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## Designing for Improving Social Relationship with Interaction Design Approach

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### Abstract

The industrialization of modern societies in today's world has had an enormous effect on reducing the traditional ways of communication among people. The cities of the world are in serious demand of more specific spaces that fulfill the Socio-cultural relationships of the people. As a result, creating more spaces for the people who frequently try to overcome the dearth of human communication and interaction is necessary. This study has specifically focused on Iranian traditional urban places and spaces which used to effectively address the issue mentioned above. Among them, teashops, Charsooghs, lines, squares, shrines and traditional markets (bazaar) were regarded as the main vibrant places and spaces. The findings reassure the importance of designer role to establish more spaces for more social interactions.

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### 1. Introduction

These days, the cities around the world are experiencing different ways of living. The growth and the development of cities along with various social changes have enormously increased the complexity. Johnston (2000) believes that modernization is a process of social change resulting from the diffusion and adoption of the characteristics of expansive and apparently more advanced societies. Modernization involves social mobilization, the growth of a more effective and centralized apparatus of political and social control (Abdol Karim and Hashim,

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2012). On the other hand, technologies become progressively more an integral part of human behaviour and living spaces, the design of user interface and interactions in regard to the urban space is still a challenging task. Socio-cultural practices of any society depend on the desire of the people to continue practicing them and the resettlement program effect of such practices (Abdol Karim and Hashim, 2012). According to the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council, cultural identity is defined as “the sense of belonging and attachment to a particular way of living, including: language, religion, art, food, values, traditions or any other day-to-day practice, associated with the historical experience of a particular group of people” (1977, p. 3). The process of building a connection to the new community is highly influenced by the level of multicultural interactions (Teig et al. 2009). In a research by Agustina and Beilin (2012), the multicultural interactions within the community gardens have been studied and the degree of which gardening practices changed the people’s behaviour, as a result of Cross-cultural interactions with nature, has been revealed.

In order to create new alternatives and present services, it is necessary to know about the society and the people, their needs and preferences. Maslow pyramid, although not recent, is a good example for identification of the basic needs and create a foundation (Fig. 1). With regard to his pyramid, the lack of the each human need will results in various consequences, mostly unpleasant. On the third level, for instance, emotional and social needs are located. Unmet needs at this level bring about the disappearance of family relationships and social interactions (Maslow, 1954). It has been indicated that modernization and industrialization of modern societies today have had an effective role in reducing the communication of people in their societies (Kaczynski, 2007).

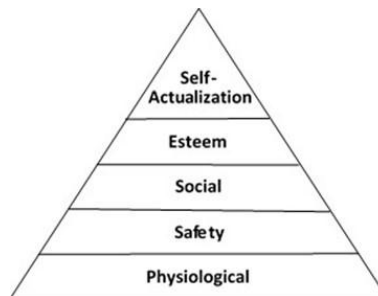


Fig. 1. Maslow hierarchy of needs.  
(Source: Maslow, 1954)

With that in mind, the question arises here will be: what is or could be the solution? Regarding what is in progress in the current situations across cities around the world, one could say that cities are in demand of more specific spaces that fulfil Socio-cultural relations with proper performance. One of these spaces is the public or urban recreational space in which people spend their leisure times. Findings of a study that was done in 2006 on 1000 public spaces around the world indicate that four factors are highly effective on the utility of the urban spaces (as showed in Fig. 2). First factor is continuity of spaces and easy access to them, second factor points to the activity of the people in these spaces. The third factor refers to comfort and attraction of such spaces with the last which is social places that allow social interaction for the public (Moeini, 2012). We can refer to some factors of urban space failures such as lack of space for gathering, poor entrance, inaccessible spaces from a visible view and direction. With the progress of technology and abundant tendencies to virtual spaces (such as cyberspace) and unilateral formation of social interactions, there is a need for urban open spaces in local-urban scale in order to reduce social stresses by increasing face to face interactions and establishing verbal communication. As the city is directed to urban development with unknown identity, due to specific conditions of modern life, social interactions have been reduced and human beings made continuous effort to create and use virtual spaces. The current research will focus on how to communicate a given content using interaction design. Therefore, the aim of the study was formulated as how the formation and establishment of such spaces for the people who work during the day would increase the quality of urban environment using interaction design approaches. The authors investigated the issue of designing

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