

INTERACTION INTEGRATION RELIGION COLLECTIVE SPACES THIRD PLACES OPEN SPACES INTERCULTURALITY

CULTURE PUBLIC SPACES COMMUNITY PEOPLE ACTIVITIES SOCIAL LIFE HISTORY MINORITY **DIVERCITY**

“IF YOU PLAN CITIES FOR CARS AND TRAFFIC, YOU GET CARS AND TRAFFIC. IF YOU PLAN FOR PEOPLE AND PLACES, YOU GET PEOPLE AND PLACES.” FRED KENT

## IDEAS FOR AN INTERACTIVE DISTRICT: THE CASE STUDY OF JOLFA, ISFAHAN



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Minority groups are groups of people who are differentiated with the majority ethnically, religiously, culturally, etc. In terms of sociology, minority groups are the ones who are under discrimination socially, economically, etc. They usually secede from participating in the bigger society life. This results in segregation that is a big threat for the society and its members' mental health. On the other hand, integration between different communities and the existence of diversity of people and communities help the society to improve.

The question is how this integration can be reflected in urban fabric? Which criteria should these urban environment have in order to provide opportunities for interaction?

The project aims to study the effective factors on social interaction and integration leading to ideas for an interactive neighborhood considering the effect of religious diversity and culture diversity, focusing on the point that juxtaposition of different cultures and religions leads to a more interactive and social sustainable neighborhood.

*Gruppi minoritari sono gruppi di gente che si differenziano con la maggioranza etnicamente, religiosamente, culturalment, etc. In termini di sociologia, gruppi minoritati sono quelli che discriminati n casi in sociale, economia, etc. Loro si staccano di partecipare nella vita' di societa' grande. Questo risulta in segregazione che e' un grande minaccia per la societa' e saluta mentale degli utenti. D'altra parte, integrazione tra comunita' diversi e esistenza di gente diversi e comunita' aiuta la societa' per migliorare.*

*La domanda e' come questo integrazione si puo' riflettere in tessuto urbano? Che criteri questi ambiente urbani devono avere per fornire opportunita' per interazione?*

*Questo progetto intenta di studiare fattori efficaci sul interazione e integrazione sociale e l'idee per una zona interattiva considerando l'effetto di diversita' religiosa e culturale, che giustapposizione di culturi e religione diversi risulta a un quartiere piu' interattivo e sociale sostenibile.*

The research includes 5 chapters which starts by theoretical explanation about integration and public spaces. The sequential steps goes forward with research methodology, while next steps try to introduce case study exceeding to site analysis, while the last chapter reaches to final interventions.

In the first chapter effects of segregation and integration and their impacts on a society have been explained, proceeding to intercultural spaces and criteria forming a district to be socially sustainable.

Chapter 2 is about research methodology that is based on observation, library study, and analytic-descriptive method. A questionnaire is designed and has been filled out by the people.

The third chapter talks about the case study that is Jolfa District in Isfahan, Iran. A neighborhood where from its beginning of formation was dedicated to Armenians- Christians- who were and are the religion minority in this city. Armenians were apart from what some scholars state about discrimination of minority groups. They had a good social and economic situation in general, however in some periods they experienced hard time. Study has been done to understand the reason of this good situation through history.

In chapter 4 site analysis has been done. In terms of urban fabric, this neighborhood is rich with having historical buildings and especially churches that cannot be seen in any other parts of Isfahan. Analysis have been done to understand the urban fabrics of the district and users' social behavior. However Jolfa's framework, its use and users, and its fabric have been changed during years, it still has the opportunity to function as one of the city hubs where attract many people with diverse backgrounds.

**1.The State of Art; Culture; Integration,  
Interculturality**







## 1.1 Juxtaposition of Different Religions and Cultures

"With three cultures and languages racing around my blood it feels natural to want to "see the world through other eyes" and to focus on what we share rather than what divides us". (Charles Landry)<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1.1 A World of Distinctions

"Distinction – identification, categorization, ordering, valorizing – is integral to the way in which we, both individually and collectively, make sense of the world. Distinctions help us negotiate life and discover our identities. Without them we are, effectively, paralyzed.

We create a world of distinctions that help define who we are and what we are not. We build an intellectual architecture so we can categorize things, ideas and people to decide and specify: Who am I? Who am I not? Who is "insider" and who is "outsider"? What is "in" and what is "out"? What is significant and meaningful, as distinct from trivial and superficial? What is deemed to be right or wrong, good or bad? Where do "the high" and "the low" fit in? In particular we define ourselves relationally, in relation to who we are not, into "Self" and "Other". This is the stuff around which identity itself is constructed."<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1.2 Religion, Culture, and the Relationship between Them

"Religion" is a set of beliefs, attitudes and morals that shape an individual. All religions have some values as their frameworks which are guides to behavior for the individuals and society.

"Culture" is a set of beliefs, behaviors and customs that rises out of religion, defines us as individuals in relation of others in a society, and therefore distinguishes us from others.

Religious beliefs have a strong influence on the culture of a community. Indeed, for many people around the world, religious beliefs are central to their culture and provide the moral codes by which they live.

"Culture shapes the way we see the world. It therefore has the capacity to bring about the change of attitudes needed to ensure peace and sustainable development which, we know, form the only possible way forward for life on planet Earth. Today, that goal is still a long way off. A global crisis faces humanity at the dawn of the 21st century, marked by increasing poverty in our asymmetrical world, environmental degradation and short-sightedness in policy-making. Culture is a crucial key to solving this crisis." (Preface, World Culture Report, UNESCO Publishing, Paris, 1999)

Our cultural values, which often include particular religious beliefs, shape our way of living and acting in the world.

The principles for living sustainably that flow from these and other cultural and religious beliefs vary between groups and countries. They have also changed over time as circumstances demand."<sup>3</sup>

According to what Center for Advance Research on Language Acquisition defines "culture", that is "shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs and understandings that are learned by socialization", to think and behave with cultural awareness is to establish a means of understanding and interacting with others that may transcend perceived barriers.

There are different categorize of people's responses when their diverse cultures meet in time of contact, and the best response is to synthesize some aspects of the two different cultures, the ones that the person can understand and digest according to his own personal level. The best sense of psychological well-being, satisfaction and resilience occur where the culture of origin is respected and overlaid with that of the host.

### 1.1.3 Reflect of Religion and Culture on Physical Fabric

Every culture has a framework that somehow tells what is right and what is wrong, what is important and what is not. These frameworks can be seen in physical fabric of a city where diverse cultures exist. In shaping up this physical fabric and architecture, religious beliefs are also involved. These factors are apparent in residential architecture in Iran before the contemporary time. It is noteworthy that politics and economy play an important role as well.

"Cultural divisions whereby parts of cities can be identified according to the language, ethnicity, religion, national descent or life style of the inhabitants". (Peter Marcuse 2002)

What happens then when different cultures meet and coexist in the same space? Are the basic building blocks of the city the same when having in mind diverse culture backgrounds? Think of street frontage, building heights, set-backs, pavement widths, turning circles, the number of windows and their size, how architects and planners deal with enclosure, privacy or sight lines. Think too of the materials used, color, light and water. Should architects and planners structure space to reflect different cultures as they might see and use spaces in varied ways? Or should open-ended spaces be created that others can adapt to?"<sup>4</sup>



Great cities like Istanbul are gateways where cultural influences collide. Here in Beyoglu a mosque stands in the heart of the wholesale mannequin district. The nakedness associated with the West and Islam are uncomfortable partners.



Different conceptions of openness and privacy. In the Dutch cultural context, as here in Amsterdam, the interior of people's homes is for all to see. Contrast this with how openness and privacy are seen within Islamic traditions as shown here in Marrakech.

Figure 1; urban fabric reflecting different religion and culture; up: a mosque beside a nakedness shop/ bottom: different conceptions of openness and privacy

Ref: Wood, Phil; Landry, Charles. The Intercultural City: Planning for Diversity Advantage.

<sup>1</sup> Wood, Phil; Landry, Charles. The Intercultural City: Planning for Diversity Advantage. Earthscan in the UK and USA. 2008

<sup>2</sup> See note 1

<sup>3</sup> Preface, World Culture Report, UNESCO Publishing, Paris, 1999, <http://www.unesco.org/education>

<sup>4</sup> See note 1



### 1.2.1 Living Apart: Segregation

"The logic goes that where people of one race or religion are disproportionately concentrated in a defined space, they are more likely to experience social and economic exclusion and are less likely to share the value system or the sense of civic commitment of the broader population."<sup>5</sup>

"*Segregation*" refers to that restriction of opportunities for different types of associations between the members of one racial, religious, national, or geographic origin. Where the action takes place in a social milieu in which the groups involved do not enjoy equal social status, the group that is of lesser social status will be referred to as the segregated group. In dealing with the question of the effects of segregation, it must be recognized that these effects do not take place in a vacuum, but in a social context in which discrimination exist."<sup>6</sup>

### 1.2.2 Effects of Segregation on Society

Segregation imposes upon individuals a distorted sense of social reality. It leads to a blockage in the communications and interaction between the two groups. Such blockages tend to increase mutual suspicion, distrust, and hostility. (Pdf effects of segregation) and therefore may lead to poverty, crime, higher unemployment, and also mental health problem.

### 1.2.3 The Case for Religious Minorities

"*Minority group*" is a group of people who are distinctive from the majority in terms of race, ethnic, religion, etc. They have some features in common which are:

- Their members have predicaments as they are discriminated from others.
- Their members have a sense of group solidarity that means having a sense of belonging to each other.
- They are a bit socially detached from the bigger society.

In sociology, ethnic and religious minorities are defined as a groups who are at risk of discrimination and distinction and in turn social and economic disadvantage due to their difference with the majority."<sup>7</sup>

"Being discriminated against can turn people inwards and cause a sense of isolation or diminished self-importance. Prejudice and discrimination are strong tendencies of intercultural contact and thus that cultural learning, which focuses on how we feel, behave, think and perceive, is key. What psychological analysis tells us is that perceived discrimination retrenches people and creates less willingness to adapt to the host culture or to understand another culture."<sup>8</sup>

"Under segregation and discrimination, a minority group member is thrown into a conflict to his feelings about himself and his group. They often react with a generally defeatist attitude and a lowering of personal ambitions. Besides, they are tend to be hypersensitive and anxious about their relations with the larger society."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See note 1

<sup>6</sup> Kenneth B. Clark; Isidor Chein; Stuart W. Cook. The Effects of Segregation and the Consequences of Desegregation, Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka. Vol. 59, No. 6. September 2004, pp. 495-501

<sup>7</sup> Jafari, Ali Akbar. Situation Historical Sociology and Performance of Religious Minorities in Esfahan in Safavid Dynasty (Case Study: Armenian in Jolfa in Esfahan in Safavid Dynasty). Social and Economic History Journal Article, No. 1, 2012, pp. 1-23

<sup>8</sup> See note 1

<sup>9</sup> See note 6

### 1.2.4 Why interact?

Human, it is said, are social beings. They need to interact to survival. There is the biological urge to mate, there is safety in numbers so addressing security is easier, and there are social needs and the desire for companionship. Let's not forget efficiency, as two hands can get things done more easily, and communicating with others leads to greater speed in solving problems and inventing solutions to them. Mix has been said to promote social harmony by reducing social and racial tensions, by reopening channels of communication and interaction decreasing mistrust and hostility, and promoting a better understanding between the groups.



Mixing across cultures and doing things together has the greatest impact when it starts young and can have a lifelong impact.

Figure 2; social mixing across different cultures  
Ref: Wood, Phil; Landry, Charles. The Intercultural City: Planning for Diversity Advantage.

"*Contact Hypothesis: (Allport, 1954)*

In essence it suggests that as majority group members come into contact with other minorities, they will be progressively less likely to hold prejudicial attitudes towards them.

"*Contact hypothesis*" has been followed by other theories such as the "*similarity-attraction hypothesis*". (Byrne, 1969)

The *similarity-attraction hypothesis* suggests that we are more likely to seek out, enjoy, understand, and want to work with, play with, trust, believe, vote for and generally prefer people with whom we share salient characteristics. These include physical attributes like color and complexion, interests, values, religion, group affiliation, behavior attitudes such as those towards women, skills, age, language, and knowledge of the cultural zone."<sup>10</sup>

Social psychology tells us that contact is key for mutual understanding. The more we interact, the more we learn about each other and that is the way we nurture empathy and the distrust between people can be reduced. We learn to live with differences that leads to foster positive impacts in different aspects of life.

A good interaction takes place under some preconditions i.e. it is voluntary and not by force, as far as when something comes by force, people usually tend to refuse doing that. Besides, people are less willing to learn and experience the things which they have already known, so another precondition that is worthy to note is what Edgar states:

"*The most successful interactions occur when people from different backgrounds share experiences which are new to both*". (Edgar 2005b)<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See note 1

<sup>11</sup> See note 1



### 1.3.1 Diversity Advantage: The Benefits of Cross-cultural Interaction

Every person has his own physical ability, mindset and way of thinking, perceiving and dealing with the outer world. These different viewpoints are intensified on a ground where different religions and cultures exist, as it has been said before that it is religion and culture shaping our beliefs and behaviors. One sees some aspects of things which the other does not. The essence of diversity in a society, especially religious and cultural diversity, brings all of these abilities and attitudes together.

"Heterogeneity is also claimed to promote *social conflict* in order to foster individual and social maturity. Disharmony is thought by some to be essential to individual psychological growth and that by recognizing the *vitalizing challenge of dissonance*, varieties and antagonism can be reconciled by emphasizing them. However Diversity is inevitable and with it the potential for conflict, it is not something merely to be tolerated because this is the right thing to do or because our lives will be less troublesome. It makes economic, social, and cultural sense and in a society it should be embraced because therein lie opportunity, resources and advantages.

What the city is and how it works as an economic and social entity (Park et al, 1925; Mumford, 1938, 1961; Wirth, 1964) and this has included consideration of the value of variety. However, *Jane Jacobs* is perhaps the first writer on cities not simply to describe diversity but to make the case for it as a driving force for long-term urban prosperity (Jacobs, 1961).

"Diversity is a positive social asset and is a source of innovation". (Richard Florida 2002a, 2002b, 2003).

The London Development Agency (LDA) promotes the "*business case for diversity*" and pronounces that "*Diversity provides opportunities for business growth, and diversity is one of London's greatest strength*".

Crucially a workforce of multiple backgrounds is a workforce of multiple perspectives."<sup>12</sup>

### 1.3.2 Interculturalism

"In searching for "*interculturalism*" in the past, our reliance is upon a much older terminology – we are in fact in search of "*cosmopolitanism*". The term cosmopolitan, meaning "*citizen of the world*", refers to a capacity to recognize and engage with cultures other than one's own and to describe a universal love of humankind as a whole.

There are some basics for "*Interculturalism Theory*" as Sandercock declares, among which are:

- *The cultural embeddedness of human is inescapable. We grow up in a culturally structured world, are deeply shaped by it, and necessarily view the world from within a specific culture. We are capable of critically evaluating our own culture's beliefs and practices, and of understanding and appreciating as well as criticizing those of other cultures. But some form of cultural identity and belonging seems unavoidable.*

- *"Culture" cannot be understood as static, eternally given, essentialist. It is always evolving, dynamic and hybrid of necessity. All cultures, even allegedly conservative or traditional ones, contain multiple differences within themselves that are continually being re-negotiated.*

- *Cultural diversity as a positive and intercultural dialogue is a necessary element of culturally diverse societies. No culture is perfect and can be perfected, but all cultures have something to learn from and contribute to others. Cultures grow through the everyday practices of social interaction.*

- *At the core of interculturalism as a daily political practice are two rights: the right to difference and the right to the city. The right to difference means recognizing the legitimacy and specific needs of minority or subaltern cultures. The right to the city is the right to presence, to occupy public space, and to participate as an equal in public affairs.*

- *A sense of belonging in an intercultural society cannot be based on race, religion, or ethnicity but needs to be based on a shared commitment to political community. Such a commitment requires an empowered citizenry.*

- *Reduction fear and intolerance can only be achieved by addressing the material as well as cultural dimensions of "recognition". This means addressing the prevailing inequalities of political and economic power as well as developing new stories about and symbols of national and local identity and belonging.*

It could be said that being different and arguing about differences shows you are alive. This process of crossing boundaries and trying to understand the "*Other*" can broaden the mind, encourage different perspectives and lead to hybrid inventions. It can generate a special cross-cultural creativity. A positive impulse to *intercultural exchange* is vital to encourage cross-fertilization from which innovation can proliferate."<sup>13</sup>



*It is easiest to recognize intercultural communication when it is between black and white people, but in reality there are a mass of relationships between people of similar colour coming from vastly different backgrounds.*

Figure 3; intercultural communication  
Ref: Wood, Phil; Landry, Charles. *The Intercultural City: Planning for Diversity Advantage*.

"Interculturalism in our public life is not only a better alternative but something that is desirable, attainable and sustainable and will actually add value to our urban communities and economics. *Gisela Welz* (2003) is one author who proposes that an intercultural context is a creative one. She highlights the collective nature of innovation: "*creativity thrives in a context of exchange, cooperation and difference*"."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See note 1

<sup>13</sup> See note 1

<sup>14</sup> See note 1



“While people of different ethnicities may not live together or even go to school together, at least in urban settings they are likely to encounter the *“Other”* through some form of commercial or service transaction, from buying their morning newspaper to any number of other regular or occasional experiences.”<sup>15</sup> Intercultural spaces are such spaces in which these interactions occur among different people with different backgrounds, where the people can talk, act, and exchange ideas and thoughts. Moreover, through these interactions they can expose their own cultures, meanwhile knowing and learning about other cultures.

“In a survey of residents in Lewisham and Bristol to identify popular intercultural spaces, the places mentioned with most frequency were not the highly designed or engineered public and corporate spaces but rather the spaces of day-to-day exchange such as libraries, schools, colleges, youth centers, sports clubs, specific cinemas, the hair salon, the hospital, markets and community centers. They are the *“spaces of interdependence and habitual engagement”* where (what Ash Amin, 2002, calls) *“micro publics”* come together and where (according to Leonie Sandercock, 2004) *“dialogue and prosaic negotiations are compulsory”*. In these places, Sandercock says, *“people from different backgrounds are thrown together in new settings which disrupt familiar patterns and create the possibility of initiating new attachments”*. (Sandercock, 2004). ”<sup>16</sup>

1.4.1 Public Spaces, Intercultural Spaces

*“We shape our public spaces, therefore our public spaces shape us”*. (Winston Churchill)<sup>17</sup>

Public is defined by Habermas (1956) as *“the site of collective performance that brings together those who are different from one another precisely because they are different...”*<sup>18</sup>

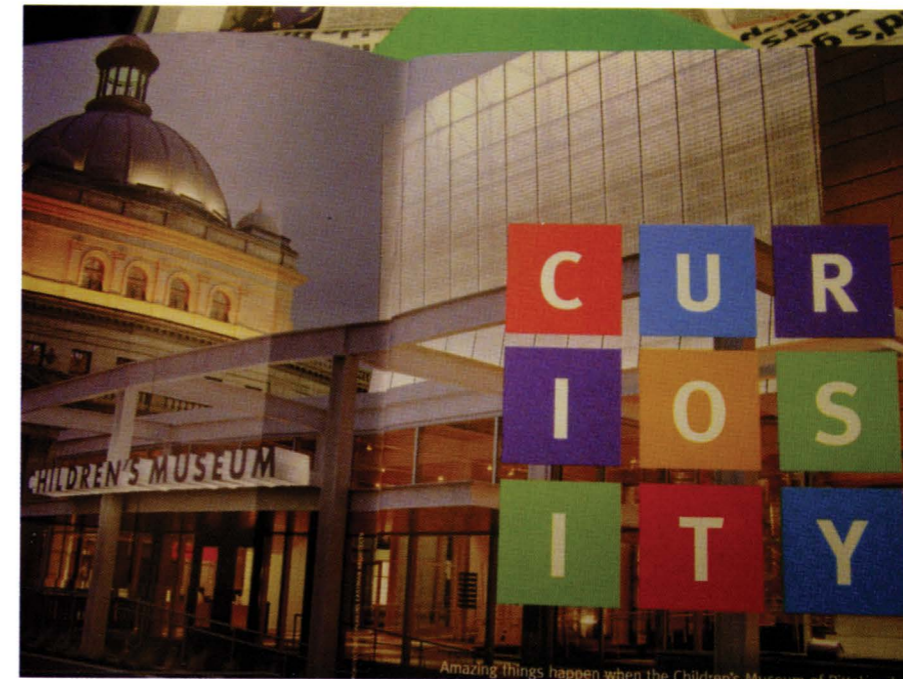
“It is very easy to think of the city as its physical form – the familiar elements of its civic infrastructure such as the city hall and railway station, its shopping streets, office blocks, warehouses and residential apartments. This leaves out one vital but too easily overlooked zone – *the space in between*.

“Public space is not limited simply to the formal areas of democratic gathering, market trade or ceremonial pomp created by city leaders and their architects. People create public space, often in the places least expected or intended by their designers: a street corner, the semi-abandoned patch of grass between buildings where teenagers can avoid the prying eyes of adults, the beach or riverside, or even the motion on public transport.”<sup>19</sup> All public spaces have a mutual characteristic that is the *essence of social interaction*.

“One instinctively wants to agree with Richard Rogers and Anne Power (2000) in their enthusiastic assertion of public space at the heart of reviving our cities:

*“Combining physical attraction with the excitement of activity seems the recipe for success. This helps people to connect up in an informal, often random way. A sense of community, of shared interests, grows in functioning public spaces where streets, shops, cafes and public institutions help to weave together our private worlds. The public spaces of the city contrast with the tightly packed density of city buildings, the confinement of cars and buses, the scattered nature of private homes and suburbs... rebuilding cities along their “desire lines”, their streets and public spaces, is the “glue that holds cities together”.*”<sup>20</sup>

Public spaces, however not necessarily, can be imbedded in the category of intercultural spaces, since, as it has been said before, therein lie social interactions as their mutual characteristic that is the required and compulsory factor of a space to be intercultural.



All photos taken by Charles Landry unless otherwise credited

*A precondition for an intercultural city is being curious about others. It should start at a very young age and cultural institutions and education play a significant role. The Children's Museum in Pittsburgh is an excellent example of fostering understanding across cultures.*



*Street life in Paris: Café culture fosters casual encounters that may lead to more.*



*Street life in New York: The human throng and diversity of life, yet does it lead to a meaningful meeting of minds?*

Figure 4; social mixing across different cultures  
Ref: Wood, Phil; Landry, Charles. *The Intercultural City: Planning for Diversity Advantage*.

<sup>15</sup> See note 1

<sup>16</sup> See note 1

<sup>17</sup> Lent, Ethan. PPS Projects for Public Spaces. Institute for Quality Communities Place-making Conference. University of Oklahoma. April 3rd 2013

<sup>18</sup> Memarovic, Nemanja; Fels, Sidney; Anacleto, Junia; Calderon, Roberto; Gobbo, Federico; Carrol, John, M. Rethinking Third Places: Contemporary Design with Technology. University of Lugano (USI); University of British Columbia; Federal University of Sao Carlos; University of Amsterdam; Penn State University

<sup>19</sup> See note 1

<sup>20</sup> See note 1



## 1.4.2 Parks

"Likely parks are the most known and familiar public spaces in our minds. A park – particularly a well-managed and creatively animated one – can provide a place where new social contacts can be sparked, to be consolidated elsewhere. But in general they are places where people go to do things for themselves (perhaps an escape from social contact) or with people they already know, rather than opening up a conversation with a stranger.

Unsurprisingly, now that society is increasingly culturally heterogeneous, there are many varying perceptions of what and who the park is for:

*Public spaces are not equally available at all times to all people. Certain groups may be effectively excluded or their access can be dependent upon time of day... young people's use of parks is often not recognized by park managers because their use is often evening use... the majority of daytime users thought it unlikely they would consider walking in the park in the evening or after dark... women hardly used parks early in the morning or last thing at night before closing, but were heavily represented during in the day. Dog-walkers are very fixed in their "first thing in the morning, last thing at night" routine... ethnic minority families would often come to the park only on Sunday afternoons, believing that numbers implied greater safety. The realization of an increasingly complex and heterogeneous mix of urban population implies an even greater need for well managed public space. (Comedia, 1995)<sup>21</sup>*



*Cities need neutral territories where the communities of a city can come together and share mutual respect. This is why parks and public open space are crucial as here in Bryant Park, New York.*



Figure 5; parks as public space

Ref: up: Wood, Phil; Landry, Charles. *The Intercultural City: Planning for Diversity Advantage*/ bottom: [www.irna.ir/](http://www.irna.ir/) Isfahan, Iran

## 1.4.3 Housing and Neighborhoods

"The proponents of community cohesion have argued that if people do not live in proximity they are unlikely to do other things together."<sup>22</sup> In a neighborhood, it is crucial to deal with the community and to make social bonds. Thus, a neighborhood can become an intercultural space if they provision some preconditions, such as providing diverse opportunities for participation and to have a sense of place and belonging for people in that community. The result is magnified when in a neighborhood there is diversity of people, so the process of exchanging is more dynamic. There is more probability of exchanging thoughts and cultures, and as a result, more social interaction.

### 1.4.4 Market Place and Neighborhood Stores

"The "corner shop" is a microcosm of interethnic relations, but the classic location of social and economic exchange is the urban market."<sup>23</sup> Market place is a public place where different people gather to buy or sell or even just to take a look. It can be a place of diversity and interculturalism as far as interactions occur in their background. However people might not sit together and talk about different issues such as their cultures, but the interaction begins with those very short conversation even between the seller and buyer about a product or so, as one trader is quoted in *Dines et al* (2006) as follows:

*"Next to the Bengalis selling biscuits is a Jewish guy selling curtains. They would never have met a Jewish bloke... It's most unlikely that they'd find themselves in a colleague situation where they can ask questions, they can joke with him... And he could ask them about their religion. I can't see another space where that could possibly happen. You could set up a society to bring Jews and Muslims together: he wouldn't turn up and they wouldn't turn up, because these sorts of outfits attract social people".<sup>24</sup>*

Neighborhood stores play an important role where affect people's perception of an area as a neighborhood.



Figure 6; neighborhood store, Jolfa, Isfahan

Ref: author

<sup>19</sup> See note 1

<sup>20</sup> See note 1

<sup>21</sup> See note 1

<sup>22</sup> See note 1

<sup>23</sup> See note 1

<sup>24</sup> See note 1



“The *third space*” concept, developed by *Ray Oldenburg* in his book *The Great Good Place* [1989] with the fundamental idea of *“a home away from home”*, argues that third spaces are anchors of community life, neither workplace nor home, but an informal gathering places that people intentionally seek out. Where local community gather to socialize and to talk about wide range of topics. Third spaces are, as *Bell Hooks* describes them, *“a place of enunciation, where new identities can be forged and marginalized voices can speak”* (Bell hooks (1990): *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*. Boston MA South End Press). The phrase *“third places”* derives from considering our homes to be the *“first”* places in our lives, and our work places the *“second.”*”<sup>25</sup>

“Typical of the mood were the books of *Ray Oldenburg* (1989) in which he extolled the virtues of the *“third places”* that lie between work and home, such as coffee shops, post offices, barber shops and bars. These places serve community best to the extent that they are inclusive and local:

*“The first and most important function of third places is that of uniting the neighborhood... A third place is a “mixer”... Assimilation is a function to which third places are well suited. They serve as “Ports of Entry” for visitors and as places where newcomers may be introduced to many of their predecessors... The neutral ground (space upon which one is not burdened by the role of host or guest) of third places offers the great ease of association so important to community life. People may come and go when they please and are beholden to no one. Eventually one meets or otherwise learns about everyone in the neighborhood. In this respect, third places also serve as “sorting areas”... that is, people find that they very much like certain people and dislike others. They find people with similar interests, and they find people whose interests aren’t similar but are interesting nonetheless”.* (Oldenburg, 1989)”<sup>26</sup>

“This theory helps us to understand and create an environment in the neighborhood in which all people are included and can equally participate, and that learning experiences need to be positive and meaningful. A third space, a neutral and welcoming space where people from all backgrounds and regardless of ability, can find conversation, support and the opportunity to engage in learning and interaction with other community members in a setting that is vibrant and creative.”<sup>27</sup>

“Third places work only when they are local; and they work best when within walking distance of the people they serve. On the table below there are some of the characteristics of third places discussed by Oldenburg:

Characteristics	Explanation
Neutral ground	Places have to provide neutral ground for people to socialize.
Leveler	Social distinctions are not important in third places.
Conversation	Conversation is the main activity.
Accessibility and accommodation	Places are easy to access, both geographically and socially.
Having regulars	Regulars shape the “tone” of a place.
Low profile	Third places have a moderate style where “pretentiousness” is avoided.
The mood is playful	The conversation in the third place is light.
A home away from home	Third places should provide an out-of-home environment with the same feeling as home.

Table 1- characteristics of third places  
 Ref: Oldenburg, Ray. Our Vanishing "Third Places". Planning Commissioners Journal. No. 25. Winter 1996- 97

Third places serve many functions, important both to individuals and to the communities they live in:

1. *Third places help unify neighborhoods.* Where third places are absent we find that people often live in the same vicinity for years without ever getting to know one another. Indeed, the subdivision resident who knows three other families is something of a social gadabout.
2. *Third places also serve as “ports of entry” for visitors and newcomers to the neighborhood where directions and other information can easily be obtained.* For new residents, they provide a means of getting acquainted quickly and learning where things are and how the neighborhood works.
3. *Third places are “sorting” areas.* While third places serve to promote the habit of association generally, they are also the places in which those with special interests find one another. In third places, amateur musicians, shooting enthusiasts, poetry lovers, fishermen, scuba divers, etc., get introduced and find local outlets for their interests. Here is provided the basis of whatever kind and degree of local culture will emerge.
4. *Third places help care for the neighborhood.* The people who operate third places are often the kind of people noted social observer Jane Jacobs described as *“public characters”*. They seem to know everybody in the neighborhood; they keep an eye on the local kids and what they’re up to; they do favors for local customers; and they keep regulars up to- date on all variety of local matters. Third places also serve as gathering spots when emergencies or disasters occur. People want, and need, to be with other people in these situations — to help and support each other, and to decide on courses of action.
5. *Third places help reduce the cost of living.* Where people meet regularly to relax and enjoy one another’s company, natural support groups or *“mutual aid”* societies tend to form. As we take our relaxation with people, we grow to like them and, as we come to like them, we are inclined to *“do for them.”* Third places are also easy places to collect time-saving, labor-saving, and moneysaving advice — sometimes without even asking.
6. *Third places are entertaining.* And the entertainment is provided by the people themselves. The sustaining activity is conversation which is variously passionate and light-hearted, serious and witty, informative and silly. In the course of it, people become very near and dear to one another such that continuity is assured.
7. *Third places are important for retired people.* They provide the means for keeping in touch with others and continuing to enjoy the life of the community. The young and the active need the elderly and the contributions they have always made to community. But the elderly also need community, and need it more acutely.”<sup>28</sup>

“Coffeehouses are the typical third places, as their openness, low key features and architectural qualities allow for lingering and conversation and provide regulars of all ages with a home away from home and a neutral ground where to work, rest, and converse with friends and strangers. Third places are essential to the shaping of local communities and key to the well-being of city life. *Oldenburg* posits that it is in third places that *“the human being is a person... he or she is an individual, unique and possessing a character.”* Third places play an important role in society as they provide a catalyst space between the privacy of home and the sterility of work, allowing one to engage with *“familiar strangers”* (Milgram 1977), and allowing for the creation of social bridges that shape a community’s social capital.”<sup>29</sup>



### Social Sustainability

“The World Commission on Culture and Development defined culture as *“ways of living together”* and argued that this made culture a core element of sustainable development.”<sup>30</sup> “One of the important aspects of sustainable development is social sustainability that is defined as healthy life and in harmony in nature. In this definition, survival of a community, along with preservation of environmental quality and relative to economic systems, is towards reaching the peak point of life satisfaction level.”<sup>31</sup> Sustainability also includes preserving and supporting a diversity of cultural histories and characters, and the provision of community services.

“Developing cultural values that support these people-to-people and people-to-nature values has traditionally been the role of religion in most societies.

On the other hand fulfilling today’s human needs while preserving and protecting the natural environment for future generations requires equitable and harmonious interactions between individuals and communities.”<sup>32</sup>

Thus, it can be said that interaction between diversities in a community, especially in terms of religion and culture, empowers that community and makes it healthy and socially sustainable, as it is declared that “according to medical findings, social interactions have positive bearings on the individual health. However, unfortunately nowadays, excessive devastation and construction on the pretext of resurrection following a quantitative approach has led to bodily disintegration and consequently, sense of alienation of the people towards each other.”<sup>33</sup>

#### 1.5.1 Social Mixing and the Theory of “Creative City”

“Social mixing is good for us: cultural advances can result from cross-fertilization between groups and a certain amount of social disharmony can mature societies.

Having looked at some of the theory behind social mixing and contact between groups, we took in turn different arenas where they might take place: housing, education, the workplace, markets and shopping, friendship, partnership and marriage, public spaces (such as parks, libraries, sport) and cyberspace. We concluded that most people do not go out of their way to seek out people and experiences that are different, and that there are environments and social models that encourage and exacerbate the tendency to aversion.”<sup>34</sup> Therefore providing such spaces where motivate people to come and interact with each other is the key for social mixing.

The Theory of “Creative City” is developed by the urbanist *Charles Landry*. It states that in a place always lie more potentials which can be flourished if conditions embed in the place. Conditions which should be created for people to think and act, and to use their imagination and creativity- since every single person has a specific potentials- in order to upraise opportunities. In this state, not only designers but also ordinary people are involved.

As Landry States, creativity is the method of exploiting cultural resources, including activities, local crafts, local traditions of public life, rituals, etc., that can result in community development and therefore social sustainability.

“Districts are the medium to large sections of the city, conceived of as having two-dimensional extent, which the observer mentally enters *“inside of”*, and which are recognizable as having some common, identifying character. Always identifiable from the inside, they are also used for exterior reference if visible from the outside.”<sup>35</sup>

“A neighborhood can be defined as a place for gathering groups of people in a space with a physical and social territory, that, this gathering gives each family and guild group the possibility of meeting their public needs in that neighborhood (Soltan Zade, Introduction to the history of the city and urbanization in Iran, 1988:236).”<sup>36</sup>

For a district to be such a place for gathering people and to be socially sustainable there are some factors involved. As examples, the neighborhood should have a good quality, should preserve its identity, should be legible, and should be intercultural- the features are explained below.

As *William H. Whyte* expresses: *“what attracts people most it would appear, is other people”*, the dense area will get denser by the essence of people in the space.<sup>37</sup> The most used plazas tend to have higher proportion of people in two or three and the sociable plazas tend to have great numbers of individuals, pointing out even if you want to be alone, you prefer to be in a crowd.<sup>38</sup>

One of the frequent activities is people looking at each other and the other one is people just standing there.

Corners are good places to talk. When people start to talk, they do not move to one side, they move to the middle of a traffic stream, however, they prefer steps, edges, and plateaus.

<sup>30</sup> See note 3

<sup>31</sup> Torki, Samira. Thesis: Urban Design with a Social Sustainability Approach in Neighborhoods Adjacent to Fast-bus Route (Case Study: Denart District in Isfahan). Master of Urban Design. Art University of Isfahan. 2013

<sup>32</sup> See note 3

<sup>33</sup> Rezaporian, Parnia; Aabaszadegan, Mostafa; Modiri, Atosa. Enhancing the Quality of Urban Space by Pedestrian Grid Design Using Space Syntax Technique: A Case Study of the Historical Neighborhood of Jolfa in the City of Esfahan (Iran). International Journal of Innovation and Applied Studies. Vol.4, No.1, September 2013, pp. 141-154

<sup>34</sup> See note 1

<sup>35</sup> Lynch, Kevin. The Image of the City. The MIT Press. 1960

<sup>36</sup> See note 7

<sup>37</sup> See note 17

<sup>38</sup> Whyte, William. H. The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces Movie. The Municipal Life Society of New York. 1979



## 1.6.1 Enhancing the Quality of Urban Environment

“Urban environment quality as a *“phenomenon”* or *“event”* formulated in the course of interaction between bodily and tangible characteristics and observer’s cultural patterns and codes and mental capabilities. Kevin Lynch has emphasized on the existence of a mutual association exploring the effect of urban environment quality on the life quality of the city inhabitants. He has proposed a model including 5 functional aspects which in his opinion covers all the main axes of the quality of a city. These aspects are as follows:

1-*Vitality*: Provision of the possibility of human’s biological and sociological survival in the urban environment;

2- *Sense* (meaning): Abstract functioning and meaningfulness of urban places;

3-*Adaptability*: Conformity of the urban form with various activities and behavior patterns;

4-*Accessibility*: Provision of ease of “physical penetration” into different sections of the urban fabric;

5- *Control and monitoring*: Provision of the possibility of selection and intervention made by citizens in issues related to the management and usage of public area of the city.”<sup>39</sup>

“Many kinds of cues are used to structure and identify the environment: the visual sensation of color, shape, motion, or polarization of light, as well as other senses such as smell, sound, touch, kinesthesia and etc.”<sup>40</sup>

Key attributes that make a place a good one are comfort and image, uses and activities, sociability, and access and linkage. Place-making provides the link between urban excellence, economic development, sustainability, and public health (physical, psychological, and social).<sup>41</sup>

“Parr (1963) suggested that different age groups may have different environmental needs, since he believes that there are five stages of urbanity (city living): childhood, adolescence, adult domesticity, adult emancipation, and old age.

An additional explanation might be advanced in accordance with Parr's (1963) five stages of urbanity. A youth, presumably in the period of learning the city, will be concerned with learning to navigate in the city and therefore will give more importance to the main navigation aids: the streets and street patterns. It may also be that parks, gardens, and other landmarks become more important as one grows older.”<sup>42</sup>

## 1.6.2 Keeping the Identity in Urban Fabric

*“Identity”* in urban design and architecture refers to persistent of buildings and spaces which are remained from the past, in a way that they are affected by the time while keeping theirs. A city is a physical-cultural complex and is formed by citizens' needs, activities, and behaviors. People do their activities based on their needs and release their specific behavior patterns. A city space on one hand is the reflector of these activities and behavior patterns of its society and on the other hand affects them. In other words it can be said that the city identity is formed by the citizens' cultures.

Today, standardization in designing spaces, technology, materials, and therefore overly likeness of city spaces has led to loss of city identity. As a result of these unidentified spaces, people feels unfamiliar with their surrounding in their everyday life and have less sense of belonging to their homes and so, they become more willing to move out of their places. By the people moving out their places, the identity of that place is changed and might be destructed as it is stated before the identity of a places originates from its society's culture.

There are some factors which enhances the sense of belonging to a place among which can be named physical structure, social situation, activities, and collective memories.

Moreover, “each neighborhood is itself a small town where can have its own elements, as Kevin Lynch categorizes them into paths, nodes, edges, and landmarks. Differentiation of neighborhoods- as parts of a city that are connected while different- affects both the city readability and sense of belonging.”<sup>43</sup>

## 1.6.3 Public Image and Legibility

“Behavioral and social scientists have been exploring human perception of the *“environment”*, encompassing both the physical environment and what Kates (1970, p. 648) has called the *“environment in the minds of men”*: what people think, feel, and perceive about their environment.”<sup>44</sup>

“The creation of the environmental image is a two-way process between observers and observed. What he sees is based on exterior form, but how he interprets and organizes this, and how he directs his attention, in its turn affects what he sees. The human organism is highly adaptable and flexible, and different groups may have widely different images of the same outer reality. Different observers will all find perceptual material which is congenial to their own particular way of looking at the world. While one man may recognize a street by its brick pavement, another will remember its sweeping curve, and a third will have located the minor landmarks along its length.

Almost always, a potentially powerful image is hidden in the situation itself. A frequent problem is the sensitive reshaping of an already existing environment: discovering and preserving its strong images, solving its perceptual difficulties, and, above all, drawing out the structure and identity latent in the confusion.

True enough, we need an environment which is not simply well organized, but poetic and symbolic as well. It should speak of the individuals and their complex society, of their aspirations and their historical tradition, of the natural setting, and of the complicated functions and movements of the city world.

A good environmental image gives its possessor an important sense of emotional security. He can establish a harmonious relationship between himself and the outside world. This is the obverse of the fear that come with disorientation. Let the mishap of disorientation once occur, and the sense of anxiety and even terror that accompanies it reveals to us how closely it is linked to our sense of balance and well-being. It must be granted that there is some value in mystification or surprise in the environment.”<sup>45</sup>

Not only physical cues structure the mental image of a city in an observer's mind, but also some sensual cues such as sound, smell, and social behavior should be marked.



““Legibility” or the apparent clarity of the cityscape means the ease with which its parts can be recognized and can be organized into a coherent pattern. The city legibility plays an important role in shaping environmental image. In the process of way-finding, the strategic link is the environmental image, the generalized mental picture of the exterior physical world that is held by an individual. This image is the product both of immediate sensation and of the memory of past experience, and it is used to interpret information and to guide action.”<sup>46</sup>

“The city unreadability, unidentified, and unfamiliarity create unacquainted environments where do not stimulate citizens' sense of belonging, that little by little leads to catastrophic sociological-psychological results. City unreadability makes the citizens not having the image of the city- which Kevin Lynch mentions it as “Public Image”. Not having this public image for the citizens leads to unacquaintance with the environment that causes fear, insecurity and anxiety.”<sup>47</sup>

“There are other influences on legibility, such as the social meaning of an area, its function, its history, or even its name. A vivid and integrated physical setting, capable of producing a sharp image, plays a social role as well. The named environment, familiar to all, furnishes material for common memories and symbols which bind the group together and allow them to communicate with one another. The landscape serves as a vast mnemonic system for the retention of group history and ideals.

Images may differ not only by the scale of area involved, but by viewpoint, time of day, or season. The city form must be somewhat noncommittal, plastic to the purposes and perceptions of its citizens. Yet there are fundamental functions at which the city forms may be expressive: circulation, major land-uses, and key focal points. The common hopes and pleasures, the sense of community may be made flesh.”<sup>48</sup>

### 1.6.4 Social Diversity and Social Mixing in Urban Fabric

As explained above, social diversity and social mixing are the keys to make a place interactive and sustainable, especially socially sustainable.

“In Canada, social diversity has been seen as a guarantor of neighborhood vitality. In the UK the government believes that it is important to create mixed and inclusive communities. Local planning authorities should encourage the development of mixed and balanced communities. Strong in the minds of Victorian society was a belief that if the lower orders were exposed to their class superiors, they would be motivated to aspire to be more like them, and thus social mixing would raise standards by *nurturing a spirit of emulation*. Related to this was a concern that, if there were diversity of buildings in residential areas occupied by different social classes, it would stimulate inhabitants to keep their housing up to an *aesthetic standard* worthy of the whole. More in tune with current thinking has been the belief that socially mixed residential areas could promote intellectual and cultural advances through *cultural cross-fertilization* among social groups.

Because a high degree of residential mobility might undermine social and kinship networks, a mix of housing types, sizes, costs and tenures, appealing varying age groups, ethnicities and family sizes, permits existing residents the choice of staying within their own area as their housing requirements change, thus maintaining *social stability*.

As an example, in UK local planning authorities should insure that new housing developments help to secure a better social mix by avoiding creation of large areas of housing of similar characteristics.”<sup>49</sup>

“Art and culture are also features that are advantageous for a society. *Gifts of the Muse (Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate about the Benefits of the Arts, RAND Corporation 2005)* presents a framework for understanding how arts and cultural experiences enrich not only individuals through their intrinsic benefits (e.g. enhanced empathy for other people and cultures and a greater understanding of the world) but how these benefits spillover into the public realm, building social as well as cultural capital in communities. These benefits include the creation of social bonds that occur through participation in arts activities, but experiencing the arts also encourages reflection, discourse and the expression of values and community identity.”<sup>50</sup>



Photo credit: Phil Wood

Festivals bring people together. Charles on the left at Womad and Phil at Preston Carnival.



Figure 7; festivals and their role of social mixer

Ref: up: Wood, Phil; Landry, Charles. The Intercultural City: Planning for Diversity Advantage/ bottom: author

<sup>46</sup> See note 35

<sup>48</sup> See note 35

<sup>47</sup> See note 43

<sup>49</sup> See note 1

<sup>50</sup> See note 25



“One of the common problems of the contemporary urbanization worldwide has its origins in its excessive loyalty to the vehicular movement overlooking the maintenance and organization of walkways spaces and pedestrian movement.

This has led to the collapse of valuable urban fabrics such as historical places and buildings and has been accompanied by the displacement of the values in the urban space i.e. moving and mobility instead of stop and immobility in such a way that it has led to the decline of quality elements of the urban space including collectivity, co-presence, vitality, safety, etc., and the disintegration of the social and cultural and visual values in the urban spaces and the decrease of its performance and efficiency.”<sup>51</sup>

Streets are the fundamental public space in every city, the lifeblood of social and economic exchange. *Fred Kent* in the *Place Making Conference* states: “if you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places”. Neighborhood streets can be places where parents feel safe letting their children play, and commercial strips can be designed as grand boulevards, safe for walking and cycling and allowing for both through and local traffic. Streets that are planned for people, meaning they are not completely auto-centric, add to the social cohesion of communities by ensuring human interaction, and providing safe public spaces that promote cultural expression.<sup>52</sup>

“*Brown* points out that when we presume connectivity by car, we exile anyone without the ability to drive. Walkable places allow seniors greater flexibility and independence; when an elderly person is no longer comfortable driving, she can easily walk to get groceries or hop the bus to visit her doctor.”<sup>53</sup>

“It is noteworthy that the presence of pedestrians in the cities is advantageous to enhance the social interactions of the citizens. To design paths conforming to the pedestrian movement in the urban fabric, due to their public use, requires flexibility, variation in the activities and spaces, the provision of urban safety and sense of belonging to the space, the same factors which will consequently result in the promotion of the quality of the routes, the enhancement of social relations and interactions and the flourishing of the urban life.”<sup>54</sup>

“The city is by no means perfect. But there seems to be a simple and automatic pleasure, a feeling of satisfaction, presence, and rightness, which arises from the mere sight of the city, or the chance to walk through its streets.”<sup>55</sup>

“Urban pedestrian ways as one of the indicators of the urban space are designed in such a way that be located in the everyday pass ways of the people without requiring going a long distance for using them locally. Due to their potentiality for creation of urban and collective spaces along their length and at certain intervals as joints, pedestrian axes may be helpful for removing the existing vacuums in the urban life and the resolving the lack of interactive space.”<sup>56</sup>

Walkable communities are affordable communities and often promote local businesses and services.

““*Lowly, unpurposeful and random, as they may appear, sidewalk contacts are the small change from which a city's wealth of public life may grow*”. (*Jane Jacobs*)”<sup>57</sup>

<sup>51</sup> See note 33

<sup>52</sup> See note 17

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.metroplanning.org/news/blog-post/6616>

<sup>54</sup> See note 33

<sup>55</sup> See note 35

<sup>56</sup> See note 33

<sup>57</sup> See note 17

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY





This research is based on observation and library study as well as field study and analytic-descriptive method, assuming that the presence of people and of course Armenians in Jolfa District in Isfahan is the key to keep this neighborhood alive and preserve its identity as an Armenian district. Since social dimensions and the effect of presence of the Armenians need to be evaluated and public images in this research play an important role, analytic-descriptive method has been used through some questionnaires. For gathering information for theoretical part of this project library study has been used. Moreover, observation, field study, and the results of questionnaires have been used for the design part of the project. Analysis of the results of questionnaires tries to show the overall perception and public image of different people about the neighborhood, their preferences and expectations, and to reach the psychological and social aspects lying in its background, whether in the existing situation or the ideal one.

## 2.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaires are designed in multiple-choice questions and well as descriptive questions. Choices in multiple-choice questions are picked base on observations. The questionnaires are distributed into 40 people in diversity in the neighborhood including 21 Muslims and 19 Christians among whom are 21 male and 19 female, 25 single and 15 married, with different age groups ranging from 18 to more than 60 years old (12 person ages between 18 to 25, 16 person between 25 to 40, 7 person between 40 to 60, and 5 person more than 60), and different professions including self-employed (8 people), Housewife (4 people), café and shopkeeper (4 people), student (11 people), doctor (3 people), and other professions such as manager and so on (10 people).

### Study about social interaction, integration, and social sustainability

This questionnaire is prepared in order to know about your opinion to study the relation between the juxtaposition of different religions and cultures and social interaction, integration, and social sustainability, with the focus on Jolfa district in Esfahan, Iran. Your participation is voluntary and your data are anonymous and confidential. I am Tannaz Sattar, the student of the major architecture and preservation.

Thank you for your cooperation.

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sex \_\_\_\_\_
3. Marital status \_\_\_\_\_
4. Religion \_\_\_\_\_
5. Job \_\_\_\_\_

- A. First field of study; juxtaposition of different religions and cultures, and social interaction in a neighborhood are related.
- B. Second field of study; essence of social interaction in a neighborhood improve the community well-being (E.g. comfort, safety, etc.)
- C. Third field of study; a feeling of comfort and safety, and a sense of belonging to a place, affect social sustainability.
- D. Forth hypothesis; Jolfa district is one of the most interacted, integrated, and sustainable districts in Esfahan.

#### **D. Forth hypothesis**

1. *In your opinion what differentiates Jolfa from other districts in Esfahan?*
  - a. Urban fabric
  - b. Different language
  - c. Different religion and culture
  - d. Shops and urban facilities
2. *In your opinion how much the essence of religion minority and the culture-difference of Armenians in Jolfa are perceived?*
  - a. Very much
  - b. Much
  - c. A little
  - d. Very little
3. *In your opinion are Armenians socially and economically equal to the other societies in Esfahan?*
  - a. Yes; both socially and economically
  - b. Only socially
  - c. Only economically
  - d. They are not equal
4. *In your opinion are Armenians cooperated and integrated among each other and with not-Armenians?*
  - a. Only among each other
  - b. Both among each other and with not-Armenians
  - c. They are more individual
5. *Which societies do mostly exist in Jolfa?*
  - a. Students
  - b. Workers
  - c. Unemployed
  - d. Retired
  - e. All

6. How much different societies integrate in Jolfa?

- a. Very much
- b. Much
- c. A little
- d. Very little

7. What is the first and dominant impression on you from Jolfa?

- a. Happiness
- b. safe
- c. stress
- d. Fear

8. In your opinion how is the quality of life in Jolfa?

- a. Perfect
- b. Good
- c. Normal
- d. Bad

9. In your opinion are the feelings of comfort and safety perceived in Jolfa?

- a. Yes; everywhere
- b. Yes; in some parts
- c. No

10. In your opinion is the sense of belonging to a place perceived in Jolfa?

- a. Yes
- b. No

11. What attracts you to Jolfa?

- a. Café and restaurants
- b. Shops
- c. Urban atmosphere (E.g. priority of pedestrian, open spaces, etc.)
- d. Different language and culture

12. What kind of transportation you would like to use in Jolfa? (When you are not in rush)

- a. On foot
- b. Car
- c. Bicycle
- d. None of them. I prefer not to go there

13. In your opinion does Jolfa have a good internal (in the neighborhood) and external (to the other part of the city) accessibility? (More than one option can be chosen)

- a. Good internal accessibility
- b. Bad internal accessibility
- c. Good external accessibility
- d. Bad external accessibility

14. In your opinion what kind of services Jolfa has adequately? (More than one option can be chosen)

- a. Health
- b. Sport
- c. Educational
- d. Social (E.g. meeting places)
- e. Culture-recreational
- f. Commercial
- g. Green areas

15. What are the activities that you prefer to do in Jolfa in your spare times?

- a. Going to a café
- b. Walking

- c. Shopping
- d. Gathering and talking
- e. Driving

16. In your opinion what are the main problems of Jolfa?

- a. Traffic
- b. Parking spaces
- c. Not enough urban facilities
- d. Visual disorientation

17. What changes you would like to see in Jolfa?

- a. Visual changes (E.g. pavement, street width, green areas, etc.)
- b. Functional changes (E.g. more entertainment and cultural facilities)

18. How do you feel about buildings aesthetic in Jolfa?

- a. Buildings are beautiful
- b. Buildings are unpleasant
- c. Buildings are well-detached
- d. Buildings are too close together

19. If you are an inhabitant of Jolfa would you like to live in the same place or would you like to change your place?

- a. I would like to change my place
- b. I prefer to stay here

16. Which part of Jolfa you like more?why?

- a. Khaghani
- b. Jolfa square
- c. Sangtarashha
- d. Chaharsough
- e. Explain why: \_\_\_\_\_

20. What are the changes you have observed in Jolfa during recent years? \_\_\_\_\_

21. In your opinion what are the main characteristics of public and open spaces in Jolfa? \_\_\_\_\_

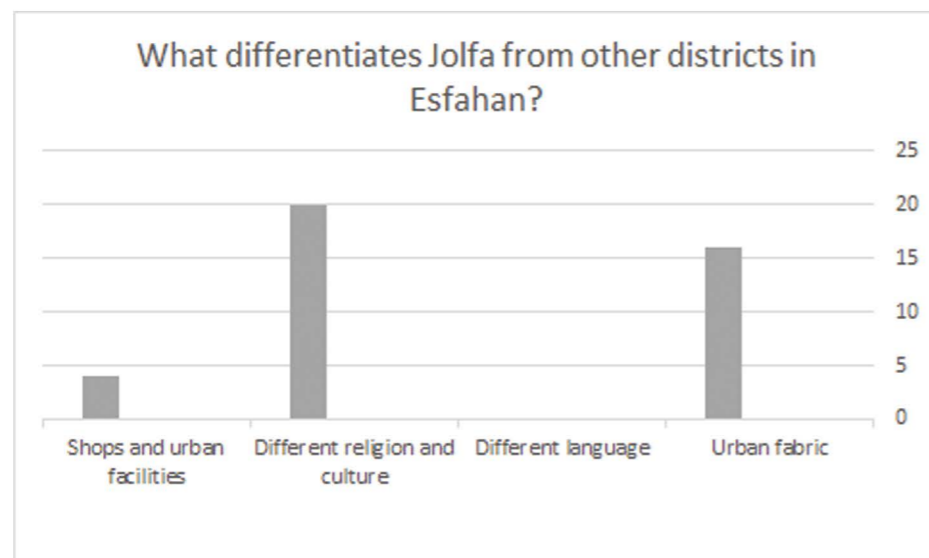
22. In your opinion what are the potentials of Jolfa? \_\_\_\_\_

23. What is your general opinion about Jolfa? \_\_\_\_\_

24. How do you see jolfa in 10 years? \_\_\_\_\_



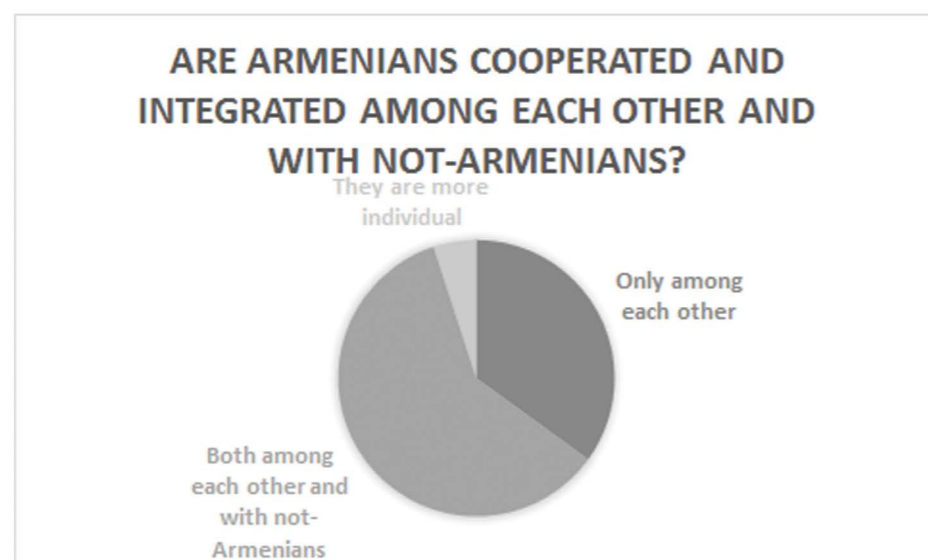
Jolfa District is known as Armenian District in Isfahan. As it has been concluded from the questionnaires, what differentiates Jolfa from other districts in Isfahan is its different religion and culture, and relatively after, its urban fabric (for instance its different pavement and so on based on observations). Thus the effectiveness of different religion and culture in people's perception of a neighborhood is clearly seen.



Graph 1; differentiation of Jolfa from other districts

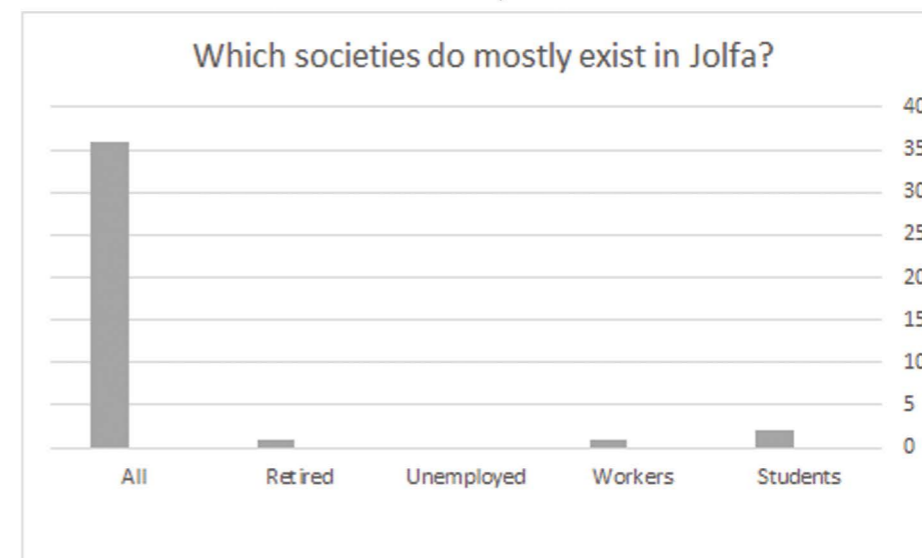
Despite the fact that Armenians are religious minorities in Isfahan, Iran, and besides the fact that according to minority features they are supposed to be discriminated, they have a privileged situation in society and therefore a successful performance in social life, not only today but also from their very first settlement in Isfahan in Safavid Dynasty.

Rather than being individual they participate in social life and in community, and they are cooperated and integrated with not-Armenians as well as among each other.



Graph 2; Armenians' integration

Jolfa is a neighborhood consisting diversity and mix of people (students, workers, unemployed, retired, etc.) regardless of their occupation, age, religion, culture, and social class. So it is obvious that there is potential in its background to form social interaction and social mixing, as it has been said before there is the dynamic of interaction where there is diversity.

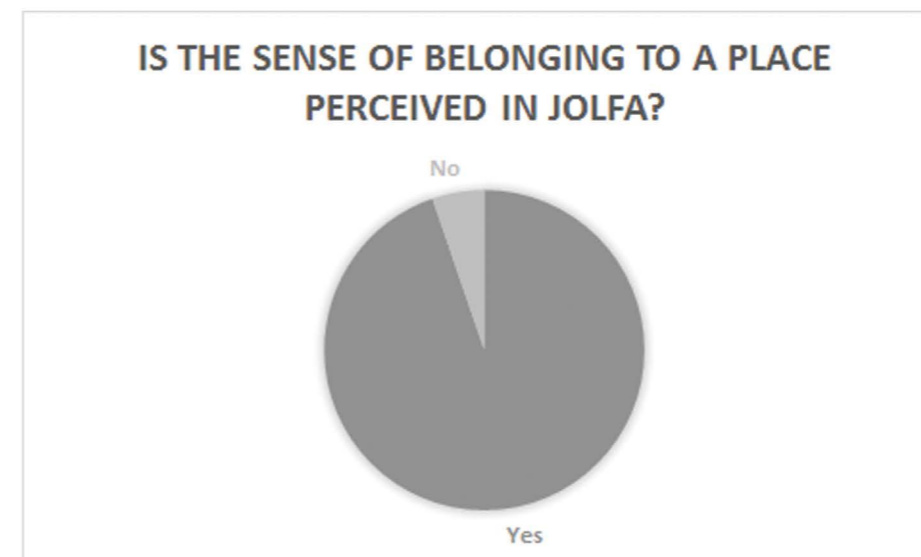


Graph 3; different societies in Jolfa

People being asked about their first and dominant impression from Jolfa mostly responded the feeling of safety and relatively after the feeling of happiness. There were no answers of the two negative feelings stress and fear. It was also answered that these feelings are perceived in almost every part of the neighborhood, yet there are some parts where need to be more secured (it is because of some factors such as less population, darkness, lack of continuity of pedestrian pathways, etc. based on the observations). The feeling of safety is one of the important and fundamental factors for a neighborhood to be sustainable and to attract more and more people.

As it has been declared in the third field of study in the questionnaire and as it has been concluded from the library studies, the feeling of comfort and safety, and the feeling of sense of belonging to a place affect the social sustainability of that place. The results indicate that these feeling are perceived by the people in Jolfa.

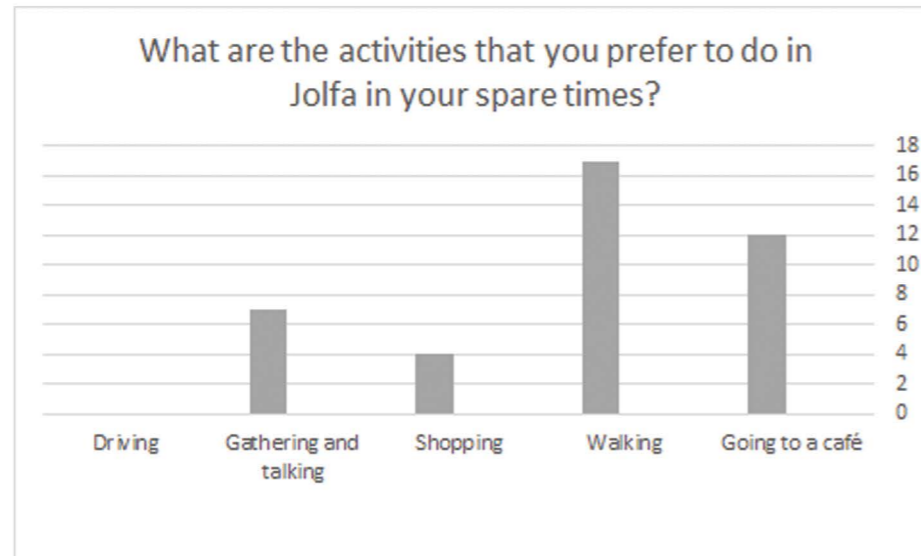
Yet, it is seen (according to interviews) that many inhabitants of Jolfa are moving out and changing their homes today because of some conditions which are explained in the next chapters (chapter 4). Therefore, they are some strong conditions which can make people move out while they have their sense of belonging to their environment.



Graph 4; sense of belonging in Jolfa

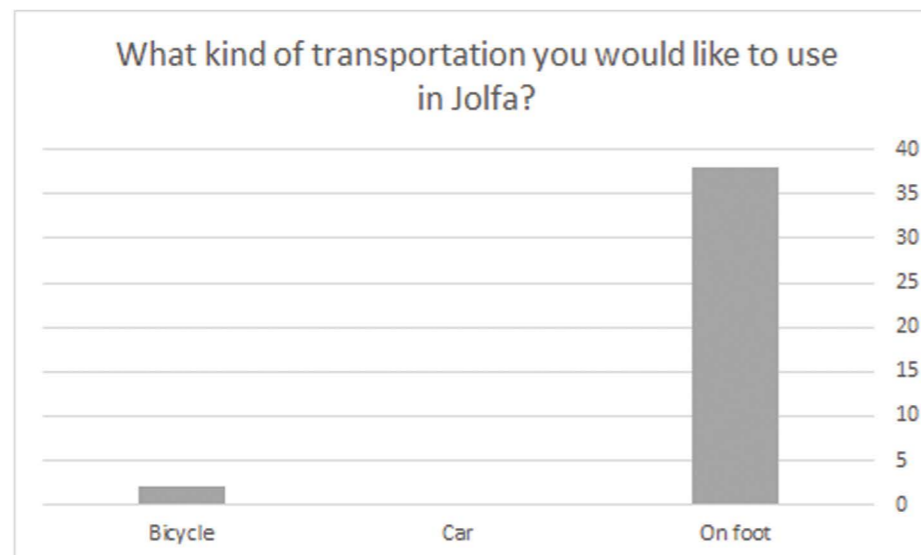
## 2.3 Conclusion

Café and restaurants are considered as interactive public spaces and as discussed in the first chapter, as third places. Hence, they play an important role to enhance the quality and vitality of a neighborhood and its social sustainability. It is visibly seen in Jolfa how the existence of many café and restaurants has made this neighborhood alive and how they attract different types of people. The urban atmosphere such as pedestrian pathways and shops can be named relatively as effective factors for attracting people to this district, since due to people's responses, walking, going to café and restaurants, gathering and talking, and shopping are the activities people prefer to do in Jolfa in their spare time.



Graph 5; activities in Jolfa

In case of transportation, almost all the people involving with the questionnaire responded that they would prefer to commute on foot. It confirms that walkable communities are sustainable communities as far as it works for the people and what they prefer. Besides, of course, it has its advantages such as reduction of air and sound pollution that is a very important issue on big cities such as Isfahan with the number of cars increasing day by day. Some people responding the questionnaires have mentioned bicycle as their preference mode of transportation, however in Isfahan, and in general in Iran, it is not so common to use bicycle in every part of a city (the reason might be the absence of bicycle path in urban fabric).



Graph 6; transportation in Jolfa

As conclusion, in recent years there were some changes in Jolfa's urban fabric which are mentioned by people. Some of them have worked well while others have failed. Such as opening new modern shops, constructing new buildings, and new pavement. These changes can be named as proper changes, while they are not. Because of such changes, some disadvantages occurred like high traffic in the neighborhood that has led to uncomforted accessibility into and within the neighborhood for people commuting there and especially for inhabitants. Its historical and original urban fabric has been ruined because of new constructions with materials in contrast, different types, as well as constructing high risers as residential houses, besides the fact that due to the regulation for new construction it is not allowed to construct high risers (in the past the buildings in Jolfa were in one or two stories). In addition it was mentioned by some that the social fabric has been destructed as well since the Armenian's population is decreasing and Muslim's population is increasing in this neighborhood.

In general, as people declares, they would see Jolfa in 10 years as a not well-functioning neighborhood (just in the contrary to what it was in the past) if the process of changing continues like this, nevertheless in has the potentiality to become an ideal neighborhood.

According to responses, observations, and field studies, Jolfa district has the potential to enhance its quality as an urban fabric, to attract more and more people with different backgrounds, to improve its social life, and to become a socially sustainable district. It is considered as a multi-use district since it has diverse backgrounds such as religious, cultural, historical, and social, and diverse functions.



### 3. CASE STUDY- JOLFA DISTRICT IN ISFAHAN





### 3.1 History and Historical development in Isfahan

In general, Iran has hot and dry climate and Isfahan, as central city in Iran has the same climate too. Based on the historical records from 1999 to 2012, Isfahan with the altitude of 1578m, has the average temperature of 15°C and average rainfall of 125mm in a year.<sup>58</sup> Nowadays it is facing the threat of water shortage and draught.

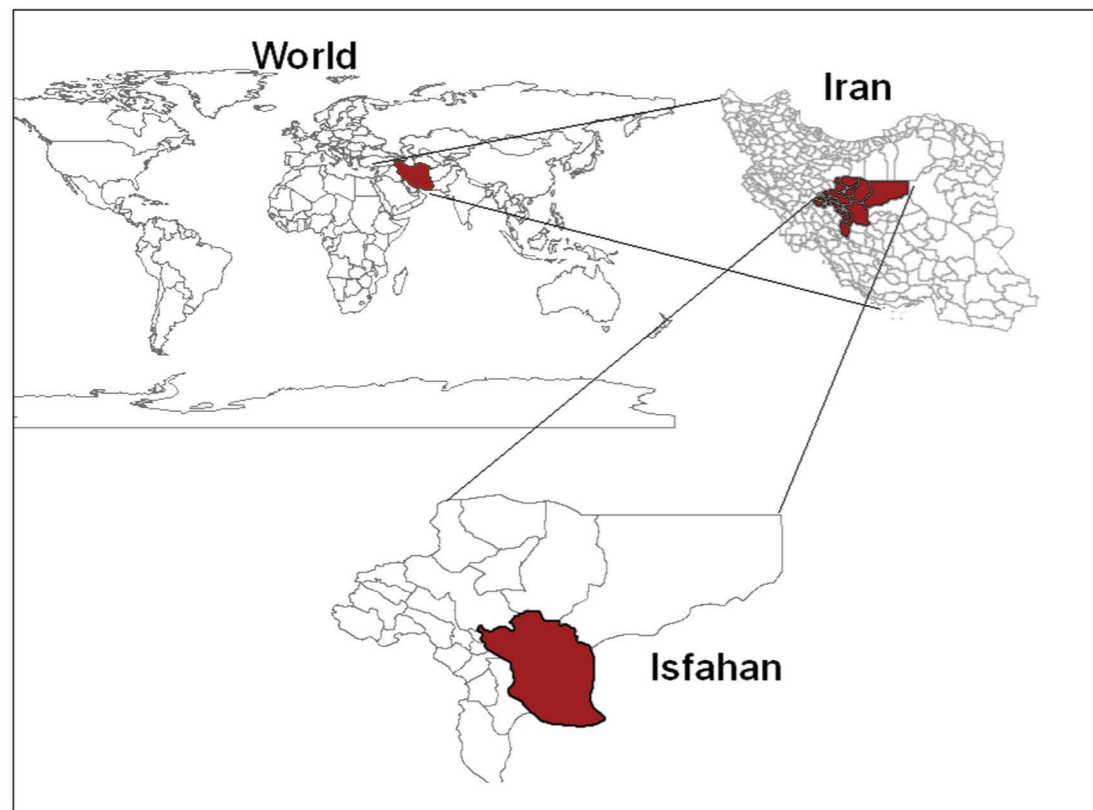


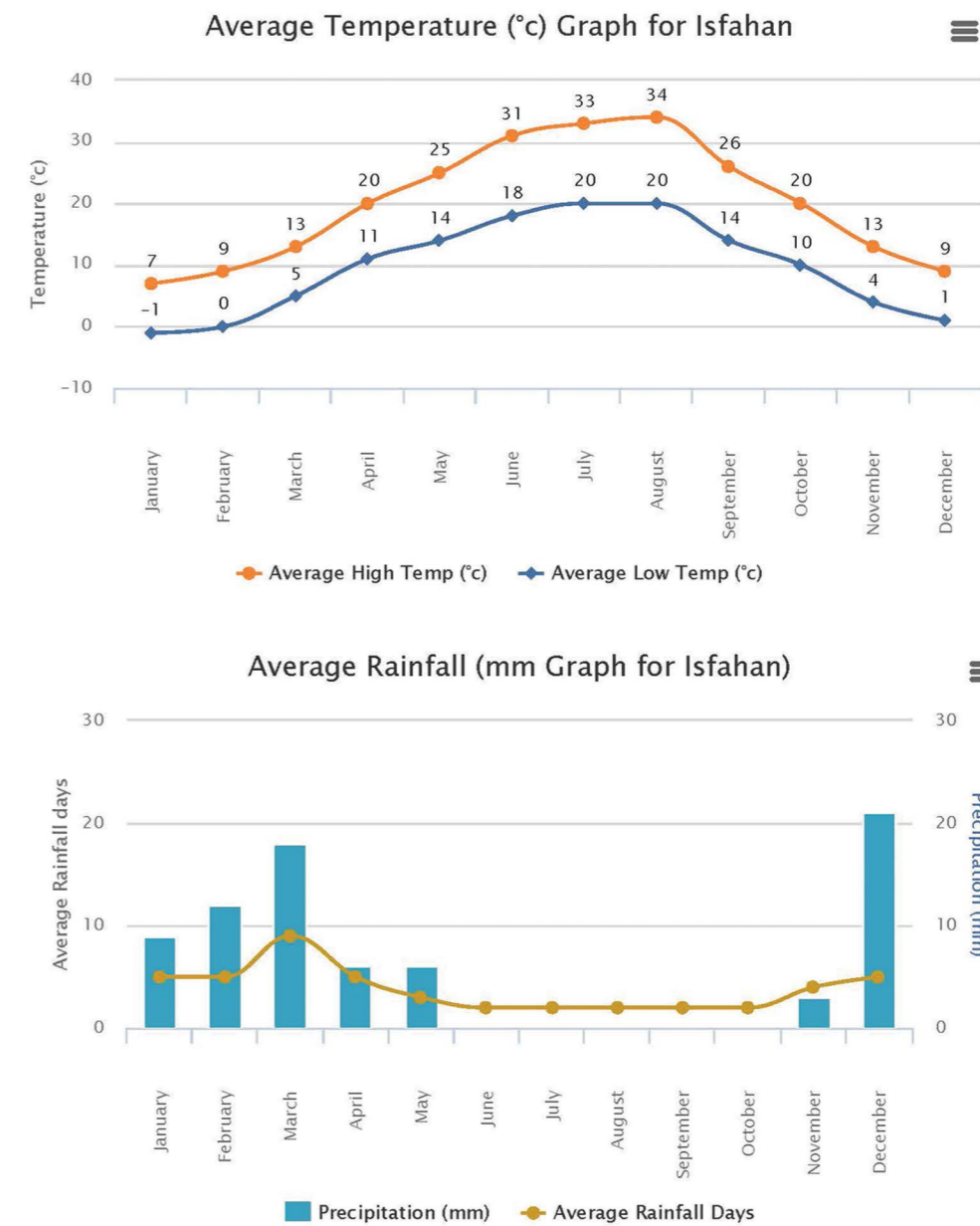
Figure 8; geographical situation of Isfahan in the world

Ref: Rashidi, Masoume; Rameshat, Mohammad Hossein; Gharib, Hadi. Air Pollution- A Comprehensive Perspective.



Figure 9; Iran climate

Ref: Google earth



Graph 7; Isfahan climate  
Ref: <http://www.worldweatheronline.com/>

However, due to the geographical situation of this city, favorable climate, fertile soil, and also relatively abundant water resources (in compare to other central cities), it is suspected that the habitation precedent in Isfahan is as old as the country.<sup>59</sup> The city emerged gradually between 2700-1600 BCE.<sup>60</sup>

The province of Isfahan, with an area of about 107,018 km<sup>2</sup>, equivalent to 6.6% of the total area of Iran, is Iran's third largest and most populous metropolitan area with 4,879,312 inhabitants in 2011- out of 75,149,669 that is equivalent to 6.5% of the total population of Iran in this year, while the city of Isfahan is an area of about 493.82 km<sup>2</sup> with the population of 1,755,382.<sup>61</sup> It became the capital of Persia (Iran) in the 16th century under the Safavid dynasty (that is often considered the beginning of modern Persian history).<sup>62</sup>

Among cities in Iran, Esfahan is famous its being multi-religious as it hosts different religions in different neighborhoods- such as Christians in *Jolfa* (south-west), Zoroastrians in *Sichan* (south-west), Jews in *Joubare* (north), and Muslims in other parts- an issue that is not typical in other cities of Iran.

<sup>58</sup> <http://en.climate-data.org/>

<sup>59</sup> Aatek Consulting Engineer. *Overview of the Master Plan of Isfahan, Region 5 and 6*. 2007

<sup>60</sup> Isfahan Metropolis News Agency/ [www.imna.ir](http://www.imna.ir)

<sup>61</sup> Statistic Center of Iran/ [www.amar.org.ir](http://www.amar.org.ir)

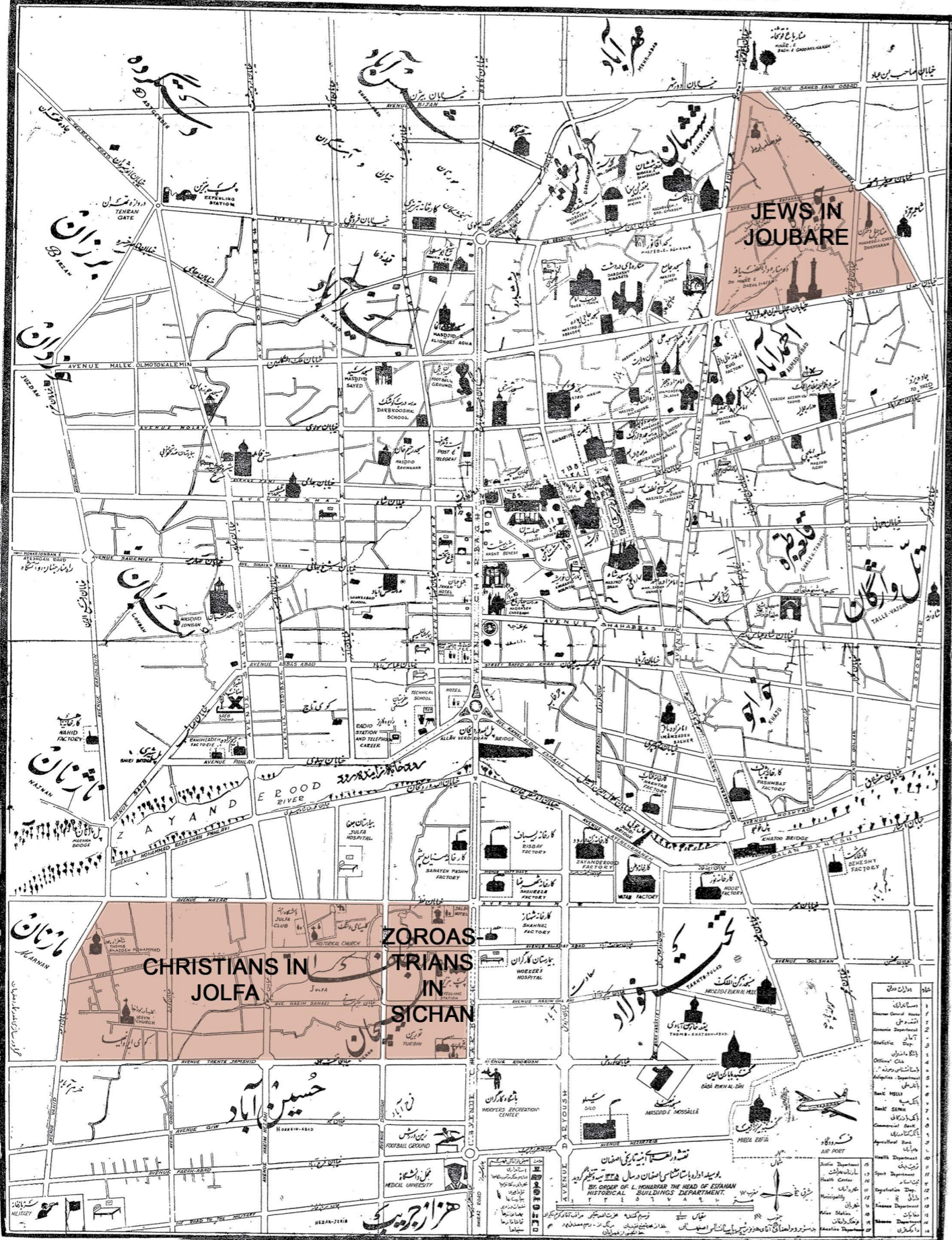
<sup>62</sup> See note 60



نقشه شهر تاریخی اصفهان

AN HISTORICAL MAP OF ISFAHAN

۱۳۱۶  
B



Grand Synagogue- Isfahan  
Ref: www.bankshahrsazi.ir



Jews praying  
Ref: www.anasiha.blogfa.com/ photographer: Kian Amani



Vank Cathedral- Isfahan  
Ref: www.mehrnews.com



Christians praying  
Ref: www.isna.ir/ photographer: Arya Jafari



Jame Mosque- Isfahan  
Ref: www.iran-eng.com



Muslims praying  
Ref: www.vazeh.com





Figure 11; historical map of Isfahan  
Ref: Isfahan Municipality

From the very beginning of the emergence of Isfahan, there were different dynasties governing it and sometime as their capitals. Between 13th and late 15th century Mongols attacked Isfahan that is a tragic period in the history of the country that continued until Safavid Dynasty in 16th century. The Armenians fled to Iran in Safavid dynasty, thus the previous dynasties are not explained here.

• **Safavid 1501-1736;** in Safavid Dynasty synchronous with social-cultural and economic fundamental changes, profound changes in the field of architecture and urbanism occurred and Isfahan was developed based on Safavid art style and became a unique environment of garden city with a population of around 500000.<sup>63</sup>

According to some scholars, the history of *Mady* network- that is a water stream system branching from a river to farms and gardens in order to irrigate them- dates back to years before Safavid dynasty and even to the early settlements in this city.<sup>64</sup> This network was expanded unprecedentedly and the scheduled water sharing was planned in this period.<sup>65</sup>

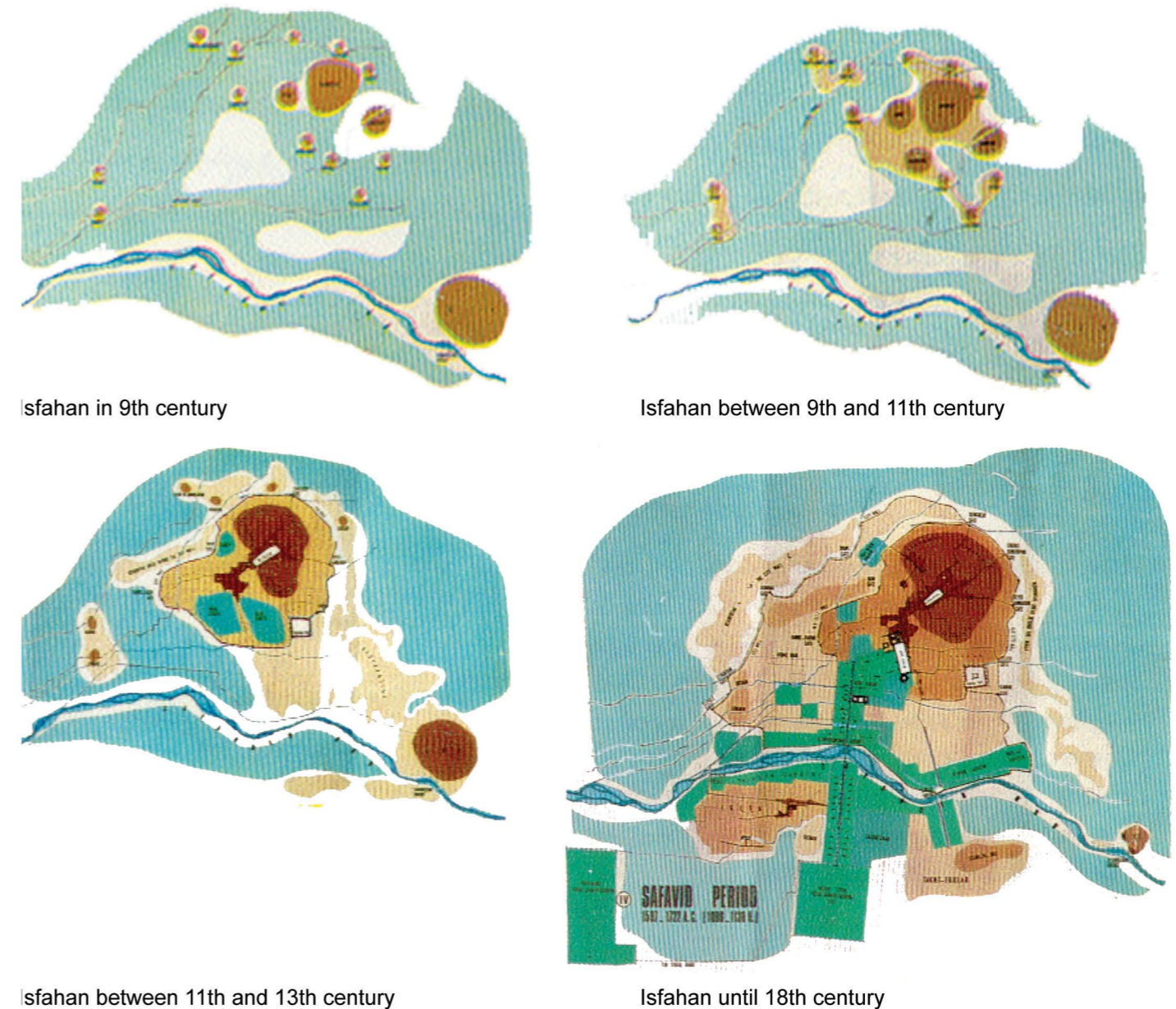


Figure 12; historical urban development of Isfahan until Safavid Dynasty  
Ref: Iran Ministry of Culture and Art; Isfahan: City of Light

<sup>63</sup> See note 59

<sup>64</sup> Heydari, Dariush. Isfahan- the City of Madies. Rasekhon Article. 2011

<sup>65</sup> See note 59



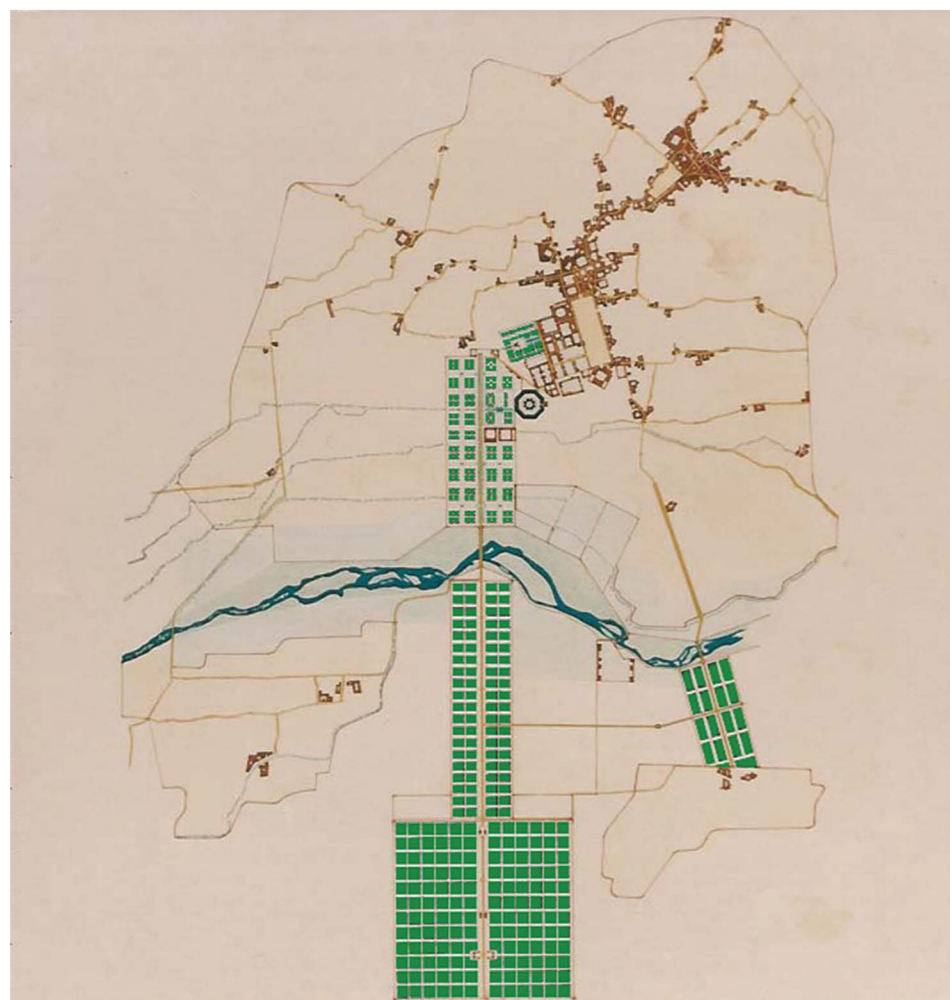


Figure 13; gardens axis in Isfahan- garden city  
 Ref: left: Isfahan Municipality/ right: www.manzaronline.com

In this period there were at least 3 different groups of Christians inhabited in Isfahan including Armenians, Georgians, and Europeans.

-*Armenians*: They were the main category of Christian minority group in Isfahan who settled in New Jolfa District in Isfahan.

-*Georgians*: They were the second main category of Christian minority group in Isfahan and they did not have a specific settlement in Isfahan.

-*Europeans*: Europeans in Isfahan consisted of missionaries, politician, and merchants. In comparison to the other Christian inhabitants of Isfahan, they were less in population and less effective in social issues. They did not have a specific settlement in Isfahan.<sup>66</sup>

• **Qajar 1785- 1925**; until the end of Qajar Dynasty, Isfahan was waned almost in all fields. Qajar Dynasty should be considered as a starting point of cultural interruption because of the fact that not only remaining cultural heritage from the past had not been preserved, but also they had been demolished and their construction materials had been sold.<sup>67</sup>

• **Pahlavi 1925-1979**; in Pahlavi Dynasty, because of investment in new urban fabrics and lack of attention to old urban fabrics, and presence of cars in city life, values and attitudes of society, especially new generation, were changed in terms of habitation in old quarters. The first master plan of Isfahan was done in the beginning of Pahlavi II Dynasty by *Kocks* (German consulting engineers) and was approved in 1959. Based on this master plan the restoration of the city center and continuous and considerable expansion of the city was on agenda.<sup>68</sup>

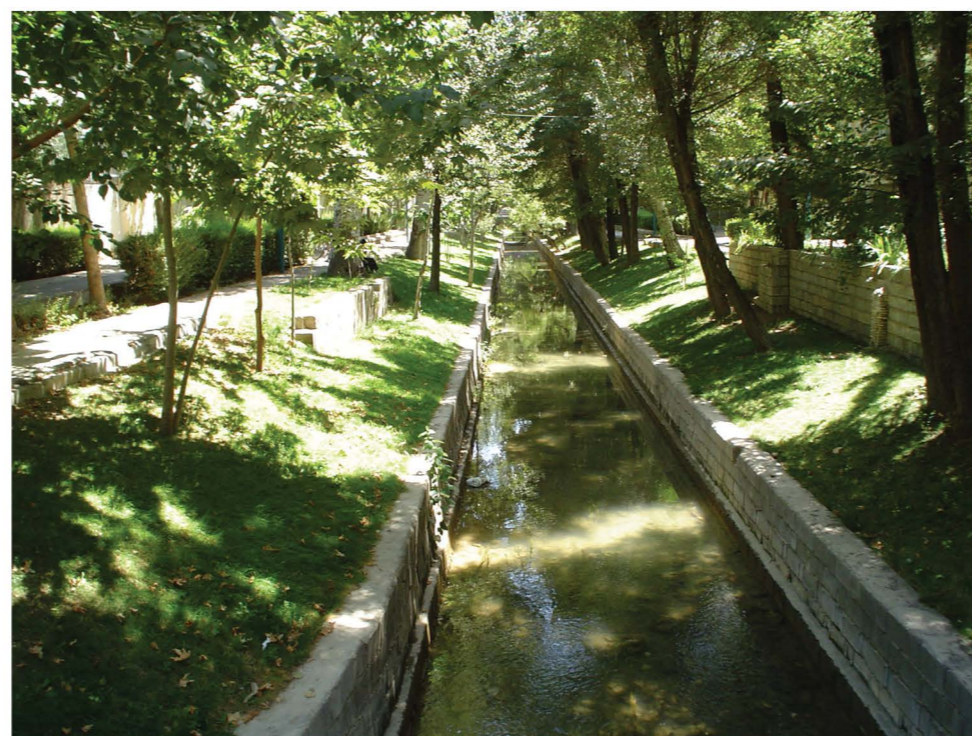
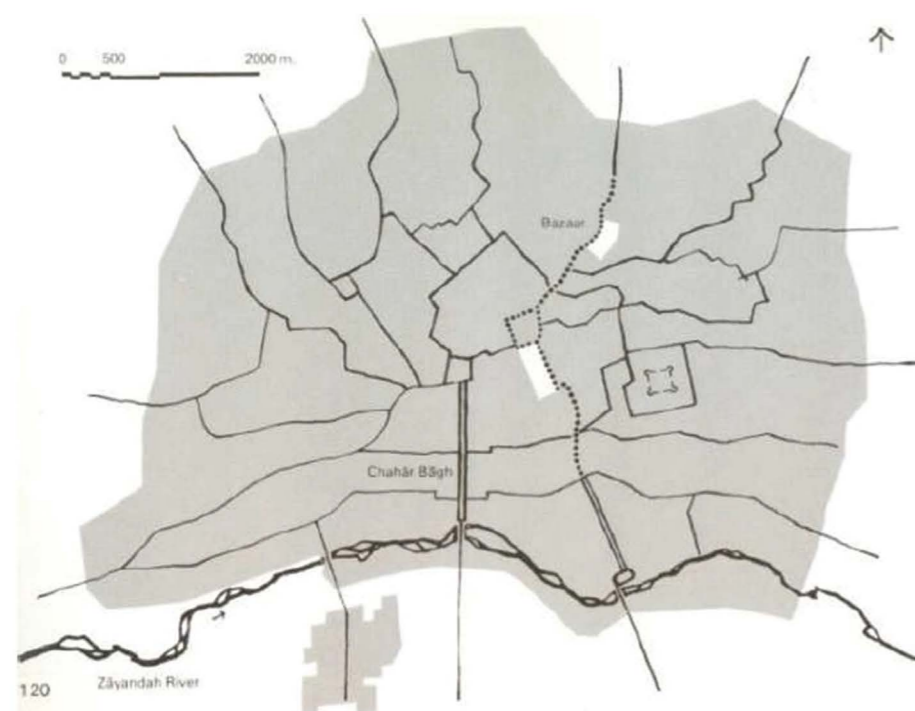


Figure 14; Madi network in Isfahan

Ref: left: Vestiges of Urban Spirit- Isfahan's Urban Fabric through Socio-spatial Transformations/ right: Isfahan municipality

<sup>66</sup> See note 7

<sup>67</sup> See note 59

<sup>68</sup> See note 59



• **Shah Abbas I 1588-1629**; in the year 1588 Shah Abbas I was the king of Iran. During that period Ottomans were hocking Armenians in Armenia because of their different religion. There were reasons for Armenian to flee to Iran including:

- War between Iran and Ottoman and risk of life for Armenians
- Enemy access to regional resources of the region
- Loss of thriving business and economic activities of Armenians

Later on, in the year 1603 Shah Abbas I attacked Armenia, defeated ottomans and after conquering Armenia brought some captives from the city of Jolfa- that is a city located in southern part of Armenia- to Iran and accommodated them in Kashan and Isfahan.<sup>69</sup>

The people from Jolfa arrived to Esfahan in 1605 and were settled in different districts. The first development of Isfahan in the south part of *Zayandeh Roud River* (*Roud* means river) happened in this period of time and Armenian district, the only urban and historical habitat in the south part of Zayandeh Roud, was established in 1606 in south-west of Isfahan and was called "*New Jolfa*" due to the fact that its inhabitants were from the city of Jolfa in Armenia.<sup>72</sup> Around 3000 Armenian families were accommodated in Jolfa.<sup>73</sup>



Figure 15; geographical situation of original Jolfa in Armenia  
Ref: Google earth

“One of the reason that Armenians were moved to Iran was to develop Safavid capital-Isfahan- by using Armenians' capabilities and experiences in business.” (Savory, R. Iran under the Safavids. 1993:170 )<sup>70</sup>

“Shah Abbas I firstly provided the international business entry field for Armenians by monopolizing silk trade for Armenians. Armenians were successful in this business due to their life style and their common customs for traveling since they were extremely thrifty.” (Tavernier, J.B. Les Six Voyages En Turquie, En Perse ET Aux Indes. :401)<sup>71</sup>

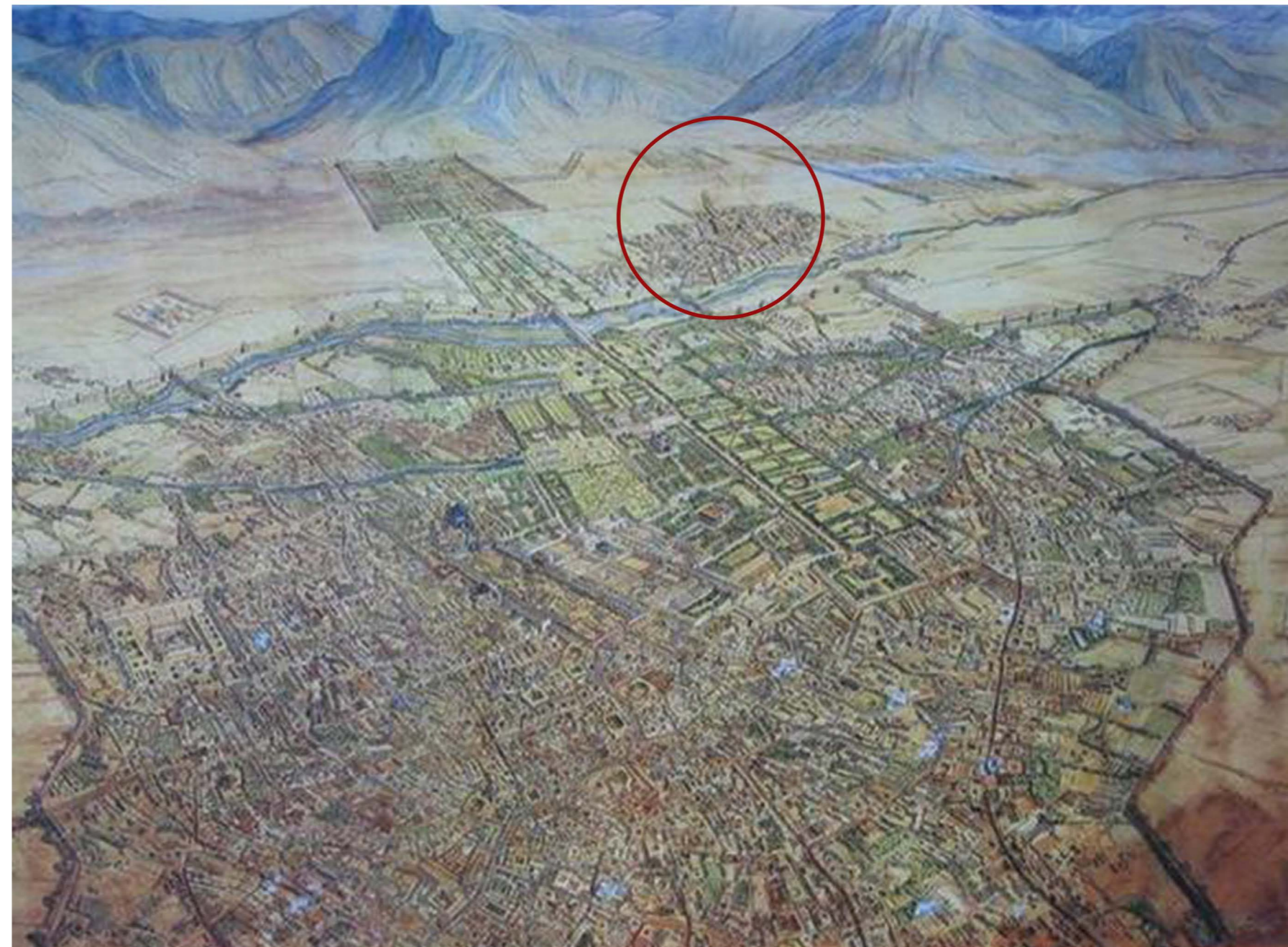


Figure 16; geographical situation of Jolfa in Isfahan  
Ref: Isfahan Municipality

<sup>69</sup> Der Hovhastian, H. History of New Jolfa in Esfahan. Translator: Minasian, L. K. Fereidany, M. A. 2000

<sup>70</sup> See note 7

<sup>71</sup> See note 7

<sup>72</sup> See note 69

<sup>73</sup> History of the Formation of Jolfa District. Rasekhooon Article. 2014



There are two different quotes about Armenians settlement in Jolfa district. Some say “from the time of emigrants settlement in Isfahan, the lands near Abbas Abad neighborhood on the north side of Zayandeh Roud were dedicated to Armenians as Shab Abbas I ordered. They constructed a neighborhood like their primary settlement with high motivation and then gradually moved to this new neighborhood.” (Falsafi, Nasrollah. Life of Shah Abbas I. Vol 2, 3. 1992 ). Some others point out “they were moved from those neighborhoods to Jolfa in Shah Abbas II period.” (Chardin, Jean. Journal du Voyage du Chevalier Chardin en Perse. Translator: Abbasi, Mohammad. Vol 7, 8, 9. 1966). Comparing these two quotes, it can be said that Armenians settled down in the northern neighborhoods of Zayandeh Roud primarily and then gradually settled down in southern neighborhood of Zayandeh Roud in Jolfa and then stayed in this neighborhood finally in the time of Shah Abbas II.<sup>74</sup>

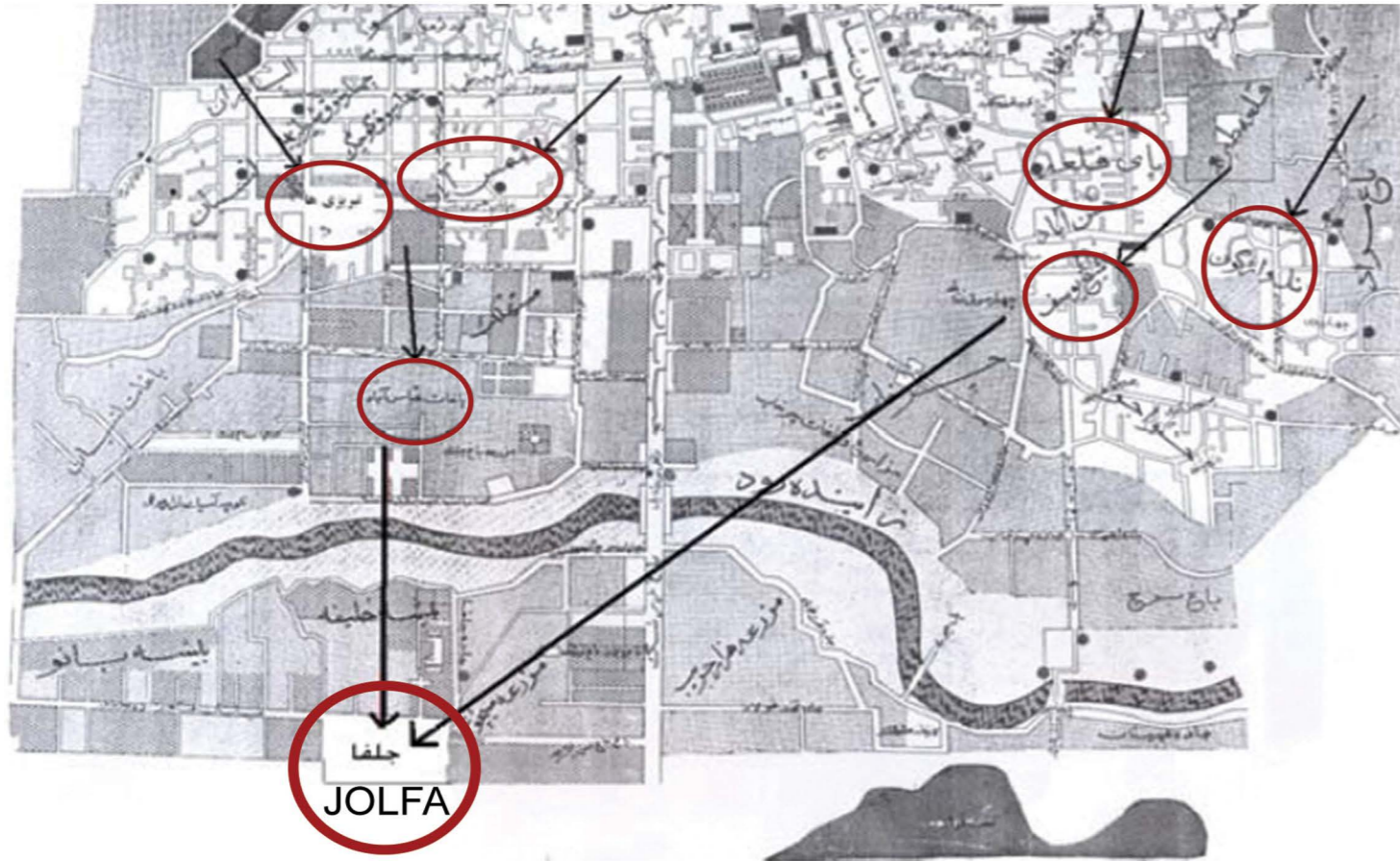


Figure 17; Armenians emigration and settlement in different neighborhoods in Isfahan during the years 1701-1739  
 Ref: Jafari, Ali Akbar. Situation Historical Sociology and Performance of Religious Minorities in Esfahan in Safavid Dynasty (Case Study: Armenian in Jolfa in Esfahan in Safavid Dynasty).

Based on the order of Shah Abbas I for Jolfa, this district became a small autonomous republic consisting of some quarters, residential buildings, churches, small bazaars, caravansaries and also some gardens.<sup>75</sup> “Shah Abbas I stated to a European traveler about his motivation for formation of Jolfa: “I have it in my mind to form a big Catholic society in this part of the world and to name it New Rome with all the features of Rome”. (Della Valle, Pietro. Cose e Parole nei Viaggi di Pietro Della Valle. Translator: Shafa, Shoa-aldin. 1991. P. 455 )<sup>76</sup>

The flat ground of this area provided the setting for designing the neighborhood. Armenian ethnic motivations and the memory of urban pattern from their former land in mind, led to its beautiful architecture, and since its land was agriculture land, the design was done by their likings.<sup>77</sup> Armenians built luxurious houses of 2 or 3 floors with gold and azure decoration, glorious churches with high domes decorated with colorful flowers with the icon of Jesus.



Figure 18; geographical situation of Jolfa district in Isfahan  
 Ref: Isfahan Municipality



Figure 19; Vank Cathedral decoration  
 Ref: www.flickr.com/ photographer: Marmusa. 2015



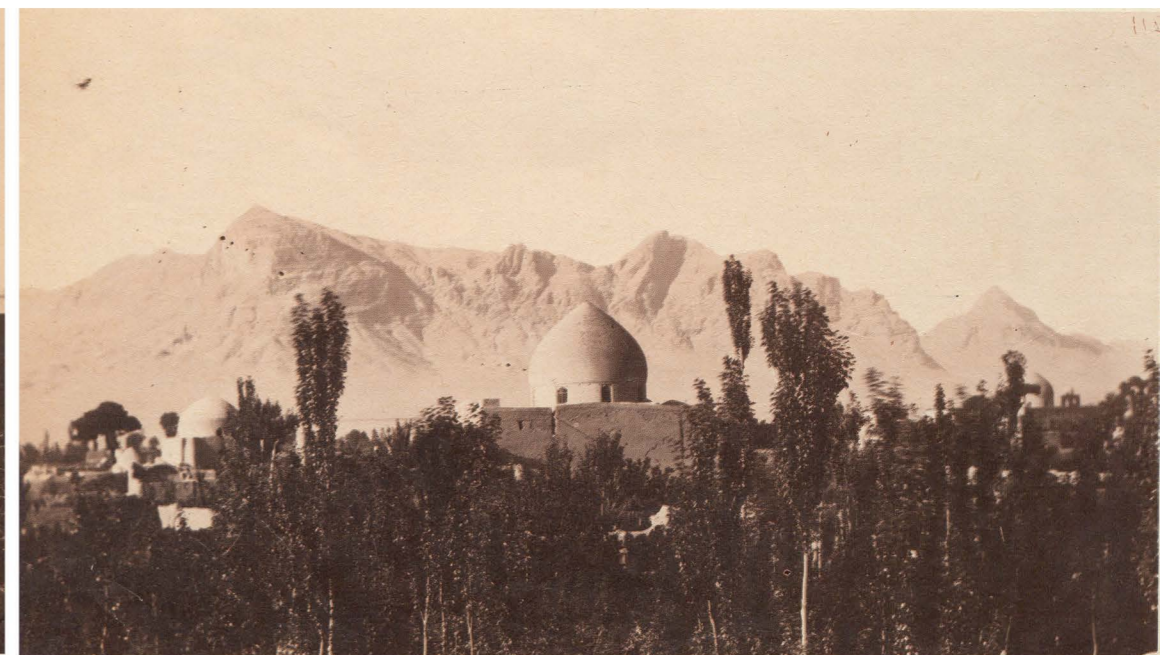
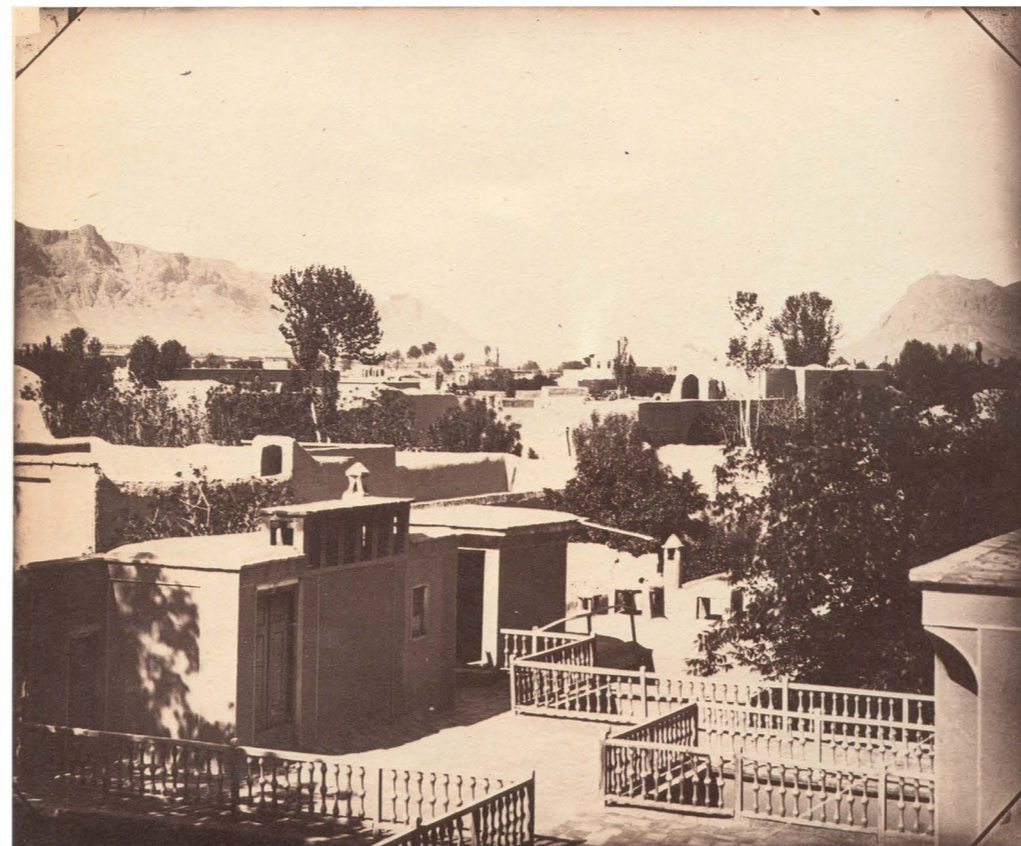
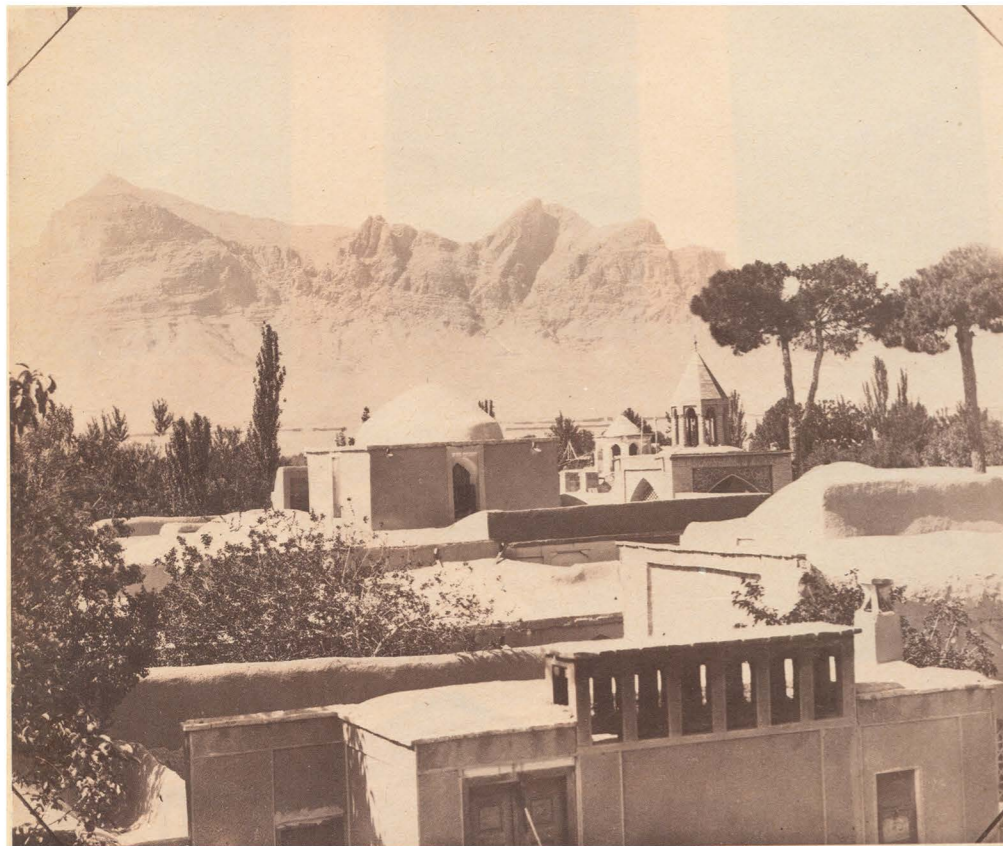


Figure 20; views from Jolfa; luxurious residential houses and churches in Jolfa  
Ref: Holster



The ethnic features of this religious minority was even effective on naming different parts of this newly established neighborhood. They constructed a street from east to west called "*Nazar Street*" based on the name of the most senior person of Jolfa that was "*Khaje Nazar*". Two famous families were living in two ends of this street.

Shah Abbas I gave the Armenians freedom of religion and business and considered them as citizens of Iran and encouraged them to build churches.<sup>78</sup>

The result of Armenians' vast business network and their remarkable activities was the influx of wealth to Isfahan and to Jolfa District. Based on this result, Armenian businessmen were the wealthiest and most famous Iranian businessmen in Isfahan in Safavid Dynasty.<sup>79</sup>

- **Shah Abbas II 1642-1666;** Shah Abbas II moved the Armenians who were living in the city with not Armenian ones to Marnan district (that is on west side of Jolfa).<sup>80</sup>

- **Shah Soltan Hosein;** after the throne of Shah Soltan Hosein, the life quality of Armenians declined due to not being Muslim. Jolfa had been developing day by day until 1722 and then after, the neighborhood and its inhabitants suffered damages. This situation continued in a way that they were extremely extorted from the preceding governors and people.

The last 2 decades of Safavid political life was not a desirable time for this religious minority. About Armenians limitations in Shah Soltan Hosein period, Der Hovhanian mentions the pressure for giving up their religion, preventing their entrance to bazaars in some cases, and misbehaving some Armenians. Nevertheless, even in time of Shah Soltan Hosein, their trade was continuous.<sup>81</sup>

### 3.3.1 Expansion of Jolfa

To sum it up, Jolfa was expanded in 4 steps due to Armenians' emigration:

1. 1603-1605; emigration of people from Jolfa in Armenia by the order of Shah Abbas I.
2. 1620-1655; gradually expanded due to population growth
3. 1630-1640; emigration of 200 families who were stonemasons. (In Jolfa there is a main street called "*Sangtarashha*" that means stonemasons).
4. 1655-1656; reached the peak of expansion after 12000 Armenians living on the northern part of Zayandeh Roud were moved in time of Shah Abbas.<sup>82</sup>

The social situation of Armenians was changed during different periods and these changes appeared during 4 eras after Safavid dynasty:

- In time of *Nader Shah Qajar* in 1728 Armenians were in bad situations because of being vilified to Nader Shah. They immigrated to foreign countries and did not return until Qajar Dynasty (1785).

- During *Qajar Dynasty* (1785- 1925) when western countries found considerable influence in Iran, the situation became better for Armenians and many immigrants returned back to Iran.

- During *Pahlavi Dynasty* Armenians who were separate from Iranians for eras, had the opportunity to adapt themselves more with the culture due to the development of the city of Isfahan. Their population grew from 1286 (during *Constitutional Revolution*) to 6000 (in the year 1974). Armenian language and literature was established in literature faculty of *Esfahan University*, and these changes led to the more dynamics of Armenian populations.

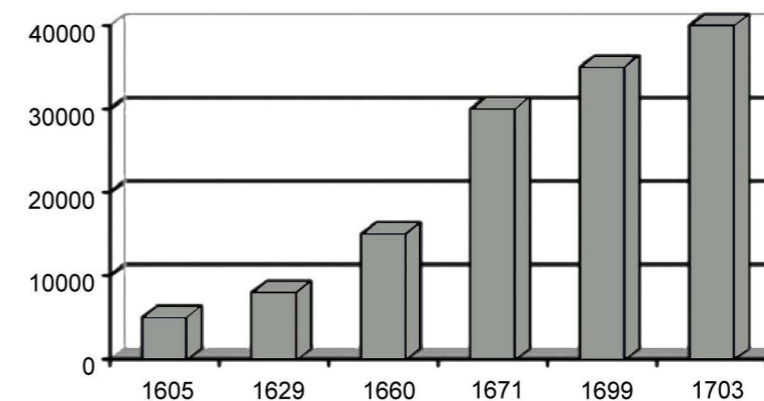
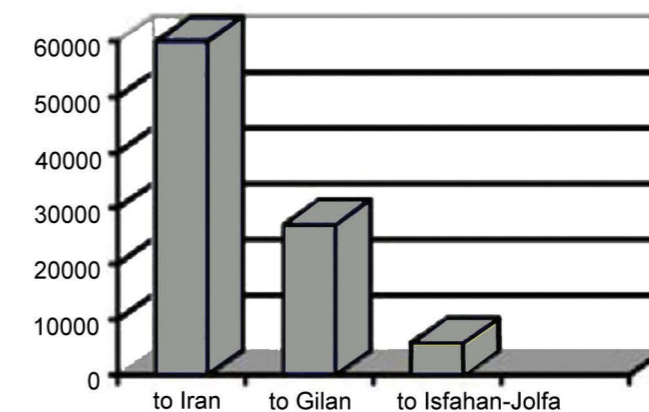
- After establishment of *Islamic Republic*, the city Christian population significantly decreased because of their emigration to America and Canada.<sup>83</sup>

## 3.4 Demography of Jolfa

Due to the growing trend of Jolfa District in terms of religious freedom and good social and economic situation, there was an increase in its population from the beginning of its formation until Isfahan's downfall in time of Shah Soltan Hosein.<sup>84</sup>

There was an increase in Armenian inhabitants of Jolfa from the first settlement in Jolfa until the last days of its flourishing in Shah Soltan Hosein Safavi period. This population growth was due to tolerance and new non-obligatory emigrations. On the other hand, the fame of Jolfa's flourish, its inhabitants' freedom, comfort and welfare having civil rights, and their ethnic solidarity, away from any extortion and oppression for being minority, had also caused the sharp increase in its population. Sociologists' comments about minorities discrimination and their detachment from participation in social life (like *Gidden's* statement), is not true in case of Armenian inhabitants in Isfahan in Safavid Dynasty.<sup>85</sup>

Until the end of 1690s, almost 5% of Isfahan's population was Armenians that is a significant number for a newly-founded neighborhood. This population growth of Armenians and other Christian inhabitants in Jolfa in Safavid Dynasty was such, that they were the first city population after Muslims.<sup>86</sup>



Graph 8; Armenians population/ left: Armenian emigrants entered to Iran in time of Shah Abbas I-year 1605/ right: Armenian inhabitants of Jolfa in Safavid Dynasty (before Shah Soltan Hosein Safavi)  
 Ref: Jafari, Ali Akbar. Situation Historical Sociology and Performance of Religious Minorities in Esfahan in Safavid Dynasty (Case Study: Armenian in Jolfa in Esfahan in Safavid Dynasty).

<sup>78</sup> See note 69  
<sup>79</sup> See note 7

<sup>80</sup> See note 69  
<sup>81</sup> See note 7

<sup>82</sup> See note 73  
<sup>83</sup> See note 73

<sup>84</sup> See note 7  
<sup>85</sup> See note 7

<sup>86</sup> See note 7



"Some effective factors in Jolfa development were social, religious, and ethnic and even job-related, among which the role of religion was bolder." (Shafaghi, Sirous. Structure and Development of Isfahan in Safavid Dynasty. Congress of "Isfahan and Safavid Dynasty". 2002. P. 373)

Inhabited emigrants in Jolfa in Isfahan, just like the other citizens, played an important role in social life of this city that can be invoked as a proper sample for minorities' life.

On the contrary of what *Anthony Giddens* states in his book "*Sociology*" (1982:261) about minority groups, This Armenian group in Jolfa has been never discriminated from others for their minority situation and has never had bad predicament. However, in accordance with Giddens's statement, there has always been a sense of solidarity among them and they were a bit separate from the bigger society in Isfahan. It is important to explain some points about this issue:

1. "The main reason of dedicating the southern lands of Isfahan to Armenians by Shah Abbas I was to detach them from other citizens and to have more monitoring and control over their behavior and their relationship among themselves and with Muslims." (Chardin, Jean. Journal du Voyage du Chevalier Chardin en Perse. Translator: Abbasi, Mohammad. Vol 7, 8, 9. 1966)

2. "Armenians not only were granted financial aids, but also they could have their own president and judge and were not obliged to follow Iranian's trails." (Tavernier, J.B. Les Six Voyages En Turquie, En Perse ET Aux Indes. :401). This fact shows that inhabitants of Jolfa were accepted as citizens.<sup>87</sup>

"Even in time of Shah Soltan Hosein, compulsory change of religion for Armenians, firstly did not include all of them, secondly they still had freedom for their neighborhood affairs and religious issues, while the other neighborhood of minorities, Zoroastrians, was destroyed." (Savory, R. Iran under the Safavids. 1993:170). "In this period, Armenians were living freely in their own neighborhood based on their national, religious, and ancestral customs, and were independent in judicial issues." (Ravandi, Mortaza. Social History of Iran. 1977. Vol. 3. P. 408). Besides, "the Muslims were not allowed to inhabit in Jolfa and if a Muslim mistreated an Armenian, there would be a punishment for him." (Mir Azimi, Nemat-Allah. Isfahan, the Birthplace of Beauty and Perfection. 2000. P. 233) About the freedom and grants given to these people, it should be mentioned neither it was just for showing off, nor it was only in time of Shah Abbas I. This way Shah Abbas I and his successors obtained international credit for themselves and their government. This cooperation of the Shah, state officials, and citizens with Armenians, led to national and international development, glory and credibility of Jolfa and its population growth.<sup>88</sup>

"Armenians' religious freedom and having social rights can be seen through some facts including establishment of several churches, different feasts such as Christmas and Easter" (Careri Gemelli, Giovanni Francesco. Giro del Mondo. Translator: Karang, Abdol Ali; Nakhjavani, Abbas. 1699. Vol. 2 (Persia). P. 100), "religious rituals for sanctifying Zayandeh Roud water and Epiphany" (Figueroa, Silva. Garcias de Silva Figueroa en Perse. Translator: Samiei, Gholam Reza. "Now" Publication. 1984. P. 317), and "the most importantly, the participation of Safavid kings in these feasts and rituals." (Falsafi, Nasrollah. Life of Shah Abbas I. Vol 2. P. 638-640)<sup>89</sup>

The Armenians boldest social role in Isfahan in Safavid Dynasty that had even been remained during their hardest times, was their role of economic activities especially in international business. Armenians in this district had even a stronger situation compared to Muslim merchants and businessmen. In this case, it also is not in accordance with some sociologists' comments that say minorities have naturally a weaker situation or even not having participation in social life.<sup>90</sup>



Figure 21; rituals and festivals in Jolfa/ up: Christmas in Jolfa/ bottom: Eucharist ritual in Vank Cathedral

<sup>87</sup> See note 7

<sup>89</sup> See note 7

<sup>88</sup> See note 7

<sup>90</sup> See note 7



Year	Dynasty	Isfahan	Armenians in new Jolfa	
1600-1800	Safavi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-rich culture</li> <li>-500000 population</li> <li>-garden city</li> <li>-expansion of madi</li> <li>-Armenian arrived</li> </ul>	1600- 1700	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Armenian settlement</li> <li>-3000 Armenian</li> <li>-new autonomous neighborhood</li> <li>-freedom for religion and business</li> <li>-population growth</li> </ul>
			1700- 1800	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-no freedom for religion</li> <li>-low life quality due to not being Muslim</li> </ul>
1800-2000	Qajar	-cultural interruption	1800- 1900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-bad situation</li> <li>-they left the country</li> </ul>
2000	Pahlavy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-cars in city for the first time</li> <li>-lack of attention of urban fabric</li> </ul>	2000	-population growth

Table 2; conclusion of historical events in Isfahan in different periods  
 Ref: author





#### 4. SITE ANALYSIS







Nazar Street, a wide street with 2 rows of tall plantain on each side with a stream, was considered as Jolfa's spine. There were 2 gates on the beginning and the end of the street named "Shahriman Gate" and "Sarafraz Gate" that defined this street. 10 north-south-oriented paths (garden lanes) divided Jolfa into 10 parts and connected Nazar Street with Zayandeh Roud and from the other side to Armenian cemetery. These 10 garden lanes, each with a stream, determined the border of different quarters in historical Jolfa. Each of the quarters also consisted of one or more churches, a few commercial-service units and public spaces.<sup>91</sup>

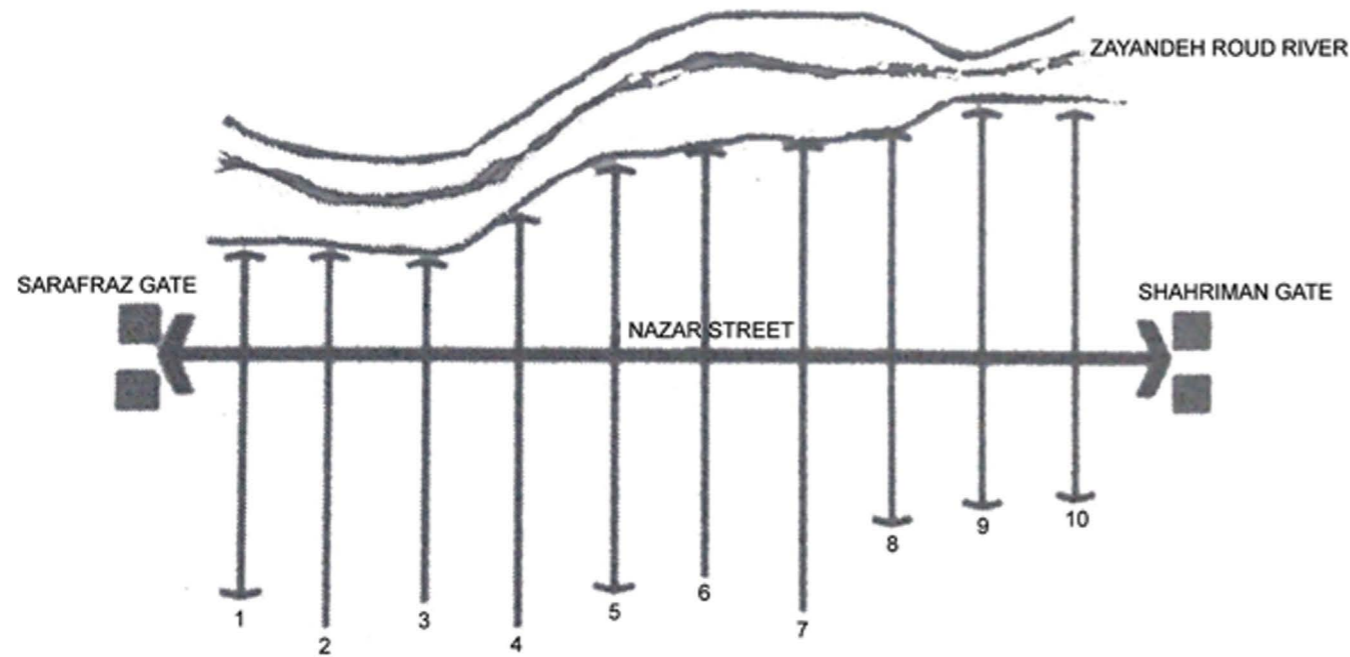
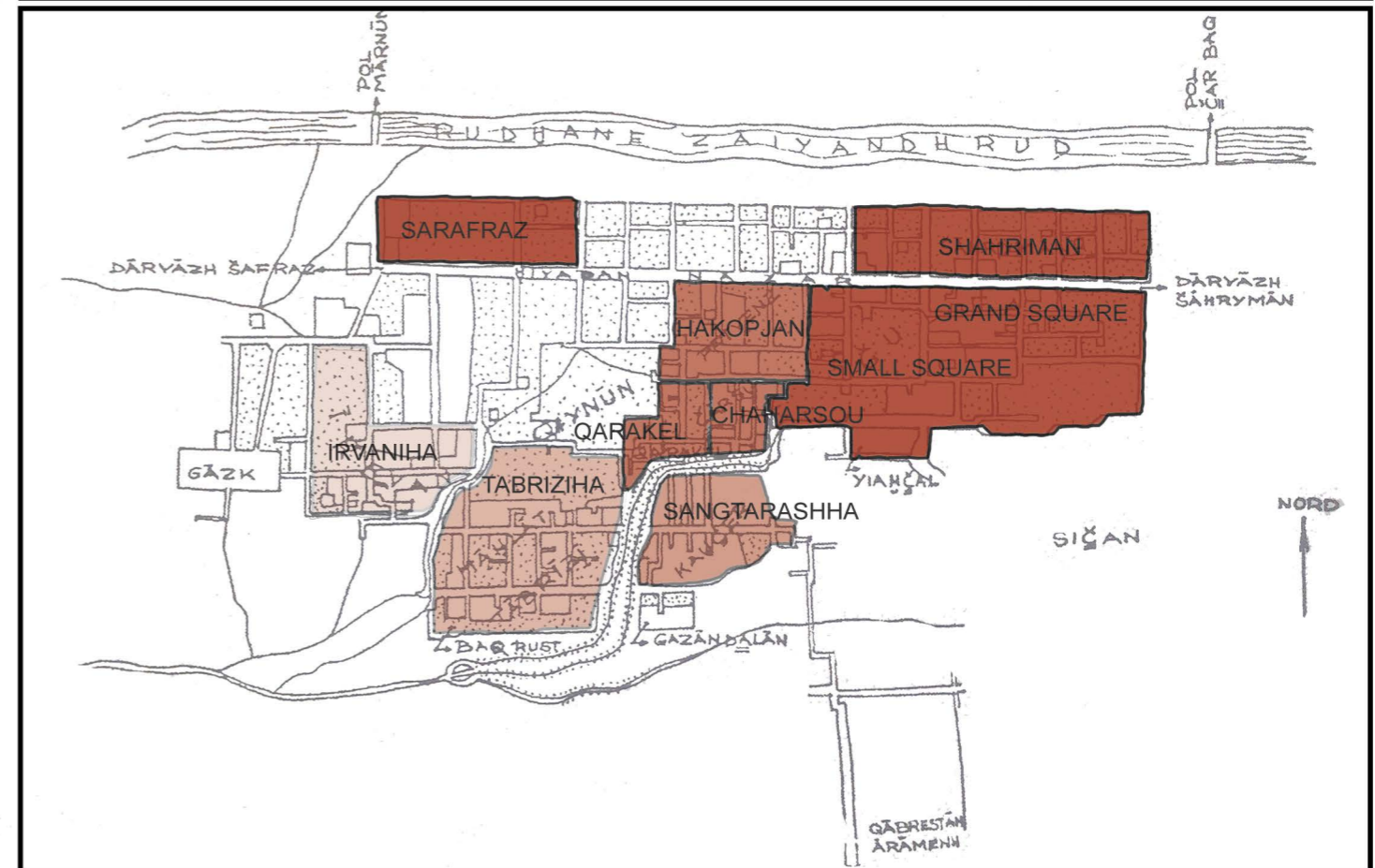
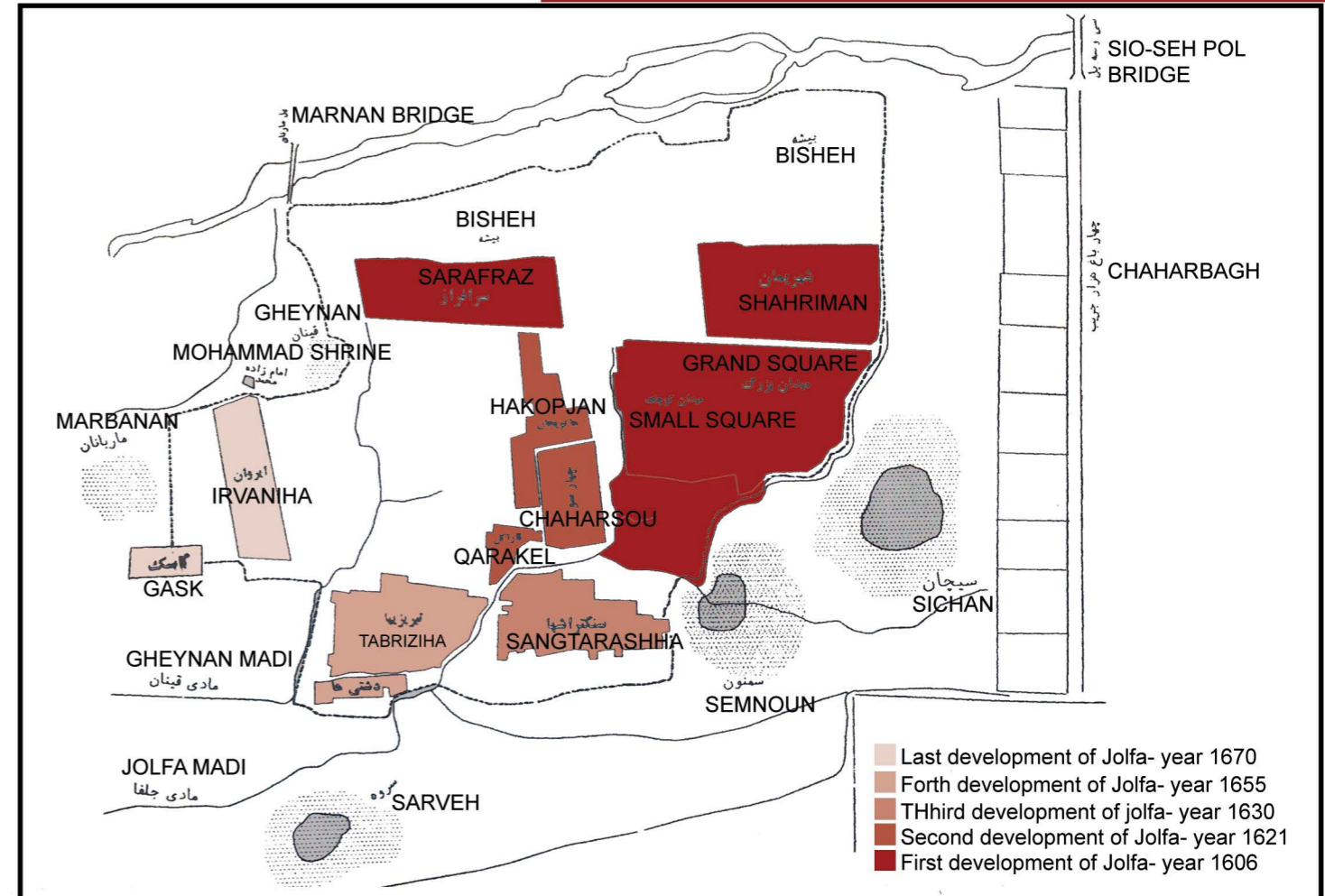


Figure 22; scheme of first formation of Jolfa (old Jolfa) - 10 branching lanes from Nazar Street (Ref: Khodanakhshi, Shohre. Sustainable City (The Image of Jolfa District in Esfahan

Jolfa had 8 main quarters which were formed during different years respectively as the following:

- Grand Square Quarter and Small Square in the year 1606 (besides 2 main gates- Shahriman Gate and Sarafraz Gate which existed in Jolfa first formation)
- Chaharsou Quarter, Qarakel Quarter and Hakopjan/Yaghoubjan in the year 1621
- Sangtarashha/Kocher Quarter in the year 1630
- Tabriziha Quarter and Dashtiha Quarter in the year 1655
- Irvaniha Quarter and Gask Quarter in the year 1670 <sup>92</sup>

The first 6 quarters were established during the first years of Armenians emigration to Isfahan in Shah Abbas I period, and the rest 2 quarters were established around 50 years later (1655) in Shah Abbas II period. In some quarters also Muslims live.<sup>93</sup>



Drawing 1; Jolfa quarters until its last development Ref: author

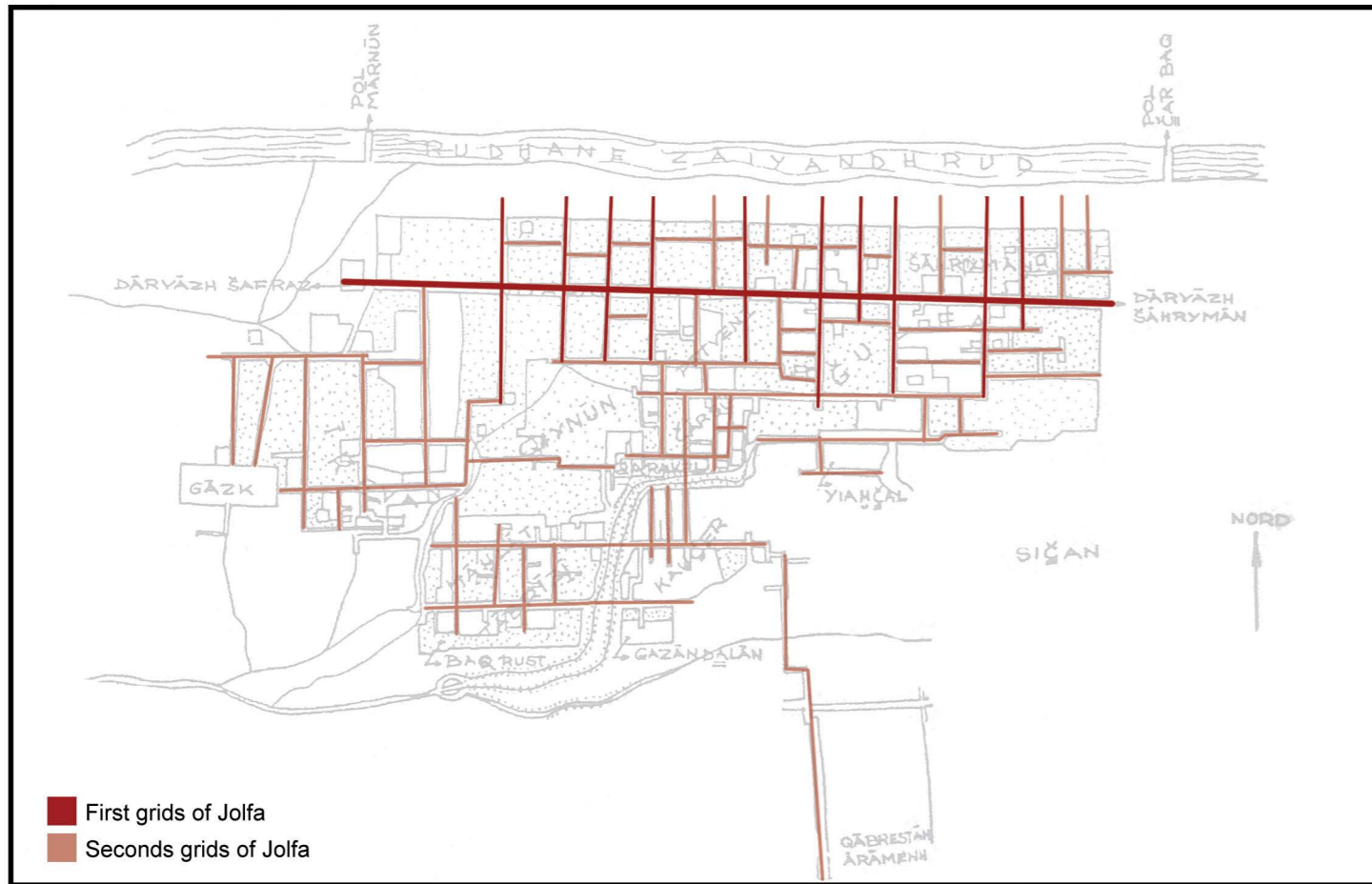
<sup>91</sup> See note 43

<sup>93</sup> See note 60

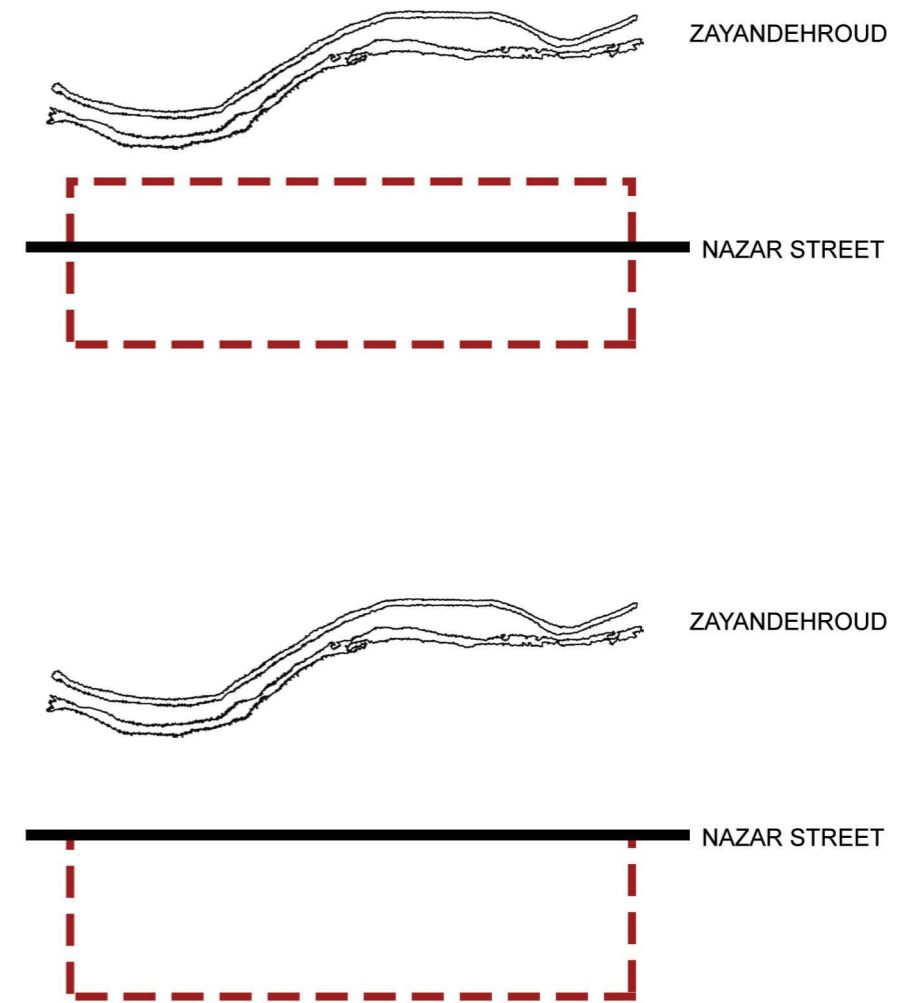
<sup>92</sup> See note 43



More than 60 years after formation of Jolfa this neighborhood was moved from Zayandeh Roud margin to south, in such a way that Nazar Street did not pass from the middle of Jolfa anymore and became an axis which was defining the northern border of Jolfa.<sup>94</sup>



Drawing 2; grids of Jolfa in urban fabric  
Ref: author



Drawing 3; zone of Jolfa and the change in its margin  
Ref: author

<sup>94</sup> See note 43



• **Grand Square Quarter;** that is located on the north-east edge of Jolfa district consists of *Vank Cathedral (Surp Armenaprkich)* (1655) (in Armenian language *surp* means church), *Maryam Church (Surp Asdvadzadzin)* (1613), and *Surp Bettlehem* (1628). This quarter is the most important historical quarter of Jolfa due to the presence of *Jolfa Square* and different functions around it, and due to the presence of the biggest and the most important cathedral of Jolfa (Vank) and its privileged social-cultural-religious role on Armenians social life.

In Maryam Church, now there is a school in some rooms of which council and funeral and memorial rites are held, and some others are used as accommodation [also some chambers of the church].<sup>95</sup>

• **Small Square Quarter;** is located on the north-east of Jolfa. Its main church is named *Surp Grigor Lusavoritch* (1633) and is almost in the middle of the quarter. Another name for this quarter was *Shirehkhane*, that means tavern, due to the fact that most of its inhabitants were wine maker.<sup>96</sup>

• **Chaharsou Quarter;** that is almost located in the middle of Jolfa has *Surp Hovanes* (1621) and *Katarine Nunnery Church* (1623) (that means monastery of sisters). Before the settlement of Armenians in New Jolfa, on the south-west margine of Old Jolfa, Chaharsou quarter was the southern edge of Jolfa when its physical importance was increased as a connection ring between old and new Jolfa after formation of Sangtarashha and Tabriziha Quarters on its southern part.<sup>97</sup>

• **Hakopjan Quarter;** in the middle of Jolfa is the closest quarter of Jolfa locates *Surp Stepanos* (1614), there was also *Amenaprkich School* in its chambers. This quarter was considered as the location for palaces of wealthy people. However, none of the quality values of this quarter neither the other ones, can be seen because of demolishing historical buildings in contemporary decades.<sup>98</sup>

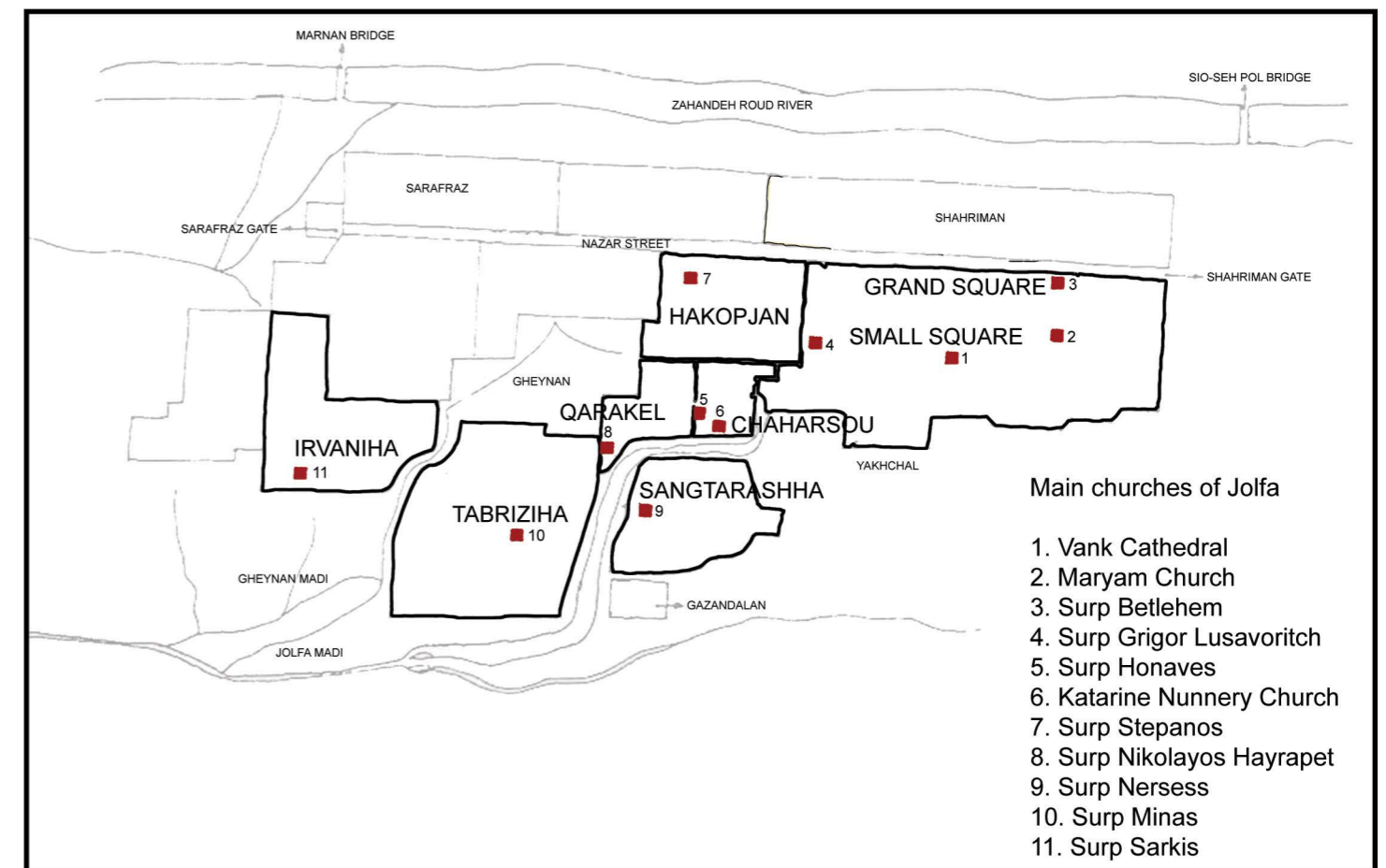
• **Qarakel Quarter;** is the smallest quarter of Jolfa and therefore it has the smallest church of Jolfa that is called *Surp Nikolayos Hayrapet* (1630). Shayej Madi passes through this quarter. According to history, most of its inhabitant were destitute. Qarakel historical pathway that is east-west oriented is branched from Chaharsou Street.<sup>99</sup>

• **Kocher or Sangtarashha Quarter;** is located on the margine of Hakim Nezami Avenue and it was called *Gabr Abad*, before the settlement of Armenians. The main inhabitants of this quarter were Zoroastrians who later on were moved to other neighborhoods. Its church is named *Surp Nersess* (1666) that became abandoned after revolution because of Catholic migration. This quarter has some historical houses 300 years date back.<sup>100</sup>

Sangtarashha axis as the historical pedestrian-based route with urban scale services (due to the existence of the universities) is currently the strongest historical axis of Jolfa neighborhood embedding significant local and urban functions.<sup>101</sup>

• **Tabriziha Quarter;** on south-west margin of Jolfa was considered the most populated quarters in Jolfa after its expansion due to its number of inhabitants, including also Muslims. The church of this quarter is called *Surp Minas* (1659) that is on the north edge of Tabriziha Lane.<sup>102</sup>

• **Irvaniha Quarter;** is located on the west part of Jolfa and its inhabitants were from the city of *Yerevan* in Armenia, who settled first in Isfahan, and during Shah Abbas II period moved to this quarter. Its church is named *Surp Sarkis* (1659) that is located on the south part of the quarter and in which, nowadays the imposed-war Armenian emigrants live.<sup>103</sup>



Drawing 4; quarters in Jolfa and their main churches  
Ref. author

<sup>95</sup> See note 59

<sup>97</sup> See note 59

<sup>99</sup> See note 59

<sup>101</sup> See note 33

<sup>103</sup> See note 59

<sup>96</sup> See note 59

<sup>98</sup> See note 59

<sup>100</sup> See note 59

<sup>102</sup> See note 59



## 4.2 Jolfa Pathways, Accessibility, and Transportation

- **Nazar Street;** in Jolfa district is considered as the most important historical pathway of this district in the time of its boom.

The main and populated pathways of historical Jolfa which connect different quarters to each other are: Khaghani Street, Sangtarashha and Tabriziha Streets, Vank Cathedral Street, Chaharsou Street, and the pathway crossing border of Shayej Madi, while the main service axis are Hakim Nezami Avenue, Nazat Street, and Khaghani Street.<sup>104</sup>

- **Khaghani Street;** that is the east-west axis of Jolfa along with Nazar Street, is one of the historical and important pathways of Jolfa. This importance is mostly due to the ramification of 10 pathways of historical Jolfa rather than aggregation of valuable buildings around it.<sup>105</sup>

Hakim Nezami Avenue and Khaghani Street work as edges for this district as they make it separate from the rest. Hakim Nezami Avenue is considered as an edge due to its width, high traffic, and its dense commercial-service use, and Khaghani Street also due to having diverse commercial uses in its structure. Usually the presence of these non-natural edges around residential areas brings traffic and congestion into that urban fabric.<sup>106</sup>

- **The Pathway along Shayej Madi;** Madies or water streams that are considered as natural form paths are an important elements of the site. They pass through some parts of the district. The presence of these elements through paths not only makes the paths more readable but also makes them unique in terms of design, strengthens the sense of place and makes them more memorable for the city observers.<sup>107</sup>

*Shayej Madi* is one of the privileged traffic axes and green space in historical Jolfa that crosses Sangtarashha and Tabriziha axes and continues to north. This Madi provided the required water for gardens, agriculture lands and streams near historical garden lanes by passing through the historical part of Jolfa and was considered as the source of life and greenness of the area. With its west-east orientation, it determines the boundary of Sangtarashha and Tabriziha quarters, goes to north then east, and by crossing Qarakel and Chaharsou quarters, it is divided to 2 sub-branches.<sup>108</sup> The passage of Shayej irrigation canal through the axis, rich historical background, marked functions, pedestrian stop spaces etc. all are among the potentials of this axis.

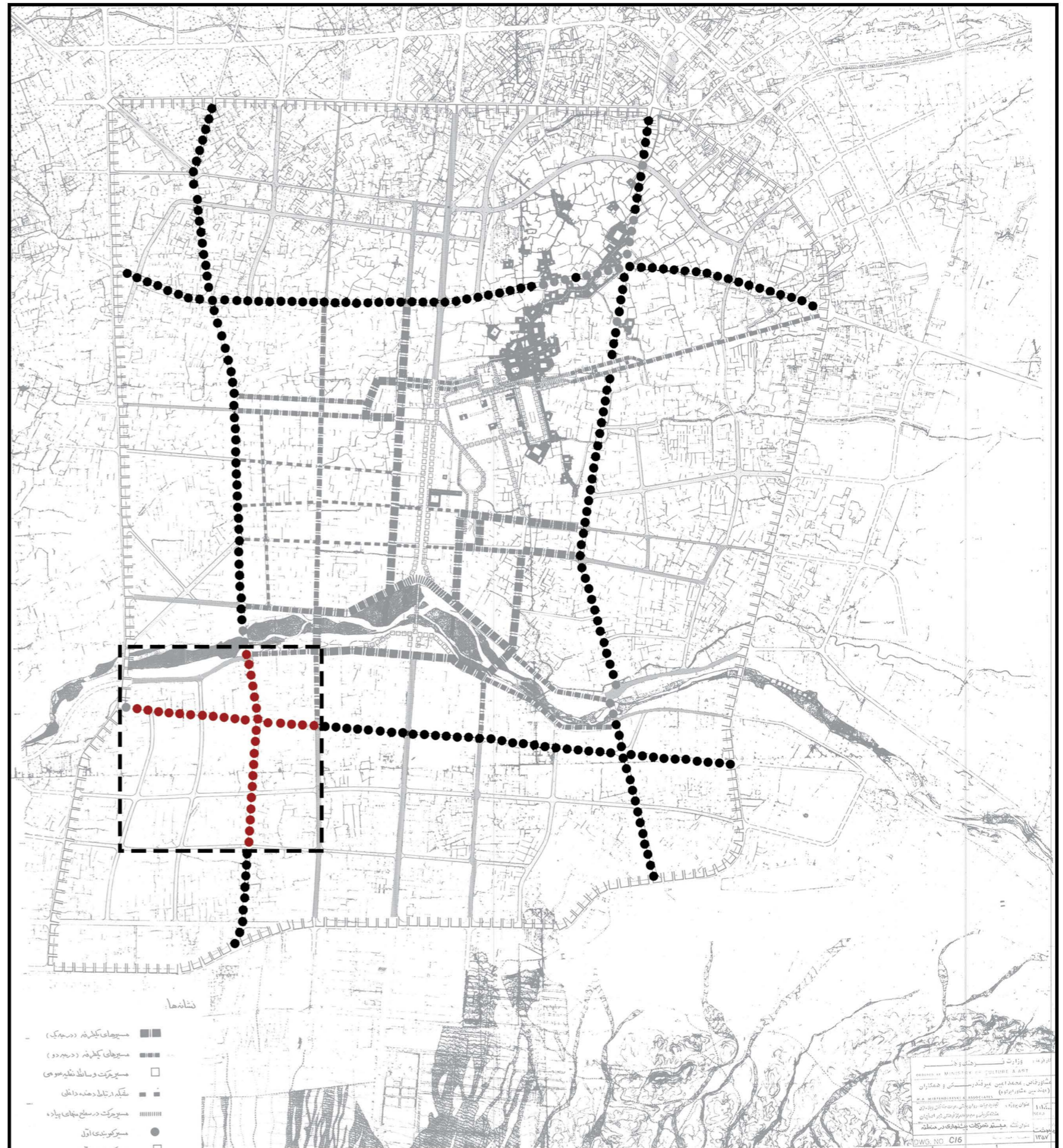


Figure 23; main accessibility in Isfahan and in Jolfa  
Ref: Ministry of Culture and Art

<sup>104</sup> See note 59

<sup>105</sup> See note 59

<sup>106</sup> Baghernia, Azin; Shafiei, Hamed. Recognition of City Identity in Organizing Jolfa District in Esfahan. Rasekhoon Article. 2014

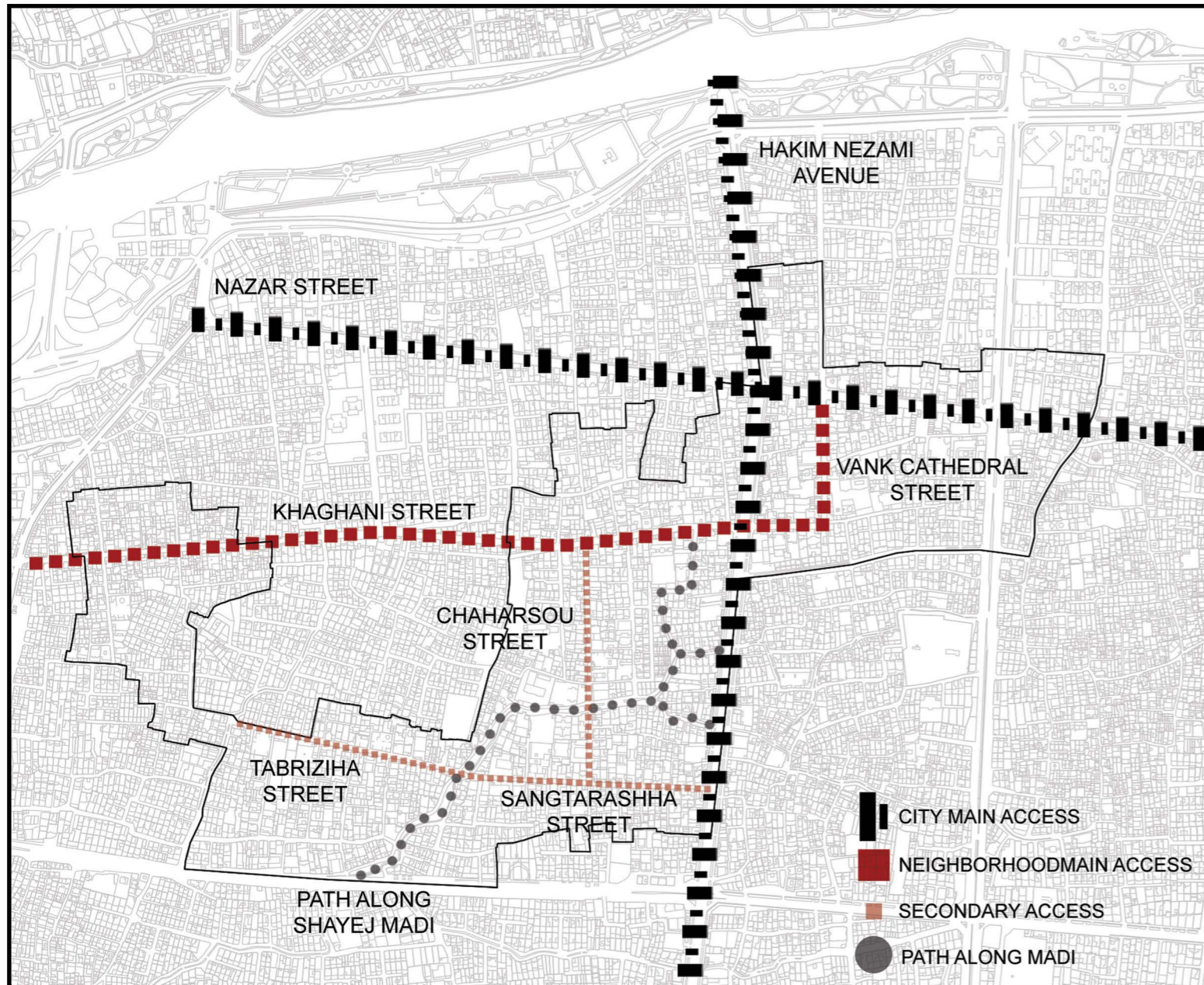
<sup>107</sup> See note 106

<sup>108</sup> See note 59

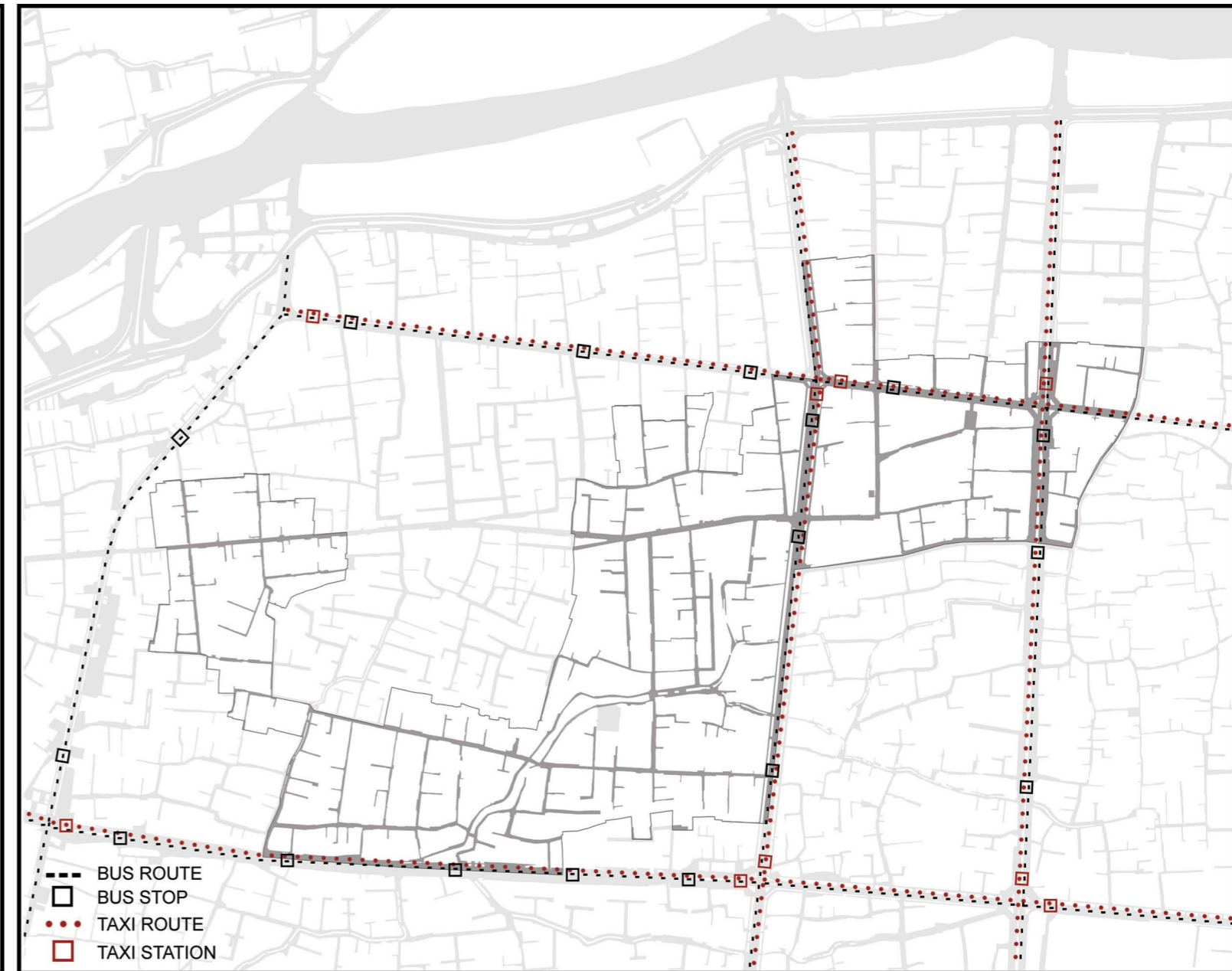


#### 4.2.1 Transportation;

Since there is not any metro or tram in Isfahan, the basic transportations are buses and taxis. As it is seen in the map below, there is not any transportation route in Jolfa, except in Hakim Nezami Avenue that is a main traffic route in the city. This fact could make the area more pedestrian-base, but on the contrary it made the personal cars dominant transportation mode and as a result, more traffic and air pollution.



Drawing 5; main accessibilities in Jolfa  
Ref. author



Drawing 6; transportation map in and around Jolfa  
Ref. author



### 4.3 Valuable Ancient Buildings and Landmarks

On the southern part of central area of Isfahan, historical neighborhood of Jolfa is the only neighborhood having a collection of valuable historical buildings that has diverse local, spatial, social and cultural privileges.

Since this district was intended and developed as Armenians accommodation from the beginning, public physical elements and symbols and cultural signs such as churches, and non-physical elements such as customs, religion, language, etc., are considered as unifying factors which make Armenian inhabitants have a sense of belonging to this district.<sup>109</sup>

#### Churches;

churches of Jolfa are the most important elements of this neighborhood although they have lost their importance during years. They were used not only for religious rites, but also as schools, in chambers around their main courtyard. In the current situation the schools in churches have stopped their function due to the fact that almost all of the churches in Jolfa have stopped their activity.

#### Architecture Style of Churches in Jolfa:

It can be said that architecture of churches in Jolfa is affected by a merge of Islamic and Christian cultures due to observing Iranian culture and at the same time Armenians' traditions and ancestors' beliefs, besides commuting foreign artists, importing stuffs and using them in decorations.<sup>110</sup> These kinds of decorations and paintings are seen in churches like Vank Cathedral with Islamic art and at the same time paintings with a whole face and body of a human, which is not permissible to be depicted in Islam. Moreover, domes of the churches are shaped likes a dome of mosque, in order to respect the surrounding mosques and not be on the contrary with the background of the city. As there is not any sharp contrast between Christians (Armenian) and Muslims (Iranians) in their settings, it leads to more integration between these two communities.



Figure 24; dome of Vank Cathedral

Ref: [www.flickr.com/](http://www.flickr.com/) left photographer: German Vogel, 2013/ right photographer: Inchiki Tour, 2014

#### Houses;

In Jolfa there are 182 valuable historical residential buildings remained, among which 64 buildings belong to Safavid, 67 buildings to Qajar, 1 building to Zand and 50 buildings to Pahlavy Dynasty. While around 115 valuable historical buildings (288 hectares) have been destroyed during recent years, especially the last 2-3 decades, and a significant number of the residential buildings are completely abandoned, some of them have continued their new life after preservation and restoration through the change in their function to education, such as Art University of Isfahan (*Pardis University*). Some of its classes are held in *Haratian House*, office building in *Martapiterz House*, faculty of preservation in *David House* and its laboratory in *Sokiyas House*, all belong to Safavid period. *Simon House* has been changed into Armenian Club, and some historical houses like *Zovoulia House* have become offices. *Zaryab Music School* on the margine of Sangtarashha Street is another example.<sup>111</sup>



HARATIAN HOUSE



MARTAPIZERZ HOUSE



DAVID HOUSE



SOKIYAS HOUSE

Figure 25; preserved and renovated historical buildings in Jolfa changed to faculties of Art University of Isfahan  
Ref: Art University of Isfahan/ [www.aui.ac.ir](http://www.aui.ac.ir)



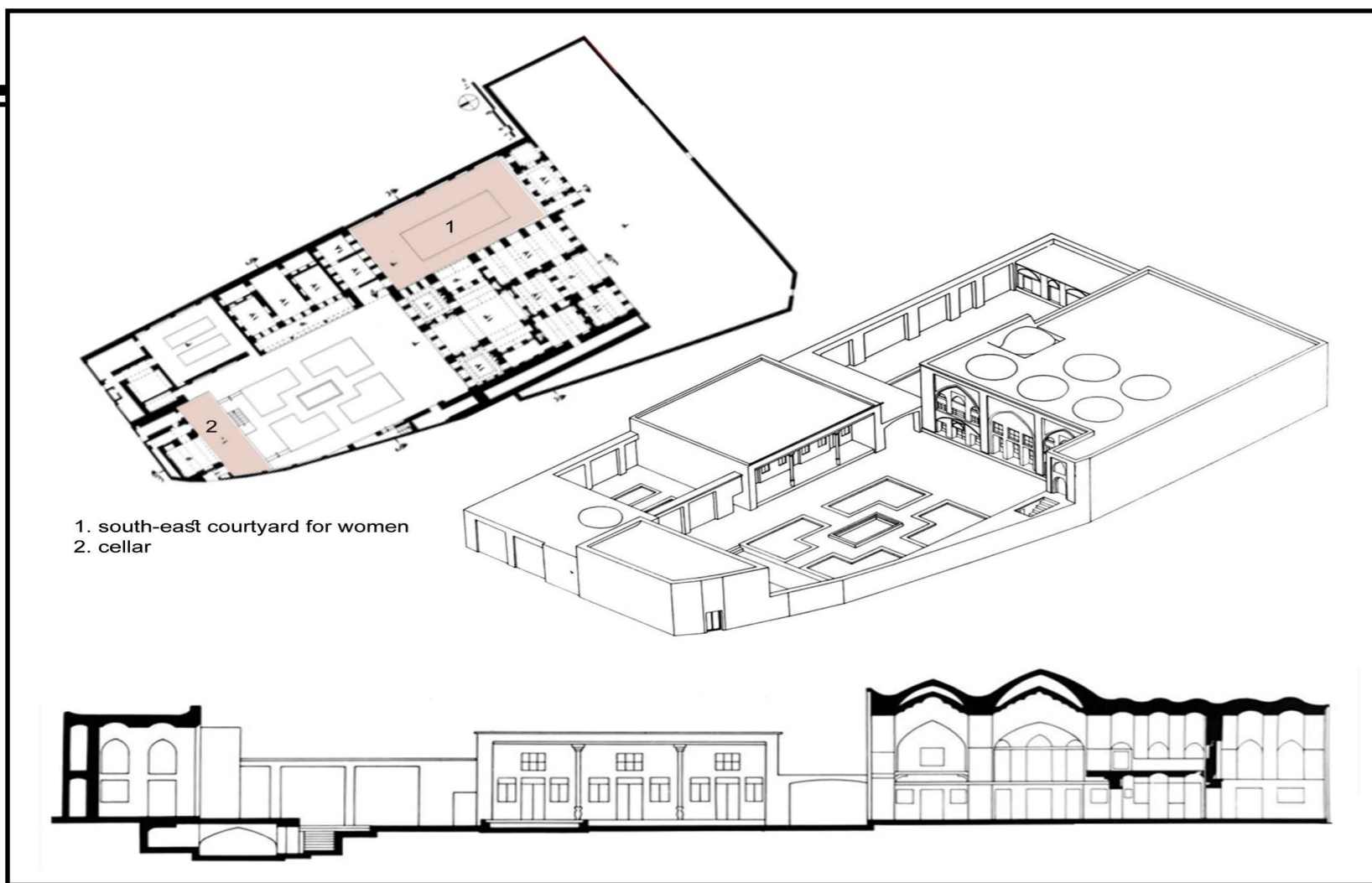
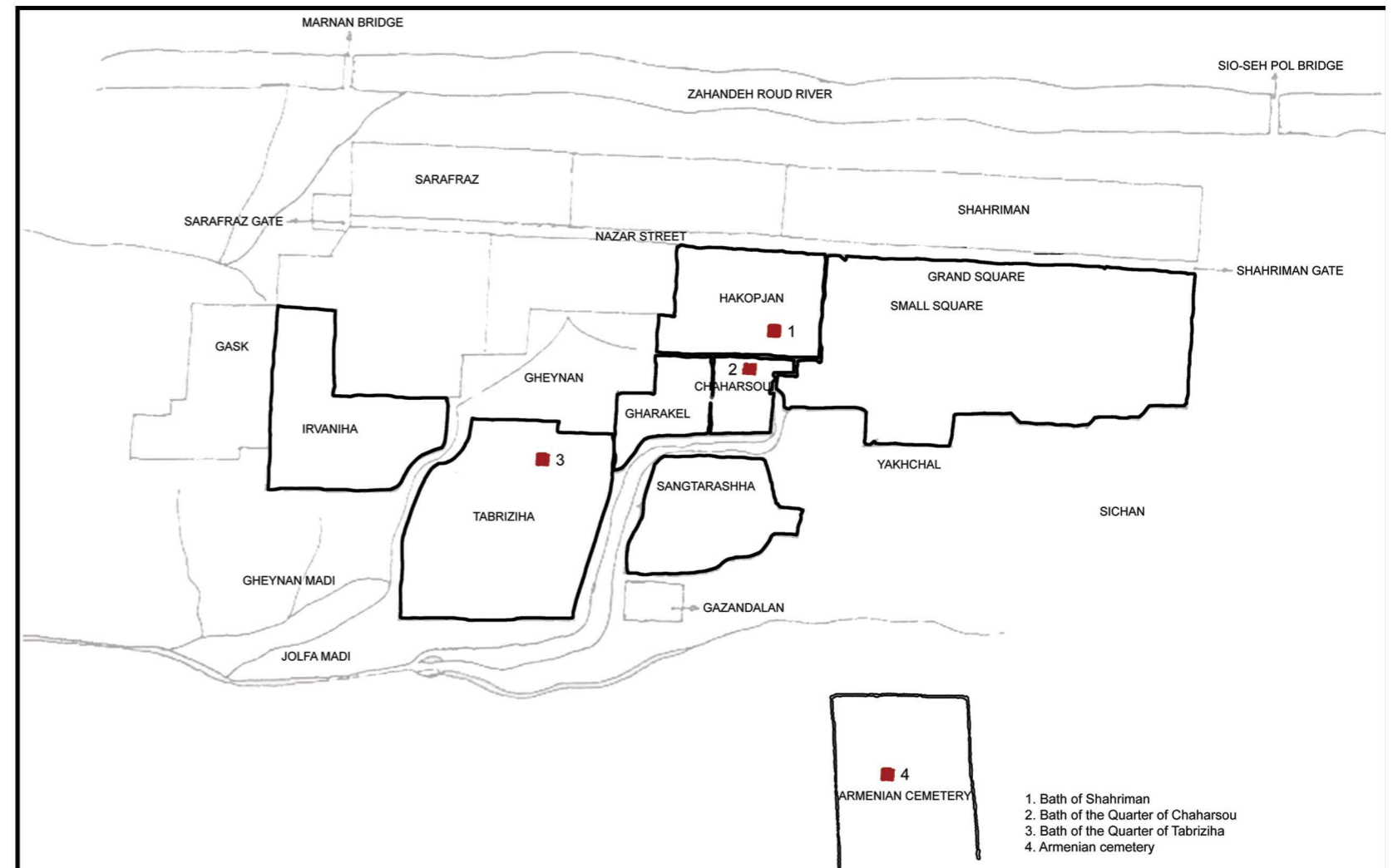


Figure 26; Martapiterz House  
Ref: www.saeedsun.ir

These significant houses of Jolfa were belonged to merchants and clergymen. These houses were usually consisted of one part for summer-stay and one for winter-stay and most of them had cellar (on the part back to the sun) for keeping food and beverage. Some of these houses were 3-floor, some had a space for women (like Martapiterz House that had 2 courtyards, among which the south-east courtyard was for women), and some had stables for keeping animals.<sup>112</sup>

**Cemetery Areas;** Armenian Cemetery is one of the valuable cemeteries in southern part of Isfahan that is located near the edge of south-west of this city (*Sofeh* hillside) and has the area of around 30 hectares where half of it is for graves and the rest is green space and football ground and a part also vacant. Its entrance is in Sofeh Street and it is limited from east to *Isfahan University*, from north to artillery and missile training center and from south to *Alzahra Hospital*.<sup>113</sup>

**Other Historical Landmarks;** In Jolfa there were 3 baths, 2 caravansaries which have been demolished and also some small bazaars which have been demolished too but the restoration of one of them is on agenda.<sup>114</sup>



Drawing 7; Armenian cemetery and bathes in Jolfa  
Ref: author

<sup>112</sup> See note 106

<sup>114</sup> See note 60

<sup>113</sup> See note 59





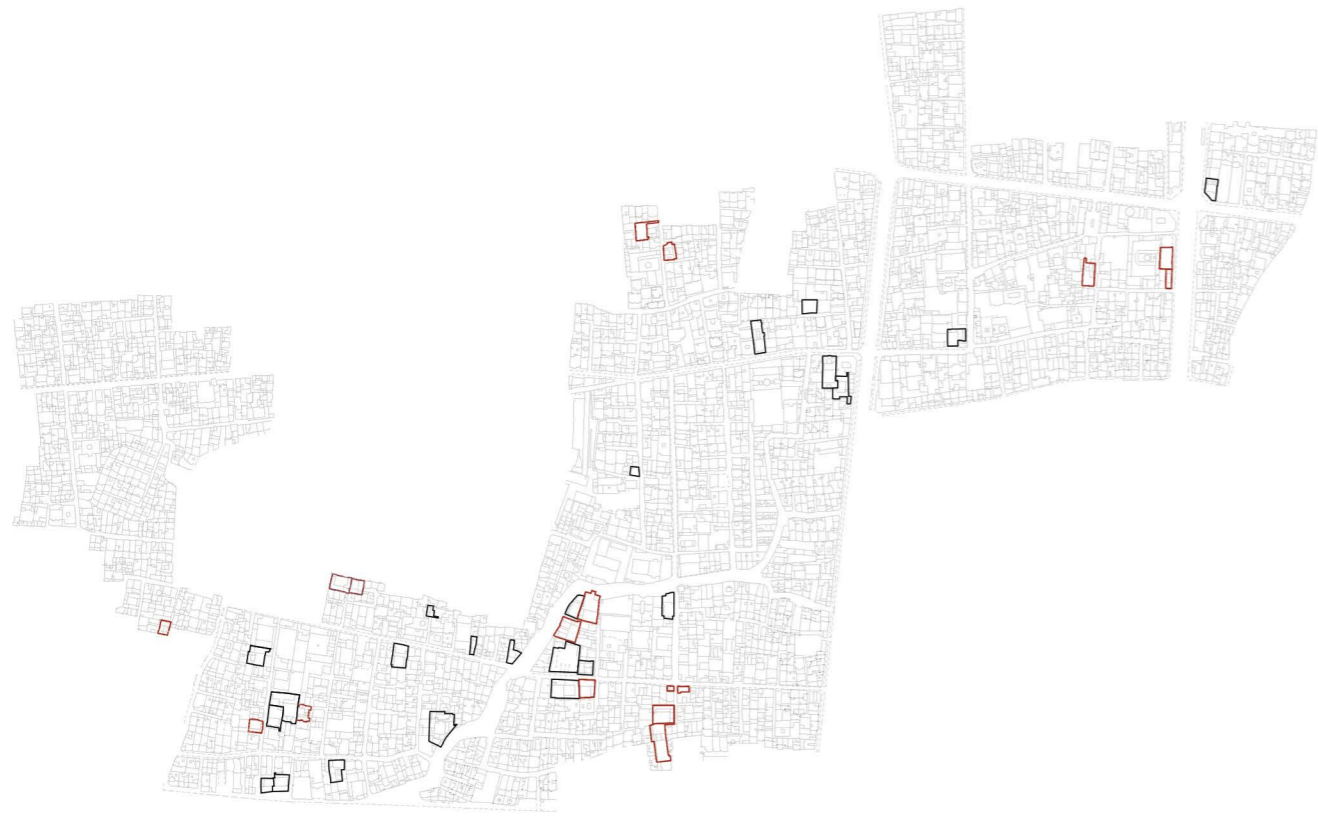
- Safavi dynasty
- Qajar dynasty
- Pahlavi dynasty

HISTORICAL BUILDINGS IN DIFFERENT DYNASTIES



- 1. Jolfa Square
- 2. Surp Betlehem Church
- 3. Vank Cathedral
- 4. Faransaviha School

JOLFA MAIN ELEMENTS



- Abandoned historical buildings
- Highly needed restoration historical buildings

HISTORICAL BUILDINGS;  
ABANDONED AND HIGHLY NEEDED RESTORATION



Figure 27; main landmarks of Jolfa  
Ref: author



As it is seen on the map filled and void, the neighborhood is so dense and there are not many open spaces.

**Residential;** as it is seen in the map below, the area is a residential area.

**Commercial;** Khaghani Street is considered as the main shopping street in Jolfa that invites many youth and other daily users.

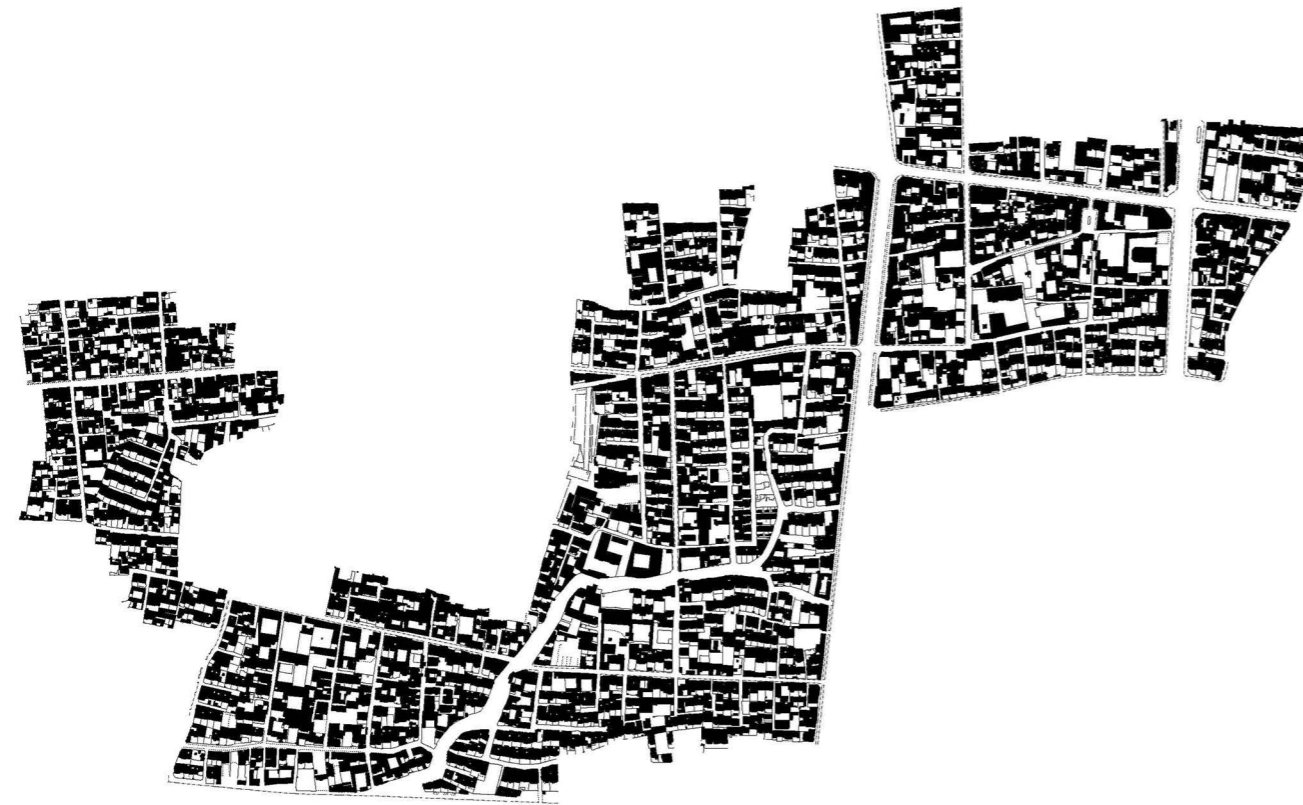
**Educational;** the neighborhood is rich in terms of education as far as it consists of many educational centers ranging from kindergarten to university as well as music schools. The existing historical schools in Jolfa are: Armenian elementary school (*Shah Abbas*) and *Armen* Girl Elementary School on southern edge of Khaghani Street, *Kataranian* Boy Middle and Highschool and *Kananian* Girl Highschool and *Kananian* Kintergarten. Different faculties of Art University of Isfahan are located in this neighborhood (except architecture and urbanism faculty) because of its rich historical background and buildings. As a result, student community is one of the main user in the district, which also can be a reason of neighborhood vitality in compare to the other neighborhoods.

**Cultural;** in terms of cultural activity, there is a deficiency in the neighborhood, as far as there are only two cultural centers among which one is only for Armenians and rest of the people are not allowed to enter. When interviewing with people and have them done the questionnaires, they mentioned the lack of cultural hub and want to have more.

**Religious;** looking at the map below, there are so many religious hubs in this neighborhood and they are churches- the main physical element of the neighborhood that cannot be seen in any other parts of the city. Among these religious hubs, there are two mosques on the west part of the district showing the presence of Muslims in the area. This is also a sign for the integration between Muslims and Christians in one neighborhood.

**Recreation- cafés and restaurants;** according to the analysis, the condensation of cafés and restaurants are mostly in Jolfa Square and that is one of the reason of its popularity since it attracts many youth and also tourists in this way, and then relatively in Charahrshou Street which is a main connecting street.

**Parking and traffic;** considering traffic issue, the problem is not lack of parking lot. As it is seen on the map below there are parking lots near high traffic nodes. The problem is excessive number of cars (in the next chapter a solution is given).



Drawing 9; filled and void in Jolfa, Isfahan  
Ref: author



Figure 28; traffic in Jolfa  
Ref: author





DISTRIBUTION OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

SC: 1/10000



DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL BUILDINGS

- UNIVERSITY FACULTIE
- MUSIC SCHOOL
- SCHOOL
- SC: 1/10000



DISTRIBUTION OF COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

SC: 1/10000



DISTRIBUTION OF CULTURAL AND SPORT CENTERS

- CULTURAL CENTERS
- SPORT CENTERS
- ONLY FOR ARMENIANS
- SC: 1/10000





DISTRIBUTION OF RELIGIOUS VENUES

- CHURCH
- MOSQUE
- SC: 1/10000



DISTRIBUTION OF PARKING LOTS AND TRAFFIC NODES

- PARKING LOT
- TRAFFIC NODE
- SC: 1/10000



DISTRIBUTION OF CAFES AND RESTAURANTS

- CAFE
- RESTAURANT
- SC: 1/10000



SOCIAL INTERACTION NODES

- SC: 1/10000



## 4.5 Physical Interventions and Changes Applied in Different Parts of Jolfa

Diagnosis and preservation of a collection of historical houses on Jolfa was an important action taken by municipality in the year 2002.<sup>115</sup>

- **Historical Landmarks;** therefore, preservation and restoration of *Faransaviha School* that reaches Shayej Madi from North was legitimated. Another action taken for maintaining historical houses was restoration of *Stepanian House* and *Jolfa Square* (year 2003).<sup>116</sup>



Faransaviha School; left: before restoration/ right: after restoration



Stepanian House; left: before restoration/ right: after restoration



Jolfa Square; left: before restoration/ right: after restoration

- **Grand Square Quarter;** taking into consideration that the area around Vank Cathedral is one of the most attractive touristic path in Isfahan and the most attractive one in Jolfa, there is a high traffic in it and therefore there might be serious damages to the cathedral, so car traffic here was limited and it became pedestrian-base path.

The pavement of *Jolfa Alley*- between Jolfa Square and Vank Cathedral- was changed in the year 2000 for both pedestrians and cars, since it was disordered due to its commercial-residential functions.<sup>117</sup>



Vank Cathedral Street; left: before restoration/ right: after restoration



Vank Cathedral façade; left: before restoration/ right: after restoration

Figure 29; restoration of historical elements of Jolfa  
Ref: Isfahan Municipality



- **Nazar Street;** It was designed and constructed narrow and straight, nevertheless it has been widened and became a roadway in this century and so, many of the valuable historical buildings along it and in its margin have been demolished and instead, new residential buildings have been replaced. Therefore, nothing has been left from its historical framework.<sup>118</sup>

- **Khaghani Street;** during recent years its end has been widened and connected to Vahid Avenue. This fact has led to easier transportation for vehicles but worse traffic. Constructing high-rise buildings along this street, despite the master plan which is based on no increase in building height, has destroyed the historical framework of Jolfa in this area.<sup>119</sup> It was also disordered in terms of pedestrian paths, streams, crofts, parking lots, etc. but later on was organized through widening sidewalks, providing crofts and short-time stays along the street in the year 2002. However, it did not work well as it was supposed to in terms of traffic and for its sidewalk.<sup>120</sup>

- **Sangtarashha;** in the master plan for this pathway, just like the other historical ones, vehicle traffic limitation and restoration of historical facades are suggested.<sup>121</sup> Pavement change and organization of this quarter was done in the year 2001 with the aim of omitting vehicular traffic and maintaining its main framework.<sup>122</sup>

- **Tabriziha and Chaharsou;** the pavement was changed in the year 2001.<sup>123</sup>

Despite of all these pavement changes and try to make the path more pedestrian-base, but there are still cars everywhere, even on sidewalks. This issue can be a threat for pedestrians' safety, since in case of narrow or blocked sidewalk they move into the street.



Figure 30; crofts, short-time stay for cars, and sidewalk intervention in Khaghani Street  
Ref: author



Figure 31; change of pavement in Sangtarashha Street; left: before restoration/ right: after restoration  
Ref: municipality of Isfahan



Figure 32; sidewalks in Chaharsou Street  
Ref: author

<sup>118</sup> See note 59

<sup>120</sup> See note 73

<sup>122</sup> See note 73

<sup>119</sup> See note 59

<sup>121</sup> See note 59

<sup>123</sup> See note 73



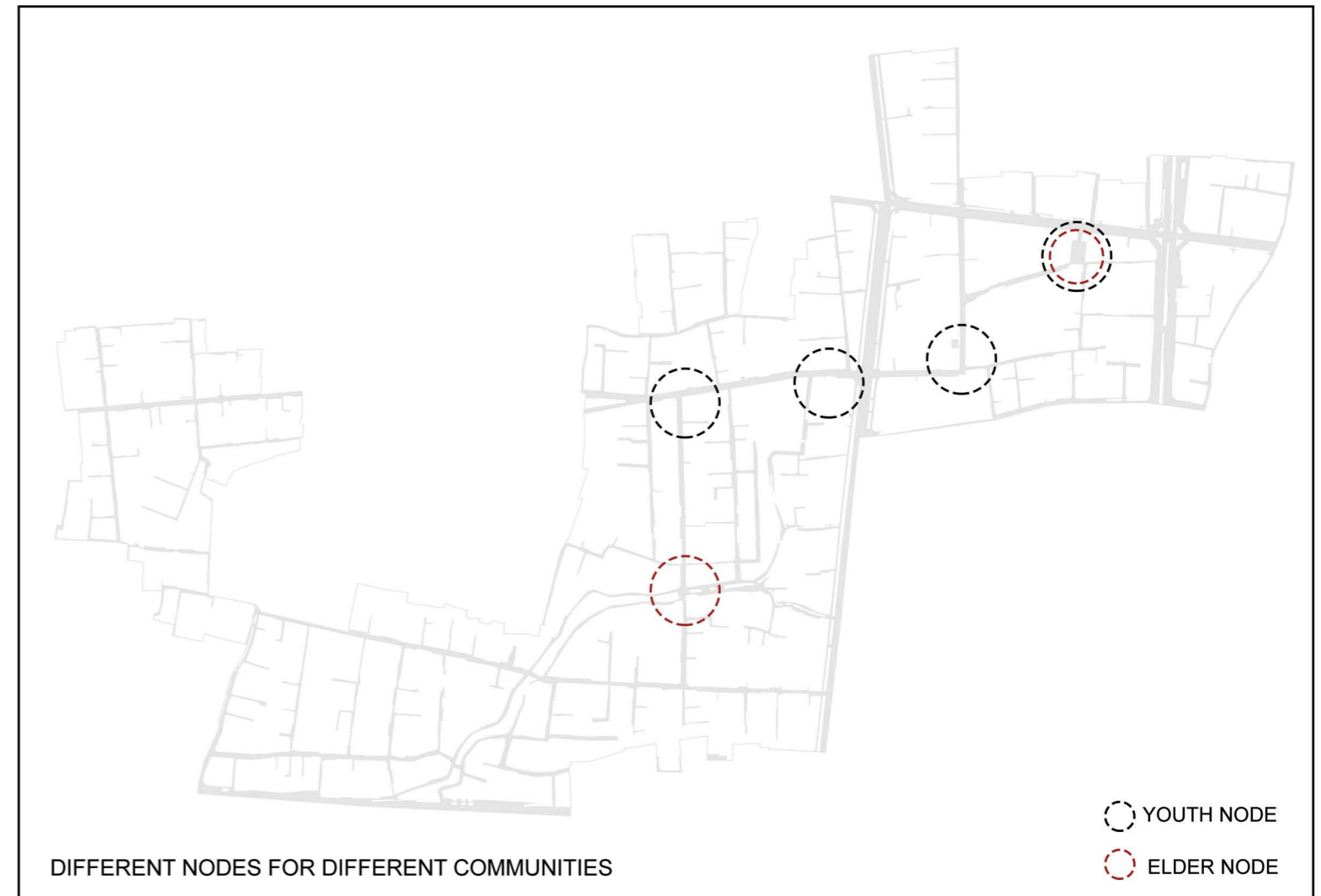
## 4.6 Social Behavior in Jolfa:

Social nodes are places where people gather and different behavior occur. It can be closed public spaces such as Pardis Commercial Center, Orkideh Commercial Center, and Refah Department Store, which their users are not only the locals but also some people from other districts, or open spaces such as Shekarchian Crossroad and intersection of Shayej Madi with Sangtarashha Street where inhabitants gather in their spare time. In such spaces the presence of the water besides other natural elements like sunlight and vegetation not only makes the space more interactive but also strengthens the local sense of belonging. There is another category of nodes which is semi-public-semi-private places, where it is not possible to be used by all people and in all hours. These places are for gathering people with certain features in common. To name some, there are some churches, a mosque, and Ararat Club.<sup>123</sup>

In social behavior one important question is “How different groups and ages of people use space?” that should be answered in design. The answer is (according to observations), eldermen prefer to gather, sit and talk (as it is bold and seen daily in Shekarchian intersection), elderwomen prefer to be inside houses or outside by their doors gathering with other elderwomen (it seems they want to have their privacy), youth prefer to go to cafés or to walk, and kids prefer to play outside.



Figure 33; eldermen and elderwomen gathering together  
Ref: author



Drawing 11; youth and elder node in Jolfa  
Ref: author

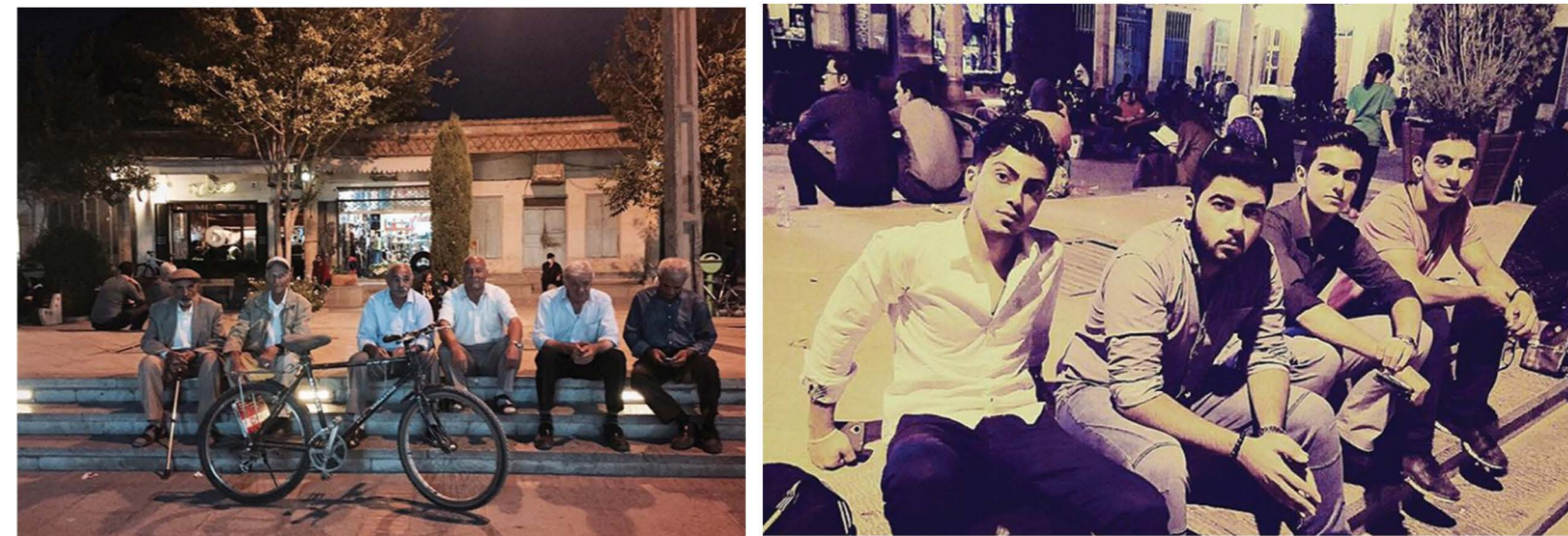


Figure 34; Jolfa Square is used by both youth and elder people  
Ref: photographer: Maryam Doostman





CONDENSATION OF PEOPLE- DAY USERS



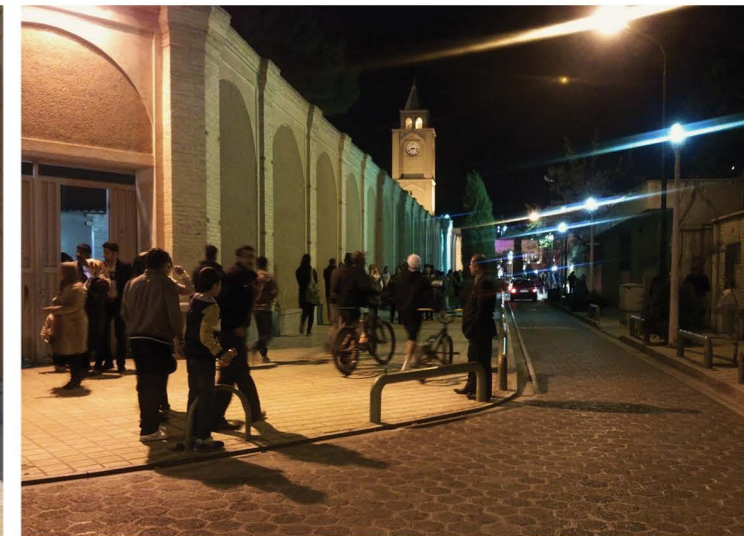
CONDENSATION OF PEOPLE- NIGHT USERS



1. Day and night users in Jolfa Square  
Main users: all communities specially youth  
Main activities: sitting, chatting, and goinf to cafe



2. Day and night users in front of Vank cathedral  
Main users: all communities specially tourists  
Main activities: visiting cathedral, walking, and sitting



3. Day and night users in Shekarchian Intersection  
Main users: Locals specially eldermen  
Main activities: sitting and chatting



Figure 35; day users and night users in Jolfa  
Ref: author





vendors  
individuals  
sitting



shopping  
walking  
people in two  
chatting



going to cafe  
groups  
chatting



taking p



student life  
shopkeepers







walking

playing instrument

shopping

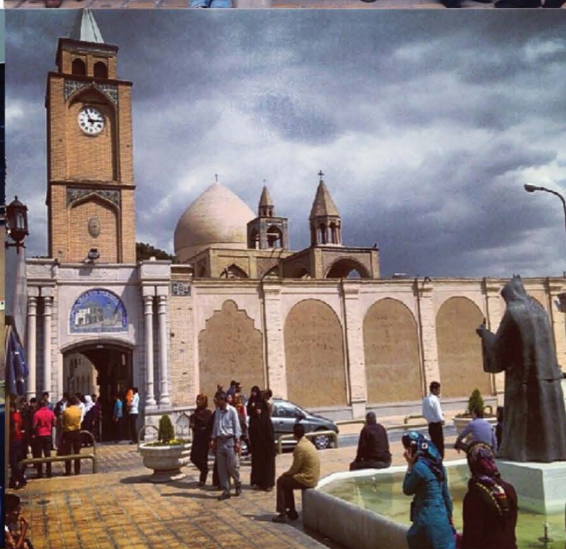
looking at others



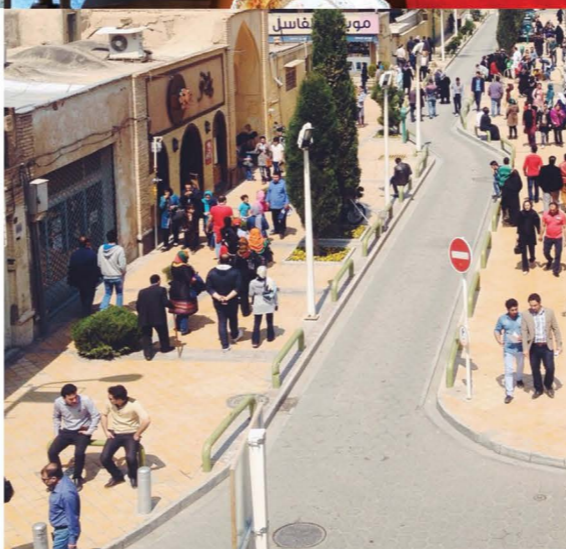
how people use spaces daily



photos and selfies



social behavior





**Sound and Smell as Intangible Heritage:**

Characteristics that determine districts are not only the visual ones: sound and smell are important as well. They sometimes reinforce visual landmarks.

In this neighborhood specific sounds and smells which can be considered as intangible heritages of Armenian district as well, are the smell of coffee, church bell, and Armenian language.

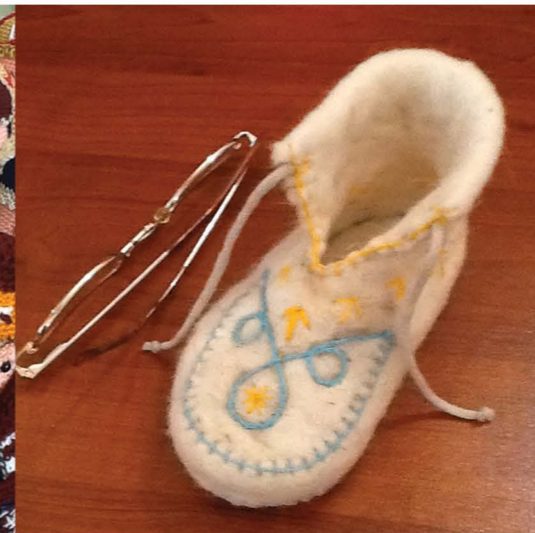
Other Armenian intangible heritages that can be named are their festivals and rituals (they are explained in the previous chapter), their traditional dance, handicraft, and cuisine- they have a special type of sweet bread called "Gata".



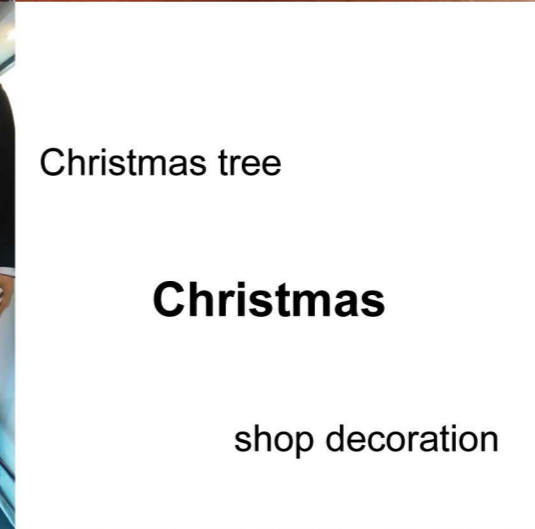
Gata- Armenian sweet bread

**cuisine**

coffee



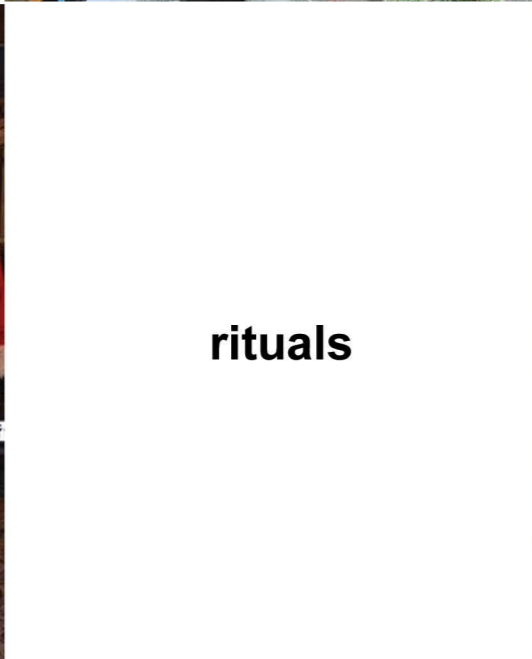
**handcraft**



Christmas tree

**Christmas**

shop decoration



**rituals**





ZONE	ATMOSPHERE	USERS	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
1	-Leisure -Tourism	-All ages; mostly youth -Tourists -Cafémen	-Tourist attractions -Concentration of cafés and restaurants -Pedestrian-bases route -Open public spaces -Night life	-Traffic	-Tourist attractions -Presence of different communities	
2	-Commercial	-Shopkeepers -Other citizens; mostly youth	-Concentration of shops and commercial buildings -Commercial center -Wide sidewalks -Night life	-Heavy traffic -Visual disturbance (Shops billboards)	-Good accessibility	-Traffic -Constructing high-rise buildings
3	-Educational -Residential	-Locals; mostly elder people and Muslims -Students	-Art Univesity -Music Schools -Presence of public node (Shekarchian Intersection) -Green spaces -Pedestrian-based route	-Traffic -Improper pavement for cars -No night life -Visual disturbance (no homogeneity between new buildings' material)	-Historical houses -Presence of madi -Green spaces along madi	-Diminishing of green spaces -Draught of Madi -New construction -No safety at night
<b>JOLFA DISTRICT IN GENERAL</b>	-Leisure -Commercial -Residential -Educational	-All ages -All societies and classes of people -Muslims and Christians	-Tourist attractions -Feeling of safety and comfort -Sense of belonging -Night life -Cafés and restaurants -Adequate traffic signs -Illegal products (such as alcohol)	-Traffic -Poor-qualified spaces around valuable historical buildings -Lack of attention to social nodes and public spaces -No public space for locals like parks	-Historical buildings -Different culture and custom; intangible heritage -Churches -Presence of Madi -Social diversity -Tourism -Good accessibility to the main city streets	-Traffic -Lack of attention to historical buildings -Growing trend of constructing high-risers -Lack of green and open spaces -Population growth -Decrease in Armenians population -Draught of Madies

Table 3; SWOT ANALYSIS IN DIFFERENT ZONES



DIFFERENT ZONES OF JOLFA NEIGHBORHOOD AND THEIR MAIN USERS FOR SWOT ANALYSIS

Drawing 12; users of different zones in Jolfa  
Ref: author

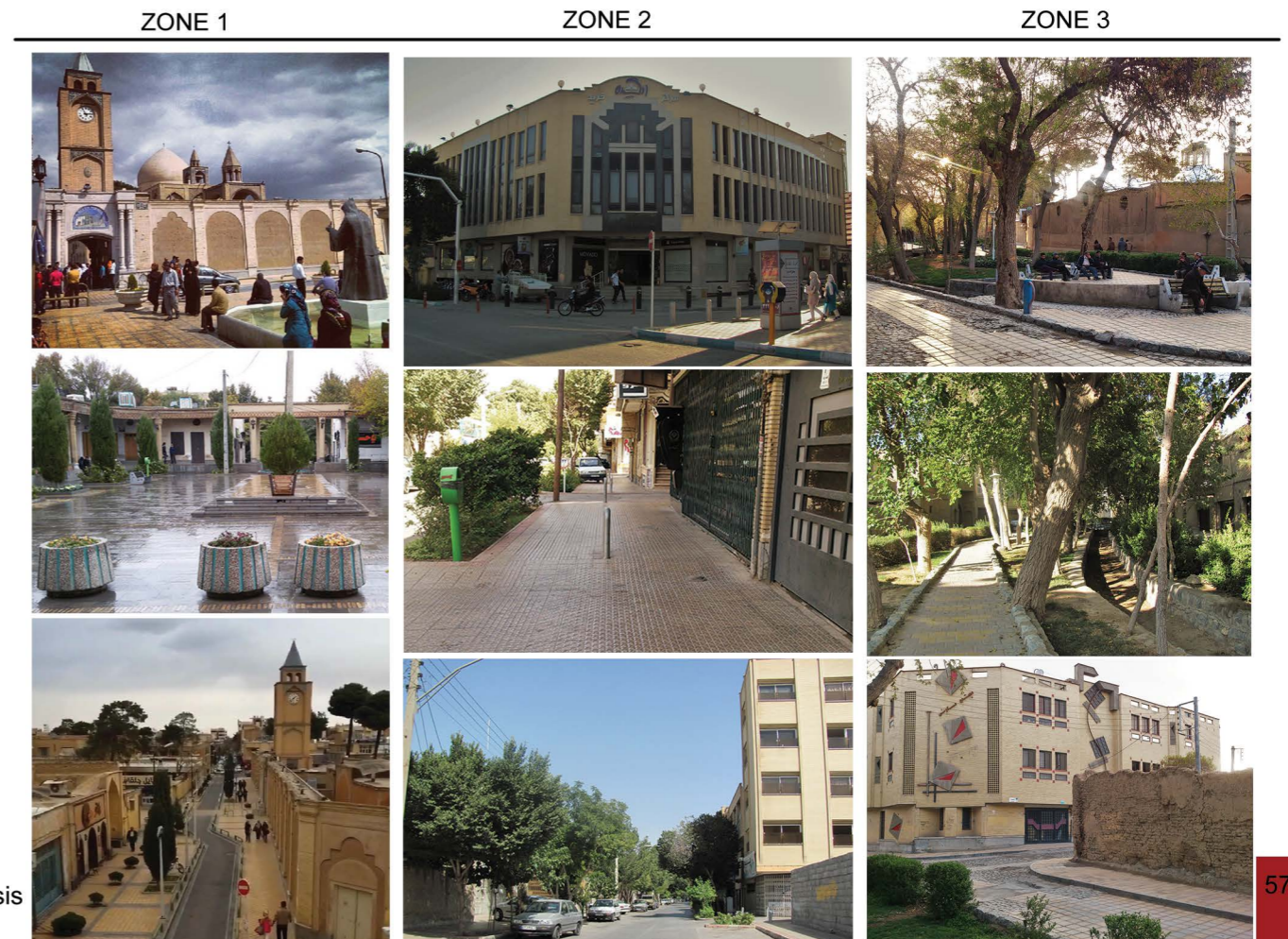


Figure 36; images for SWOT analysis  
Ref: author



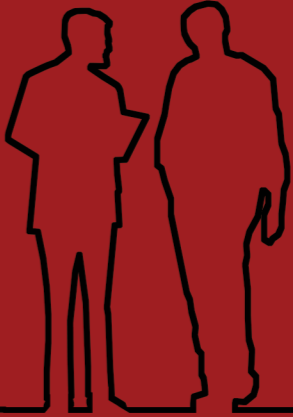
Having a valuable historical background, Isfahan's Jolfa neighborhood is of unique and distinctive attributes as evidenced by churches existed in this neighborhood. Having various cultural functions besides providing localized and globalized services, this neighborhood acts as a tourist attractor or magnet. Old houses with a change in their applications are functioning at best. The existence of small nodes and squares such as Jolfa Square in the neighborhood with service centers all around them is one of the extant historical attributes of this neighborhood with high rate of pedestrian movement.

Unfortunately, like other historical neighborhoods, Jolfa has experienced new transformations and alternations, among which construction of new streets without paying attention to the remained historical axes, lack of coherence between building materials and the context, physical and environmental disorder, and ignoring the status of the historical elements can be mentioned. This can be attributed to the fact that the status of a space in the macro-structure of the city is the primary factor which has a bearing on the entry of the pedestrian as well as tourists into an urban space.

To sum up, almost nothing has been remained of the historical fabric of Jolfa due to this destruction process and only a few of Safavid and Qajar buildings have been revived. Most of the pathways have been widened and because of this gradual widening an unpleasant space has been formed. Besides the pavement changing for some pathways in order to make them more friendly and pedestrian-base, it was an unsuccessful intervention as far as there are not less cars and less traffic. Most of the madies' streams that is part of the historical heritage of environmental engineering of Isfahan, have been draught due to the climatic issue and improper water consumption planning, and the trees and green spaces along them are disappearing day by day.



5. PROJECT









## 5.1 Project References

### Pop-up café

A few years ago, New York City began implementing a slew of tactical urbanism “*pilot*” projects that add public space and improve street safety. By making quick, low cost improvements using temporary and/or inexpensive materials. Seeing the wisdom of this deliberate, low-cost approach, city officials in San Francisco developed their own “*Pavement to Parks*” program, which makes use of the same tactics to achieve the same results: more public space, safer streets. Not to be outdone, NYC took the cue and has since added their own “*pop-up*” cafes, which are typically placed in front of restaurants where sidewalk widths preclude outdoor sidewalk seating. While the seats are open to restaurant patrons and non-patrons alike, intelligent business owners surely see the benefit to making space for people to linger in front of their establishments. Since last fall, several pop-up cafes have been built in Manhattan, adding much needed places to sit and enjoy the City’s wonderful street life.<sup>124</sup>

### Spread Furnishing

"The idea of the new development and actions on the Targ Węglowy square came at a time when the parking function disappeared from the historic square, and nothing new has come on its place. Car-free space presented the opportunity to propose a new, organized public square, which the Main City in Gdańsk lacks. City Culture Institute in collaboration with GDYBY group proposed temporary space in the form of urban grassland rooms, as one of the many possibilities of organizing this place and to inspire some subsequent actions."

"Form of the design was a result of its temporary character and a relatively small budget, but also a need to neutrally interfere with historical surroundings. The main idea was to drag the citizens into kind of a game, in which they participated from the moment they entered the square. GDYBY group designed a light modular OSB furnishings in a form of cubic boxes."

"Users had the opportunity to create their own little spaces in which they felt comfortably. Kids were creating their ideal playgrounds and geometrical compositions, while adults used cubes as tables, seats and space divisions. The whole arrangement was completed with natural grass areas which created „rooms” and gathered people around them. This intervention helped manage the considerable size of the square making it a little bit cozier."

"The essence of the project was very forward-looking and based on the principle of public participation. Residents of the city by adapting and arranging the space according to their needs, passed important information about what is needed in the square."

Location: Gdańsk, Poland

Organization: City Culture Institute, City of Gdańsk

Project and realization: GDYBY group<sup>125</sup>



Figure 37; the first pop-up café; Brooklyn, 2011, Mike Lydon  
Ref: <http://patterncities.com>



Figure 38; new public space for Targ Węglowy Square, Gdańsk, Poland, 2013, Gdby Group,  
Ref: left photo: Dominik Werner/ right photo: Wojciech Ostrowski

<sup>124</sup> <http://patterncities.com/archives/613>

<sup>125</sup> [http://www.bustler.net/index.php/article/gdyby\\_group\\_project\\_shows\\_potential\\_of\\_empty\\_historic\\_targ\\_weglowsky\\_square\\_i](http://www.bustler.net/index.php/article/gdyby_group_project_shows_potential_of_empty_historic_targ_weglowsky_square_i)



## 5.2 Concept

Based on definition and also what it comes out from history, minority groups are the ones who are under discrimination in terms of social, economic, etc. On the other hand, based on history and observations, Armenians in Isfahan were not discriminated during some periods of time and had a good economic and social situation. Thinking of the reason why, we got to know that it was because they were in contact and had interaction with other people including Armenians and non-Armenians. The merchants had a wide relation with other countries which led to a prosperity in terms of economy for them and even for the city. On the other side, it is seen that some families were in a better social and economic situation and these were the ones who were in contact with the court. Thus, it is concluded that interaction and integration played an important role for their social and economic situation in that time.

On the other hand, as it has been said in the first chapter, interculturality develops a community as far as juxtaposition and interaction of different religions and cultures brings new ideas, new opportunities, etc.

Having these two factors in mind, the city and the community of Isfahan, as it has its potential background in terms of having different cultures (due to presence of Armenians) to be an intercultural hub, can be developed by meeting Armenians' needs and have them as positive power of the city.

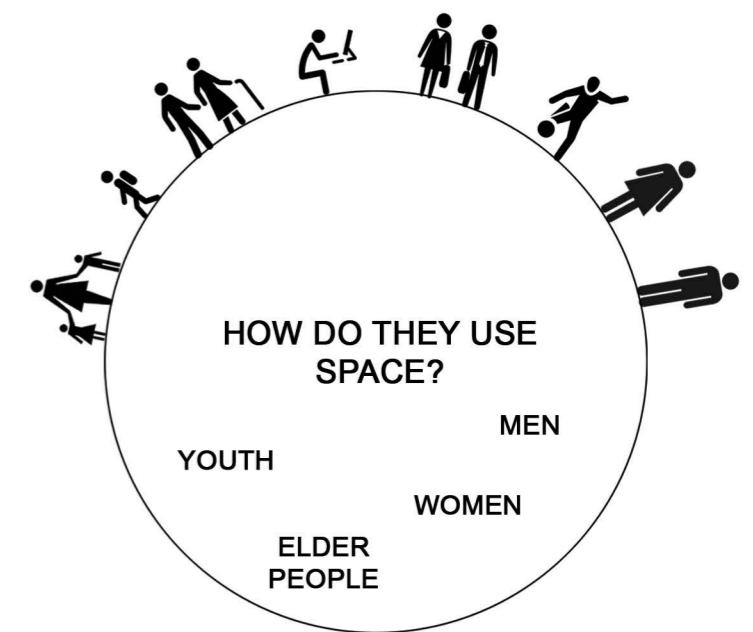
Furthermore, the identity of this potential background which is Jolfa district- the Armenian district should be preserved, that was and is the presence of Armenians. Nowadays, based on the interviews and questionnaires, it is seen that the Armenian population is decreasing that is a threat for this neighborhood. Trying to understand the reason why it is happening, some key features came out such as economic problem and job issue, diminishing historical and social fabric, religious issue, etc. (they are explained with more detail on the following diagram). So, meeting their needs and providing them with different opportunities which can make them stay, is a necessity.

ARMENIANS, THE IDENTITY OF JOLFA ARMENIANS POPULATION IS DECREASING WHY?		
<b>ECONOMIC PROBLEM; JOB ISSUE</b>  -No governmental job -Few job opportunity related to their profession	<b>NO IMPROVEMENT, NEITHER BEING EXPRESSED</b>  -Little cultural openness	<b>DIMINISHING HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL FABRIC</b>  -High traffic; pollution -New construction
-More integration; more connection; more job opportunity	-Expressing intangible heritage	-Walkable community; seatable community -Restriction for construction
THEY NEED TO HAVE INNER AND OUTER INTERGRATION PLACE-MAKING FOR DIFFERENT USERS		
-Third places -Public spaces -Public art; installation, performance	-Continuity of coffee smell, church bell sound, Armenian language -Market; cuisine and handicraft	-Less car; more sidewalk; wider sidewalk -continuity of sidewalk -Sitting places

Table 4; concept and strategies  
Ref: author



Figure 39; integration; WE DO BETTER TOGETHER  
Ref: <https://rainbowlable10.wordpress.com>



Drawing 13; how do people use space  
Ref: author

To conclude, the main concept of this project is to bring *interaction and integration* between different communities. Then, the question is which are the spaces and functions with what criteria that makes interaction and integration.

The main factor for interaction and integration is presence of people as well as taking into account their *activities and needs*. Therefore, the users and their needs have been studied and resulted into some strategies.

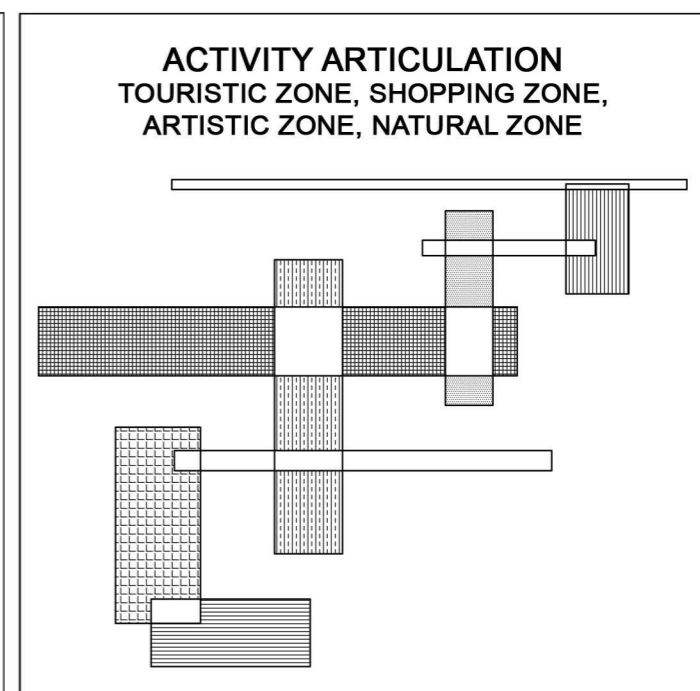
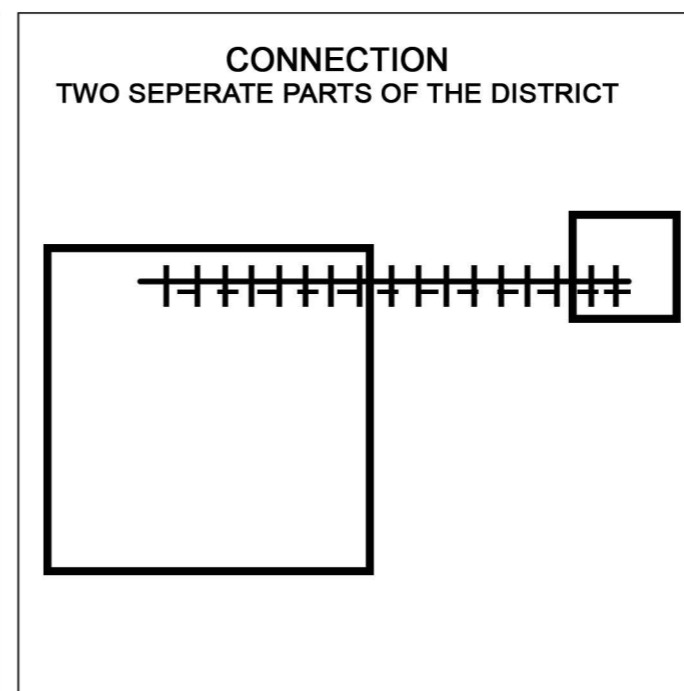
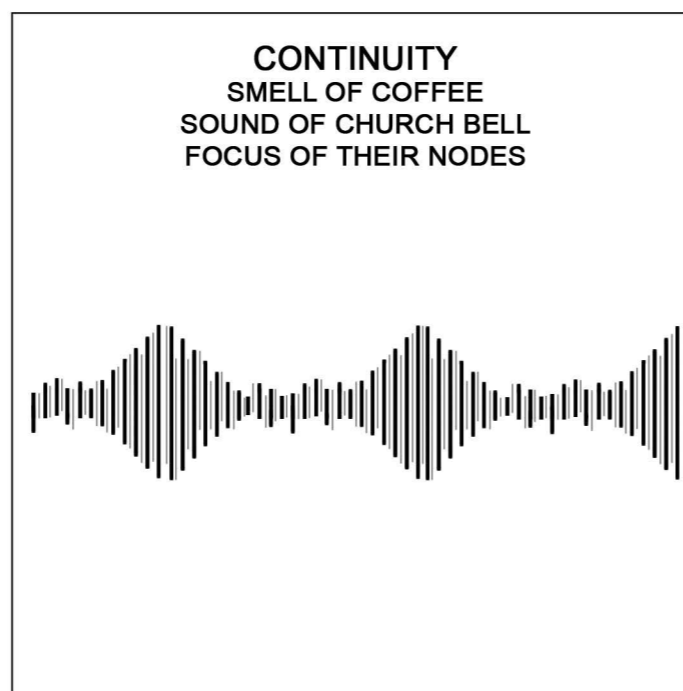
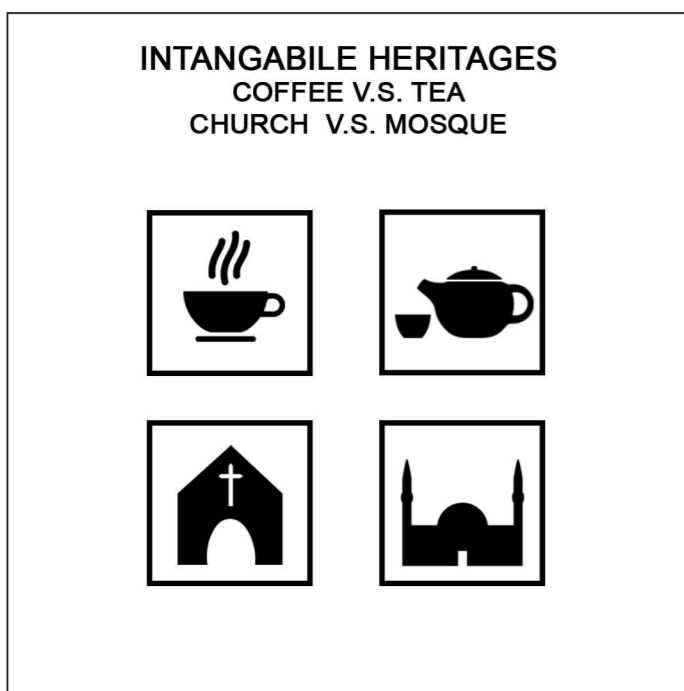
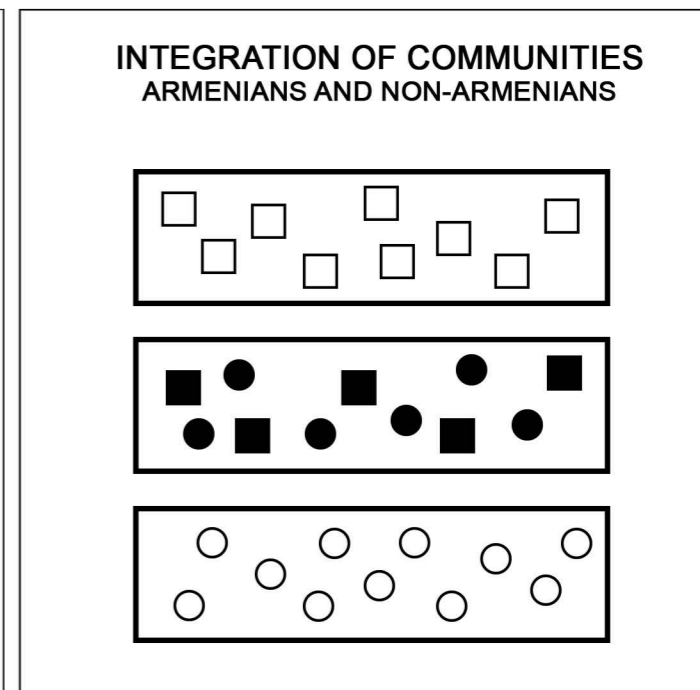
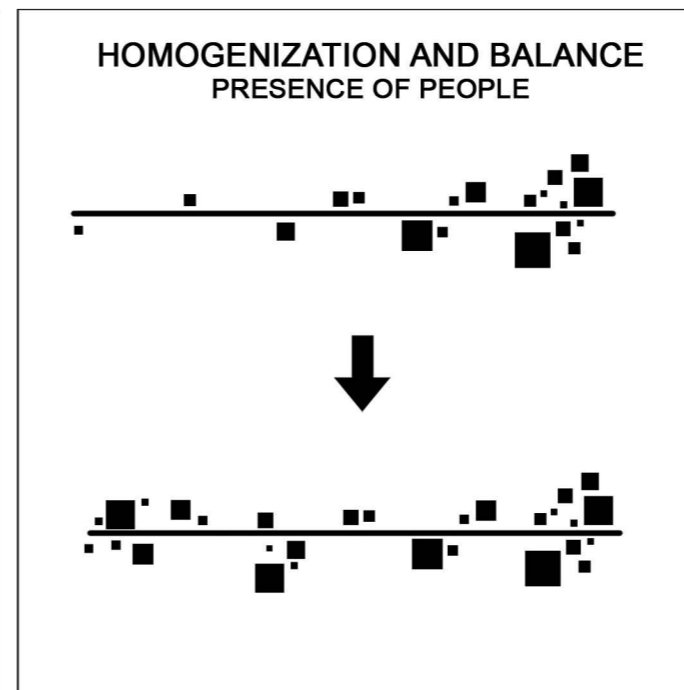
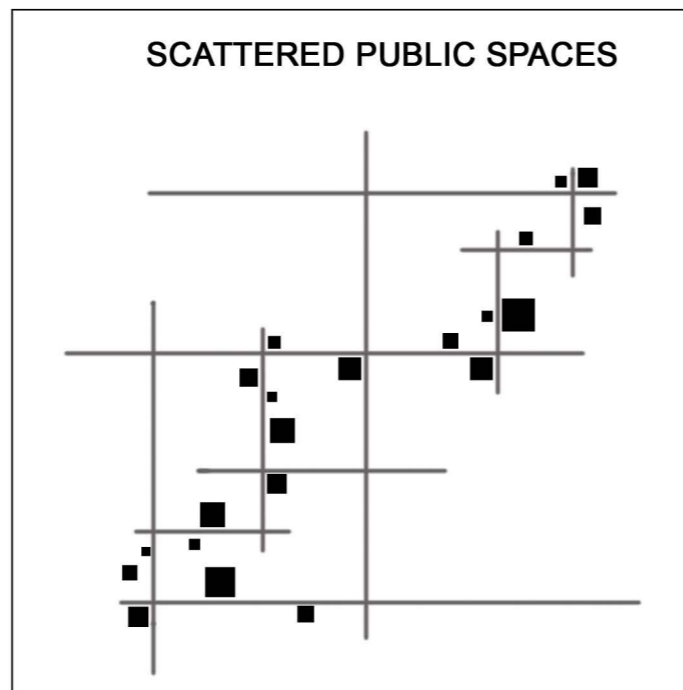
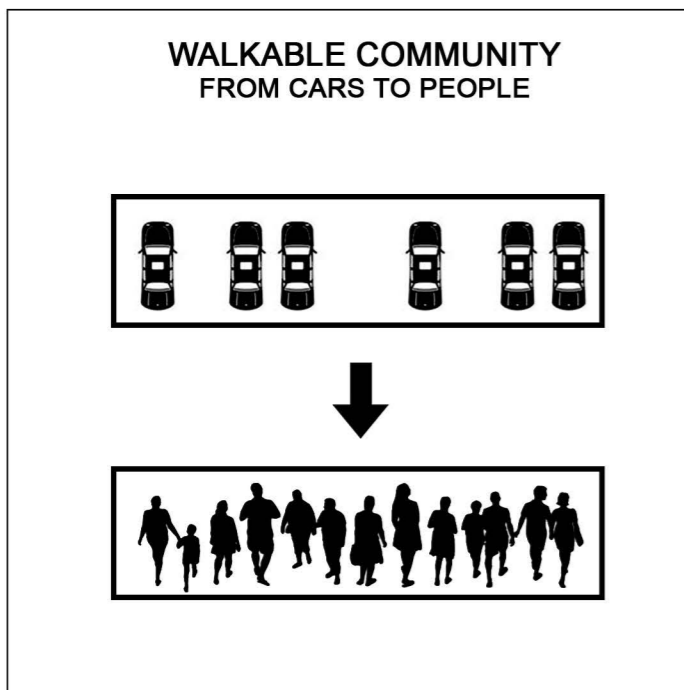
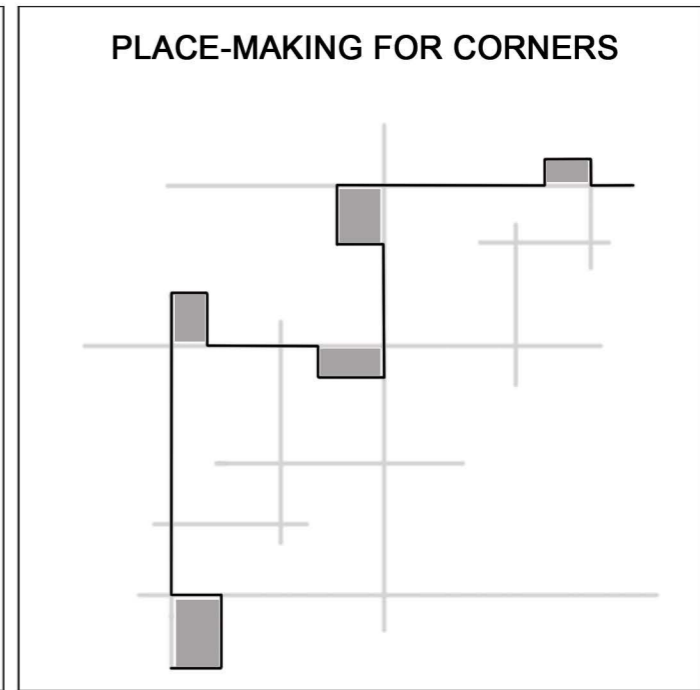
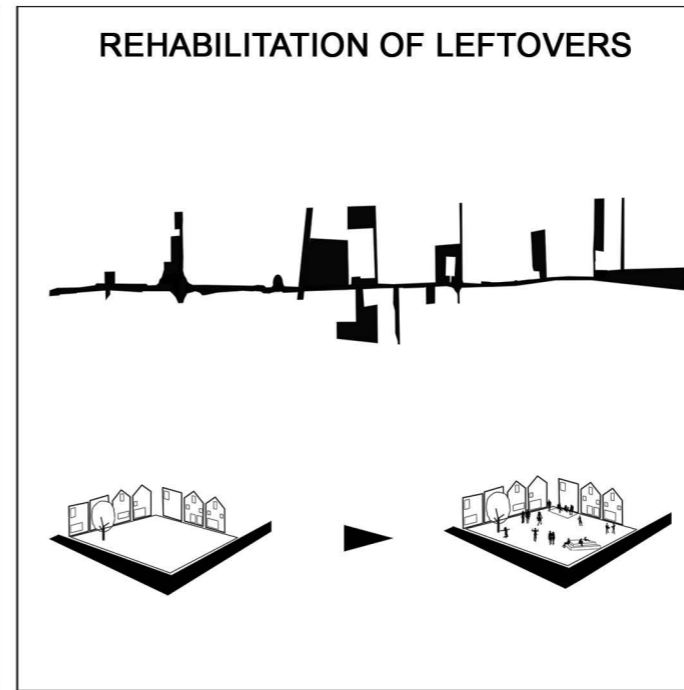
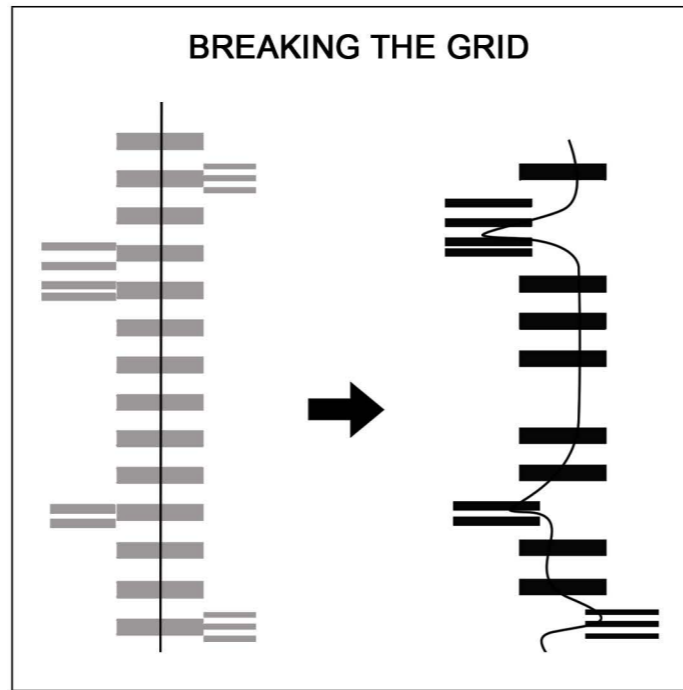
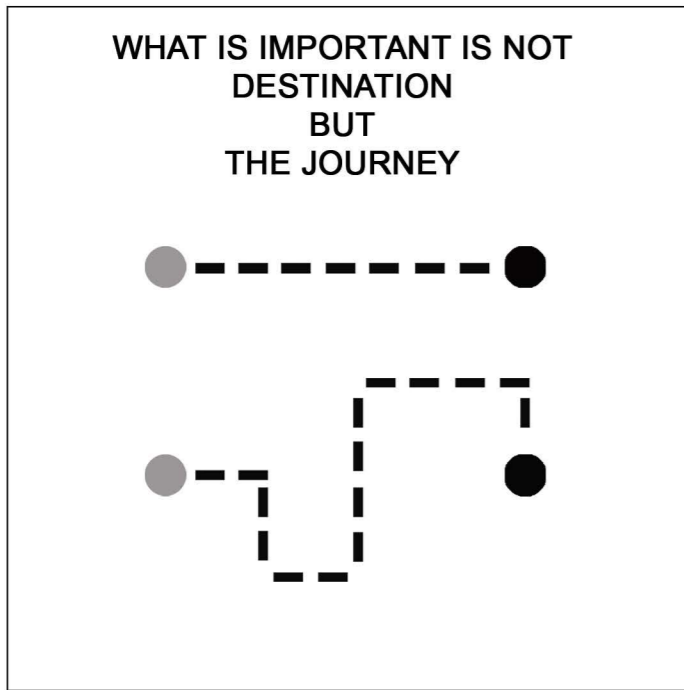
As a response to the question "What first comes to your mind, what symbolizes the word "Jolfa" for you? How would you broadly describe Jolfa in a physical sense?" in interviews, most people stated Jolfa as "Armenian District" which is known by the essence of Armenian people (especially perceived while talking with their different language), and what described Jolfa for them in a physical sense was more related to the existence of Churches (which cannot be seen in any other parts of Isfahan), Jolfa Square, and some functions that are customs and social facts like rituals, and people making wine and drinking alcohol.

The main idea is to add people to the pathway. The presence of people should be spread out all over the path (currently it is like a gradient becoming less in crown from its east part to west part), in order to make the path homogenous; however, it goes from more historical and touristic part, to commercial one, and then to residential part.

Another idea is to provide more open and green spaces, since based on the analysis the neighborhood is so dense and has a lack of open spaces. Due to the fact that providing green spaces in such hot and dry climate is unfeasible, the existing green spaces along the Madi can be enhanced in quality. Besides, new plantations result better along water stream in terms of their irrigation (having in mind that Isfahan and in general Iran suffers from lack of water). The image below shows the filled and void spaces of the area.

Interventions done in this project are based on the main idea, that is *integration and interaction*, and since in this area Armenians and non-Armenians live in juxtaposition, provided spaces, functions, and their designs, are in a way that they meet the needs of both communities. For instance, there is a node of condensation of cafés (already is in Jolfa Square) and in the master plan a node of condensation of teahouses is being proposed (as two have both different cultures of drinking).







### 5.3 Selected Path

The pathway has been selected based on various issues such as users, functions, existing buildings, etc. As a response to the question “*what elements of Jolfa you think are the most distinctive?*” in interviews, most people named *Jolfa Square*, *Vank Cathedral*, and *Madi* (water stream). Taking people’s responses into account, the path is proposed in a way it includes the main elements and people’s mental image of the area and connects these main elements.

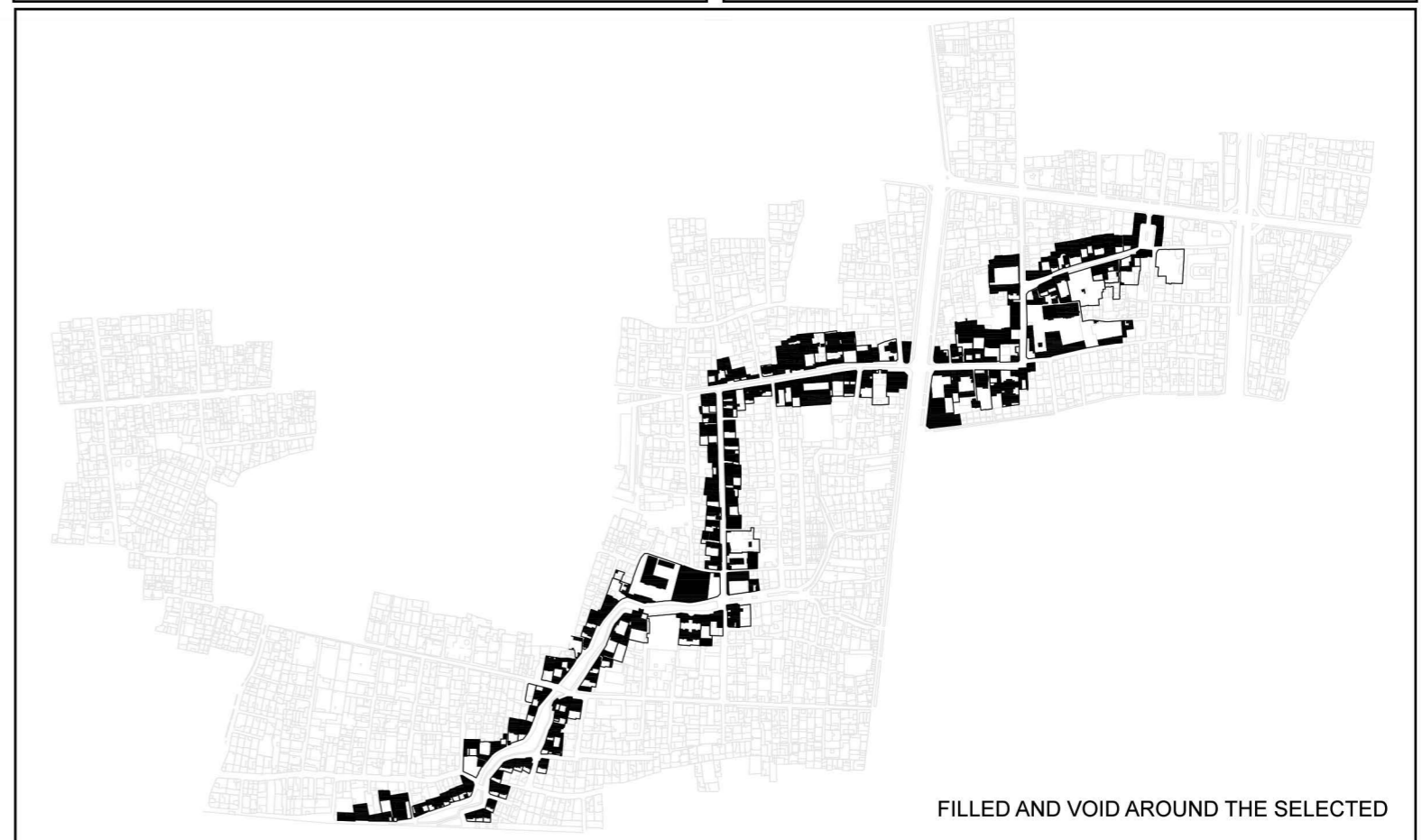
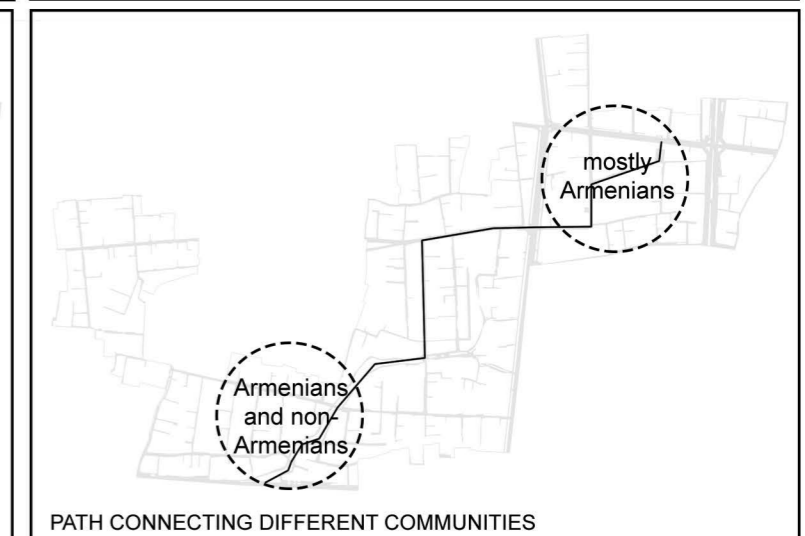
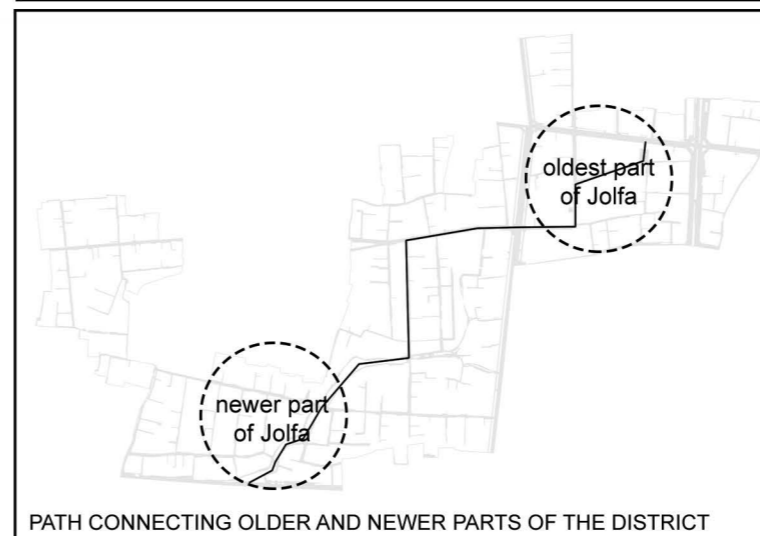
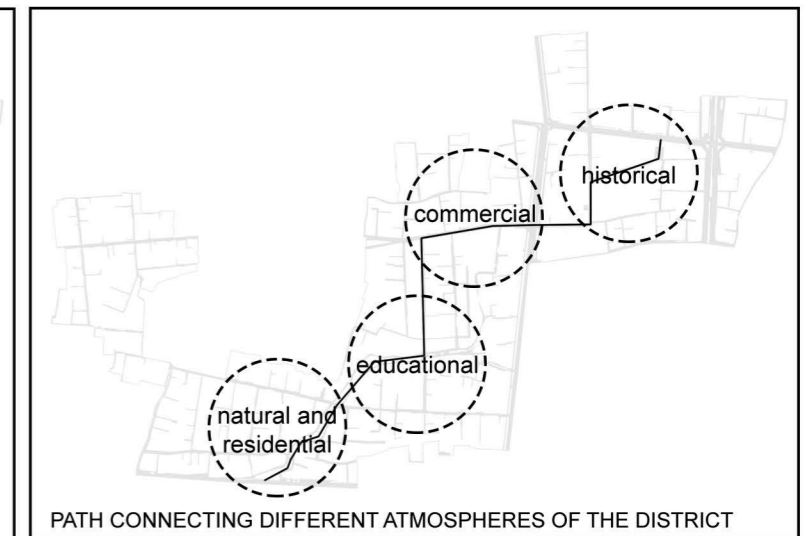
The starting point of the journey is Jolfa Square. It has been chosen as the starting point because it is the most known part of Jolfa District and also the most historical part of it. Many of the people who did the questionnaire mentioned this square as the first thing coming to their mind about Jolfa neighborhood (their mental image of the neighborhood). Currently it is a crowded node used by different groups of people especially the youth (mainly due to the presence of cafés). As *William H. Whyte* says in his “*Place-making Conference*” (2013- University of Oklahoma), “*What attracts people most it would appear, is other people*”<sup>126</sup>, a dense area gets denser, and this node plays an important role of attracting people and is a good starting point.

However, the ending point of the journey is a natural node with water stream and green spaces around it (where for now, does not have a good quality of space as far as there is not any activities around it except new residential houses), which has the potentiality of becoming an urban public space. Furthermore, this node is by one of the main streets around the site which ease the journey of the crowd in terms of transportation (yet the transportation system should be enhanced and more bus and taxi stations are needed).

The route is chosen in a way that it passes through different realities and atmospheres of the site ranging from historical, commercial, educational, residential, and natural. It passes from the oldest part of Jolfa that was Grand Square in the past (currently Jolfa Square), to more recent parts of it that is Tabriziha Pathway, from areas dedicated mostly to Armenians, to areas dedicated both to Armenians and non-Armenians, especially in terms of inhabitants, from condensation of churches, to less and less churches and presence of mosques like a gradient (nonetheless, along the chosen path we do not reach to any mosques) and it reflects the continuity of the church bell as we consider sound and smell as key elements of a place identity. Therefore both cultures can be seen along the path as well as different groups of people with different ages which can bring more life to the neighborhood as a socially sustainable neighborhood since social diversity results in neighborhood vitality.

Another reason of choosing the path, refers to the historical buildings. The ones which worth visiting, the ones which needs to be restored and renovated, and the ones which are abandoned or demolished. A survey done by cultural organization has been used for knowing these valuable historical buildings with all of their details including history, function, users, etc. So they can be used as potential surfaces.

Moreover, another factor for choosing this path is connecting streets. All of the streets which are a part of this path, are important connecting streets, or connecting two nodes, or reaching to a main street. Furthermore, mainly they do not pass among the residential parts in order to have the possibility for new uses and users, since residential areas need to have their own privacy and calmness which would be disturbed by presence of too many people.

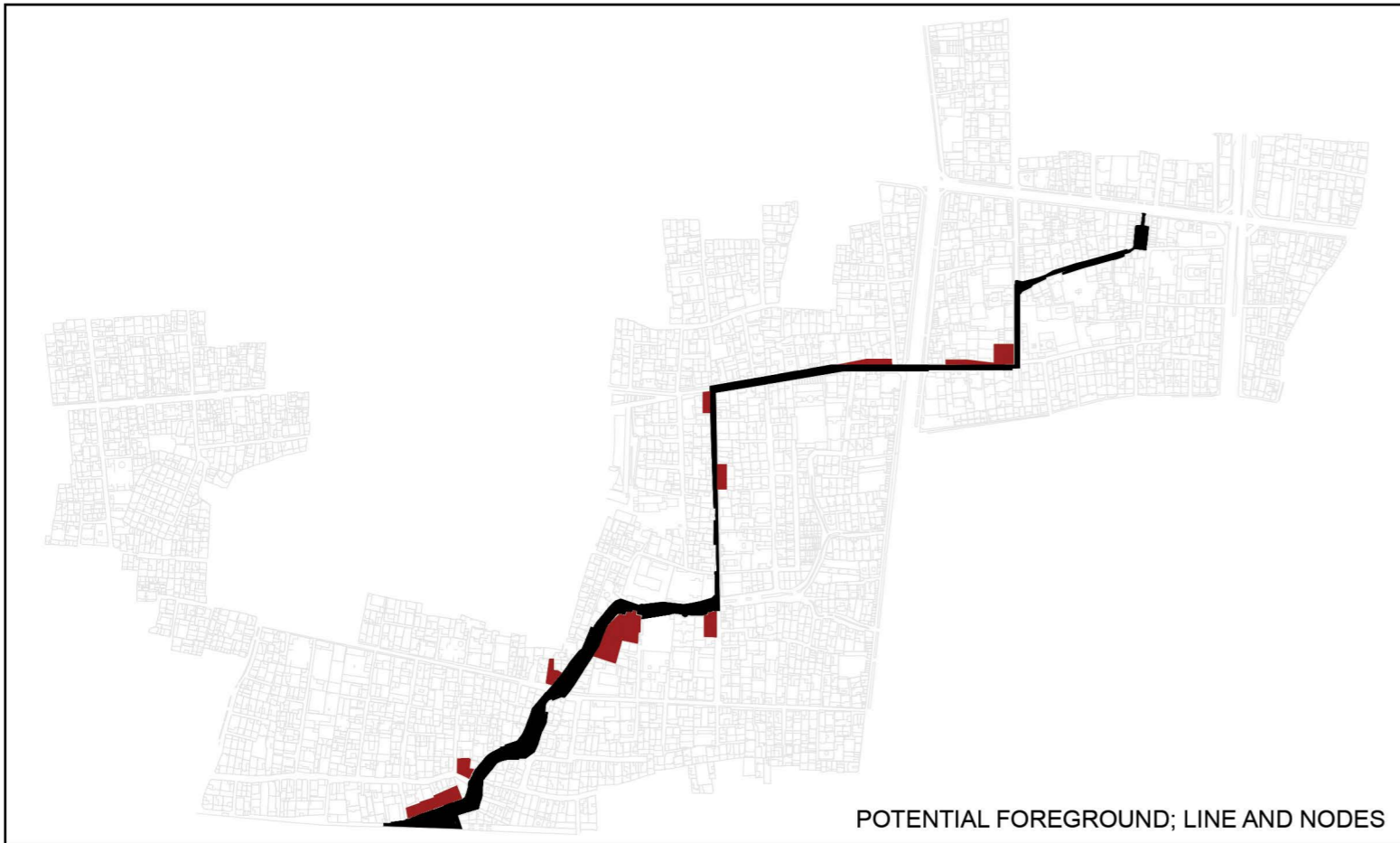


Drawing 15; why this path is selected?  
Ref: author





Number of the Block	Dates Back	Number of Stories	Area (m2)	Current Situation	Current Use	Ownership	Master Plan	My Proposal
1	Pahlavi	2	720	Urgent Need of Restoration	Abandoned	Private	Residential	Music Performance/ Open Square
2	Qajar	2	1130	Urgent Need of Restoration	Residential	Armenian Caliphate	Residential	Arc center
3	Safavid	2	628	Demolished	Abandoned	Private	Residential	Open Square/ related to art center
4	Pahlavi	1	970	Urgent Need of Restoration	Residential	Private	Residential	Art center
5	Qajar	1	439	Demolished	Abandoned	Armenian Caliphate	Green Space	Children playground
6	Qajar	2	1580	Demolished	Abandoned	Private	Religious-Cultural/ Preserving the Existing Building	Park for elder people



Drawing 16; potential foreground  
Ref: author



Figure 40; historical buildings to be reused or demolished  
Ref: Ministry of Culture and Art



All the proposed functions are based on the analysis, observations, and questionnaires done by people, what the neighborhood lacks, inhabitants and users' needs, and overall what strengthens the *vitality* of the neighborhood using public spaces as discussed in the previous chapter.

To answer these needs, in the master plan some functions have been proposed, like a node for elderly, nodes of cafés and teahouses, a pedestrian pathway, and a playground. Other proposed functions are related to the neighborhood vitality such two pop-up cafés as sitting spaces, a node for public art, a node for music performance, one open square which work with the arc center (which itself is a proposed function for the restoration of two historical buildings), and one open square with shops as Armenian handcraft shops.

In order to strengthen the vitality of the neighborhood, it is also important for it to have night life. In some parts such as Jolfa Square and Khaghani Street there is night life due to the presence of cafés, restaurants, and shops, while there is a lack of night life in other parts especially as it goes toward residential area as discussed in previous chapter. Since night life has a relation with the presence of people in an area, and that of one of the effective factors for feeling of safety is presence of people as well, it is an important factor for a district, especially a one that wants to be and become socially sustainable. According to the observations and analysis, there is a higher opportunity of night life wherever there is an activity. So the idea is to propose activities along the path which attract people, and as a result having the crowd spread over the path rather than just concentration of them in some few nodes.

5.4.1. Pedestrian Pathway

By providing a pedestrian path and having it continued, the area will be more alive and streets works as public spaces, besides the fact that this area suffers from a high traffic and therefore air pollution, and having a pedestrian pathway can be a good solution to this issue.

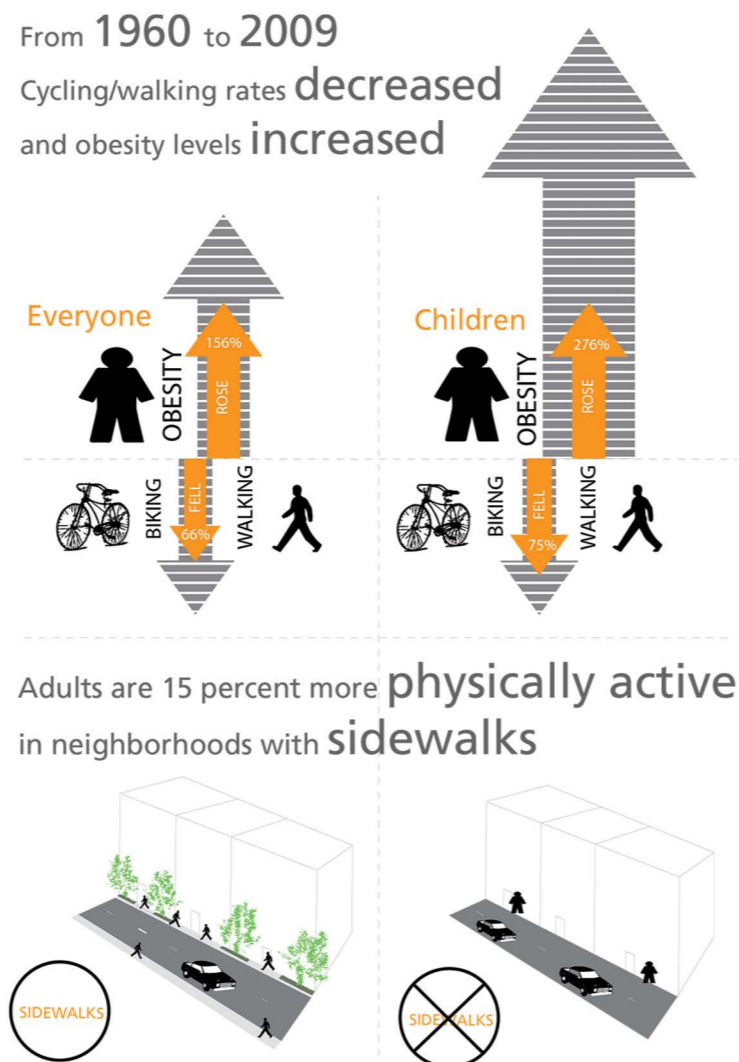


Figure 41; effects of sidewalks on people mentally and physically  
Ref: place-making conference, university of Oklahoma, 2013, Ethan Kent

5.4.2 Shared Street

“A *Shared Street* is a street with single grade or surface that is shared by people using all modes of travel at slow speeds. Curbs are removed, and the sidewalk is blended with the roadway. Speeds are slow enough to allow for pedestrians to intermingle with bicycles, motor vehicles, and transit. Shared streets can support a variety of land uses, including commercial and retail activity, entertainment venues, restaurants, offices, and residences. They are unique space where people can slow down to enjoy the public realm, and create an environment where everyone must pay attention due to the organic movement of people.

Because shared streets are at one grade, materials can vary. These streets are often surfaced pavers or other types of decorative surface treatments.

Overall, the primary design consideration for Shared Streets is maintaining slow vehicular speeds (no more than 15 mph) in order to minimize the potential for conflicts with pedestrians. If desired, Shared Streets may restrict access to personal vehicles but permit use by taxis, commercial vehicles, and buses”.

In this project streets are designed as “*shared street*” to function more like an urban public space. In addition, as it is not possible to extend the sidewalks and have proper dimensions for them, and since narrow sidewalks make people to walk in street and therefore there is less safety, “shared streets” are good solutions this issue.”<sup>127</sup>

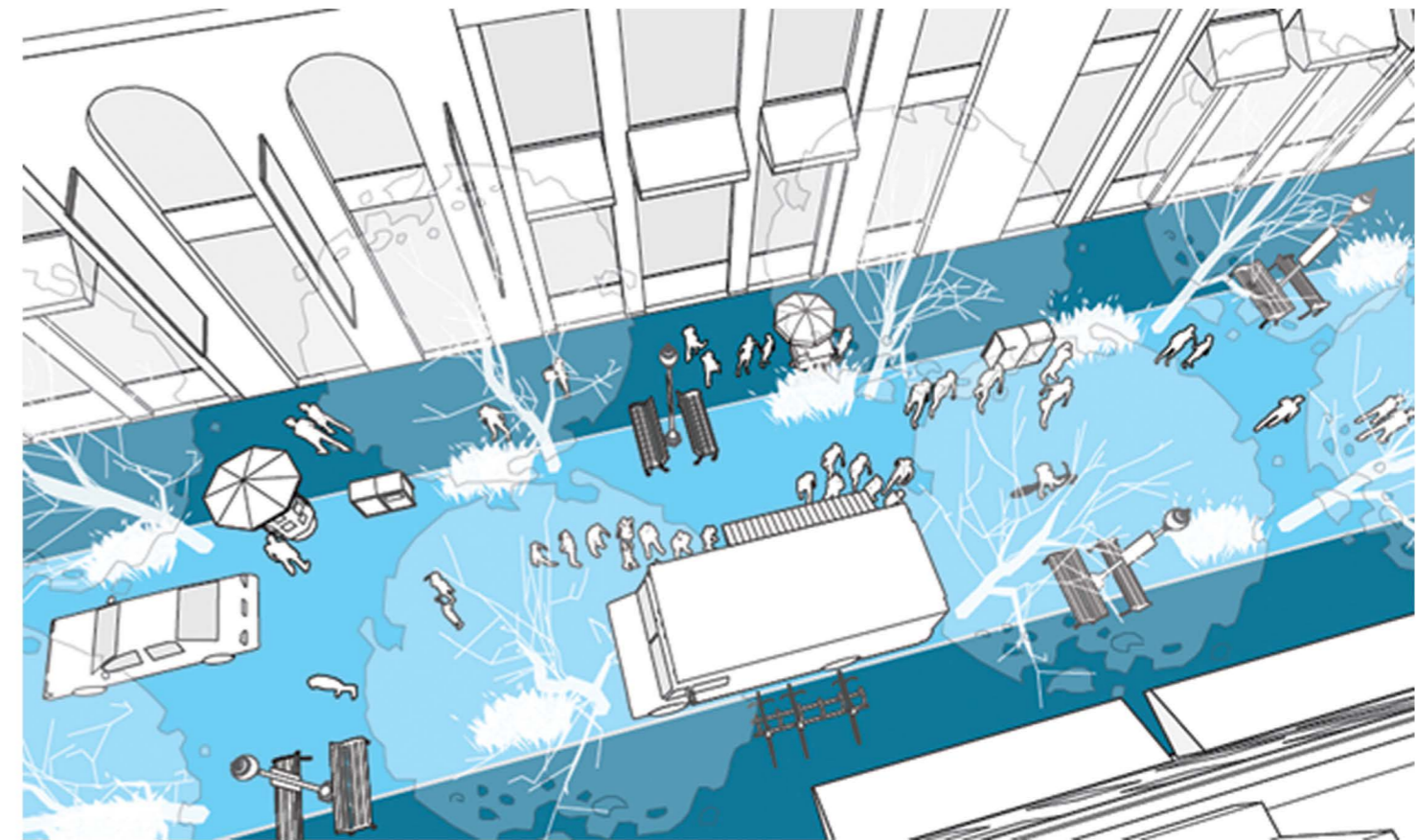


Figure 42; shared street  
Ref: Boston's guideline

<sup>127</sup> Mayor: Menino, Thomas. M. Commissioner: Tinlin, Thomas. J. Boston Complete Streets; Design Guidelines. 2013



### 5.4.3 Nodes

“Nodes may be primarily junctions, places of a break in transportation, a crossing or convergence of paths, moments of shift from one structure to another. Or the nodes may be simply concentrations, which gain their importance from being the condensation of some use or physical character, as a street-corner hangout or an enclosed square.”<sup>128</sup>

**Corners;** as explained in the first chapter, street corners are among the public spaces which are created by the presence of people and their interactions. The idea is to place-make the corners-as nodes- which can be opened up to the public and to blur their solidity which closes the open view, by demolishing one or two blocks (the ones which are already abandoned or demolished, and the ones which do not have any specific value), which leads to more free and flexible movement of the people and a proper public space.

**Pop-up Cafés;** pop-up cafés are areas for sitting and maybe drinking a coffee. They can be around cafés to be used as their outside space, or even on some small urban leftovers which can be used as sitting areas. They can result in the continuity of the smell of coffee which is Armenian tradition for drink (intangible heritage).

**Cafés and plazas;** they encourage people to linger and socialize. In plazas there can be temporary markets, art installations, and variety of seating options.

According to the video “*The Social Life of Small Public Spaces*”, “*the most used plazas tend to have higher proportion of people in two or three, while the most sociable plazas tend to have great numbers of individuals. Even if you want to be alone, you prefer to be in a crowd*”. Some important factors of a plaza in order not to be empty are amount of open spaces, seating spaces, and trees.

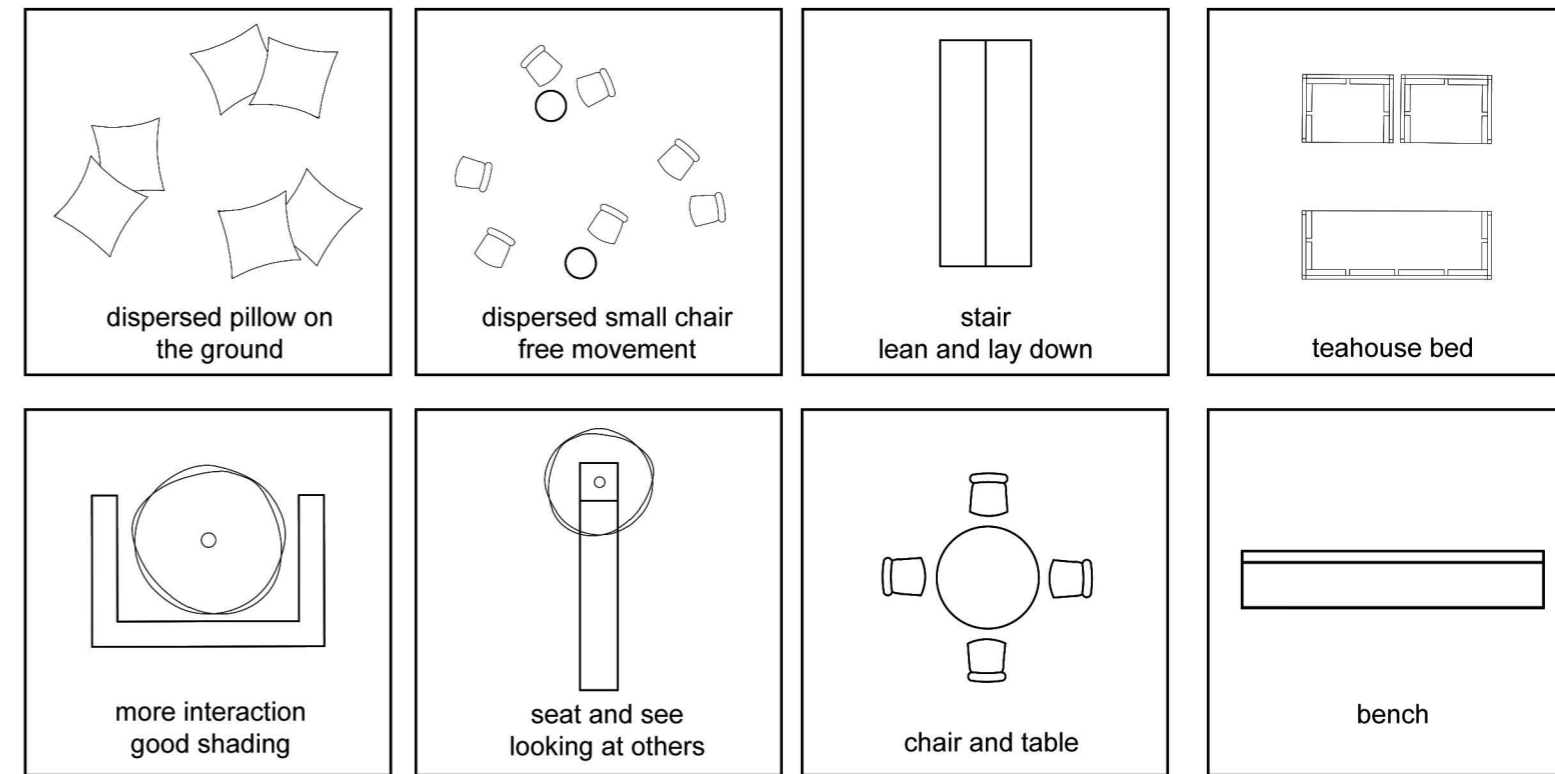
### 5.4.4. Seating;

“One of the most prominent characteristics of the majority of visited places was that chair seating was arranged facing outward to the public and public space. There was no sharp boundary between their border and the public space and third places extended into the public space and had tables outside. The seating arrangement was such that visitors of the place could easily and incidentally observe activity in the adjoining public space. One of the researchers noted the affinity to a real-time real-world version of a “Big Brother TV show”, where the majority of the third place visitors were watching the public while they were engaged in another activity, like talking and eating. Even when a close group of friends would enter the place the waiter or host would suggest that the guest sat facing the public scenery, which could be a cultural trait specific of Parisian cafés. Observing what others are doing is one of the important properties of public physical spaces (Carr, Francis, Rivlin, & Stone 1992) and virtual spaces (Khalid & Dix 2009).”<sup>129</sup>

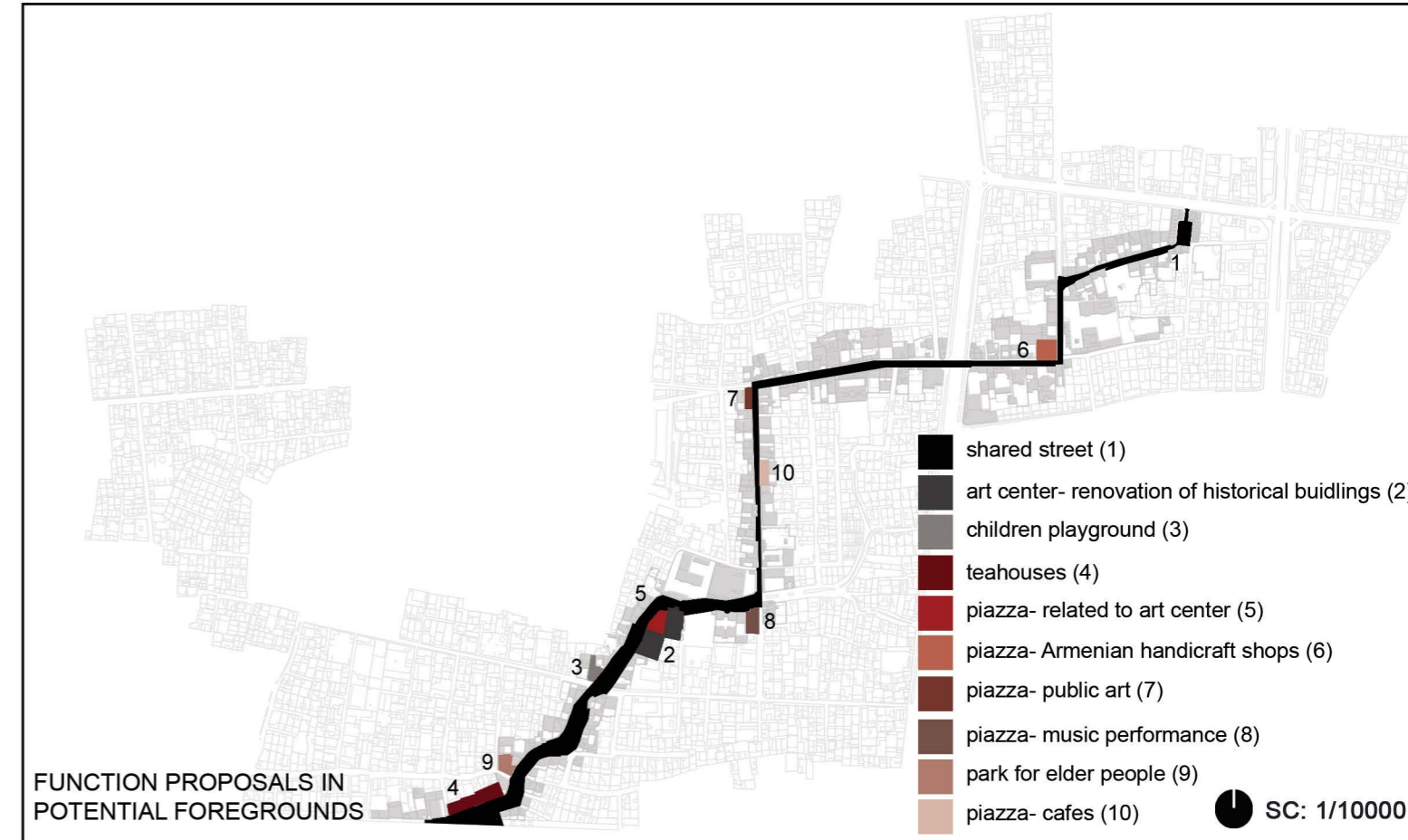
In addition, according to Boston’s guideline, public seating on a sidewalk should be fixed.

### 5.4.5 Functional Articulation of Street;

According to Lynch, paths should have some singular quality which marks them off from the surrounding channels: a concentration of some special use or activity along their margins, a characteristic special quality, a special texture of floor or façade, a particular lighting pattern, a unique set of smells or sounds, a typical detail or mode of planting.<sup>130</sup>



Drawing 17; different types of sitting proposal  
Ref: author



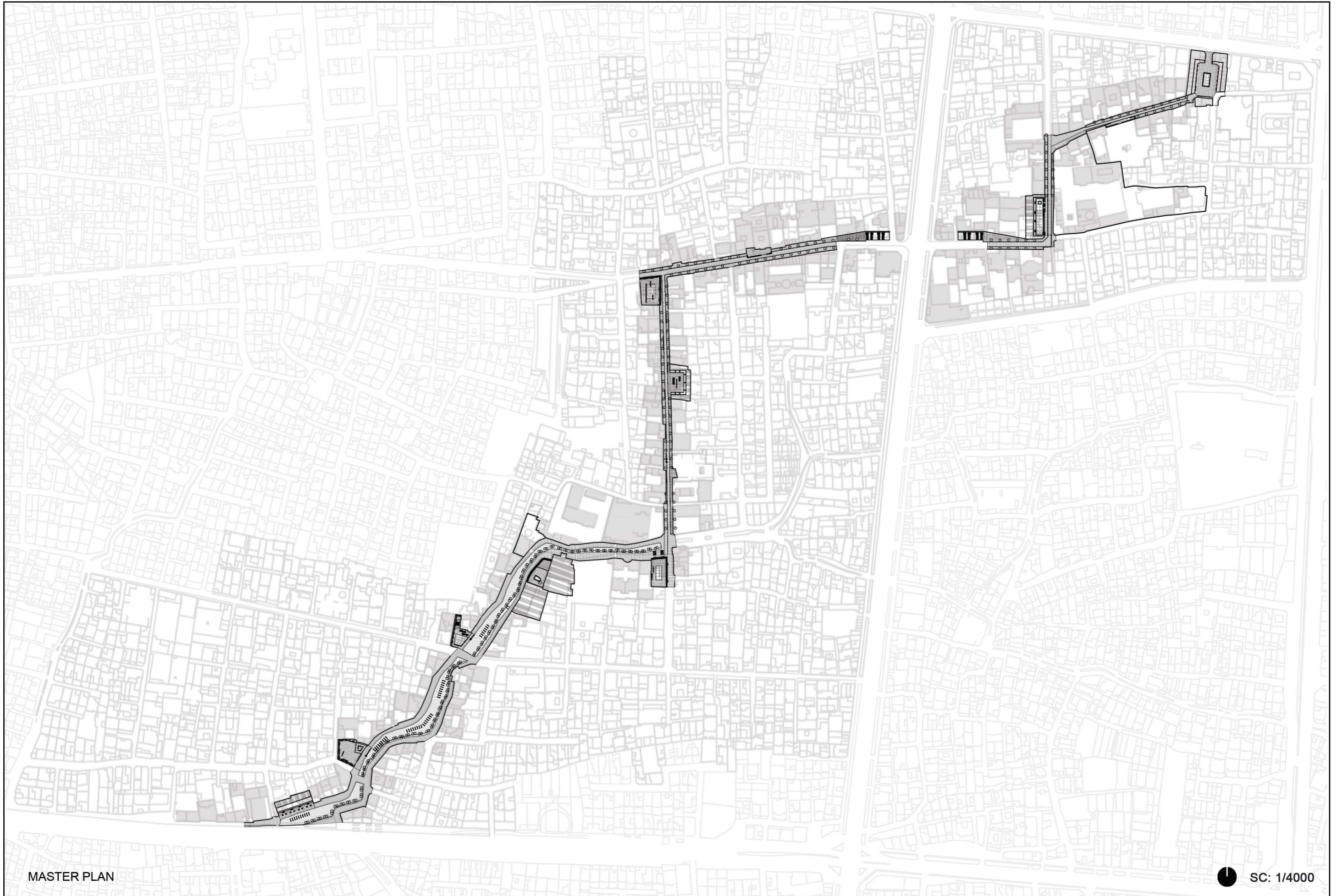
Drawing 18; function proposals  
Ref: author

<sup>128</sup> See note 18

<sup>130</sup> See note 35

<sup>129</sup> See note 35

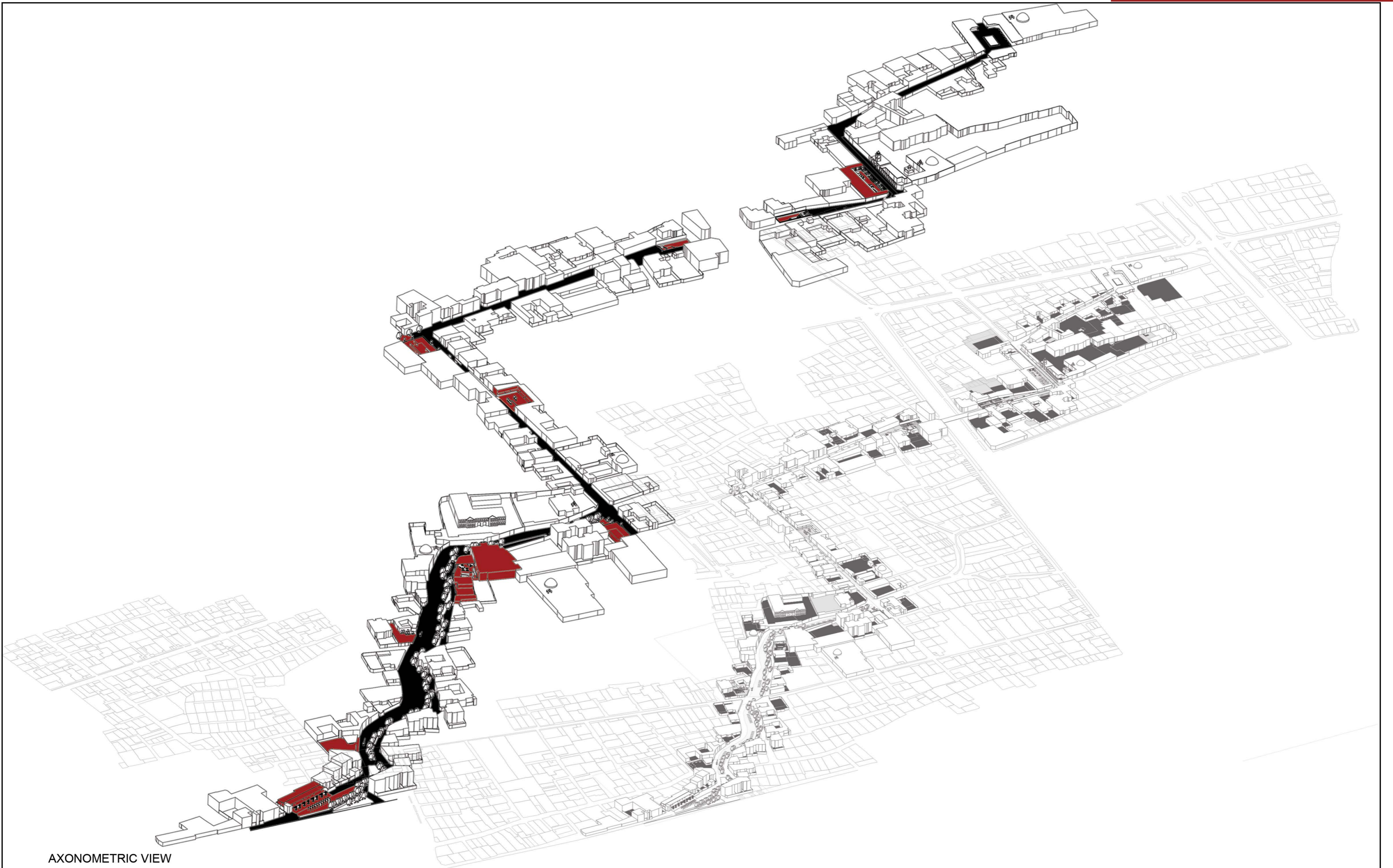




MASTER PLAN

SC: 1/4000





AXONOMETRIC VIEW

Drawing 20; axonometric view of the master plan  
Ref. author



5.5.1 Pop-up Café 1:

The location of this pop-up café is chosen based on the functions around that are mostly cafés. These cafés have their own inner space, but no outer space. As observations show, people prefer to sit outside in case of good weather. Thus, by having this pop-up café it gives the opportunity to people to have their coffee (or not) and sit outside.

5.5.2 Pop-up café 2:

The space here is a left over where can be given a function and be reused. It has a good location because it is a bit angled and is between the other two proposed nodes, having almost 100m distance from them, which is a proper distance for the visual corridor and view. With this location, it works even better since it is in a commercial street. A bike café here can help to have a continuity of the coffee smell along the path as well as have the people sit and interact.

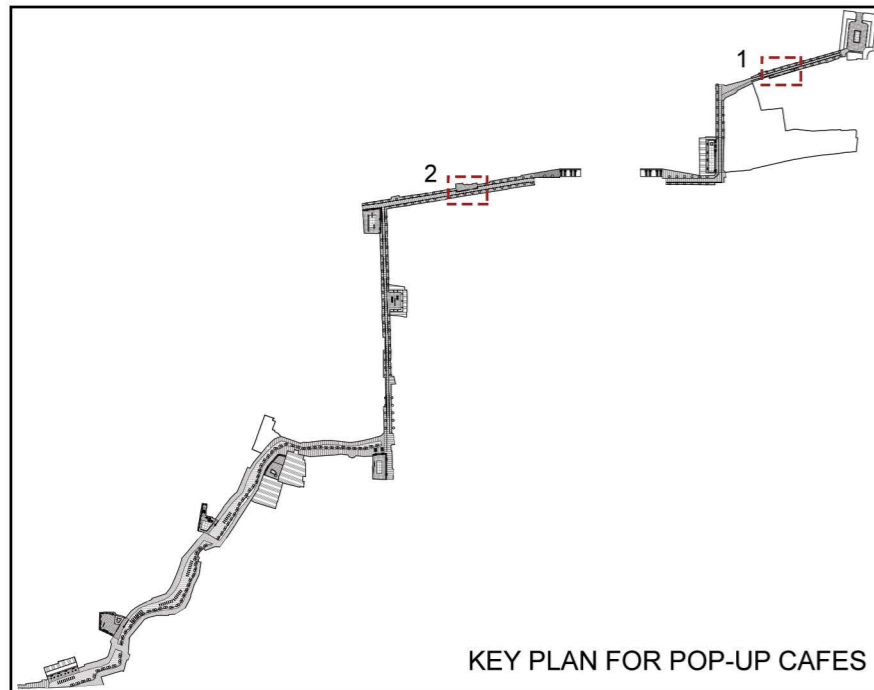
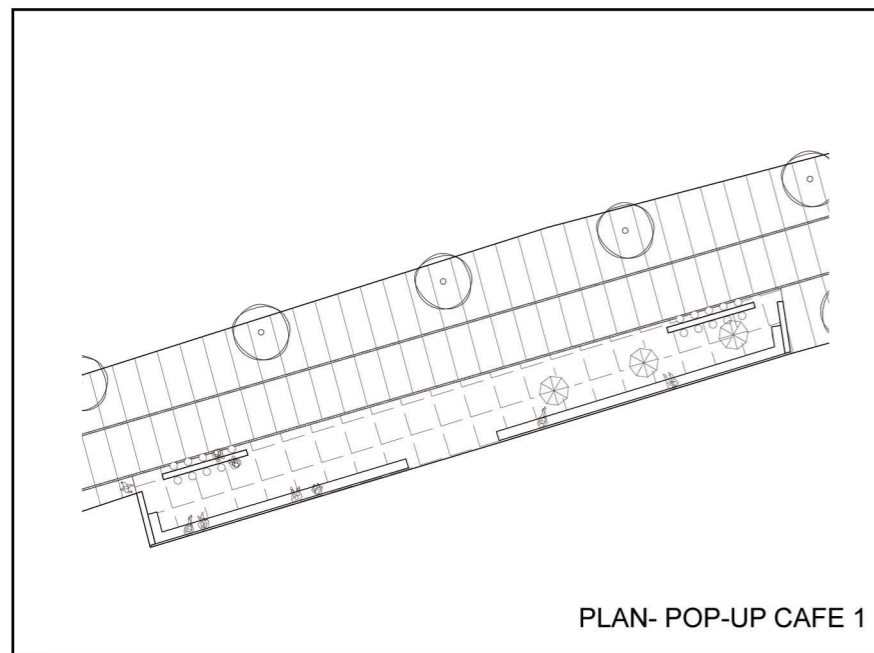


Figure 43; no proper outer space for cafes  
Ref: author



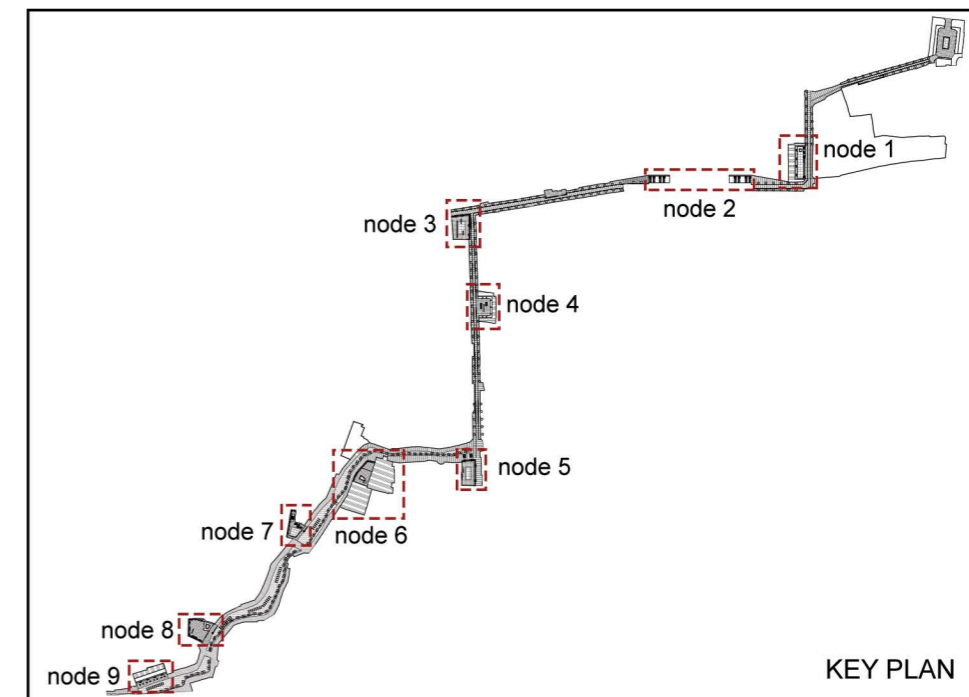
Drawing 21; proposed pop-up cafe  
Ref: author



Figure 44; bike café  
Ref: <https://www.flickr.com>

This node is chosen because it is in front of the main and the most touristic cathedral of Jolfa. So the area in front needs to be place-made and have such a good quality of space for visitors and daily users. The existing function is condensation of various shops among which there is one small shop for Armenian handcraft. There is an abandoned building next to it on the corner, which is going to be demolished (since it does not have a specific value) and to be an extension of the existing shops. The shops that are proposed for this node are *Armenian handcraft shops* rather than various ones. As far as it is a touristic place, it functions well for shops and also for the cathedral, since tourists find it interesting seeing and buying especial and traditional handcraft and souvenir of the area. Therefore it can be a solution for the economic problem of Armenians in this district besides the fact that in this way they are able to show one of their intangible heritages. As a result it is a big open square for people to do shopping, sitting, and lingering in front of the church.

This area is leveled down in order to respect the cathedral and in addition to have a better view of it. Sitting places are placed in a way that they face both the square and the cathedral.



Drawing 22; key plan for the selected nodes  
Ref: author

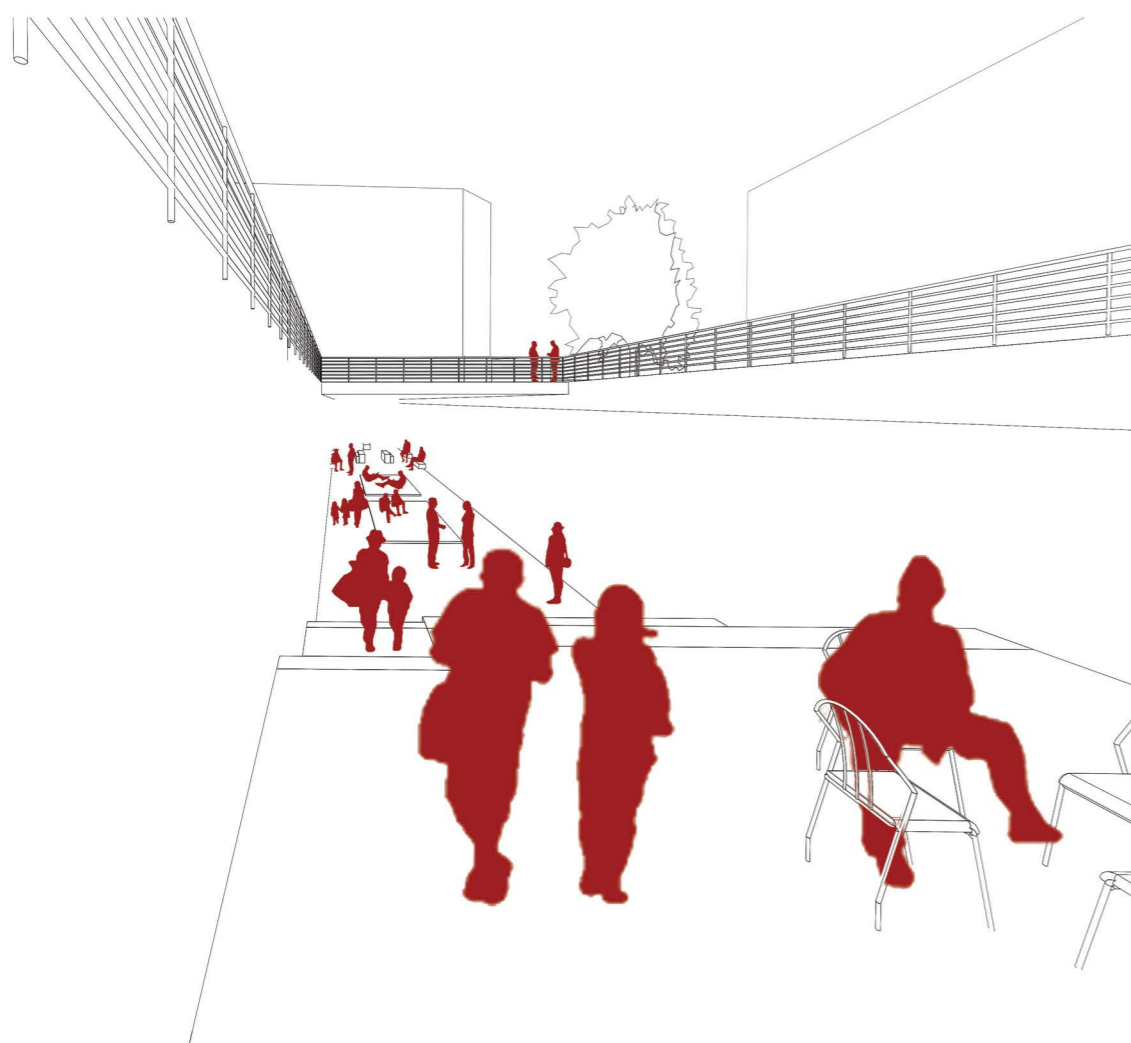


### 5.5.4 Node Number 2; Connecting two parts of Jolfa

According to the questionnaires done by people, the whole Jolfa neighborhood is known just by a small part of it, that is Jolfa Square and its surrounding. The idea is to *connect* this part to the rest, so the main parts of Jolfa and more of the neighborhood can be known. A pedestrian underpass is designed to connect these two parts and to keep the continuity of the pedestrian movement and path. The reason why it is an underpass not a continued path on the ground level, is that this intersection faces a lot of traffic every day and every hour which causes less safety for pedestrian and cannot be restricted for cars. On the other hand the reason why it is an underpass not a bridge, is to keep the same skyline of the city and not to destroy the visual corridor and the view of branching streets, especially Hakim Nezami Street as one of the main access line of the city.

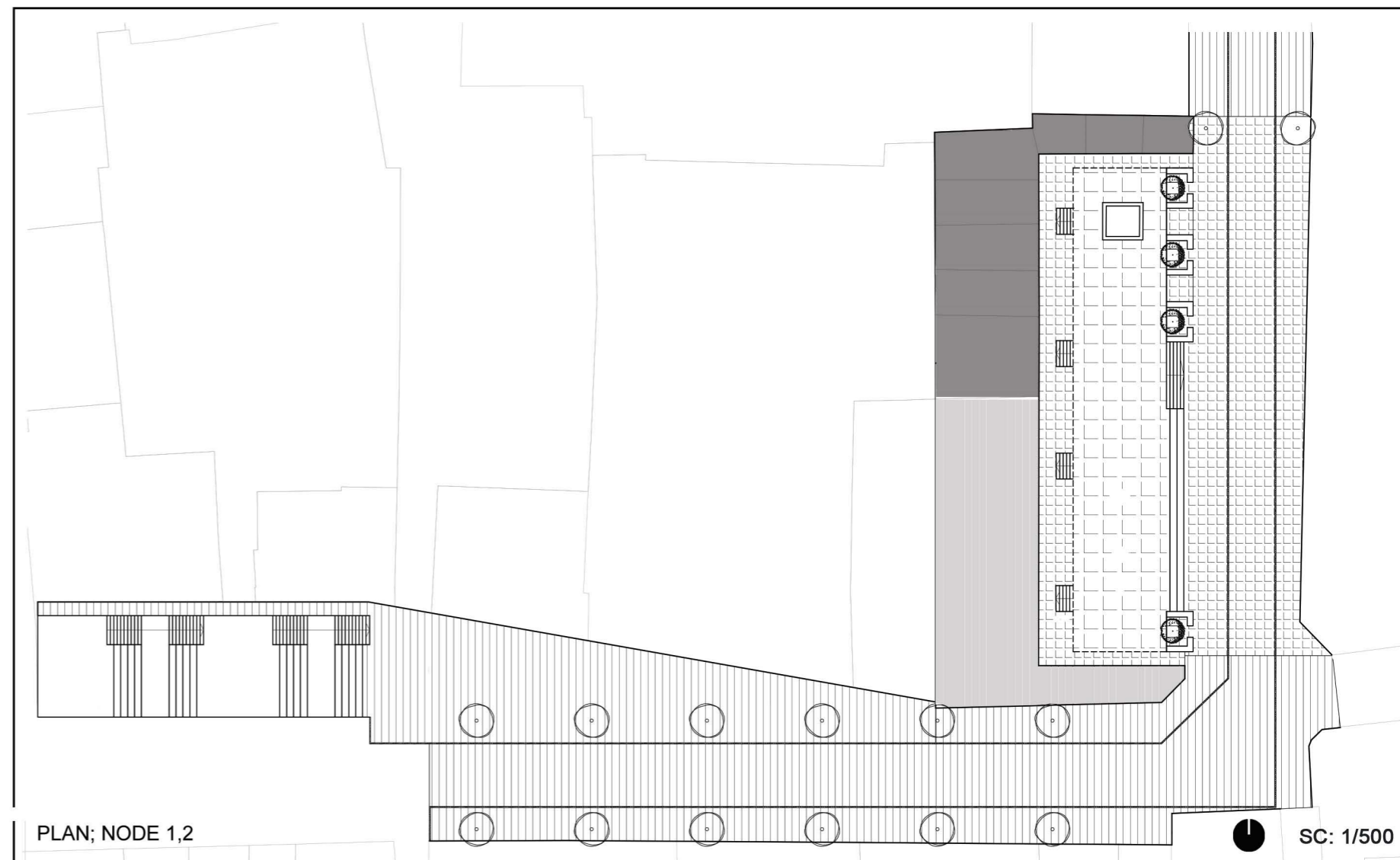
For the place-making of this connecting node, two different types of stairs are designed, one for passing, and the other one for leaning on. Stands are placed for coffee and some chairs in order to break down the solid framework of stair and to make in more like an interactive urban public space.

The pedestrian underpass is a promenade with different types of seating, stands for tea and coffee having in mind two different cultures of Armenian and non-Armenian in this term, and some stands for art handicrafts (it can be named as *Bazart* that means a bazaar for art).



NODE 2

Drawing 23; perspective view of node 2  
Ref: author

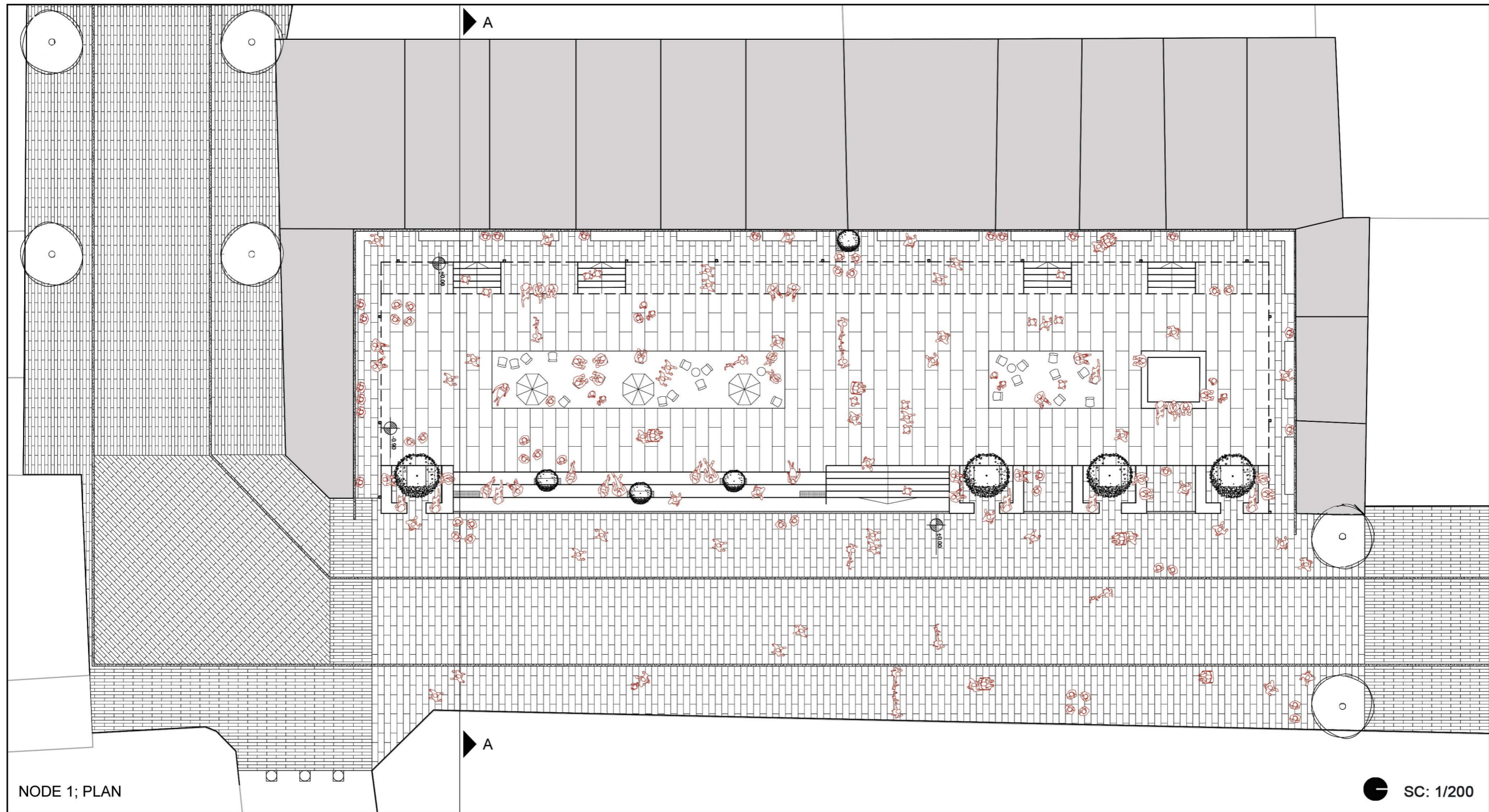


PLAN; NODE 1,2

SC: 1/500

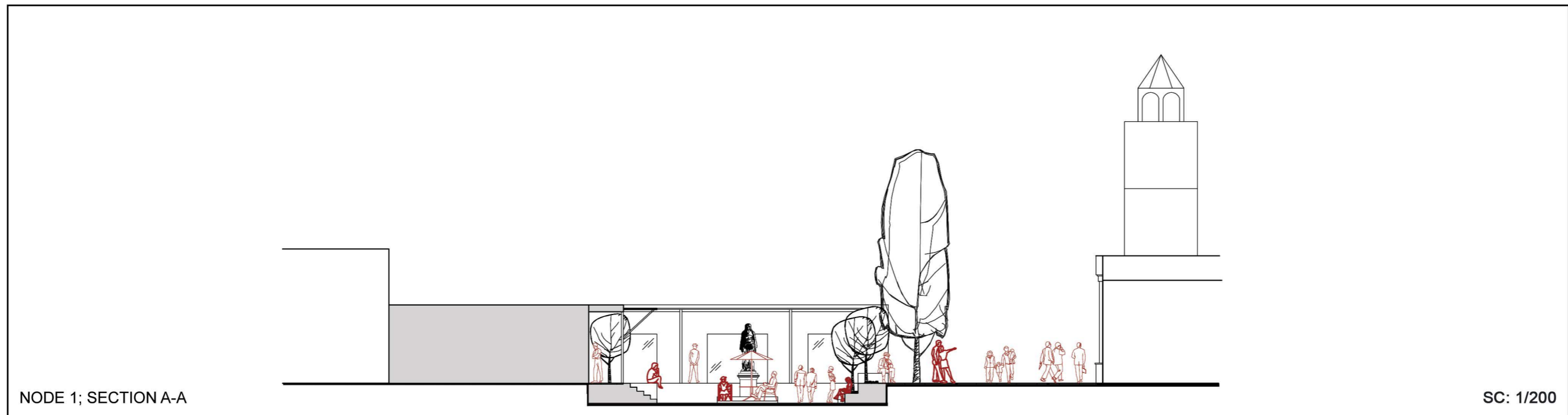
Drawing 24; proposal plan for node 1  
Ref: author





NODE 1; PLAN

SC: 1/200

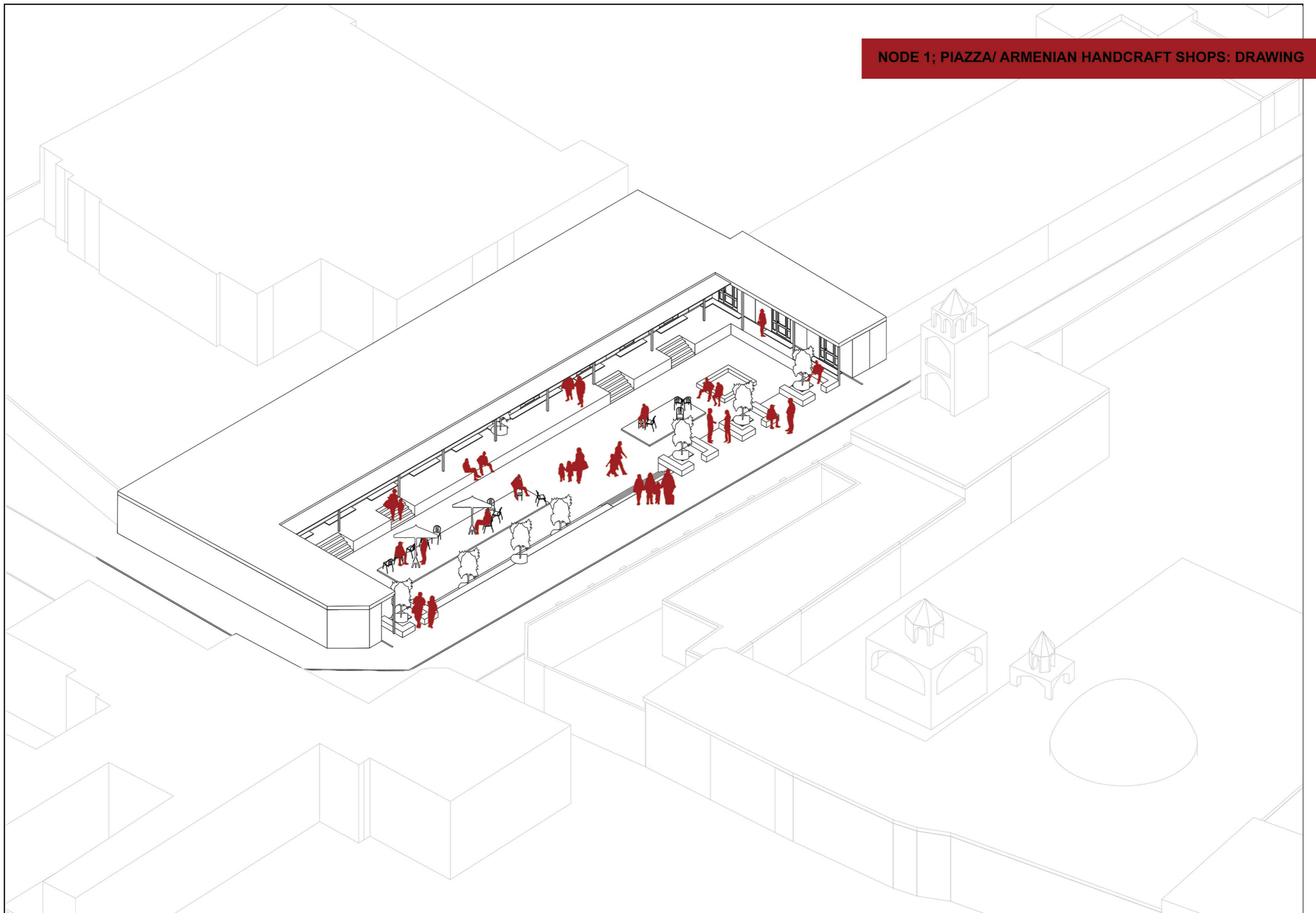


NODE 1; SECTION A-A

SC: 1/200

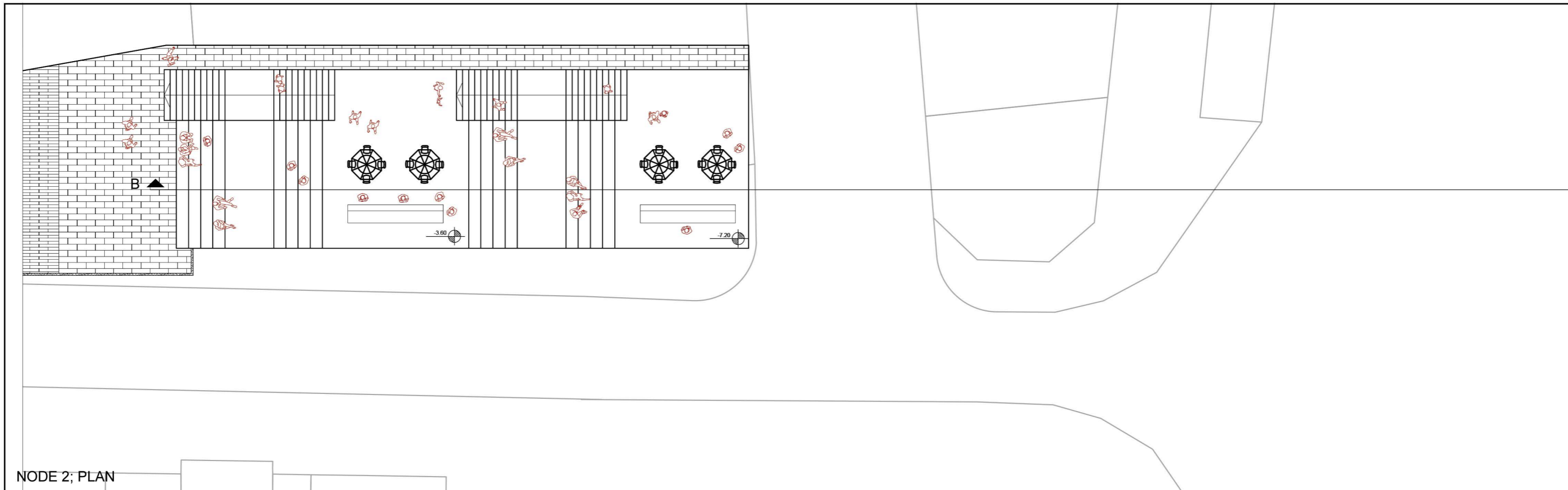
Drawing 25; node 1 plan and section  
Ref. author



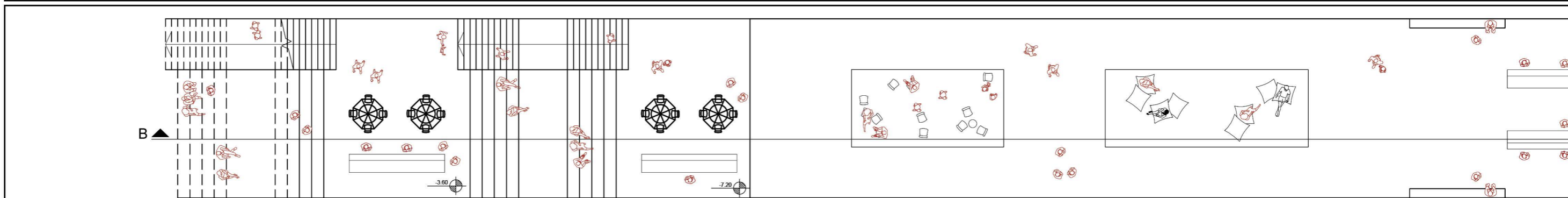


Drawing 26; node 1 axonometric view  
Ref: author

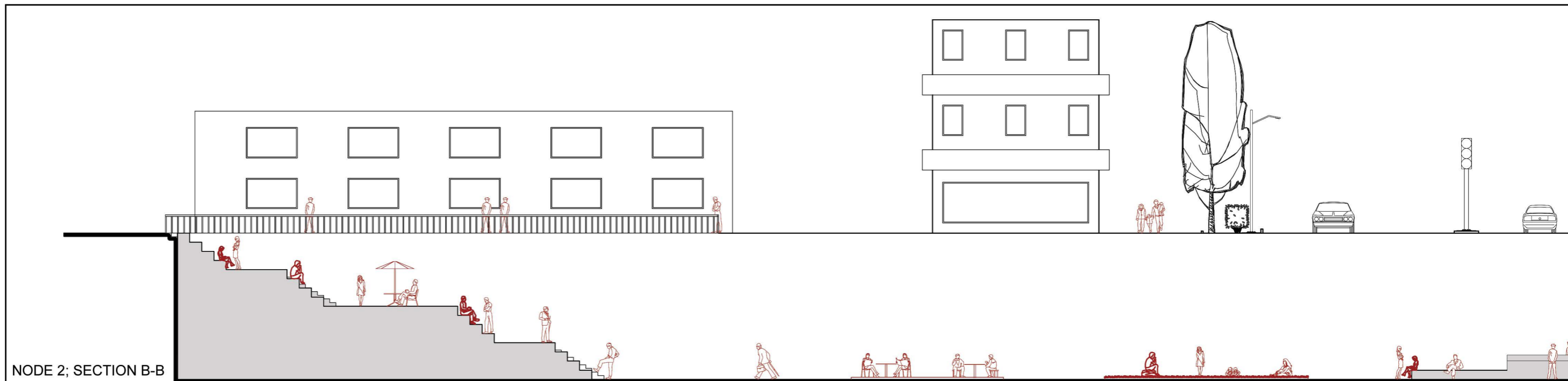




NODE 2; PLAN

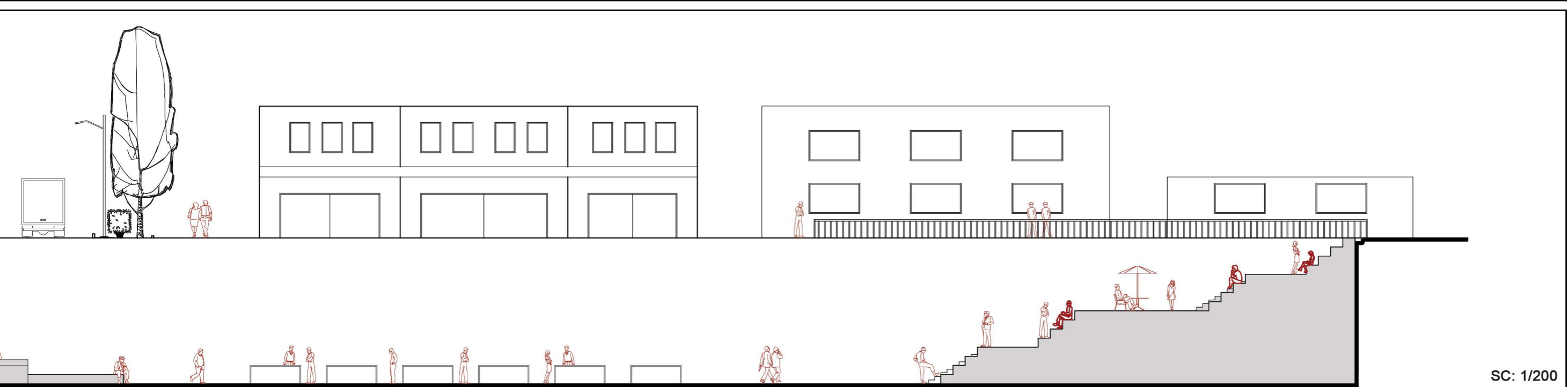
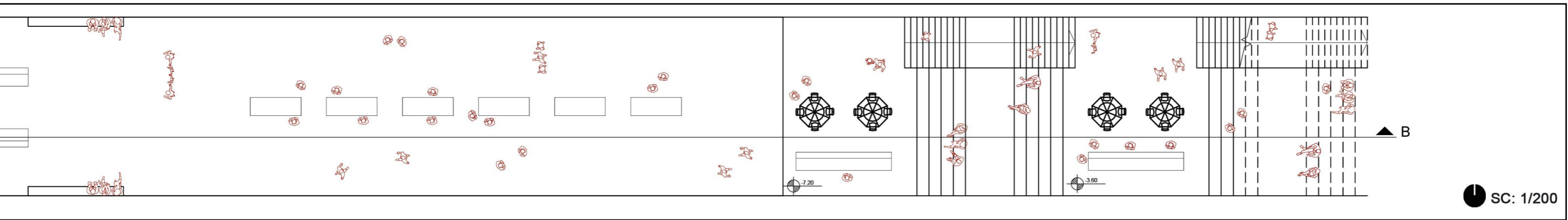
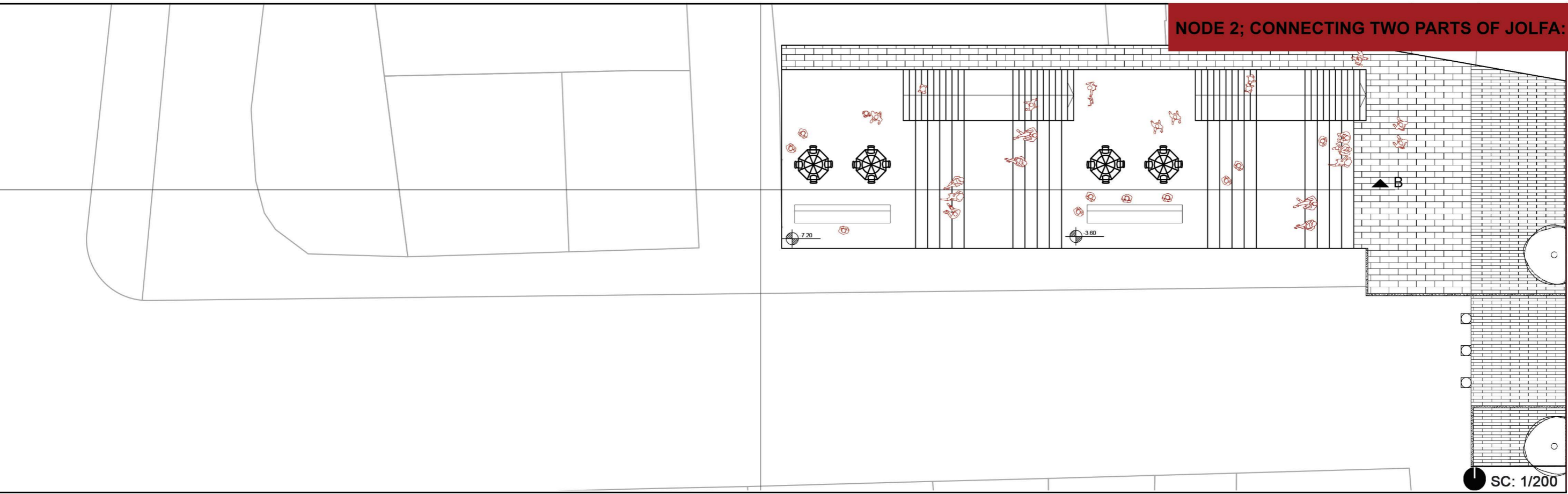


NODE 2; UNDERGROUND FLOOR PLAN



NODE 2; SECTION B-B

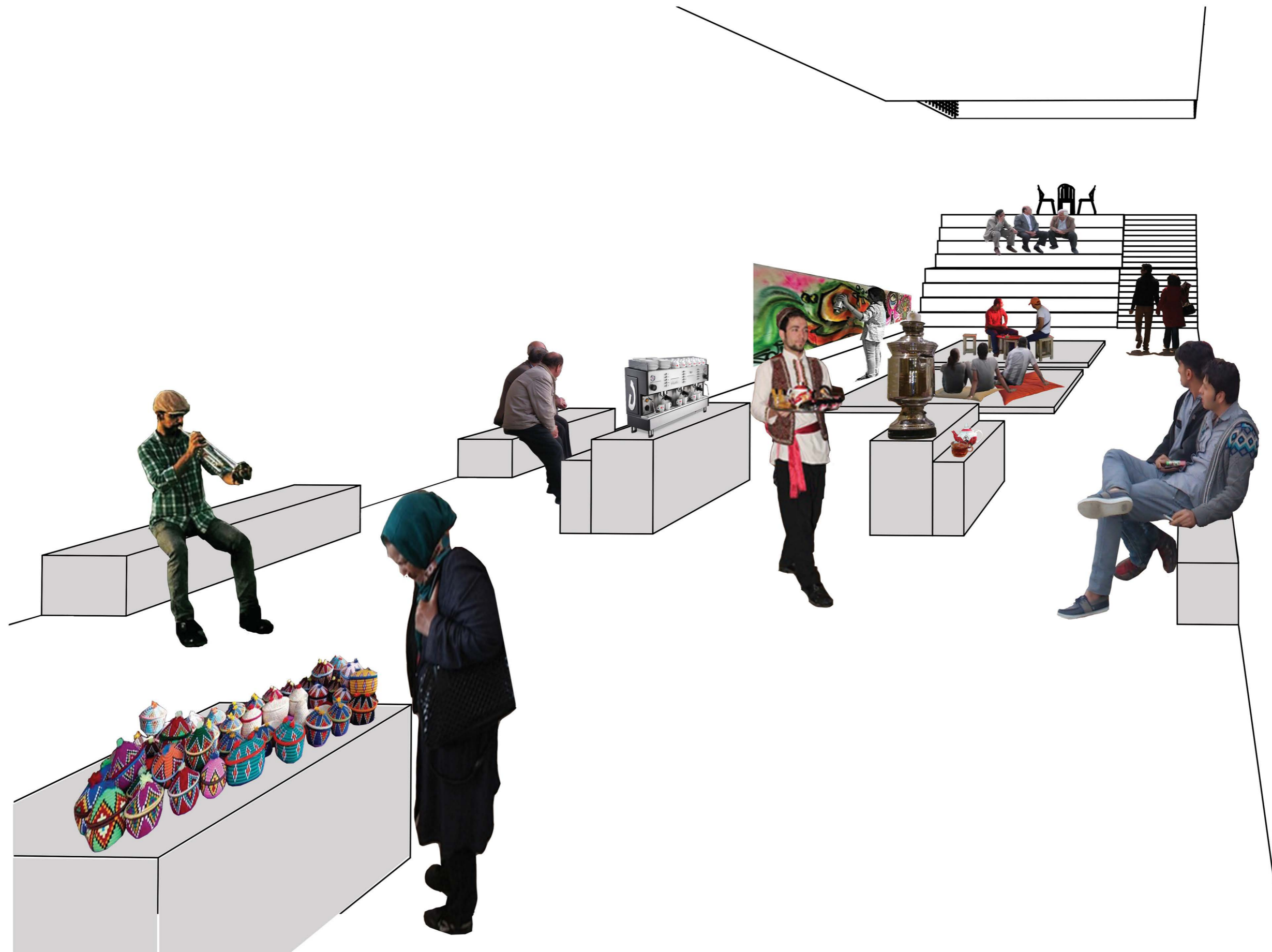












NODE 2

Drawing 29; node 2 photomontage  
Ref: author



### 5.5.5. Node Number 3; Public art

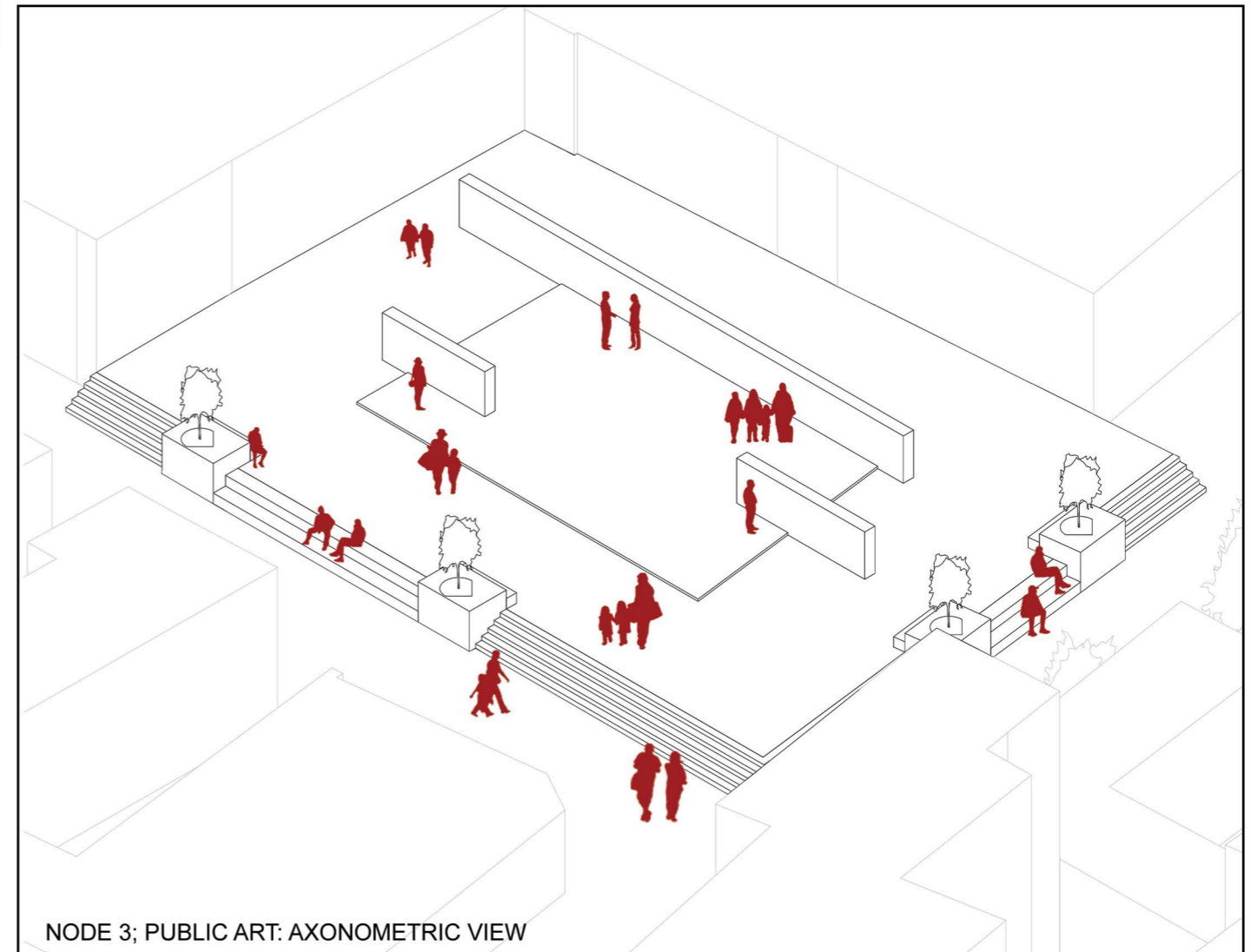
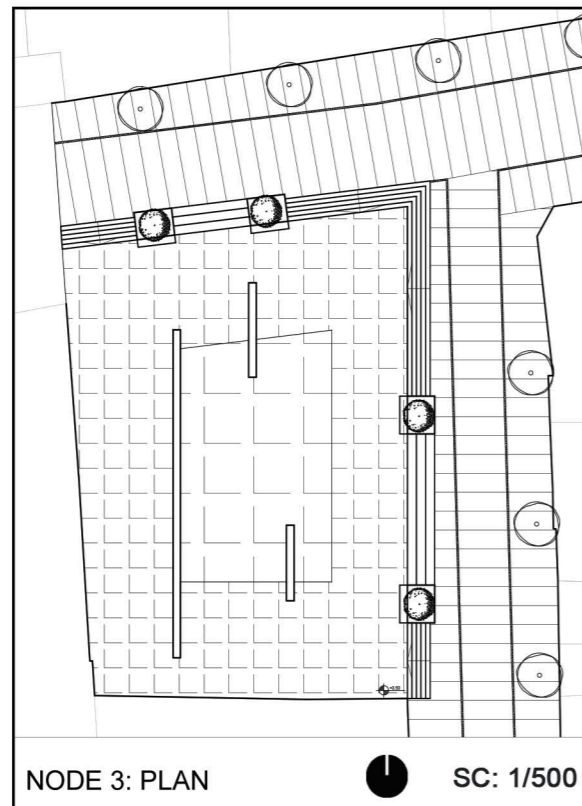
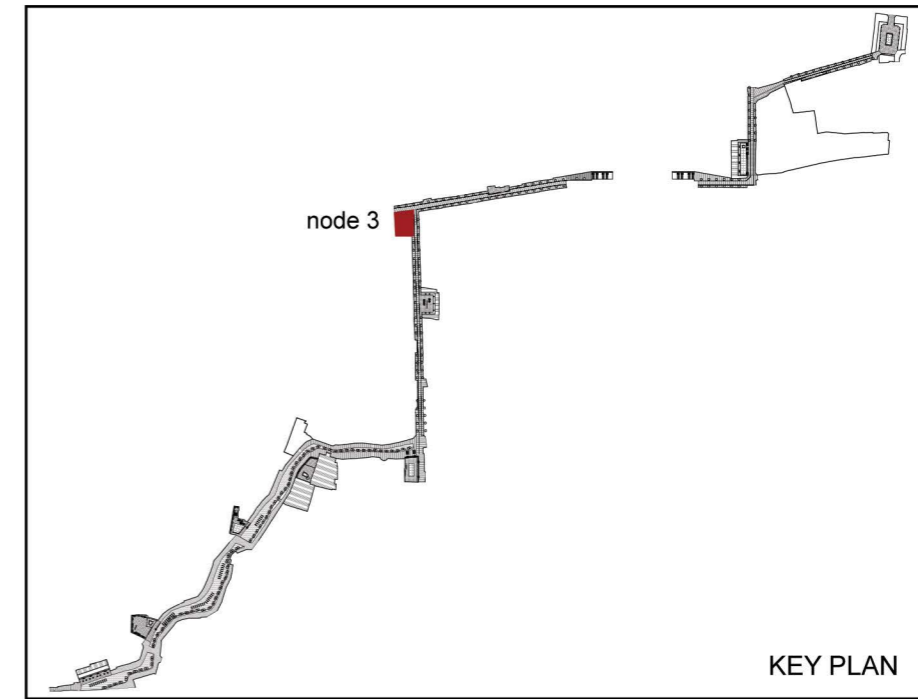
The activities happening here are temporary and vary according to special occasion, time, and sometimes random events. It serves not only the daily users and passersby, but also the students of Art University of Isfahan, since it is located in between of its different faculties (refer to the site analysis). by its flexible theme, it can host also art competition for all users with different age groups (see the example below).

In this node there are few sitting places in order to make the space more active rather than being passive.

It is leveled up with different types of stairs (that are explained before), in order to attract more attention, to be visible from far, and to be safer for public participation.



Figure 45; interactive pop-up installation; Song Board, London, students of Central Saint Martins University of the Arts  
Ref: <https://www.pinterest.com>





### 5.5.6 Node Number 4; cafés

This node that is positioned almost in the middle of node 3 and 5, works as a condensation of cafés, but not normal ones. The cafés which are here, are with special theme like “Book Café” or “Music Café”, since this path works like an “Art Articulation”. Their themes specify the extra activities happening in them rather than just drinking a coffee or having a snack, like reading a book, listening to a special kind of music and so on.

The location of this node is chosen based on the analysis, that currently here there are two cafés, so there is no need for a big change in the function.

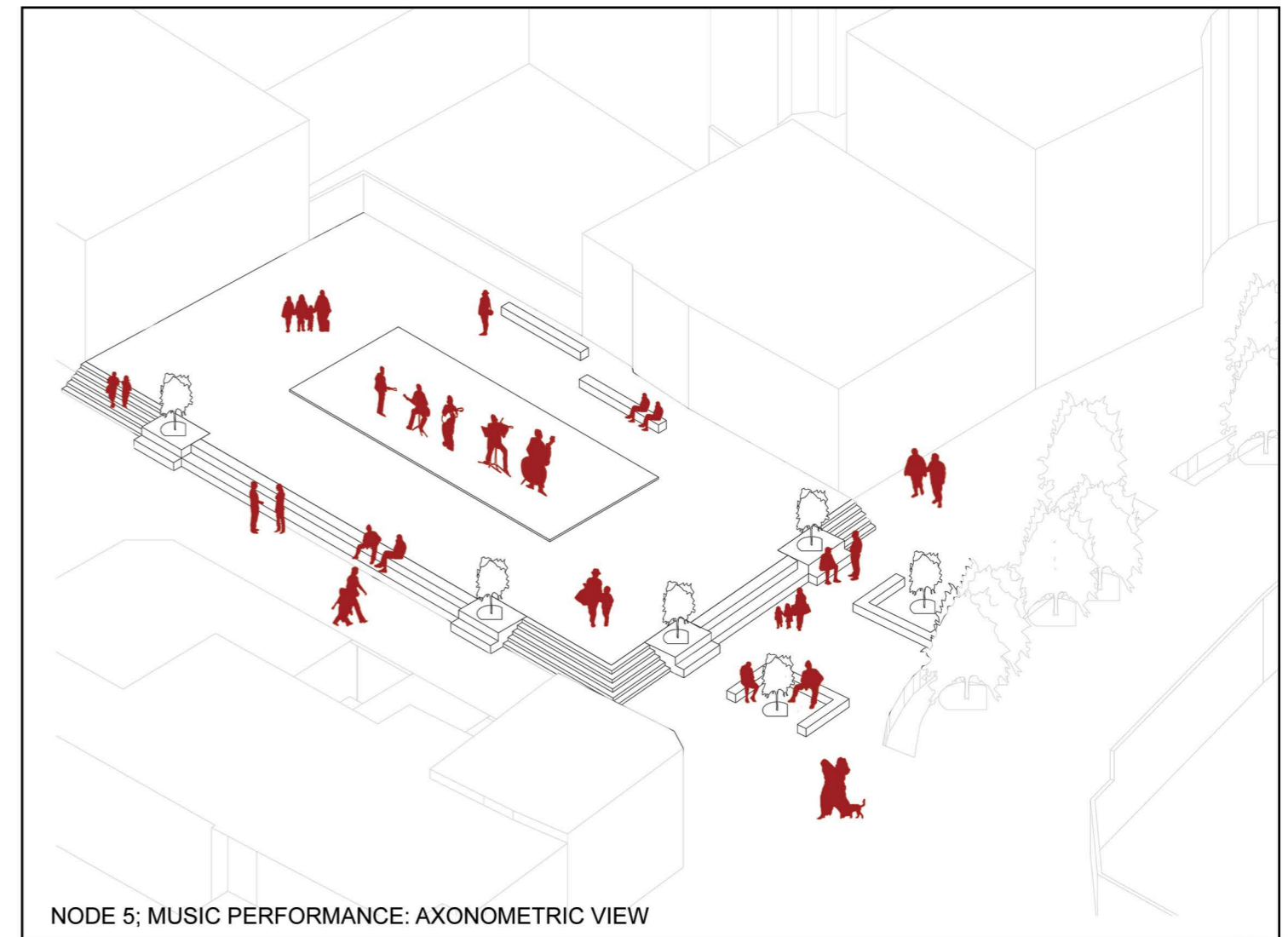
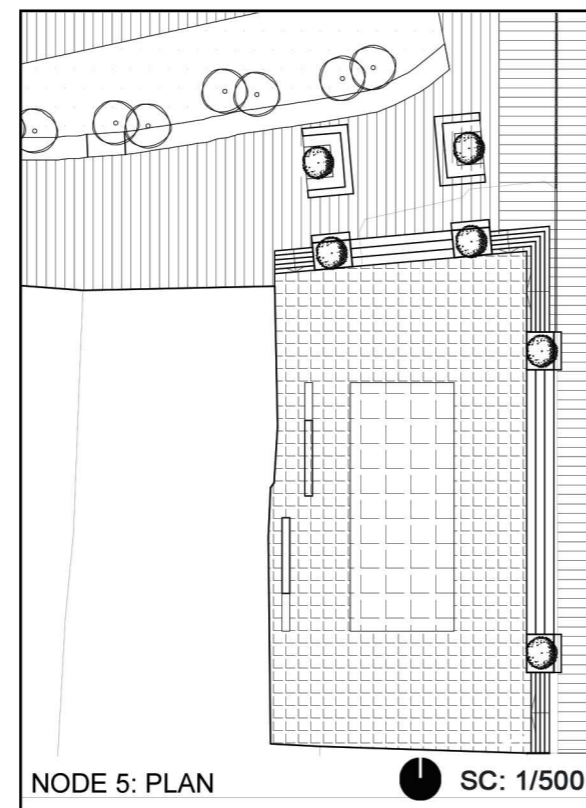
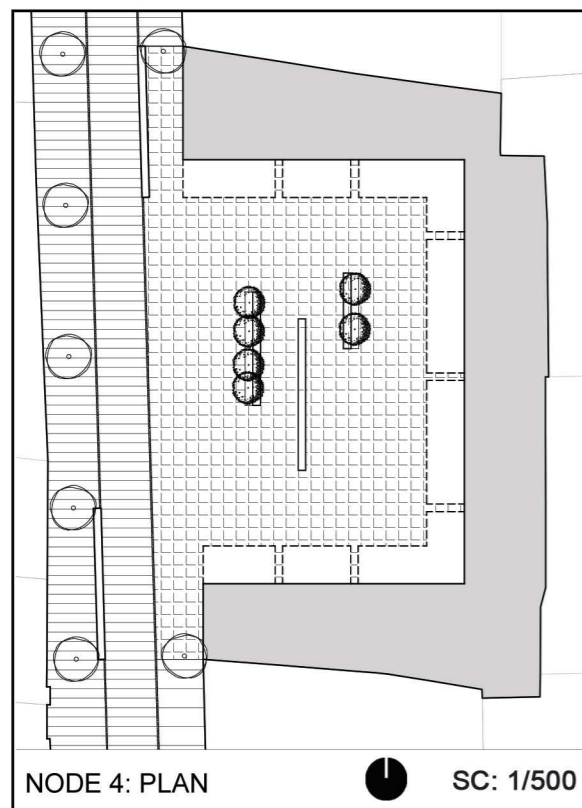
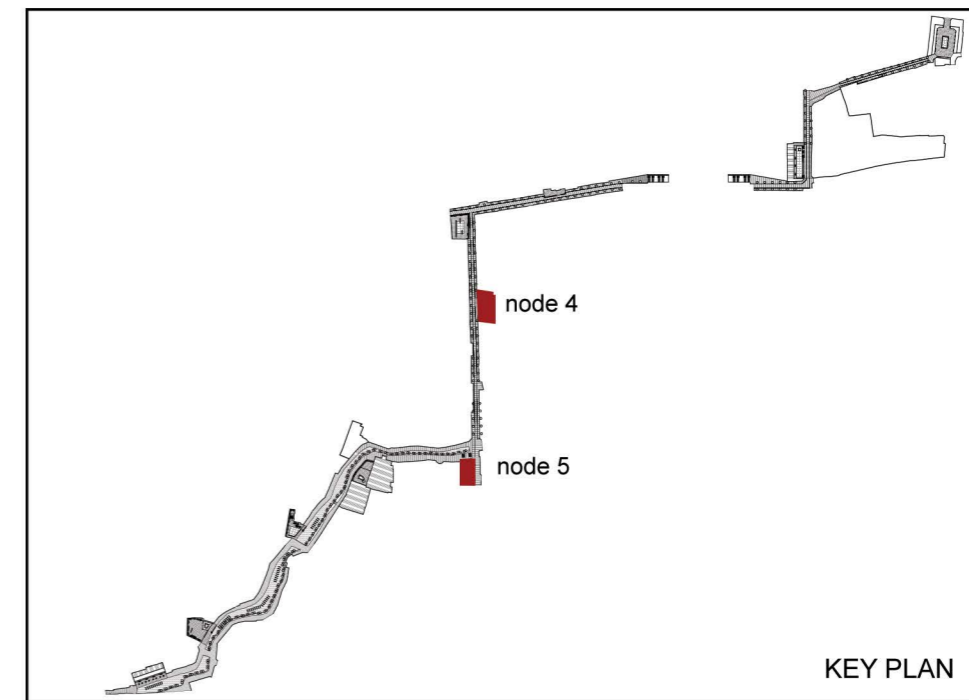
### 5.5.7 Node Number 5; Music Performance

According to the analysis, there are two music school and college nearby, which do not have proper space for their students to play for a larger group of people. Besides, due to the observations it is seen that there is a will in this neighborhood for different groups of people (not only students of music, but also gipsies and normal people) to play musical instrument. All these analysis and observations led to propose music performance function for this node.

In addition, there are more sitting places in front of the node by the water stream and its green space around, because currently it is a node for elder people to gather together and their mental image and sense of belonging to the area should not be destroyed.

These sitting places can also serve for the parents who are waiting for the children, as far as there are two middle schools for Armenians in front.

Like node 4 and for the same reason, this node is also leveled up.



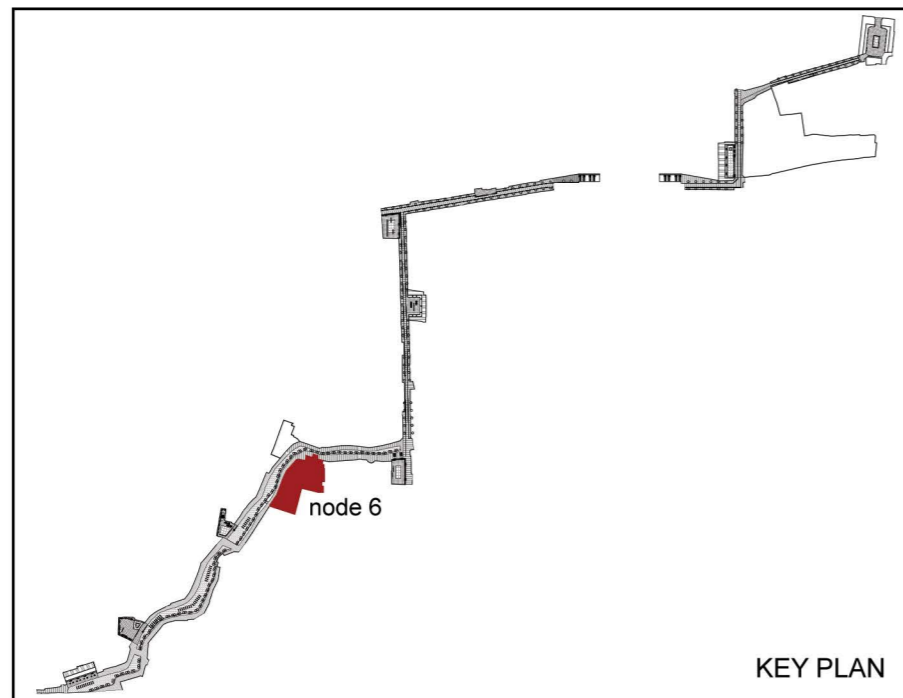
Drawing 31; node 4 and 5 key plan, plans, and axonometric view  
Ref: author



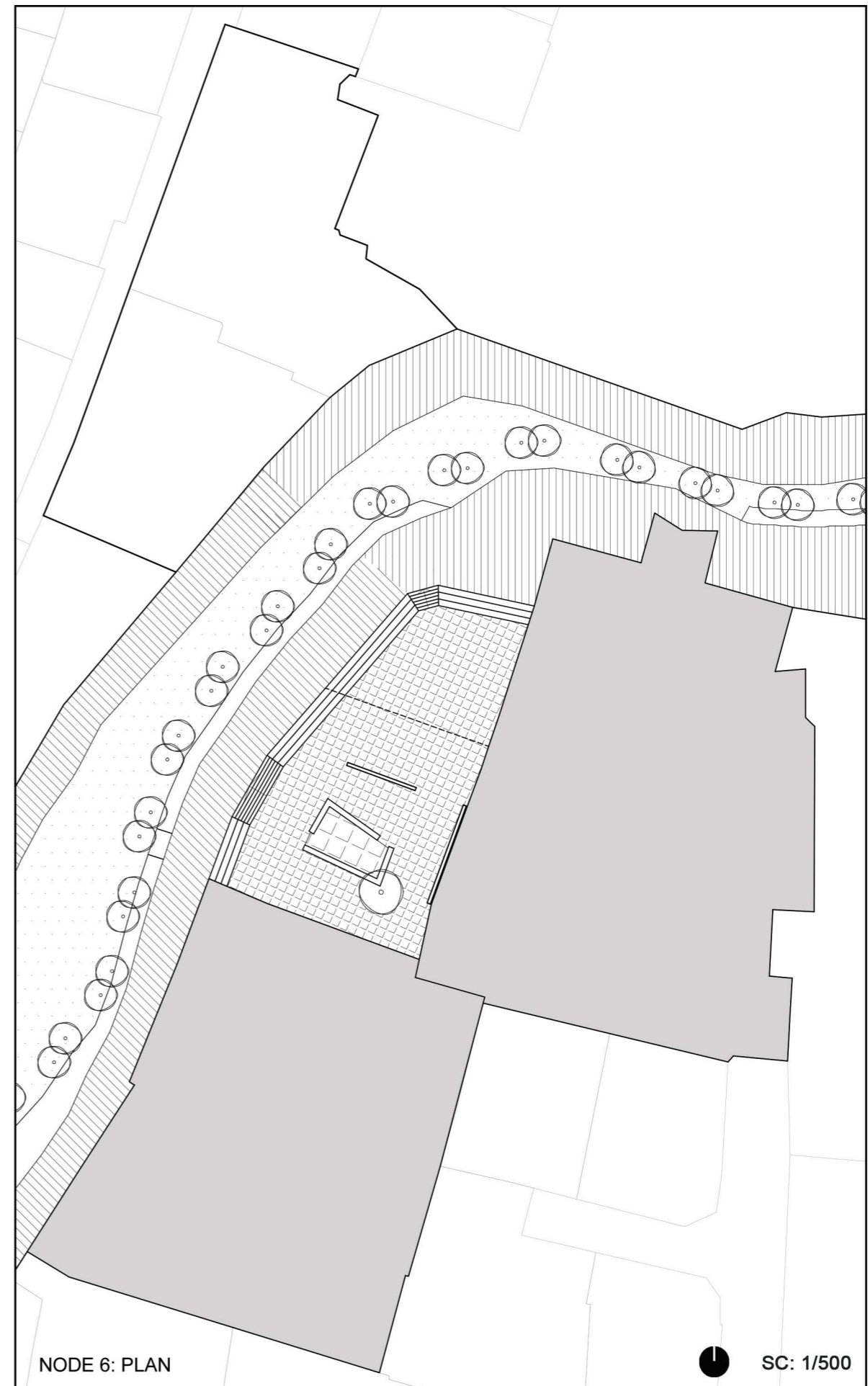
### 5.5.8 Node Number 6; art center

This node is chosen due to its location and its potentials. It is in front of a church (and continuity of the church bell is among the concept), there are two valuable historical buildings which need restoration and worth doing that, and it is by the water stream.

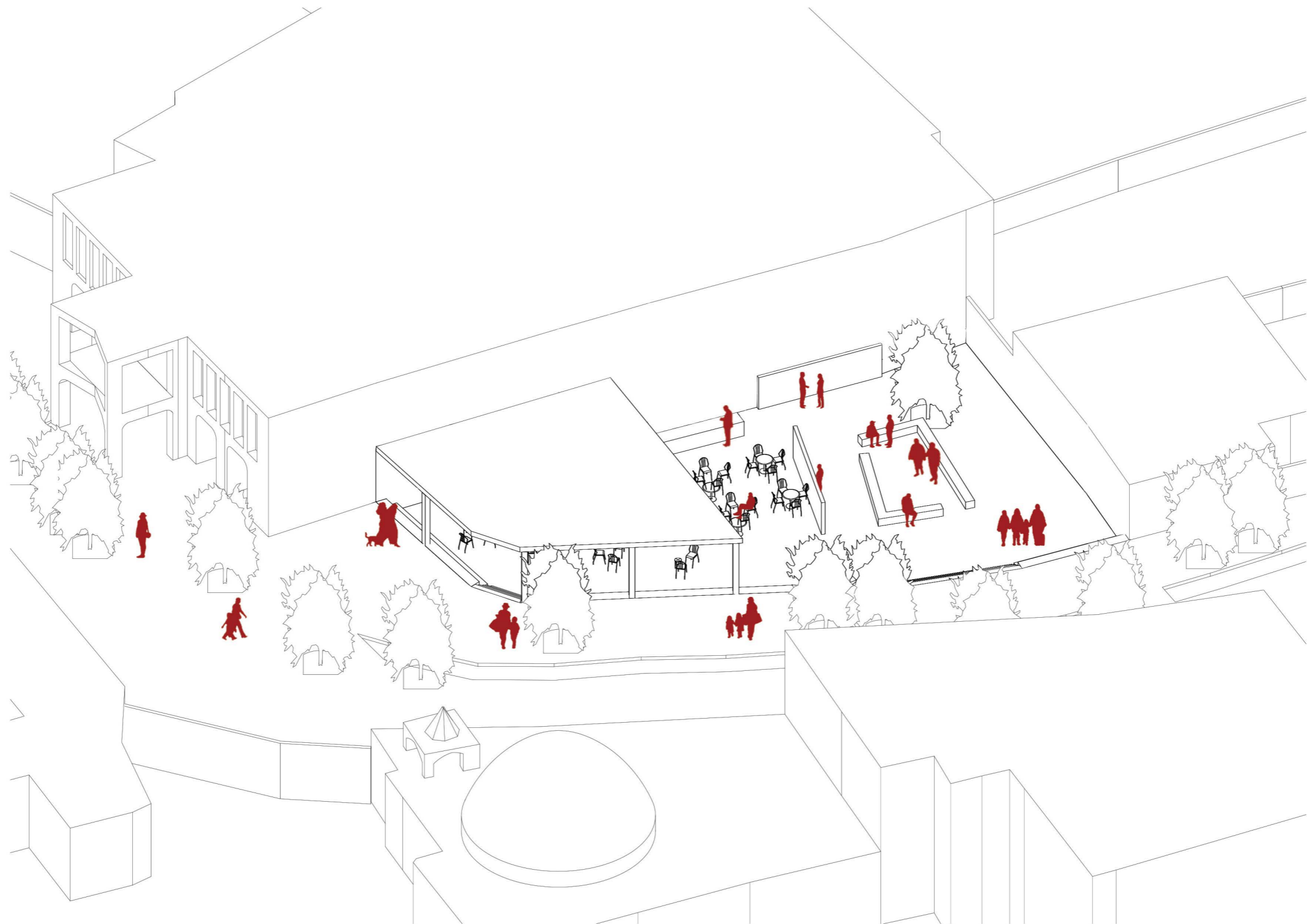
The function proposed for these two buildings is “*art center*”. In this way it brings the people to this node not only during a day, but also at night. As a result presence of people and night life is seen in this part of the path, which has deficiency right now according to the analysis. There was a building on the corner that has been demolished recently, so it can be used as open public space, having some panels for some exhibition outside.



Drawing 32; node 6 key plan and plan  
Ref: author







NODE 6; PIAZZA FOR ARTC CENTER: AXONOMETRIC VIEW



### 5.5.9 Node Number 7; Children Playground

As analysis show, in this neighborhood there is not any park or any playground for children. That means attention has not been paid to the childrens' need to play. On the other hand, there is an Armenian sport club and its football ground next to this node. Therefore, the function of children playground is suggested. In this case, it serves not only Armenian children (who also can go to Armenian sport club which is in reality forbidden for non-Armenians), but also non-Armenian ones (who lives in this part of the neighborhood as well). This function absorbs other groups of people like mothers who come with their children and can be a node for them to talk and interact.

Trees have been put on the sides attached to the residential buildings in order to provide a buffer zone. Low walls are designed on two sides of the playground, one for separating it from existing historical wall in order not to be attached and prevent damages (as currently it is an abandoned and almost demolished historical building), and the other one for separation from street for the safety. Low height makes the space not detached from the rest and at the same time has its own privacy and safety.

### 5.5.10 Node Number 8; A Node for Elderly

In Jolfa and especially in the residential parts, elder people and mostly elder men can be seen around and particularly in *Shekarchian intersection*. Although Shekarchian intersection is a node for them, but it is not a proper place, since there are many schools and other activities around it and therefore it is more like an active urban space rather than being a calm and relaxing space. Thus, this node that is located in residential part of the area is being suggested as a *node for elderly*. They can get together, seat and talk, while they can also play some traditional games such as chess and backgammon (chess and backgammon are two traditional games of Iranians and Armenians and by providing them both, it gives the opportunity to both Armenians and non-Armenians playing and interacting).

Like in the previous node, trees have been put to provide a buffer zone. Since in the existing situation it is an abandoned and almost demolished historical building, the idea is to keep the remaining walls in three sides and reorder the inside.

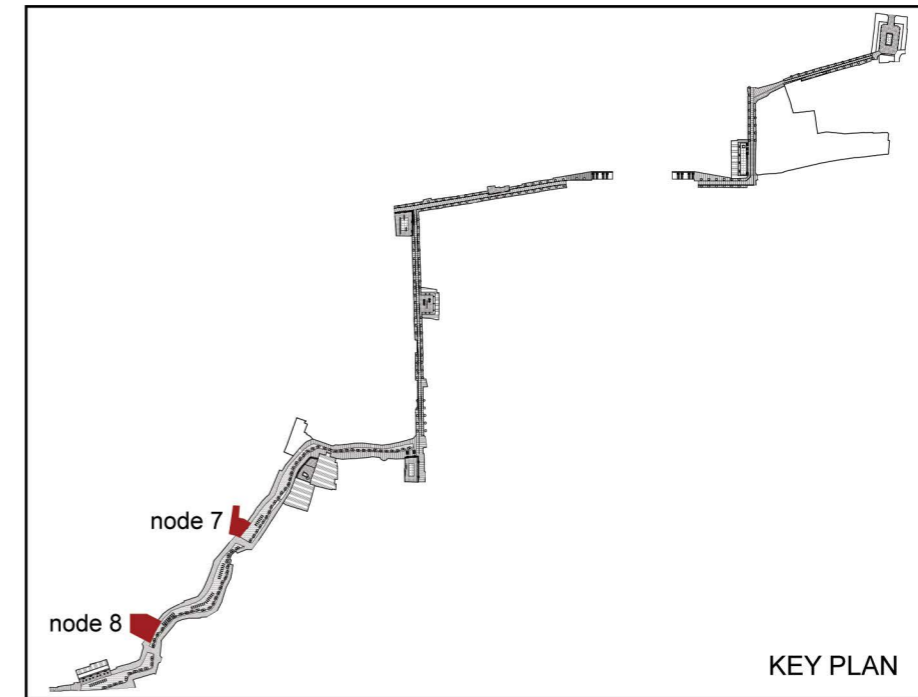
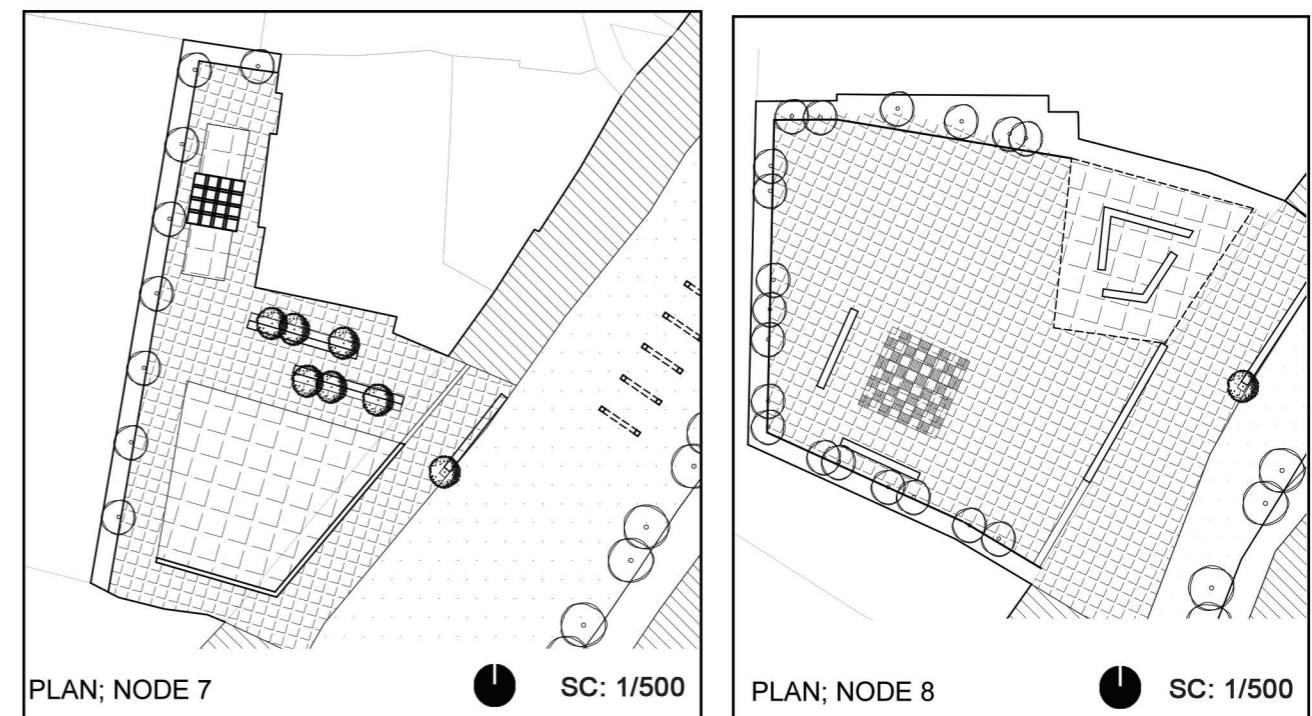


Figure 46; children's playground; Porto  
Ref: author



Figure 47; people playing super-size chess; Stuttgart, 2013  
Ref: author



Drawing 34; node 7 and 8 key plan and plans  
Ref: author



### 5.5.11 Node Number 9; Teahouses

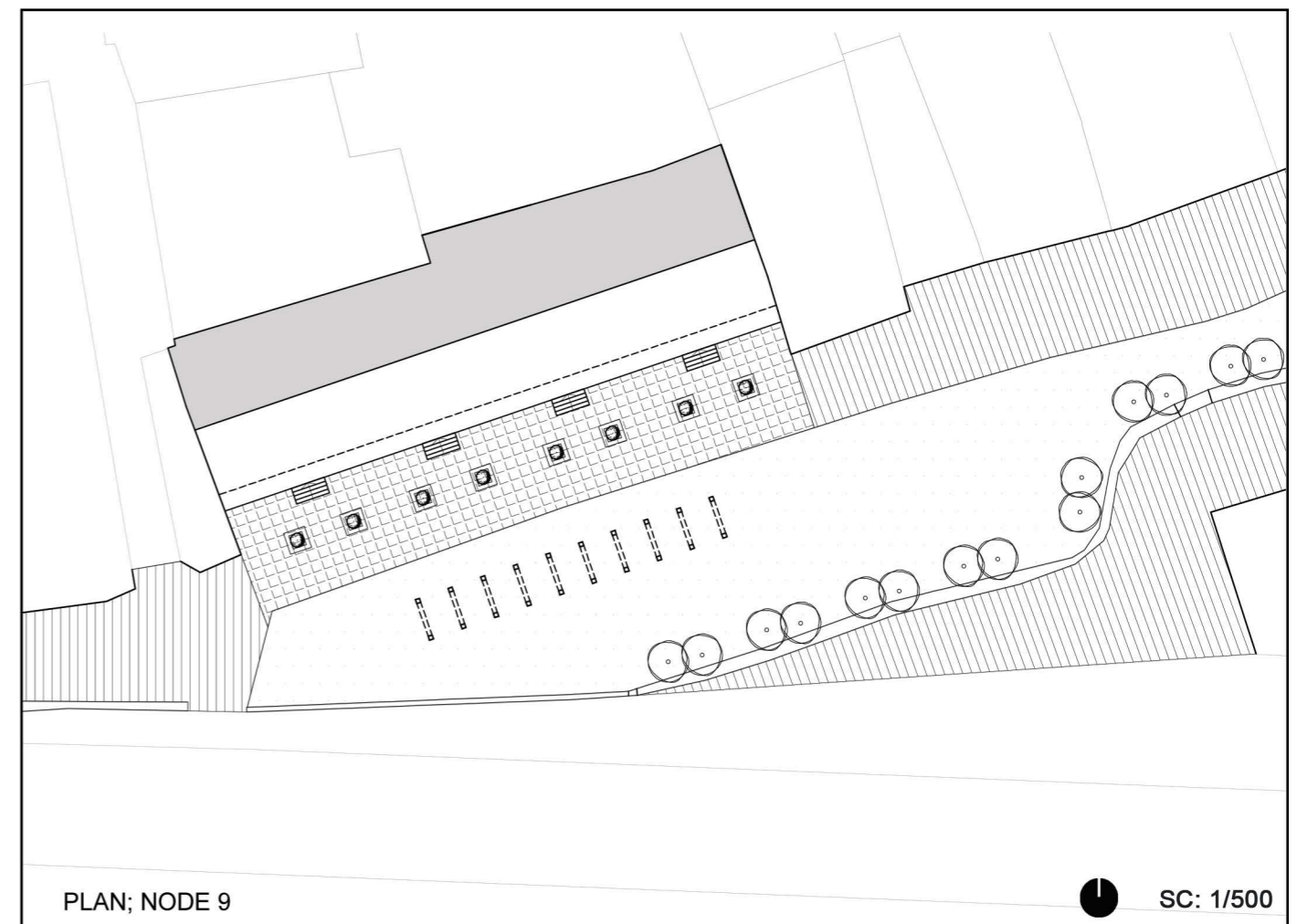
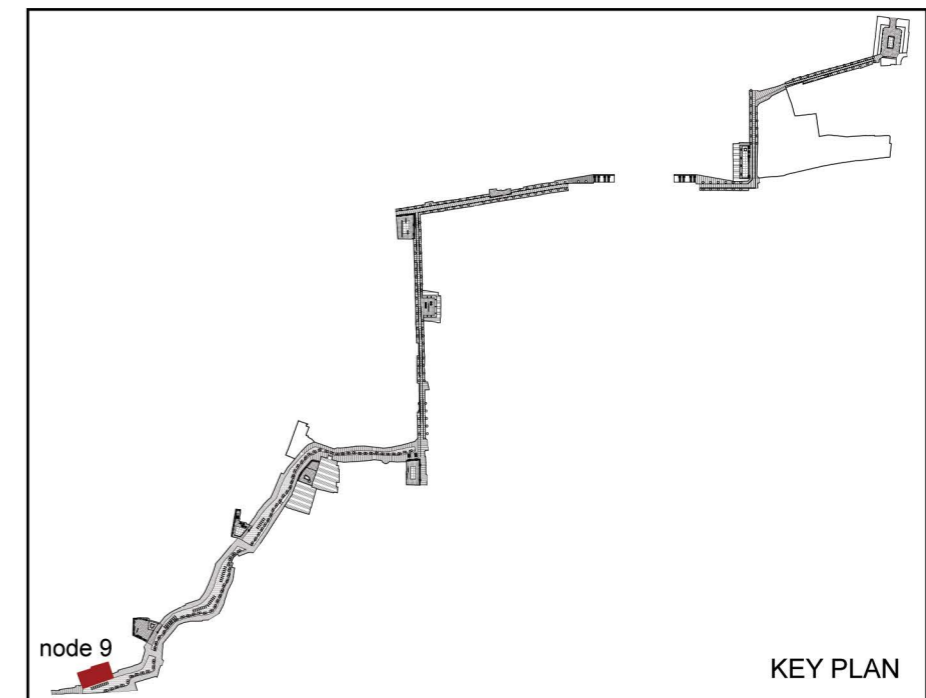
This node is an ending point of the path. Since there is a condensation of cafés in the starting point of the journey which is Jolfa Square, the idea is to have a condensation of *teahouses* here by the ending point, showing two different cultures and intangible heritages of Armenian and non-Armenian community.

There are few new and not historical buildings here which their function will be changed from residential to teahouses. They are level up with stairs like Jolfa Square, each set of staircases showing one teahouse in front of it.

The sitting places here are not like normal chairs and benches, but beds, as like traditional sitting furniture in such spaces.

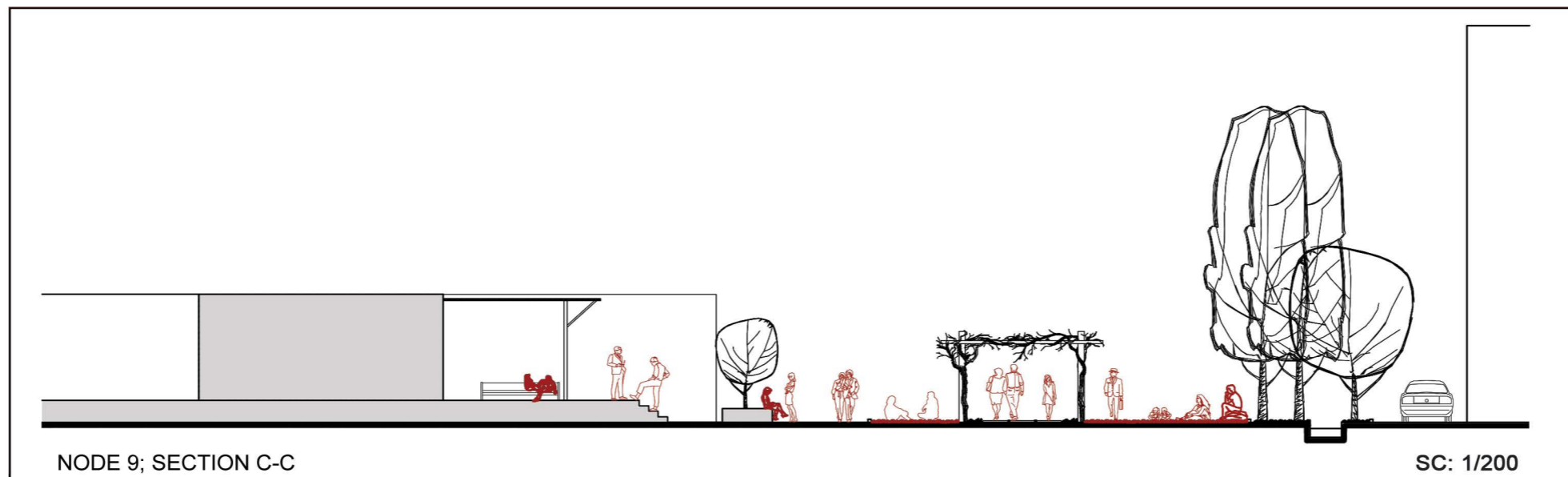


Figure 48; teahouse; up: Abbasi Hotel, Isfahan, 2015/ bottom: Darband, Tehran, 2014  
Ref: up: author/ bottom: [www.flickr.com/](http://www.flickr.com/) photographer: Oksana



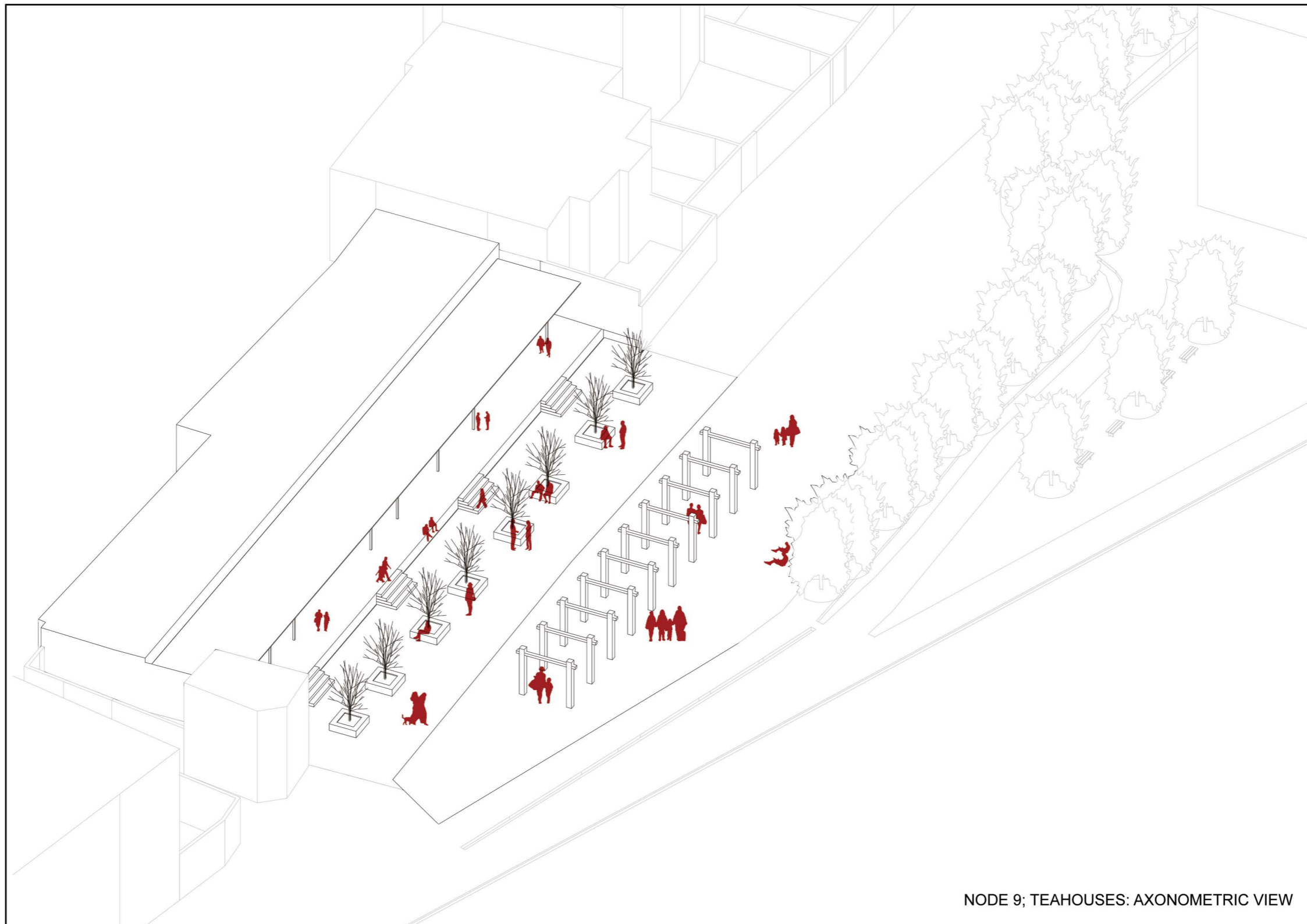
Drawing 35; node 9 key plan and plan  
Ref: author





Drawing 36; node 9 plan and section  
Ref: author





NODE 9; TEAHOUSES: AXONOMETRIC VIEW



