point of view. Mehdi Khalaji, writer and expert on Shiite Islam and Iran's domestic politics, states that "this kind of interpretation about the story is hiding the reality. We have to escape these ideological views of everything and we have to return to the concepts of the modern world like democracy, law and freedom. Speaking about the concept of Jihad and Ashoora in the new world is misleading people for other aims and for achieving the democracy; we have to deny this kind of view". 7

⁵ Rohoolah Khomeini, *Sahifeye Nour Volume III*, 1994, p.254.

⁶ Ayatollah Khamenei, 'Speaking with Artist about Ashoora' (speech with some writers), 2006, Available at: http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/ index.php?p=bayanat&id=8109 [Accessed 25 December 2011].

Radio Interview with Mehdi Khalaji in France (Persian), Paris, 12 December 2011, Podcast available at: http://www.persian.rfi.fr/ [Accessed 12 December 2011].

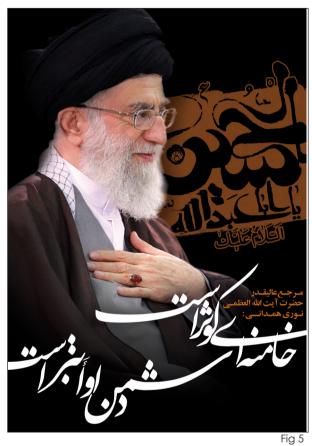




Fig 6

Fig 5 & 6: An example of posters which promote Ashoora concept and compere the Iranian leaders with Imam Hossein.

Left: picture of Ayatollah Khamenei (current leader of Iran) behind of his picture, there is an Arabic text which uses in some flags of Taziye.

Right: The hand of Ayatollah Khomeini (leader of Iranian religious revolution), on this poster there are three hands, first hand is the hand of Ayatollah Khomeini and the last one is the symbol of Taziyeh and Ashoora.





Fig 7 & 8 : "Office chair" by Parastoo Frouhar.

Using the *Taziye* concept is not just for the political and social views. The signs and the elements of Taziye have been used in art such as photography, literature, paintings, posters, graphics, music, cinema and architecture to advertise the government's ideological views. This issue caused big propaganda in art. Taziye, like other ideological art which has been used to interpret its concepts in society, has just two extreme parts, positive and negative or good and evil. There is no moderation or in between. There are lots of artists and art works which are just about the sacred parts of the Taziye elements and signs,(fig 9) but some artists had enough courage to work on Taziye signs and space and tried to find a realistic way of showing the effects of this kind of sacred ideology on society.

Parastoo Forouhar is an Iranian artist who applies common elements used in *Taziye* to criticise ideological societies but with a different approach. (fig 7 & 8) In her piece, she covers chairs with fabrics that have similar patterns to the elements of *Taziye* so that there is no space left to sit.⁸ This fabric is used in the *Taziye* and *Ashoora* ceremony to cover walls or different objects. On this kind of fabric, the story of Ashoora is written. In this project she displays her criticism of the occupation of power with religious ideology in religious societies where other ideological views have no space to improve.

⁸ Parviz Barati, 'Die or Live', *Tajrobe Magazine (Art and Literature)*, September 2011, p.84.



Fig 9: The Evening of Ashura' by Mahmoud Farshchian (born 1930), Materials and Techniques: Paper, laminated with printed design in coloured in.

This famous painting shows the female members of Hossien's family mourning his death at the Battle of Karbala.

Fig 9



Fig 10

Fig 10 & 11 & 12: Three pictures of Shirin Neshat project; "Women of Allah". This project is about the life of women in an Islamic society.

Shirin Neshat, internationally admired photographer, videographer and filmmaker, is one of the artists who have employed religious signs and especially those used in *Taziye* in her series of photographs. In the mid-1990s, she exhibited her series the *Women of Allah* ⁹, an extraordinary body of work exploring women in Islamic culture. *Women of Allah* is a view of a large section of Iran's population, meaning people who let religion rules their lives.(fig 10 & 11 & 12) There are black and white images of women in the hijab with drawings of religious signs on their faces.

This photograph forms part of Neshat's Women of Allah series, created between 1993 and 1997 following the artist's first trip to Iran after the Revolution.

Shirin Neshat stated in an interview with the Persian BBC service, "After I went to Iran, I obviously saw the effects of advertising the religious ideology in the society and I understood how much it could change the appearance of a country. I am not a political person. I just tried to have a realistic view of the society and criticise that ideological view". 10 Neshat in Women of Allah used some of the exact signs that the Iranian government uses for its ideological aims. She has preserved the aesthetic value of the signs while implementing them to raise social issues that the ideological society faces. She uses the elements to direct the audience to a more realistic view.

⁹ Neshat's Women of Allah series, created between 1993 and 1997, after the artist's first trip to Iran after the Revolution

¹⁰ Interview with Shirin Neshat by BBC Persia, Hard Talk show, London, 2010/07/27. Podcast available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/tv/2011/03/110315_hardtalk_shirin_neshat.shtml [Accessed, 9 November 2011].

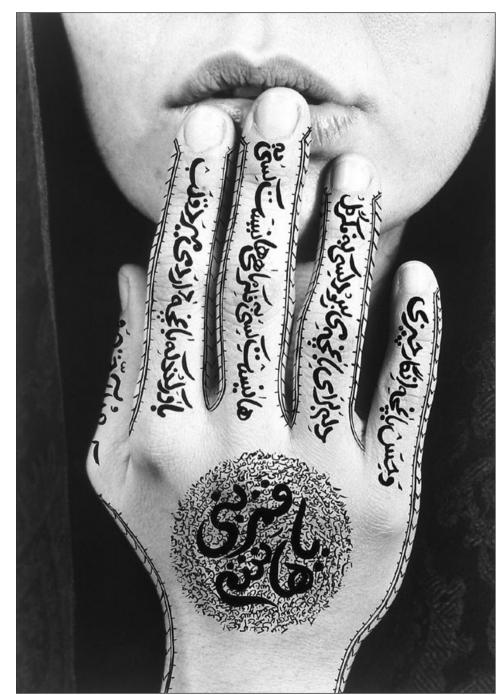




Fig 11

Pooyan Bagherzadeh

Fig 13

Fig 13: Picture of Mossala Tekye, Tehran.

Tekye and Hosseiniye

Like Western Passion plays, Tazieh dramas were originally performed outdoors at crossroads and other public places where large audiences could gather. Performances later took place in the courtyards of inns and private homes but eventually unique structures called Takias or Hosseinies were constructed for the specific purpose of staging the plays.(fig 13) Community cooperation was encouraged in the building and decoration of the Takias and Hosseinies, whether the funds for the enterprise were provided by individual philanthropist or by contributions from the residents of the particular locality. The Takias varied in size, from intimate structures which could only accommodate a few dozen spectators to large buildings capable of holding an audience of more than a thousand people. Often the Takias were temporary, having been erected specially for the mourning of Muharram. All Takias, regardless of their size, are constructed as theatres-in-the-round to intensify the dynamic between actors and audience. The spectators are literally surrounded by the action and often become physical participants in the play. In Takias, it is not unusual for combat scenes to occur behind the audience.

During history, many Takies and Hosseinies were built. Some of them were really majestic and they become part of Iran's specific architecture. The Dollat Tekye is a good example of this kind of architecture. (fig 14 & 15) It is a very important building in Iranian

architectural history. It was built in 1869 by order of the Iranian king (Shah Nasseredin). That particular *tekye* became the symbol of Tehran in that era. At that time, Shah Nasseredin came back from a European trip and he wanted to make a place for non-religious theatre and performance as in western countries. However, lots of religious leaders at that time disagreed with this project and the Shah changed his mind and Dollat Tekiye became a place for *Taziye* and religious ceremonies. ¹¹

During the Iranian movement towards modernism in the early twentieth century, this kind of building was forgotten about and instead of Tekiyes and Hosseinies, many buildings were built for concerts, theatres and performances. Then, after the Iranian religious Revolution in 1979, suddenly, building these kinds of places started again. Within 15 years, more than 1000 Tekies and Hosseines were built in Tehran. The policy of the Iranian government during those years was to make a *Tekye* for each neighbourhood. 12 The role of *Tekies* and Hosseines after the Iranian Revolution was not just for performing religious dramas and religious ceremonies; these buildings became places for interpreting and advertising the religious ideology of the regime. They became bases for followers of the regime's ideology and they made an organization for advertising the Ashoora concept and religious ideology in Tekyes and Hosseinies. Also there is a budget for building this kind of place (Tekye and Hosseiniye) in the Iranian government's yearly budget. 13

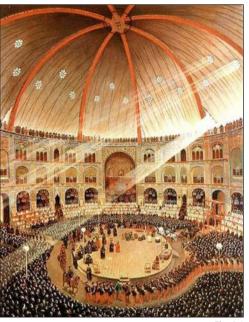


Fig 14



Fig 15

Fig 14 & 15: Dollat Tekye
Top: A paintting of Dollat Tekye by Kamalolmolk
(Famous Iranian painter).
Bottom: A photo of Dollat Tekye, during the

Taziye performance.

¹¹ Jalal Satari, *Taziye in Iranian Culture*, 2009, p.69.

¹² Mehdi Nasiri, Thousand Trees, 2010, p.17, p.72.

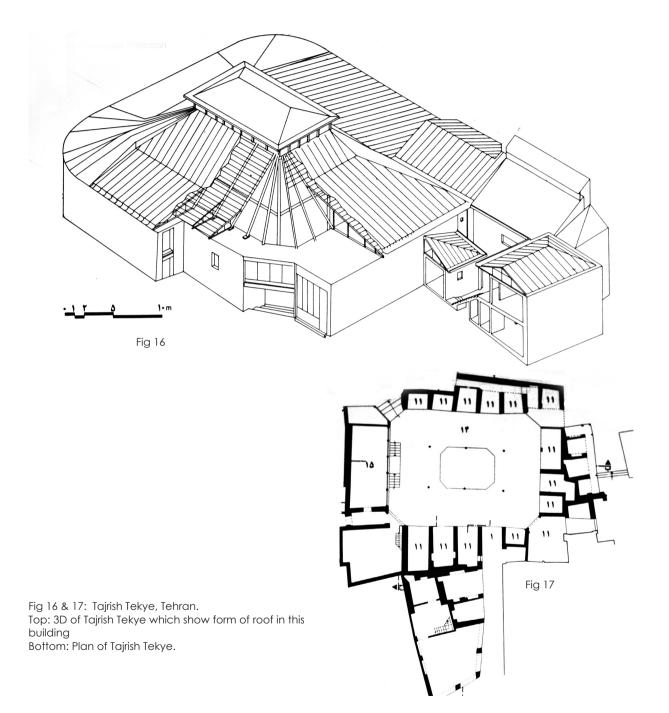
¹³ Amir Kavoos Balazade, War, Theatre, Myth, 2007, p.38.

Character of Tekiese

The plans of *Tekies* and *Hosseinies* always follow the concept of Islamic architecture.(fig 16 & 17) Also, there are some rules for designing these buildings; for example, designers have to keep the women apart from the men and they have to design a specific part of the building just for women. The size of *Tekies* are different and usually the smallest one is designed for 300 people and the biggest one (Dollat Tekye) is for 20,000 people.

There are some characteristics of *Takies* and *Hosseinies*. A designer should follow these rules when he wants to design one:

- 1: They are normally shaped in a square or a rectangle.
- 2: There are places for people to sit in every corner and watch the performance.
- 3: They are normally built with two storeys; these places have a bigger chamber called the royal living room in which the religious, the respected and the most renowned people sit and watch *Taziyeh* and the ceremonies.
- 5: Normally in the middle there is a square plateau called the *Takht*. The scenes of *Taziye* are played on the *Takht* and the passage around it.
- 6: Some of these places are open at the top or with a tin roof to have an open space to erect tents.
- 7: The materials used in these buildings are normally adobe (old buildings) and stone (modern buildings) and brick and stucco is used to make the chambers



white. The roofs are covered by wooden columns and a parapet is installed in front of the second floor chambers. ¹⁴

The shape and plan of most of Islamic buildings originate from the plan of the *Kabe* (the holy shrine) in Make. It is the place which Muslims believe is the house of God. The plan of *Tekye* also came from this plan. Also, all the mosques in Iranian architecture have something from this plan. ¹⁵ In the plan of the *Kabe*, there is a cube in the middle of a big yard. It makes a large space for people to walk around it. This form is can be seen in the plans of *Tekies* and *Hosseinies*.(fig 18 & 19)

Fig 18 & 19: Kabe (the holy shrine) Right: Plan of Kabe Left: A picture of Kabe during the "Haj ceremony" in Make.



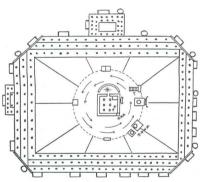


Fig 19

¹⁴ Mohammad Mirshokrayi, *Taziyeh and Ashoora*, p.99-100.

¹⁵ Mahnaz Shayestefar, 'Mosque Architecture', *Binab Magazine*, April 2011, p.26-40.

Buildings; Ideology and Propaganda

Questionnaire

After the Iranian religious Revolution, the government decided to use *Tekies* and *Hosseinies* to advertise the Islamic ideology. Lots of *Tekies* were built in Tehran and other cities by the government but, surprisingly, the support of the Iranian people decreased. Niyavaran Tekye is one of the important *Tekies* in Tehran. Now the government uses this place to promote the concept of *Ashoora*, political gatherings and religious ceremonies. To understand how much people of that area support and go to these places, I decided to make a questionnaire and ask the people who live in that neighbourhood. I asked seven questions of 82 people.

Here is the list of question which I asked:

How old are you?

- 1) Less than 30.
- 2) 30 to 50.
- 3) More than 50.

Did you go to the Tekye last year?

- 1) I didn't go.
- 2) Once.
- 3) More than once.

If you went to *Tekye* during the last year, why did you go?

- 1) To watch Taziye
- 2) For a religious ceremony
- 3) For a political reason
- 4) Other reasons (Please state)

If you didn't go to *Tekye* during the last year, what was the reason?

- 1) Because of the act of the regime with this place.
- 2) I am not into religious events.
- 3) I didn't have time
- 4) Other reasons (Please state)

Do you know about the concept of *Taziye* and *Ashoora?*

- 1) I have lots of information about it.
- 2) I know a little about it.
- 3) I don't know anything about it.

Do you follow the concept of Ashoora and Jihad?

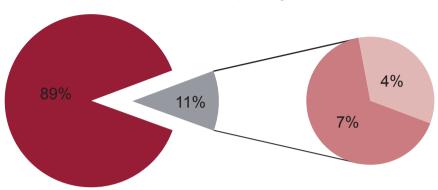
- 1) I believe it and try to promote it.
- 2) I believe it but I don't promote it.
- 3) I don't believe it.
- 4) It is just a historical story.

Do you agree with the usage of *Tekies* after Iranian religious Revolution?

- 1) Yes.
- 2) It has some problems.
- 3) No.

From 82 people who answered these questions, 73 people did not go to the *Tekye* during the last year. From 9 people who went to the *Tekye*, 6 people were over 50 years old and 3 people were between 30 and 50. (Diagram 1) These statistics show the new generation of Iranians who were born after the Iranian Revolution. It shows that they do not like to go these kinds of places and they do not support religious and political events at *Tekies*.

Diagram 1: How much people support the Tekye during the 2011.



- People who didn't go to the Tekye during the last year.
- People who went to the Tekye during the last year.
- People who are more than 50 years old.
- People who are are between 30 to 50 years old.

Also from the 73 people who did not go to the *Tekye* during the last year, 41 people mentioned the act of the regime with this place as a reason for not going and 24 people did not go because they were not 'into religious events'. This shows that the regime is not successful in attracting people and especially the new generation to these places.(Diagram 2) Furthermore, all of the 82 people knew about the concept of *Ashoora* and *Taziye* which shows the advertising of government as effective. However, 34 people did not believe in this concept and 21 people thought that it was just a historical story. Also, from 27 people who believed in the concept of *Ashoora* and Jihad, 19 people did not like to promote it.(Diagram 3)

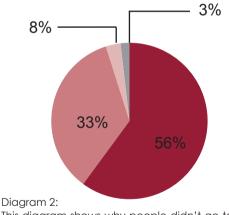
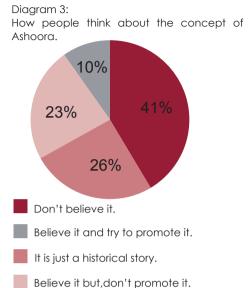
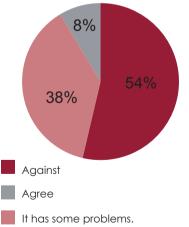


Diagram 2:
This diagram shows why people didn't go to
Niavaran Tekye during 2011.

- Because of the act of regime with this place.
- Didn't have time.
- Not in to religious events.
- Other reasons







When I asked the people who lived around the Niyavaran *Tekye* about the current use of that building, the interesting result came up. Forty-four of 82 people were against the use of the building as set by the government and just 7 people totally agreed with this issue.(Diagram 4)

The results of this questionnaire show that a majority of people who live around the Niyavaran Tekye do not support or go to this place even with lots of advertising by the government. Also, people are not interested in the religious events and ceremonies, especially the new generation.

It is possible that the people understand and realize how the regime uses the story of *Ashoora*, *Taziye*, Tekies and Hosseinies for ideological purposes and they realize about this kind of propaganda. This questionnaire shows how people react to this propaganda after more than 30 years have passed since the Iranian religious Revolution.

However, many *Tekies* and *Hosseinies* have interesting and beautiful architecture and those buildings have an important part in Iranian architectural history.

Chapter 4

Conversion: A Path to Democracy When dictatorships and totalitarianism regimes use art to influence the creed and behaviour of people and create a big propaganda machine, one big principle always is missing: democracy.

Democracy means consideration the whole population for making a system, 1 but in these kinds of countries, propaganda is used in an opposite way, to eliminate and eradicate the opposite ideas. Tekyes and Hosseinies are good examples of this issue. The Iranian regime does not consider what is essential for people and what they need. The questionnaire about Niyavaran Tekye shows that the people of that area do not support this building and the propaganda about it and most of the people prefer to not visit this building. Jacques Ellul states

¹ Jerry Weinberger and Richard Zinman, *Democracy and the Art,* Translated by: Shapour Jorkesh, 2010, p.16.

that "one can lead a horse to water but cannot make him drink; one cannot reach through propaganda those who do not need what it offers". ²

Many buildings have been created to promote an idea or a life style around the world but when a government uses architecture to influence the behaviour of people in an organized way and does not give a chance for other ideas to show themselves, it becomes undemocratic propaganda. This behaviour usually happens under dictatorships. On propaganda, Colin Moore states:

Propaganda is a reciprocal activity, a continuous dialogue between the giver and receiver, long recognised by historians as a faithful and sensitive index to the changes occurs in society. An applied art, like architecture and design, it imposes constraints which under a totalitarian regime can be suffocating; however in opposition the artists can be free, and the best of their work reflects this freedom.³

The development of the media such as the internet and satellite, in increasing the ability of communication with people around the world, gives the people a chance to make a decision about their life style and compare it with others in different countries. It seems that, in the modern world, this huge propaganda in countries with dictatorships cannot defend itself. These kinds of propaganda are losing power when it is versus free information and free space of communication. When the author asked people living around Niavaran Tekye their thoughts on the behaviour of the government

² Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: the Formation of Men's Attitudes*, 1963, p.121.

³ Colin Moore, *Propaganda prints (a history of art in the service of social and political change)*, 2010, p.8.

regarding Tekyes and hosseinies, it seemed that their decision about not going and supporting the Niyavaran Tekye was a way of being against the regime's propaganda, and even by not paying attention to the interesting history and architecture of that building. Carroll William Westfall, professor of architectural history at the University of Notre Dame, on the relationship between architecture and democracy, states that "the modern architecture does not accept the Thought of governments and regimes for the characters and role of buildings".4 He maintains Hitler's architecture propaganda as an unsuccessful experience because in his propaganda, he did not consider what the people of that society wanted. In the same way, the Iranian regime does not pay attention to people's essential requirements and their life style.

⁴ Carroll William Westfall, *Democracy and the Art*, Translated by: Shapour Jorkesh, 2010, p.154.

Conversion

In many countries around the world, conversion and rehabilitation has become an interesting subject in architecture in recent years. In this method, the designer usually focuses on those instances where a building constructed for o purpose is to be used for another: putting a new activity into an existing set of spaces.⁵

There are lots of purposes for rehabilitation and conversion. The first and the most understandable reason is the economic purpose. It is less expensive to rehabilitate than to rebuild. Graeme Aylward maintains that economic reasons and population growth are the most important reasons of rehabilitation of historical buildings.⁶

On the other hand, Jim Johnson calls considering the social life of the people as a main reason for the rehabilitation of a building. He states that a "building could be replaced but the social life could not be, at least not for several generations".

Social life could be one of the main reasons for changing the function of buildings and converting them. Considering what the people of a society need and paying attention to the social life of the people is one of the architects' and designers' responsibilities. This consideration relates an artist and his society which is essential. When the social life of people and their beliefs become an important issue for government, it would be a sign of becoming one step closer to democracy. Building conversion can be a solution for escaping from architectural propaganda under dictatorships.

⁵ Graeme Aylward, 'Conversion and Rehabilitation: a model and design strategies', In Thomas, A. Markus (ed.), *Building Conversion and Rehabilitation; designing for change in Building use*, 1979, p.1-12.

⁶ A. Markus Thomas (ed.), Building Conversion and Rehabilitation; designing for change in building use, 1979, p.5.

⁷ Jim Johnson. 'Housing Rehabilitation; A challenge to the profession', In Thomas A. Markus (ed.), *Building Conversion and Rehabilitation; designing for change in building use*, 1979, p.50.

Concrete Mushroom Project

The social life of people and their beliefs has been the cause of many building conversions in the modern architectural world. The Bunkers project in Albania is a good example of this issue.

The Bunkers in Albania are a kind of architecture propaganda. In Albania, there is one bunker for every four Albanians.

Between 1950 and 1985, Albanian leader Enver Hoxha ordered the construction of thousands of safe shelters, from the tallest mountains to the Adriatic coast. Hoxha, who ruled Albania with an iron fist for 40 years, was not only concerned about a possible attack by the USA and its Western allies, but also by fellow Communist countries like Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union and China, which he had cut ties with.8

In Hoxha's regime, the main reason behind building a huge number of mushroom-shaped bunkers was to show off the strong defending power/force to both Albania and other countries, as Hoxha commanded the building of a bunker for each Albanian which ultimately resulted in 700,000 bunkers countrywide. In other words, the incredible number of bunkers in Albania as a weird defence method reveals the main purpose of the regime which was nothing other than propagandizing and approaching the regime's intentions.(fig 1 & 2) After years, the bunkers were not only signs of a military defence method, but also

⁸ Adens Borova, 'Albania's bunkers transformed into local amenities', in *France 24 international News Agency*, http://observers.france24.com/content/20100812-albania-bunkers-transformed-local-amenities-mushroom-hoxha, accessed on 05.01.2012.





Fig 1 & 2 : Some Bunkers in Albania which were built in Hoxha regime.

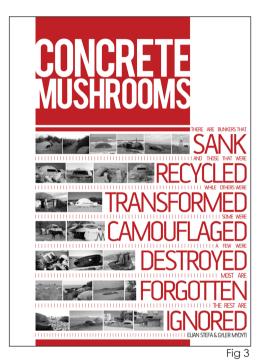


Fig 3: Poster of Concrete Mushrooms project.

a symbol of unclean public toilets for the Albanians. ⁹ Also for the Albanians who grew up in the early '90s, the bunkers became a symbol of the first kiss and making love. After the '90s, with liberty and economic progress in Albania, many of these bunkers became "per hour hotels" and "small restaurants" in a project called the 'Concrete Mushroom Project'.(fig 3 & 4) This project is based on an idea by two Albanian graduate students at Milan Polytechnic. The official website of this project maintains some purposes for this project:

The purpose was to emphasize the appreciable assets of Albania such as bunkers which are vast in number and across all the rich and beautiful landscape of Albania. The priority of the Concrete Mushrooms Project is facing the symbol of bunker with deliberate awareness for the purpose of inverting its meaning, the preservation of the memoir of a significant period of the Albanian history, giving bunkers value instead of having them as burden and as a result the promotion of an underdeveloped touristic sector such as Eco- Tourism which has an enormous potential at the same time growing the financial viability, social and environmental sustainability.¹⁰

The designers of this project had some methods in considering in their design:

How the people of Albania nowadays coexist with them. How and why they use them, it is also thought how the remaining bunkers can last their lives without being totally disap-

⁹ Elian Stefa. 'Concrete Mushrooms' in the *Abitare Design Journal*. http://www.abitare.it/en/architecture/concrete-mushrooms/, accessed on 08.12.2011.

¹⁰ Official Concrete Mushroom Project website: http://www.concrete-mushrooms.com, accessed on 12.11.2011.



Fig 4: A bunker became to "per hour hotels" - Concrete Mushrooms project.

peared and can become the icon of a paranoid past transformed to the symbol of a bright future of the landscape of Albania.11

The designers considered the life style of Albanian people in their design which the author thinks is a reason for this project becoming a successful project, and the reason that people support it. These days these hotels attract many people to visit the Albania from around the world. There are some tours for people to go to Albania and visit these hotels and small restaurants.(fig 5 & 6) 12

Fig 5 & 6: Left: A bunker became to a Restaurant - Concrete Mushrooms project.

Right: A bunker during the conversion





Fig 6

¹¹ A tour to see the Concrete Mushroom: http://www.swide.com/luxury-magazine/Life/Good-s-/Holiday-in-an-Albanian-bunker/2009/10/26

¹² Official Concrete Mushroom Project website: http://www.concrete-mushrooms.com, accessed on 12.11.2011.

Selexyz Dominicaner Maastricht

Recently, religious tendencies have decreased considerably among people in Europe and this has influenced the number of churchgoers. This could be one of the main reasons for the conversion of many churches during these years. There are still many churches in Europe which are empty. In the UK, there are many websites which sell these churches to people for conversion. ¹³ The conversion of sacred places such as churches in Christian communities and European countries is not a new subject. "As more European churches become redundant, we need to dream up new uses for them". ¹⁴ One of the great church conversions is the Selexyz Dominicaner Maastricht.(fig 7)

Dutch architects Merkx + Girod won the Lensvelt de Architect Interior Prize 2007 for their Boekhandel Selexyz Dominican in Maastricht, a bookstore inside a former Dominican church.

The jury awarding the prize said that the "Merkx+Girod architects have created a contemporary bookshop in a former Dominican church, preserving the unique landmark setting. The church has been restored to its former glory and the utility equipment has been housed in the extended cellar". ¹⁵

To preserve the character of the church, the architects built a two-storey structure in black steel on one side and used it as the place where the books are kept. This way, they achieved the desired commercial square size.



Fig

Fig 7 :church conversions - The Selexyz Dominicaner Maastricht.

¹³ See these websites: http://www.property.org.uk/unique/ch.shtml & http://www.churchofengland.org

¹⁴ Jonathan Glancey, 'In the beginning was the bestseller', in *The Guardian*

http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2008/apr/09/architecture.bestbookshops, accessed on: 24.12.2011

¹⁵ Marcus Fairs, 'A shop in a church by Merkx + Girod Architecten' in *Dezeen Magazine*. http://www.dezeen.com/2007/12/04/a-shop-in-a-church-by-merkx-girod-architecten/, accessed on: 08.11.2011



Fig 8 : Maastricht bookshop - Merkx + Girod's finest work

In addition, keeping the shop on the other side low created a clear and decipherable shop. The architects also benefited from the magnificent lighting plan and impressed the jury with these spatial solutions. "The combination of book complex and church interior were deemed particularly successful" 16 said the prize jury.

The client's original idea was to bridge the area, however the architects rejected this idea as it would disprove the architectural quality of the church' space. Instead, they wanted to emphasize the building's height and exceptional architecture. ¹⁷

Jonathan Glancey on the Masstricht bookshop said:

But the Maastricht bookshop is Merkx + Girod's
finest work. And its transformation is, I think, a
lesson to us all. Yes, we need to think up new
uses for old churches, but we must also consider ways of converting them without altering
their venerable fabric. A church is a prayer
set in stone, and even if we do not use them
as they were intended, their very presence is
reassuring and comforting, reminding us that
there is more to life than getting and spending,
trade and toil. The Dominican church in Maas-

¹⁶ Marcus Fairs, 'A shop in a church by Merkx + Girod Architecten' in *Dezeen Magazine*. http://www.dezeen.com/2007/12/04/a-shop-in-a-church-by-merkx-girod-architecten/, accessed on: 08.11.2011

¹⁷ Merkx+Girod official website: http://www.merkx-girod.nl/en/projects/retail/shops/selexyz-bookstore/dominicanen-maastricht, accessed on: 14,01,2012

¹⁸ Jonathan Glancey, 'In the beginning was the bestseller', in *The Guardian* http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2008/apr/09/architecture.bestbookshops, accessed on: 24.12.2011

tricht strikes just the right note. Its architects deserve a blessing. 18

It is right that time has changed religions and it is claimed that fewer people are willing to preserve the religious places and afford the financial costs to keep them erected. However, this church still stands thanks to the conversion of this classic architecture and gives new set of functionality. What the author wants to put here is that this solution can be quite useful in opposing architecture propaganda under dictatorships. It can make the religious structure defunct but, at the same time, not demolish the sacred signs and indications but instead consider them in converting these sacred places.(fig 9 & 10)

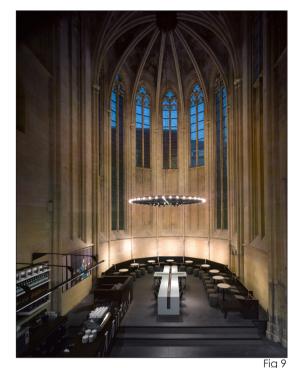


Fig 9 & 10: Designer used shape of cross (religious element) in new design. It is a way to respect to the religious elements and showing the old function of building.

Chapter 5

Design

Idea

As explained in Chapter Three, after the 1979 religious revolution in Iran, *Tekies* and *Hosseinies* turned into places to promote the government's ideological and political ideas. These days *Tekies* and *Hosseinies* are not just buildings for performing religious dramas and ceremonies; they are a part of the government's propaganda. Niyavaran Tekiye is one of these buildings but these days the majority of people who live around Niyavaran Tekye do not use this building and most of them do not support the government's propaganda of this building.

As analysed in the case studies in Chapter Four, conversion is a way of escaping propaganda in architecture and it could also be a path to achieve a democratic space when people's social life is considered.

It has been decided to convert Niyavaran Tekye based on people's need and life style in running away from the regimes' propaganda and make a democratic space for people.

location

Niyavaran is a region in north of Tehran's foothills. Up to about 40 years ago, Niyavaran was just a village north of old Tehran. These days, Niyavaran is a luxury area in Tehran. Niyavaran Tekye is located in the middle of the Niyavaran region.

The original Niyavaran Tekye was built upon the orders of the Qajar monarchy Nasser-ed-Dinn Shah and its galvanized iron roof was erected by Master Hassan Bokhara, a resident in Niyavaran village, with the financial assistance of endowers. ¹

The foundation of the Niyavaran Tekye was laid in 1848. At that time the building was comprised of the alcoves and arcades surrounding the central area, which was covered with a canvas canopy during mourning ceremonies. About five decades ago, the area of the Tekye was roofed with masonry materials. Niyavaran Tekye was entirely restored during Pahlavi period and its roof was subsequently repaired in 1982. This Tekye appears to have been located at the centre of a residential neighbourhood including traditional restaurants and commercial units; an urban fabric that was annihilated when the new avenue was cut through. ²

Today, all of the buildings around Niyavaran Tekye are houses and apartment buildings. There is no sign of the old texture of Niyavaran except the *Tekye* building.

^{1.} Abdolhojat Balaghi, History of Tehran (North part), 1971, p.66.

^{2.} Kambiz Haji-Qassemi, Ganjnameh-volume 9-Sacred Building, 2005, pp.186-192.





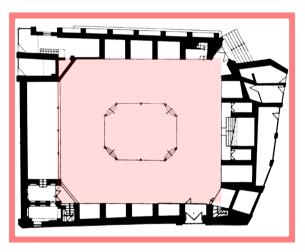
Fig1: Top: 3D of building

Bottom: Current entrance of building.

Characters of Niyavaran Tekye

- 1: The shape of the building is a rectangle; also, inside the building, all the chambers and stage (*Takht*) are rectangular or square.
- 2: It was built with two storeys. People on the second floor can also see the stage.
- 3: Inside the building, there are places for people to sit in every corner and watch the performance.
- 4: In the middle there is a square plateau called a *Takht*. The scenes of *Taziye* are played on the *Takht* and the passage around it.
- 5: These places have a bigger chamber called the royal living room (*Shah-Neshin*) in which the religious, the respected and the well renowned people sit and watch *Taziyeh* and the ceremonies.
- 6: The entrance for women and men is different and they do not sit near each other.

1: The shape of the building is a rectangle; also, inside the building, all the chambers and stage (*Takht*) are rectangular or square.(fig 2)



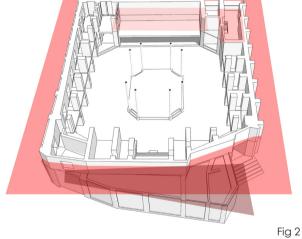
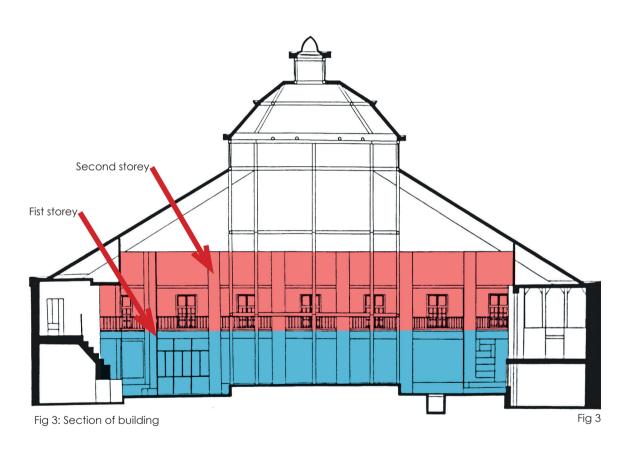


Fig 2: Plan and the 3d section on building. The shape of the building is a rectangle.

2: It was built with two storeys. People on the second floor can also see the stage



3: Inside the building, there are places for people to sit in every corner and watch the performance.

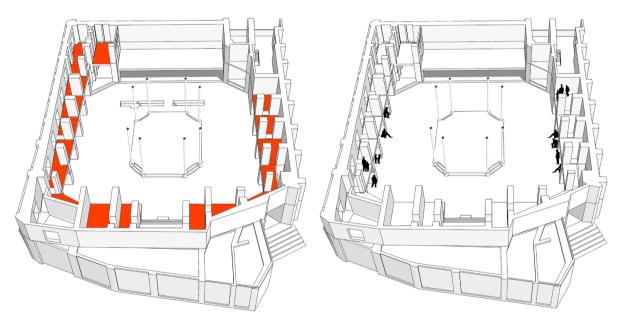
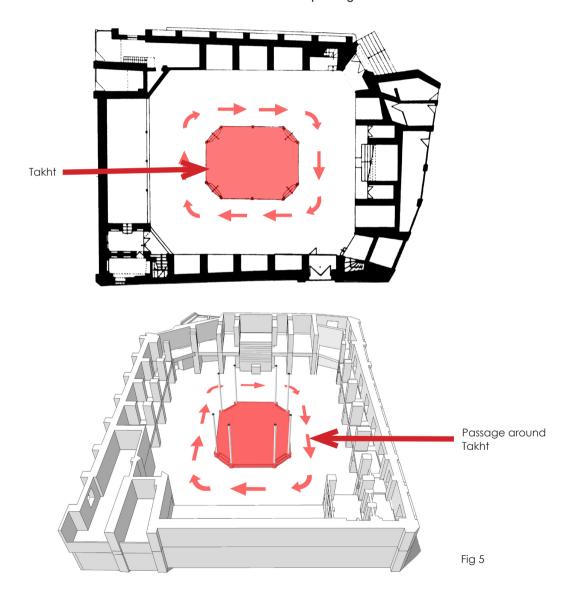
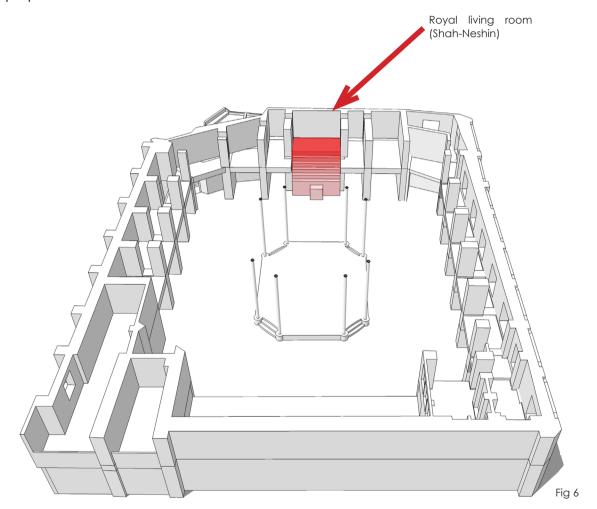


Fig 4

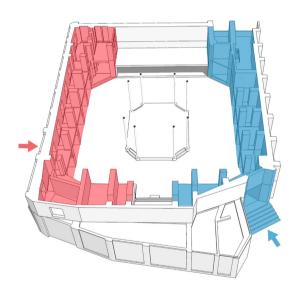
4: In the middle there is a square plateau called a *Takht*. The scenes of *Taziye* are played on the *Takht* and the passage around it.



5: These places have a bigger chamber called the royal living room (*Shah-Neshin*) in which the religious, the respected and the well renowned people sit and watch - and the ceremonies.



6: The entrance for women and men is different and they do not sit near each other.



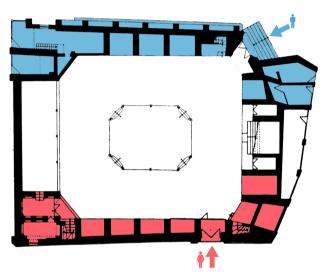


Fig 7

Methods of Design

As explained in Chapter Four, conversion based on people's social life is a way to escape the propaganda. Considering people's life style need is a way to make a democratic space and society. In respect of Niyavaran Tekye, the question is what people in that neighbourhood need. The

what people in that neighbourhood need. The questionnaire about Niyavaran Tekye shows that people who live around the building are not satisfied with the function of that building and most of them do not visit that building during a year.

When the author visited that area, she understood that around the Niyavaran Tekye building, there were many big houses and apartments and surprisingly no restaurant. The nearest restaurant is approximately 1 km away from that area. Close by, there are just some takeaways and fast food restaurants.

Also, there are some attractive places around that area such as the *Niyavaran Palace Complex, Niyavaran Park*, *Farhangsara* (Cultural Centre) which includes a theatre, museum, music hall and Café Gallery.(fig 8)These places attract many people to that part of Tehran but there are no restaurants around that area for people. It seems that it is one of the needs of that area.

Moreover, Niyavaran is a historical area in Tehran which had interesting textures and architecture but these days there is no sign of the Old Niyavaran and the *Tekye* is the last building which still shows the architecture of the old Tehran. In old Niyavaran, there were many traditional Iranian restaurants in that neighbourhood, called *Ghahvekhane*. It was one of the characteristics of that area 50 years ago. This area was famous because of these traditional restaurants before the new avenue was cut through. Based on this issue, it seems that a traditional Iranian restaurant is a very suitable and advantageous function for the Niyavaran Tekye building. Also, this function could show the atmosphere and the history of that neighbourhood:

Ghahvekhane (Iranian traditional restaurant) in Iranian society and culture had a very important role. It was a place for gathering people and spending their free time together. In any street and corners of the old Tehran there was



a Ghahvekhane. These buildings were the best public places for all of people from different social and economy levels. These places made people closer. 3

A Ghavekhane also has its own architectural characteristics: (fig 11)

- 1: Architects of these buildings always try to make a traditional space using the traditional material such as brick, stone, and wood.
- 2: Some walls in these places are covered with religious paintings and paintings of Iranian old stories or the pattern of Iranian carpets.
- 3: There are no tables in these places; instead there were lots of wooden benches(Takht) covered by Iranian carpet which a group of people could sit on. Some restaurants in Iran still use this system.(fig 9)
- 4: In the middle of the building and the main hall of the building there is a shallow pool to show transparency and honesty which makes that place have respect.

5: Another characteristic of these places is the

music; some musicians and bands always played traditional Iranian music in these places. Musicians also sat on the wooden or stone benches.(fig 10) People respected these places in Iran because there was no difference between rich and poor people. Because of this characteristic of Ghahvekhane







Fig 10

³ Iraj Nezafati, 'Ghahvekhane in these years', in Keyhan Newspaper, 25, December, 2008, p.5.



Fig 11: Some photos of Ghavekhane (Iranian traditional restaurant)

Fig 11

and the important role of these buildings in Iranian society, it is a good choice for new function of Niyavaran Tekye.

Based on the conversion experience in *Selexyz Dominicaner Maastricht* ⁴, another method which is important in the design is respecting to *Taziye*, *Ashoura* and religious elements and also considering the characteristic of *Tekye* in the new design. It is a way to protect and respect the religious elements and signs, especially in Iran which has a religious government.

⁴ See Chapter 4, Conversion: a path to Democracy.

Project

In the design part, the following issues will be considered based on the design methods and case studies:

- 1: Respecting the religious signs and religious places.
- 2: Preserving the main signs and specifications of the main (chosen) building.
- 3: The space, by eliminating the building specifications which include discrimination such as *Shah-Neshin* (a special place for important people).
- 4: Considering people's need and lifestyle and also the area requirements.
- 5: Combining traditional and religious Iranian elements.
- 6: Using significant traditional Iranian restaurant elements and giving a unique identity to the space.

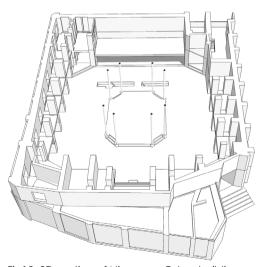


Fig12: 3D section of Niyavaran Tekye building.

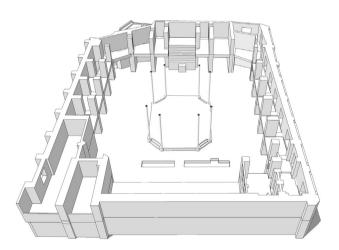


Fig 12

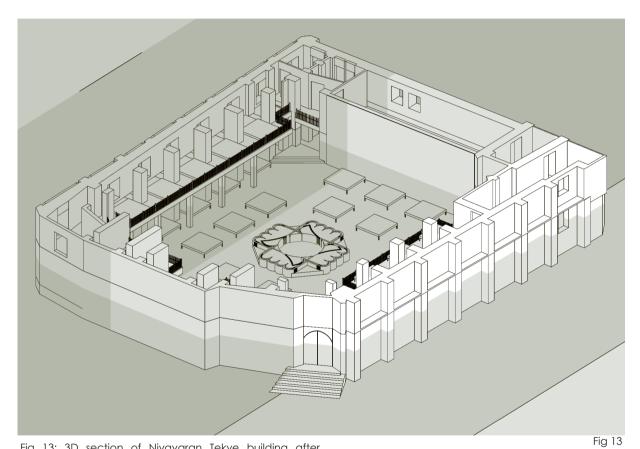


Fig 13: 3D section of Niyavaran Tekye building after conversion.

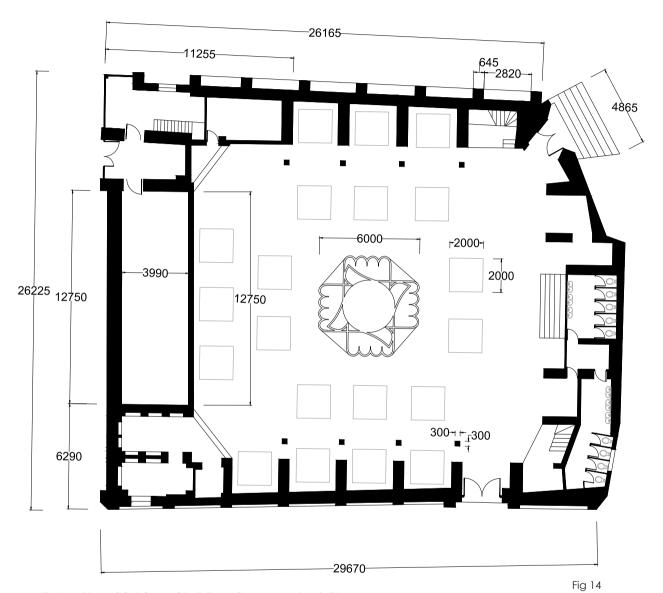


Fig 14 : Plan of first floor of building after conversion (with dimensions) $\,$

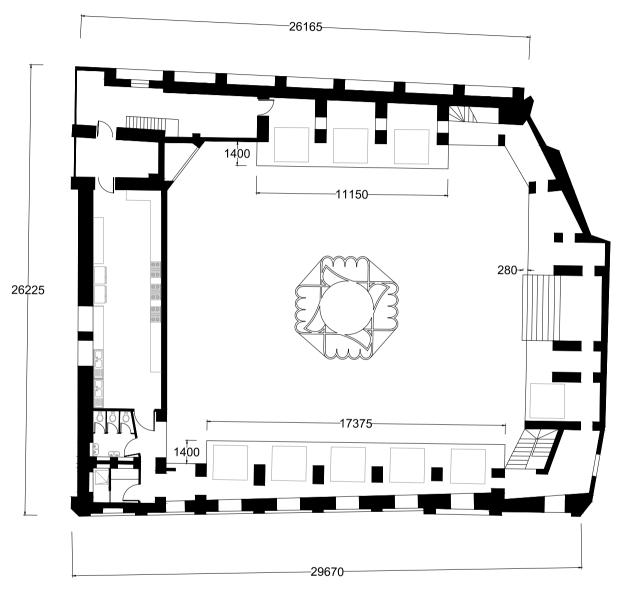


Fig 15 : Plan of second floor of building after conversion (with dimensions)

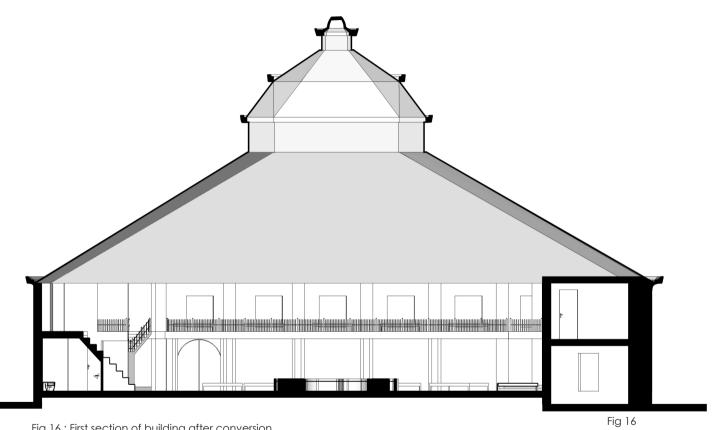


Fig 16: First section of building after conversion.

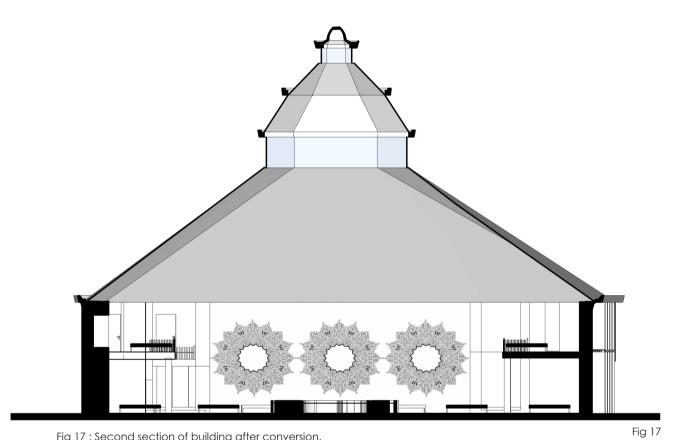


Fig 17: Second section of building after conversion.

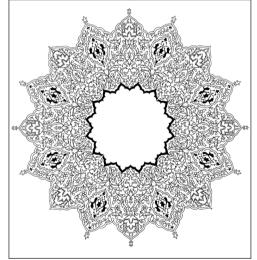


Fig 18

Fig 18: Iranian Pattern. This patter is a famous shape which use in designing Persian carpet

Pattern

Iranian carpets and Iranian patterns have an important role in the interior of traditional Iranian restaurants (ghahvekhane). Usually the interior walls of these places are covered with paintings or Iranian carpets. Based on this issue, the author decided to use an Iranian-Islamic pattern which is used in Persian carpets to cover a big wall of the building.(fig 18)

Democracy in the building

One of the signs of democracy is eliminating divisions and making the same facilities for people from different social levels.

In the design part, the following issues were considered to make a democratic space:

- 1: Eliminate the special sitting place for religious leaders and important people (Shah-Neshin).
- 2: Remove the women's and men's entrances and sitting areas which divide the building into men and women's parts.
- 3: Respect all the elements and ideas, especially the Ashoura and religious signs and not abuse the religion in the new function of the building.

Shallow pool

One of the features of the *Selexyz Dominicaner Maastricht*⁵ was using the church elements in a new design such as The Cross to consider and respect the religious element and the old function of the place. This aspect was an important reason in making that project successful.

As has been explained, one of the important elements in designing a traditional Iranian restaurant is a Shallow Pool (Hoz). Also, the major Element of *Ashoora* and *Taziye* is a sign of a hand which means the innocence of Imam Hossein and his followers. (fig 19) Also this sign is used in the decoration of *Tekye* and sacred places in the Shia culture.

Water in Iranian culture and history is very important, In Iranian culture, 4 elements are respectful: Water, Fire, Wind and Soil. In Iranian history Anahita is one of ancient goddesses who protect the water of the world. Iranians call water: the base of life. Because of these issues, water is a sacred element for Iranians.⁶

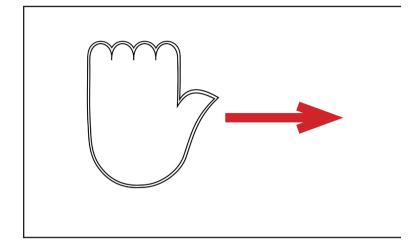


Fig 15

Fig 19: Hand ;the major Element of Ashoora and Taziye

⁵ See Chapter 4, Conversion: a path to Democracy.

⁶ Encyclopaedia Iranica, Vol. I, 1985, p.2.



Iranian people still have respect for this concept. In the Islamic culture, water is very important, too:

Muslims, before praying, should wash their hands and faces with water; in Islamic culture, water is clean and it makes people ready to speak with God. ⁷

The author tried to combine elements of Iranian traditional restaurants with the element 'Shallow pool' with *Taziye* and the *Ashoura* sign, a hand to show respect to the religion and the old function of the building. So, a shallow pool was designed with these two elements. To design, the shallow pool, the author used the shape of a hand as an *Ashoura* sign in four directions so people can see it from everywhere in the building.(fig 20) Also, in the shallow pool, there are some canals around the shape of the hands for the water movement. It is way to consider the sign of *Taziye* and also respect the religious signs, especially in Iranian society.

⁷ Mohammad, Naghizadeh, 'The role of water in Iranian culture', in Etela'at Newspaper, 14, June, 2006, p.6.

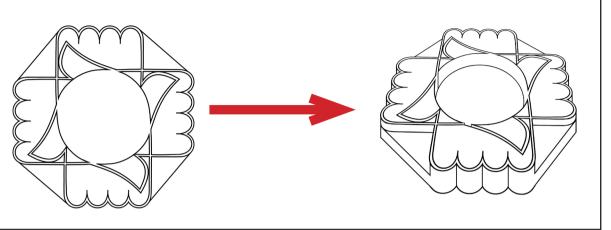
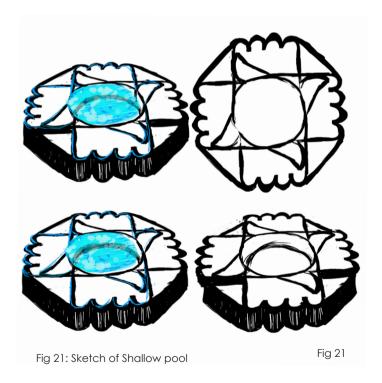


Fig 20 : Shallow pool : shape of a hand as an Ashoura sign in four directions

Fig 20

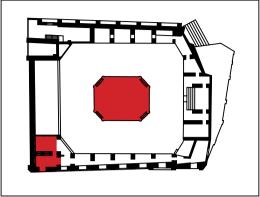


Comparing two plans

The conversion of Niyavaran Tekye was tried with minimum changes in the original building to make a new space. Also, the design tried to consider the original architectural characteristics of *Tekye* and use those characteristics in a creative way to make a democratic place for people and consider their social life and their life style. The following changes were done in making a new space. ⁸

- Make the chambers on the second floor bigger and add some columns on the first floor to hold them and make a corridor behind the chamber area on the second floor.
- Design the toilet and use the space under the royal chamber (*Shah-Neshin*) for it.
- Change the form of the stairs and make them wider.
- Consider a suitable and reasonable part of the building for the kitchen and design it.
- Make another entrance for the staff and the kitchen.
- Remove parts of some walls to make a bigger waiting room.
- Design the shallow pool instead of the stage (Takht).
- Design a toilet for staff.

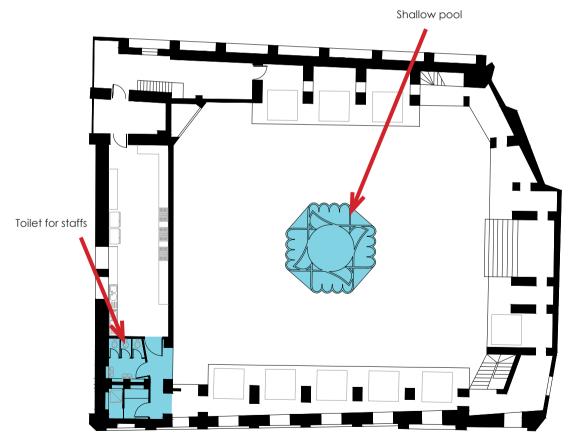
⁸ See next 5 pages.



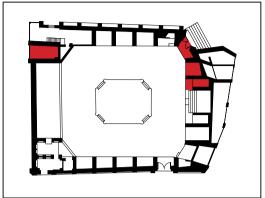
Plan of building before conversion (Second floor)

Fig 22 :Design the shallow poor instead of the stage (Takht).

Also in new plan a toilet is designed for staffs, who work in the restaurant.

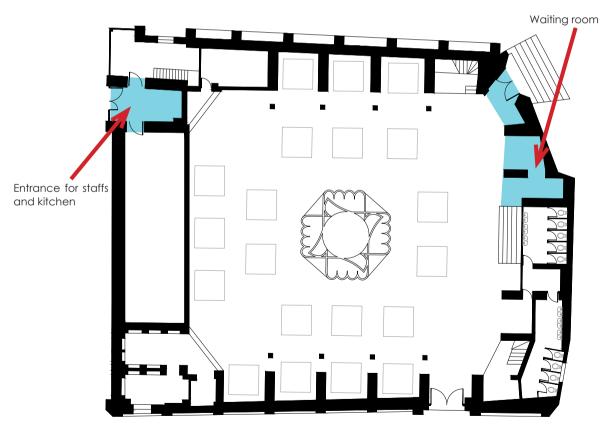


Plan of building before conversion (Second floor)



Plan of building before conversion (First floor)

Fig 23: Make another entrance for staffs and kitchen. Removing parts of some wall to make a waiting room bigger.



Plan of building after conversion (First floor)

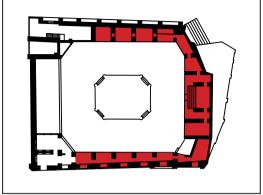
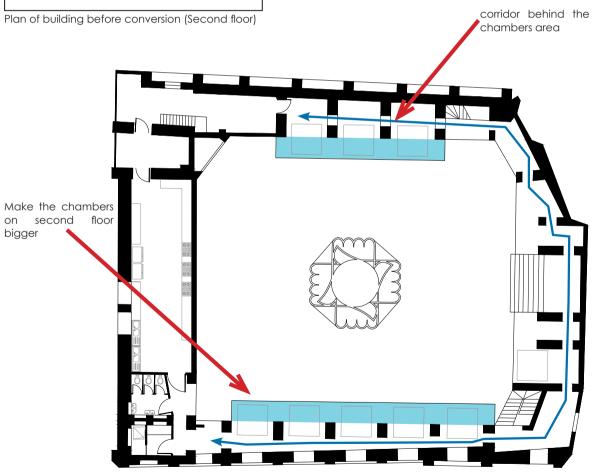


Fig 24: Make the chambers on second floor bigger and add some columns on first floor to hold them and make a corridor behind the chambers area on second floor.



Plan of building before conversion (Second floor)

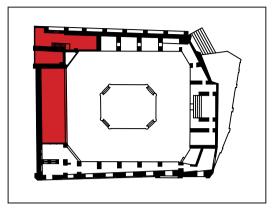
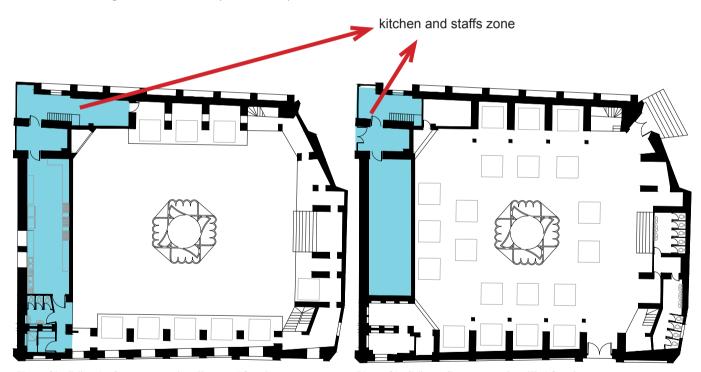


Fig 25:Consideration a suitable and reasonable part of the building for kitchen and design it.

Plan of building before conversion (Second floor)

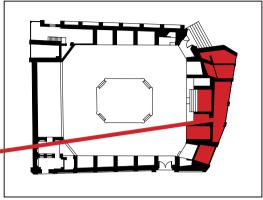


Plan of building before conversion (Second floor)

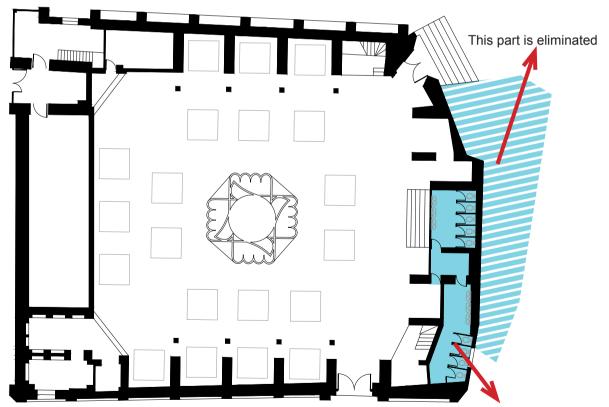
Plan of building after conversion (First floor)

And eliminate some parts of building which added to original building 15 years ago. This part destroyed the original shape of Tekye.

This part of the building was added 15 years ago to the original building. There are some stores on that area .It damaged the original shape of Building and I decided to eliminate that.



Plan of building before conversion (First floor)



Plan of building after conversion (First floor)

Toilet under the royal chamber

Conclusion of design

In designing the new space, the author had some methods based on research and the case studies. As a result, the following issues were considered:

- 1: Consider the social life and life style of the people.
- 2: Consider the history of that area and building.
- 3: Respect the religious elements and signs.
- 4: Combin the architectural characteristics of Tekies and the traditional Iranian restaurants (Ghahvekhane).
- 5: Try to make a democratic space and ignore the propaganda.

Reflecting on these issues in design enables an escape from propaganda and being closer to democracy. Also, more people would support the new function of the building and they would visit this place. Moreover, this building, as a historical building in that area, would achieve an important role in that area for people to gather.⁹

⁹ see the next 6 pages



Fig 27 & 28 & 29 : Photos of Current Niyavaran Tekye

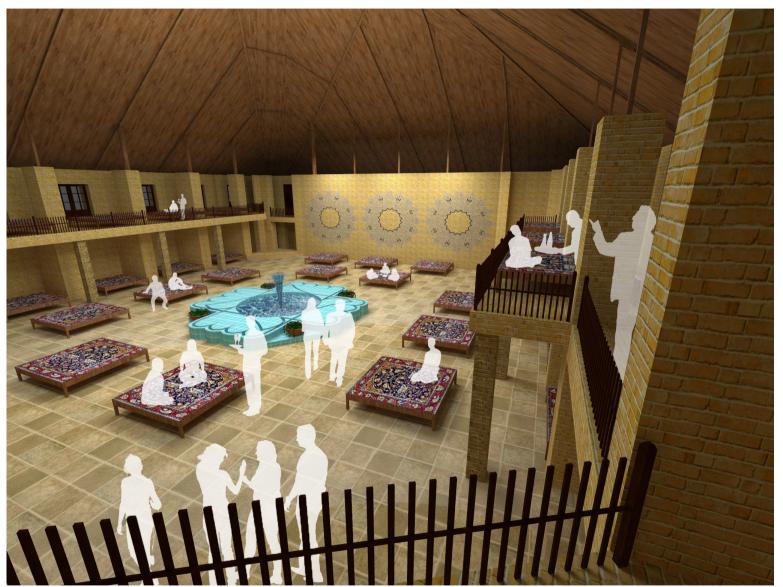


Fig 30: Interior of building after conversion

Fig 30



Fig 31:Interior of building after conversion

Fig 31



Fig 32:Interior of building after conversion

Fig 32



Fig 33:Interior of building after conversion



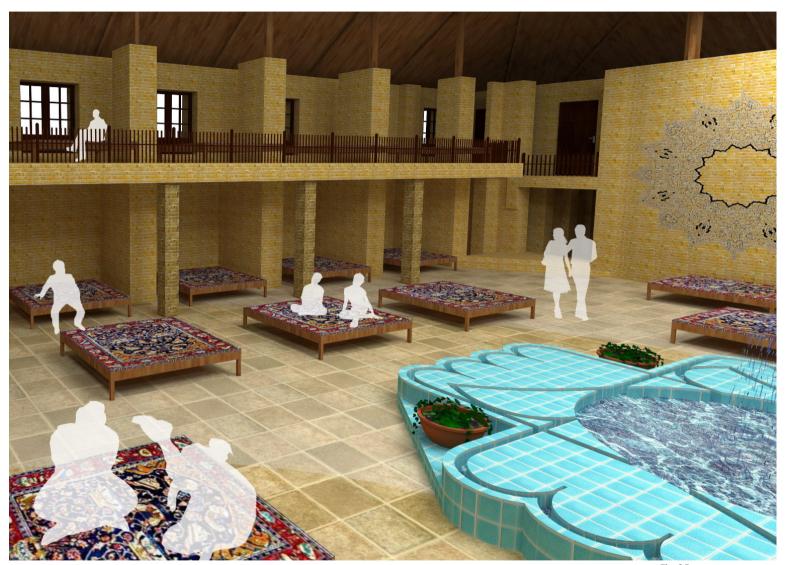
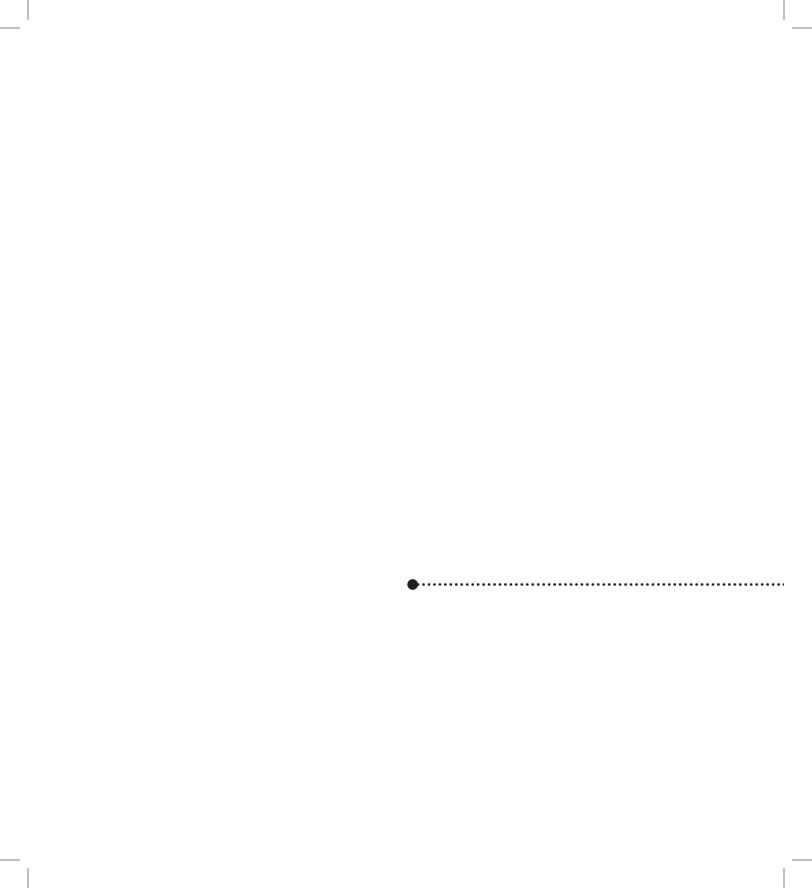


Fig 34 & 35 :Interior of building after conversion

Fig 35



Conclusion

People who follow an ideology sometimes use art to promote their beliefs and also attract other people to their ideology. As a result, there have been many ideological art works created. However, the honesty of these artworks is always a controversial subject because there is a narrow line between ideological art and propaganda. During history, propaganda has shown itself in architecture, as have other forms of art. Many buildings were built for propaganda reasons in Germany and the former Soviet Union, for example. This study has found that most organized propaganda in architecture happened

during dictatorships, totalitarianism regimes in different countries. In all of the examples given, there seem to be two reasons for the cause of propaganda in architecture: showing the power of the government and a regime and presenting the new style and method of living for people.

Of course, many buildings have been created to promote an idea or a life style around the world but when a government uses architecture to influence the behaviour of people in an organized way and does not give a chance for other ideas to show themselves, it becomes undemocratic propaganda. During such propaganda, one important rule is always missing: democracy. Democracy means consideration of the whole population to make a system, but in these kinds of regimes, propaganda works in an opposite way by eliminating different ideas. In the modern word, increasing the ability of communication gives the people a chance to make a decision about their life style and compare it with others in different countries. It seems that, in the modern world, this huge propaganda machine in dictatorships regimes cannot defend itself. Tekies are a good example of architectural propaganda and people's reactions.

A *Tekye* is a place for performing *Taziye* (a religious drama). These places have an old history in Iran but after the Iranian religious

revolution in February 1979, Taziye and Tekye became a very important issue for Iranian religious government. The story of Tazive is about an old event in Shia culture about jihad and the philosophy of it. After the revolution, the role of the Tekye was not just a building for performing religious drama. These buildings became places for advertising religious ideology and the government trying to impress people's style. thus, making architecture propaganda. Thus, over 15 years following the revolution, more than 1,000 Tekies were built in Tehran. The regime made an organization for advertising the Taziye and Ashoora concept (Jihad philosophy) and religious ideology in *Tekyes*, and there is a budget for building this kind of place (Tekye and Hosseiniye) in the Iranian government's yearly budget.

During this research, I asked people who live around one of these *Tekies*, theNiyavaran Tekye, about the role of this place in their neighbourhood. The result was very interesting. Out of 82 people who answered the questions, 73 people had not been to the *Tekye* during the last year. In 9 people who did go, 6 were over 50 years old and 3 were between 30 and 50. These statistics show the new generation of Iranians born after the Iranian Revolution

do not like to go these kinds of places and they do not support religious and political events at *Tekies*. In addition, 44 of the 82 people were against the use of the building as set by the government and just 7 people totally agreed with this issue.

The Niyavaran Tekye has an old history and it is the last building in that area which shows the old texture of that neighbourhood. It also had a very important role in that neighbourhood before the revolution. However, the government propaganda has influenced the role of this building and the reaction of people in that area shows that they have found a way of not considering the regime propaganda by not going to this building; that is the solution for them.

In the modern world, some concepts such as democracy and freedom have become very essential subjects for people. Also, during recent years in the Middle East, people understand their rights and they want to have democracy.¹

Therefore, in this paper, the question was: How we can make a democratic space from a building used for propaganda reasons? This study has shown that conversion and rehabilitation could be a way to make a democratic space from these places. In many countries around the world, conversion and rehabilitation has become

¹The Iranian Green Movement in 2010 and the Arab Spring in 2011 are signs to show that people in that area want to achieve democracy and they cannot tolerate dictatorship anymore.

an interesting subject in architecture in recent years. There are many reasons for converting buildings and social life could be one of the main reasons for changing the function of buildings and converting them. Considering what the people of a society need and paying attention to the social life of the people is one of the architects' and designers' responsibilities. This consideration relates an artist to his society which is essential. When the social life of people and their beliefs become an important subject for a government,

Diagram 1: Path from Ideology to Democracy; how we can change a building which use for a propaganda reason to a democratic building.



Ideological art

Ideologists usually seek simple and affective approaches to convey and express their beliefs to people and art has been a tempting and effective way



Propaganda

Propaganda is a method of communication that emphasises just one part of a situation and is used by a government or political group to make people agree with them.

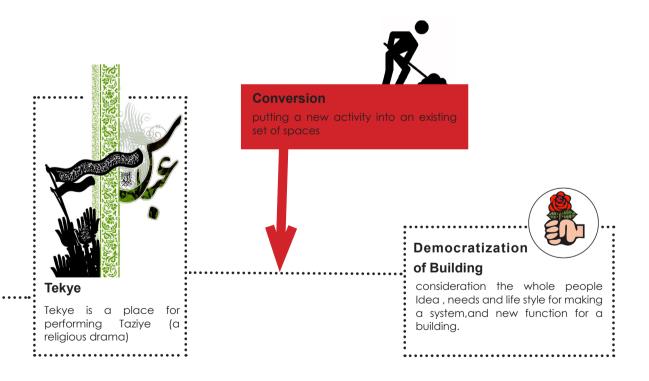


Sacred art

There are many kinds of ideologies, such as political, social, epistemological and religious. The art based on religious ideology is called sacred art.

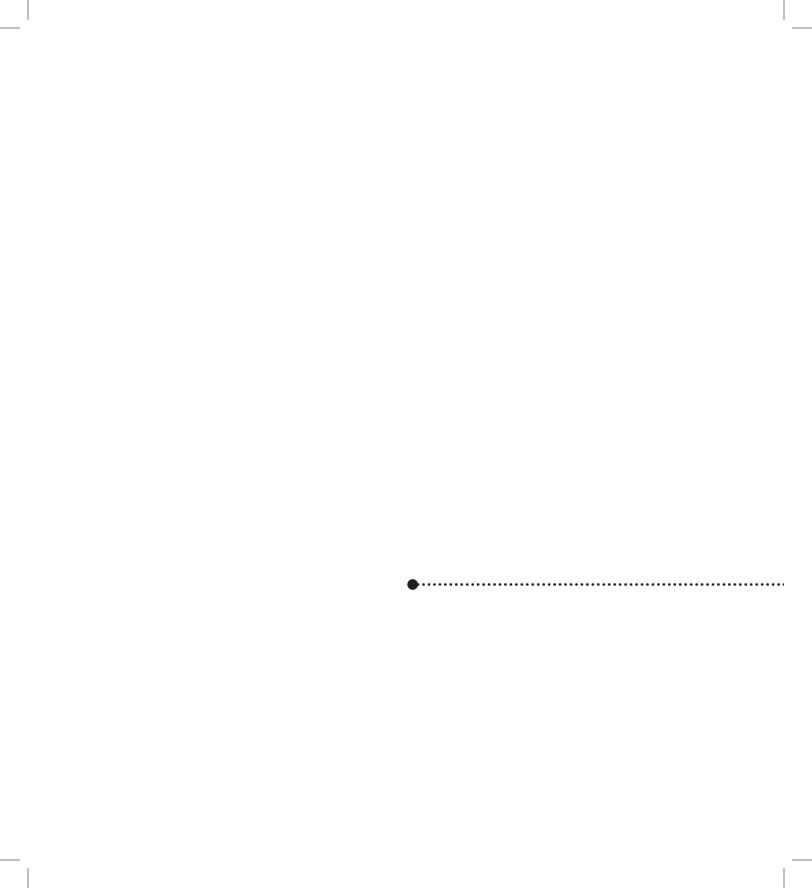
it would be a sign of becoming one step closer to democracy. So, it seems building conversion can be a solution to escape from architectural propaganda under dictatorships.

In designing the new space, I had some methods based on my research and case studies. The most important method in the design was to consider the social life and life style of people in the area. Also, considering the history of the area and the building was important to choose the new function for the building. Other methods



used in the design were to respect the religious elements and signs; to try to make a democratic space; and to ignore some characteristics of the original building which divided the place.

In this investigation, the aim was to make a democratic place so that more people would support the new function of the building and visit it. Moreover, as this building is a historical building in that area, the new function would play an important role in the area to encourage people to gather there. The design part of this research considered only one of Tehran's Tekies. There are more than 1,500 Tekies in Tehran and it seems, by using this method, we can have more democratic buildings and we can escape from propaganda, remembering that conversion and rehabilitation must consider the people's and neighbourhood's needs.



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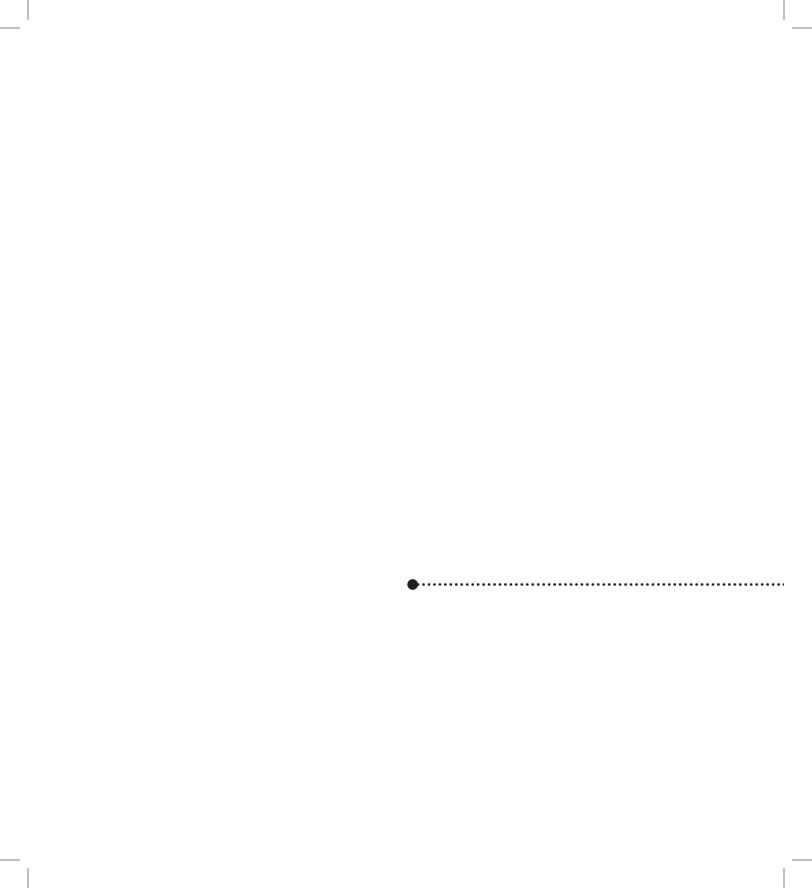
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Chapter 3: Taziye, Tekye and Propaganda

Fig 1: http://www.tebyan.net/index. aspx?pid=83158.

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Fig 19: http://hacforumu.com/index.php?topic=336.0

Diagram 1 &2 & 3 & 4: Designed by Pooyan Bagherzadeh

Chapter 4: Conversion; a Path to Democracy

Fig 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6: http://www.concretemushrooms.com/

Fig 7 & 8 & 9 & 10: http://openbuildings.com/buildings/bookstore-selexyz-dominicanen-profile-38887

Chapter 5: Design

Fig 1: http://safarpedia.ir/130159

Fig 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8: Designed by: Pooyan Bagherzadeh

Fig 9: http://blog2.hoomanb.com/2010/08/blog-post.html

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Fig 11: http://3nasl.com/archive/view/2166984

Fig 12 & 13 & 14 & 15 & 16 & 17: Designed by: Pooyan Bagherzadeh

Fig 18: http://www.4shared.com/dir/J7tDFcTN/sharing.html

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Fig 20 & 21 & 22 & 23 & 24 & 25 & 26: Designed

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Fig 27: http://safarpedia.ir/130159

Fig 28 & 29: By: Pooyan Bagherzadeh

Fig 30 & 31 & 32 & 33 & 34 & 35: Designed by :

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Conclusion

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