

A Conceptual Framework for Interacting Landscape Architects and Urban Designers: Professionals' Perspectives

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ABSTRACT: Urban design and landscape Architecture are considered as modern Art (knowledge) which are developed through integration of various Art and science fields of studies. Formal emergence of urban design in 60s and landscape design is occurred at the beginning of 20th century. The success of these two fields is because of their attention to environmental qualities upgrade in public and open spaces all over cities. Indeed, these two fields have got similar approaches to designing open spaces; this article is looking forward to deliver proposals regarding suitable integration among experts of these two fields. This research is based on a qualitative and quantitative approach; using 'grounded theory method' and applying 'content analysis' in questions extractions analyze the practical mechanisms among experts in these two fields in Iran. The emphasis of this research in procedural aspect is based on the four-level order of relations among design component including: design-planning, management-guidance, control-policy and conservation-catalyzing, as the most important common role of urban design and landscape architecture, is to achieve an effective interaction pattern. In addition, to substantial aspect designing urban landscape and urban spaces is considered as a common subject among landscape architects and urban designers. At the end, based on incorporation of substantial and procedural components, a system of correlation between these two fields is proposed.

Key words: Environmental design, Interaction, Professional role, Urban landscape, Urban open spaces

INTRODUCTION

Urban design and landscape architecture as two independent branches of urban studies and architecture since the last century are getting well-known basically because of the importance of public and open urban spaces (Pijanowski *et al.*, 2009, Faryadi and Taheri, 2009, Gharakhlou *et al.*, 2010, Zhang *et al.*, 2010). Nowadays the expansion of urban design and landscape architecture theories and their overlay in urban spaces upgrading process have caused a kind of conflict among experts of these two fields.

Review in literatures shows various procedural and substantial similarities and differences in these two fields. Conflicts among these two have created a gap in architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and urban planning (Madanipour, 2006; Shirvani, 1985; Thompson, 1998; Lang, 2005; ASLA, 2009; Kriger, 2009; Waterman and Wall, 2010). This gap which is mostly because of the Short background of these two fields, lack of valuable and successful professional experiences, mixture of various responsibilities context,

and lack of a harmony among influential elements in plan preparation process basically in Iran is because of the lack of a pattern or a conceptual framework in order to define mutual relations.

Because the context of all landscape architects, urban designers and environmental designers are open and public spaces design, therefore a kind of interaction among all approaches facing with urban spaces as a context of human life happens. As a matter of fact, this paper is trying to propose an interaction framework in Iran, by studying concepts and professional role of each field and their trends in a periodical survey. In fact, the main focus of this research is to find the answer of "What is a proper framework of providing an easier way of a better interaction between urban designers and landscape architects?"

MATERIALS & METHODS

Gathering all needed information related to the subject of urban designers and landscape architects

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activities to define a relationship mechanism, necessitate choosing a method in which they can find a model and theory. In other words, making a theory base on data and extracting professional roles and comparative approach in extracting results necessitate applying ‘grounded theory’ in the research. Based on ‘Glaser and Strauss’ method, a theory is extracted from systematic data, with or without background questions. ‘Grounded theory’ is a methodology in which a logical systematic information accumulation and analysis to extract the data theory is provided (Hunter and Kelly, 2008; Bloor and Wood, 2006). Various data accumulation and analysis including: coding, constant comparison and theoretical sampling are common to apply (Behzadfar *et al.*, 2010a). Therefore categorizing roles and professional subjects among two fields of urban design and landscape architecture is contiguously analyzed and main items for proving a theory is extracted.

Based on previous researches, a three level system of the relation among students and masters of these two fields is proposed base on the procedural component of interaction (Behzadfar *et al.*, 2010; Razzaghi Asl *et al.*, 2009). Therefore the main aim of this research is to analyze the role of landscape architects and urban designers in urban environment design and proposing a sample mechanism of their interactions based on professional roles and subjects. Therefore in addition to literature review, the method of self-administered was applied from graduated landscape architects and urban designers who are working in governmental and private sectors based on Dillman(1978) method as a pilot project. The reason of choosing graduated and professionals was their dominance over professional market and their interactions with other fields such as urban design or landscape architecture. This survey was E-mailed to 245 professionals in May 2010. Among all the participants, 65 percent (151 persons) answered questions properly, which include 85 urban designers and 66 landscape architects.

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Mentioned survey and studies and theoretical publications of these two fields all over the world, is a result of the expansion of the duty of landscape architects and urban designs in urban and regional context (Murphy, 1995; Swaffield, 2002; Lang, 2005; Madanipour, 2006; Foster, 2009). In previous decades because of the evolutions in information technology, global economy and social spaces, urban forms has faced with sudden changes. It means that, urban form and structure has turned into a tool to absorb investments and specific social groups of people. The main role of urban design is to provide a suitable high quality image for people which are the most important reason of the growth of this field in previous decades. On the other hand, landscape architects are focusing

on various spectrums of spaces and scales from small scale urban spaces to complicate ecosystems. ‘Wherever human have influenced landscape, you can find a landscape architect there’ (Beardsley, 2001). Providing everyday spaces, monumental places, playing places, natural places, private places, historical places, scientific places, mental spaces, industrial places and new towns are considered as the physical context of landscape architects activities, notwithstanding before half a century ago designing parks and gardens were the main key profession of them (Waterman, 2009).

Besides, most of the urban designers and landscape architects have focused on the direct corporation of these two fields in various scales (Carmona *et al.*, 2006; Thompson, 1998; Shirvani, 1985; Lang, 2005; Waterman and wall, 2010; Krieger, 2009). Furthermore, emergence of new approaches in previous decades such as “landscape urbanism” and “landscape architecture in urban design” is the result of this integration (Faizi and Razzaghi asl, 2009). Base on this necessity understanding each professional role of people in landscape design process for landscape architects and urban designers is necessary. Because, without a proper understanding of professional role of each field, there will be a disturbance in a whole function of the system. Moreover, perceiving professional importance of professionals to face with artificial and natural environment in conceptual framework will ease the interaction process. In order to achieve an order of components and main items, the main duties of urban designers and landscape architects are extracted in Table 1.

Based on the table, there is an emphasis on the common roles in urban design and landscape architecture in; designing, planning, management, conservation, balancing, leadership, vision-making, policy-making, catalyzing, facilitation and coordination. This may be because of the total overview of urban designers in environmental design projects in which draw various phases (Lang, 2005; Carmona, 2006). Therefore these eight mentioned roles will be followed ahead.

Generally 3 open-ended and closed-ended questions were asked from the mentioned group. The first question focusing on procedural aspect, tries to extract professional roles and duties of these two fields. The next two questions is emphasizing of the content and subjects in environmental design. The conclusion of question 1 answers “what is the most important role of urban designers and landscape architects in your point of view?” is shown in Fig. 1. This question is answered both in an open and closed form which in addition to the mentioned eight roles, tries to find more important ones of these two fields.

Table 1. Professional roles of urban designers and landscape architects in literature

Professional Roles	Key distributors	Discipline Focus
Design	Cowan,2005 ; Lynch,1981; Behzadfar,2009 ; ASLA,2009 ; McHarg,1971; Carmona,2006	Landscape Architects Urban designers
Planning	Cowan,2005; Thompson,1999 ; Murphy,2005	Landscape Architects Urban designers
Management	ASLA,2009 ; Worth; Motloch ; Carmona,2006	Landscape Architects Urban designers
Conservation	ASLA,2009 ;Carmona,2006	Landscape Architects Urban designers
Balance	Bell,1999 ; American Institute of Urbanism	Landscape Architects Urban designers
Leadership	Fein and Crespi, 1977; Madanipour,1996	Landscape Architects Urban designers
Vision-making	Carmona,2006	Urban designers
Policy-making	Cowan,2005 ; Punter,1997 ; Waldheim,2006 ;Carmona,2006	Landscape Architects Urban designers
Catalyzing	Meyer,1992 ;Carmona,2006	Landscape Architects Urban designers
Facilitation	Carmona,2003	Urban designers
Coordination	Shirvani,1984	Urban designers

In addition to the confirmation of mentioned eight roles, 46 percent (70 persons) have indicated to the ‘control’ role of these two fields. Analysis and conclusion of answers show that more than half of the answers emphasis on the controlling, management, planning, designing and catalyzing role of the fields. Amongst, the portion of designing was 94 percent and planning 79 percent. This may be because of the academic educational backgrounds in Iran which there are two main fields of urban planning and urban design at universities. ‘Carmona et al.(2006) considers landscape architects as professionals who their main fields of their activities are designing environments in their book “Public spaces-urban spaces”. Therefore

urban design provides goals, policies and final decisions in a framework. The role of urban designers can be delivered in 2 ways:

- 1) providing intentional urban design guideline
 - 2) providing inadvertent urban design guideline
- Therefore eventually these are the landscape architects who decide and the urban spaces and environments are designed based on their decision. ‘Alex Krieger’ writes: landscape architecture is located in urban design territory and this is the corporation of these two with civil engineering and ecology which ends up to an environmental design. Therefore landscape architecture is a vital component of an urban design process (Krieger, 2009). Based on the functional and activity

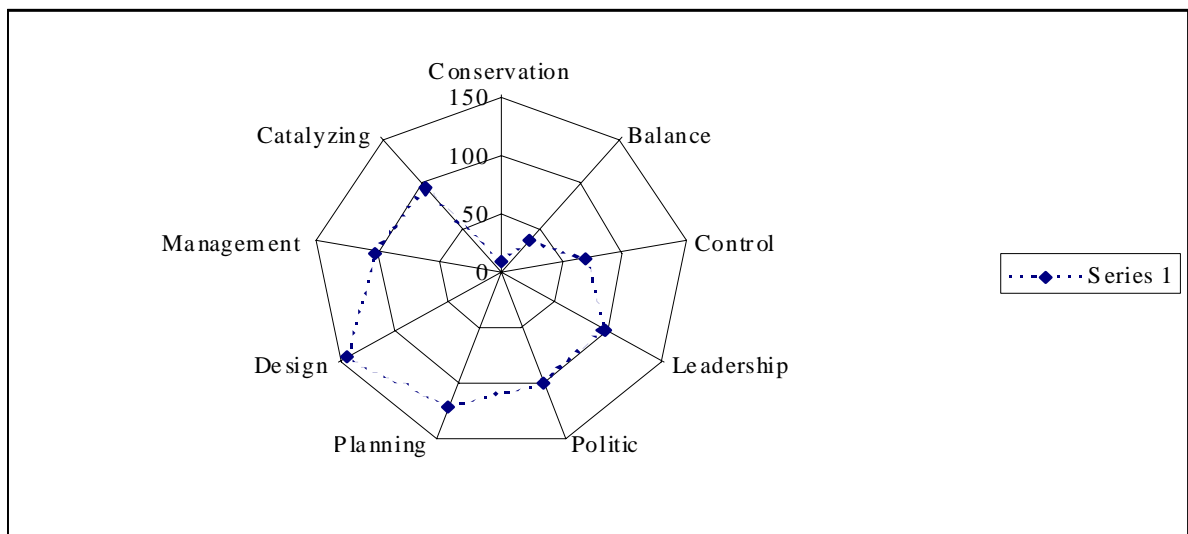


Fig. 1. frequency of urban designers and landscape architects roles in environmental design

system of landscape architects and urban designers, it can be said that the product of urban design is a guideline and design. It also can be said that the product of landscape architecture is guideline and design. The difference among these two is their amount of emphasis on mentioned products. As a matter of fact, subject such as ecology and natural processes in landscape architecture and economic and sociology in urban design are considered as the main focuses. But, creation of new approaches such as green or ecological urban design and economical or social perspectives in landscape architecture recently have caused an influence on distinction among landscape architecture and urban design. The main activity of urban design is to provide codes and guidelines for designing as a system of controlling guidance, whereas the main activity of landscape architecture is providing detailed spaces design.

The second research question aims at discovering the most important products of urban designers and landscape architects separately from the two groups. Conclusion of analysis shows that landscape architecture products are mainly as 'Design and plan: n= 145' 'Design details: n=121' and 'Guidelines: n=87'. The above statistics show that designing an planning duty has got the most importance (95 percent) among landscape architects (Fig. 2).

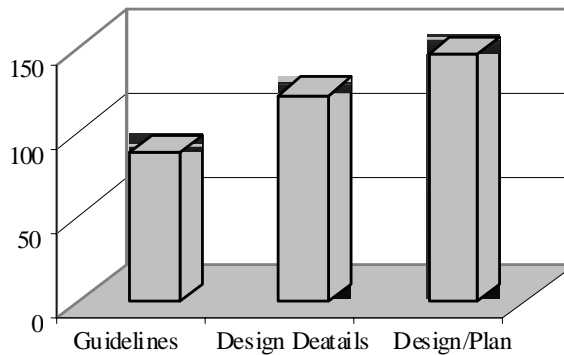


Fig. 2. the frequency of landscape architects expected products in environmental design

The conclusion of analysis regarding the most important duties of urban designers shows that guidelines (n=135), design briefs (n=117) and design (n=98) are the most important products by order. Amongst, preparing guidelines for designing with 90 percent has got the priority over the other products among urban designers. In addition the importance of guidelines in urban design is the result of the mixture of designing and planning and creation of new approaches such as 'policy-oriented urban design' and 'design-led planning' in previous decades (Fig. 3). In the third question urban designers and landscape architects were questioned "which professional subjects do you follow the most?"

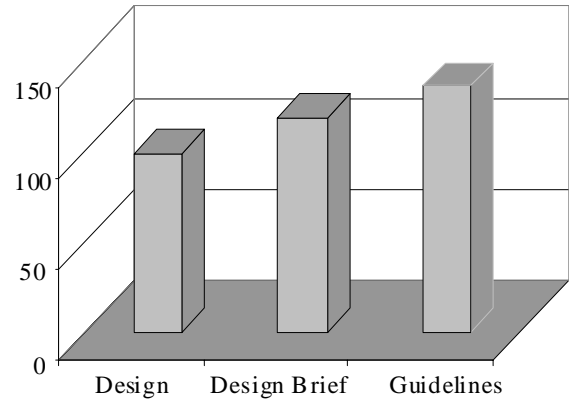


Fig. 3. the frequency of urban designers expected products in environmental design

Analysis of the results in Fig. 4 and 5 shows that landscape architects are more eager to focus on designing parks and green spaces, recreational zones, urban open spaces and residential zones. Whereas, the main focus of urban designers mainly are squares and streets, guidelines, urban landscape and deteriorated fabrics. Therefore urban landscape has got a specific importance as a joint subject.

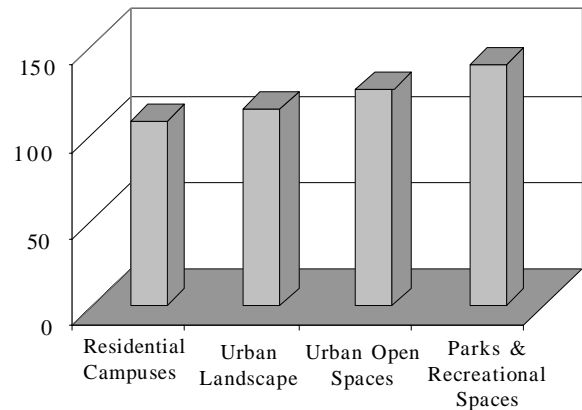


Fig. 4. Frequency of noteworthy subject among professional landscape architects in Iran

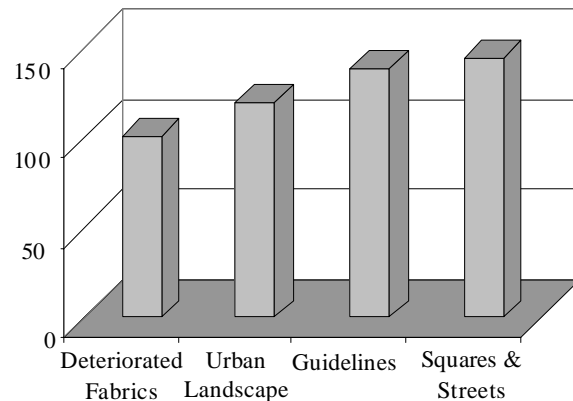


Fig. 5. Frequency of noteworthy subject among professional urban designers in Iran

Based on the conclusion of the gathered information extracting from questions and literature review of the both fields, following graphs are

prepared based on the subject-oriented relations and product-oriented relations among both landscape architects and urban designers (Fig. 6 and 7).

The main part of the urban design in this mechanism is to provide guidelines and landscape architects has got a direct relation to providing design details. Beside this direct role and relation, there is less important indirect relation regarding providing guidelines by landscape architects and design details by urban designers (Carmona *et al.*, 2006). In addition landscape architects and urban designers not only have their influence on urban landscape and urban open spaces, but also are involved in residential complexes design and urban declined area regenerations.

CONCLUSION

The last part of this paper is mainly focusing on the answer of the first question regarding “What is a proper framework of providing an easier way of a better interaction between urban designers and landscape architects?” The most important fields of study and work of landscape architects and urban designers regarding confronting urban environment was extracted in this research based on literature review, analysis of the literature and also theoretical sampling of professional architects and designers. Based on the conformation approach to the literature review and grounded theory method, data got analysis and conceptual frameworks of the interaction based on joint roles and fields were prepared. In this model, the role of each participants, including; supervisor, leader, designer or manager is

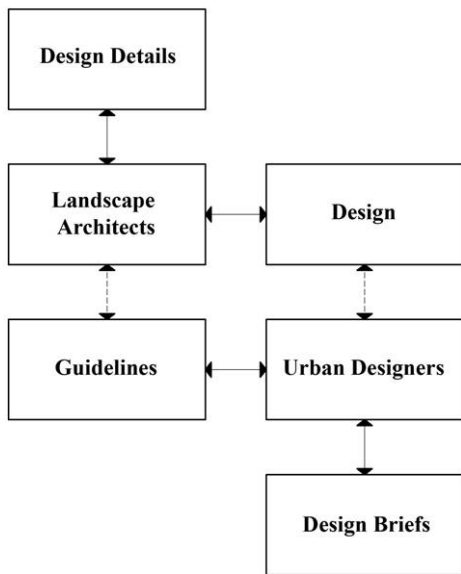


Fig. 6. Mechanism of product-oriented relations among landscape architects and urban designers

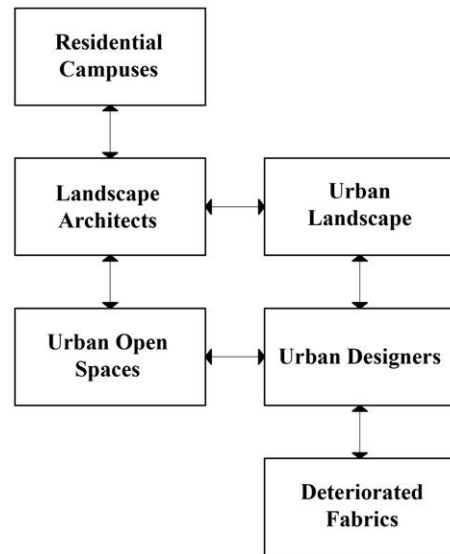


Fig. 7. Mechanism of subject-oriented relations among landscape architects and urban designers

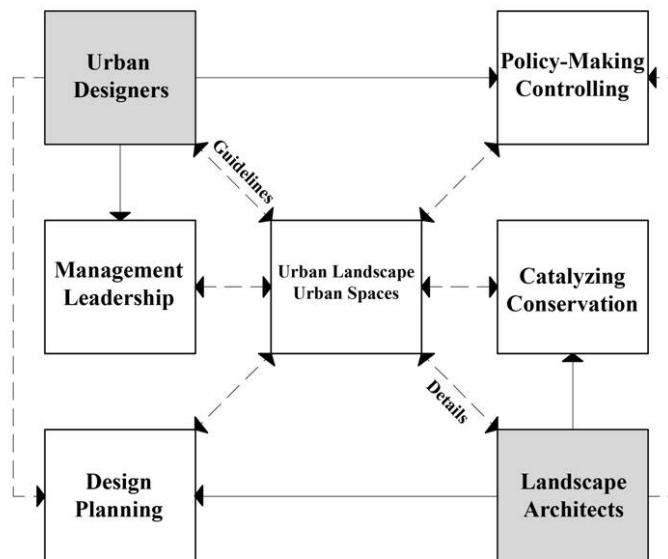


Fig. 8. Proposed conceptual framework of the interaction of urban designers and landscape architects

determined based on the main territories, products and attitudes of urban design and landscape architecture (Studying more in detail regarding the above mentioned idea needs a separate research). The result of this research shows that there is a four level order of joints roles among landscape architects and urban designers including: designing and planning, political-controlling, leadership-management and catalyze-conservative, which can be taken into account as the interaction framework among landscape architecture and urban design in Iran (Fig. 8).

Based on the graph eight, landscape architects having catalyzing and conservation role which are the result of their focus on environmental approaches, do their professional activities/role through preparing plans and design details. Urban designers also have got the management and guidance role through rigid responsibility as a policy making and controlling over design process and design guidelines in environmental design process. Therefore this paper tried to deliver an interaction sample among urban designers and landscape architects in environmental design, based on a structural model.

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