Research Paper

Intangible Cultural Resources of Urban Parks, The Case of Fateh Garden, Karaj, Iran

Mehdi Nilipour, Leila Medghalchi [*], Morteza Mirgholami

Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Tabriz Islamic Art University, Tabriz, Iran

Abstract

In recent years, several studies have focused on the perceived meanings of urban parks. However, few studies are to be found providing a comprehensive model of the meanings and associations of an urban park. This paper seeks to address the main following question: What are the meanings and associations of Fateh Garden for its users? In this study, a grounded theory approach was conducted to identify meanings and associations as intangible cultural resources of Fateh Garden which is one of the largest and most popular parks in Karaj. In this regard, sixty-nine semi-structured interviews were conducted with Fateh Garden's users. The results reveal that when users are asked about the park, they often come up with pleasant meanings and associations. Components, events, and activities as causal conditions create pleasant meanings and associations for the users of Fateh Garden. Moreover, ease of accessibility facilitates the use of this park. However, there are some issues, problems, and contradictions related to Fateh Garden that need to be addressed. In this regard, identifying problems and providing solutions can lead to promoting peace, safety, and hope for Fateh Garden's users. This study identifies eight categories and sixteen subcategories. The substantive theory that emerged, was named promoting peace, safety, and hope through pleasant meanings and associations. This study provides a framework for urban parks managers and future researchers to assess intangible cultural resources of urban parks.

1. INTRODUCTION

Urban parks, as the main public multifunctional spaces of cities, are used for a wide range of activities (Hami, 2014). People visit urban parks for different goals and reasons, leading to diverse patterns of activities and events (Pazhouhanfar, 2016). The current pandemic highlighted the role of urban parks in crowded urban areas (Moran, 2020). The potential of urban parks for promoting both psychological and physical health is amplified even more during the pandemic and made them more meaningful for urban dwellers (Geng, 2021). Due to

various restrictions during the pandemic in many cities, access to close-to-home parks has become much more important. However, many citizens in different countries do not have access to close-to-home parks. For example, 100 million people do not have access to a neighborhood park within a 10-minute walk from home in the U.S. (Surico, 2020). The '15-minute city' idea is a new way of thinking which provides Parisians with access to a neighborhood park within a 15-minute walk from home (Dragonetti, 2020). Moreover, urban parks can be used for outdoor cafes and restaurants during the pandemic as Lithuania's capital, Vilnius, has decided to do (Henley, 2020).

In many cases, some components are considered as the primary elements of urban parks and they are designed and planned with different combinations.

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* *Corresponding author: l.medghalchi@tabriziau.ac.ir*

The needs and desires of users in each neighborhood or city and the way urban parks design and planing response to them are often overlooked. Park's policymakers generally rely on quantitative information, such as the area of the parks and the number of facilities available. However, the meaning of a park for users is not necessarily related to the number of facilities or the size of the park.

To address this neglect, park officials must seek the meanings and associations of parks for users that can be extracted through qualitative methods such as deep interviews, ethnographical and narrative studies. Although it is not possible to ask all users, a systematic study can provide an overview of the meanings and associations of a park. The present study attempts to investigate the meanings and associations of Fateh Garden as an important urban park in Karaj based on its users' expressions. Therefore, grounded theory as a suitable qualitative method was used to explore these meanings and associations.

To conduct the study, the concept of meanings and associations as intangible cultural resources of urban parks was studied first, and then, using the grounded theory, the data obtained from the interviews and observations were coded and analyzed. The findings show that the components, events, and activities can create pleasant meanings and associations for the users of Fateh Garden. However, some issues, problems, and contradictions need to be solved. These findings inform designers, planners, and park officials in their efforts to consider the meanings and associations as one of the most important points in the design and planning of parks.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Several studies have revealed that meanings and associations act as intangible cultural resources of places (Ellis, 2011; Harrison, 2007; King, 2011; Morse-Kahn, 2011; Relph, 1976). Tuan (1977) argues that space is transformed into place as it acquires meaning. According to Rapoport (1990), people react to the environment based on the meanings that it has comprised. He describes perceptual and associational aspects of the environment as mutual and interactive features and believes that the former is a necessary condition for the latter.

The present study focuses on the perceived meanings and associations of urban parks. Rapoport (1976) points out that parks have an important meaning in the urban environment. According to him, they communicate meanings of positive environmental quality of the areas in which they are located. Therefore, an urban park can be defined by the meanings and associations attached to it.

Gee and Burkhard (2010) argue that meanings arise from specific relationships between the observer and the environment. Urban parks have a broad range of meanings to park users. The meaning of an urban park can be perceived and interpreted by the users.

Numerous studies have attempted to explain the perception of meanings by the users in urban parks (e.g. Burgess, 1988; Campbell, 2016; Ekinci, 2016; Gunderson, 2007; Krenichyn, 2006; Lee, 2015; Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995; Mahdavinejad, 2012; Main, 2013; Manzo, 2005; McCormack, 2014; Muderrisoglu, 2004; Özgüner, 2011; Peters, 2010; Peters, 2011; Stewart, 2006; Taplin, 2002; Vaughan, 2018; Wynveen, 2010; Yazdani, 2015; Yazdani, 2018).

Burgess et al. (1988) use examples to show perceived meanings in Shrewsbury Park. They describe the feelings of a man who enjoyed sitting on a bench on top of a hill and looking at the horizon. This activity made him feel happy. Moreover, walking into the wood down below and watching the squirrels made him feel relaxed. Hence, happiness and relaxation are two meanings he perceived. They also mention a woman who considered an urban park as a place for sitting down in quiet and meditating environment to get away from the noise of the city. Here, calmness is the meaning she perceived. They assert that urban parks can act as a safe place where children can burn off energy which gives their mothers peace at the end of the day. Here are two meanings for mothers to perceive: safety and peacefulness. Moreover, children can play freely and perceive independence. Children may consider urban parks as places to find new friends and play with them. Hence, friendship and sociability are perceived meanings that emerge out of their objectives and activities.

Main (2013) pinpoints some positive meanings versus negative ones in urban parks: cleanliness versus dirtiness; continuity versus discontinuity/change; familiarity versus lack of familiarity; community versus isolation; restoration versus disturbance; safety versus insecurity; freedom versus restriction; unity versus conflict; welcome versus unwelcome. In a study conducted by Peters (2010), she discusses some park users' perceived safety and comfort in both Goffert Park and Thieme Park and perceived togetherness in Thieme Park. She also cites examples of negative meanings that urban park users perceived: some women perceived uncomfortableness when Moroccan teenagers were trying to get women's attention by staring at them and making comments; a Turkish-Dutch woman

perceived disrespect when a 10-year-old Dutch boy insulted her.

In their case study of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, Wynveen et al. (2010) provide examples of the meanings that some users ascribed to the park: amazing, fabulous, and spectacular (to water color and clarity); calmness, peacefulness (to water); uniqueness, seclusion, solitude (for Palm Island area); prettiness, safety, and accessibility (to the reef); abundance and diversity (to the coral and other wildlife); curiosity and exploration (to kayaking and snorkeling); aesthetic beauty (to sea/landscapes and open vistas) immersion, interconnectedness, freedom, isolation, relaxation (to the whole park).

An urban park can be considered as a place of beauty suitable for wedding pictures as Taplin et al. (2002) cited for Independence National Historical Park. Chiesura (2004) also discusses some perceived meanings in urban parks such as freedom, luck, adventure, happiness, unity with myself, and unity with nature. In another study, Rennit and Maikov (2015) investigated four meanings of fascination, being away, extent, and compatibility in Tartu city parks. Shahhoseini et al. (2015) also investigate six meanings of mystery, coherence, refuge, complexity, legibility, and prospect in 135 small parks in Tabriz, Iran. Similarly, Afsharzadeh et al. (2021) explored the meanings of accessibility, continuity, and legibility in an urban park in Tehran, Iran.

In a study investigating perceived meanings in an urban parkland in New York, Campbell et al. (Campbell, 2016) identified isolation, peacefulness, quietness, calmness, relaxation, safety, serenity, solace, tranquility, beauty, loveliness, pleasance, niceness, attachment, sociability, coolness, and convenience. In a research done by Loukil et al. (2010) in three Tunisian urban parks, some respondents mentioned that the park evoked leisure, pureness, naturalness, liberty, relaxation, calmness, tranquility, quietness, and beauty for them.

In another major study, Krenichyn (2006) cited the example of meanings that some women perceived in Prospect Park in New York including beauty, prettiness, greenness, colorfulness (in the fall), transition (the seasons' change), freedom, safety, convenience, comfort, activeness, intimacy, challenge, peace of mind, accessibility, spectacular, astonishment, coolness, pleasure, enjoyment, meditation, the release of stress, independence, strength, resistance, and empowerment.

In a study conducted by Manzo (2005), she described a man who went to a park and sit there for self-evaluation (think about who he was and what he was doing, and what his direction was). The result was a sense of peacefulness, relaxation, and comfortableness for him. Manzo also highlighted the process of developing meaning around the place. She took an example of a woman who was playing as a child in a local park, met her husband there, separated there, and took her children to play in the same park. As Manzo stated: "This park was a significant place whose meaning developed from both positive and negative experiences. Thus, repeated use of, and varied experiences in, places added layers of meaning to places" (Manzo, 2005).

Recent studies have been mostly concerned with meanings; however, urban parks are full of meanings and associations. Associations can be arisen based on the particular individuals' meaning of urban parks components. Perceived meanings can bring urban park users back to memories of their childhood, their family gatherings, their favorite objects, pets, flowers, friends, or other things in the past.

Manzo (2005) mentioned a respondent who spent time in Central Park to have contact with nature. It reminded her of a childhood spent in the country. As Krenichyn (2006) stated, Prospect Park in New York can remind some women of rural, 'pastoral,' or suburban places in the northeastern United States where they grew up. In a study conducted by Yazdani (2017), perceived restoration and peacefulness in Ruffey Park in Australia by looking at a lake with a deck, a distant view of the lake, and an open space with an old tree and a bench can remind some Iranian immigrants' memories of fishing by the lake in their hometown when they were teenagers or a similar place where they went with their families in Iran.

To further investigate the role of perceived meanings in reminding specific things, Main (2013) cited a series of examples of immigrants at MacArthur Park. The grassy areas reminded one's village; the Hispanic food reminded one's home; the palm trees and the soccer games reminded one's country. the author showed that for almost half of the participants, the natural components of the park (the trees, grass, lake, birds, and other creatures) served as reminders of their sending communities.

It is important to note that although perceived meanings can serve as reminders of things or individuals, these associations may evoke some meanings afterward and this process may continue. Main (2013) showed reminding one's country can cause a sense of loneliness and isolation for some park users. As a result, perceived meanings in urban parks can serve as potent reminders of some individuals, animals, plants, objects, places, events, specified times or periods, or even other meanings.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Study Area

Fateh Garden is located in Karaj, Iran. The city of Karaj hosts a population of around 1.6 million, as recorded in the 2016 census (Iran, 2018) situated 20 kilometeres west of Tehran. Fateh Garden is one of the largest and most popular parks in Karaj (out of 243 parks). Historically, before transforming into an urban park in 2006, Fateh Garden has served as an orchard. Fateh Garden is selected for the following reasons: the existence of diverse and rich cultural resources, including different types of plants, animals, different age and sex groups of users, different options for sitting, various sports activities, and also artistic and cultural events have made the park very popular with users. Additionally, Fateh Garden is accessible to many adjacent residents of the park. Moreover, a large number of entrances to the park from the streets and alleys and the possibility of parking cars on the side of the street have made it easy for visitors to access this park. Figure 1 shows the location of Fateh Garden in Karaj.
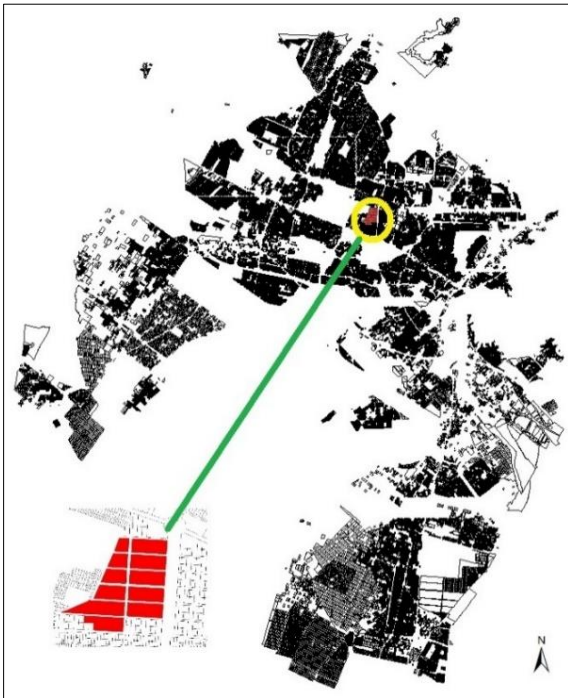
Fig 1. Location of Fateh Garden in Karaj

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

This study seeks to extract the meanings and associations that are ascribed to Fateh Garden by its users. Meanings and associations are qualitative and therefore a systematic qualitative method is needed to extract them. Previous studies in urban parks have mostly used quantitative methods, and in studies that have employed qualitative methods, ethnography has been one of the apropriate methods. Analyzing interviews to find meanings and associations requires a method that can systematically extract them and provide a theory to explain the context, causal conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences. This has not been done for urban parks so far, and the analysis of meanings and associations has only been done through the personal analysis of researchers. Since grounded theory research gives researchers the freedom they need to generate new concepts to explain human emotions, beliefs, and behaviors (Glaser, 1967), this study follows the grounded theory data analysis and coding steps by Corbin and Strauss (1990) who designed a systematic and rigorous coding structure to create a theory which closely corresponds to the data (Kenny, 2015).

Corbin and Strauss (2008) define grounded theory as "a specific methodology developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) for building theory from data". Corbin and Strauss (1990) used three main coding steps of open coding (breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data), axial coding (identifying categories in the concepts), and selective coding (the reduction of concept and categories to carve out main ideas of storylines of the theory). Grounded theory ends when theoretical saturation is reached (Singjai, 2021). Data saturation was determined by highly similar responses on core theoretical categories and no novel findings based on the recommendations for theoretical sampling. The first author sent the summarized findings to participants for member checking to promote methodological credibility and rigor and to support the inferential components of the theory with participant perspectives (Gullo, 2020).

The sample for this study was selected from participants during autumn 2020. Sixty-nine semi-structured interviews including 34 males and 35 females were conducted in Fateh Garden. The interviewees can be classified based on their age into 9 children (under 15 years old), 14 adolescents (15 to 20 years old), 28 youths (20 to 40 years old), 9 middle-aged (40 to 60 years old), and 9 elderly (over 60 years old). Theoretical sampling helps to ensure the final theory is grounded in the data (Mills, 2014). Theoretical sampling allowed this research to follow leads in the data by finding the interviewees that could provide relevant information. In the present study, the convenience sampling method was used. Therefore, theoretical sampling led to the inclusion of the interviewees who had the following criteria: the interviewees should be the users of the park, the

samples should be of different ages and genders, interviewees should give detailed answers to the questions, and interviewees should express their feelings and beliefs without fear or anxiety. According to the above-mentioned criteria, out of more than 100 interviews, 69 interviews were selected for the final analysis. The interviews continued until it was ensured that no new and valuable information would emerge. The interview questions were organized into three sections. The first section dealt with the personal information of interviewees. The second section was dedicated to how the interviewees use the park and how they feel about the components, activities, and events of the park. The third section, finally, included questions addressing the problems and issues in Fateh Garden and the suggested solutions of the interviewees.

The interviews lasted between 20 and 70 minutes and, memos were included in the analysis. Memo writing as an analytic process is a key element in ensuring quality in grounded theory (Birks, 2015). Memos can document the researcher's thinking processes and transform field-note descriptions into theoretical accounts (Montgomery, 2007). The present study used memo writing to ensure that sampling, coding, collapsing of codes and producing concepts, subcategories, and categories are done correctly. Memo writing and discussions of the memos also helped the authors to avoid relying on

their prejudices and preconceptions and eliminated the risk of information bias. The memos included data from discussions with interviewees before and after the interview and prompt impressions and thoughts after each interview. These memos were written by the first author and discussed with other authors.

Constant comparative analysis is used in grounded theory for coding and category development (Tie, 2019). This study used the constant comparative analysis to find consistencies and differences and to refine the concepts, subcategories, and categories. First of all, codes were identified in the data. The first author then compared meanings and associations in each code. Afterward, initial codes were compared to other codes, and codes were collapsed into concepts. Constant comparative analysis generates more abstract concepts through inductive processes (Charmaz, 2006). Then, the concepts were divided into subcategories and finally into categories.

After data collection, the first author entered interview transcripts into ATLAS.ti for coding. This study follows the major stages of coding and categorizing the raw data, determining the concepts, subcategories, categories, and their relationship in a researcher-constructed framework (Fallah, 2018). Figure 2 shows the process of this study.
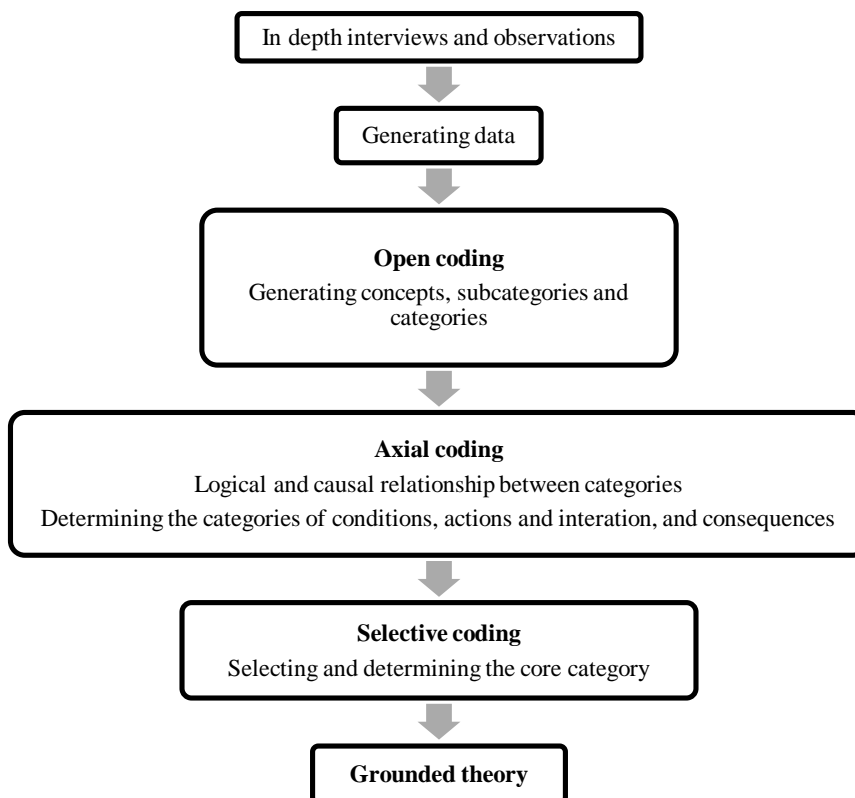
Fig 2. The Resarch Process (Fallah, 2018)

4. RESULTS

The meanings and associations constitute the intangible cultural resources of Fateh Garden. To find these cultural resources, the present study used three main coding steps of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. These steps of coding were done through ATLAS.ti software. The information gained from the theoretical foundation of urban park studies assisted the researchers in identifying the meaning and associations' structure. In this section, the obtained data were analyzed using the grounded theory. Concerning the grounded theory method, theorization is conducted in the following stages:

Open coding: Firstly, important sentences were noted by underlining and separating meaningful phrases for coding (Chiang, 2021). For example, S14 said that "I love animals, especially cats, and when I come here, I take pictures of them". This comment was underlined and coded as "reminiscent of taking pictures of animals". The following paragraph demonstrates a theoretical memo grounded in the interview data:

December 4th, Reminiscent of taking pictures of animals

A girl [Neda] is taking a picture of a cat on the west side of the park. This may demonstrate her interest in animals. When I talk to her, she mentions her interest in animals, especially cats, and taking pictures of them as one of the things she does in the park. For Neda and some other users, it is very enjoyable to see the animals and take pictures of them in this park. For these users, taking pictures of animals is one of the most memorable things they do in Fateh Garden. Neda has saved the photos she took of cats, dogs, and birds in Fateh Garden on her mobile phone and showed them to me. Therefore, she has recorded these memories of being in the park and seeing the animals and she remembers Fateh Garden by taking pictures of animals.

The next example is what S3 mentioned: 'I love dogs very much, and I feed them when I come here'. This comment was underlined and coded as 'reminiscent of feeding animals'. The following paragraph demonstrates another theoretical memo:

November 25th, Reminiscent of feeding animals

A girl [Mahla] is feeding a dog on the plot. This may demonstrate her interest in animals. When I talk to her, she says she feels that animals in the park need her help. Therefore, she tries to bring food for the animals every time she comes to the park. She mentions several other people who come to the park every day to feed the animals. Even when the park was closed, these people would come to the park and feed the animals. For these people, the park does not make sense without the presence of animals, and their presence in the park is dependent on them. Therefore, the advantage of Fateh Garden over other parks for them is the presence of a large number of animals, including cats, dogs, and birds.

Since 'reminiscent of taking pictures of animals' and 'reminiscent of feeding animals' are animal-related activities, the researchers condensed these two into the concept of 'reminiscent of animal-related events and activities'.

Axial coding: The researchers then advanced to axial coding, a strategy for aggregating similar concepts (Chiang, 2021). For example, reminiscent of animal-related events and activities, reminiscent of games and entertainment, reminiscent of romantic events and activities, reminiscent of plants-related events and activities, reminiscent of art events and activities, reminiscent of socializing with friends and family, reminiscent of playing sports, and abnormal events and activities are classified as reminiscent of events and activities. The analysis procedures can be accessed in Table 1.

Table 1. An analysis of the Coding Process from Codes to the Category

Open coding	Axial coding		
Code	Concept	Subcategory	Category
Reminiscent of young couples, girls and boys under 20 years old and beautiful girls	Reminiscent of teenagers and young people		
Reminiscent of fiancé or spouse, friend(s) and family(es)	Reminiscent of family(es) and friend(s)		
Reminiscent of gardeners and the late Fateh	Reminiscent of workers and managers of Fateh Garden	Reminiscent of humans	Human dimension
Reminiscent of playful kids	Reminiscent of children		
Reminiscent of sports practitioners and tennis players	Reminiscent of sports practitioners and athletes		
Reminiscent of drug users, drug dealers, thieves, and thugs	Reminiscent of criminal people		
Reminiscent of the middle-aged couples	Reminiscent of middle-aged people		

Open coding	Axial coding		
Reminiscent of the elderly chess players	Reminiscent of the elderly people		
Reminiscent of the musicians, photographers, and singers	Reminiscent of artists		
Learning, curiosity, and creativity	Desire to learn		
Power, simple living, endurance, and stability	Diligence		
Liberation and freedom	Liberation and freedom	Greatest human qualities	
Thrill and enthusiasm	Mobility		
Integrity, philanthropy, equality, forgiveness, and sacrifice	Altruism		
Sympathy, kindness, love, intimacy, mercy for human beings and animals	Endearment		
Reminiscent of spring, summer, autumn, and winter	Reminiscent of the seasons		
Reminiscent of Karaj and reminiscent of the garden in the past	Reminiscent of the past of the park and the city		
Reminiscent of the thirteenth day of the new year on which people go out for pleasure, Reminiscent of a time before the revolution	Reminiscent of special times or periods	Reminiscent of time or periods	Time dimension
Reminiscent of childhood, adolescence, youth, and university days	Reminiscent of lifetime		
Reminiscent of board games, snow games, and swinging	Reminiscent of games and entertainment		
Reminiscent of dating, romantic walking, and romantic dates	Reminiscent of romantic events and activities		
Reminiscent of playing with animals, listening to the sound of crows, noisy birds, and insects, taking pictures of animals, and feeding animals	Reminiscent of animal-related events and activities		
Reminiscent of walking on leaves and fruit picking	Reminiscent of plants-related events and activities	Reminiscent of events and activities	Event and activity dimension
Reminiscent of taking photos, playing musical instruments, and singing	Reminiscent of art events and activities		
Reminiscent of eating and drinking with family and friends	Reminiscent of socializing with friends and family		
Reminiscent of skating, walking, running, cycling, playing tennis, volleyball, badminton, and chess	Reminiscent of playing sports		
Reminiscent of fights, verbal sexual harassment, and drug-using	Reminiscent of abnormal events and activities		
Reminiscent of Valiasr Street in Tehran, Hesarak neighborhood, and Babolsar river	Reminiscent of specific places		
Reminiscent of Karaj	Reminiscent of the city		
Reminiscent of villas, villa houses, homes, private gardens, and grandma's house	Reminiscent of house, garden, and villa	Reminiscent of places	
Reminiscent of Khanevadeh Park, Chitgar Park, and forest parks	Reminiscent of other parks		Physical dimension
Reminiscent of heaven	Reminiscent of the ideal place		
Reminiscent of vases	Reminiscent of beautiful objects		
Reminiscent of tennis balls and fitness machines	Reminiscent of exercise tools	Reminiscent of objects	
Reminiscent of swings	Reminiscent of entertainment tools		
Reminiscent of gazebo	Reminiscent of comfort tools		
Colorfulness	Beauty	Physical features	

Open coding	Axial coding			
Order and arrangement, uniqueness, glory, fitness, impressiveness, lovable	Memorability			
Variety and crowdedness	Multiplicity and diversity			
Silence, shading, cleanliness, and soothing	Peace of mind			
Reminiscent of apple, walnut, and pear trees	Reminiscent of fruit trees	Reminiscent of plants		
Reminiscent of sycamore trees, pine trees, cedar trees, maple trees	Reminiscent of non-fruit trees			
Reminiscent of cats and dogs	Reminiscent of pets	Reminiscent of animals		
Reminiscent of crows and noisy birds	Reminiscent of birds		Environmental dimension	
Reminiscent of nature	Reminiscent of nature	Reminiscent of nature		
Reminiscent of snowy, rainy, windy, and sunny days and nights	Reminiscent of weather conditions			
Freshness, greenery, coolness, and verdancy	Pristine	Natural features		
Height, greatness, extension| and oldness	Scale			
Sense of life, happiness, pleasure, and cheerfulness	Vitality	Hope	peace, safety, and hope	
Refuge	Supportive	Safety and security		
Peace, comfort, and relaxation	Peace	Peace		
Unresolved problems after years and lack of awareness of managers about problems	Identifying the needs and desires of users by garden managers	Identifying issues, contradictions, and problems		
Lack of awareness of the existence of management building, lack of a clear communication mechanism with management, and lack of a specific program for polling users	Establishing a mechanism for continuous communication between garden managers and users		Identifying problems and providing solutions	
Holding sports and art competitions by users and holding ideation workshops to improve the condition of the garden	Using the capacity of users to improve the condition of the garden	Providing solutions and suggestions		
Holding group games such as Mafia, pantomime, etc. and doing group sports such as volleyball	Holding group events especially for young people			
Modeling of Mellat Park in Tehran	Modeling successful parks			
Proximity	Accessibility			
Multiple entrances				

Selective coding: Selective coding as the main stage of the theory is based on the results of the previous steps. This codification relates the categories to each other and demonstrates the relationship between categories (Soleimani, 2019). The researchers identified sixteen subcategories and eight categories. The categories include environmental dimension, human dimension, time dimension, event and activity dimension, physical dimension, accessibility, promoting peace, safety, and hope, and identifying problems and providing solutions.

What was mentioned more than anything in the interviews were the meanings that were enjoyable for the users and the associations of people, objects, times, activities, and events that reminded the users of their satisfaction. Thus, what was achieved in coding was some pleasant meanings and associations as the core issue. The subcategories were somehow related to either the meanings or the associations. The categories were also related. For example, the time dimension is related to the human dimension on the one hand and the environmental dimension on the other, or the accessibility is related to the physical dimension. In Figure 3, the relationship between categories and subcategories is shown in a systematic and graphical model.

The substantive theory that emerged from this study was named *promoting peace, safety, and hope through pleasant meanings and associations*. In addition to this theory, this research also presents five theorems as follows:

Theorem 1: Activities, events, environmental, physical, and human components are causal factors that form meanings and associations of Fateh Garden.

Theorem 2: Identifying the desires and needs of users, creating a mechanism for continuous communication between the managers and users, using the capacity of users to improve the condition of the park, increasing group events especially for young people can be done to promote peace, safety and hope for the users of Fateh Garden.

Theorem 3: Weather conditions, different seasons of the year, lifetime, and special times or periods can be effective in the formation and continuity of meanings and associations of Fateh Garden.

Theorem 4: Ease of accessibility to Fateh Garden helps to form meanings and associations and can be effective in maintaining these meanings and associations.

Theorem 5: Meanings and associations can have consequences for the users of Fateh Garden. Comfort, peace, the feeling of safety and security, hope, vitality, happiness, joy, and a sense of life are among the positive consequences of these meanings and associations for the users of Fateh Garden.
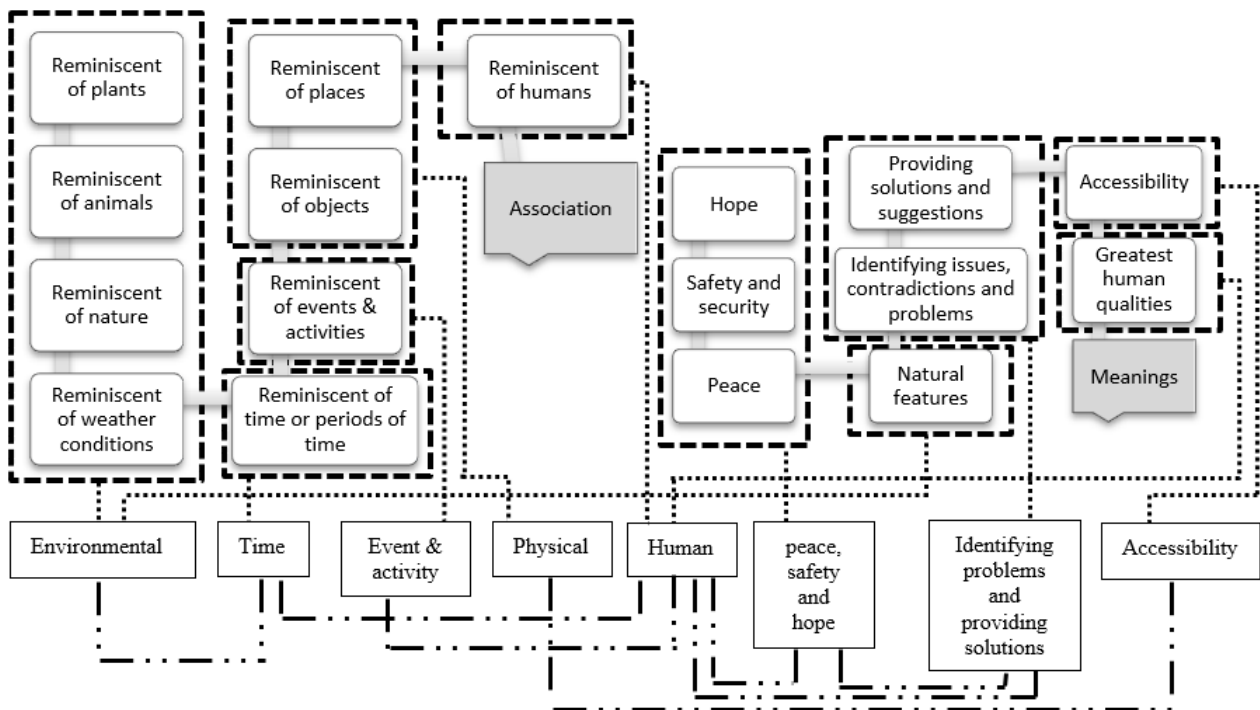
Figure 4 displays the components of the theory.

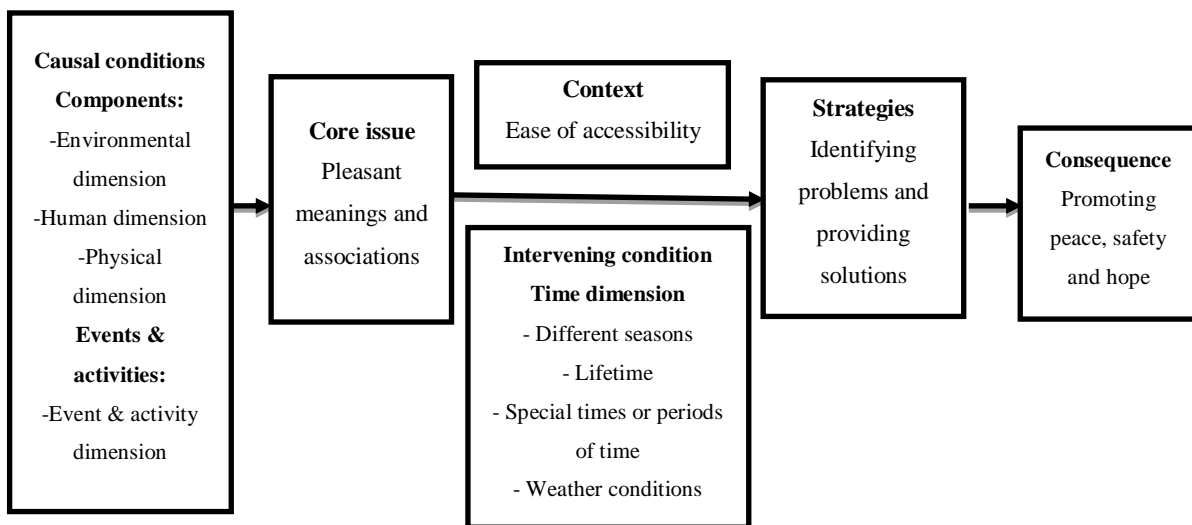

Fig 3. The Conceptual Model of the Present Study

Fig 4. The Substantive Theory: Promoting Peace, Safety, and Hope through Pleasant Meanings and Associations

The Core Issue: Pleasant Meanings and Associations

When Fateh Garden users are asked about this park, they often come up with pleasant meanings and associations. They have good memories of being in this park and it is a pleasure for them to go there. For them, Fateh Garden is a place that can have many positive meanings and remind people and things that are pleasant.

The context: Ease of Accessibility

Proper access to the main and busy streets of the city center, as well as some residential alleys and the possibility of parking cars in the streets and alleys, have made it easy for people from other parts of the city to have access to this place: *'I use Fateh Garden because I have easy access to it' [S20].*

Causal Conditions: Components, Events, and Activities

There are components, events, and activities that create pleasant meanings and associations for the users of Fateh Garden, which are discussed below.

The Human Dimension

For some users, Fateh Garden is associated with different individuals and groups. Due to the naming of the founder and the main owner of this park, the late Fateh is the most important person that users remember when they hear the name of Fateh Garden. Due to the fame of the late Fateh for some human traits such as compassion, self-sacrifice, and creativity, the name of Fateh Garden is for some people associated with these great human traits: *For me, Fateh Garden is a great association of a man who devoted his wealth and capital to the people of his country, in every season, Fateh Garden reveals a secret to us. I am interested in the codes that Fateh gave us to discover them [S36].*

Fateh Garden, for some, represents the efforts of hard-working gardeners. Fateh Garden is also associated with athletes and sports practitioners. Moreover, most of the time, there are artists in Fateh Garden who are either playing an instrument or singing. According to the memories of the users, this place reminds them of family, friends, or their fiancé and spouse. Also, due to the presence of different age groups of people, Fateh Garden is associated with its multi-user environment. The important point is the dominance of the number of users of teenagers and young people. Because of the relative freedom they have in this place and their desire to express themselves, youths, especially girls, have a specific viewpoint: *Fateh Garden reminds me of an environment full of boys and girls, who are often under twenty years old and want to show off [S41].* Due to the place where the chess tables are located and often a group of middle-aged and old men plays chess and backgammon there, Fateh Garden is reminiscent of this group of people too.

Fateh Garden evokes some great human qualities. As mentioned earlier, some of these attributes are ascribed to the late Fateh: *Fateh garden evokes purity, intimacy, integrity, honesty, and forgiveness for me, because of the late Fateh [S23].* Moreover, other components, activities, and events also evoke other human traits. Desire to learn is one of these traits. Kindness, mercy, affection, and altruism are among the other traits that can be seen in the behavior of people in Fateh Garden: *In Fateh Garden, you see people feeding dogs and cats and showing hope for life and kindness and compassion for each other [S52].* Due to the sports activities and high mobility that people show in Fateh Garden, excitement, mischief, and dynamism are other human traits that people have mentioned: *On the swing benches of Fateh Garden, the feeling of mischief and childishness touches a person [S52].*

According to the presence of teenagers and young people who are present in pairs in Fateh Garden at different times, it means freedom, liberation, and love for some people: *'Fateh garden means spending time with someone you love, it means romantic conversation, it means playing with the beloved, it means to love', 'When I walk in Fateh Garden, I see myself as a free girl', 'I see this park as a symbol of freedom, where young people have freedom' [S52, 28, 19].*

The presence of trees that have grown for decades has led to concepts such as originality, antiquity, and endurance in Fateh Garden: *We must learn from the trees of this garden, be strong, be rooted and original. I think the tree is a symbol of endurance. These trees are very old. They endured hardships and survived [S41].* Moreover, the mountain stone sitting walls along the main walking path evoke the concept of simplicity: *These sitting walls connect man with stone and earth. They have a sense of simplicity that is beautiful. It means some needs can be met in a simple way [S39].*

Despite all the positive things about Fateh Garden, there are some young boys in this place mainly from other parts of the city such as the Hesarak Neighborhood who exhibit abnormal behavior. Some complain about their verbal harassment and their willingness to fight, while

others accuse them of stealing, consuming, or distributing drugs, and consider these to be among the negative points of Fateh Garden.

Physical Dimension

Fateh Garden evokes some places for some users. When a person feels at home, it means that he feels calm and secure in that place. For many users, Fateh Garden feels like home: *Fateh Garden gives me a sense of home and peace [S13]*. For some, it feels like a private villa or garden: *Fateh Garden reminds me of villa houses, because of its intimacy [S9]*. For some, it is reminiscent of old big houses or grandparents' houses: *Fateh Garden is a beautiful nostalgia for me, like my grandmother's house [S25]*.

For some, it is reminiscent of the city of Karaj: *Fateh garden is always a symbol of Karaj for me [S13]*. For some people, it is reminiscent of forests, forest parks, or other urban parks: *Fateh garden and its trees take me into my imagination, which makes up a story that once was a forest and was more beautiful than it is [S17]*. Also, due to some similarities, people think of other places based on their experience: *The tall trees of this park remind me of Valiasr Street in Tehran [S8]*. Fateh Garden is also associated with some beautiful objects (e.g., vases), sports and play equipment (e.g., balls), and resting tools (e.g., gazeboes).

The ideal place in Iranian culture is paradise, which people wish to achieve in another world. For some users, Fateh Garden is reminiscent of paradise: *Fateh Garden is always beautiful, but in spring, it is paradise [S22]*. The main feature of paradise is beauty as one of the environmental features. This beauty doubles in some seasons such as spring and autumn due to the color of the trees. Another feature of Fateh Garden is its good design, which has contributed to its beauty. Its design has made the shade of the trees comfortable for the users on the sidewalks and especially on sunny days.

Order in the components of Fateh Garden, especially in the field of planting trees, is another environmental feature of this urban park. The magnificence and wonder of this garden have made it a special, unique, and lovable urban park for its users: *Everything is lovable. Its nature, its environment, its location is indefinable [S27]*.

Moreover, different gender and age groups at different hours of the day and a large number and variety of users can be seen in Fateh Garden. For this reason, the garden looks crowded at some times, especially in the afternoon. However, in some hours, such as before noon, noon, and midnight, the number of users is less than that and silence can be felt. All

have made Fateh Garden a lovely place. Also, due to the good maintenance of this garden, the users' efforts to keep it clean, and the high number of trash cans, this garden is very clean.

Environmental Dimension

At the time of its construction, Fateh Garden contained a large number of fruit trees, which were sold commercially. This process continued until its transformation into an urban park, and the municipality is selling the gardens' walnuts now. Therefore, for some users who have been acquainted with Fateh Garden for a long time and have many memories with this place, it is associated with fruit trees such as apples, pears, apricots, and walnuts. Apart from these fruit trees, the sycamore trees that are planted along the sidewalks and mark the border of these paths with the plots are other sorts of trees that are prominent in Fateh Garden and many people associate this garden with these long and old sycamore trees. Although other trees and plants are planted here, sycamore and fruit trees have had the greatest impact on the minds of users. Due to the great impact of these trees on users, many of them consider Fateh Garden to be reminiscent of nature.

Because of these tall and numerous trees, many birds live in this garden, the most characteristic of which are crows. These birds usually make the garden pleasant by singing, especially in the morning: *Crows are the beautiful music of nature, that you feel like you are out of town in the heart of nature [S52]*. There are also some insects among the trees, some of which, such as some kinds of beetles and crickets, emit sounds that are attractive and memorable to some. The presence of some animals such as dogs and cats is also significant in Fateh Garden, especially stray dogs, which are more numerous than cats, and most users look at them with interest and even feed them. When the place was closed due to the Corona Virus outbreak, some users brought food for the dogs and cats in the garden. According to the presence of trees and animals in Fateh Garden that represent nature, it evokes the characteristics of nature such as greenery, freshness, vitality, coolness, greatness, height, and extension in the minds of users: *The trees of Fateh Garden give me a sense of vitality and freshness [S2]*.

Event and Activity Dimension

Due to the popularity of this urban park and the presence of different age and sex groups in this place and performing various activities in it, Fateh Garden

is associated with many events and activities for its users. Games and entertainment are among the most significant events and activities in this park. On the four-seater chess tables or the gazeboes, some people are playing board games. Moreover, in times of snowfall, snow games are one of the games that users remember. Some users also recall memories of romantic dates and dating that they made in this place. For some, Fateh Garden is reminiscent of friendly and family gatherings, often accompanied by eating, drinking, and laughing, creating pleasant memories for them. Many people also remember the sports activities they did in Fateh Garden including walking, running, volleyball, cycling, badminton, football, skating, chess, and tennis. For some, it is associated with artistic events and activities such as photography, painting, playing musical instruments, and singing.

In addition to these memorable events and activities, there are also bad events and activities such as fights, verbal harassment, using drugs and dealing, which upset users and form inappropriate memories and mentality about this garden: *There are some people from the disadvantage areas fighting and using drugs in Fateh Garden [S44].*

Some of Fateh Garden's events and activities are also related to plants such as blooming, leafing, and picking fruits that remain in the minds of users and create meanings and associations for them. Moreover, some of the events and activities are related to animals such as birds, insects, dogs, and cats. Some people remember the sounds of noisy birds, crows, and some insects and feeding animals and taking pictures with them.

Intervening Condition: the Time Dimension

Due to the main role of trees in the appearance of Fateh Garden and the change of color and their growth stages in different seasons, Fateh Garden has a different appearance in each season. For the users of Fateh Garden, it is associated with different seasons: *Most of the leaves of Fateh garden trees turn yellow and fall in this season. I want to walk on the leaves [S5].* Since this garden is more than half a century old, it reminds some users of the past of this garden and times like before the Islamic Revolution and even the past time of Karaj. The sense of excitement and vitality that emanates from some components of this garden, such as swing benches and children's play equipment, reminds some users of their childhood: *I like swing benches; I remember as a child riding a swing [S19].* Some people remember their adolescence period and going to school or using Fateh Garden together with their classmates. For some, Fateh Garden is reminiscent of their youth or university days, when they had many memories of the place.

Strategies: Identifying Problems and Providing Solutions

There are some issues, problems, and contradictions related to Fateh Garden that need to be addressed. Some issues, such as lack of light, are among those that have not yet been addressed. It seems that the managers of this park have not paid enough attention to some of the needs and desires of users and few attempts have been made to identify and meet them. Some issues, such as lack of light, are among those that have not yet been addressed. To identify the needs and desires of users by garden managers, it is necessary to create a mechanism for continuous communication between the managers and users. The first step is to introduce the park's management building to users who are unaware of its existence. The next step is to identify a way to communicate with management so that users can easily share their comments and suggestions with park managers. Moreover, it seems necessary to have a specific program for polling park users.

It seems that due to the users' interest in using this urban park, their capacity can be used to improve the condition of Fateh Garden. One suggestion could be to hold sports competitions such as tug of war, volleyball, badminton, and chess, and art competitions such as music or photography by users. Workshops and meetings can also be held for users to share their ideas with managers, and from these ideas, those that can be implemented. Many people who come to Fateh Garden tend to connect with other people and find friends among themselves. This is done by some teenage and young boys in ways such as teasing girls or asking them for phone numbers. One suggestion might be to hold group events and activities such as group games (e.g., pantomime and mafia), or group sports (e.g., volleyball and badminton): *I think if something can be done to make some games like Pantomime and Mafia play here, teenagers and young people will become friends in this way instead of looking for friends in other ways [S15].* Experiences from other successful urban parks can also be used to improve the conditions of Fateh Garden and resolve issues and contradictions. Some parks in other cities have been able to keep users satisfied in other ways. Therefore, using the methods implemented in those parks can keep the users of Fateh Garden more satisfied.

The Consequence: Promoting Peace, Safety, and Hope

Perhaps the most important keyword in describing Fateh Garden by users is 'peaceful'. In this regard, the presence of tall and beautiful trees that give a special beauty to Fateh Garden in the four seasons of the year plays a decisive role. This garden also allows people to forget the problems of their lives and experience tranquility, even for a few hours: *Fateh Garden has a special sense of calm and makes you take a few moments away from worries and problems [S1].* Also, the existence of suitable facilities for users means that they do not need to go outside the park to meet their needs and desires and spend hours in this park without worries.

Another very important issue is the feeling of safety and security that allows users to visit this urban park with ease. Users generally feel very safe in Fateh Garden. One of the reasons for this feeling of safety and security is the location of Fateh Garden in one of the best urban and economic areas of Karaj (Jahanshahr Neighborhood) and also the possibility of accessing it from several residential streets and alleys that are connected to the main and busy streets. It is also surrounded in the western part by walls of houses and residential alleys. This situation has caused many users to look at Fateh Garden as a refuge and a place to be safe: *Fateh Garden is a place where you can take refuge from the hustle and bustle of the city [S6].*

Due to this peace and feeling of security, Fateh Garden has become a place to relieve sadness and fatigue: *'Looking at the trees of Fateh Garden will take away all my sorrow', 'When I feel sad, nothing makes me feel better like walking with a friend in this park' [S4, S7].* This feature of Fateh Garden as a warm and invigorating place has caused people to look for sports activities and exciting events to instill a sense of hope and vitality.

5. DISCUSSION

The research findings and codings are consistent with the findings of some studies reflected in Tables 2, 3, and 4.

According to Table 2, the perceived meanings in urban parks can be categorized in the form of three categories of human qualities, physical, and natural features and peace, safety, and hope, as shown in Table 3.

Table 2. Some Examples of Meanings (Intangible Cultural Resources) in Urban Parks

Researcher(s)	Components, events, and activities (Tangible cultural resources)	Meanings (Intangible cultural resources)
(Burgess, 1988)	sitting on a bench on top of a hill and looking at the horizon	happiness
	walking into the wood down below and watching the squirrels	happiness and relaxation
	sitting down in a quiet and meditating manner to get away from the noise of the city	calmness
	children playing with their moms	safety and peacefulness
	finding new friends and playing with them	friendship and sociability
(Chiesura, 2004)	the natural environment	freedom, luck, adventure, happiness, unity with myself, and unity with nature
(Manzo, 2005)	sitting on a bench for self-evaluation (thinking about who he was and what he was doing and what his direction was)	peacefulness, relaxation, and comfortableness
(Krenichyn, 2006)	weather and seasonal conditions, plants, and the natural environment	beauty, prettiness, greenness, colorfulness (in the fall), transition (the seasons' change), freedom, safety, convenience, comfort, activeness, intimacy, challenge, peace of mind, accessibility, spectacular, astonishment, coolness, pleasure, enjoyment, meditation, the release of stress, independence, strength, resistance, empowerment
(Wynveen, 2010)	the natural and built environments	immersion, interconnectedness, freedom, isolation, relaxation
	water color and clarity	amazing, fabulous, and spectacular
	Water	calmness, peacefulness
	Palm Island area	uniqueness, seclusion, solitude
	Reef	prettiness, safety, and accessibility

Researcher(s)	Components, events, and activities (Tangible cultural resources)	Meanings (Intangible cultural resources)
	coral and other wildlife	abundance and diversity
	kayaking and snorkeling	curiosity and exploration
	sea/landscapes and open vistas	aesthetic beauty
(Peters, 2010)	walking, socializing, park's atmosphere	safety, comfort, and togetherness
	Moroccan teenagers try to get women's attention by staring at them and making comments	uncomfortableness
	a 10-year-old Dutch boy insulting a Turkish-Dutch woman	disrespect
(Loukil, 2010)	a games area for children, places for picnic and rest, the natural composition of the space	leisure, pureness, naturalness, liberty, relaxation, calmness, tranquility, quietness, beauty
(Main, 2013)	the natural components of the park	cleanliness vs. dirtiness; continuity vs. discontinuity/ change; familiarity vs. lack of familiarity; community vs. isolation; restoration vs. disturbance; safety vs. insecurity; freedom vs. restriction; unity vs. conflict; welcome vs. unwelcome
(Rennit, 2015)	big meadow, open area in the park, the rustle of leaves in the wind, the sound of a rivulet foaming across the stones, tall trees, bushes, flowers, pavilions, plant walls	fascination, being away, extent, and compatibility
(Campbell, 2016)	bathrooms, barbecue pits, buildings, community centers, play equipment, parking, paths, trails, sports and recreation facilities, nature centers, fish, shade, water, trees, birds	isolation, peacefulness, quietness, calmness, relaxation, safety, serenity, solace, tranquility, beauty, loveliness, pleasance, niceness, attachment, sociability, coolness, convenience
(Yazdani, 2017)	looking at a lake with a deck	restoration and peacefulness

Table 3. Categorized Meanings in Urban Parks

Categories	Meanings
Human qualities	curiosity, exploration, activeness, adventure, independence, strength, empowerment, friendship, sociability, togetherness, respect, attachment, intimacy, freedom, fascination, astonishment
Physical & natural features	colorfulness, beauty, prettiness, loveliness, niceness, greenness, coolness, pureness, naturalness, uniqueness, accessibility, amazing, fabulous, spectacular, extent, continuity, transition, unity, change, abundance, diversity, cleanliness, quietness, familiarity, immersion, compatibility, resistance, solitude
peace, safety, and hope	happiness, pleasure, meditation, enjoyment, safety, security, comfort, relaxation, calmness, peacefulness, convenience, tranquility, serenity, solace, pleasance, restoration, the release of stress, peace of mind

Table 4. Some Examples of Associations (Intangible Cultural Resources) in Urban Parks

Researcher(s)	Components, events, and activities (Tangible cultural resources)	Associations (Intangible cultural resources)	Concept
(Manzo, 2005)	walking, sitting, and playing	playing as a child, meeting the husband, separating from him, and taking the children to play	-Reminiscent of special times or periods
	Nature	a childhood spent in the country	-Reminiscent of lifetime
(Krenichyn, 2006)	natural environment	rural, pastoral, or suburban places in the northeastern United States where some users grew up	Reminiscent of specific places
(Main, 2013)	the natural components of the park (the trees, grass, lake, birds, and other creatures)	users' sending communities	Reminiscent of specific places
	grassy areas	village	Reminiscent of house, garden, and villa
	the Hispanic food	home	
	the palm trees and the soccer games	country	Reminiscent of specific places
(Yazdani, 2017)	a distant view of the lake and an open space with an old tree and a bench	fishing by the lake in the users' hometown when they were teenagers	Reminiscent of games and entertainment

As illustrated in Table 2, some studies have sought to find the perceptual meanings of urban parks. However, as Table 4 shows, little attention has been paid to the associations of urban parks. None of these studies provide a comprehensive model of the meanings and associations of an urban park. This research uses a grounded theory approach to provide a model for identifying the meanings and associations of urban parks. The use of grounded theory is helpful in the generation of a framework to identify intangible cultural resources of urban parks. The coding technique used in grounded theory creates explicit and traceable links between the raw interview data and the subsequent interpretation and analysis in the model, preserving the transparency of the analysis (Nixon, 2018).

The resulting codes via grounded theory, *promoting peace, safety, and hope through pleasant meanings and associations*, are comprehensive, explanatory theories that explain intangible cultural resources of an urban park and how users interact with the park through meanings and associations.

This research also shed light on how users identify problems in an urban park and how to solve them. For instance, due to the lack of adequate lighting in the north of the park and the plots, some users have complained of a lack of security. Another problem that should be mentioned is the large number of stray dogs, which frightens some users. Another issue is sports activities on the sidewalks, which sometimes cause users to be afraid of colliding with skaters, cyclists, balls, or Frisbees. Children's playground flooring is also used to practice martial arts and parkour, which is complained about by families who want their children to use play equipment in a quiet environment. Perhaps the most important problem mentioned in the interviews is the presence of young people and adolescents who behave inappropriately in the park. Drug use and verbal harassment of girls are among these abnormal behaviors.

Depending on the capacity of the park's cultural resources, users have suggested various solutions. For instance, holding sports and art competitions can lead to the formation of good memories in the minds of users and be effective in promoting their peace, safety, and hope. Assigning part of one of the walking paths to skate can be a good solution to reduce the possibility of pedestrians encountering skating practitioners on the walking path. Playing volleyball only in the fenced area and throwing Frisbees in the open and empty piece of land at the north of Fateh Garden can decrease the possibility of volleyball or Frisbee colliding with pedestrian users. Moreover, equipping a flat and wide area with suitable flooring for parkour and martial arts practitioners can resolve the conflict of simultaneous use of children's playground by those interested in parkour and martial arts on the one hand and children on the other. Collecting stray dogs by volunteers or environmental groups and using youth workers to train the park attendants to change the attitudes towards Fateh Garden as a hangout for thugs and ignorant people are among the other solutions.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The study contributes to filling the gap in our understanding of meanings and associations as the intangible cultural resources of urban parks. Based on a grounded theory study, this article offers a conceptualization of intangible cultural resources of Fateh Garden as an important urban park in a major Iranian city. We identified the environmental dimension, human dimension, time dimension, events and activities dimension, physical dimension, accessibility, promoting peace, safety and hope, identifying problems, and providing solutions as meanings and associations discussed by the users.

This model provides a framework for urban parks managers and future researchers to assess intangible cultural resources of urban parks. It is hoped that the development of this framework can respond to challenges on the assessment of needs and desires of urban parks users and promote their peace, safety, and hope.

Perhaps the most important insight from the present study is that people choose a park to use that reminds them of their favorite components, places, events, activities, plants, animals, and individuals and gives them peace of mind. It would be interesting to perform studies focusing on the relations of the time dimension, environmental dimension, human dimension, and physical dimension to events and activities dimension of urban parks. Further research on intangible cultural resources of urban parks should seek to answer other questions. The following list is indicative of possible emerging research questions. What does a specific urban park mean to users? How do users feel when they are in a certain urban park? What does a specific urban park remind users of? What kind of people, animals, plants, objects, and places does a specific urban park remind users of? What time does a specific urban park remind users of? What kind of activities, sports, events, games, and entertainment does a specific urban park remind users of? What kind of colors, smells, and voices does a specific urban park remind users of? Studies similar to the present study can be done in other

urban parks, other urban spaces, and for different users.

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AUTHOR (S) BIOSKETCHES

M. Nilipour., *Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Tabriz Islamic Art University, Tabriz, Iran*
Email*: m.nilipour@tabriziau.ac.ir*

L. Medghalchi., *Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Tabriz Islamic Art University, Tabriz, Iran*
Email*: l.medghalchi@tabriziau.ac.ir*

M. Mirgholami., *Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Tabriz Islamic Art University, Tabriz, Iran*
Email*: mirgholami@tabriziau.ac.ir*

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