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ARTICLE

Inclusive Urban Gateways: Towards Socially Just and Open Urban Systems

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ABSTRACT
This article reimagines the concept of urban gateways, highlighting their potential to promote social equity and inform policy decisions in urban development. The research explores how urban gateways can be adapted to meet contemporary needs, focusing on their evolving forms, functions, and conceptualizations. Using grounded theory, a case study of Shiraz's Qur'an Gate illustrates how the concept of a gateway can be reinterpreted as a cultural entity that remains relevant in urban planning. The analysis identifies five primary categories that define urban gateways: spatial, functional, environmental, social, and perceptual. These categories emphasize the potential for gateways to contribute to balanced urban development strategies that promote social justice. The research advocates for a transition from closed to open spatial systems in gateway design, driven by cultural, economic, and political considerations. This shift can lead to policies that foster social and economic balance, urban decentralization, and a more inclusive urban environment. By examining gateways as thresholds and nodes within urban networks, the research investigates their ability to connect local, regional, and even global scales. The concept of projective and topological spatial performance is introduced,

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suggesting ways in which gateways can be designed to redefine their roles within the evolving urban landscape. Ultimately, this article emphasizes the importance of reconceptualizing urban gateways as tools for promoting social equity and shaping policies toward more just and open urban systems.

KEYWORDS
urban gateway, cultural heritage, social policy, urban development, open spatial systems

Introduction

In the rapidly evolving landscape of Iranian cities, the traditional concept of urban gateways is undergoing a significant transformation. As cities expand and their boundaries become increasingly blurred, the need for innovative approaches to urban planning has emerged. This study examines the concept of urban gateways, focusing on their potential to promote social equity and inform policy decisions in contemporary urban contexts.

In the ongoing process of reconfiguring Iranian cities, their extensions are scattered and multinodal. This fragmentation challenges the traditional notion of clear urban edges. The urban gateway, as a long-standing concept in urban planning, can be reimagined within this new framework to address the evolving needs of these cities. A new approach to the gateway is necessary to respond to the flow space in the urban network and open spatial systems (Çalışkan, 2010; Ferguson et al., 2012). The reason is that global, regional and urban networks rely on different modes of transportation and communication to connect with each other. Thus, both the nature of flows and the type of crossings have changed (Andersson et al., 2015; Rodrigue, 2004). By understanding the complex interplay between urban form, social dynamics, and economic forces, we can harness the potential of urban gateways to create more equitable and sustainable cities.

Reconsideration of the role of urban gateways can lead to the creation of open spatial systems that promote social inclusion, economic opportunity, and environmental sustainability. These gateways have the potential of vital connectors, bridging gaps between diverse neighborhoods and promoting social cohesion. Moreover, the strategically aligned implementation of urban gateway projects will ensure that the benefits of urban development are shared equitably among all residents.

The open spatial systems feature permeability, flexibility, and adaptability. They are intended to accommodate multiple activities, promote social interaction, and encourage spontaneous encounters. The creation of such spaces can contribute to the development of a sense of belonging and community amongst people. Accordingly, this study aims to explore how urban gateways can be designed to facilitate social interaction, improve accessibility, stimulate economic development, and protect the environment.

In Shiraz, Iran, the capacity and permeability of the Qur'an Gate have changed over time. However, the concept of the gateway remains relevant within the urban and regional networks. Its connection with the foundations of social space that makes up the "territory" is guaranteed. The mobility of goods and people has made urban networks spread widely. Still, the territorial definition remains decisive and reliable.

Shiraz, like other big cities in Iran, gradually became more dependent on the automobile in the early 1930s. This dependence created a form of independence for the city where urban mobility was no longer carried out through the fixed routes of the past. The automobile allowed flexible mobility of the crowds in all directions. In a short period, cars changed the conventional patterns of mobility. Mass production processes were experienced, causing large-scale urban fabric spread (Arefian & Moeini, 2016; Kheirabadi, 2000; Sarmento & Kazemi, 2014; Sharifi & Murayama, 2013). Open ubanization was strengthened and observers have noticed that urban forms are losing their clear boundaries at the edges (Gu, 2019; Ni, 2013; van der Woude et al., 1990).

The city border started to disappear. Urban planning appeared as an independent field, based on the capability of steering the dynamic boundaries of the cities. Shiraz lost all its gates and the borders, and distinctions between the city and its surroundings became unclear. The current urban planning moved toward a corridor development plan. This caused the removal of unjustified elements. The new stage was an end to the contrast between the city and the center with the periphery and the terrain. The walls served to block the passageways. The gates acted as regulators of the entry of "strangers" into the city. However, they were abandoned. In between, the emerging new authorities were placed on power, technology, information, time, and speed (Arefian & Moeini, 2016; Pilehvar, 2021; Shabani & Kamyab, 2013). In 1936, during Reza Shah Pahlavi's era, the Qur'an Gate was destroyed. It was included in the development plan for the northern corridor of Shira. However, unlike other gates in Iran, it was rebuilt ten years later by the people themselves. With a new definition, it regained its role and continues to function as an urban element until today.

Since the mid-1950s, Iranian cities have experienced dynamic development and transformation. Controlling the city frontier within definite thresholds and boundaries became a serious concern (Arefian & Moeini, 2016; Madanipour, 2003, 2011). The urban fringes of cities are outlined by dynamic, dispersed development patterns, rather than controlled and legible functional areas and entrance areas (Ehlers & Floor, 1993; Madanipour, 2006a, 2006b). The case Qur'an Gate in Shiraz offers a valuable lens to explore the evolving role of urban gateways. Historically, gates served as physical and symbolic boundaries, regulating access to cities. However, with the advent of modern transportation and urban planning, their functions have shifted. This research investigates how gateways can be reimagined as dynamic elements within urban networks, contributing to social and economic balance, and fostering more inclusive urban environments.

While examining the historical and contemporary significance of the Qur'an Gate, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

- How can urban gateways be reconceptualized in the context of contemporary urban development?
- What new roles can gateways play in promoting social equity and inclusivity?

- How can the concept of gateways be applied to inform urban planning policies?

The study explores the historical evolution of the Qur'an Gate, its current function within the urban landscape, and its potential to serve as a model for rethinking urban gateways in other Iranian cities. By examining the gateway's semantic foundations and its spatial impact, this research seeks to provide insights into the future of urban planning and the role of gateways in shaping equitable and sustainable cities.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach, specifically grounded theory, to conduct a conceptual analysis of urban gateways. Grounded theory is a systematic method for developing theories from data, allowing for the exploration of complex phenomena and their underlying relationships (Drisko & Maschi, 2016; Kyngäs, 2020; Sabharwal et al., 2018). By focusing on the social and spatial dimensions of urban gateways (refer to Glaser & Strauss, 2006), this study intends to contribute to a deeper understanding of their role in promoting equitable and inclusive urban environments.

A comprehensive literature review was conducted to establish a strong theoretical foundation and identify key concepts related to urban gateways. The review focuses on understanding the differences between gates and gateways, identifying key characteristics of gateways, and exploring their potential roles in urban development. The review process involved the following steps:

Electronic databases such as JSTOR[1], Google Scholar[2], Web of Science[3], and Scopus[4] were used to identify relevant academic articles, books, and reports. Keywords such as "urban gateway," "gate," "urban design," "urban planning," "public space," and "social inclusion" were used to refine the search. Additional sources were identified through references cited in the initial search results.The identified sources were evaluated based on their relevance, credibility, and methodological rigor.

The case study of Shiraz's Qur'an Gate was selected based on its historical significance, contemporary relevance, and potential to illustrate the evolving role of urban gateways. The selection process involved:

1. Literature Review: A thorough review of existing literature on Shiraz's history, urban development, and cultural heritage.
2. Expert Consultation: Consultation with urban planning experts, historians, and local stakeholders to gain insights into the gate's significance and its role in the city's urban fabric.
3. Field Observation: On-site visits to the Qur'an Gate and its surrounding area to observe its spatial characteristics, usage patterns, and social dynamics.

Data Collection and Analysis were conducted simultaneously using grounded theory methodologies. The process involved:

[1] https://www.jstor.org

[2] https://scholar.google.com

[3] https://www.webofscience.com

[4] https://www.scopus.com

1. Document Analysis: Analysis of historical documents, urban planning documents, and policy reports related to Shiraz and the Qur'an Gate.
2. Field Observations: Systematic observation of the physical characteristics of the gate, its surrounding urban environment, and the activities and interactions taking place in the area.
3. Semi-Structured Interviews: In-depth interviews with key informants, including urban planners, architects, historians, and local residents, to gather insights into the gate's social and cultural significance.
4. Data Coding and Analysis: The collected data was coded and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, themes, and relationships between concepts.
5. Theory Development: The analysis led to the development of a grounded theory that explains the social, spatial, and political implications of urban gateways. The theory focuses on how gateways can contribute to equitable and inclusive urban environments, and how they can be integrated into urban planning policies.

Urban Gateways: Connecting Cities and Communities

"Gateway" is a term with multiple interpretations and uses. While often associated with entrances or passages, it can also signify a point of connection or transition. In the context of urban planning, a gateway serves as a vital interface between a city and its surrounding areas (Punter, 2009). A gate, on the other hand, is typically a physical structure that controls access to a specific area. It may be a door, a barrier, or a series of barriers. Gates are often used to protect property, regulate traffic, or restrict access to certain individuals or groups (Hesse, 2010; Zaninović, 2022).

While both gateways and gates can serve as points of entry or exit, there are three key differences between them including function, scope, and intangibility. First, gateways are more about connection and transition, while gates are primarily about control and access. Second, gateways often encompass a broader area or concept, while gates are typically more localized and specific. Third, gateways can be physical structures, but they can also be intangible boundaries, such as cultural or economic zones. Gates are almost always physical structures (Burghardt, 1971; Melville, 2015; Scholvin, 2021; Scholvin et al., 2019). Urban gateways are more than just physical structures; they represent the intersection of urban and rural landscapes, the meeting points of diverse cultures, and the conduits for economic and social exchange. They are essential for understanding the dynamics of cities and their relationships with their hinterlands (Bangia, 1994; Gallent et al., 2006; Shibley et al., 2011; Singer et al., 2008; Woudsma, 2007).

The concept of a gateway emphasizes both flow and control. It serves as a location where people and goods move in and out of a city, while also acting as a point of regulation and management. Gateways can be physical structures, such as bridges, tunnels, or transportation hubs, as well as intangible boundaries, like cultural or economic zones. The social significance of gateways is immense. They are spaces

where individuals from different backgrounds come together, interact, and exchange ideas. Gateways can promote social cohesion, economic development, and cultural diversity. However, they also present challenges like congestion, pollution, and social inequality. These spaces represent connection, exchange, and transformation, illustrating the changes occurring at the urban edges of gateway areas (Abdullah, 2022; Bagheri & Mansouri, 2018). Careful planning and management are essential to ensure that gateways meet the needs of all citizens and positively impact the overall quality of life in a city. This consideration leads us to the question: How can we define a city gate according to the principles of inclusive urbanism?

Inclusive Urban Gateways: A Pathway to Equitable Cities

Inclusive design is vital in urban gateways, as it ensures that these key entry points into cities are welcoming, accessible, and equitable for everyone. By prioritizing the needs and experiences of all users—regardless of age, ability, income, or background—we can create vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable urban environments.

Traditionally, urban gateways have often been designed with a singular focus on aesthetics or functionality, neglecting the diverse needs and experiences of the people using them. This narrow approach has resulted in spaces that are often exclusive and inaccessible to many.

To address this issue, we need to adopt a more holistic approach that considers the needs of all users. By emphasizing accessibility, fostering social inclusion, stimulating economic opportunity, and promoting environmental sustainability, we can create urban gateways that are welcoming, inclusive, and equitable. Ensuring both physical and sensory accessibility, as well as respecting diverse cultural backgrounds, is crucial. Involving local communities in the design process, creating inclusive public spaces, and promoting affordable housing can enhance social inclusion. Stimulating economic activity, supporting local businesses, and improving connectivity can drive economic opportunity. Finally, incorporating green infrastructure, using sustainable materials, and prioritizing energy efficiency can promote environmental sustainability.

How a Gateway Was Formed: Qur'an Gate of Shiraz

Shiraz, the capital of Fars province and the fourth most populated city in Iran, is located in the south of Iran. The complex of the Qur'an Gateway in Shiraz is known as the entrance of Shiraz. This gateway is located in the northeastern part of Shiraz near the Allah Akbar gorge, between Chehel Magham and Baba Kouhi mountains. It is on the way from Shiraz to Isfahan. In this complex, the access network for riding and walking is well located, making an enjoyable image from the entrance of a city.

In the past, when passengers approached urban areas after passing deserts and mountains, they felt excited upon seeing nearby farms and gardens. Such a sense was completed by reaching a gate. Regular barriers and gates determined the city's territory and how to enter the city. Before passengers saw the gates and barriers, they first noticed agricultural lands. They also saw the presence of some urban marginal actions, which indicated their approach to the cities (Habibi et al., 2019; Khalilian et al., 2021; Rahimzadeh & Ahari, 2022).

The Qur'an Gate's evolution has been influenced by various social and political factors. In the 11th and 12th century AD, Albuyeh dynasty chose Shiraz as his capital. The main structure of the city was formed during this period. During the Azod al-Dawleh period, this gate was built (Limbert, 2004; Manoukian, 2012). Until the end of the Qajar dynasty (from 1789 to 1925), the Qur'an gateway can be considered a durable naturality and changeable structure. The change in Shiraz's physical structures and population during the Qajar period was insignificant compared to the previous period. The city was centralized in the Bazar and Zand region. At the beginning of the last century, Shiraz was affected by modernization like other cities in Iran (Manoukian, 2002).

The changes in Shiraz started at the beginning of the reign of Pahlavi I, around 1926. During the Pahlavi era, the primary core of Shiraz changed from a traditional structure to a modern form. More than a hundred new neighborhoods were built. By 1956, the area of Shiraz was doubled compared to 1926, while the population of Shiraz reached 156,557 people. The Qur'an Gate had been standing until 1936. Reza Shah ordered to destroy it with dynamite for the development plan of the northern road of Shiraz. The increasing number of cars, especially trucks and buses, made the narrow and dangerous gate a traffic hazard (Kooros, 1963; Manoukian, 2002). However, it was rebuilt again by the people of Shiraz in 1949.

The Qur'an Gate's destruction and subsequent reconstruction reflect the changing priorities of urban development and the interplay between cultural heritage and modernization. In the Pahlavi era, the emphasis was on modernizing the city and improving infrastructure, leading to the gate's demolition. However, the public's strong attachment to the historical landmark resulted in its rebuilding, demonstrating the importance of cultural heritage in shaping urban identity.

The next period of changes in the entrance of Shiraz co-occur with the second Pahlavi period, the era when Shiraz experienced rapid growth in sync with other cities of Iran. Between 1956 and 1966, the area of the city tripled from its 1926 area. This rapid development and growth may be due to several factors. These include the establishment of academic and administrative centers, military bases, a rise in immigration, and natural population growth . According to the General Population and Housing Census of Iran in November 1966, the population of Shiraz reached 270,000 people. After half a century, the city's population grew slowly at first (about 2% per year from 1922 to 1956). Then, it increased faster (approximately 4/7% from 1956 to 1966). Therefore, the population of Shiraz increased fivefold in 50 years. According to nationalist strategies in the Pahlavi II era, Shiraz became important. Therefore, during this period, Shiraz was considered as the cultural capital of the Iran. All these events caused a dramatic increase in the number of tourists to this city. In 1972, Shiraz's first comprehensive plan was made. Inspired by the past, the Qur'an gateway was rebuilt, although there were some differences. It had larger dimensions, a rectangular room above it for the Qur'an, two small entrances on either side and an arched main opening. But the cars entering Shiraz still passed through the narrow and limited passage under the Qur'an Gate (Khalilian et al., 2021; Sadeghi et al., 2019).

Fundamental changes have been made in the Islamic Republic era. During this period, Shiraz has faced a large population growth, witnessing a 5.34 growth between the years 1979 and 2020. It has reached 1.869 million people from 350 thousand people. Incoming tourists reached 11,500,000 from 1,200,000. The city developed more rapidly and in 2008, a new master plan was prepared for the city. Construction also increased by 80 percent compared to 1979.

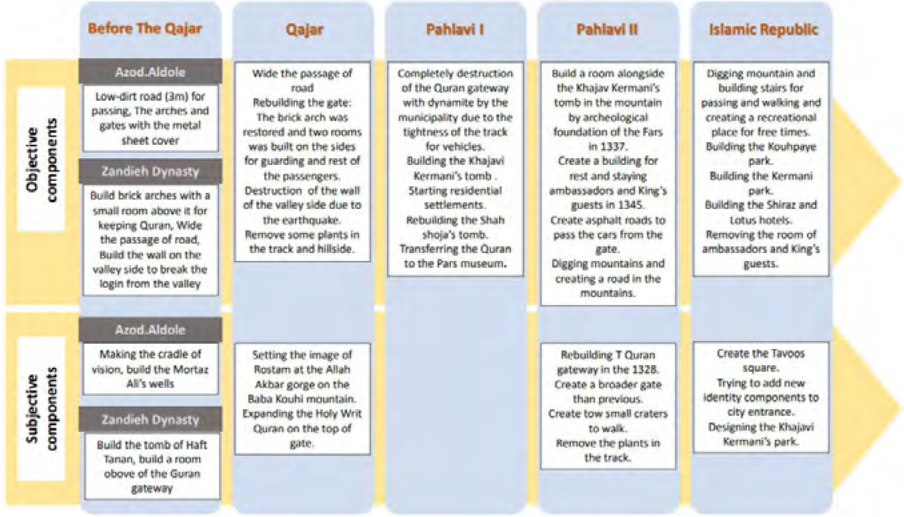
The Qur'an Gate's transformation in the Islamic Republic era reflects the changing priorities of urban development and the impact of economic globalization. The city's rapid growth and increased tourism have led to significant changes in the surrounding area, including the development of commercial and recreational facilities. However, this development has also raised concerns about gentrification and displacement of local communities.

During this period, the amount of Shiraz green spaces decreased from 18 thousand hectares to 2,857 hectares. The gateway area turned into one of the great green spaces of Shiraz . Also, one of the most important interventions that took place in the area of the gateway was filling the channel. It poured the floodwaters of the valley into the river. The water channel was filled to widen the path. At the time, this measure did not take environmental considerations into account. This changed the natural bed of the area and caused problems in flood control. The further cutting off of the mountains widened the gate area and turned it into an urban edge (Kamanroodi Kojuri et al., 2020; Sabet Sarvestani et al., 2011).

Figure 1 shows transformations of the Qur'an Gate to a new gateway from the Qajar era until now in the objective and subjective categories.

Figure 1

The Theoretical Framework of the Research

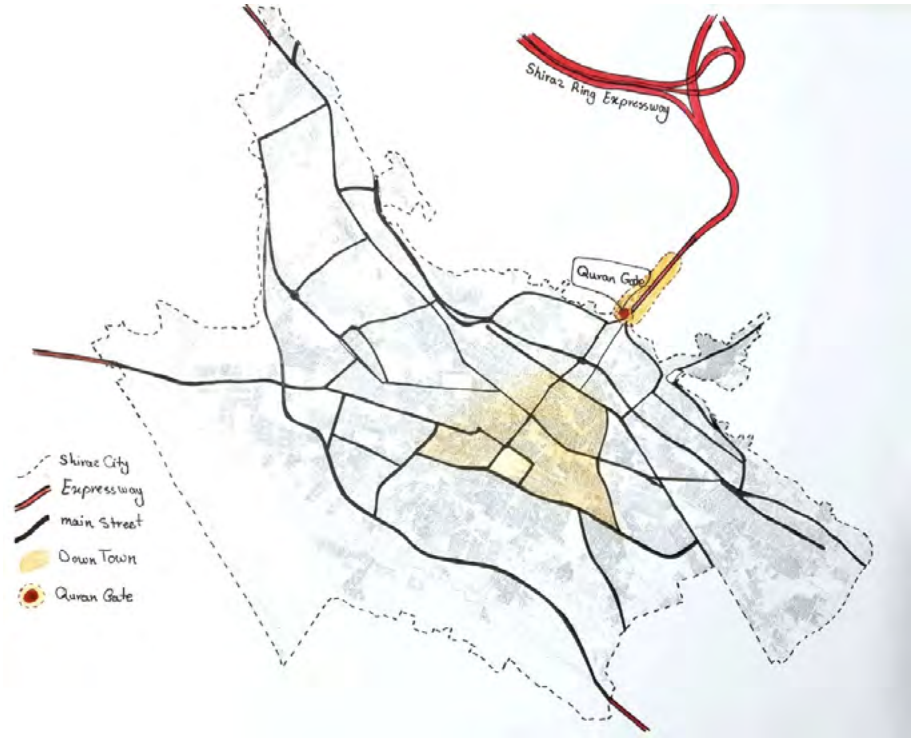


Note. Source: developed by the authors.

Since 1949, we can identify a process of forming a gateway at the edge of the city beyond its traditional gate meaning. As shown in Figure 2, in these years, the Qur'an Gate of Shiraz defined a threshold for the urban network. This gateway has made it possible to access the northern cities to Shiraz by the ring road. An east-west highway on North Main Boulevard terminates at this gateway. Then it distributes the traffic to different parts of the city. Three main ways have diverged from this threshold. The first, Jomhoori Eslami Boulevard, goes to the west of Shiraz. The second, Hrjrat Boulevard, reaches the center of the city. The third, Haft Tanan Boulevard, goes to the east. As a whole, Qur'an Gateway in Shiraz makes an entrance corridor and threshold from the ring road to the city.

Figure 2

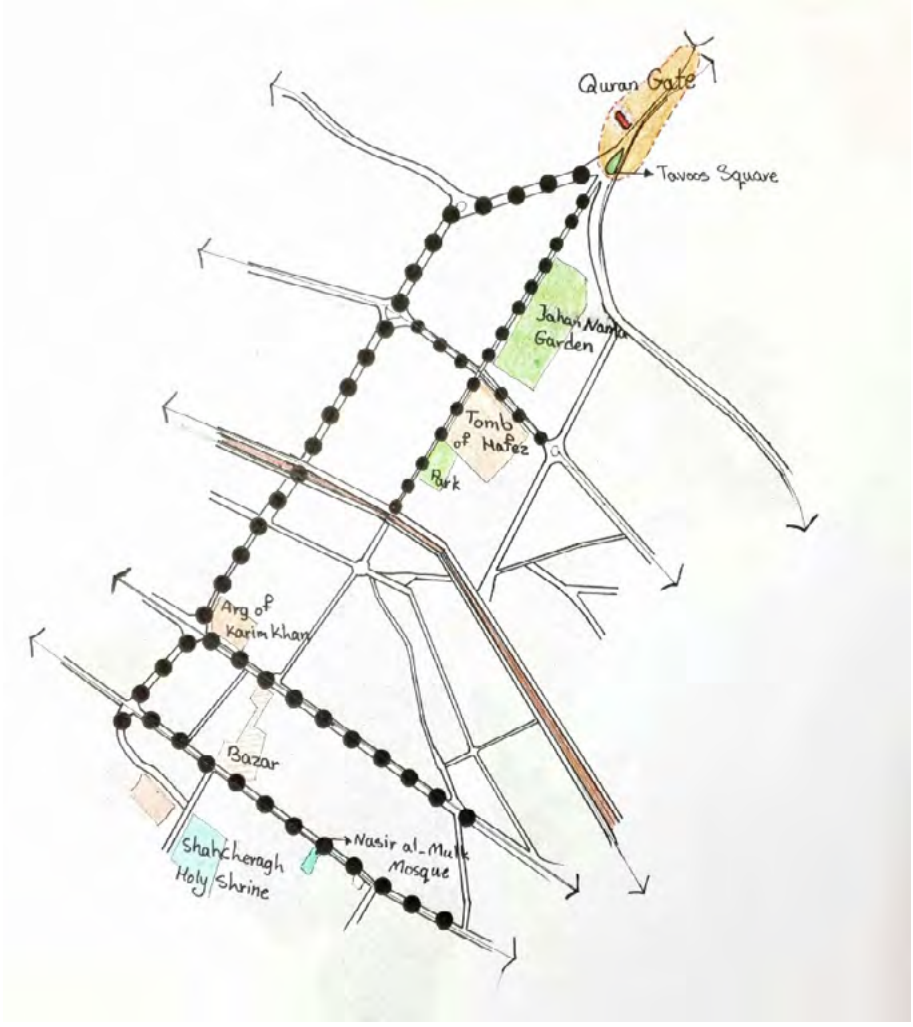
The Location of the Qur'an Gateway in Shiraz in Shiraz Urban Area



Note. Source: developed by the authors.

As shown in Figure 3, the spatial structure of the Qur'an Gateway is shown towards the city center. There is an easy access from the Qur'an Gateway to the central part of Shiraz by Hejrat Boulevard. It just takes about 10 minutes from Tavoos Square to downtown. Important historical and tourist places are located on this path. Accessibility is one of the most important elements of spatial quality in the Qur'an Gateway. It is along with the other features.

Figure 3
The Spatial Structure of the Qur'an Gateway in Shiraz



Note. Source: developed by the authors.

As shown in Figures 4 and 5, the Qur'an Square was made with the building of a large two-way boulevar. It hosted instruments made in the shape of a peacock whose tail was formed by colorful flowers. The peacock was recognized as the symbol of Shiraz. The zone of Qur'an Gateway is one of the tourist recreation parts of Shiraz, which has different functions inside itself. As the years passed, commercial, recreational, and service uses were joined to this area. Qur'an Gate turned into a recreational and commercial area on an edge at Shiraz's entrance, forming one of

the main urban nodes. It was a sign at the entrance, a park at a highway intersection, or an entrance corridor to a city. This was with a certain sequence of indications, lighting, landscaping, and shopping malls. The Shiraz grand hotel is located near this gate too. This made the new gate a multifunctional space on the edge of the main road. Despite the functional diversity and multi-scale places of this space, there is still harmony and unity in this place.

Figure 4

The Multifunctional Space of the Qur'an Gateway on the Urban Edge

Note. Source: developed by the authors.

Figure 5

From a Gate to a Gateway at the Urban Edge

1980 and after it
Islamic Republic
Passing under gate until 1985. Closing the gorge within 10 years and creating a two-way boulevard on it. Excessive increase in residential construction in the Allah-Akbar gorge. Removal of the passage through the Allah-Akbar gorge. Removal of the monument of ambassadors and kings

1949–1966
Pahlavi II
Reconstruction of the Qur'an gateway with the public will and by Etimad al-Tojjar. Construction of an asphalt highway for automobiles to pass under the gateway. Removal of some plants on the road crossing

1936
Pahlavi I
Removal of the Qur'an gateway due to the passage of heavy vehicles. Built the Khajavi Kermani's tomb

Note. Source: developed by the authors.

The Conceptualization of Urban Gateway: An Inclusive Perspective

Conceptualizing urban gateways requires a systematic approach to break down data into its constituent components. However, traditional approaches often overlook the social, cultural, and environmental dimensions of these critical urban spaces. By integrating principles of inclusive urbanism, we can redefine urban gateways as dynamic and equitable elements within the urban fabric.

Previous research on urban gateways has primarily focused on their physical form and functional role. While these aspects are important, a more holistic understanding requires consideration of the following:

Social and Cultural Significance: Urban gateways can serve as powerful symbols of identity, community, and cultural exchange. They can foster social cohesion, promote diversity, and create a sense of belonging.

Spatial Justice and Equity: Gateways should be designed to be accessible and inclusive for all, regardless of age, ability, or socioeconomic status. They should connect people to opportunities, services, and green spaces.

Environmental Sustainability: Gateways can play a crucial role in promoting sustainable urban development by incorporating green infrastructure, reducing carbon emissions, and enhancing biodiversity.

Economic Development: Well-designed gateways can stimulate economic activity, attract investment, and create jobs.

To better understand the multifaceted role of urban gateways, we propose a revised framework that incorporates inclusive urbanism principles:

– Social Dimension: The social and cultural significance of the gateway, including its role in community building, identity formation, and social inclusion including:
  - Community engagement and participation;
  - Social inclusion and equity;
  - Cultural identity and heritage.

– Spatial Configuration Dimension: The physical arrangement and layout of the gateway, including its location, size, and connectivity to the surrounding urban fabric including:
  - Physical accessibility and mobility;
  - Public space quality and design;
  - Urban form and connectivity.

– Functional Dimension: The purposes and uses of the gateway, such as transportation, commercial activities, or cultural events, including:
  - Transportation and logistics;
  - Commercial activities and retail;
  - Cultural and recreational uses.

– Environmental Dimension: The environmental impact of the gateway, including its contribution to green spaces, biodiversity, and climate resilience, including:
  - Green infrastructure and biodiversity;
  - Climate resilience and adaptation;
  - Sustainable materials and construction practices.

– Perceptual Dimension: The public's perception of the gateway, including its aesthetic appeal, symbolism, and overall image, including:
  - Aesthetics and visual identity;
  - Wayfinding and signage;
  - Public perception and branding.

By analyzing urban gateways through this expanded framework, policymakers and urban planners can develop more effective strategies to create inclusive, resilient, and sustainable cities.

Social Dimension

Urban gateways are not merely physical structures but also significant social and cultural spaces. Their role in community building, identity formation, and social inclusion is essential to creating vibrant and equitable cities. Given the strong connection between urban edges and gateways, planners can explore how gateways can contribute to:

Social equity: By promoting inclusive and accessible urban spaces that accommodate the needs of diverse populations.

Community building: By fostering connections between different groups and promoting social cohesion through shared experiences and activities.

Economic development: By supporting local businesses and creating jobs in the gateway area, contributing to the overall economic vitality of the city.

Environmental sustainability: By incorporating ecological considerations into gateway design and planning, such as providing green spaces, promoting sustainable transportation, and reducing environmental impact.

Gateways are public spaces that support social contact and gathering, similar to town squares or parks. They are physical places where people come together to interact, socialize, and participate in community activities. As shown in Table 1, the social category can be divided into social space and social activity. Social space refers to the physical characteristics of the gateway, including its accessibility, safety, and design features that encourage social interaction.

Social activity refers to the types of activities that take place within the gateway, such as cultural events, festivals, or informal gatherings. Factors such as sociability, universality of space, and security are related to the social space of a gateway. A gateway that is accessible to all, safe, and welcoming is more likely to attract and retain visitors. Social activities in a gateway are connected to stimulus activity and the presence of mixed land use. A gateway with a variety of activities and land uses, such as shops, restaurants, and cultural attractions, is more likely to be a vibrant and attractive destination. By understanding the social and cultural dimensions of urban gateways, planners can create more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable cities.

Table 1

The Social Dimension of Redefining a Gateway

Category	Sub-Category	Component	Codes
Social	Social space	Sociability	Making it possible for everyone to socialize and gather for events
		Spatialization	Creating spatial forms where social activities and material objects, phenomena or processes are located at the threshold and making a general sense of social space typical of culture, place and time Inclusivity of an urban gateway
		Security	The possibility of being within the city gateway for everyone (being safe from danger and fear and having peace)
	Social activity	Stimulus activity	Encouraging and persuading services to increase people's presence
		Mixed land use	Proximity to various uses, including recreational and green spaces or commercial complexes for the presence of different groups

Spatial Configuration Dimension

Urban gateways are not merely physical structures but significant spatial markers that shape the character and identity of a city. A well-designed gateway can integrate seamlessly with the surrounding urban fabric, create thresholds, provide access to different areas, and be permeable to various modes of transportation. The spatial configuration of Shiraz, centered around the Qur'an Gate, demonstrates a clear sense of order and coherence. The physical structure of the movement system and access networks is well-organized, facilitating efficient movement and accessibility. The connection of elements with similar scales in the realms of state, religion, and the bazaar creates a cohesive texture. The spatial and physical diversity provided by openings, belts, squares, highways, and main streets and passages enhances the city's character and vitality. The hierarchical structure of roads and multi-purpose urban uses is significant in ensuring efficient transportation and accessibility. It allows people to reach their destinations without experiencing excessive traffic congestion or feeling disconnected. The historical presence of the Qur'an Gate at the main entrance of the city, along with nearby landmarks like the tombs of Khajovi Kermani and Tavus Square, and the presence of large commercial and recreational spaces, create an open and inclusive spatial system at the city's edge. This benefits not only passengers but also residents and visitors. As shown in Table 2, content analysis reveals two subcategories in the spatial configuration of a gateway: spatial relations and access network. Spatial relations include spatial integration, spatial opening, and permeability. A well-designed gateway should integrate seamlessly with the surrounding urban fabric, provide access to different areas, and be permeable to various types of movement. Access network includes accessibility, reliability, and safety. A gateway should be easily accessible to all, provide reliable transportation options, and prioritize safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

By considering these spatial dimensions, planners can ensure that urban gateways contribute positively to the social, economic, and cultural vitality of a city. Well-designed gateways can promote inclusivity, accessibility, and a sense of community, while also enhancing the city's overall attractiveness and livability.

Table 2

Spatial Configuration Dimension of Redefining a Gateway

Category	Sub-Category	Component	Codes
Spatial configuration	Spatial Relationship (Point, line, surface, and volume)	Spatial integration	• Making some urban nodes on the edge of the city as an interface between outside and inside the city • The establishment of ties with the core areas and its surrounding • A connector domain between city and urban, regional or global networks • Continuing the main structure from the inside to the outside of the city and vice versa • Forming some articulations around the city

Table 2 Continued

Category	Sub-Category	Component	Codes
Spatial configuration	Spatial Relationship (Point, line, surface, and volume)	Spatial opening	• The physical changes in the spatial structure of the Gateway in the framework of an open spatial system instead of its historically closed spatial system • Adopting the volume with the path at the threshold of the city entrance • Define thresholds on the urban edge
		Permeability	• The transformation of the gate concept from an inflexible form to a gateway with a flexible and dynamic vast spatial entity. • Widen the main roads (less enclosed), more direct and with more diverse uses • Strenghthing urban decentralization and open spatial system
	Access Network	Accessibility	• Continuity of the path from inside the city to its gateway • Easy access by belts, main roads and high ways • Important Nodes on the crossing of belts and highways with easy access • Locating at the joint of belts and main axes • Suitable access to various routes in the city
		Walkability	• Considering pedestrians and their needs in path design • Continuity and sequence of the paths (pedestrian and rider) in the wall, ceiling, and floor • Space making of paths (pedestrian and rider) • Continuity of the path (walk and ride) from inside the city to its surroundings
		Safety	• Attention to the safety of pedestrians and drivers at the city gateway

Function Dimension

The functional index of urban gateways encompasses a range of activities and uses, including traffic management, infrastructure development, land use planning, and economic development. However, a truly inclusive gateway should prioritize the needs and experiences of all users, regardless of their age, ability, income, or background. Gateways should feature a diverse mix of uses, such as commercial, residential, cultural, and recreational activities. This diversity not only contributes to their visual appeal, dynamism, and vibrancy but also provides visitors and residents with a variety of choices and opportunities.

Gateways should serve as inclusive spaces that facilitate rather than limit activities. They are thresholds where different land uses and activities converge, creating a dynamic and sociable space that is accessible to all.

Table 3 outlines two sub-categories: land use and activity and facility and utility. Land use and activity components should prioritize compatibility, efficiency, flexibility, and diversity. A well-functioning gateway should have a mix of land uses that are compatible, efficient, flexible, and diverse, and that cater to the needs of the local community. Facility and utility components refer to the physical infrastructure and services that support the gateway's functions, such as transportation networks, public amenities, and utilities. These should be designed and maintained to be accessible to all users, including people with disabilities. By considering these functional dimensions and prioritizing inclusive design principles, planners can ensure that urban gateways are not only efficient and well-connected but also contribute to the social, economic, and cultural vitality of the city.

Table 3

Function Dimension of Redefining a Gateway

Category	Sub-Category	Component	Codes
Functional	Land use and activity	Compatibility	• Compatible Land uses with the city gateway space • No interference between land uses with each other
		Efficiency	• Activities and services provided are close to the people • Satisfaction with the way the service is provided
		Flexibility	• The open spaces with a larger scale next to the crossings create spaces for spending leisure time in the surrounding of the city • Variable and flexible land uses with different uses
		Variety of land use	• The presence of mixed uses and multiplicity of uses in the thresholds of the city and 24h services • Placing the important land uses in the gateway (service complexes, chain store branches, main terminals, main train station, and international airports) • Making a suitable space on the thresholds of the city to hold religious and ritual ceremonies • The existence of various services • Protected recreational and green spaces
	Facilities and utilities	Consolidation and retrofitting	• The justifiable quality and stability of superstructure and infrastructure (surface water disposal, street pavement, etc.) • Use of pavements, vegetation, stairs, and level differences
		Efficiency	• Highlighting access nodes by deploying appropriate facilities and utilities

Enviroment Dimension

The environmental dimension of urban gateways encompasses concepts related to livability, climatic comfort, environmental integrity, and natural richness (Table 4). These factors are essential for creating sustainable and healthy urban environments.

Climatic comfort refers to the pleasantness of the climate, influenced by factors such as temperature, humidity, wind, radiation flow, and air pressure. A well-designed gateway should mitigate the negative effects of the climate, such as excessive heat or cold, and provide comfortable outdoor spaces. This can be achieved through strategies like shading devices, green roofs, and cool paving materials.

Beyond climatic comfort, a holistic approach to environmental sustainability is essential for creating truly sustainable and resilient urban gateways. Key considerations include:

- Livability: Gateways should be designed to prioritize the health and well-being of residents and visitors. This includes providing access to green spaces, parks, and recreational facilities.
- Environmental Integrity: Preserving natural ecosystems and biodiversity is crucial. This can be achieved through measures such as habitat restoration, pollution control, and sustainable land use practices.
- Natural Richness: Incorporating natural elements, such as trees, water bodies, and green roofs, can enhance the aesthetic appeal and ecological value of the gateway.

By prioritizing these environmental considerations in the design and development of urban gateways, planners can create spaces that are not only sustainable but also contribute to the overall health and well-being of the community.

Table 4

Environment Dimension of Redefining a Gateway

Category	Sub-Category	Component	Codes
Enviroment	Water, soil and air	Greenness	• Gateway can be a part of the green belt strategy • Sufficient green space and vegetation at the gateway area
		Eco-friendliness	• Gateway as part of eco- sustainable urban strategies • Connection between the artifacts and natural elements in gateway area
		Climate adaption	• Climate-friendly design
		Basin and catchment area	• Control of runoff in the area of the gateway
		Unpolluted and clean air	• The flow and blowing of unpolluted and clean air

Perceptual Dimension

The perceptual dimension of urban gateways is crucial in shaping their identity, character, and overall appeal. A well-designed gateway can create a lasting impression on visitors, fostering a sense of place and belonging. By considering factors such as visual appeal, auditory experience, and olfactory sensations, we can create gateways that are not only functional but also emotionally engaging.

Clear signage, wayfinding systems, and iconic landmarks can enhance the gateway's legibility and memorability. Public spaces, cultural activities, and local businesses can contribute to the gateway's social and economic vitality. The incorporation of natural elements, such as trees, water bodies, and green spaces, can enhance the gateway's aesthetic appeal and ecological value. Additionally, the careful design of man-made elements, such as buildings, plazas, and streets, can create a sense of order, hierarchy, and visual interest.

By prioritizing the perceptual dimension of urban gateways, we can create spaces that are not only functional but also inspiring and memorable. Through careful planning and design, we can transform urban gateways into vibrant and inclusive destinations that enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Table 5 summarizes these components of perceptual dimension.

Table 5

Perceptual Dimension of Redefining a Gateway

Category	Sub-Category	Component	Codes
Perceptual	Mental image	Legibility	The legibility of the physical and visual connection of the main route, squares, and when entering and leaving the city
			Easy and fast routing and navigation
		Memorability	Using historical monuments in an urban gateway and interfacing it to the new forms
			Using symbolic elements with visual sequence and making scales on the way of movement
		Imageability	Creating memorable images of the atmosphere of the city gate in people's minds
			Use of special symbolic forms
		Distinction	The city gate is different from the outside and inside of the city, as well as the gate of other cities
			Discerning the entrances implicitly within the gateway
	Natural and human-made landscape	To be eye-catching	Using symbolic elements with visual sequence and creating appropriate scales and colors in the man-made landscape A great view of the city A proper view of the city's scene and, if possible, making it possible to view mountains, forests, rivers, and so on

Table 5 Continued

Category	Sub-Category	Component	Codes
Perceptual	Natural and human-made landscape	Lightness	Providing suitable lighting for the night view of the city gate Simultaneous use of light and shadow
		Variety along with order	Creating the contrast in the path (by changing the rhythm and form) Attention to viewing angle and eye movement Using dynamic elements and signs Making various facades using the forms consistent with performance Variety in size, patterns, structures
		Contextualism	Attention to environmental conditions in the design of surfaces and spaces
	Morphological	Topography	Conforming the gateway and its path with topography (natural and artificial) Defining the gateway in the form of a panoramic urban landscape Enhancing visibility and scenery to one or more elements of natural landmarks (such as mountains, rivers, gardens, etc.) or elements of artificial landmarks (such as religious monuments, historical monuments, and important streets, etc.)
		Continuity in the form	Circulation and orientation in space Using the human scale The relationship between parts and patterns in such a way each part continues another one

Conclusion

The concept of the urban gateway needs to be redefined in light of contemporary urbanization patterns. While traditional gates were significant in the past, modern gateways are evolving to meet the changing needs and priorities of cities. The new discourse around gateways introduces an open spatial system, contrasting with the closed systems of the past. A gateway can be defined as a threshold that manifests as a territory, region, or urban strip, adapting itself to the contemporary dynamics of cities. In this context, the threshold serves as a starting point rather than a restriction. By returning to its symbolic meanings, it becomes a sort of interface.

Implementing the urban gateway concept demonstrates that controlling the domain of sovereignty does not necessarily require a closed spatial regime. Embracing the idea that fluidity is at the heart of the urban gateway signifies an open spatial system that promotes decentralization. Urban gateways can continuously redefine their roles based on spatial performance settings, which are both projective and topological.

To leverage urban gateways as catalysts for urban development and enhance the quality of life, a comprehensive approach is essential. These gateways can

contribute to a strong urban identity and a sense of place. By strategically designing and implementing gateway projects, cities can transform these spaces into vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable destinations.

One of the key advantages of urban gateways is their potential to tackle social equity and mitigate urban inequality. By creating inclusive and accessible public spaces, gateways can help dismantle social barriers and promote greater integration among diverse communities. They can also foster economic development and job creation, particularly in marginalized areas. Furthermore, gateways can play a vital role in improving the quality of life in urban edge areas. By providing amenities, services, and connectivity, they can revitalize often-neglected spaces, making them more appealing places to live and work.

Key strategies to maximize the impact of urban gateways include:

- Prioritizing Inclusive Design: Ensuring accessibility for all people and considering the diverse needs of user groups to promote inclusivity.
- Fostering Community Engagement: Involving local communities in the planning and design process to cultivate a sense of ownership, organizing community events, and supporting local businesses to boost the gateway's social and economic vitality.
- Stimulating Economic Development: Attracting investment, creating jobs, and promoting tourism by developing attractive and accessible spaces.
- Enhancing Environmental Sustainability: Incorporating green infrastructure, promoting sustainable transportation, and reducing energy consumption to establish environmentally friendly gateways.
- Improving Public Spaces: Creating high-quality public spaces that are safe, inviting, and accessible to all.

By implementing these strategies, cities can fully harness the potential of urban gateways to achieve a variety of benefits. Gateways can foster social inclusion by creating public spaces that are accessible and encouraging community engagement. They can stimulate economic development by attracting investment, supporting local businesses, and promoting tourism. Additionally, gateways can promote environmental sustainability by integrating green infrastructure and encouraging sustainable transportation.

By adopting a holistic approach that considers the social, economic, and environmental aspects of these spaces, cities can create vibrant and sustainable urban environments. Policymakers must integrate gateways into urban planning policies and implement sustainable development strategies.

Some key recommendations for policymakers include:

- Formulating urban gateway initiatives as part of urban growth and development plans.
- Prioritizing social equity, community building, economic development, and environmental sustainability in gateway design and implementation.
- Integrating gateways into the urban network to enhance connectivity and accessibility.

- Promoting sustainable development practices in gateway areas, including green infrastructure, renewable energy, and sustainable transportation.
- Investing in research and development to explore innovative approaches to urban gateway design and management.

By adopting these recommendations, policymakers can unlock the full potential of urban gateways, leading to more sustainable, equitable, and vibrant cities.

The research may have been limited by factors such as a small sample size, regional focus, data limitations, the subjectivity of perception, changing urban dynamics, a lack of comparative analysis, and the lack of distinction between the concept of an urban gate and a gateway among urban development planners. These limitations could affect the generalizability of the findings and the ability to draw broader conclusions.

Future research on urban gateways can contribute to a deeper understanding of their role in shaping sustainable and equitable cities. Researchers can identify best practices, assess effectiveness, and explore innovative approaches by conducting comparative studies, longitudinal analysis, case studies, quantitative research, and interdisciplinary collaborations. Additionally, involving citizens in the planning and evaluation of gateways can ensure that they meet community needs. Analyzing existing policies and developing guidelines can also support sustainable urban growth. Finally, exploring the potential of new technologies can enhance the functionality and sustainability of urban gateways.

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