

## TABRIZ HISTORICAL BAZAAR IN THE CONTEXT OF CHANGE

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**Abstract.** As multifunctional urban complexes, Bazaars were gradually formed to meet the demands of their developers and users. In fact, a Bazaar was a place to centralize the inter-related interests of different groups of stakeholders. A number of these Bazaars including Tabriz historical Bazaar Complex (THBC) located in Tabriz city in the north west of Iran played a momentous role in the economic and social development of the region as the hubs of international commercial and cultural exchanges. Being a commercial and social ensemble and being able to cope with and contribute to the changing world, Tabriz Historical Bazaar has served a diversity of functions to different stakeholders throughout the history. Although after being affected by the intensive political, social and economic change in the industrialization and modernization era the Bazaar continued serving its functions to different generations, its contribution to the economic and mainly social development has experienced a remarkable decrease.

In order to sustain the prospective contribution of Tabriz Historical Bazaar world heritage site to the life of the contemporary society and facilitate its protection process, this work aims to provide a profound understanding of the authentic characters of the Bazaar, the root and nature of its values, and interests of people involved with it.

Keywords: Tabriz Bazaar; social and economic development; change; stakeholders

Bazaars of Iran developed in cities along the ancient caravan routes formed a network which linked centers of culture and commerce to each other. Being multifunctional urban complexes, Bazaars were gradually formed to meet the demands of their developers and users. In fact, a Bazaar was a place to centralize the inter-related interests of different groups of stakeholders. Most of Iranian Bazaars – except the ones built upon an order or a short term decision- are ensembles gradually formed by construction and connection of commercial and public buildings such as caravanserais, Timchas (covered caravanserai inside the bazaar) and Dokkans (shops). Although the major area of Bazaars is dedicated to commercial functions, Bazaars' meaning to their users and developers is much more than a place with merely economic values. In addition to commercial buildings, there are many spaces with socio-cultural and religious functions allocated to mosques, Madrasas (traditional, religious schools), tea hoses, Hammams and in some cases, ZurKhanas (gymnasiums). In fact, the most significant attribute of Bazaars has always

been their social and cultural role in every-day life of citizens. So, when talking about the Bazaar as heritage, it should be considered that the tangible built heritage and the ongoing life together form the concept of Bazaar. Archeological findings and studies along the ancient routes indicate that the existing Caravan routes of Iran are developed on the basis of The Royal Routes, established by Achaemenians (c.550-331 BC) (Naderi, 2009). Bazaars of Iran, located along these historic routes, used to form a commercial and cultural network which linked dominant cities to each other. A number of these cities, such as Semnan, Qazvin, Zanjan and Tabriz that were along the east-west silk roads played a momentous role in transferring commodities, people, cultures and information (Bastani Parizi, 2000). Being located along the silk roads and having commercial relationship with Europe and china, Tabriz city experienced the interchange of east and west cultures and therefore played a leading role in the history of economy and social and cultural movements in Iran.

Among many other Bazaars in the region, Tabriz Bazaar located in the centre of Tabriz city in north-west of Iran considerably stands out. In 2010, it was included in UNESCO world heritage list as one of the most important international commercial centers along the Silk Roads, a living complex developed from the early centuries of the Islamic era on the basis of a strong traditional social system, and an outstanding example of the Islamic Bazaars (ICHHTO, 2009). In addition, in terms of its contribution to contemporary economic activities, it is one of the most influential commercial centers of Iran and undoubtedly the most important in the north-west region of the country (Marsousi, 2011).

Although Tabriz Historical Bazaar Complex has served a diversity of functions to different stakeholders throughout the history and is one of the most active Bazaars which still enjoys social cohesion and structural integrity, its contribution to the economic and mainly social development has experienced a remarkable decrease and change particularly during and after the industrialization and modernization era. This ongoing change undoubtedly affects the social and structural integrity of Tabriz Bazaar world heritage site. In order to facilitate the policy-making and protection system of the site with a realistic insight into the nature of change and the ways in which it affects the site, this paper seeks to follow the functions, values

and meanings of the Tabriz Bazaar throughout the history.

### 1. Role of Tabriz Bazaar in Socio-economic Development Throughout The History

Enjoying an exceptional strategic location and being a significant commercial city, Tabriz has developed under the influence of commercial circumstances. The social and economic history of Tabriz shows that the traditional Bazaar has been able to integrate social and commercial foundations of the city within itself and as a result, has had a crucial influence on the cultural and economic development of the city.

Studies on the structure of the old city in different historic maps and illustrations dating back to 17th and 19th centuries clarify that Tabriz was formed along the main caravan routes linking the city to other commercial cities of Iran and the world. In fact, the city and Bazaar formed an integrated structure a result of building caravanserais and other commercial and public buildings along caravan routes. The trace of these commercial routes can be clearly seen in the present structure of central Tabriz and this fact shows the strong influence of the Bazaar, regional and international trade in the city's form (Figure 1).

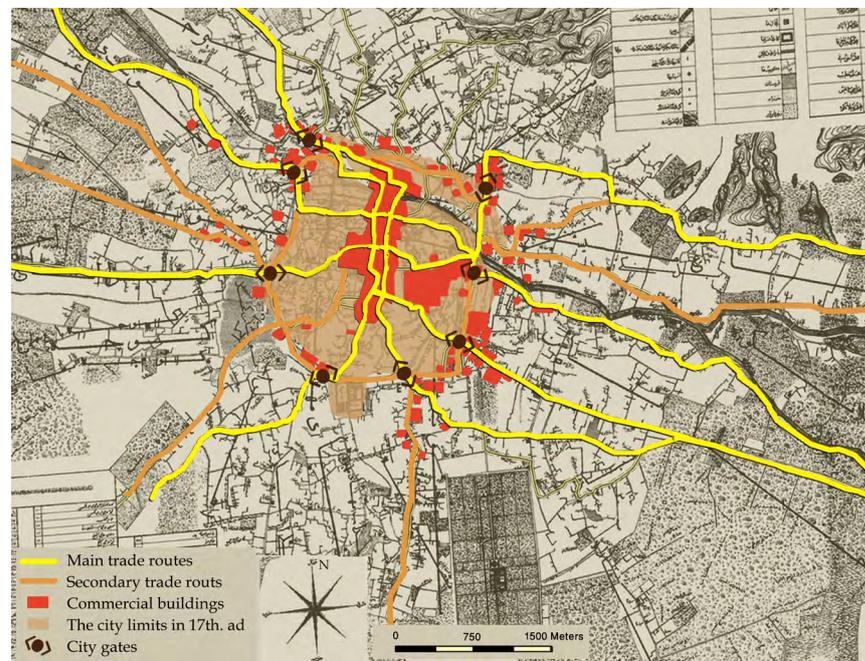


Figure 1. The city's structure is developed based on historic caravan routes linking Tabriz to other regional and local commercial centers (Based on comparative analysis of historic maps and illustrations of 17th and 19th centuries) (Yadollahi, 2010)

The inner structure of the Tabriz Bazaar is also a clear testimony to its social and economic role in the past society. In Tabriz Bazaar there are several commercial buildings such as thousands of Dokkans forming 30 Rastas (covered pathways), 25 caravanserais, 20 Timchas, and 8 Bazarchas (cluster Bazaar) as well as 28 mosques, 3 mausoleums, 6 Madrasas and 2 libraries built to serve religious functions in addition to a historic Meydan (square) which was the governmental centre of the city. Then again, there are a large number of teahouses, 5 Hammams, a Yakhchal (icehouse) and a Zurkhana used to serve the public. Functions of the mentioned components of the Bazaar show that this huge complex was developed, shared, and managed by users and owners of these places. The Bazaari (merchants), government, Olamaa (religious class) and local people are the four key groups of stakeholders in the history of traditional Bazaar. Undoubtedly, existence of the Bazaar as a living public and commercial place or a heritage resource has always depended on these key stakeholders and functions satisfying their interests. Moreover, since the strong alliance among the Bazaar Olamaa and the Government has always been the important character of Iranian society, strong or weak performance of each of these groups has affected the others.

However, in spite of the fact that comparing to many other Iranian Bazaars, the Tabriz Bazaar has managed to keep its social and structural integrity in a better condition, the shift of power balance among the stakeholders, dramatic change in local and international commerce and modernization of the social lifestyle have affected its role and contribution in the economic, political and social affairs of the country. Historic records indicate that the gradual development of bazaar was sustainable in particular periods when decision makers - local people, Olamaa, local or central governors or tradesmen - were aware of the pace of global change and made wise decisions to cope with the change. However, in the industrialization era, when the pace of global change became faster, perceptions and interests of Bazaar's leaders and developers was affected by the consequences of change. The structural form of the city and bazaar along with historic records clearly illustrate this at the beginning of the modernization era.



Figure 2. Tabriz Bazaar, formed by several commercial, religious and public buildings built together through the history. (Iranian Cartography Organization)

### 1.1. PRE-INDUSTRIALIZATION ERA

Because the Tabriz city was destroyed by severe earthquakes many times, most of the built evidences are related to 11th century and thereafter. However, archeological findings indicate that there were human settlements dating back to 6000 BC and then 900 BC in Tabriz (Omrani, 2006).

Location of Early Islamic buildings of the city such as Jami mosque dating back to Seljuk era (11th century) within the Bazaar area shows that this area played an important role in the city's development. In addition, historic texts and statements of different travellers indicate the significant role of Tabriz Bazaar in the international trade in early and middle Islamic ages. Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Battuta (14th century traveler) For instance, who visited Tabriz in 1330 illustrates the prosperity and commercial importance of the Bazaar in his statements (Le Strange, 1930).

#### 1.1.1. The Bazaar, a Powerful International Commercial Centre and a Strong Social Foundation

In terms of commercial relations, Tabriz experienced its most glorious time in 14th AD. It was in this period that Tabriz became the capital of Mongolian dynasty and as a result of that, main caravan routes which used to pass through Rey, Neyshabur, and Baghdad, changed their destination to Azerbaijan, the region which Tabriz was located in as the capital. In his work "The History of the Mongol Conquest", Sanders (1971) mentions the significance of Azerbaijan and Tabriz in the international trade. Cities or caravan stations on the main routes of international commerce rose to flourishing life and native business was enriched and augmented by contributions of Indians, the Latin (principally Italians) of the west, and perhaps the Mongols. The metropolis of Tabriz boasted some 300,000 inhabitants by 1300, doubtless contributed to the trade which linked the Mediterranean and black sea coasts with central Asia and the Far East. Due to commercial and cultural interchanges with the cities in all around the world, it can be said that Tabriz became a global city in this period. In the same way, historic documents such as Marco Polo's travel letters indicate the significance of Tabriz in terms of commercial and cultural influence in the 14th century world.

About the power contribution in Mongol societies Sanders states : "the town merchants and nobles were organized in trading companies and from their ranks drawn the principal city officials, the Ra'is or mayor, the Katib or imam of the mosque, and the Muhtasib or police chief, the craftsmen and artisans formed guilds" (Saunders, 1971, p 143). Generally the rich merchant and landowner, and high-ranking governmental official, who were the main developers of the Traditional Bazaar, formed together a concentration of power and property in 14th century society of Tabriz. So, Tabriz Bazaar was the linking point of interests of the Bazaari or the rich merchant, Olamaa or Imams, the government and local people who worked in the Bazaar and contributed to the social life of the city concentrated in the Bazaar.

#### 1.1.2. The Bazaar in the Context of Political and Economic Crisis

By the 16th century the Bazaar has achieved a maturity in terms of functional and social structure and has become the place of political, social and economic values for different groups of people. Changing and developing according to the needs of that time's society, Tabriz Bazaar served its functions completely and perfectly. Although, after the fall of Mongol dynasty the strong influence of the Azerbaijan region and Tabriz decreased in the international market, due to the political stability and peace in the short period of pre-Safavid era Tabriz continued its role in international commercial and cultural interchange.

During the dominance period of Uzun Hasan, the Aq\_Quyunlu regional governor of Azerbaijan who is known as a pacifist and broad minded man, the city developed its cultural and economic power due to peace and friendly relations with the international community. In his time Tabriz Bazaar became the governmental center of the city and region of Azerbaijan. The Sahib-Abad Square used to be consisted of centres such as Jami mosque, royal palace, schools, hospitals, caravanserais, a mint, the court, elegant commercial centers (such as Gheisarie, bazaars), a shrine, a church, and The Sāhib-ābād gardens was constructed near the Bazaar in his rule time (Omrani, 1971).

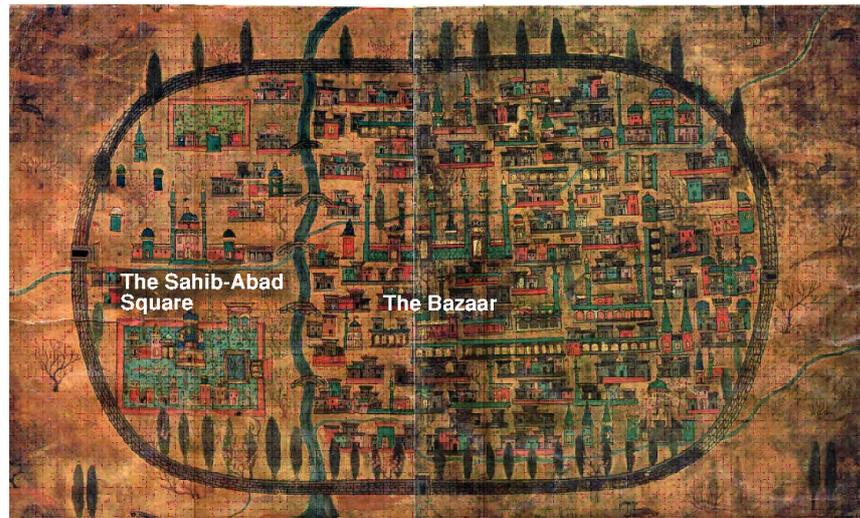


Figure 3. Tabriz city, 17th century miniature designed by Nasooh – metraghchi-Osmani. the Bazaar and the Sahib-Abad square. (Tehrani, 2008)

The wealth and peace did not last long after the death of Uzun Hasan. The Safavid king, Shah Ismail, destroyed all the wealth, dignity and cultural richness achieved by his grandfather Uzun Hasan. Due to the Shiite king's ideological conflicts with his Sunni neighbors the Ottoman Empire, Tabriz; the former centre of culture and commerce became a battle field for decades. Since peace and safety in the city and commercial routes are the basic requirements for sustainable development, not surprisingly, during this period Tabriz city and the Bazaar experienced a considerable fall in their contribution to the global and local cultural and financial development.

Despite the fact that during the major part of Safavid era Tabriz's market did not have a remarkable development, within the dominance period of the Shah Abbas the great, Tabriz and other cities in his territory experienced a considerable growth in commerce and cultural activities. Bastani Parizi (2000) the Iranian historian and author illustrates the financial power of the country during the rule of Shah Abbas In his work "policy and finance in the Safavid era". During that time Iranian currency was validated indeed and Guilds were also very strong in terms of social and economic effectiveness. Central government was powerful and tactful enough to provide safety and essential infrastructures for commerce and cultural interchange in routes and important cities. Several caravanserais and commercial buildings were built along caravan routes in all around the country (Andaroodi, 2006). Tavernier, the French traveler (1605 –1689) makes an interesting illustration of safety and peace in Iran territory in 1638 AD. When he enters the Safavid king's territory, from ottoman lands he states " we were not afraid of anything anymore, as we were in the territory of Iran's king.

Here people travel in safety and peace (Bastani Parizi, 2000).

Nevertheless, the first signs of economic crisis appeared right after the death of Shah Abbas. Fall in quality of Iranian manufactures caused lack of trust and even conflict between Iran and its international commercial partners. As a result of that, inflation in the state and dramatic fall in value of Iranian currency came up gradually in the last years of 17th century. Jean Chardin the French traveler describes the state of commerce and wealth of the country in the mid and late Safavid period. He states that for the first time he entered the Persian territory in 1656 during the rule of Shah Abbas and he visited the country in 1677 in the time of Shah Suleiman. During this 12 year period economic conditions of Iran has become unprecedentedly instable and the wealth of country was decreased to half (Bastani Parizi, 2000). From this time on, Tabriz bazaar never gained back the international importance it used to have. Generally, the economic Development of Tabriz was not bright throughout the Safavid era. However, after Safavids in time of Qajars (1785 to 1925) Tabriz became a more peaceful place and consequently, commerce grew again in the city.

In 1194 AH (18th century) the city was completely destroyed by a destructive earthquake which was simultaneous with the rise of the Qajar dynasty in Iran. After the disaster, local people, Bazaaris and the Qajar authorities started to rebuild the fortifications and the Bazaar immediately (Zoka, 1980). In addition, according to inscriptions installed on the buildings inside the bazaar showing their construction date, the major part of the bazaar was rebuilt after that earthquake. This fact shows the significance of Bazaar as the main asset of the city.

As one of the most important cities of the country, Tabriz became the seat of crown prince of Qajars and this new position relatively brought back wealth as well as new residents to it.

## **1.2. TRANSITION PERIOD, TOWARD INDUSTRIALIZATION AND MODERNIZATION**

### **1.2.1. First Signs of Modernization in Iran**

The Azerbaijan region experienced a period of commercial instability due to Iran-Russia conflicts in the early 19th century. But, after The Treaty of Turkmenchay and cease fire between Iran and Russia in 1828 Tabriz enjoyed peace and consequently, again its Bazaar became the centre of international commerce. As Tabriz always has been the main gate of the country to international relations, At the beginning of 19th century the national and regional trade extremely depended on Tabriz Bazaar's merchants and bankers (Edwards, 1989). After the sharp turn in political and natural conditions in this time, -due to the earthquake and the war- the city lost a considerable number of its local residents and attracted immigrants from different social classes mainly consisted of the prosperous Qajar community, merchants from near smaller cities who intended to develop their business particularly in importing European goods, artisans, and the worker class. In fact, the mentioned chain of events resulted in a remarkable change in the city's life.

It was in the rule time of Naser al-din shah that Iran's economic system started to move towards modernization. As merchant class became more rich and powerful due to the export-import business, they started to buy the royal family's lands and gradually became land owners. As before that time the only owner of all lands and properties was the king, this was an unprecedented change in ownership system and power balance in Iran. Although the merchant class became powerful, due to decrease in national manufacture and increase in importing modern products from foreign countries, this change in trade system was not beneficial for the county's economy and

the traditional Bazaar. In fact, the new economic system can be defined as an unsustainable progress that brought wealth to the individual Bazaaris who involved in import and land dealing, not to the artisan, farmer class.

Throughout the history, commerce has enhanced relations among nations. In addition to commodities, nations exchange their knowledge and social experiences when involving in commercial relations. Not surprisingly, cities with powerful commerce experience the social transformations earlier than other cities of the country. In the same way, as a result of rise in commercial relationships and progress in education and information exchange in late 13th AH (later half of the 19th century), signs of change started to appear in cities of high political and commercial importance in Iran. Appearance of constitutional motivations among the citizens of important cities is one of the most important manifestations of modernism in Iran. Constitutional movement ignited among Olamaa, Bazaaris western oriented intellectuals and ordinary people mainly in Tabriz and Tehran. Homa Katouzian (2011) suggests that "It was not just the merchants and shopkeepers, but virtually the whole of the (urban) society which rose, not against the landlords but against the state". And he adds ", its beneficiaries were both landlords and merchants, in that order: Their property ownership became much stronger now that it was no longer threatened by the state's arbitrary power; and, by the same token, they acquired independent political power and influence". The significant role of Bazaaris in social movements of constitution is well documented in historical statements and texts related to this revolution. Although constitution and modernism brought democracy for the country and specially Tehran, its consequences for Tabriz were civil war and a kind of political exclusion. Although Tabriz played a leading role in the constitution movement of Iran, after constitution was signed by Mozafar e-ddn shah Tehran began to lose trust in Tabriz (Kasravi, 2005). In consequence, power and investment centered mainly in Tehran the capital of Qajars.



Figure 4. constitutionist forces in Tabriz (Kasravi, 2005)

Generally, from the late Qajar time (early 20th century) political events transformed Iran into a centralized national state with Tehran as the seat of power. Keshavarzian (2007) describes this centralization in his work “Bazaar and state in Iran”. He states that “the concentration of resources and facilities in Tehran and creation of state monopoly firms in 1930s, along with the relative decline of other economic centers (notably, Isfahan, Tabriz and Kashan) helped attract and concentrate commercial and industrial capital in Tehran “. However, being the most significant commercial city Tabriz retained its position as one of the most important cities of Iran.

### 1.2.2. Rapid Socio-Economic Change

The late 20th century was indeed the time of rapid change and modernization in Iran. Due to appearance of industrial manufacturing and political centralization, important cities attracted investors and work force from neighbor areas. Rising of simultaneous development projects in large cities like Tehran, Tabriz, Hamadan, Shiraz and Isfahan is a tangible example of modernization in the first 20 years of 14th century in Iran (the late 20s). Historic fabrics of cities were cut by new perpendicular or geometrical streets to provide better access and welfare. As Bazaars are usually located in the central part of the historic cities, by renovation projects, almost all of the historic Bazaars of Iran were divided into several pieces by contemporary streets.

Unlike other cities, in Tabriz the government could not cut the bazaar in many pieces by constructing new streets.

The history of Tabriz clearly explains the reason why Tabrizi people insisted on keeping their Bazaar intact and integrated. After disasters like destructive earthquakes, floods and civil wars people of Tabriz were able to reconstruct their city and regain wealth and power for their city. Bazaaris played a remarkable role in rebuilding the city as they were the most powerful and prosperous citizens. The launch of urban development was in 1921 – 1926 in Tabriz. According to the approved master plan of the city in that time, the Firdousi Street was supposed to pass through the bazaar and cut it in two pieces. But, the Bazaaris and local people opposed the project (According to statements of local heritage bodies Mr. Chatruz and Mr. Yazdani and an elderly merchant in Tabriz Bazaar, summer 2009) . In fact, they managed to do something that many other people in other cities of Iran could not. The aerial photo of bazaar area clearly shows this historic event. Stopping this urban project directed by the government, demonstrates the vital importance of Bazaar for social life and socio-economic development of the city.

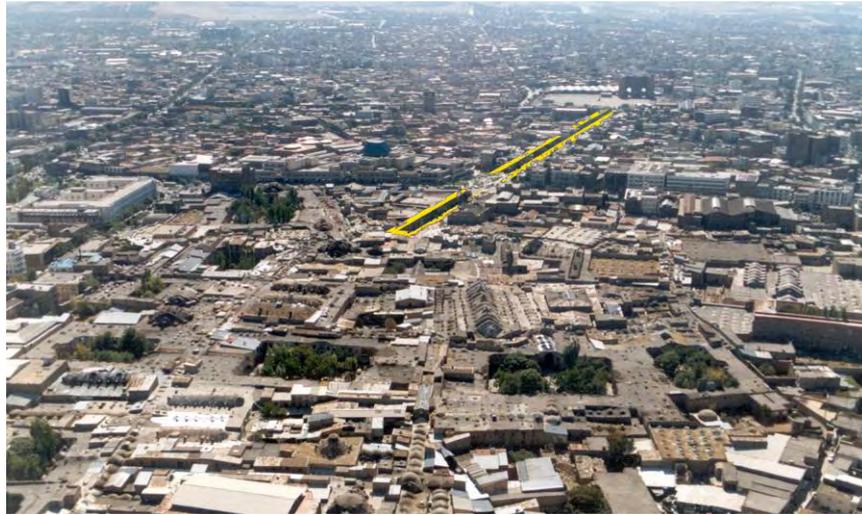


Figure 5. Firdousi Street project (shown with the yellow line) stopped by local community in 1920s. (Iranian Cartography Organization)

However, the economic, political and social dominance of the Bazaar lasted until the 1950s when the consequences of global change began to appear faster and stronger than before in Iran. By establishment of governmental economic foundations (such as city-village cooperative markets, chamber of guilds, the Special Tribunal for the Prosecution of Price Gougers, and Association for the Protection of Consumer Rights) in 1960s, the traditional Bazaar began to go weaker in terms of political and economic effectiveness (Ashraf, 1991). Generally, as a result of modernization, Bazaaris (merchants) started to move outside the Bazaar area and invest on new shops along new streets. In addition, as the government began to encourage investments on new industries, many of the most prominent merchant families in the Tehran Bazaar as well as other important Bazaaris like Tabriz Bazaar transferred their asset into industry (Keshavarzian, 2007). Moreover, due to the intense and rapid change in communication and social activities, Madrasas, Mosques, ZurKhanas and tea hoses inside the Bazaar area had to compete with modern schools, communication centers and entertainment places which offered modern public services outside the Bazaar. Hence, a considerable number of people who used to go to Bazaar to get the latest news, to visit each other, or to study chose to listen to radio, go to entertainment places and modern schools instead of going to the old Bazaar.

In essence, the review of social, political and economic changes of Iran and Tabriz shows that the roles and values of the Bazaar have changed with the changing world and formation of the Bazaar is based on perceptions and interests of its different stakeholders. However, during the

industrialization and modernization era, the traditional Bazaar couldn't cope with the rapid change like it used to do before. Not being prepared to compete with modern educational and communicational systems, many public spaces of the Bazaar were left vacant or with limited functions in the recent decades.

However, according to a recent anthropological study in Tabriz Bazaar, even after the continual change, Bazaaris and guilds of Tabriz Bazaar have been able to retain their unity and common identity to some extent (Asl-e Sarirai, 2007). Despite the fact that they were not as powerful as before, the footprints of Bazaaris and Olamaa of Tehran and Tabriz can be identified in the course of events 1977-79 which led to the fall of Pahlavi regime from power. Comparing to many other Bazaaris in and outside Iran, the living tradition and social cohesion can still be found in Tabriz Bazaar. Due to its importance for the contemporary stakeholders, Tabriz Bazaar has maintained its structural and architectural integrity as an urban complex. That's why Tabriz Bazaar is a special case among Iranian Bazaaris and has always been considered a place of outstanding cultural values.

### 1.3. THE BAZAAR AS HERITAGE

Being inscribed in the national heritage list in 1975 and being considered a cultural heritage property, values originating from its cultural, historical and scientific significance were added to its initial socio-economic and political values. Therefore, after creation of heritage concept out of the Bazaar, new stakeholders who ascribed cultural values to it joined the traditional stakeholders (the Bazaari, Olamaa, local people and government).

The perception of government about the Bazaar to some extents changed in this time. In addition to the economic and political values Bazaar had for the government, the heritage protection sector of the government became one of the most effective stakeholders and decision makers particularly in constructional interventions in the Bazaar. Now, the new-comer “architects, archeologists and experts” were responsible for protection of the Bazaar, whereas, the structural development and interventions used to be directly conducted by the owners and users of the Bazaar in the past. As a result of economic and cultural importance of the Bazaar for the government, a chain

of new protection regulations were approved without adopting the opinion of the traditional stakeholders. During and after 1980s the government launched regeneration projects in large cities of cultural importance in all around the country. According to new policies adopted by higher council for architectural and urban planning of Iran (HCAUPI) in 1990, Isfahan, Shiraz, Kerman, Hamadan and Tabriz were considered the historical - cultural cities of Iran (HCAUPI, 2004). The master plan of historical - cultural zone of Tabriz was prepared in 1996. After that, the municipality started a number of regeneration plans near and in the Bazaar area.

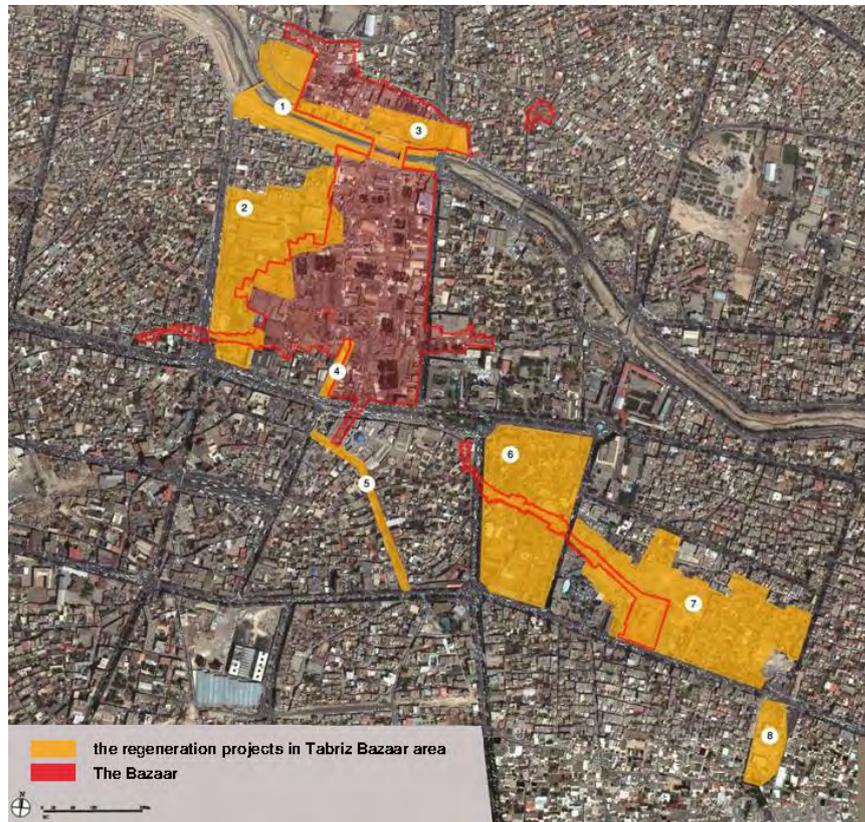


Figure 6. 1990's Regeneration projects near and inside the Tabriz Bazaar area (Yadollahi, 2010)

### 1.3.1. Tabriz Bazaar as the Shared Heritage

In the first years of 1990 cultural heritage authorities made remarkable improvements in the protection and management policies of Tabriz Bazaar. As a feasible conservation strategy, the necessity of participation of Bazaaris was taken into consideration in conservation projects. According to the author's interview with Akbar Taghizadeh, the former head of cultural heritage organization of eastern Azerbaijan province in September 2010, in the period of time from 1994 to 2005 the local heritage authorities managed to make a considerable progress in negotiating with the Bazaari. As a result of regular negotiation with the main members of important guilds of the Tabriz Bazaar, most of the conservation projects in the Bazaar were financed by Bazaaris. Taghizadeh states: "we realized that if we do not include the Bazaari in making decision for the Bazaar, we actually exclude them from decision-making for a place where they get their livelihood and identity from. So, asking for their opinions about the interventions in the Bazaar and clarifying the benefits of conservation projects for them, we tried to rebuild confidence between the Bazaari and the conservation authority as a governmental organization." In the High Technical Council of Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization meeting in 2008, Tabriz Historical Bazaar Complex was selected to be one of the two properties to be nominated for inscription on the world heritage list in 2009. Going through the nomination and inscription process, Tabriz Bazaar attracted unprecedented attention and investment. This led to establishment of a conservation base for protecting the Bazaar and historic fabric of the city in 2002.

In 2010, Tabriz Historical Bazaar Complex was included in UNESCO world heritage list with criteria II, III and IV. Being the stakeholder who ascribe cultural values to the Bazaar and as heritage conservation professionals our responsibility of protection of this living historic ensemble has become more serious and complicated since its inclusion in the world heritage list. Although the Tabriz Bazaar enjoys the most integrated social and structural system among many other bazaars, it is our unpreparedness to face and cope with the ongoing change -and not the change itself-, that could be a serious threat to the world heritage site's outstanding universal values.

## 2. The need for context-oriented policies to protecting Tabriz Bazaar in the context of changing contemporary values and social life

Since in protection of Tabriz Bazaar world heritage site we are dealing with issues of a living historic place which already involves in the contemporary socio-economic life, the function and the ongoing life are the most important factors to be considered. Because, like every other living place, it is the ongoing function that protects the Bazaar

against deterioration. According to this study, the Tabriz Bazaar is a commercial, social and cultural ensemble developed throughout the history based on sustainable development and its existence depends on its adaptation to change. That is to say, dealing with change is an authentic attribute of the Bazaar and when the process of change does not harm the social and structural integrity of the Bazaar it keeps transcending and serving functions to new generations with new needs and perceptions.

Therefore, as conservation professionals, our job is to sustain the life (use) in the context of existing built environment to prolong life of the built and living features of the heritage resource. In order to facilitate the protection process, this work aimed to provide a profound understanding of the authentic characters of the Bazaar, the root and nature of its values, and perceptions and interests of people involved with it in the course of time. As results of this study suggest, Tabriz Bazaar has been developed based on social economic and political values and has served both commercial and public functions. However, after being affected by the socio-economic and political centralization in 19th century, the contribution of the Bazaar in public life decreased considerably. Today, the Tabriz Bazaar has become a retail and whole sale centre with tourist attractions.

Regarding the way in which the change has affected the stake holders and the power balance among them, it can be said that, before the 19th century when the government became the main and central decision maker for all aspects of social life, four key stakeholders used to involve the ongoing life in the Bazaar and in decision-making for its development; The Bazaari, the government, the Olamaa, and local people. After the political modernization the traditional power balance among the stakeholders experienced an intense change. Today, groups involved with the Bazaar are more various in number and more diverse in terms of their perceptions on and interests in the Bazaar. But according to the anthropological studies conducted in the Bazaar, in the contemporary decision making system the most powerful stakeholder is the government and the least effective are the public and local people. Figure 7 shows the ongoing change in Tabriz Bazaar's values and functions for its stakeholders in the course of time.

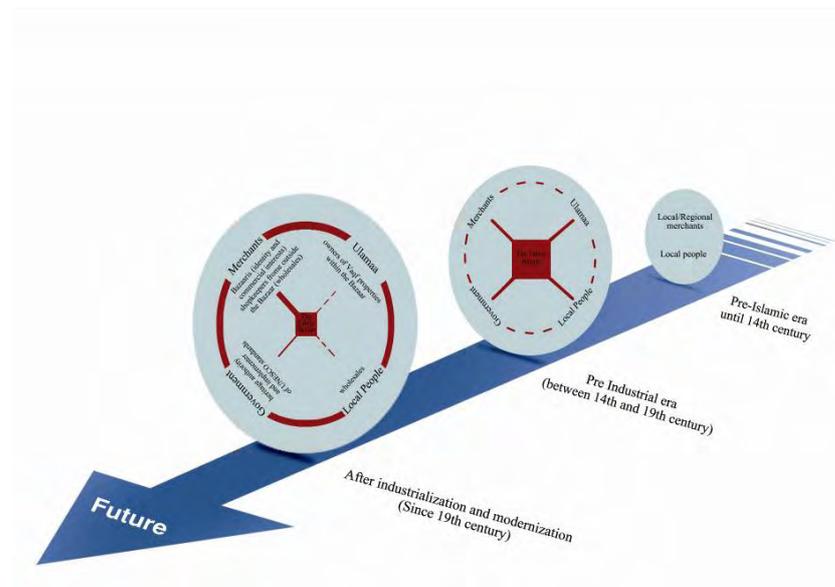


Fig 7. The ongoing change in Tabriz Bazaar's values and functions for its stakeholders in the course of time

According to its authentic characters argued in this paper, in policy-making for protection of the Tabriz Bazaar world heritage site change should be considered as an undeniable factor in the natural life cycle of Bazaar and not as a necessarily negative factor. The negativity or positivity of influences of change on the Bazaar directly depends on reactions of its managers to the change. Since Bazaar is a public place owned by individuals and different organizations, the sound and in-time reaction to the change in needs and values associated with it could only be made by a Management and decision-making system based on transparent negotiation and participation of all stakeholders for common interests. Adopting the following strategies could certainly assist heritage preservation authorities to move towards a context-oriented sustainable protection system for the Tabriz Bazaar world heritage site;

- Applying the traditional social framework as the main management tool for sustainable protection,
- Making regular negotiation with the reputable Bazaari who are trusted among other groups in the Bazaar,
- Capacity-building in education and promotion of youngsters working in Bazaar, (Mostly being relatives and sons of Bazaaris, these young people are the future owners of commercial places in the Bazaar.)

- Including the management plan of the Bazaar in the city's master plan,

- Reevaluating the existing legal protection tools in order to optimize them based on our knowledge about the nature of new factors threatening the outstanding universal values of the site and opinions of all stakeholders to ensure that:

- All stakeholders have the equal opportunity to (emotionally, intellectually or financially) use and enjoy the Bazaar as a public property;
- The Tabriz Bazaar is an integrated and active part of its surrounding built and social environment;
- And its contemporary functions are not damaging the material and intangible heritage.

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