

Is the Tehran Bazaar Dead?

*Foucault, Politics,
and Architecture*

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By

Farzaneh Haghighi

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For NEDA AGHA-SOLTAN.

the least I could do.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---|
| AH: | After Hijra (Islamic lunar calendar) |
| SH: | Solar Hijra (Official calendar of Iran) |
| ICHO: | Iranian Cultural Heritage Organisation |
| ICB: | the Iran Carpet Bazaar (<i>Bazaar-e farsh-e Iran</i>) |
| NCC: | National Cartographic Centre of Iran |
| IRDC: | Islamic Revolution Document Centre |

INTRODUCTION

This book aims to demonstrate that Foucault's notion of *event* allows for the potential immanent in the Tehran bazaar to be expressed as an alternative to the sociopolitical and architectural discourses of this marketplace. This aim is achieved by pursuing four key objectives. The first objective is to identify the manner by which the Tehran bazaar has been framed through the lens of sociopolitical and architectural discourses. Chapter one presents the sociopolitical accounts and chapter two introduces the architectural perspectives.

The second objective is to consider the spatio-political notions that have consequently been excluded from the frame of these two discourses. This involves addressing the inability of contemporary conceptualisations of the Tehran bazaar to incorporate the spatiality of this marketplace with experiences taking place in it. In doing so, the second objective identifies such incapacities and their particular architectural characteristics: the transformation of this urban environment which has been fixed as the static commercial focus of the city in architectural discourses, the political role of architecture in promoting or preventing *micro-activities*, the dynamism of the bazaar as a set of relations, and the role of restoration projects in stabilising the tension of the bazaar as a system. These neglected architectural characteristics that arise are examined in the first two chapters.

The third objective is to introduce the Foucauldian notion of *event* and the possibilities it generates to restore to the bazaar its character as an *event*. The purpose is in part to address the perceived lack in the dominant conceptualisations of the bazaar. The Foucauldian *event* acts as a diagnostic tool and augmentation to these perspectives of sociopolitical and architectural accounts that are addressed in chapter three. This chapter elucidates the context by which Foucault proclaims the notion of *event*, the definitions he proposes for it, and the specific aspects of his notion of *event* enabling this book to explore intersections of built environment and actions.

The fourth objective is to deploy Foucault's notion of *event* and engage with alternative modes of spatial thinking on a micropolitical level. Each alternative presents a non-reductive narration based on a specific possibility. A non-reductive narration refers to a form of alternative

narration that fosters the multiplicity and imperceptibility of events without reducing them to cause-and-effect relationships. This objective is largely dealt with in the last three chapters. It takes *the decline of socioeconomic activities* and examines a depoliticised and delocalised marketplace as a spatial event, engages *the neglected ongoing everyday life* and analyses the experiences promoted or prevented by architecture, and focuses upon *the makeshift restoration projects* to explore the constraining-constrained relationship between architecture and the body.

Through these four objectives the book will advance its aim to argue that the potential immanent in the Tehran bazaar can be expressed through Foucault's notion of *event*. The book will develop a lengthy mediation to explore the *event* and the bazaar, respectively, and in doing so the intention will be to use the bazaar as a prompt to explicate the event. That is, the bazaar will play more of a supporting role for the explication of the notion of event. The balance between architecture and philosophy will be maintained in a way to make the exploration of the architecture of the act of trade possible. Such an exploration avoids reducing the bazaar to a case study, and instead seeks to investigate how architecture might transform individuals through the act of exchange—the exchange of words, things, bodies, and thoughts.

Research Background

Iranian urban uprisings of the 2009 presidential election

This book has its origin in my personal involvement, as an ordinary resident, in a series of protests in 2009 in Tehran, Iran. In one of these protests, Neda Agha-Soltan, an individual in the crowd, was killed. This was a particular event that the media tied heavily to the street in the reporting of her death. She died east of Kargar Avenue. Kargar Avenue runs north-south and is the main street of the Amir-abad District in Tehran. Several departments of Tehran University, university student dormitories, the sports centre of Tehran University, the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran, and the Tehran Heart Centre are some of the key institutions located in the Amir-abad District. Neda's death has been spatially anchored in this area: northern Amir-abad, east of Kargar Avenue, at the intersection of Khosravi and Salehi Streets.

The image of Neda bleeding on the street suffices to suggest that the linear urban streets serve not only as sites for practising civil activities but as pathways along which surveillance is easily applied. Her death had a long-lasting effect on me, causing me to rethink the potency of urban

space. To put it simply, the built environment cannot be neutral. Examining the relationship between an *event* and the *environment* in which it occurs emerged as the crux of this book.

It is not surprising that in February 2013 the photographer Azadeh Akhlaghi launched her exhibition “By An Eyewitness” in Tehran, affirming the effect Neda’s death had on her ambitious photographic project.¹ Akhlaghi reconstructs the tragic deaths of seventeen Iranian artists, clerics, athletes, and revolutionary figures between 1908 and 1998. These deaths, markers in Iran’s modern history, have not previously been visually documented. Akhlaghi recreates these incidents not as a historian but in a manner similar to that of an architect who designs a “condition” as opposed to stage setting, and the scenes portray the architecture intertwined with the reconstructed events. This book comes out of a similar approach towards architecture, seeking to question the performance of place: to investigate what it can do.

Tehran bazaar

The numerous street rallies of the Iranian presidential election of 2009 have been compared to the demonstrations leading up to the 1979 Islamic Revolution.² Unlike the period of the 1970s, the Tehran bazaar remained outside the frame of revolutionary spaces during the 2009 demonstrations. Regardless of the sociopolitical, economic, and urban reasons for this absence, the Tehran bazaar stands as a complex spatial and social ensemble that resists the reduction of architecture to a backdrop for activities. The transformation of the Tehran bazaar, which is intertwined with the history of urban uprising in Iran, has been the object of numerous (and continuous) studies that the first two chapters will consider in depth. The extensive literature exploring the role of the Tehran bazaar in social movements and its significance to the origin of Tehran for architectural historiography is one reason for having this marketplace as the book’s focus. A second reason relates to the expansive restoration projects currently transforming the Tehran bazaar. By “currently,” I am referring to projects observed during two field research visits: one conducted between December 2011 and February 2012 and the other during June 2013. Like much of the history of changes to the bazaar, the precise launch and completion dates of these restoration projects are not identified due to the lack of official reports. To overcome this difficulty, it should be understood that any time the words “contemporary” or “current” are used for the ongoing restoration projects, they refer to the time span of the fieldwork: that is from the end of 2011 until mid-2013.

This book initially hypothesised that the sociopolitical and architectural discourses of the Tehran bazaar would prove to have nothing in common, apart from the fact that they narrate this marketplace from two distinct perspectives. Further exploration, as chapters one and two will show, reveals the lack of a clear-cut separation between the two discourses. They not only share similar methodologies, concepts, and objectives by virtue of both being disciplinary forms of knowledge, but also treat the bazaar as an object of investigation through classificatory schemes: one discipline ascribes social, political, and economic roles to the bazaar; the other assigns it morphological and functional features.

Through these lenses the Tehran bazaar has been conceptualised as a linear-structured marketplace and a united sociopolitical entity consisting of several public buildings that vary in form, function, and historical value. Built in the sixteenth century, it was affected by several urban plans in the twentieth century under the Qajar, Pahlavi, and Islamic governments. Today, it is known as a fixed, central urban district demarcated by distinguishable linear north-south and east-west streets. The existing scholarship on the architectural history of the Tehran bazaar treats this Iranian marketplace as an immobile complex of static commercial spaces and public buildings. It is this scholarship that I seek to challenge.

Architectural history

Some contemporary architectural theorists and historians suggest the necessity of bringing other forms of time, contextual relations, and gender narration into architectural history. While agreeing with these endeavours, a limited number of key literary examples will be given that define the problems of Western architectural historiography to which this book responds from a Foucauldian perspective.

The architectural theorist and historian Steve Basson, in the essay “Temporal Flows,” addresses the flaws of the traditional Western architectural historiography in engaging with architecture’s past. Conventionally, Basson suggests that architecture is perceived as a continuous and accessible subject of historical knowledge trapped in a linear chronological order and corresponding organisation of forms.³ The traditional time spans impose a totalitarian vision on the engagement with architecture’s past which treats every built environment similarly. Differences are not considered. The majority of any society is overshadowed by the will of those in power. Basson questions the linearity of conventional temporality, and invites us to let the multiplicity of time spans and disparate discourses come into play. In search of a model for historical engagement and becoming an actor within

the built environment, Basson argues that the question of architectural production must consider the discursive relations through which a built form has appeared in the first place. According to Basson, by letting the multiple encounters, flows of time, and disparate discourses play in the historical narratives, the totalising vision of convention can be avoided.⁴

The architectural theorist Andrew Ballantyne supports the critique that “traditional architectural historiography” is limited to the study of the finest buildings projecting bourgeois views.⁵ The neglected notions are therefore the forms of collective habitation and the role of power, and particularly commercial power in the building industry. Ballantyne treats architecture as an “index of the value-system of the society,” and invites the architects to study the state of affairs through which a building can be built or even destroyed. Buildings, he suggests, are multifaceted and expensive products that express a complex socioeconomic process. Traditional historiography undermines the performance of power relations in architectural analysis and underlines the aesthetic effects. For Ballantyne, the multiplicity of narrations in the formation of each building has to replace the single totalitarian narrative by considering the intricate “ethical milieu” in which a building is constructed.⁶

For architectural historian Dana Arnold, the problem of Western historiography includes the suppression of the “Other’s” narration and the dominance of the white Western male subject who reinforces the masculinist narratives.⁷ The multiplicity that these three accounts promote for architectural historiography comprises three forms of otherness: other forms of time, other forms of contextual relation, and other forms of gender narration.

Implicitly or explicitly, the Foucauldian influence is inseparable from the critiques of intrinsic historical orders, the author’s function, and power relations in historical narration.⁸ Concerning Foucault’s role, Arnold observes that, “Foucault amongst many other thinkers asserts that there is no essential order, meaning or framework as knowledge is forever changing and is itself subject to periodisation or fashion, as is the discipline of history itself.”⁹ Although Foucault criticises Western historicity, problems such as the search for meaning, engagement with time and past, pre-existing forms of continuity, discursive classification, and linear periodisation are also applicable to the history of the Tehran bazaar. The first part of chapter three, concerning classification, will specifically explain Foucault’s attack on orthodox historiography.

This book is based on research that includes a detailed examination of the key sociopolitical, economic, geographical, historical, anthropological, and architectural studies of the Tehran bazaar. The scope of the book has

not been expanded to include the growing number of interdisciplinary explorations and analyses of the Middle Eastern market, and it rather seeks to identify the most repeated conceptualisations of the Tehran bazaar delineated through two general categories of sociopolitical and architectural discourses. As qualitative research, the book is heavily textual, engaging with descriptions of the Tehran bazaar, traveller's accounts, and most contemporary Farsi and English press sources focused on the Tehran bazaar. The two texts that will be mentioned most frequently in the book are *Bazaar and State in Iran: The Politics of the Tehran Marketplace* (2007) and *Sargozasht-e Bazaar-e Bozorg-e Tehran, Bazaar-ha va Bazaarche-haye Piramoni-ye An dar Devist Sal-e Akhir* (*Chronicle of the Tehran Grand Bazaar and Its Allied Bazaarche over the Last 200 Years*) (2010). The first, by political economist Arang Keshavarzian, is a work that cuts across economics, politics, anthropology, sociology, and urban discourses. The second, by Shahram Yousefi Far, is the result of wide-ranging fieldwork commissioned by the Iranology Foundation, a research institute established in Iran in 1997; it remains the most up-to-date text in Farsi mapping the contemporary situation of the Tehran bazaar.

Parallel to these studies, my personal observations, accidental encounters, and informal conversations (with merchants, petty traders, urban planners, and architectural conservation supervisors) are included to incorporate the experiences taking place at the Tehran bazaar. Such a fieldwork approach is not an interview-based method. This information has not been used as the fulcrum to the argument, nor as a source of data. The informal conversations were not conducted to answer the research questions and the bazaaris have not been used as a subject or object of observation in any anthropological sense. The implication of these random encounters for the wider context of the methodology relates to the potential they might offer the equally accidental and informal, complex context of the Tehran bazaar. Such encounters are as personal and idiosyncratic as the event of bleeding on a street.

Boundaries and Definitions

Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework that emphasises the importance of urban space in spatial discourse arose as part of the linguistic turn of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.¹⁰ Foucault is one of the many contributors to this *turn*. In spatial discourse, Foucault's ideas are deployed in analysing transparency,

spatial power relations, institutional enclosures, heterotopic visions of the future, and criticising the objectifications of architecture.

Foucault's contribution to spatial discourse fluctuates from the small scale of the distance between oneself and life to the performance of a city. For instance, the philosopher Brian Massumi, in *Semblance and Event* (2011), employs the Foucauldian notion of biopower in order to explore the proximity of the performance of regimes of power in the context of "evolutionary interaction."¹¹ Through analysing the simple action of shopping online with a credit card, Massumi argues that interaction with some codes will feed the marketing apparatus and will get back to the user with the set of products based on their desires. This interaction, Massumi suggests, depicts how close the productive power is to "the soft tissue" of life.¹² At a larger scale, the urban theorist Christine Boyer uses Foucault's interpretation of spatial relations as networks in order to explain the juxtaposition of near and far experiences in the city as a network of relations in a short essay "Violent Effacements in City Spaces" (1993).¹³ According to the architectural theorist and urban designer Gordana Fontana-Giusti, "Out of all Foucault's work, this revelation seminally elaborated in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) has attracted architects' attention the most."¹⁴ The architectural theorist Sanford Kwinter employs *Discipline and Punish* to explore the events that architectures might generate and for explicating the spatial dimension of power permeating an individual body: one's flesh, activity, and desires.¹⁵ The architectural theorist Anthony Vidler employs the notion of panopticism, identifying the blind spots of Foucault's analysis of modern spaces. Vidler, in the essays "Dark Space" (1994) and "Transparency and Utopia: Constructing the Void from Pascal to Foucault" (2011), broadens the Foucauldian spatial paradigm to consider the Enlightenment fear of darkness and the political role of transparency.¹⁶ Vidler has critiqued Foucault for remaining blind to the aspects of the enlightenment which were not aligned with his panoptic spatial analysis.¹⁷ The one significant element ignored by Foucault, in Vidler's words, was the "terrifying sublime" displayed in the works of the late eighteenth-century architect Claude Nicolas Ledoux.¹⁸ For the architectural theorist Neil Leach in *Camouflage* (2006) and the architect Juhanni Pallasmaa in *The Architecture of Image* (2007), Foucault's panopticon operates as an architectural controlling device serving spatial surveillance.¹⁹ Fontana-Giusti presents a concise account of the implication of the panoptic modality of power for architects: "[s]ince the emergence of Foucault's discussion on panopticism, it has become impossible to see architecture as neutral, simply aesthetic or merely functional."²⁰

Another text dear to architects is Foucault's lecture "Of Other Spaces" (1984), discussing the idea of heterotopia.²¹ Boyer, for instance, in "The Many Mirrors of Foucault and Their Architectural Reflections" (2008), states that heterotopias are "counter-discourses"—spaces of "contestation and reverberation," and an "other" space.²² By linking the notion of an other space and "thinking otherwise," Boyer questions the disciplinary thought that regulates subjectivity.²³ The political geographer Edward Soja traces the same idea in *Thirdspace* (1996), arguing that the proliferating Foucauldian approaches miss a crucial point of his thought—to challenge "conventional spatial thinking."²⁴ Soja calls his alternative account, derived from Foucault's heterotopology, "the geohistory of otherness." Such a method, for Soja, acts as an envisioning of spatiality to go beyond the established.²⁵ By undertaking the position of an outsider, the philosopher Elizabeth Grosz, in *Architecture from the Outside* (2001), seeks to keep architecture open to the outside, and to force it to think.²⁶

With the exception of Bernard Tschumi's body of work, there are few studies that explore the implications of Foucault's notion of *event* for architectural discourse. For instance, Grosz associates the Foucauldian notion of *event* with utopia.²⁷ For Grosz, utopic visions are "represented as the cessation of becoming, the overcoming of problems, a calm and ongoing resolution."²⁸ In other words, the future idealised by utopic structures is controlled and the emergence of the *event* is blocked. Grosz observes the *event* conceptualised by Foucault that is "unprepared for, unforeseeable, singular, unique, and transformative, the advent of something new."²⁹ The philosopher and art historian John Rajchman points to the impossibility of the *event* and its incompatibility with the avant-garde's quest for new order.³⁰ To experience the heterotopic moments of invention, Rajchman suggests, we need to disengage from the taken-for-granted historical construction. The heterotopic moments are as yet unknown; they are not possible, but *actual*. They act as thinking otherwise, reclaiming Foucault's account of inhabiting the uninhabitable, the heterotopia.³¹ By mapping the most prevalent Foucauldian concepts in architectural discourse, this book pursues this less-explored one—the notion of *event*.

Event, space, and practice

It would be impossible to deploy the notion of *event* in architectural analysis without mentioning the links between this Foucauldian concept and the work of architect Tschumi.

Tschumi uses Foucault's notion of *event* implicitly and explicitly. To investigate the role of Foucault's notion of event, two separate interviews are juxtaposed. The first is an interview conducted by the architectural theorist Gevork Hartoonian with Tschumi in 2002.³² The second is a panel discussion between Foucault and French historians held in 1978. The two interviews share similar concerns. In the conversation with Hartoonian, Tschumi states: "for me as an architect, what counts in a building is not so much what it looks like, but what it does."³³ In the other interview, Foucault discusses his aim in studying the prison, namely that, "I was aiming to write a history, not of the prison as an institution, but of the practice of imprisonment."³⁴ Tschumi and Foucault, in their respective interviews, state that the method enabling them to go beyond the conventional is the notion of *event*. Foucault states: "I am trying to work in the direction of what one might call 'eventualization'," and Tschumi suggests: "a building is a place where things happen. I would say that architecture should be defined not only as space but also as the thing that happens in the space, that is, as space and event."³⁵ Foucault and Tschumi both employ the notion of event in the forms of "eventualisation" and "experience" to go beyond the objectification of "architecture."³⁶ In both forms, what matters is what something does, the practice and the action. Tschumi and Foucault, with the word *doing*, both refer to the social transformation that an object can produce or may be produced through. Such an object can be madness, illness, prison, or architecture. What Tschumi's theoretical discussion designates is a replacement of architecture as an object with its role in constructing madness, illness, crime, and sexuality, not for historical analyses but rather for designing and thinking of a space yet to come.

To understand the role of architecture defined by Tschumi, the plot of the movie *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* (2006) might be helpful.³⁷ The main character aims to produce a perfume resembling the affecting smell he once encountered on the body of a girl. His journey to distil this fragrance involves the killing of various women and the violent extraction of the essence of their bodies. Eventually he is captured and condemned to death for these murders. After escaping execution with the help of his overwhelming perfume, in the final scene he uses up what remains of the scent in a way that casts people into an orgy in the town square. Such a radical transformation caused by a perfume might act as an analogy for Tschumi's stress on the role of architecture. He seems to argue that architecture can foster such political, social, erotic, or violent experiences. In his own words, as an architect he is more interested in "designing conditions for events" than "conditioning designs."³⁸ His projects ranges

in scale from pamphlet advertisements featuring Villa Savoye imbued with urine, excrement, and graffiti, to urban proposals.³⁹ In referring to Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* (1961) (French publication dates will be used for Foucault's work), Tschumi suggests that considering insanity in architecture will open the possibility of going beyond the good, normal, and rational.⁴⁰

The notion of *event* in Tschumi's research is developed in contrast to the dominance of *program*. In *Architecture and Disjunction* (1994), he contextualises the duality of *event* and *program* in relation to the obsession of 1970s architectural history with style and that of the 1980s with ignoring function. Tschumi suggests that in the 1970s, architecture as a "form of knowledge" was reduced to "knowledge of form."⁴¹ Stylistic approaches transformed the architects into "mere decorators," and architectural critics, by focusing on the "surface signs," ignored the activities occurring in the space.⁴² Tschumi suggests that *program* in the 1980s was a forbidden territory, because architecture's main concern was to resemble a decorative painting; consequently, architecture was used in the "cycle of consumption."⁴³ Based on the obsessions with style in the 1970s and ignoring function in the 1980s, Tschumi argues that there is no architecture without *program* and no space without *event*.⁴⁴ Such an approach also aims to bridge the gap between the functional and aesthetic concerns of architecture. Tschumi's notions of "crossprogramming," "transprogramming," and "disprogramming" propose a different critical paradigm from the modernist "form follows function."⁴⁵ In Hartoonian's words, Tschumi suspends this modern axiom and suggests that Tschumi's work is an "architecture with a sense of space that is pregnant with event."⁴⁶ One might argue that the objectification of architecture is shaken by Tschumi's claim that good architecture must be "conceived, erected and burned in vain" while introducing fireworks as the greatest architecture.⁴⁷

Tschumi's attempt to define architecture can be traced back to his teaching experience in 1974–5 at the Architectural Association (AA) in London. He mixes various genres of representation, from photography to literature, in relation to his teaching, writing, and design. For instance, for him the role of writing in architecture is something more than "injecting meaning into the building." He uses literary texts because of the similarity between the ways literature and architecture unfold *events*.⁴⁸ Employing various mediums for Tschumi was a device for introducing architecture, not as the backdrop for actions, but as an "action itself":

The fascination with the dramatic, either in the program (murder, sexuality, violence) or in the mode of representation (strongly outlined images, distorted angles of visions—as if seen from a diving airforce bomber), is

there to force a response. Architecture ceases to be a backdrop for actions, becoming the action itself.⁴⁹

To support the redefinition of architecture as an action itself, the notion of *event* plays a fundamental role for Tschumi. The notion of *event* is highly linked to the impact of philosophy on his work as an architect, an architectural theorist, and an architectural mentor. For instance, Louis Martin diagnoses the literary influences of Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Georges Bataille, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Philippe Sollers, and the Situationists.⁵⁰ Architectural theorist and historian Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen, writing in “Bernard Tschumi's Event Space” (1998), identifies a direct influence of the Deleuzian notion of *event* on Tschumi's works.⁵¹ Martin and Pelkonen both search for the origins of Tschumi's architectural thinking rather than studying the possibilities that his approach provides for spatial thinking. One might argue that, for Tschumi, the concept of *event* is essential for a different mode of thinking of space. For him, the notion of *event* is a tool deployed in designing, writing, and teaching architecture in order to redefine architecture and the role of architects. In the essay “Event and Disjunction” (2011), employing Deleuze's equating of *reality* and *event*, Tschumi writes:

The very multiplicity of an architectural project is about the combination of differences, but not necessarily about the reconciliation of these differences.

The coexistence of such heterogeneous dimensions and demand makes up the “event”. [...]

Architecture is never a neutral figure. Architectural concepts are inescapably connected to events and are part of them. The concept of event is universal insofar as it confronts architecture and what happens in it—what architecture looks like and what it does. It is about intensity, conflict, tension.⁵²

Here, Tschumi moves towards the complexity and tension of the relations between *architectural concepts* and *events*. It seems that architectural concepts provide a replacement for the ambiguity of architecture. Moreover, the Deleuzian notion of *event*, by including the intensity and tension of reality, paves the way for Tschumi to stress the coexistence of multiplicities, differences, and conflicts in any *event*. It might be argued that when Tschumi uses the word *event* it is a combination of the Deleuzian concept and the Foucauldian concept, which is discussed below.

The Foucauldian notion of event

The *event* is dispersed among Foucault's major books, essays, book reviews, and interviews, acting as a *concept* or a *method*. In the archaeological era of his works, raising the importance of institutions such as the hospital and asylum, the *event* appears as a concept. In the other two periods of Foucault's work, the *event* emerges as a method, this book argues. Those periods are: the genealogical exploration shifting the institution-centric approach to the interrogating diagrams of power-knowledge relations, such as prison, school, and town; and the problematisation period when the space between bodies is at stake.

In opposition to the orthodox historiography of his time, Foucault suggests that *event* as a concept is not a known, visible, identifiable cause with a hidden meaning that can be discovered by a historian. It is diffuse, multilayered, and imperceptible to the historian. The *event* is not a battle, it is the reversal of the relationship between forces, allowing the *other* to enter the games of power and truths. Foucault shifts the *event* from being a single known cause in an inert continuous evolution towards a multilayered unexpected incident in a discontinuous narration. He shows that the *event* is born simultaneously, with the distinction being set between traditional history and the new history in order to go beyond the disciplinary formations and temporal forms of the chronological ordering of discourse. Such a polycephalous concept allows this book to engage critically with discursive accounts of the Tehran bazaar.

For Foucault, the conditions in which the *event* operates is of more importance than its definition. He argues that *event* arises from a problematisation of the present rather than a traditional historical study of a period. The *event* belongs to the realm of history of thought but does not restrict itself to an epistemic break nor a reversal, but rather complicates itself as a point of application of power relations. It does not appear as an even successive flow, but rather is the moment of erosion where drama may take place. The *event* is not a known cause of a problem but rather a singular form of experience. The *event* for Foucault has different scales and occurs over different time periods. It engages with various scales of historical problems varying from the classical epistemic shifts to the inscription of medical discourse on an individual body in modernity. It operates as a rupture and also as a smooth transformation. The *event* has different intensities, from a rupture to an inflection point, a process and a transformation. The *event* appears when a problem is dispersed within multiple discourses produced by the mechanism of power-knowledge relations centring on that very problem. Such an opening up of the possibilities of the *event* as a method allows this book to explore an urban

fabric loaded with more than four hundred years of resistance against the return to an authentic bazaar; an urban environment that is the largest centre of attraction in Tehran, through which four hundred thousand people pass every day.

Despite the implicit references and explicit use of the word “event,” it should be stated that the concept of *event* has not been formulated in any tightly framed manner in Foucault’s work. This is particularly clear in comparison with (for example) the significance of the notion of *event* as presented in Deleuze’s *The Logic of Sense* (1969). The lack of an explicit formulation is one of the difficulties that this book engages with. A similar difficulty has been elaborated by philosopher Manuel De Landa when exploring the Deleuzian concept of *assemblage*. De Landa, in the introduction of *A New Philosophy of Society* (2006), refers to “the relatively few pages dedicated to assemblage theory in the work of Deleuze,” and explains how he deals with this difficulty.⁵³ The way De Landa articulates his problem and the strategies he proposes to sidestep those obstacles are similar to how I deal with the constraints of accessing the Foucauldian notion of *event*. De Landa suggests that it is not only a paucity of words that is a problem for his study, but also the way the definition, extension, and qualification of the concept of assemblage is dispersed throughout Deleuze’s works. He enumerates the strategies he proposes to use to engage in Deleuzian hermeneutics: “I will give my own definitions of the technical terms, use my own argument to justify them, and use entirely different theoretical resources to develop them.”⁵⁴

In much the same fashion, there are few paragraphs one can turn to where Foucault directly conceptualises the notion of *event*. Following De Landa’s two latter strategies, this book has made particular interpretative movements to identify cases as *events*. In other words, it is articulated that a particular case fits within Foucault’s criteria and as such can be read as an *event*, although he does not himself make the identification. These movements are documented in chapter three. The next strategy is to use a set of theoretical perspectives to develop this Foucauldian concept, those are: Barthes’s notion of *studium/punctum*, Gilbert Simondon’s notion of *metastability*, Deleuze’s readings of Foucauldian *force relations*, and Foucault’s notions of *body*, *power*, *force*, and *resistance*. This allows for an examination of the extent to which Foucault’s notion of *event* might eventalise habitual thought. This study might thus allow for an observation of the possibilities and also the limits of the notion of *event* for thinking on a micropolitical level.

The problem of micro

Two schools of historiography during the 1980s shifted their emphasis towards the significance of daily life: the third generation of the *Annales* School and the French and Italian microhistorians.⁵⁵ They converged at the point of making claims for the “lived experience,” “day-to-day problems,” and “real-life.”⁵⁶ The *Annalistes* undertook pioneering ventures on several fronts, such as: breaking with historical positivism, seeking an interdisciplinary method, rejecting event history, reorienting towards an “analysis of problems” rather than a “description of events”, acknowledging the role of the author, and shifting their concern towards material historiography.⁵⁷ The lack of attention to epistemological problems in writing history appeared as the major critique of this school of historiography.⁵⁸ The historian Paul Veyne identifies the problem of *Annales* historiography as the absence of literature and philosophy. Foucault’s approach, according to Veyne, overcomes such limits. Veyne calls Foucault a “consummate historian” who looks to “the relations of practices.”⁵⁹

Foucauldian historiography analyses the practices of micro-powers. For Foucault, overcoming the metanarratives does not imply an attention to the silent mass or the oppressed. Though he deals with people situated outside the circuits of productive labour—the mad, the ill, the criminals, and children—he does not claim to speak for the oppressed, nor to discover the truth.⁶⁰ According to philosopher Todd May, what is at stake for Foucault is the analysis of power relationships on a micropolitical level.⁶¹ In the lecture series on biopolitics, Foucault explicitly explains that micro is not a question of “scale” but “point of view”:

So, we have been trying out this notion of governmentality and, second, seeing how this grid of governmentality, which we may assume is valid for the analysis of ways of conducting the conduct of mad people, patients, delinquents, and children, may equally be valid when we are dealing with phenomena of a completely different scale, such as an economic policy, for example, or the management of a whole social body [...]. What I wanted to do [...] was to see the extent to which we could accept that the analysis of micro-powers, or of procedures of governmentality, is not confined by definition to a precise domain determined by a sector of the scale, but should be considered simply as a point of view, a method of decipherment which may be valid for the whole scale, whatever its size. In other words, the analysis of micro-powers is not a question of scale, and it is not a question of a sector, it is a question of a point of view.⁶²

Following Foucault, this book uses the *micro* as a perspective in order to examine the mechanism of micro-powers exercised over individual bodies by the built environment.

Two bazaars in Tehran

There are two bazaars in Tehran: the Tajrish bazaar in the north and the grand bazaar (mostly known as the Tehran bazaar) in the south (Fig. Intro.1). As a part of the Qajar monarchs' interest in the northern village of Shemiranat and to benefit from the climate of steep terrain in the slopes of the Alborz mountain, the Tajrish bazaar developed during the eighteenth century and is now intertwined with the cultural, religious, and economic urban fabric. The focus of this book, however, is the Tehran bazaar, located on the south of the city, whose formation can be traced back to the origin of Tehran. The physical location with which the Tehran bazaar is today associated comprises an urban precinct demarcated by four streets: Panzdah-e Khordad Street on the north, Molavi Street on the south, Mostafa

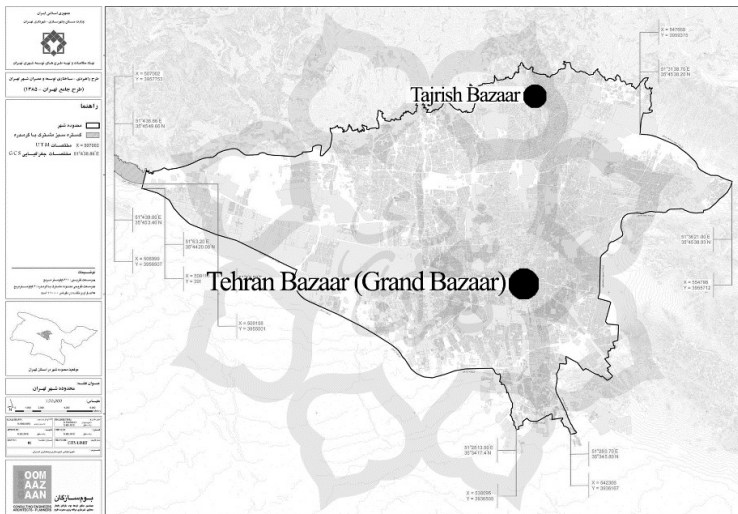


Fig. Intro.1. The two bazaars in Tehran, Iran: the *Tajrish* bazaar in the north and the grand bazaar (mostly known as the Tehran bazaar) in the south.

Source: “Tehran City-Limit”, Boom Sazgan Consulting Engineers and Planners (2006), Tehran: Vezarat-e maskan va shahrsazi-e tehran, accessed March 10, 2018, <http://www.tehran.ir/Default.aspx?tabid=209&cid=84&smid=604&tmid=598>.

Khomeini on the east, and Khayyam on the west (Fig. Intro.2). It is with this demarcated urban fabric that this book engages. Within these cartographic boundaries, the architectural configuration of this environment is examined. In this analysis, terms have been employed such as “built environment,” “place,” “architecture,” and “technical objects,” and which are briefly introduced.

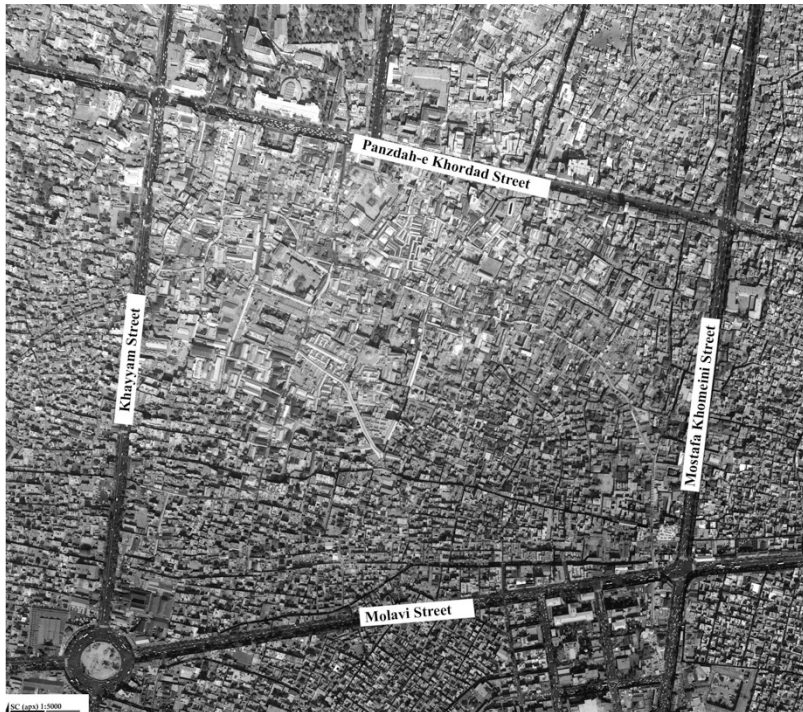


Fig. Intro.2. The Tehran bazaar is demarcated by four streets: Panzdah-e Khordad Street on the north, Molavi Street on the south, Mostafa Khomeini on the east, and Khayyam on the west. Tehran Bazaar, Tehran, Iran (2002). Map Source: National Cartographic Centre of Iran (NCC).

Architecture, place, and built environment

The architectural theorist Kim Dovey, in the introduction of *Framing Places: Mediating Power in Built Form* (1999), notes the interchangeable employment of terms such as “architecture,” “urban design,” and “built form” and the slippery boundaries between them.⁶³ I borrow the same

logic to explain this book's use of the terms "architecture," "place," and "built environment." It is not only the flexible boundaries between these terms that allows the book to substitute one for the other, but also the multiple scales by which the Tehran bazaar might be examined. The book does not engage with a notion of identity attached to place, nor in theorisation of the differences between space and place. It rather seeks to scrutinise the relation between experience and the environment in/by which it occurs.

In terms of the multiple scales of the bazaar, what this book tends to do when referring to "architecture" is indicate a building scale or a large section of the bazaar which might constitute an architectural consistency—almost as if it were a building. The term "place" is used to designate the locale, not a specific site that a building occupies, nor the plasticity of boundaries of an urban environment. When referring to an "urban environment," the larger scale of the bazaar in the content of the city is implied.

Technical objects

The term "technical objects" features prominently in the work of French philosophers Gilbert Simondon and Bernard Stiegler. For Simondon, the distinction between machines and humans must be rethought in the face of observing a human reality in technical ensembles. In his first major publication *Du mode d'existence des objets techniques* (On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects) (1958), well known as a source of several discourses on technics, Simondon discusses the distinction between living and non-living entities. Discerning the continuity of "technicity" passing through objects, he writes: "technical objects result from an objectification of technicity; they are produced by it, yet technicity is not exhausted in these objects and is not entirely contained in them."⁶⁴ As this book undertakes problematising the habitual distinction between *experience* and *backdrop*, *word* and *object*, along with the division between *object* and *body*, the "technical object" will be used in the last three chapters. This term allows the stability and autonomy traditionally assigned to objects to be overcome.

Structure of the Book

The book consists of six chapters. Chapters one and two are organised primarily to identify the major conceptualisations by which the Tehran bazaar has been framed and to identify the spatio-political notions that

have consequently been neglected. Chapter one is divided into two sections in order to present two key conceptualisations of the bazaar: as “A Socioeconomic Organisation” and as “An Autonomous Sociopolitical Opposition.” The sociopolitical and economic scholarship has been thematically arranged in this chapter. Chapter two also includes two sections: introducing the bazaar as “An Urban Concept” and as “An Architectural Edifice.” This chapter follows a chronological order based on the main periods of Iranian history from the fifteenth century to the contemporary Islamic Republic. The discussion of each era follows a brief introduction to the sociocultural history of the period in close relation to the urban formation of the capital. In the second section, the morphological evolution and physical development of Tehran deeply entwined in the formation of the Tehran bazaar are discussed.

Chapter three develops a theoretical framework not only to overcome the shortcomings of sociopolitical and architectural discourses but also to provide possibilities to restore to the bazaar its character as an *event*. The chapter contains three major sections: “Difference,” “Definition,” and “Deployment,” in order to extract the Foucauldian discourse of *event*. Although there is a sense of chronological order in dealing with Foucault’s major oeuvres, interviews, essays, and secondary texts, the priority is thematic. The section “Difference” is further subdivided into two parts: “Dichotomy” and “Classification.” The section “Definition” is also divided into two parts: “Statement and Discourse as Event” and “Problem.” The final section “Deployment” consists of three parts: “Chance: Creating the Unexpected,” “Acting Transversally across Discursive and Non-discursive Formations,” and “Standing Outside.” These three parts are designed to extract the potential of the Foucauldian notion of *event* to operate as a tool for thinking otherwise. Thus, the part entitled “Chance” suggests that when chance is deployed as an *event*, it allows the *not-yet-seen* relations to play a random role, and consequently the *not-yet-thought* may emerge. The part entitled “Acting Transversally” argues that by examining the technical practices of architecture – following a Foucauldian deployment of the notion of *event* in disrupting the habits of thought – one can go beyond the limits of stratified formations. Finally, the part entitled “Standing Outside” suggests that the deployment of *event* entails the exploration of the techniques of power; the mechanisms that, by thwarting the emergence of *event* as an unexpected problematic, enable the delinquent to resist.

Chapters four, five, and six present three alternative narrations to multiply the possible *in-forma-tion* that the bazaar as an *event* is able to express. They deal with what the aim of the book describes as “potential



Fig. Intro.3. Inside the Tehran bazaar throughout a closing down during the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Source: *Ettela'at* Newspaper Archive in Tehran. Photo code: 96021025. Entitled *roozshomar-e enghelab*. The photographer is not identified.

immanent in the bazaar.” The fourth chapter, “Death,” problematises the emphasis on the demise of Tehran bazaar through two *events*: the performance of roller-doors during strikes and the placement of photographs of the dead in disparate shops throughout the Tehran bazaar. The fifth chapter, “Movement,” addresses the dynamism of this urban environment through two *events*: the enduring carpet trade in a multistorey building and the ongoing fabric trade in a passageway, both sites being located on the west side of the Tehran bazaar. Chapter six, “Resistance,” explores the constraining-constrained relationship between architecture and the body through an *event*: restoration projects located in the clothing sector of the bazaar encountering a problematic instance of urban decay. These three final chapters are not considered as pieces of a puzzle providing a whole image of the bazaar. They are instead partial fragments;

each has its own stream of organisation, argument, and architectural exploration. They all borrow various lenses from the French poststructuralist philosophy of the late twentieth century to open new possibilities for narrating the bazaar in alternative accounts. Such a choice does not seek to downplay the growing body of critical scholarship that problematises the Western architectural historiography.⁶⁵ This tactic probes the potentials of specific concepts rather than dwelling upon geographic, cultural, or historical differences.

Finally, the conclusion retraces the key theoretical moves of the book in order to address the aim of the book to demonstrate that Foucault's notion of *event* allows for the potential immanent in the Tehran bazaar to be expressed as an alternative to the sociopolitical and architectural discourses of this marketplace.

Notes

¹ Sean O'Hagan, "Atrocities Revisited: Conflict and Cruelty in Iran," *The Guardian* (2014), accessed March 10, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/apr/09/azadeh-akhlaghi-conflict-cruelty-iran>.

² One of the best accounts of the 2009 demonstrations known as The Green Movement is a collection of essays edited by Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel, *The People Reloaded: The Green Movement and the Struggle for Iran's Future* (Brooklyn, NY: Melville House Pub, 2010). Some of the similarities noted between these two movements are "breaking the monopoly of the Iranian government over public spaces since revolution of 1979" (30); "similar slogans and similar tactics" (69); and "crowds' creative self-organization" (72).

³ Steve Basson, "Temporal Flows," in *Architecture in the Space of Flows*, eds. Andrew Ballantyne and Chris L. Smith (New York: Routledge, 2012), 161.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 173–5.

⁵ Andrew Ballantyne, "Architecture as Evidence," in *Rethinking Architectural Historiography*, eds. Dana Arnold, Elvan Altan Ergut, and Belgin Turan Özkaya (New York: Routledge, 2006), 40. The term "traditional architectural historiography" is used on p. 48.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 44–6.

⁷ Dana Arnold, "Beyond a Boundary: Towards an Architectural History of the Non-East," in *Rethinking Architectural Historiography*, 232.

⁸ Gwendolyn Wright, "Cultural History: Europeans, Americans, and the Meanings of Space," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 64 (4) (2005).

⁹ Dana Arnold, *Reading Architectural History* (London: Routledge, 2002), 6.

¹⁰ Wright, "Cultural History," 436.

¹¹ Brian Massumi, *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 47–8.

¹² *Ibid.*