SPATIAL AGENCY:

THE ROLE OF TEHRAN'S FREEDOM SQUARE IN PROTESTS OF 1979 AND 2009

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the concept of "spatial agency" as a particular understanding of agency and space which goes beyond the human-centric conceptions of agency and provides theoretical capacities to explain the way architecture engages in social and political arenas. As a case study, this research employs the notion of spatial agency to investigate the role of Tehran's Freedom Square in pre-revolution (1979) and post-election (2009) protests.

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INTRODUCTION

The main theoretical concern of this study is to explore the way architecture engages in social and political arenas. In response, I have set an agenda for a theoretical exploration and tried to consider a framework which conceptualizes space and agency in a unified notion. To do so, I have explored the notion of "spatial agency"[1] and used its outcomes as a theoretical ground to maintain a case study. I have investigated the role of Tehran's Freedom Square in protests of 1979 and 2009. In accord with this outline, the paper is organized in two main chapters.

In the first chapter, I will consider a theoretical framework to conceptualize and introduce the notion of "spatial agency." First, I will analyze space and agency in Marxian framework. To do so, after a brief introduction of Henri Lefebvre's model of "Spatial Triad," I will explore its limitations through using the notion of "Chordal Triad" which is one of the comprehensive accounts of agency. I will conclude this part with underlining that the main limitation is originated in human-centric understandings of agency and the main task in conceptualization of spatial agency is to overcome to the division of human and non-human. It entails considering a specific "association" between them and re-thinking the definitions of agency and architecture. Then, with employing Actor-Network Theory (ANT) I will discuss the quality of a specific "association" between humans and non-humans which considers them as actors/actants. I will show that agency and space both are characterized through the hybrid notion of "actor-network" and spatial agency is conceivable in the particular "association" of human/non-human and in Bruno Latour's (2005) words is capability to "modify a state of affairs by making a difference." For ANT, architecture is a dynamic "assembly" of various

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1 "Spatial Agency" is also the name of an ongoing architecture research project. Main researchers of this project are Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider, and Jeremi Till. For more information about this project see http://www.spatialagency.net

associated humans and non-human (actors/actants), rather than a static material product. And mutually, identity of spatial agency is tied to the identity of architecture as an "assembly." In the end of this part, I will elaborate this conception of spatial agency through reviewing ideas of some sociologists and architects. They provide more details about the characteristics of spatial agency as affecting, influencing, empowering, engaging, involving and allowing others to take control of their environment. Through elaborating these notions, I will explain that spatial agency is mobilized through an architectural project and becomes effective in a certain domain. In short, in a specific architectural project, specific "associated entities (actor/actants)" leads to a specific effect in an issue-area. Based on this theoretical conclusion I will continue with a case study in the second chapter.

In the second chapter, I will examine the role of Tehran's Freedom Square in protests of 1979 and 2009. Regarding the implications of theoretical exploration, the task of this case study is to realize that whether "specificity" of Freedom Square in regard to its "associated entities (actors/actants)" meaningfully influences the quality of protests. After exploring associations and entities of Freedom Square, I will underline that this square is strongly associated with social and historical contexts through its functional characteristics and symbolic/conceptual approaches. As a result of these characteristics, I will highlight that Freedom Square is empowered to become a national symbol and a very important public arena in Tehran for social and political activities. I will examine these implications with considering the pre-revolution (1979) and post-election (2009) protests. This exploration will verify the theoretical outcomes of the first chapter.

METHODOLOGY

The central question of this research investigates the way architecture engages in social and political issues. Therefore, my starting point was to consider a theoretical framework which is employed as a tool for formulating and exploring the case. This theoretical tool evolves around the concept of "spatial agency" and its implications specify the main tasks in the agenda of case study. Based on this agenda, I have identified the type and sources of empirical materials which I benefited in exploring the role of Tehran's Freedom Square in mass protests of 1979 and 2009. For architectural characteristics Freedom Square, I have benefited from my previous observations while I was in Iran. As an architect, in the past years I have visited the square several times to observe the physical characteristics including its position in the city structure, architectural functions, and design patterns. This familiarity with space facilitated organizing and interpreting the data that I found from secondary sources. I have used three interviews of Freedom Square's architect with the media, his official website, map of Tehran, architectural maps and drawings of the square, photos, documents in National Library and Archive of Iran (online database), in one particular case the online archive of The American Presidency Project, and other explanatory accounts which have been written about the history, construction, and characteristics of Freedom Square.

To explore attributes the pre-revolution (1979) and post-election (2009) protests I have focused on the most important events that are tied to Freedom Square. Based on a categorization of protests and taking the timeline of events into account, I have used several sources. For the pre-revolution (1979) protests, regarding the long time which has been passed from the Revolution I have mainly examined written materials including historical, social, and political accounts of the Revolution as well as archival sources, journalistic reports, and a few photos. One of the challenging points in reviewing and interpreting the pre-revolution (1979) protests was the objectivity of available accounts. For example, comparing

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the accounts which were provided by the state sources with those that were written by academicians showed that some of official accounts are biased or have overlooked some aspects of the events. This point specially was recognizable in their account of different political groups and social classes that engaged in the protests. However, regarding the place of protests, there was an agreement between most of the accounts. Therefore, maintaining the main concerns of this research, I have followed two main strategies in using the available data sources of pre-revolution (1979) protests. First, I have used the data with focus on the spatial dimension of protests, and second, I have compared different sources to realize plausible biases and avoid them.

For exploring the post-election (2009) protests, I had access to a broad scope of sources and various types of data which are considerably different from the Revolution time. Since the news of protests broadly distributed in the world through online media, one of my important sources was blogs, online social networks, news agencies, websites of different political groups, organizations, etc. I have used written material including journalistic reports, articles, memos, and blog entries as well as visual materials such as TV programs, videos, photos, and maps of the protests. Although the scope of sources, accessibility, and amount of data can be considered as an advantage, it leads to a chaos in terms of classification and interpretation. Therefore to avoid confusion I have employed three main criteria. First, I have focused on the spatial dimension of protests and investigate those materials which were related to Freedom Square. Second, I have highlighted some of critical events and tried to use various sources to reflect different views including remarks of witnesses and other secondary reports. Third, to gain quantitative material such as number of protesters I have used reliable and independent reports.

CHAPTER ONE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I will consider a theoretical framework to conceptualize and introduce the notion of "spatial agency" through reviewing and analyzing the relevant literature. This part is a response to the theoretical questions and concerns of this study: How do architectural projects engage, involve, or play a role in social and political arenas? What are the nature and characteristics of this engagement? How can transformative power of architecture be theoretically conceptualized?

With the term "spatial agency" I consider those formations or modes of agency which are not external to architecture and space; rather are tied with architectural resources, processes, and constitutive entities (both human and non-human.) This mode or understanding of agency in (or through) architecture cannot be explained only by the human-centric accounts of agency and needs to be conceptualized in a broader theoretical framework which takes non-humans into account. The main concern is the quality of relevance between agency and space, and this theoretical framework should be able to conceptualize, to integrate agency and space in the hybrid term of "spatial agency." This is a very broad theoretical project which can be elaborated in various aspects and dimensions, but in this study it is inevitable to maintain a focused agenda. Hence, in regard to the preliminary theoretical concerns that I outlined above, I have considered two criteria for specifying the scope of literature review and boundaries of the theoretical analyses. First, I should focus on those notions that have accounted on both agency and space, or at least take a theoretical position about the quality of their relevance. Second criterion addresses the scope of literature review in regard to the disciplinary domains. That is to say, the theoretical framework should not be a "pure" sociological notion or architectural theory. Rather, it has to have an interdisciplinary nature in order to be discussed in both disciplines. It has to address both sociology and architecture theory to make a common ground and theoretical capacity for the conceptualization of the

hybrid notion of spatial agency. Based on these two criteria as well as considering the limited pages of this thesis, I have chosen the Marxian framework with focus on Henri Lefebvre's notion of "Spatial Triad" and Actor-Network Theory (ANT) with focus on Bruno Latour's ideas. These notions have considered the nature of relevance between agency and space (but in different ways) and also have had a considerable influence in sociology and architecture theory. I have organized this theoretical exploration in two main parts. In the first part I will discuss Henri Lefebvre's notion of "Spatial Triad" and in the second part, Actor-Network Theory (ANT) with focus on Bruno Latour's ideas will be employed to conceptualize the notion of spatial agency.

1.1 Space and Agency in the Marxian Framework

Henri Lefebvre is one of the scholars who theorized the city based on the Marxist understanding of the society. His ideas deeply influenced and inspired other scholars at least for three decades. He can be considered as one of the key persons in understanding the Marxist accounts of the city. One of the central concepts in his theory is "Spatial Triad" which is a model for explaining the different categories and attributes of space, their dynamics, and interconnections. Spatial Triad is not only a theoretical model, but also follows a certain ideological and political agenda which has very strong practical consequences. In other words, it is also about agency and its relation to space and structure. This model has been interpreted and developed from different perspectives in the Marxian urban theories. As Merrifield points out "[Lefebvre] sketches this out only in [a] preliminary fashion, leaving us to add our own flesh, our own content, to rewrite it as part of our own chapter or research agenda." (2006:109) However, it should be underlined that in spite of all different interpretations, the common ground of these approaches in the Marxian framework is the capitalist and class-based society. The Marxist understanding of the society which is strongly

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determined by economic factors, to a considerable degree connects all Marxian urban theories. Hence, in exploring Spatial Triad it is helpful to keep this Marxian ground in mind.

Spatial Triad includes three modes or moments of space. A brief explanation of these moments regarding the Merrifield's (2004) reading of the Lefebvre is as following. Representations of space: conceived space, conceptualized space, space of capital, constructed by professionals and technocrats (engineers, planners, architects, developers, urbanists, geographers, etc.) Representational space: lived space, space of everyday experience. "It is [the] space [that is] experienced through complex symbols and images of its inhabitants and users and overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects" (2004:174) Conceived space tries to intervene in, rationalize, and appropriate lived space through its actors (engineers, planners, architects, developers, technocrats, etc.) Spatial practices: perceived space, "secrete" society's space. Spatial practices "have close affinities with people's perceptions of the world, of their world, particularly with respect to their everyday world and its space." (2004:174)

In accord with the Marxian framework, the role of economic factors and class society in forming the Spatial Triad can be easily realized. Conceived space is dominated by the capitalists who employ professionals, technocrats, and capital to produce space in accord with their own interests. Lived space is the domain of the majority of the people who are dominated by capitalists. The way in which they use space is different from the imposed rules and regulations of the actors of conceived space. Perceived space refers to the people's perceptions of the world. Hence, as an ideological mode, it is the way in which people see the space and is connected to subjectivity, desires, and ideals. Structure and dynamics of the Spatial Triad resemble the characteristics of the capitalist society and result in a Marxist agenda and conception of agency. Therefore, it is predictable that in the next step Lefebvre

proposes a "revolutionary" conception of action. According to the Marxist framework, class conflicts in the evolutionary phases of capitalism ultimately form the social transformations through mobilizing the people of the suppressed class and revolution. The same mechanism is at work in Lefebvre's revolutionary schema. The challenge between conceived space and lived space is the reflection of the distinction between work and places of residence which according to the Marxian urban theories is one of the structural factors in shaping capitalist cities. The perceived space is the reflection of people's world view. Agency and action are being formed through provoking the lived space and perceived space over the conceived space in everyday life. "Everyday life internalizes all three moments of Lefebvre's spatial triad" (2004:176) Lefebvre wants to empower socialists in their struggle against modern capitalism in the cities. His model prepares the ground for proposing the idea of urban festivals and upheavals which are the action of people against the dominant class and ultimately is called urban revolution. In the following I will maintain an assessment of Spatial Triad through employing a conception of agency which is called "Chordal Triad."

"Chordal Triad" was proposed by Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische in an article entitled "What is Agency?" in 1998. According to them, the existing conceptions of agency are not adequate to explain different aspects of human action. They try to provide a comprehensive definition of agency, which covers diverse dimensions of human action. One of the powerful attributes of this model is that the authors carefully review the existing notions of agency and distance their conception from ideological or political biases. Hence, the Chordal Triad can be a reliable and comprehensive framework to explore other conceptions of agency. Human Agency in Chordal Triad is "the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments (the temporal-relational contexts of action) which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, both reproduces and transforms those structures in [an] interactive response to the problems posed by changing

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historical situations." (1998:970) Based on the definition above, agency can be disaggregated into three main elements as "iterational element" (habit), "projective element" (imagination), and "practical-evaluative element" (judgment). Each of these elements actually refers to time: the first element addresses the "past", the second points to the "future", and the third element refers to the "present." According to Emirbayer and Mische, the existing notions disregard the "time" and "temporality" of agency and structure: "agency remained outside of time, while structure remained a spatial category rather than (also) a temporal construction." (1998:966) Hence, time and temporality are fundamental concepts in their definition of agency. Based on this, employing Chordal Triad, highlights at least three limitations in the notion of Spatial Triad.

The first limitation is related to the temporality of structure. In the notion of Chordal Triad, agency is the temporally constructed engagement by actors of "different" structural environments which these structural environments are also temporal (not permanent) constructions. Space in the Marxian spatial render of the capitalist society is strongly determined by economic factors. As a result, through the Marxian account, space from the very beginning becomes a restricted economic structure rather than a temporal construction. In other words, space is limited to the borders and regulations of economy and loses the possibilities of engagement with the other structural environments through the actors. As a result, agency in Spatial Triad only can be conceptualized in regard to the internal dynamics and modes of space. That is why; the concept of agency as urban revolution comes out of the interactions of conceived, lived, and perceived space. To be clear, agency in the Marxian render of space is "inevitably" conceptualized based on the internal dynamics of space. Since in the Marxian understanding of class-based society, the structure is limited to the deterministic borders of economy, in the conception of agency there is no possibility for considering the structures and actors which are located outside the economic borders.

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The second limitation is related to the conception of time in agency. In Chordal Triad "all three of these constitutive dimensions of human agency are to be found, in varying degrees, within any concrete empirical instance of action." (1998:971) This conception of time which simultaneously covers the past, present, and future provides a much broader framework to explain different types and modes of action. In contrast, time in the conception of agency in Spatial Triad is limited to the historical phases of capitalism. Spatial Triad is a Marxian render of space and its three moments or modes of space are formed following the evolutionary stances of class-based society in a leaner and teleological account of time. That is, dominated class ultimately in the last phase of capitalism will overcome the dominant class through the revolution. Accordingly, in the Spatial Triad conceived space will be overcome by provoking lived space and perceived space in the everyday life through the urban revolution. Moreover, the revolutionary conception of agency in Spatial Triad is "inevitably" oriented to the future which the ideal society is promised. Whereas, according to Chordal Triad of agency "there are times and places when actors are more oriented toward the past, more directive toward the future, or more evaluative of the present." (1998:1012) In sum, as to matter of time, the conception of agency in Spatial Triad is not flexible and is limited to linear time with orientation to the future.

The third limitation comes out of the first two limitations which were discussed above and challenges the capability of the Marxian accounts of space in explaining the complex aspects of contemporary urban issues. According to the Chordal Triad "The ways in which people understand their own relationship to the past, future, and present make a difference to their actions. Changing conceptions of agentic possibility in relation to structural contexts profoundly influence how actors in different periods and places see their worlds." (1998:973) In contrast, as explained before, the conception of agency and structure in the Spatial Triad is limited to the determinism of economic factors and borders of the teleological and linear time

which both are rooted in the Marxist accounts of capitalist societies. As a result the Marxian renders of space to a considerable degree disregard many other factors such as culture, identity, gender, ethnicity, religion, and technological advancements. "Much work in this tradition appears totally innocent of the issues raised in social theory by the feminist critique of Marxism, by post-structuralism and postmodernism, and politically by the collapse of communism." (Tajbakhsh, 2001:18) Exploring these issues goes beyond the topic and main concerns of this study, and needs much more articulation.

All these limitations in a broader frame point to a bigger problem which not only affects the Marxian conception of space and agency but also challenges Chordal Triad. Both Spatial Triad and Chordal Triad introduce a human-centric conception of agency and exclude non-humans. This point is not specific to these models, but most of the social theories have conceptualized agency as a human-centric, intentional, and goal-oriented mode of action. Therefore, agent is someone who benefits from human intelligence and intentionality. From the point of these notions architecture as a "material" product, cannot have agency. In this understanding, agency remains external to architecture and is conceptualized merely in human. Hence, the central point in conceptualization of spatial agency is re-thinking the definitions of both agency and architecture. In other words, spatial agency can be conceptualized if the understanding of agency goes beyond the intentionality of human and definition of architecture exceeds materiality. That is to say, the key point in both sides (architecture and agency) is to overcome the dichotomy of human and non-human, constructing a theoretical framework which associates between human and non-human, a conception which considers a hybrid and unified notion of human and non-human. As Isabelle Doucet and Kenny Cupers (2009) underline, the question of agency in architecture entails considering the "multiplicity and relationality" of actors (both human/non-human) and conceiving the "relationship" between them.

1.2 Conception of Spatial Agency through Actor-Network Theory

Incapability of human-centric notions in providing a unified concept of human/non-human and conceptualization of spatial agency is rooted mainly in the dichotomies of subject/object, human/non-human, material/non-material, and limiting the phenomena to categories, groups, and structures. These dichotomies and groups are imposed by theory and methodological traditions in social inquiry. They are more conventional, imaginary, and hypothetical rather than real. Bruno Latour (2005) in his book "Reassembling the Social, An Introduction for Actor-Network Theory" highlights these theoretical and methodological limitations in the social theories and differentiates between two notions in sociology as "sociology of social" and "sociology of associations." The former conceives "social" as "a stabilized state of affairs, a bundle of ties that, later, may be mobilized to account for some other phenomenon." (2005:1) He underlines that in this understanding there is the risk of conceiving "social" as "a type of material" and argues that "the social cannot be construed as a kind of material or domain." (2005:1) Based on this argument, and with referring to the etymology of the word (socius), Latour proposes a new notion in sociology as "sociology of associations" through re-defining and re-assembling the concept of "social" which its task is "tracing the associations." Latour, in this book accounts on Actor-Network Theory (ANT) as a notion in the realm of "sociology of associations" and organizes his ideas in two main steps: "How to deploy controversies about the social world" and "How to render associations traceable again." Introducing Latour's project of ANT and details of these steps go beyond this thesis, but in the following, I will try to benefit from some of its main concepts in order to move from the realm of "sociology of social" as a human-centric approach and make an alternative theoretical ground for conceptualization of spatial agency.

According to Latour (2005), "Sociology of associations" in contrast to "sociology of social," distances itself from the notion of grouping and does not designate any kind of

dichotomy between human and non-human or subject and object. "Sociology of social" based on its understanding of the word "social" uses grouping as a tool in order to start and follow the social inquiry. In contrast, "sociology of associations" traverses the boundaries of groups and insists that "there is no relevant group that can be said to make up social aggregates, no established component that can be used as an incontrovertible starting point." (2005:29) The starting point for "sociology of association" is not to claim "Social aggregates are mainly made of (x)." (2005:30) For ANT, there is no group, only the "performance of group making" (as a "temporal mode") is employed for the social inquiry. ANT sociologists neither recognize groups nor stick to them, rather they "move from one group formation to the next." (2005:52) By this understanding, ANT fairly overcomes the problem of groups and categories as one of the main limitations of human-centric notions in conceptualization of spatial agency. That is to say, accordingly ANT provides a solution for the problem of human/non-human, material/non-material, and subject/object in spatial agency. The important point in ANT's account of human and non-human is that "[it] has nothing to do with a "reconciliation" of the famous object/subject dichotomy." (2005:75) In other words, "overcoming" should not be misunderstood as "reconciliation." ANT, overcomes the dichotomy of human/non-human first by criticizing and reformulating the notion of grouping (as was discussed above), and then through providing a specific definition of agency and association, which in the following I will explain.

In "sociology of social" agency is a human-centric notion which is considered as an "intentional" and "meaningful" mode of action. Whereas, according to Latour (2005), in ANT, actors (apart from their figuration) are "participants" or "co-workers" and the nature of connections between them, in the course of action, is not merely "human-to-human" or "object-object" but is "zigzag" from one to another. For ANT, "any thing that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor or, if it has no figuration yet, an actant."

(2005:71) This understanding of agency goes beyond the division of humans and non-humans in "sociology of social" and considers a particular "association" between them which provides a theoretical capacity for the conceptualization of agency in architecture. That is to say, agency in architecture (spatial agency) can be conceptualized as capability of modifying a state of affairs by "making a difference" through its "associated" entities (human/non-human or more precisely in terms of ANT's account of agency: actors/actants.) The nature of these "associations" is not a simple link between separated groups (I recall that ANT rejects groups) or "reconciliation" of humans and non-humans. Rather, based on ANT's account of agency the nature of associations is tied to those humans and non-humans which became actors (if have no figuration yet: actants) to "make a difference." Tracing this specific quality of associations is the main task of ANT as "sociology of association" and is best introduced with the concept of "actor-network."

ANT is a "Theory" of "Actor-Network." The hyphenated term of "actor-network" represents both actors (human/non-human) and associations in a unified concept. The metaphor of network in "actor-network" stands for connections, but as Latour (1997) underlines, the nature of this network is different from the mathematical or technical networks which carry topological meanings. "ANT adds to the mathematical notion of network a completely foreign notion, that of actor. The new hybrid actor-network leads us away from mathematical properties into a world which has not yet be so neatly charted. To sketch these properties we should now move on from static and topological properties to dynamic and ontological ones." (Latour:1997) This is the reason that ANT constantly criticizes static boundaries, structures, dichotomies and "topological attributes" such as far/close, inside/outside, and small/big. "Topological attributes" are spatial characteristics and ANT has a specific understanding of space. Sociologists of ANT involve in the theory of architecture and challenge those notions which conceive architecture as a material and static product. In

the following I will introduce the notion of space in ANT and its advantages for the conceptualization of spatial agency, but before that it would be helpful to review very briefly what I have discussed up to this point.

Considering the main limitations of human-centric conceptions of agency, I came to this point that spatial agency can be conceptualized if the understanding of agency goes beyond the "intentionality" of human, and definition of architecture exceeds "materiality." The key task in both sides (architecture and agency) was to overcome the dichotomy of human/non-human and making an "association" between them. For the part of agency, through employing ANT as a theoretical framework in "sociology of associations" I came to an understanding of agency which overcomes dichotomies and associates between human and non-human. I explained this through discussing the notion of actor/actant and the hybrid concept of "actor-network." In regards to the characteristics of "actor-network," I reached to this point that ANT has specific implications for the notion of space and challenges the material and static understandings of architecture. This point is the other side of conceptualization of spatial agency which entails having a dynamic definition of architecture by considering associations of humans and non-humans.

According to Latour (2009) the existing notion of space which he calls it "Euclidian space" was emerged in the Renaissance based on the Western scientific imagination: "Euclidian space is the repository inside which Galilean objects move without transformation and are rendered detectable and calculable through their changing positions." (2009:12) That is to say, in this notion of space, there is a dichotomy of inside and outside, the association of the entities is overlooked and non-humans do not involve in the forming or producing of the space. "Euclidian space is a subjective, human-centered or at least knowledge-centered way of grasping entities, which does no justice to the ways humans and things get by in the

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world." (2008:84) In contrast, according to ANT, space should be explained as association of various entities (actor/actants) in the hybrid of actor-network. Latour supports this notion of space by raising two questions: "Is space what inside which reside objects and subjects? Or is space one of the many connections made by objects and subjects? In the first tradition, if you empty the space of all entities there is something left: space. In the second, since entities engender their space (or rather their spaces) as they trudge along, if you take the entities out, nothing is left, especially space." (2009:142) That is to say, the existence of space is totally dependent to the existence of associated entities (actors/actants.) In other words, space is more conceivable and understandable as association of various entities (actor/actants) in the hybrid of actor-network. In accord with this conception of space in ANT, Albena Yaneva (2006) defines architecture as an "assembly" and underlines that "a building is more conceivable as a complex ecology; a complex assembly of contradictory issues a hybrid forum of various actors." (Yaneva, 2006) That is to say, in accord with the conception of space, architecture cannot be defined merely as a material product, a commodity, a bounded physical construction, or a static body of physical elements and objects. This notion not only does not separate humans and non-humans but also is able to consider the associations between the diverse entities in the architectural projects. Accordingly, it overcomes the limitations of the human-centric notions and characterizes that part of the conception of spatial agency which is related to the definition of architecture.

In fact, comparing the conceptions of agency and space in ANT shows that their definitions are two sides of the same coin. Both are characterized based on a specific understanding of "association" between human and non-human (actor/actant) which is explained through the hybrid notion of "actor-network." In other words, the nature of spatial

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agency is conceivable in this particular "association" of actors/actants which makes architecture capable to "modify a state of affairs by making a difference."[2] Taking this general conception of spatial agency, in the following I will try to provide more details about its characteristics through the ideas of some scholars from disciplines of sociology and architecture. Mutually, this will show that how this general conception of spatial agency is highly capable to encompass the ideas of thinkers from both sides (architecture and sociology.) However, it should be underlined that the similarity of these ideas does not mean that all of these scholars have developed their ideas in the framework of ANT. They may have different theoretical reference points as well as sometimes different practical and empirical addresses. The implication of this point is that the same understanding of spatial agency (in terms of the conception which I have introduced above) can be reached through alternative theoretical approaches other than ANT. ANT is only one of the plausible theoretical frames that I have chosen as the main approach for this thesis.

Scott Lash (2009) points out that agency in architecture can be explained as "activity." He mentions that the classical Weberian and Parsonian understanding of agency is a "goal-oriented" mode of human's action. Rather, activity "[…] is much more situational. […] you put yourself down anywhere, and see where it takes you." (2009:8) This understanding of "situationality" can be explained through Jeremy Till's account of architect's role in architectural projects. Till (2009) points out that, architects have not a full control and authority in architectural projects. Their intentions are influenced by other elements and forces. According to him "other people, circumstances, and events intervene to upset the architect's best-laid plans." (2009:1) That is to say, agency in architecture cannot be

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2 The phrase: "modify a state of affairs by making a difference" is a quote from Bruno Latour (2005:71), which in this document has been used in several forms: separately or in combination with other sentences or phrases. This note is to avoid repeating the citation.

conceptualized through human-centric notions. Conceptualization of agency in architecture entails having a different understanding of architecture as a dynamic assembly of various associated entities (actor/actants) that I explained before through employing ANT.

Antoine Picon (2009) considers agency in architecture as the "affect" which happens through a "spatialized identity." According to Picon, this "spatialized identity" is related to the debate of human/non-human and transcends their division. This conception of agency is very similar to what I explored through ANT in regard to the specific "associations" of human and non-human in agency and space. In terms of ANT, "affect" can be characterized based on associated actors/actants in the hybrid of "actor-network." He goes further and underlines that agency in architecture is about "political and social relevance" of architecture. He highlights that "Architecture is always both about the reproduction of society as is, and about proposing an alternative future." (2009:12) Isabelle Doucet and Kenny Cupers (2009) by referring to him point that the nature of architecture is being "in the world" and ability of architecture to perform, enact, critique, and lead is associated to its nature.

Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till (2009) in their notion of "spatial agency" consider agency in transformative sense. According to them architects engage "indirectly" with the world through the buildings. "Far from setting the human (architect) against the non-human (building), spatial agency sees the whole process as a continuity, motivated in the first instance by intent, and then open to adjustment, "acting otherwise", as it unfolds in time." (2009:98) For them, spatial agency is a critical long-term activity instead of a short-term "exchange of service." They underline that spatial agency is "empowerment of others in the sense of allowing others to "take control" over their environment." (2009:99) This understanding of spatial agency is very similar to Latour and Yaneva's (2009) formulation of architecture and its dynamic nature. For them a building is a "contested territory" which can

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be introduced through "the way it resists or attempts at transformation, allows certain visitors' actions and impedes others, bugs observers, challenges city authorities, and mobilizes different communities of actors." (2008:86)

All these ideas that I mentioned above, less or more can be fit in the general notion of spatial agency that I conceptualized through ANT. They add some details or re-state the same general understanding through alternative ways. Moreover, some of them have implications about the ways that spatial agency can be employed, leaded, benefited. They also point out social and political influences of spatial agency. These implications further the notion of spatial agency to a more complex level beyond its nature. They address practical and concrete influences of architectural projects in different issues (i.e. political and social.) As I explored in this chapter, the nature of spatial agency is conceivable in the particular "association" of "actors/actants" which makes architecture capable to "modify a state of affairs by making a difference." In words of Picon (2009) it stands for "spatialized identity" of agency. According to the definition of architecture as a dynamic "assembly" of various actors/actants, it is understandable that spatial agency is internalized in architectural projects. Spatial agency and assembly of architecture mutually constitute the identity of each other. That is to say, spatial agency "exists" in "all" architectural projects. But, for example, do a hospital and a museum have equal influences in promoting culture?

Albena Yaneva (2006) inspiring from ANT perceives architecture as a dynamic "assembly" of various entities and argues for the "perlocutionary force" of architecture. She borrows this term from J. L. Austin's theory of speech acts. It means persuading, convincing, scaring, enlightening, inspiring, getting someone to do something or realize something. Perlocutionary force of architecture is "the power of saying something with an architectural project, or the ability to argue by design, and to produce certain consequential effects upon the

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thoughts, actions, feelings and attitudes of all the protagonists involved in a design story." (Yaneva, 2006) Yaneva's notion stands for this point that a certain "mobilization" of spatial agency through an "architectural project" can produce a certain force, influence, effect in a certain issue. In other words, the "role" of an architectural project in a specific issue (i.e. political or social) can be conceived in the "specificity" of that project in mobilizing spatial agency, which consequently produces a certain influence. It is important to underline that, here "Specificity" of a project is defined in regard to the relationship between spatial agency and its manifestation in an issue-area (in words of Yaneva: perlocutionary force). "Specificity" stands for this point that each project in a different way mobilizes spatial agency and produces different influence. That is why; a hospital and a museum do not have the same influence in improving culture. To develop this understanding of "specificity," it would be helpful to recall that, as I discussed before, nature of spatial agency can be mutually understood in regard to the definition of architecture as an assembly of associated entities (actors/actants). That is to say, the "specificity" of an architectural project can be explained with consideration of "associations" and "entities (actors/actants.)" In other words, in different projects, different entities (actors/actants) are associated in a different ways. Consequently, different projects produce different effects in a certain issue-area; that is to say, they have different "roles" in a certain Issue-area.

To sum, the nature of spatial agency is conceivable in the particular "association" of "actors/actants" which makes the architecture capable to "modify a state of affairs by making a difference." This conception stands for "spatialized identity" of agency. Spatial agency is mobilized through an architectural project and becomes effective in a certain issue-area. This defines the role of a project. The reason that different architectural projects produce different effects is rooted in the "specificity" of each project in regards to its "associations" and "entities (actors/actants)." In short, in a specific architectural project, specific "associated

entities (actor/actants)" leads to a specific effect in an issue-area. This is a hypothesis which theoretically was formulated in this chapter, and can be examined empirically in a case.

CHAPTER TWO: TEHRAN'S FREEDOM SQUARE

In the previous chapter, through a theoretical exploration I conceptualized the nature of spatial agency and came to the point that the role of an architectural project is mobilizing spatial agency which consequently leads to certain influence in a certain issue-area. Elaboration of this conception ended with this hypothesis that, in a specific project, specific "associated entities (actors/actants)" leads to a specific effect in an issue-area. In this chapter, I will examine this hypothesis through exploring "role of Tehran's Freedom Square in protests of 1979 and 2009." In this case, Freedom Square stands for the "project," protests stands for the "issue-area" and the task of study is to realize that whether "specificity" of Freedom Square in regard to its "associated entities (actors/actants)" meaningfully influences the quality of protests.

This chapter is organized in three main parts. In the first part, I will briefly describe the case including the history of Freedom Square, a brief history of protests in Iran, and the protests were held in Freedom Square. In the second part, I will explore the "specificity" of Freedom Square in regard to its associations and entities (actors/actants). Then, in the third part, based on the specificity of Freedom Square, I will explore protests in two periods of time: Pre-revolution (1979) and post-election (2009).

2.1 Case Description

2.1.1 Freedom Square

Freedom Square (in Persian: Meydan-e Azadi), also is known as Shahyad Square (Shahyad in Persian means memorial of Shah: the king) which was the name of the square before the 1979 revolution. It also includes a monument which is known as Freedom Tower (in Persian: Borj-e Azadi) or Shahyad Tower which was the name before the Revolution.

In late 60s and early 70s the monarchy system in Iran organized a series of illustrious ceremonies and celebrations in order to demonstrate the power, dignity, and progression of Iran to the world. The main concept of these celebrations was to emphasize the central role of the monarchy as the source of wellbeing and development in Iran. One of the manifestations of this claim could have been the architecture. Therefore, the idea of constructing a monument was posed by the state as a part of those celebrations. In fall of 1971 the celebrations of 2500-year monarchy started in the Persepolis and continued with inauguration of Freedom Square in Tehran. The monument was supposed to be the symbol of power and dignity of monarchy. "When the Shah was speaking about great progressions of Iran he was mentioning the gate of a great civilization. Hence, the design and construction of such a gate came to the agenda in order to realize the Shah's desires" (Javaherian:2008). That is, the project was named Shahyad which means the memorial of king.

A design competition was organized in 1968 and the most famous architects proposed their projects but surprisingly the proposal of a 24 year old architect, Hossein Amanat, was selected. The square was built to celebrate the 2500 years of monarchy, but in contrast the architect underlines that his idea was not merely about the monarchy. "For me [it] was really 2500 years or many thousand years of Iranian culture […] in my mind it was not only the monarchy but the history of art and culture of Iran." (BBC-website:2009) At that time, some groups were against the monarchy system and criticized the government because of the huge expenses of celebrations. After the revolution, some people blamed the architect that his project was serving the monarchy. He rejects this claim: "When I was designing the project I was thinking about all periods of the history and the future of Iran not only specific political conditions of that time." (BBC-website:2007)

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His design includes two main elements: the monument (Freedom Tower) and the open space (plaza). The area of the Square is around 120 hectares. "The length of the monument is 63 meters and its height is 45 meters." (BBC-website:2004)

> The structure comprised four huge columns joined on top and forming four arches and sits in a plaza of fountains and landscaping patterned similarly to ancient Persian gardens. A foundation hall museum in the basement and two main exhibition halls on the upper floors are reached through the main entry level [...] the underground museum was designed as a space for permanent exhibition of relics of the Persian civilization and its culture through the ages. It consists of three major areas with the main exhibition space directly underneath the Shahyad/Azadi Monument [also known as Freedom Tower]. (Amanat Architects:2009)

The construction was started in 1969 and was accomplished in 1971. Freedom Square was inaugurated in 1971 with the participation of many important guests from all over the world. In this day "the mayor of Tehran, Gholam Reza Nickpay handed the Shah a replica of the Cyrus Cylinder." (Kadivar, 2009) For the pictures of Freedom Square see appendix.

2.1.2 Protests of 1979 and 2009

In this part, I will provide a brief history of protests in Iran and will specify the type of pre-revolution (1979) and post-election (2009) protests which are being explored in this study. Historically, protests, crowds, demonstrations, meetings, and strikes were one of the important ways for the Iranian people to show their discontent and influence the political processes. Ervand Abrahamian (2009) in his exploration of the mass protests in the Iranian Revolution goes back to the history and underlines that mass protests and crowds had a significant role in the Iranian political history. He reviews the protests and demonstrations in 1891-2, 1905, 1919-192, 1924, 1951-3, and 1963 and points that these events were deeply influential in the political arena. He explains that how street demonstration and meetings was important in 1891-2 to forcing the Shah to cancel an agreement which would have allowed a British company to have the monopoly of sale and export of tobacco. He points that later in 1905; demonstrations of people played an important role in following their demand for

constitution. According to him, later in 1919–20, "protests prevented the government from ratifying an Anglo-Persian Agreement which would have in effect incorporated Iran into the British Empire." (2009:165) and mass demonstrations in 1951-3 supported Mohammad Mossadeq, the prime minister, to nationalize oil industry. Abrahamian underlines that Khomeini for the first time was appeared in the national scene after the crowds of June 1963.

As to 1979 Revolution, several mass protests in 1978 played a very significant role in the process of evolving the Revolution and finally led the monarchy system to be collapsed in 1979. Thirty years later in 2009, after the contested presidential elections, again mass protests were the most important ways that Iranian people used to show their discontent. In this thesis my focus is on the pre-revolution (1979) and post-election (2009) protests and their relationship with Freedom square. As I mentioned before, Freedom Square was built to celebrate the monarchy system, but it became the most important public space of the country for different political and social events. Many important political and social events took place in Freedom Square, including different types of celebrations, ceremonies, demonstrations, protests, cultural festivals, anniversaries, rituals, and parades. Low (2000) has a comprehensive study about public space and plaza which can be useful to categorize the events which have taken place in Freedom Square. She underlines that "public space is often about public protest, but the form of that protest is not always the same." (2000:183) She uses the concept of protest in three categories as manifest protest, latent protest, and ritual protest. According to her, "Manifested protest such as public demonstrations or the appropriation of space by marginal or outcast groups, latent protest such as the symbolic struggle for architectural and cultural representation within the built environment, and ritual protest such fiestas, parades, and carnivals that temporarily invert the everyday social structure and hegemonic meanings of the public space. (2000:183) In Freedom Square many events can be considered as manifest, latent, or ritual but the category which is explored in this study is the

category of the manifest which is applied to the type of pre-revolution (1979) and post-election (2009) protests. In regard to Low's definition, "Manifest protest is the most apparent and obvious. It includes strikes, demonstrations, and other gatherings organized to express discontent and disagreement." (2000:183) Base on this definition, the pre-revolution (1979) and post-election (2009) protests can be considered as manifest protests.

2.2 Associations and Entities of Freedom Square

In the following, I will show that Freedom Square strongly associated to its historical and social contexts. I will explain in detail that associations with history mainly have maintained through symbolic and conceptual approaches in design. As to the social context, the project includes some functional attributes which enable it to be in close association with the social context. Both in the tower and the open space (plaza) a set of design strategies have been followed to connect the project to everyday life and public activities. Its location in the city, museums and exhibitions in the tower, and the open space connect Freedom Square to the social context. In short, in the following I will show that the specificity of Freedom Square in terms of "associated entities (actors/actants)" is its strong association with the "social" and "historical" contexts and can be explored in the location of the square, the tower, and the open space (plaza).

2.2.1 Location

Freedom Square is associated with social context through the functional characteristics of its location. The square is located in the west side of Tehran close to the international airport. Der-Grigorian writes that "Shahyad was designed as a significant point of reference, focus, and attention of Tehran." (1998:96) The location can be considered as the entrance of the city from the west. It is on the west-east axe of the city and is connected to the central part of the city through a long path. Enghelab Street with Azadi [Freedom] Street together make this longest East-West axis. This axe is one of the most important streets of

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Tehran and many other streets from the south and north are connected to it. And also several important squares are connected to each other through it. Tehran University, Sharif (Ariamehr) University, and many important administrative, cultural, commercial, and residential buildings are located in this axis. Because of all these strong associations to the different elements and parts of the city, Freedom Square has a unique position and is deeply associated to the social context of the city and everyday activities.

Gradually, its position in the city has become stronger. One of the biggest residential complexes of Tehran with a huge population of residents has been built near the square and many other administrative, commercial, and cultural buildings have been constructed in the neighborhood. A highway which connects the north of the city to the south passes through the square. Freedom Square as an intersection of two important axes of the city has become a hub for public transportation in the west of the capital. Moreover, all major connecting roads leading to Tehran end in Freedom Square, the gate to the capital.

Freedom Square is associated with historical context through symbolic/conceptual characteristics of its location. The square is not located in the old context of capital but its closeness to the international airport implies a conceptual meaning of a gate to historical Iran. "Many famous people, kings, and presidents from all over the world had been invited for the monarchy celebrations and the airport was their entrance to the country." (Javaherian:2008) The memorial was supposed to act as a triumph, in order to depict the prosperity and achievements of the nation under the monarchy system. Regarding the aims of the project, the memorial should have implied the meaning of the gate to the great civilization. As Amanat noted, "This was supposed to be a portal to Tehran, to the country from the airport." (BBC-website:2009).

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When President Nixon visited Iran in 1972, made some remarks during his visit to Freedom Square. It is interesting that he is very optimistic referring to what he has seen between the airport and Freedom Square. The President addresses the king as the source of progress in Iran "We see the progress that has occurred […] under the enlightened leadership of Your Majesty. As we have come thus far from the airport, we have seen thousands of school children, and as we see them we think they are the future of Iran; they are the future of the world." (The American Presidency Project, remarks of Nixon in Tehran1972) As reflected in the remarks of President Nixon, the location of the square near the airport was enabling the government to impress foreigners with a short experience of the city between the airport and Freedom Square which symbolically was a gate to the historical Iran. Der-Grigorian underlines that "it served as propaganda being the gateway to the capital. […] Shahyad was also and more importantly the door to the outside world." (1998:99) In the next years, the Shah was taking foreign officials to visit Freedom Square. It was a symbol of the great Iranian civilization and history. A picture dated March 2, 1974 shows Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in military uniform beside Soltan Ghabous (king of Oman). Another picture dated October 21, 1975 shows Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and Farah Pahlavi beside Omar Ali Bongo the president of Gabon, his wife, and their convoy in Freedom Square listening to the Mayor of Tehran. A picture dated May 23, 1977 shows Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and Farah Pahlavi beside Felix Hufue Buani the president of Republic of Cote d'Ivoire and his wife visiting the Shahyad Cultural Center.[3] Even "Iran Air" used the pictures of Freedom Square as the symbol of the great Iranian civilization on its advertisements. Since the square was very close to the airport, "Iran Air, the national airline, used to organize a short tour of the tower to

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3 These pictures are available in National Library and Archive of Iran (NLAI) http://www.nlai.ir/

passengers transiting via Tehran's airport on their way to the USA or Central Asia." (Nourizade:2006)

2.2.2 Freedom Tower

Freedom Square is associated with social context through functional characteristics of the tower. The considerable functional point in the tower is its close connection with the social context. This monument is not a solid huge sculpture; rather it includes the exhibitions and museums in the basement and upper levels, which enables it to have a constant and lively functional connection with everyday life and social-cultural activities. The proposed exhibitions and museums are easily accessible for visitors and encourage people to visit the monument constantly. Moreover, the openings on the top of the building provide a unique panoramic view of the city, which is attractive for people to have a different visual experience of the city.

Freedom Square is associated with historical context through symbolic/conceptual approaches in design of tower. Freedom Square is one of the successful attempts of Iranian architects during the 60s and 70s to integrate modern international architecture with the historical and local patterns. "In the architectural approaches of that time some transformations occurred. Nationalist approaches were dealing with the Internationalist ideas." (Javaherian:2008) That is, simultaneously, the tower includes both national and international characteristics. Moreover, different architectural patterns from the history of Iran have been integrated successfully in the design of the monument. "In this building, the main arch, in the middle represents the [great] arch of Ctesiphonpre ([the capital] of Sassanids Empire) as the pre-Islamic era and the upper arch represents the post-Islamic history of Iran." (BBC-website:2007) The inside of the tower also has a significant symbolic and historical reference. The inside was designed in a way that one could experience the history and civilization of Iran through visiting different spaces from the basement to the top. The halls in

the basement are designated to the ancient Iran and the visitor gradually to the top. Its strong use of the symbols and patterns of Iranian historical architecture not only connects the monument to the history of Iran but also creates a kind of intimacy between the monument and the people. "This monument was welcomed by the Iranian people because it has the essence of Iranian culture and characteristics." (BBC-website2007)

2.2.3 Open Space (plaza)

Freedom Square is associated with social context through functional characteristics of open space (plaza). A very large land (around 120 hectares) in the west of Tehran, near the international airport, was allocated to the project. This vast area "was ranking it as the biggest square of Tehran and one of the biggest squares in the world." (Javaherian 2008) It is important to note that the architect paid attention both to the monument and the open space. In the project, the open space is not just a context which the monument is posed on but there are strong functional and conceptual ideas behind it. The architect emphasizes that the people have an important role in preserving the plaza and keeping it alive. "The plaza should be easily accessible for the people in everyday life." (Rohani 2008)

There are no barriers, fences, dividers, or obstacles around the plaza or inside it. In Freedom Square the plaza is a vast open area which is strongly connected with its environment and allows people to walk freely and have diverse activities in it. The plaza does not impose any kind of specific function or behavior, rather its openness provides a lively environment and its function is formed by the people and their needs. That is, its use is not exclusive for specific groups and can be strongly connected with a broad scope of people from different layers of society.

Freedom Square is associated with historical context through Symbolic/conceptual approaches in design of open space (plaza). Two symbolic approaches have been followed in

the design of the open space. "The form of the landscaping in the plaza has been inspired from the complex geometrical ornaments on the dome of Sheykh Lotfollah mosque in Esfahan which illustrate the knowledge of Iranian architects in the past. The design of fountains has been inspired from Persian gardens." (BBC-Website:2007) Both geometrical ornaments and Persian gardens are strong codes of Iranian history and architecture. The Sheykh Lotfollah mosque, which is located in the historical Naghsh e Jahan square in Esfahan, is a famous symbol of Iranian historical architecture. It reminds one of the most productive and progressive eras of Iran. Also the size of the plaza can be compared to the size of the historical Naghsh e Jahan Square, one of the most famous symbols of Iranian architecture in the world. On the other hand, Persian gardens have an important status in Iranian culture and history. In many Iranian traditional houses there is a yard that people decorate with plants and fountains. Even in ordinary houses people have a tendency to decorate their yard as a garden. The symbols used in the design of the plaza not only deeply connect it to the history but also are familiar icons for people. People do not feel strangers in this plaza because they experience some familiar historical Iranian codes, motives, and symbols.

In this part, based on the theoretical framework that was discussed in chapter one, I explored Freedom Square with focus on the "associations" and its constitutive entities. I explained that Freedom Square is strongly associated with the social and historical contexts through its functional characteristics and symbolic/conceptual approaches. A summary of this part is presented as following.

o Strong associations with social context through "functional" characteristics

Location: Unique position in the city structure

Tower: Integrated with the social activities through its exhibition halls and museums

Open space (plaza): A large open plaza for diverse social activities

o Strong associations with historical context through Symbolic/conceptual approaches

Location: Designed as a symbolic gate to the Iran and Iranian civilization

Tower: Strong historical references in architectural style

Open space (plaza): Strong historical references in landscaping

As a result of the characteristics above, "specificity" of Freedom Square in regards to its associations and entities can be defined as: First, strong associations with historical context through Symbolic/conceptual approaches empower Freedom Square to be an "icon" for the Iranian national identity and the symbol of Iran in the world. Second, strong associations with social context through "functional" characteristics empower Freedom Square to be a very important place in Tehran for public activities.

2.3 Pre-revolution (1979) and Post-election (2009) Protests

Based on the theoretical exploration that I did in chapter one, the main task of this chapter was defined in two parts: exploring the "specificity" of Freedom Square in regard to its associations and entities, and second, to examine that whether "specificity" of Freedom Square meaningfully influences the quality of protests. For the first task, after exploring Freedom Square I underlined that this square is strongly associated with social and historical context through its functional characteristics and symbolic/conceptual approaches. I concluded that Freedom Square is: first, an "icon" for the Iranian national identity and the symbol of Iran in the world, and Second, is a very important arena in Tehran for public activities. In the following, with exploring pre-revolution (1979) and post-election (2009) protests, I will show that the "specificity" of Freedom Square meaningfully influences the quality of protests. The following detailed review of protests will confirm that:

Freedom Square as an "icon" for the Iranian national identity and the symbol of Iran in the world, influences the quality of protests as:

o A symbolic unifier: As a national symbol embraces the diverse groups of protestors

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o An international symbol that the media and world citizens recognize as an Iranian identity

Freedom Square as a very important public arena in Tehran becomes a unique place for mass protests, because it is:

o The best destination for rallies in the end of important streets of the capital

o Capable to contain very large crowds

2.3.1 Pre-revolution (1979) Protests

A chain of protests in 1978 lead to the collapse of monarchy on February 1979. In the following, I will explore the most important mass protests which had a significant role in the path to the Revolution. For the pictures of these protests see appendix.

September 4, 1978

September 4, 1978 was the celebration of Eyd-e Fetr.[4] The demonstration on this day can be considered as one of the most important events which prepared ground for the chain of the upcoming protests. Abrahamian (2009) recalls "on that day, rallies were held in most large towns. The one in Tehran began at dawn from four corners of the city and ended in the vast Shahyad [Freedom] Square in mid afternoon. The Financial Times described it as the largest demonstration in twenty-five years and estimated it in the tens of thousands." (2009:170) Based on this account, it can be realized that Freedom Square had two main roles. It could become a destination point in the city; and a large crowd could congregate in the square. A journalist reports a meeting of protestors' leaders the night before the demonstration. He identifies the unique characteristics of Freedom Square as the reasons for leaders to designate Freedom Square as the destination of all rallies. "It is the center of the western part of Tehran and all critical points were connected to each other on the path to the square. As an important

CEU eTD Collection

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4 A Muslim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting.

ending point, it connects several important squares, as well as Tehran University, and Ariamehr (Sharif) University to each other." (Hajiparvaneh:2009) Its unique location as well as strong associations with the structure and elements of the city had a significant impact on unifying diverse political groups and different classes in one place. "Diverse elements organized the four processions ending at Shahyad [Freedom] Square on the western road out of Tehran. College students marshaled the two from the university campus nearby and from the modern middle-class neighborhoods in the north-east. Apprentices and shop assistants coordinated the eastern one starting at Jaleh Square - a lower middle class district walking distance from the central bazaar. High school students organized the southern one starting at the railway station in the midst of the working-class districts. Further south were some of the worst slums." (Abrahamian 2009:170) Freedom Square as the largest square of the capital had the capacity of containing the huge crowd. In addition, it was a symbolic representative of country. As a result, the gathering in Freedom Square on September 4th could make the opposition confident enough to claim their majority and legitimacy. "The leader of the National Front told French reporters that the rally should be seen as a national referendum." (Abrahamian 2009:170)

September 7, 1978

The demonstration on September 4th prepared the ground for another huge mass protest on September 7th. Afkhami (2009) underlines that; the final destination of protestors was Freedom Square. "At Shahyad [Freedom Square] a declaration was read by the militants, demanding freedom, independence, release of political prisoners, dissolution of SAVAK[5], and an Islamic government led by Khomeini." (2009:463) Abrahamian underlines that "this was the largest meeting ever held in Iran" (1982:515) The significant point that can be realized

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5 SAVAK National Intelligence and Security Organization of Iran which was established by the Shah in 1957.

about the role of Freedom Square is that, the demands were read and approved by the crowd (Kurzman:2004). Freedom Square functioned as a huge arena which provided the possibility of having such a large population in a unified form. Consequently, the protestors could be an evidence of a majority presence. After this demonstration "[The Shah] forced the cabinet to decree martial law in Tehran and eleven other cities." (Abrahamian, 1982:515)

December 11, 1978

December 11, 1978 was the day of Ashoura, one of the most important religious days in Shia. People gathered from across the city in Freedom Square and chanted against the monarchy. "Two million revolutionary protestors marched toward and assembled under the monument. This public disorder was "the free political environment," within which all extreme and moderate sociopolitical views were expressed in the streets. At the center of this politically charged open space stood Shahyad [Freedom Tower] as the sign of the collective Iranian people and the domain that sheltered these outbursts." (Grigor, 2002:50) The news of the demonstration was reflected broadly in the international media. World wide audiences watched millions of protestors in Freedom Square, the symbol of Iran. That was the sign that a very important transformation was going to happen in Iran. "The Financial Times wrote that the rally "brought in all social classes" and numbered nearly one million." (Abrahamian, 2009:50) Khomeini later claimed "they voted with their feet." (Afkhami, 2009:486) The point in Khomeini's word is that the crowd was huge and stands for this reality that the opposition has the majority. Again, the symbolic significance of Freedom Square as the representative of the nation as well as its spatial capabilities to contain a huge crowd was at work and deeply impacted the quality of the protests. In Freedom Square "The rally ratified by acclamation resolutions calling for the establishment of an Islamic Republic, the return of Khomeini, the expulsion of the imperial powers, and the implementation of social justice for the deprived masses." (Abrahamian, 2008:161) A version of this declaration is kept in National Library

and Archive of Iran.[6] The Washington Post with underlining significant political consequences of this gathering concludes that "the disciplined and well organized march lent considerable weight to the opposition's claim of being an alternative government." (Cited in Abrahamian, 2009:50) Two months later Khomeini came back to the country from exile and the monarchy system collapsed on February 11th, 1979.

After the Revolution, in regard to the relatively open political climate of those days, Freedom Square was the central place for many gatherings of different political and social groups. I could find a collection of documents related to 1979 and 1980 in the National Library and Archive of Iran[7] which shows Freedom Square based on its unique characteristics had a significant role in the political and social activities. For example, the National Front of Iran in a statement invites people for a gathering in Freedom Square on March 20 1980, the day of nationalization of the oil industry. The statement invites National Front's supporters among businessmen and merchants of Tehran's Bazaar to commemorate this day as the day that intervenes of the imperialism in Iran was terminated by the leadership of Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh. In another statement, the Organization of Iranian People's Fedaian invites supporters for a demonstration in Freedom Square. The same group in an announcement, dated February 29, 1980, declares that in regard to discomfit the plot of the government, cancels the gathering in Freedom Square. This group in another statement invites people to gather in Freedom Square for declaring its parliament candidates. The Iranian Union of Workers, invites workers for a gathering on December 20th in Freedom Square. It has stated that the purpose of the gathering is investigating conditions of Iranian workers after the revolution. The Organization of Iranian People's Fedaian (Majority), in a statement invites people to gather in Freedom Square to celebrate May Day. People's Mojahedin Organization

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6 The document is available at the National Library and Archive of Iran (NLAI) http://www.nlai.ir/
7 The documents are available at the National Library and Archive of Iran (NLAI) http://www.nlai.ir/

of Iran, in an announcement on February 7, 1980, declared that, this group will participate in the celebrations of the anniversary of the revolution in Freedom Square.

2.3.2 Post-election (2009) Protests

Following the disputed 2009 presidential elections in Iran, there were series of protests that brought the unhappy Iranians to the streets of major cities. The intensity and size of these protests were unprecedented in Tehran and in streets ending in Freedom Square. Most notable were the two immediate demonstrations that brought millions to the street, catching the Iranian regime and the international community by surprise. These demonstrations are highlighted to underscore the important role of Freedom Square in regards to its characteristics which I explained before. For the pictures of these protests see appendix.

June 15, 2009

The huge gathering of June 15th was one of the most important political events of 2009. Amnesty International reports that "up to three million attend mass protests against the election results in Tehran; at least seven people are killed."[8] This huge demonstration attracted the international community and world wide media. The BBC reported that the June 15th protest "involved hundreds of thousands of people and was one of the largest since the Iranian revolution 30 years ago."[9] Wall Street Journal called the demonstration as the largest demonstration since the Iranian Revolution.[10] A demonstration was planed from Enghelab (revolution) Square to Azadi (Freedom) Square and Mir-Hossein Mousavi, supposed to have a speech there. The New York Times wrote that some have seen a "symbolic" meaning in his decision.[11] "Enghelab to Azadi" (Revolution to Freedom) was a slogan among protestors as a

8 http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/123/2009/en
9 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/8102400.stm
10 http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124508111902415491.html
11 http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/18/world/middleeast/18moussavi.html?_r=2

symbolic reference to these two squares. Crises Magazine with mentioning the symbolic value of Freedom Square wrote[12], "A million of people marched from Enghelab Square to Azadi Square - from the Square of Revolution to the Square of Freedom - beneath the eyes of Tehran's brutal riot police." (Fisk 2009)

Shirin Ebadi, the Iranian Nobel Peace Prize winner in an article after the demonstration on June 15th describes that "People marched in the streets of Tehran […] to object to [sic] the results of last week's election. Their destination was Azadi Square [Freedom Square] which, at the time of the Islamic Revolution thirty years ago, had been the gathering spot for revolutionaries." (Ebadi 2009) A news program describes the path and destination of protestors. "The rally is scheduled to be held […] from Enqelab (Revolution) Square to Azadi (Freedom) Square in protest at [sic] the results of the country's 10th presidential elections." (Press TV, 2009) Many videos distributed online showing protestors in Freedom Square. The Los Angeles Times reported[13] that on June 15th "Hundreds of thousands of Iranian protesters defied authorities and marched to Tehran's Freedom Square." (Dargahi and Mostaghim 2009) Times online wrote[14] "Chanting *death to dictatorship*, large crowds gathered in a boulevard linking Tehran's Freedom Square and Revolution Square." (Colvin, 2009) A video[15], dated June 15th, shows protestors in Freedom Square chanting "death to the dictator." The video shows three people climbing on the Freedom Tower writing slogans with green spray. The Guardian reported[16] that on June 15th "The fatal shooting in Tehran's Azadi [Freedom] Square during Monday's massive protest march […] arose from a clash between basiji [militia] and pro-Mousavi demonstrators. Basiji [militia] are also said to

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12 http://www.crisesmagazine.org/index.php/June-18-to-June-25-2009/irans-day-of-destiny.html
13 http://articles.latimes.com/2009/jun/16/world/fg-iran16
14 http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article6544234.ece
15 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgCdpNoXT5Y
16 http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jun/17/basiji-militia-iran-election-protests

have attacked students in Tehran University dormitories, along with police. Seven other people were killed, apparently also with the involvement of the militiamen." (Black, 2009)

After the huge demonstration in Freedom Square, a journalist of BBC in an interview with the architect of Freedom Square entitled "Who is the man behind the Tehran's Freedom Monument," underlines the importance of Freedom Square in Iranian contemporary political and social history. Amanat in response to the question about the special status of the Square between the Iranian people underlines its strong connections with the people. "This square now more than the time of the revolution thirty years ago has become a part of the heart of the people of Iran. They like it and they refer to it as the symbol of the country. This is the way this building should have been." (Kesby, BBC-interview 2009)

February 11, 2010

February 11th is the anniversary of 1979 Revolution. Every year state-organized celebrations are hold in Freedom Square and the president speaks to public. The government uses the images of crowd to imply its legitimacy. That is why, prior to the event, the government mobilizes all its resources to make a huge crowd in Freedom Square and on the day state TV broadly broadcasts the event and also the international media are invited to report the anniversary. Recalling the mass protests of 1978 in Freedom Square, the images of those days repeatedly are illustrated on the media which all share one common element: Freedom Square. But, because of the post-election unrests, February 11, 2010 was different from last years. Seventeen reformist groups[17] as well as other political groups asked people to participate in the demonstrations of anniversary of the Revolution, not for supporting the government, but for protest them. The CNN reported[18] that "A coalition of Iranian reformist

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17 http://www.radiofarda.com/content/F11_Iran_Postelection_Refomist_Parties_Statement/1948622.html
18 http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/meast/02/11/iran.revolution.anniversary/index.html

groups had urged opponents of Iran's hard-line regime to stage nonviolent protests at central Tehran's Azadi [Freedom] Square on Thursday, on the official anniversary of the ouster of Iran's shah." (CNN, 2009) A Youtube video clip[19] entitled "2010 Iranian Revolution-lets repeat history on February 11" gives pictures and maps of Freedom Square and encourages people to gather in the square on the anniversary of the Revolution and protest the government. An opposition website[20] published a report indicating that the government plans to execute five people in Enghelab Street or Azadi (Freedom) Street (which ends in Freedom Square) before the anniversary of the Revolution. This was interpreted as the government's fear of the rallies planned for the anniversary of the revolution.

Since Freedom Square is the centre of congregation in the anniversary of the Revolution, protestors planed to gather in the square to show their majority and protest the state-organized celebrations. Moreover, since every year the international media reports the celebrations of the Revolution, organizing an anti-government protest in the Freedom Square could have a broad reflection in the world. Several plans to maintain the idea of occupying the square were circulated broadly on the online social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. Ebrahim Nabavi, an Iranian journalist and activist, wrote an article entitled "Trojan Horse in Freedom Square"[21] and proposed a strategy referring to the Greek mythological Trojan War. Inspired by the Trojan War, his proposal was to gather in Freedom Square without any slogans and green signs to create a distraction. Once on the podium, the people would surprise Ahmadinejad by their anti-regime slogans and the green emblems they had hidden before arriving at the square to show the opposition's Majority. He underlined the importance of distributing pictures and news of the event, and specially emphasized the significance of

19 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aO5-3MKJgDI
20 http://www.rahesabz.net/story/9107/
21 http://www.rahesabz.net/story/9213/

41

independent media. Nabavi's suggestions indicates that how significantly the characteristics of Freedom Square as an international symbol of Iran and as a unique large public arena, can be influential in the organization and implications of protests. However, on February 11th, the government could surround Freedom Square using some tactics and prevented protestors to gather in the square. In practice, Nabavi's plan did not work and arose many debates, especially among activists on the online social networks. He was criticized that the ideas of Trojan Horse misled people. In response, he apologized on his Facebook page and later, in an article[22] entitled "What Happened on February 11th" pointed that the plan was not successful because the government closed all entries to the Freedom Square and bussed in government supporters. He underlined that the government-sponsored media presented a distorted visual image of the event. In addition, international media were allowed to show only what the government allowed them to. Although the plan of Trojan Horse did not work, the debates around the issue underlines the importance of Freedom Square in terms of its spatial characteristics. In fact, the challenge between government and protestors was focused on getting the control of the square.

Roozonline[23] wrote[24] that the officials planned to collect international reporters in a controlled zone in Freedom Square and prevented them to report or take photos from outside of this controlled area. BBC Persian confirmed[25] that international reporters under a controlled condition transferred to Freedom Square and were not allowed to report from other places. Jaras[26] website reported[27] that From Imam Hussein Square to Freedom Square people marched under the severe control of riot police, Basij militia, and intelligence forces. Jaras

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22 http://www.enabavi.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6369:-22---&catid=125:2009-11-22-06-00-17&Itemid=54#comment-853
23 Roozonline is a news agency close to opposition groups.
24 http://www.roozonline.com/persian/news/newsitem/article/2010/february/08//-085c245978.html
25 http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2010/02/100211_l07_ir88_22bahman_afternoon_clashes.shtml?s
26 Jaras is a reformist website close to presidential candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi.
27 http://www.rahesabz.net/story/11233/

called it "terror tunnel" and reported an unprecedented number of arrests. New York Times based on witnesses wrote that in Tehran intersections were filled with riot police and "helicopters hovered over Azadi [Freedom] Square and Azadi [Freedom] Street, where the Ministry of Labor is located and workers had been expected to gather."[28] On the day, a website[29] following the events through witnesses updated that "Clashes on Vesal St. have continued, preventing the people from moving to Azadi [Freedom] Square." (Valadbagy 2009) On February 11th, Google's official website published[30] a satellite image of Freedom Square. The image showed the security forces surrounded the area and the long lines of the regime's supporters who were bussed in. (See appendix). Similar pictures and videos[31] were also published by activists and protesters who were present at the square. These challenges between the government and protestors to take the control of the square and claim their legitimacy underlines the importance of Freedom Square in the course of protests.

To sum, I recall that Freedom Square in regard to its "associations" and "entities" is strongly associated with social and historical contexts. These characteristics empower Freedom Square to become a national symbol and an icon of Iran as well as a unique public arena in Tehran. As the account of protests confirms, Freedom Square as a national symbol, embraces the diverse groups of protestors. As an international icon, is recognized as the Iranian identity and consequently intensifies the worldwide reflection of protests' news. As a unique public arena in Tehran, Freedom Square is the best destination for rallies in the end of important streets of the capital and is capable to contain very large crowds.

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28 http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/02/world/middleeast/02iran.html
29 http://www.astreetjournalist.com/2010/02/10/we're-live-blogging-from-iran'streets- گزارش-زنده-از-خیابانهای-ایر/
30 http://google-latlong.blogspot.com/2010/02/view-into-tehran.html
31 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XwcZi9L69iw&feature=player_embedded#
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxHwpESlpqA&feature=player_embedded#

CONCLUSION

The central question of this research investigates the way architecture engages in social and political issues. The theoretical exploration evolved around the concept of "spatial agency." Considering the limitations of human-centric notions of agency, I came to this point that the main task in the conceptualization of spatial agency is to overcome the division of human and non-human. It entails considering a specific "association" between them and re-thinking the definitions of agency and architecture. I employed Actor-Network Theory (ANT) as a theory of "associations" which overcomes the categories and dichotomies of human/non-human. I introduced two alternative definition of agency and architecture which both are based on the "association" of human and non-human. I conceptualized spatial agency as a quality which is conceivable in the particular "association" of "actors/actants" and makes the architecture capable to "make a difference." This conception stands for "spatialized identity" of agency and can be elaborated as affect, activity, transformative power, indirect engagement, or empowerment. Spatial agency is mobilized through an architectural project and becomes effective in a certain issue-area. In a specific architectural project, specific "associated entities (actor/actants)" leads to a specific effect in an issue-area.

Based on the this theoretical ground, I explored the role of Tehran's Freedom Square in pre-revolution (1979) and post-election (2009) protests and realized that "specificity" of Freedom Square in regard to its "associated entities (actors/actants)" meaningfully influences the quality of protests. Exploring the case of Tehran's Freedom Square showed that the engagement of this square in social and political arena can be explained through employing the notion of spatial agency. The notion of spatial agency and case of Freedom Square can be helpful to investigate similar cases and promising for the future architectural projects.

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APPENDIX

The figures in this appendix are related to chapter two.

Figure 1. Arial View of Freedom Square (Source: Amanat Architect)

Figure 2. Freedom Tower on the Iranian Bank-note before the Revolution
(Source: http://www.notafilia.com/colecciones/images/billetes/iran/irn103_t.jpg)

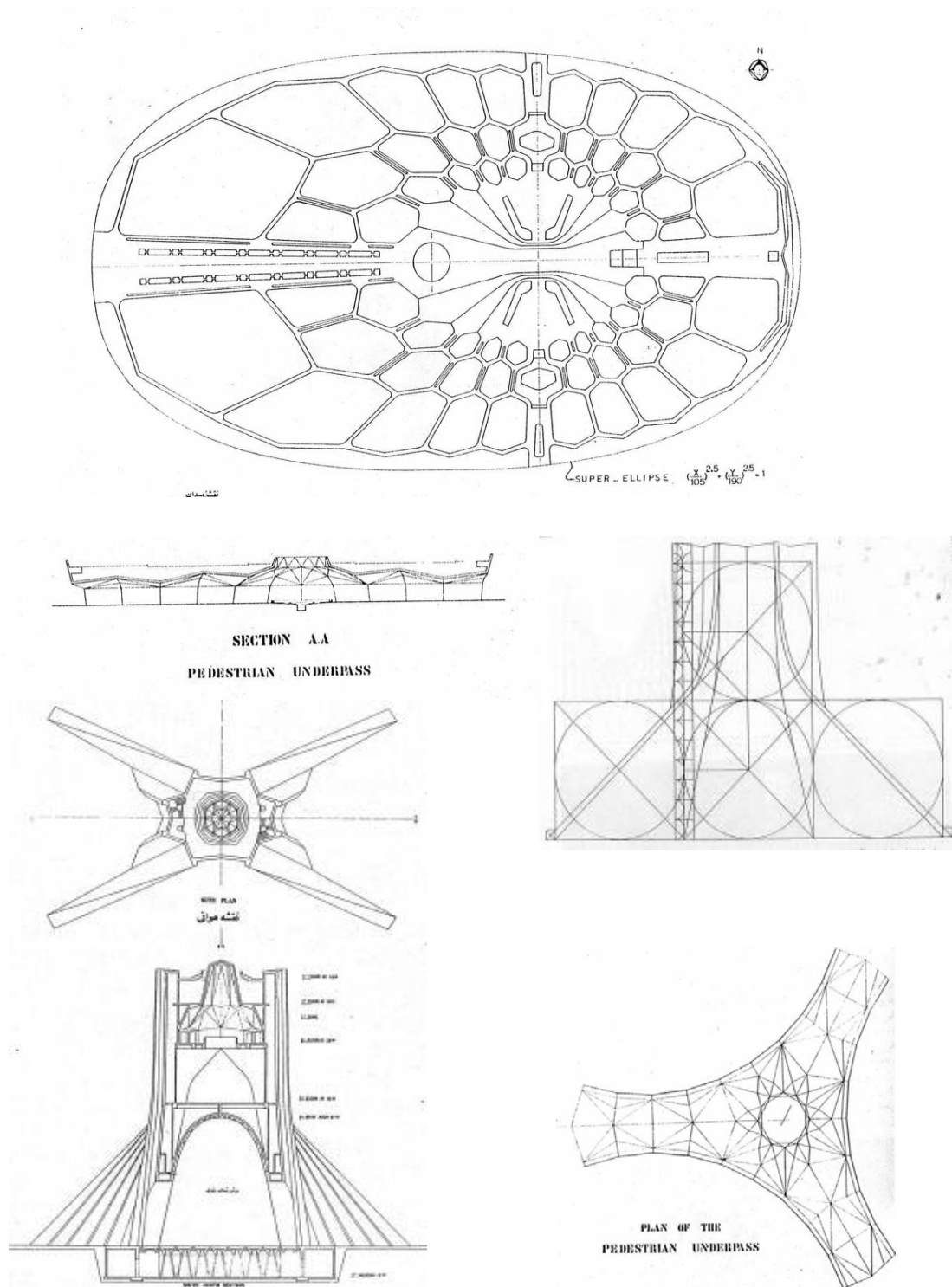Figure 3. Location of Freedom Square in Tehran. (Azadi Square at the left)
(Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8101098.stm#map)

SUPER - ELLIPSE $(\frac{X}{105})^{2.5} + (\frac{Y}{190})^{2.5} = 1$

SECTION A.A

PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS

WITH PLAN

PLAN OF THE
PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS
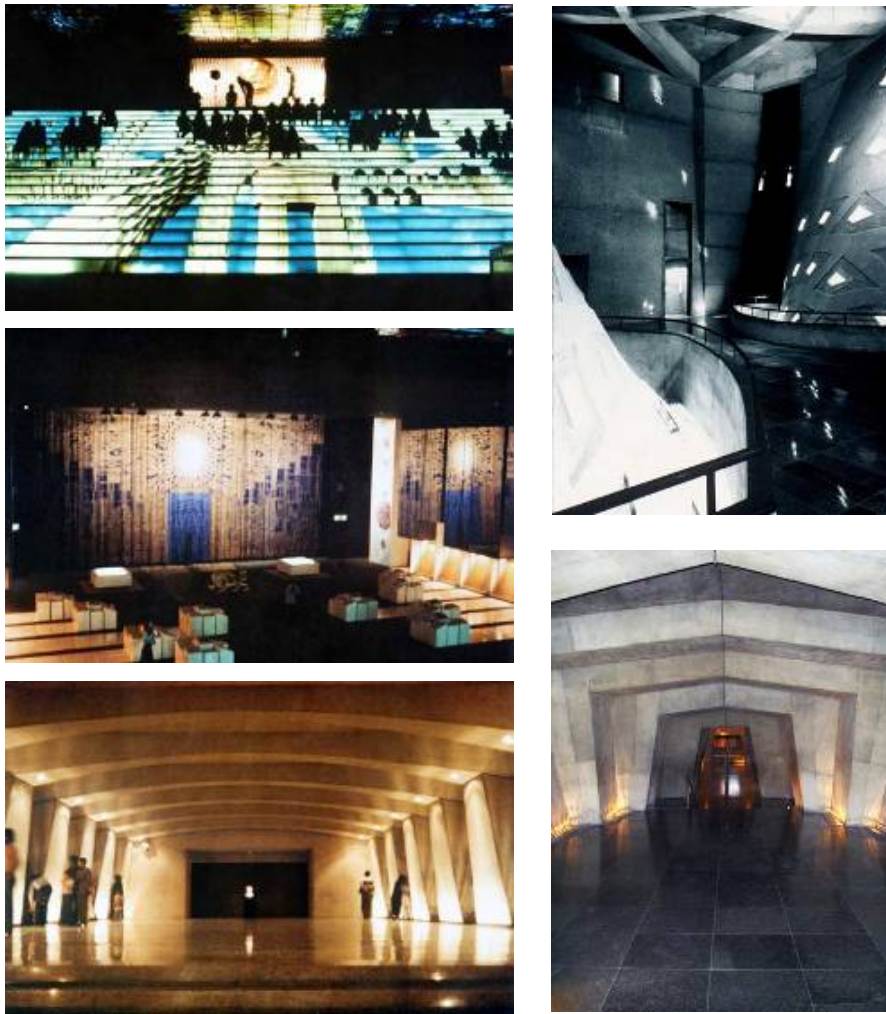
Figure 4. Architectural maps of Freedom Square (Source: Honar va Memari)

Figure 5. Interior spaces of Freedom Tower (Source: Amanat Architect)
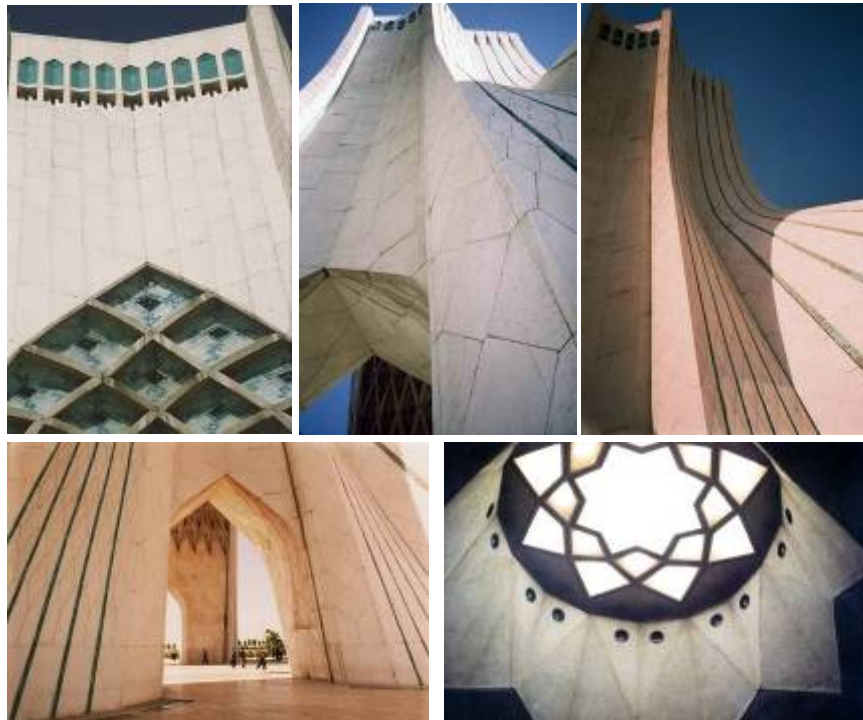

Figure 6. Historical patterns in design of Freedom Tower (Source: Amanat Architect)

Figure 7. Protest in Freedom Square-the Revolution 1979
(Original source: Reza Degati. Secondary source: http://www.rferl.org/soundslide/110.html)[32]

Figure 8. Protest in Freedom Square. 2009 (Source: AP)

Figure 9. Protest in Freedom Square. 1979 Revolution (Source: Fars News Agency)

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[32] This picture is a snap-shot from a slide show on the web.

Figure 10. June 15, 2009. A protestor climbed the Freedom Tower and wrote: "Death to Dictator"
(Source: AP)

Figure 11. The 1979 Revolution, protestors climbed the Freedom Tower (Source: Fars News Agency)

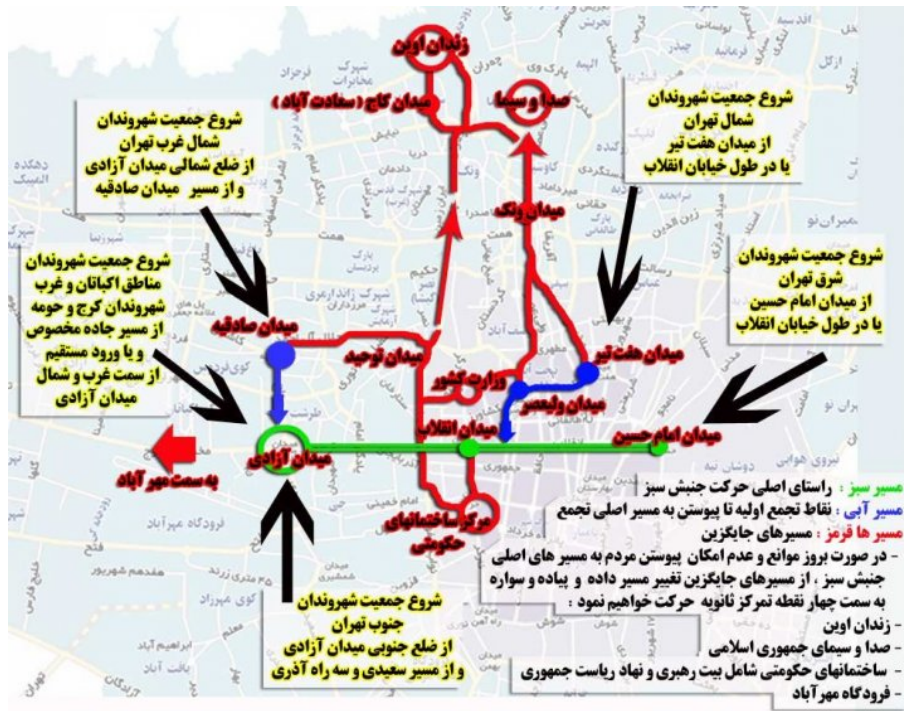Figure 12. Freedom Square, 1979 Revolution (Source: Fars News Agency)

Figure 13. A map of planed rallies distributed in online social networks. The green Line indicates the gathering of all rallies in Azadi (freedom) and Enghelab Streets, ending in Freedom Square.

Figure 14. Google Satellite Image of Freedom Square on February 11, 2010, anniversary of the Revolution. The image shows how security forces have prevented the protestors from entering the square. Only pro-government demonstrators were allowed in the square. (For more information about this event see chapter two.
(Source: http://google-latlong.blogspot.com/2010/02/view-into-tehran.html)