

**Faculty of Humanity**

**World Heritage Buffer Zone as a Liminal Place: A**

**Study of Pasargadae and Sheikh Safi-ad-din**

**(Iran)**

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**This thesis is presented for the Degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**of**

**Curtin University**

**November 2020**

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material that have been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at this or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by others, with whom I have worked at this university or elsewhere, is explicitly acknowledged in the thesis. I also declare that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work. The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – updated March 2014. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00262), Approval Number: RES-VC-ORD-JC-11754.

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## **Abstract:**

**Keywords:** World Heritage Buffer Zones, Liminality, Place Making, The World Heritage Actors

The World Heritage Buffer zones are a valuable tool for the conservation of properties on the World Heritage List. Throughout the history of the World Heritage Convention, the protection of the ‘surroundings’ of listed properties was considered an essential component of the conservation strategy, for cultural and natural sites alike. This thesis is an investigation of the social process of construction of place in two buffer zones: Pasargadae and Sheikh Safi al-Din Khānegāh and Shrine Ensemble.

This thesis explores buffer zones as liminal spaces – the transitory spaces – where different actors have inscribed parallel personal and communal spaces within them by reproducing patterns of usage and movement that reflect their daily lives, including conflict, rather than allowing them to be fully transformed into a general protected area. Despite regulations and heritage laws, the management of buffer zones has not been clearly defined within international and national nature conservation and development policies. The heritage and authorities’ plans have not provided a stable strategy for the further development, application, and management of buffer zones.

The management of buffer zones in Iran is a real issue. One reason for this complexity is a lack of understanding of the concept of a buffer zone and its systematic application to create a living and multifunctional place. Further, a multidisciplinary approach is necessary for proper management of buffer zones. The practice of viewing the World Heritage buffer zones from an exclusively protective angle is a significant failure.

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The findings are consistent with previous research on the 'social construction of place'. This study demonstrates the impact of spatial concepts and various other categories necessary for buffer zone descriptions and analysis.

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisors: Professor John Stephens at the beginning of my studies, Professor Reena Tiwari, and Dr Ali Mozaffari for guiding and supporting me over my study years. I would like to express my deepest gratitude toward my thesis committee members for all of their guidance through this process; your discussion, ideas, and feedback have been absolutely valuable and made this portion of my life memorable.

I would like to thank Professor Jane Mathew for supporting me with my field work travelling. I would like to thank Professor Diana MacCallum for supporting me in this journey.

I would like to thank Dr Christina Houen of Perfect Words Editing for copy editing this thesis according to the guidelines of the university and of the Institute of Professional Editors.

I would especially like to thank my family for the love, support, and constant encouragement I have gotten over the years. In particular, I would like to thank my children Baran and Darya Ghamami for their patient and tolerance with a busy mother.

I undoubtedly could not have done this without you.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## Introduction

This study focuses on the buffer zones around World Heritage sites declared by UNESCO. It considers the heritage landscape of Pasargadae, a pre-Islamic era (521–550 BC) heritage site (Hejazi & Saradj, 2014), and the Sheikh Safi al-Din Khānegāh and Shrine Ensemble buffer and landscape zone from the post-Islamic era (built between the beginning of the sixteenth century and the end of the eighteenth century) (UNESCO, 2010). It is the heritage itself that has a symbolic value in relation to facets of Iranian identity. Therefore, these heritage sites are considered to be two symbols of Iranian identity. Buffer zones are regions that are created to improve the safeguarding of particular conservation parts that are in most cases peripheral to the site itself (UNESCO, 2008). Based on UNESCO's (2008) description, a buffer zone is any area, often peripheral to a protected area, in which activities are managed to protect the nearby heritage site. The concept of buffer zones evolved from the desire to better protect core conservation areas by minimising the impacts of human activities. Therefore, a buffer zone is intended to protect World Heritage sites from human influences that affect heritage sites, such as the burning of trees for fuel, illegal destruction, digging, and vandalism (UNESCO, 2008).

A buffer zone is not of outstanding universal value, but it may influence a World Heritage site (Martin, 2008, p. 7). Protection is defined as the provision of a 'suitable perimeter as well as required protective measures for the buffer zone' (Leask & Fyall, 2006, p. 14). In many conservation programs and projects, the zoning principle is

delineated to combine protection and human use, whereby critical areas (often conservation areas and/or core zones) are surrounded by buffer zones (Martin, 2008). Among different laws and protection tools, buffer zones can be a valuable management tool for protecting World Heritage sites. There are no international treaties or conventions that specifically consider buffer zones. However, in practice, buffer zones are often designated as tools to implement those conventions (Martin, 2008). The main goal of buffer zone management is the protection of the environment. In addition, limiting the number of people accessing the natural areas means there is a higher chance of reducing the waste and negative effects often inflicted by human activities. Protecting the natural environment is important around the heritage sites (Brandon, 1997; Brandon & Wells, 1992).

There are many issues around heritage for buffer zones that impact their management strategies (Martin, 2008, pp. 9–24), such as:

- Buffer zones in the World Heritage context are often ambiguous and confusing with no clear definition.
- The outcomes of preserving the buffer zone are not clearly known.
- In some cases, due to regulatory and policy changes, buffer zones may wind up as an empty shell.
- Buffer zones may be more problematic if government authorities and heritage organisations have overlapping or conflicting responsibilities or goals. The ‘zone of co-operation’ is dysfunctional.
- Many people associate buffer zones at cultural heritage sites only with the visual impact and setting.
- In most cases, buffer zones cannot generate cultural, spiritual, social and economic benefits for communities, while also creating space for the

recreational and educational needs of visitors. Therefore, there are high levels of dissatisfaction and conflicting views among locals.

- There is confusion in the relationship between the core zone and the buffer zone and their outstanding universal value. The level of protection in the buffer zone and in the core zone are undefined.
- Further, it is unclear how they could be mutually beneficial for local communities and heritage organisations/authorities.
- The defined functions of buffer zones, politically, socially, economically and culturally, are unclear.
- Strict controls and limitations in a buffer zone may isolate a heritage buffer zone from its longstanding social, cultural, and economic context, and from its surroundings.
- The level of protection for the buffer zone for different goals and multiple uses is unclear and is often ambiguous and confusing.
- Clarity on the function and definition of agricultural activities, settlements, and tourists is lacking, and varies in space and time.
- There is a lack of local ownership levels in buffer zone.

Establishment of buffer zones is based on the situation, and the buffer zone can be classified through a process approach based on ecological, social, economic, biological, political, sanitary, sustainability and institutional aspects that are following the same principle, but applied under different conditions. Social buffer zones are probably the most sustainable kind of buffer zone surroundings (Ebregt & Greve, 2000, p. 28). The objective of the social buffer zone policy making and management cannot be achieved only based on protection and conservation of the world heritage sites strategies. These kind of buffer zones are complicated because the world heritage sites

are surrounded by human everyday life and activities. It should be made through sustainable development for the government, national legislations, private sectors, socio-economic wellbeing of the people inside the buffer zone. In order to create a sustainable development, involvement of the local in the process of buffer zone management programmes could be considerable. A social buffer zone approach draws upon the differences in culture and the sense of identity of the indigenous or local population, their social life and organisations to create a system that provides both a barrier and monitoring within the zone between the area targeted for conservation and its surroundings (Ebrecht & Greve, 2000, p. 28) sustainable development.

The main challenge for this study is to gain an understanding of the heritage landscape buffers such as those around Pasargadae and Sheikh Safi al-Din Khānegāh Shrine Ensemble. Meanings and conditions of the built environment within the zones will be studied from different aspects—social, economic, cultural and environmental — i.e., not from one single approach. This is because buffer zones are specific places that require a different approach to heritage site planning and management. Issues for those living inside the zones will be explored. The study will assess how the loss of the built heritage impacts the heritage sites.

It is important to note that buffer zones are not autonomous, but are working parts of a larger system with a collection of sustainability resources that are associated with the areas of concern (Martin, 2008, p. 9) which will be extended through the study. As mentioned, this study will address these issues using a new approach. As noted earlier, it has been found that in most cases, it is not possible for buffer zones to meet the needs of the locals and at the same time help to diminish the effects that come with human actions. Thus, it becomes a challenge for individuals to abide by the buffer zone rules, since these regulations are highly stringent. Accordingly, this study argues that buffer

zones have not been successful in protecting the heritage sites and at the same time addressing the locals' requirements and sustainable development inside the zoning areas.

This thesis will analyse how the condition of selected buffer zones impacts heritage sites, the work patterns and the domestic lives of the surrounding people. There is considerable evidence that problems in buffer zones prevent their role from being fulfilled (Martin, 2008, pp 13–17; Oliver & Piatti, 2009, p. 17; Staneva, 2006). Buffer zones and their conditions should be studied in the context of the heritage environment (Ashworth, 2005, pp. 3–12), and in relation to space and time, and the understandings of the communities living around the heritage places (Edroma, 2004, p. 36).

Although their existence is associated with these potential problems, buffer zones have a prominent role to play, as they help protect heritage sites and retain the environmental and heritage characters and features that they are intended to protect. However, a buffer zone implies possible change and transition, not only physically, but more importantly, emotionally. Physically, these zones transform an unprotected area into a protected zone, ensuring conservation of the area (Martin, 2008). But what about their emotional impact?

Emotionally, such control can cause conflict, ambiguity, confusion, misunderstanding, and local dissonance? These conditions are associated with transition, change, and possible liminal conditions? In other words, they can disrupt people's lives and sense of wellbeing? This presents new challenges that arguably need to be overcome and analysed. To better understand these challenges, this study seeks to address problems involving:

- The relationship of the environment to the heritage site;
- The possible liminal condition of the buffer zones;

- The importance of the environment;
- The functional abilities of the buffer zones;
- The appearance of the heritage sites.

In addition, it is worth noting that the quality of a buffer zone acts as a transitional region that has both physical and emotional impacts. Because of its transitional nature, the buffer zone is likely to have some effects on the locals living close to the surrounding regions (Dijkgraaf, 2003, p. 32). Moreover, in view of this transitional character of buffer zones, it is also significant to consider the surrounding functions of the ecology in relation to people's day-to-day practices. Certainly, making these observations provides us with a plan that can be used for analysing the heritage buffer zones from the perspective of a liminal condition. Hence, this study will present and interpret the World Heritage Buffer zones and analyse their conditions by focusing on the two heritage buffer zones in Iran as symbols of Iranian identity. However, before we can proceed further with this discussion, it is important to first develop an understanding of the subject of the World Heritage buffer zone itself. How is it constructed and shaped? What factors are considered to make a heritage buffer zone? How can we define the heritage buffer zone?

The first three sections of this chapter outline the background and context of the research, and its purposes. The next section describes the significance and scope of the research and provides definitions of terms used. Finally, the last section includes an outline of the remaining chapters of the thesis.

## **Background: The World Heritage Buffer Zone Evaluation**

Since this work primarily considers the hitherto-neglected social aspects of buffer zones, this section attempts to clarify the manner in which social construction has been

deemed significant for evaluating buffer zone conditions. The section further assesses the need for clarification of the relevant literature and outlines different aspects needed in order to answer the major question; that is, how a heritage buffer zone is constituted and defined. The section describes an understanding of heritage buffer zone in terms of social constructs, as well as physical, cultural, economics and political significance. Examining buffer zones from a social perspective will offer valuable insights for interpreting the complex interplays between heritage sites' buffer zones and their wider social contexts and networks.

By considering the Actor Network Theory (ANT) (Latour, 1996), the heritage buffer zones can be understood in terms of both human and non-human actors within a network. The concept of ANT argues that everything — people, organisations, technologies, nature, politics, social order(s) — are the result, or effect, of heterogeneous networks.

Latour aims to “redefine the notion of the social” (Latour, 2005, p. 1), not as a static reality made of stabilised matter, but as a reality made of relations; the result is then “a very peculiar movement of association and reassembling” (Latour, 2005, p. 7). Latour’s attempt is somehow ontological and foundational in the sense that he gets at the very heart of the meaning of social by reconsidering the classical and modern dualism between individuals and between subjects and the reality outside, i.e., the object. In so doing, he places social sciences in a new perspective that can then be extended to other areas. He describes the social, not as a contraposition of entities, but as a relational state that redefines the composition of society in terms of this associative and connective power. This connective approach represents the basis for the Actor Network Theory (ANT) for which Latour is mainly known. The two key elements of the theory are, obviously, actor and network. ANT considers those two elements as the essence of our

social dimension, a new social model, nothing more. Latour advocates for a view that is not simply based on assigning the roles of actors or agents, but is an “enquiry about the agency of all sort of objects” (Latour, 2005, p. 76). Latour’s foundational take redefines the concept of the social. It does this by granting agency to all sorts of objects, such as documents, technologies, machines, artefacts and humans. The resulting everyday experience is a platform for all sorts of new social dimensions and configurations (Corino, 2013). The term ‘actor’ in this context entails objects, machines, subjects, animals, human beings, and various organisations, ideas, intangible meanings, and inequalities in size and scale, in addition to geographical preparations in the heritage setting and aspects of it.

Aside from the liminality at the border of the buffer zone, and the condition of the buffer zone itself, another attribute of heritage buffer zones is that they are in a hierarchy of *spatial scales*. This means that there are processes with local, regional, national, continental and international scales that play different and various roles in constructing the heritage buffer zones. The concept of a variety of spatial scales, in turn, relates to the geographical area and population of a historic artefact and the ability to function within it at such a variety of scales (Garrod & Fyall, 2000, p. 4). A definition of scale that emphasises hierarchical levels is useful. The capacity for conflict resulting from opposing heritage interpretations made at different scales has been considered and documented in many studies (Silverman, 2011). This definition of scale creates a framework for analysis or comparisons that challenge the established system of what Collinge (1999) called scalar fixes, or a relatively stabilised hierarchy of levels that privileges activities at one scale over those at others. This leads to the conclusion that a single heritage area secures more attention than other areas do. The concept of scale is a hierarchy, and has its shortcomings (Harvey, 2015). It should be noted that such a

concept is already well challenged (Lähdesmäki, Thomas, & Zhu, 2019; see introduction).

The evaluation of the buffer zone cannot be adequately done without considering the roles of the different actors involved in the process of social construction within a World Heritage buffer zone. It is possible that despite UNESCO's aim in the designation of a heritage site (conservation of a World Heritage), different actors, such as the heritage sites themselves, as well as interests stemming from the scales of international, national and central states, the local community, as well as tourist interests, objects and meanings — all of these divergent elements have various and at times conflicting aims that directly affect the understanding of buffer zone conditions. Latour's concept of ANT has been considered to understand the key actors in the buffer zones. Based on the ANT theory, the key main actors (human and non-human) that have been recognised as influencing the buffer zone's condition include:

- i. The world Heritage Site and monuments, their meanings, and intangibilities.
- ii. National and international institutions that oversee World Heritage sites, especially those of central states.
- iii. Visitors to World Heritage sites (i.e., tourists).
- iv. Local residents and under-recognised groups that play a significant role in the future development and preservation programs of World Heritage sites.
- v. Non-government organisations (NGOs) that help provide a diverse socioeconomic environment that creates a space for different political views. (Mozaffari, 2015)

The entities included in the last category are established by individuals with an intention of reaching out to a large audience in society and are not related to the state.

Such NGOs must adhere to legal rules, remain committed to their goals, and should not have any political affiliation (Executive Regulations, 2017).

i. **The World Heritage Buffer Zone and Heritage**

As mentioned, different actors play important roles in shaping a particular condition inside a World Heritage Buffer zone. The most important category of the World Heritage buffer zones relates to the World Heritage site, its protection strategies (management) and their associated meanings and intangibilities. The concept of heritage as the important actor enshrined in the WHC (World Heritage Convention) of 1972 has been developed over two to three centuries. The Convention established the World Heritage List, first, to recognise that some places are of sufficient importance as cultural or natural sites to be the collective responsibility of the international community, and second, to determine an area (buffer zone) for their protection as a conservation tool. By joining the WHC, a nation agrees to care for its World Heritage sites as part of its protection of national heritage. In this sense, ‘World Heritage sites should retain a function in current community life around the heritage sites as buffer zone while being conserved for transmission to future generations’ (UNESCO, 1972). It is important to see buffer zones as related to the World Heritage site from two main perspectives. One is that of heritage designation and management, the other, heritage meaning.

The World Heritage site designation can be sub-divided into three themes:

- 1) There is a rich body of research that explores the links between the heritage and power: Graham & Howard (2005), Tunbridge & Ashworth (1996, 2005), Breglia (2006). Graham and Howard (2005) argue that heritage is a political process, which is directly linked to power. Power is central to the construction of heritage. They represent that heritage is not given, it is made by

whoever wields the greatest power; the party in power can influence, dictate, or define what is remembered and consequently, what is forgotten. Heritage could be viewed as the selective use of the past as a resource for the present, and power impacts greatly on the designation process (AlSayyad 2013; Dovey, 2009; Hall, 2004; Leask, 2006; Mitchell, 2001; Nasser, 2003).

2) Recent work has clarified the impact of the designation on the actual heritage presented on site, and on-site development and preservation (Ahmed, 2004; AlSayyad, 2013; Alam, 2004).

3) Most studies focus on the reasons for the designation and its perceived advantages and disadvantages to the actors involved (Poria, Reichel & Cohen, 2011, p. 482).

Most publications about World Heritage sites explore different aspects of heritage management as increasingly complex and controversial (Glasson, Godfrey & Goodey, 1995; Hall & McArthur, 1996; Harrison, 1994; Herbert, 1995; Lyon, 2007; Shackley, 1998). Mainly through descriptive analysis, these scholars discuss the current, value-led, participative management and conservation at World Heritage sites, which is the culmination of over a century of planning, conservation consciousness and management experience. Publications demonstrate that heritage management has been transformed from merely conserving resources (1970s) to finding the appropriate balance between managing visitors and resources (1980s), to understanding the human dimension of heritage and its conservation (1990s) (Hall & McArthur, 1996).

These considerations naturally come into play with buffer zones; the initial concept and starting point for any study of heritage buffer zone conditions must inevitably be heritage meanings and intangibilities and their effect on place, how a particular buffer zone condition is constructed through heritage-particular situations and considerations,

and most importantly, the zone's effect? The current study about the conditions of construction of the buffer zones of World Heritage sites is influenced by theories of 'heritage as a process and as a practice' that shapes the buffer zone from different social, political, cultural, and economic perspectives.

Thus, the heritage process should be considered in the development, management, and construction of buffer zones. This is especially because these things relate to the social considerations involved with buffer zone management, i.e., individual and collective attitudes, rituals, performances, national identity, values and perceptions, interpretation, wants and needs, changing technology, and economic, political and institutional arrangements.

This thesis examines Lisa Breglia's research (2006) on social aspects of heritage. Breglia examines the construction of meaning in heritage, which she calls 'heritage-as-practice'. She argues that heritage is not only a site, materials, or objects that represent the past, but is also a 'renewable process' that is always reproduced and reinterpreted with social and political meaning. Therefore, heritage is not a simple inclusion of static objects or monuments that must be protected according to the national and international conventions; it is also about the inclusion of the intangible sociocultural aspects around those objects and sites that influence and impact the users of the buffer zone. Thus, we have studies that approach and identify heritage as a social process, and provide a fully articulated theoretical model for the definition of heritage and its interpretation (Harvey, 2001; Smith, 2006). In addition, Bushell and Staiff's (2012) use of this approach recognises that the historical process has left its traces on the current setting, and different actors produce heritage, social and historical context. These concepts are helpful for analysing the heritage buffer zone in this thesis.

Another source that explores the social aspect of heritage is the work of Caitlin DeSilvey. DeSilvey (2006) argued that heritage, recognised as ‘the things we want to keep’, decontextualises objects and resocialises them to tell specific stories in controlled environments. The worldly condition of things often becomes lost in the transformation of junk into heritage, because placing ‘cultural’ or ‘historic’ value on something means that other values fall away.

As mentioned, this research on the condition of buffer zones of World Heritage sites is not merely an acknowledgment of the existence of a social view of heritage and buffer zones; it is influenced by the theory of heritage as process. The concept of heritage as process helps to understand that heritage can be influenced, dictated, or defined differently from time to time. It means that the past has potential to validate and legitimise (as well as undermine) political and territorial ideologies in the present. Therefore, heritage could be the selective use of the past as a resource for the present (Graham and Howard, 2005). The heritage buffer zone could be defined or interpreted not only as a tool for heritage conversation, because the concept of heritage as process defines the buffer zone condition in the present. As Bennett (2005) believed that conventional heritage practice typically manipulates, alters, and controls objects to produce new social realities and relationships in the present time.

It is taken for granted that the role of international obligations and conventions is essential for the nomination and inscription of the World Heritage sites and the determining of a buffer zone for heritage protection. Getting states to commit to their international obligations and to conventions is a key focus in protecting World Heritage sites from the vantage point of national and international institutions. A buffer zone around the World Heritage sites is a tool for heritage protection (Croissant & Chambers, 2011; DíazAndreu, 1995, 2007; Kohl & Fawcett, 1995).

ii. **The World Heritage Buffer zone, the National and International Institutions**

There are many challenges involved with World Heritage sites in relation to national or international concerns. Iran has been involved, and cooperated with many of the international organisations: UNESCO (the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations), ICOMOS (the International Council of Monuments and Sites), ICCROM (The International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property), ICOM (the International Council of Museums), as well as institutes like IsMEO (Italian Institute for Middle and Far East), the Asia Institute, and the British Institute of Persian Studies.<sup>1</sup>

Mainly, the scholars conclude that there are legal deficiencies, especially in international law and conventions, concerning the protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage. There is a connection between heritage and identity in every nation/state, and this can come into conflict with the pluralisation that has originated from Western cultural perceptions. Therefore, political negotiations are necessary, which are imposed from outside by the compulsory international obligations and conventions (Graham & Howard, 2008). In other respects, the international diversity and hybridity of forces bring dissonance, conflict, and violence inside heritage areas, particularly among the residents inside the buffer zones (Graham & Howard, 2008). Several studies examine the ties between cultural heritage and the nation-state (Arnold & Hassman, 1995; Croissant & Chambers, 2011; Díaz-Andreu, 1995, 2007; Hamilakis, 2007; Kohl & Fawcett, 1995; Labadi, 2007; Mitchell, 2001; Winter, 2012) that directly address the buffer zone and could certainly have a large role in shaping it. How the

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<sup>1</sup> The information is available in Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Organization website, <https://www.mcth.ir/Portals/1/english-logo.png?ver=2020-02-12-083756-663>

buffer zone construction affects people's emotions and sense of belonging to the place or disconnection from it will be analysed in this study.

There are several studies about the processes of evaluating heritage sites by central governments and their impact on the buffer zone's condition (Carlarne, 2006; Martin, 2008; Wang, 2012). Central governments exercise a range of legislative and regulatory measures (Carlarne, 2006; Wang, 2012), particularly in buffer zones, which are used as a tool for the protection of World Heritage sites across the world (Martin, 2008). For example, Carlarne (2006) discussed the detrimental role of the sovereign state in heritage sites. She contributed to and encouraged the development of innovative, interdisciplinary approaches for the protection of natural and cultural heritage sites. Furthermore, she demonstrated that international conventions were designed such that they focus on external threats to World Heritage and neglect threats posed to items and sites of heritage by the sovereign state in which they occur (Carlarne, 2006). Her discussion highlights that it is impossible to protect the heritage sites from a singular consideration. She argued that, while the World Heritage Convention needs to share power and responsibility between state governments and the international communities, there also needs to be a high level of societal awareness about the importance of protecting cultural and natural heritage (Carlarne, 2006). The international cultural heritage laws have developed with uncertainty and ambiguity. Their conventions have been developed based on a set of principles which are not always coherent, and need to be further developed towards a comprehensive, unambiguous definition (Carlarne, 2006). 'It is axiomatically proclaimed that these institutions are run by some corrupt and inefficient people who are "unconscious" and therefore, incapable of taking required measures for protecting the heritage' (Swadhin, Imran, Khan & Rahman, 2006, p. 72). It is of considerable importance that the main

problematic area for implementing protection strategies for heritage is within buffer zones.

International and national institutions face great challenges in developing strategies for heritage conservation and sustainable development in buffer zones that involve local and land use changes and activities inside the zone. Establishing a harmonious balance between conservation and sustainable development is a serious issue for local daily life and practices (Du, Penabaz-Wiley, Njeru & Kinoshita, 2015, p. 7).

At the national scale for Iranian heritage sites' management, international obligations and conventions [based on UNESCO (UNESCO, list 1106)] should be focused. It should be mentioned that Iranian Heritage buffer zones are under the legal protection and management of the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO) (which is administered and funded by the Government of Iran and now it is a ministry).

On the other hand, and beside the ICHHTO heritage legislations, the buffer zones are also under a regional master plan with its own regulations. In Iran, there are different protection laws, such as the Foundation Law of the National Council of City Construction and Architecture, Law of City Construction and Architecture, Law of City Properties (approved on September 12, 1982), the Law of Purchase of properties, buildings and archaeological monuments, as well as some chapters of the Law of City Halls, that force the states or private administrations to respect registered monuments in the National Heritage List (UNESCO, list 1106). Most of these laws are focused on general or local plans that have been influenced by the international heritage conventions for the World Heritage buffer zones in Iran. The national and international laws affect common cultural, social, and economical practices, and under the present

administration, there is a high level of limitation, conflict of interest, and dissonances, particularly among people inside the zoning areas or heritage buffer zones.

Societal changes in Western nations result in considerable socio-spatial segregation in their diverse cultures. Fragmentation has led to heterogeneity, which has affected the selection, interpretation and management of heritage sites (Ashworth & Graham, 2005).

Heritage is dominated politically and socially by national and international institutions. This is because many authorities and discourses have vast numbers of actual and prospective participants, who tend to have binary relations, be they insiders, outsiders, colonisers, or those being colonised. Heritage is connected with the creation, shaping, and management of responses and demands that consistently produce conflicting results (Graham & Howard, 2008); in other words, heritage is perpetually and inherently dissonant and contestable.

Given the dissonance attached to heritage site management by the central state, the dangers and constraints of the tangible/intangible dichotomies need to be considered (Graham & Howard, 2008), as do the environmental impacts of buffer zone management of both natural and cultural heritage sites (Leask & Fyall, 2006). The authorities, the Iranian government and heritage organisations seem to support the argument for using selected buffer zones as a tool of governance. Shortt (2015, p. 634), points out that they provide a vehicle for the expansion of bureaucratic regulation and political power into people's everyday social lives. Iranian buffer zones will be observed in this study to uncover tensions associated with dissonance as monumental and social time transition and morph into one another.

The role of government in the destruction of World Heritage sites is considered in this thesis in terms of the condition of heritage buffer zones, not only in Iran but also around

the world. The aim is to understand how heritage authorities under international regulations and conventions have direct and indirect impacts on the condition and status of these selected heritage buffer zones. In these studies, various causes of the destruction of heritage remains are cited; for example, the Regional Advisor for Asia and the Pacific (Richard Engelhardt), UNESCO, highlighted two interrelated factors:

1. Lack of adequate technical expertise to deal effectively with the conservation challenges; and
2. Lack of effective planning and implementation mechanisms to manage the site. (Alam, 2004)

Alam (2004) also cited other causes, such as financial crisis, lack of authenticity and absence of awareness. There are attempts to find solutions for the better management of heritage sites in the context of international World Heritage conservation (Wang, 2012).

However, these studies neglect the role of other actors in the construction of World Heritage sites.

The dangers and constraints of the tangible/intangible dichotomy attached to heritage sites and their buffer zone management and conservation by the central state need to be considered (Graham & Howard, 2008). This will be done by considering and recognizing the reality of:

- i. Conflicts and power dominance of national and international institutions;
- ii. The identity politics governing heritage dissonance and plurality related to heritage;
- iii. The need for proper assessment of environmental impacts.

Akagawa & Smith (2018) argue that the management of the World Heritage sites needs to pay attention to community's involvement and their interest. Heritage studies should consider how communities and their practices impact on heritage management, conservation, and the process of heritage production and consumption, and the communities' engagement with heritage decision making. The intangible heritage, meanings, people's traditional practices and performances, and aspects of everyday social life are part of the picture (Akagawa, N., & Smith, 2018).

The authorities, the Iranian government and heritage organisations, seem to support the argument for the selected buffer zones as a tool of governance; heritage authorities provide a vehicle for the expansion of bureaucratic regulation and political power into people's everyday social lives (Shortt, 2015, p. 634). Iranian buffer zones suffer from the same intrusive problems. The selected Iranian buffer zones will therefore be analysed to discover any resulting tensions that may be associated with this dissonance, power dominance and strict bureaucratic regulation.

In order to arrive at a wide view of the situation, it is necessary to examine literature that looks at several angles. Many researchers attempt to find solutions for improved conservation of heritage related to the role of the central government and other heritage authorities in the context of World Heritage conservation (Wang, 2012). These studies also consider the role of other actors in the protection and conservation of World Heritage sites, such as that of tourism and its impacts (Harrison, 2005; Harrison & Hitchcock, 2005; Jimura, 2011; Smith, 2006; Winter, 2007b). In this study, the roles of heritage buffer zones and people within them will be examined. The literature relating to heritage and tourism offers further insights. Apart from the studies about the nature and function of heritage (or the historical formation of heritage), there is also

significant literature on the role of tourism in heritage and the individual consumption of heritage by visitors (Ahmed, 2004) and their role in shaping heritage buffer zone.

### **iii. The World Heritage Buffer Zone and Tourism**

Tourism is another key actor in the formation of buffer zones. Some of the literature discusses the management and impact of tourism on the local communities, particularly inside buffer zones. The designation of a World Heritage site has a positive brand ethos; this and UNESCO's logo (Poria, Reichel, & Cohen, 2011) attracts tourists to the heritage site (Hall, 2004), which could change the place physically and emotionally. While these visitors are bringing direct and indirect revenue, they also have an effect on the heritage site and its buffer zone in particular. Researchers (Poria, Reichel, & Cohen, 2011; Hall, 2004) have argued for multiple actors' participation in strategic planning processes. These studies examine the conflicts within the ideas of conservation, heritage, and tourism development plans. They argue for a sustainable approach to the tourism management and planning of heritage sites, especially inside their buffer zones, based on a community- and culture-led agenda. They consider the relationship between heritage tourism and sustainable development, with special reference to World Heritage sites (Landorf, 2009; Nasser, 2003).

Many studies have examined the dual relationship of eco-tourism and the cultural type of tourism under the category of heritage tourism (Harrison, 2005; Harrison & Hitchcock, 2005; Jimura, 2011; Smith, 2006; Tasci & Kozak, 2006; Winter, 2007b), with emphasis on conservation and cultural heritage (Pedersen, 2002, p. 24). Tourism affects life within the buffer zones (Canton & Santos, 2007, Landorf, 2009) and is a source of income for local people in the heritage sites (Deng & Ma, 2014; Remoaldo & Ribeiro, 2014). Certain studies focus on the commodification of the heritage designation for tourist consumption, the resulting increase of benefits from tourism

sectors, and the impact of this process on authenticity (Ahmed, 2004; Alam, 2004) within the buffer zone. Increased visitor flow brings 'economic gains' (Hall, 2006, p. 51) among other effects.

Other scholars discuss how and why a multitude of social actors adopt culture as a resource to serve certain purposes or goals within a context of development, and discuss the effect of the heritage designation on the actual heritage presented on site, and its development and preservation (Winter, 2007a). The tourism designation and the impact on life within buffer zones includes the resulting attraction of national and international visitors; the links between a site's attributes and the tourists themselves are essential to understanding tourists' motivations to visit heritage places (Poria, 2004; Poria et al., 2006). People travel from afar to view the heritage sites that have been designated for this purpose. However, communities living around and inside the buffer zone are affected by the tourism management and plans, or any other activities to attract tourism, such as designation plans.

The researchers cited so far in this section have argued for multiple actors' participation in strategic planning processes and the hierarchy of power in management of the places. Based on the Faro Convention (2005), the value of cultural heritage for society has been the focus in the conservation of cultural heritage values. This is an appropriate model for sustainable tourism development at World Heritage sites. Several papers investigate the direct and indirect effects of tourism activity on economic growth in buffer zones of World Heritage sites (Deng & Ma, 2014; Remoaldo & Ribeiro, 2014). The human rights of communities and a democratic relationship between heritage authorities and different communities need to be considered. The research shows that there is not democratic community involvement in heritage decision-making process

in Iran (Nasrolahi, Roux, Ghasvarian Jahromi, & Khalili, 2019) even in the tourism sector.

Certain studies focus only on the attitude of tourists towards heritage site visitation. They provide information on people's visitation patterns (Alberini & Longo, 2006). Moscardo (1996), while clarifying the role of different interpretations in the context of heritage site and buffer zone management, emphasised two main motivations: educational (tourists' willingness to learn) and entertainment/social (tourists' desire to be entertained) that have different impacts on local people's everyday life, behaviour and living conditions around heritage sites. According to the literature, understanding tourists' behaviour should be based not only on the attributes of the site or the characteristics of the tourists, but also on the link between the two. These studies seek to discover the appropriate balance between the conservation of monuments and improving cultural heritage experiences at the site and the quality of the infrastructure or services inside the buffer zones (Moscardo, 1996).

Different opinions lead to a better understanding of reasons for visiting heritage places and provide further insight into heritage tourism in general and the conservation of World Heritage sites in particular. Many tourism developments plans focus on heritage designation considerations about facilitating the 'consumption' of heritage areas (buffer zones) around the heritage sites (UNESCO 1996, 166). People's everyday life and practices inside heritage places and buffer zone are affected by the manufacturing of heritage for commercial consumption (AlSayyad, 2013). While the use of heritage for commercial consumption to attract tourists for economic profit (AlSayyad, 2013) is a powerful driving factor (Smith, 2006) it brings changes in neighbourhood formation, both physically and in terms of people's emotional reactions to the changes in their living areas. Political power and dominance of place cannot be ignored by

national and international heritage organisations. Decision-makers use heritage to produce their political ideology and naturalise their power and dominance of place (AlSayyad, 2013).

The selected Iranian sites of Pasargadae and SKSEA in Ardebil will be observed in terms of practical questions related to heritage buffer zone conditions and the roles of different actors. What is an appropriate balance between the conservation of the monuments and improving cultural experiences at the sites on the one hand, the quality of the infrastructure or services inside their buffer zones, and their impact on people's everyday lives and emotions on the other?

### **I. The World Heritage Buffer Zone and Local Residents**

The impacts on the local population of the various actors in the management of heritage monuments and their associated buffer zones has not been a focus of studies so far. This thesis will therefore focus, not only on the local people as one of the key actors in constructing the physical features of heritage buffer zones, but also on their emotions. These locals are connected to the heritage sites by cultural and social factors, such as local identity and the worth of these sites in the eyes of the locals (Hanna 2013; Stokenberga & Sen, 2013) as well as economic factors, such as livelihood needs of local people and NGOs (Nasser, 2003).

It is worth noting that heritage sites have intangible effects. This affective aspect of heritage influences the development of personal, social and emotional stability. Since the heritage sites are porous, they are always in a state of interpretation by different actors in processes and encounters. This makes people both active and passive agents that contribute to the meanings of heritage in process (Smith, 2006).

The role of local residents is a key consideration in this research. There is a rich body of literature about the role of local residents' values, perceptions, and interests in

constructing and evaluating the buffer zone conditions. There is also extensive research about these values and community narratives about place in terms of how decisions are made on environmental and land-use issues in general and World Heritage sites in particular (Breglia, 2006; Dicks, 1999; Herzfeld, 1991, 2006; Jimura, 2011; Nicholas et al., 2009; Rolf & Windle, 2003).

As an example, Dougald O'Reilly (2014) demonstrated the role of local residents in his discussions about the problems of dealing with and managing a heritage resource that extends across a wide territory. His article examines the illicit trafficking of archaeological artefacts in Cambodia. By situating his discussion within the challenges of post-conflict reconstruction, the author highlights the economic and political pressures.

Interestingly, it seems that, while rural communities view the country's pre-modern temples as an important part of their religious and cultural history, they rarely view the archaeological remains contemporary to these structures as 'heritage', with the effect that their value is not recognised. One result is looting or vandalism. Profound poverty in many of these communities is identified as a key factor driving the search for precious stones and buried carvings (Winter, 2007a, p. 2).

One of the important considerations in the formation of a place is the perceptions of local and communities in regard to their involvement in activities to support the WHS. This acts as a mediator of their perceptions and their sense of belonging (Jaafar, Noor & Rasoolimanesh, 2015). Thus, involving the local residents in heritage-related activities can invite participation, and negate alienation. There are some studies that examine the perceptions of residents concerning their involvement in sustainable World Heritage sites' development and preservation programs (Jimura, 2011; Nicholas et al., 2009). The values of different groups among local residents about the protection

of World Heritage sites have been investigated (e.g., Rolf and Windle, 2003). It is obvious that people's perception gives a deeper understanding of heritage places and provide sustainable development processes and social wealth inside the heritage places. Several studies argue that community involvement in heritage projects positively influences residents' sense of belonging and built heritage, helps to develop social networks between community members, enhances their sense of pride, and increases their understanding of the value of the local area; this is a human rights-oriented image of the sustainability of heritage development (Akagawa & Smith, 2018, Yung & Chan, 2011). The concept of 'heritage communities' is the central key consideration in the Faro Convention (Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, Faro, 27 October 2005). It is notable that the interaction between people and places through time could construct a place condition. Therefore, heritage community is identified by people and their specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations (Faro Convention). This study will explore how the rights of locals in the selected buffer zones in Iran have been regarded or disregarded in heritage decision making in the political and social context of Iran, and whether the inhabitants' rights in the selected buffer zones are met with ignorance or exclusion.

The literature demonstrates how World Heritage provides a vehicle for the expansion of bureaucratic regulation into people's everyday lives (Breglia, 2006; Dicks, 1999; Herzfeld, 1991, 2006). This has a direct impact on people's everyday life and practices and could not only change the buffer zone conditions through strict national and international conventions and regulations of land use and conservation strategies on people's daily life, but could also create emotional dissatisfaction, and in many cases, conflict of interests and dissonance inside zoning areas.

Place is perceived as a cultural entity that can contain and convey multiple, and often conflicting, discursive fields or narratives purporting to represent a specific human experience (Cosgrove, 1993, p. 281). Dicks (1999) demonstrated that community interpretations of place are based on prior acts of imagining that represent the social subjects of history as bound together in a social, spatial and temporal identity. From the perspective of plurality, the heritage site's wholeness disappears, and the place is defined by the existence of a myriad different social phenomena and pathways that affect it. Local people may still feel part of a whole, but this is more likely to be the feeling of belonging to a network spreading out in all directions rather than to an enclosed totality. Networks, however, are difficult to turn into visual heritage, for they have no clear beginning and end, and resist the inscription of identity on which narrative depends. (Dicks, 1999, p. 352)

Heritage texts can be viewed as the simple reflectors of already-constituted public discourse. However, heritage is a social construct through the interaction of various actors rather than an enclosed and fixed totality (Corner & Harvey, 1991; Hewison, 1987; Walsh, 1992; Wright, 1985, 1989). As previously discussed, a critical heritage literature has long concerned itself with the intersection of heritage and identity. For example, several scholars have investigated the instrumentality of the materialisation of the national stories, and identity and continuity through time (Anderson, 1991; Boswell & Evans, 1999; Díaz-Andreu & Champion, 1996; Kohl, 1998; Kohl & Fawcett, 1995; Wright, 1985).

However, the connection between heritage and people identity is defined by the cultural dimension constituting political negotiations, state politics, and societies. The value of heritage for different communities in the world is defined by cultural diversity and hybridity, but also involves dissonance, conflict, satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and

violence between local and heritage authorities (Graham & Howard, 2008) that have direct impacts on buffer zone condition. The complexity of some of these interactions is explored in several studies which examine the ties between cultural heritage and nationalism or nation states (Arnold & Hassman, 1995; Croissant & Chambers, 2011; Díaz-Andreu, 1995, 2007; Hamilakis, 2007; Kohl & Fawcett, 1995; Labadi, 2007; Mitchell, 2001; Winter, 2012).

These studies investigate the globalisation of heritage in the form of World Heritage and the entrenched and multifaceted relationship between heritage and the nation states within this discourse (Cesari, 2010; Labadi, 2007). They demonstrate how World Heritage not only builds upon the tradition of national heritages but also reproduces, amplifies, and expands this tradition's logic and infrastructure.

This approach is close to the theoretical paradigm of this thesis and links it to human geography in general especially the theory of place. Employing a holistic approach necessarily includes new perspectives and hitherto unexamined concepts, for addressing new problems that have been created by solving old ones.

## **Problem Statement**

In accordance with UNESCO's 1972 Convention with regard to the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO World Heritage Convention, 1972), the aim of this multinational instrument is to make sure that it identifies and properly provides long term protection for cultural heritage sites. The reason for advocating for the protection of cultural heritage sites is that these sites have "outstanding universal value (OUV)" (UNESCO World Heritage Convention, 1972). Because of their value, their protection is the responsibility of both national states and the international community.

To provide such protection, the World Heritage Committee works to ensure that all these sites are sufficiently safeguarded and protected for the coming generations. However, there is a problem with how people can deal with the resulting limitations and controls in order to protect heritage sites; in most heritage protected zones such as buffer zones, local people have come into conflict with the national and international heritage laws and legislations concerning World Heritage sites situated in territories they occupy.

This is because cultures and lives, in addition to the locals' daily life and the beliefs of the local people, cannot be separated from their territories, lands and natural resources.

There are some issues in the World Heritage buffer zones because of a disparity in the recognition of what is important by such Heritage conventions. The legislation and guidelines consider that World Heritage has outstanding universal value, while the heritage buffer zones are important in so far as they relate to protection of heritage. Consequently, the heritage protection conventions fall short of concurrent acknowledgement of the local cultural values of a specified site; thus the management frame works consider the protection of World Heritage values first.

Thus, there are many serious issues arising from the fact that the locals have not had any meaningful participation in the making of the heritage laws of the World Heritage sites that directly relate to their lives. There is a lack of fairness in the heritage convention's processes, both internationally and nationally, particularly in Iran.

As a result, there has long been recognition by the heritage-practitioner community that new approaches are needed for dealing with the increased complexities of their work and interactions with the surrounding environment and especially with the local communities.

The rapid socio-cultural changes of our times and the increasing conflict of interest makes this particularly urgent.

In response to this awareness, to help with effective management and conservation of cultural world heritage properties, operational guidelines are needed. The ones that are in place are of course considerable. The existing *Managing Cultural World Heritage* manual aims to provide such guidelines and protection (UNESCO, ICOMOS and IUCN, 2013). These current guidelines state that every World Heritage property ‘must have an adequate protection and management system to ensure its safeguarding’, and also that ‘The purpose of a management system is to ensure the effective protection of the nominated property for present and future generations’. Further, according to this manual, ‘an effective management system depends on the type, characteristics and needs of the nominated property and its cultural and natural context’. In other words, the manual strives to prioritise an understanding of management systems and discusses ways to improve these for the effective management of cultural properties.

The manual is designed to be accessible to all practitioners as a tool for increasing the capacity of effective management of heritage, particularly World Heritage properties.

It aims to:

- Enhance the knowledge, capabilities, skills, and conduct of people with direct management responsibilities for heritage conservation.
- bring about an active association between heritage and context that will result in increased mutual benefits via inclusion, with sustainable benefits.

The manual was composed to help state organisations and associated actors (such as policy-makers, administrators or others involved in related work) in making decisions that would presently or later affect the management and care of world heritage cultural sites. This covers the three broad areas of site management as defined by the World Heritage Strategy for Capacity Building.

- Practitioners (includes groups and individuals who are closely involved in conservation and management of heritage properties).
- Institutions (includes government organisations at the federal and national levels, as well as NGOs, the World Heritage Committee, advisory bodies and other institutions which are dedicated to improving management and conservation).
- Any involved communities and networks, whether nearby or actually living on the properties or larger networks with an interest in improved management of cultural heritage. The manual is intended to accomplish the following, through selfguided learning or as part of structured capacity-building initiatives:
  - o Give strategic and daily guidance
  - o Improve existing strengths or to develop new ones, whether of practitioners, institutions, or communities and networks. In both cases, positive change in the management of heritage sites is affected through people understanding the conditions of World Heritage buffer zones.

The primary aim of management strategies is to define the varying levels of control necessary across the heritage sites and buffer zones according to the conditions.

Yet even according to the existing standards set forth in the heritage conventions, these current guidelines are not adequate. For example, World Heritage sites are still in danger due to the ineffective functioning of buffer zones, including the lack of management of human activities that affect the territories, and undefined buffer zone boundaries or unclear delineation (Martin, 2008). Human activities, including destruction by large-scale development projects for commercial and industrial

purposes, are more extensive than ever before. There is also destruction by mechanised agriculture, vandalism, and looting inside the buffer zone (Niknami, 1999, pp. 266–268).

In many studies it is claimed that buffer zones have unclear borders that are crossed by visitors while leaving or entering the protected heritage area (Staneva, 2006). The natural setting is currently experiencing destruction at a very high rate internationally because of the lack of clear borders, which results in individuals crossing over into the protected heritage areas. Accordingly, the communities that live inside and around the buffer zones have little regard for the natural environment and this leads to the destruction of the heritage environment (Martin, 2008).

The physical problems in the World Heritage Buffer Zones have been considered by UNESCO and some scholars. Buffer zones were originally conceived as a response to the need for protection against these threats. Therefore, the important question is: can the problem of buffer zones be solved simply through well-defined borders, which would require strict management of the areas?

Answering the question requires a broader view than the currently accepted one. The previously unexamined role of different actors in the creation (construction) of buffer zone should be considered. Buffer zones are constructed (not natural) entities, hence they cannot be treated as unchanging, static, and not subject to differing perspectives. An informed understanding of buffer zones is essential, not only for the heritage environment, but also for heritage protection. The purpose of this study is to provide such an understanding by focusing on the conditions of buffer zones as social spaces on the physical and emotional level.

As it stands, most communities living inside buffer zones view the outside visitors as having little regard for the locals and treating the buffer zones as mere transit areas to

be passed through on the way to reach the heritage site. In addition to this potential source of frustration, ignorance among people inside the buffer zone leads to destruction of the heritage environment (Brandon, 1997; Brandon & Wells, 1992; Dijkgraaf, 2003; Martin, 2008; Oliver & Piatti, 2009, pp. 13–15). Thus, buffer zones need to be understood as a complex interplay of different facets of social life. It is possible to develop a multi-faceted alternative perspective that is often forgotten in binary, simplistic conservation and protection approaches to understanding the conditions of buffer zones.

Consequently, the purpose of this research is to study the social process created by different actors within the buffer zone, and to re-examine the purpose of the buffer zone itself. Sheilds (1991, p. 6) stresses that these zones are not only for the protection of heritage sites but are also for people and other things (meaning and materiality) as well.

Buffer zones should ideally protect collective resources while being culturally acceptable and economically viable. In examining this goal, there are many debates that consider aspects of the inherent conflict of conservation versus development goals in buffer zones, as well as conflicting development goals within target groups (Heinen & Mehta, 2000, p. 48).

According to ICHHTO (2004), the World Heritage sites in Iran suffer from the problems mentioned above. However, Iran has accepted and is a participant in the World Heritage Convention (WHC), because the WHC commits states to identifying and nominating potential sites and to caring for any World Heritage sites designated within their sovereign territories. The specific examples within Iran discussed here also fall within its purview.

Governments such as Iran's that have ratified this convention have also recognised their duty to protect these sites of outstanding national value and conserve them for future generations.

The people concerned with such organisations need to adopt policies, set up services, undertake scientific and technical research, and take appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative, and financial measures.<sup>2</sup> There is a necessity to identify, protect, conserve, present, and rehabilitate heritage sites, and foster the establishment of regional training centres.

However, World Heritage sites such as Pasargadae have witnessed disintegration due to state-level political divisions. There are high-level conflicts of interest and unhealthy relationships or lack of cooperation between locals, non-locals and heritage and governmental authorities. Physical and natural erosion are other issues that have a detrimental effect (Mozaffari, 2016, p. 3)

The governmental oversight of the Pasargadae heritage site lacks strategic management decisions and a detailed plan for dealing with issues such as population changes, dam building, and road construction. There is no distinct way of addressing issues like control and management of ancient structures such as the nomadic tribe routes, flora and fauna, and the unique natural and historical landscape of the region (Behbahani, Bahrami & Samani, 2010). These issues have a negative impact on approaches to solving the problem or answering the question.

In addition to these problems at Pasargadae, climate change is a big risk for agriculture, and it will have an even greater impact and potential danger in the future (Heydari, Mohammad, Faridah Othman, & Mohammad Noori, 2013). It is predicted that there is

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<sup>2</sup> See World Heritage Convention, *supra* note 10, Art. 5.

a need for poor rural people to manage the multiple risks they face, constraining their ability to live in their own town, and forcing them to pursue new opportunities in other major cities and in a non-farming economy. These risks and conflicting interests impact the environment and integrity of heritage sites as well the traditional features of the buffer zone, and cause local confusion, emotionally and physically.

Vast changes in climatic conditions, and a lack of adequate management to reduce the impact on agriculture in the region around Pasargadae and on small businesses has exerted pressure on the locals. The issue of Sivand Dam and the increased humidity levels in Pasargadae is another consideration. Flooding of the Sivand Dam and uncontrolled development plans and lack of an adequate heritage management will cause destruction at the heritage site (Hejazi, 2008) and present many challenges for people and for agricultural industries. This may result in the routes used for migration by nomads being abandoned for newer ones, changing the social status and land uses inside the buffer zone not only physically but emotionally.

Issues specific to the second case study have been reported by ICHHTO in 2009. The destruction of parts of Sheikh Safi al-Din Khānegāh and Shrine Ensemble (SKSEA) named Shahidgāh, the construction of walkways and residential homes, and the damaged garden, were among the damages inflicted on the area by development pressures around six decades ago. Also, operations are underway to expand urban facilities inside the buffer zone of the ensemble, such as excavations for installing gas and water pipes. These activities gravely harm the sections located beneath the passageways, which may contain historical documents and information.

Constructions and new heritage designations inside the buffer zone adjacent to this ensemble are likely to affect it adversely. Local desire better facilities for their homes and are highly confused about their ownership. In many cases, they migrate to other

suburbs for greater clarity and freedom of ownership. This condition in both Iranian case studies raises emotional concerns that this study will analyse. On the other hand, heritage organisations, by assigning cultural functions to the zones along with proper management, can create valuable opportunities for SKSEA. For example, such buildings can be reorganised within the framework of service and support spaces for the ensemble, or other cultural functions needed locally.

The lack of adequate buffer zone roles and definitions will result in considerable risk to those heritage buffer zones and their residential features (Behbahani, Bahrami & Samani, 2010). However, the subtler social, political and cultural implications of many development plans inside buffer zones of heritage sites that have global tourist attractions (e.g., visual signifiers or branding tools), prompt conflict, confusion and misunderstanding, especially in terms of local dissonance. Heritage is challenged by the creation, shaping and management of multiple responses or demands, which are ongoing sources of conflict and disagreement (Graham & Howard, 2008).

There is a problem when the World Heritage sites are situated in territories occupied by local people. Cultures and lives, in addition to emotional and spiritual beliefs of the local people, cannot be separated from their territories, lands and natural resources.

This thesis will therefore analyse the material performance around heritage sites as well as the discursive, heterogeneous relationships that take part in the processing of all actors based on Latour ANT theory (1996). The intention here is to analyse buffer zones through a socio-spatial lens. A buffer zone is the site of converging concepts involving geographic locations, meanings, and material forms. The social relations between people, objects, and ideas, can be treated as generic entities, together comprising a buffer zone condition (Creswell, 2009; Latour, 1996, pp. 369–381). On most occasions, indigenous people have criticised conditions that arise in World

Heritage sites situated in territories occupied by indigenous people. Cultures and lives, in addition to the spiritual beliefs of the indigenous people, cannot be separated from their territories, lands and natural resources. Management frameworks consider the protection of 'natural' heritage values first. This is often detrimental to indigenous persons, including the safeguard and expansion of their cultural heritage and expressions.

More specifically, this research will examine and analyse two key local sites in Iran in terms of interpreting the causes of issues in the buffer zones where this tension is embodied in the heritage landscapes. It also will address the under-researched fact that buffer zones may be inert, wasted spaces awaiting transformation, or possible liminal places. It will demonstrate how the condition of buffer zones affects the quality of life of communities around the heritage sites, both physically and emotionally. The resulting state of affairs of the people, with the noted lack of provisions to address the many mentioned concerns, can be considered to be an example of oversight and neglect.

## **Liminality in General**

Buffer zones can be seen as transitional spaces that are accessed when crossing between the protected heritage area and its surrounding environment (Martin, 2008). This study intends to analyse the possible transition involved in the buffer zones, in which clear-cut laws may be replaced by ambiguity, disorder and anti-structure, as well as experimental behaviour. This thesis explores the possible 'between-ness' of this state, to investigate the heritage buffer zone's potential liminal condition. The characteristics of this possible between-ness are explored to uncover its liminal situation.

Before going further, an overview of the concept of liminality is given. Liminality was introduced in 1909 by ethnologist van Gennep in his *Les Rites de Passage*, which referred to a state of in-between-ness during such rites. Rites of passage are, in short, ceremonial acts of a special kind that accompany a person going from one social grouping to another, and are connected to different phases in life (van Gennep, 1960, pp. 1–3). Following Turner (1974), rites means rituals or change in quality from one situation toward a new situation or condition. Ritual is a strategic way of specific embodied acting in specific social situations. It is a performance of religious, traditional, or collective consciousness, in symbolic, and meaningful moments in specific places or conditions, and has a large effect on social control or social change (Bell, 1992, p. 67). Therefore, there are ceremonies of birth, puberty, marriage, and so on. Part of such rites is a territorial passage, such as crossing a threshold. This threshold stands for neutral territory, such as a frontier (Turner, 1974, p. 19). An exploration of these elements inside buffer zones illuminates the quality of these areas.

Van Gennep's (1960) concept of liminality, explored in Turner (1967, 1969) views liminal spaces as 'interstructural', as they are 'betwixt and between' the positions that they occupy at the points of separation and aggregation. Both van Gennep and Turner's conceptual framing of liminality have been used and interpreted differently, particularly over the past two decades. Liminality has incorporated both temporal and spatial dimensions across a wide variety of academic disciplines, including geography and geography-related studies (King-Irani, 2006; Navaro-Yashin, 2003; Rumelili, 2003; Shields, 1991; Teather, 1999), education (Cook-Sather, 2006; Meyer & Land, 2005), tourism and leisure (Preston-Whyte, 2004; Pritchard & Morgan, 2006), psychology (Dixon, 1971; Forss, Tishelman, Widmark & Sachs, 2004), organisation

studies (Beech, 2011; Czarniawska & Mazza, 2003; Garsten, 1999) and consumer research (Cody, Lawlor & Maclaran, 2010; Mehta & Belk, 1991).

Thomassen (2006) explained that there are various dimensions to liminality. The concept is applicable to both space and time and can be applied to individuals, groups, or whole societies. He further differentiated the 'scale' with which liminality is experienced along with a distinction as to whether liminality is artificially produced or naturally occurring, and whether it is sought after or applied involuntarily to individuals or groups (2006, p. 18). It applies to change in a single personality, and to social change and transition in large-scale settings. The concept of liminality ties together the micro and the macro, operating from the middle. Liminality opens a new view of events and meanings that affords plasticity and movement in different directions (Thomassen, 2014).

This section reviews studies that apply this concept to the notion of the buffer zone. Further, it explores the characteristics of liminal places. Cultural geographers and tourism studies have helped to extend the liminal space discourse using a spatial/physical lens. A famous example of applying this concept is Shields's *Places on the Margin* (1991), which invoked the concept of 'liminality' to understand how some spaces gave rise to and sanctioned behaviour perceived to be outside normative everyday conventions. In his use of the word margin, Shields effectively made it synonymous with liminal, which in turn became entwined with ideas of place. However, liminal space does not only mean the margin. The beach, for example, has been defined as a liminal space between land and sea, identified as an in-between zone, offering visitors opportunities for freedom and 'carnival' (Shields, 1991). Preston-Whyte (2004) discussed social settings, surfing, and nudist beach spaces as examples of where liminality may be found and experienced in several ways: beaches are 'limbo-

like space(s) often beyond normal social and cultural constraints. In these spaces people can find brief moments of freedom and an escape from the daily grind of social responsibilities' (p. 350).

Preston-Whyte (2004) argued that visitors find a space where the stress of normal workaday life is suspended. For the surfer, liminality is experienced in the exhilaration of confronting breaking waves and where newcomers are required to participate in a rite of passage to demonstrate their skill and ability to cope with formidable waves. Another example is hotels. Pritchard and Morgan (2006) cited the combination of liminality and tourism. Augé (1995) suggests that transitory spaces lack organic social life and are 'nonplaces'. Another example is the street; Matthews (2003) argued that the street is a liminal space, in that it is infused with cultural identity, especially in the passage of youngsters from childhood to adulthood.

According to Garsten (1999), liminality can also be a position in which new models, symbols and institutions arise. More recent studies have started to analyse liminality in small scale spaces such as hospital corridors, toilets, corners, and others. They analyse are liminal environments in which to engage in conversations, teaching and knowledge exchange (Iedema, 2012; Shortt, 2015). Shortt (2015) explored the spaces in-between employees' lived experiences of liminal spaces at work. She illustrated how and why liminal spaces are used and made meaningful by workers, in contrast to the dominant spaces that surround them. She extended the concept of liminality and argued that when workers construct spaces as vital and meaningful to their everyday lives, they cease to be liminal spaces and instead become 'transitory dwelling places'. She found that participants saw these spaces as providing much needed escape from the surveillance/gaze of corporate power in an otherwise panopticon-style workplace (Shortt, 2015).

The concept of liminality in place is also expressed in the tourism literature. A growing body of the literature has sought to conceptualise tourism spaces as liminal places. For example, Foster (2015) demonstrated that the concept of liminality and liminal space can be readily applied to interactions between tourists and tourism places. He discussed the idea of the camp environment as a liminal zone, relating touristic aspects of the experience (such as being away from the familiar and placed into contact situations with a new social group) to the achievement of successful outcomes.

Another example of discussion of liminality in tourism studies is pilgrimage tourism (Urry, 2003). Referring to Turner and his ideas about pilgrimages and *communitas*, Urry (2003) discussed how the tourist moves from a familiar place to a far place and then returns to the familiar place. At the far place there is the worshipping at sacred shrines and the tourist is supposedly uplifted through intensive social bonding in which everyday obligations are suspended or inverted. It should be considered that the analysis of the complexities and similarities between tourism and pilgrimage have been critically discussed. A critical issue is that pilgrimage entails the movement of people from their everyday statuses to a sacred place where people enter a world of *communitas* or *antistructure* through the ritual practices. Turner acknowledges that *communitas* is not only realized at particular sacred place but could be usually recognised in the meaningful state of existential *communitas*. This argument obviously made a typological opposition between the sacred and secular world, structure and *communitas* or *antistructure*. It established a new point of view between tribal rites of passage and pilgrimage to and from shrines located in the past as well as in present and future society. Turner discussed how the modern pilgrimage is blended with tourism, involving a major journey to a national or international shrine (Eade, 1992, pp: 18-32). Turners' complexity between structure and *communitas* and pilgrimage to a sacred

place and tourism to cultural and historical places were widely discussed by Eade (1991) for further reading<sup>3</sup>. This study focuses upon people practices and perceptions around *communitas* rather than the complex analogies behind the concepts of pilgrimage and tourism. It is important that in the liminal zone there is a license for permissive or playful behaviour. And then there is return with enhanced social status. Overall, in literature about the subject of place, liminality is commonly taken to mean ambiguity, transformation in quality, and uncertainty. While this accords with part of Turner's (1987) concept, it does not typically include, for example, the procession phases. Liminality is a threshold moment: betwixt and between. Characteristically liminal spaces of the physical kind—beaches, hotels, corridors and so on—share some of the key conceptual elements that are found within the temporal state of liminality. Thus, the physical and figurative spaces of liminality overlap. Liminal spaces exist in parallel to more formal space; formal spaces are defined by their mainstream uses and characteristically have clear boundaries, where the practices within them are interwoven with social expectation, routines, and norms. Despite their comparative lack of formality and setting aside of rules, liminal spaces often have precise, socially defined rituals and routines beyond those associated with transition from one state to another. These parallel spaces are actively used by different actors to take advantage of their alternative offerings of stasis vs. change. It can be concluded that a liminal space can be highly structured and conservative in its own right, as well as being creative and unsettling, and can be permanently available for use (Shortt, 2015).

We need only to notice the graffiti on street corners or the 'usual spots' quickly occupied by groups of teenagers in public parks to see how individuals, who may not

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<sup>3</sup> Eade, J. (1991). Order and power at Lourdes. *Contesting the sacred: The anthropology of Christian pilgrimage*.

have their own formal territories, often attempt to assert a sense of power, control, and subjectivity within the liminal spaces around them, to create their own footholds within them (Shortt, 2015, p. 653). Physical liminal spaces are in-between borderlands where boundaries, to some extent, are blurred and difficult to define clearly; ownership of such places is confused and unclear, making them semi-private or semi-public (Shortt, 2015). Thus, liminal spaces have their own unique set of circumstances. Can we see the buffer zone as a possible liminal place? Do the social and emotional conditions associated with the buffer zone fit the concept of liminality?

### **Liminality and the World Heritage Buffer zone: Thesis Assumption**

As defined above, liminal describes the characteristics of any in-between state, regardless of the context that it is part of; a place, time, situation, and being can all be liminal (Turner, 1974). Liminality is defined as a middle ground, a space and time where transformations take place, a transitional state filled with ambiguities and contradictions. A liminal place can act as a sort of ‘non-place’ that does not seem to fit within, or interact with, local surroundings and residents (Cresswell, 2014). This condition can cause mismanagement (Staneva, 2006), a lack of clear regulations, or confusion about regulations and border definitions (Martin, 2008). The structuring and administration of buffer zones is often done by a combination of actors, including people at both the regional (e.g., government) and international level (e.g., organisations such as UNESCO) that are distant from the sites themselves (Mitchell & Kelly, 2012). Hence, there are contradictions and ambiguities in these buffer zones that could impose a liminal condition. Some important points regarding living within buffer zone conditions are:

- People are waiting for new heritage decision-making from heritage organisations internationally and nationally as well as from regional and local government to enhance their life inside the zone areas. People's lives are plagued with ambiguity and confusion in different aspects of the unclear buffer zone definition both nationally and internationally, in management, information, interpretation, local community involvement in decision making about heritage properties, the management system itself,<sup>4</sup> power imbalances between heritage organisations, local rights, political and economic factors.
- People may not be satisfied with their living conditions when they live under excessive limitations and control.
- Immigration could be a critical issue.
  - Everyday life could be often suspended because of the unclear conditions.

In such undefined spaces, actors themselves may experience a vague situation, with their behaviours unconstrained by social norms, and where, they might argue, as Turner (1974, p. 13) suggested, 'anything may happen'. This is a salient feature of liminal space; 'spaces like these are not easily defined in terms of their use and not clearly owned by a particular party' (Shortt, 2015, p. 634).

In such a situation, the actors are dissatisfied and there is conflict and dissonance (Graham, 2002; Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2005; Robertson, 2016; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996); there is difficulty maintaining relationships with heritage, identity, and place for all involved, but especially for locals. Therefore, if buffer zones cannot

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<sup>4</sup> The expression "management system" can be described as several processes that are working simultaneously to improve the system, as well as its actions and achievements, in an upward spiral.

function efficiently, they may cause alienation from place and disempowerment of locals, which will in turn result in apathy and potential destruction (Niknami, 1999). Ultimately, this damages heritage too.

Buffer zones can be interpreted through recognition of the conditions that construct them. Complex circumstances and conditions, and different mixed uses and interpretations of buffer zones have a direct relationship with communities living around the area. The actors include the natural setting and local and international bodies' protection facilities intended to preserve the buffer zones. Hence, the diverse social levels of influence on these sites necessitate a globalised approach, which can lead to the transformation of the status quo of people living around the buffer zones as well as of the environment (Martin, 2008).

People inside the World heritage buffer zones live in a specially protected zone where the land is owned by heritage and government authorities and the people are, as a result, confused about their rights. Controls are exerted over the people who inhabit or visit these sites, creating conflicts of interest among different people on the proper use of the land occupied by the power of heritage and governmental authorities.

The integration of world cultural and natural heritage conservation allows for proper handling of public and private conditions, and makes it possible for eliminate the unnecessary conflicts and economic challenges that have existed. In the long term, this type of relationship leads to complex issues of private–public or private–governmental land use and access management; the resolution of these is still in its infancy. This creates economic and social development issues around the long-term sustainability of areas which depend on the continuing survival and advancement of these populations. Therefore, the interpretation of buffer zones has be framed by a strong emphasis on protecting areas of historical and cultural significance. The definition of buffer zones

has generated ambiguous spaces (Martin, 2008, p.25) whose status and ownership are indeterminate, where:

- The right of access and use is unclear (Martin, 2008, p. 9).
- Social status is suspended (Turner, 1974).
- The conditions created by all actors are vague and unclear, emotionally and physically.

In the discourse around buffer zones, there has been a focus on attracting the attention of communities living around the area to consider their actions in the designated areas (Oliver & Piatti, 2009, p. 17) in regard to heritage site protection. Therefore, this study seeks to analyse the impact of buffer zone conditions that transform people's everyday life, activities, and practices (events or festivals, ritual performances) physically and emotionally inside these zones and that support the notion of buffer zones as possible liminal spaces. People's practices in great public events, festivals, and ritual performances will be considered because these activities come under the focus of liminality. People's everyday life and practices will be analysed, not only as an index, but also as an agency of sociocultural and political change that is directly associated with liminality (Turner, 1979).

This thesis argues that rather than adopting a protective approach to these spaces, the recognition that they are potential liminal buffer zones is a lens through which to analyse their condition. In examining two key local sites in Iran where ambiguity is embodied in the landscape, this dissertation identifies the ambiguity issue in buffer zones that are inert or wasted spaces, while others are awaiting transformation.

Rather than considering buffer zone as generic protected areas, it will be argued that the users of the liminal places tend to inscribe parallel spaces within them by reproducing patterns of usage and movement that reflect their daily lives. This results

in some conflict. It will be posited that different usages and interpretations of place create an undefined, vague understanding of a buffer zone. Tourists view a buffer zone as a temporary space where they do not want to stay for long. Locals are confused about their rights in a public/governmental place which they need to take personal advantage of. Government officials seek to benefit from the heritage site, a costly location that they are obliged to protect by strict law and regulation (Oliver & Piatti, 2009).

Contradictory ways of viewing buffer zones need to be acknowledged to better understand that the places are subject to change. It is possible to view the buffer zones from different perspectives and be motivated to preserve them for the longest possible time. De Certeau (1984, p. 117) framed space as ‘a site of movement and action, ever ambiguous’, while place ‘implies an indication of stability’.

This study emphasises the need to apply diverse concepts to analyse the buffer zone’s condition. It will be argued that the buffer zones are transient because they are subject to a high probability of demolition and change (Turner, 1974). However, reconstruction or renewal can contribute to their preservation as lasting natural heritage.

The buffer zones can be considered as a threshold in this context where the liminal connotes the spatial and temporal:

- A boundary, border, a transitional landscape;
- A doorway in a physical sense and a psychic space of potentiality;
- The ‘initial stage of a process’. (Andrews & Roberts, 2012, p. 1) A liminal space has temporal qualities, marking a beginning and an end, and the unfolding of a spatio-temporal process (Andrews &

Roberts, 2012, p. 1). It will also be argued that the buffer zones can be changed through people's practices and events.

A continuous challenge to actors when dealing with materiality and meaning and their relations to each other within these buffer zones is the need to navigate the protective laws and instructions, from situation to situation, in everyday life. This study seeks to identify the strategies pursued by different actors in response to these challenges. It can be assumed that these strategies provide a sense of control over the uncertain, tenuous existence in the fluid, ambiguous and socially abnormal space in buffer zones.

This research contributes to knowledge by addressing this question about the social conditions within the buffer zone. While the signed treaties of World Heritage sites are a global concern, a site does not exist apart from its constituent localities. Exploration of the ways in which actors face possible ambiguity in the space of buffer zones emotionally, physically, materially, and in terms of meaning is a missing piece of this puzzle. The results of such an exploration could improve understandings of the conditions of buffer zones as 'an important measure towards both implementing the prescribed protections of heritage sites and at the same time ensuring suitable living conditions for the local residents' (Edroma, 2004, p. 36).

For the purposes of understanding buffer zones, the concept of liminality could represent a new structure through which we can recognise various practices (ritual performances, events and festivals), incomplete transformation, confused and unclear places, spaces associated with power and control, semi-private or semi-public, states of ambiguity and uncertainty.

## **Purposes, Objective**

Since the legislations of heritage organisations and other authorities have not addressed the creation of buffer zones as areas with multiple functions, and have not planned for diverse contingencies, the existing buffer zone legislation is not in pace with new developments. The concept of a buffer zone also needs to be understood through the lens of social and cultural conflict, ambiguity and confusion. This is a missing piece of the puzzle that cannot be left out if we are to understand what needs to be done with buffer zones. Thus, awareness of social life in buffer zones helps to provide us with a better understanding of these conditions. As previously discussed, buffer zones are constructed entities. This study seeks to interpret and analyse the social process and conditions of buffer zone construction.

This project will address two key research questions:

1. What everyday practices and meanings exist in the World Heritage Buffer Zones that contribute to the social process of the construction of buffer zones?
2. Can the concept of liminality illuminate the constructs and the problems of the World Heritage Buffer zones?

The findings will attempt to increase understanding of the condition of buffer zones in Iran and inform similar studies of buffer zones elsewhere. If a buffer zone is ambiguous, confusing and uncertain, how can these elements be analysed? This research examines the relationship between culture, material things, social ideas, identity construction, performativity practices, and the emotional responses with which people participate in, produce, resist, celebrate, deny, or ignore conditions within a buffer zone.

Within the physical borders of buffer zones, human interference is limited; as these are areas reserved for World Heritage sites, only certain human activities are deemed permissible. Nevertheless, the role of human practices in the shaping of buffer zones cannot be ignored. To identify the challenges or possible liminal conditions of buffer zones, there is a need to analyse the spatial arrangement and the development of theories.

This study will respond to this urgent need.

## **Significance of Research**

The aim of this study is to determine the role played by buffer zones in the community and people's perceptions. This knowledge is important, since various issues of heritage sites depend on the buffer zones. As mentioned, in 2006, the list of World Heritage sites in danger consisted of 31 properties. Nine properties presented serious problems related to buffer zones. These problems may be divided into two groups:

1. Territorial—inappropriately defined buffer zone boundaries, unclear delineation, or lack of a buffer zone (Martin, 2008).
2. Poor management—illegal construction in the buffer zone, endangered visual integrity and insufficient protection (Staneva, 2006).

It is obvious that the protection and management of a cultural or natural heritage site is not only a governmental task, as Oliver and Piatti (2009) rightly claim. A site's perceived social and spiritual, historic, artistic, aesthetic, natural, scientific, or other cultural values are key factors in determining how important they are. However, their physical, visual, spiritual, and other cultural contexts and settings also need to be taken into account (Oliver & Piatti, 2009, p. 37). The conditions of World Cultural Heritage sites are affected by many agents, not just by the original planner, official protectors,

designers or architects. This means that *anyone* using these places has the capacity to edit and re-edit them, adding their own cultural ideas through their specific cultural actions (Anderson, 2015, p. 9).

Previous research opens the possibility for a livelier dialogue about urban heritage, not only as the things that we want to keep, but also as the things we inherit. The focus is not just on the preservation of objects and things, but also, on their active and lively connections (Ashworth, 2017; Harvey, 2001; Smith, 2006). It is obvious that the protection and the management of a cultural or natural heritage site is not only a governmental task; heritage sites derive their significance from their perceived social and cultural values and their meaningful relationships with their context (Oliver & Piatti, 2009, p. 37).

In this vein, this research will investigate the possible ambiguity of everyday life and people's activities in the buffer zones. The different facets of social life in buffer zones are important, since they define the quality of life of the communities in the area and how they deal with its conditions. The thesis elaborates on the perceptions people have towards the concept of buffer zones and their essence and character. The analysis will explore whether the division of the buffer zone, its in-between condition, uncertain state and the control of place by power, i.e., control by international and governmental organisations, create circumstances in which the ambiguity, doubt and struggle of everyday life.

The novelty of this research is the thorough application of the theories of liminality (or theories inspired by them) to analyse buffer zone conditions, to understand the places in their raw form.

**Summary:** The buffer zone presents unique challenges, as discussed in this chapter, and can be seen as an example of the solution to one problem creating another problem. Thus, we must deal with the resulting and unforeseen newly created problem. Since the legislations of heritage organisations and other authorities have not addressed the creation of buffer zones as areas with multiple functions, and have not planned for diverse contingencies, the existing buffer zone legislation is not in pace with new developments.

Definitions of buffer zones have failed to address the new problems caused by their creation and initial modes of administration. The concept of a buffer zone also needs to be understood through the lens of social and cultural conflict, ambiguity and confusion, missing puzzle pieces that cannot be left out if we are to understand what needs to be done with buffer zones. This thesis argues that rather than a protective approach to these spaces, the recognition that they are potential liminal buffer zones can be a strategy to reduce their ambiguity and analyse the condition. In examining two key local sites in Iran where ambiguity is embodied in the landscape, this dissertation identifies the ambiguity in buffer zones that are inert or wasted spaces, while others are awaiting transformation. Thus, awareness of social life in buffer zones helps to provide us with a better understanding of these conditions.

Contradictory ways of viewing buffer zones need to be acknowledged to better understand that the places are subject to change and transformation. It is possible to view the buffer zones from different perspectives and be motivated to preserve them for the longest possible time. This study seeks to explore the social process of this construction and understand the buffer zone's conditions by considering the two key research question, as stated above:

1. What everyday practices and meanings exist in the World Heritage Buffer Zones that contribute to the social process of the construction of buffer zones?
2. Can the concept of liminality illuminate the constructs and the problems within the World heritage Buffer zones?

There are numerous reviews of some effective literature approaches to heritage buffer zones that will help to analyse the condition and also the data from the selected world heritage buffer zones in Iran. The literature will be discussed in the next chapter, which will illustrate an understanding of heritage in terms of social constructs, as well as physical, cultural, economic, and political effects, particularly in the buffer zones. This will offer valuable insights for interpreting the complex interplays between heritage sites and their wider social contexts inside the areas of buffer zones. The next chapter will present an analysis of the place-making concept or construction of place, which is an element of Marxism, through a literature review of the subject.

However, few studies have given comprehensive reviews of various measures taken to integrate the buffer zones around world heritage sites inside this theory framework; this will be addressed in the literature review.

## **Thesis Outline**

This chapter has introduced the key concepts of the World Heritage buffer zones and Liminality, aims and objectives of this research. Chapter 2 reviews the extant literature regarding the concept of place and introduces the theoretical framework adopted in this study. These research findings are consistent with those of previous studies of the social construction of place, which views heritage in terms of social constructs as well as physical, cultural, economic and political effects, particularly in buffer zones. This

approach will offer valuable insights for interpreting the complex interplays between heritage sites and their wider social contexts. A Marxist concept of place making in the social construction of place frames the discussion of buffer zones in World Heritage sites, demonstrating how people actively create meaning about place in space.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology of this research in two sections: theoretical discussion and practical methods. First, the underlying philosophical assumptions and the design strategies underpinning this research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010) are outlined. Then the methodology of the collection of data is explained: the use of observation, depth interviews, recording images through cameras (visual), and walking around in the buffer zone (sensory ethnography), and the philosophical assumptions underpinning those mixed methods. After information was gathered from the fieldwork, data was coded using word cloud from SPSS and NVivo software to identify and analyse buffer zone conditions, in order to fulfil the objectives highlighted in Chapter 1.

Chapter 4 presents data representations for the buffer zone of Pasargadae. The data are discussed and represented based on the study's theory framework. Data is represented under different key themes: the condition of buffer zones, places of ambiguity and uncertainty, transformed places, people's dissatisfaction with the buffer zone, the meaning of the place, and more. In Chapter 5, the SKSEA raw data will be represented and discussed.

Chapter 6 summarises the entire thesis: its analysis of World Heritage buffer zones as socially produced spaces that can be seen as liminal, and as places of transformation as well as of ambiguity and uncertainty. The social construction of place is summarised for the two buffer zones of Pasargadae and SKSEA. The thesis argues that different actors have inscribed parallel spaces within buffer zones by reproducing patterns of

usage and movement that reflect their daily lives, imbuing them with conflict and dissonance, resisting the construction of such places as general protected areas.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

Chapter One discusses how the World Heritage Buffer Zones can be understood, and how the different key actors could play important roles in understanding and evaluating the buffer zones in World Heritage as the key focused in this study. The role of the World Heritage Buffer zones as areas that are created to enhance the protection of a specific conservation area, and are often peripheral to it, has been examined. Within buffer zones, the use of resources may be legally or customarily restricted, often to a lesser degree than in the adjacent protected area, so as to form a transition zone. A buffer zone can also be designated as a protected area and be assigned an IUCN Management Category, depending on the conservation objective. Protected areas such as buffer zones are recognised as vital strategies for sustainable development as well as maintaining conservation. Nevertheless, these areas/zones pose numerous challenges which mainly involve changes in the use of land and surrounding activities. This can result in dissonance, conflict of interest, and immigration. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the ambiguities about the precise function and definition of buffer zones, unclear regulations and conventions regarding the buffer zone meaning and its function, and so on (Martin, 2008), are an example of how a solution to one problem causes new problems. Such challenges undermine the balance between sustainable development and conservation in buffer zones around the protected core zones. As previously indicated, in response to the need to address these new problems, studies have examined the relationships between these zones and their environs, and have sought to discover the nature of their association with each other. These studies have varying methods, approaches, concepts, projects, and theories; some have been effective to some extent, and others not.

There are numerous studies of the heritage buffer zones. Most of the methods used specialised in the conservation of the biosphere, spatial indicators, ecosystem assessment, identification of specific priority areas, and multi-criteria assessments. Others are focused on sustainable development, community management, adaptive governance, representative stakeholders' perspective, integrated conservation and project development, and spatial functionality models.

However, few studies have given comprehensive reviews that illustrate an understanding of heritage in buffer zones in terms of social constructs, as well as physical, cultural, economic, and political frameworks. This chapter will offer insights for interpreting the complex interplays between heritage sites and their wider social contexts inside the buffer zones.

Key changes in the timeline of the development of protected areas over the years are examined, analysed, and categorised by using key concepts, theories, and approaches. The condition of buffer zones and their environs will be interpreted in terms of the need to support their conservation and sustainability. To conclude, the practices, strengths, weaknesses, features, and effectiveness of these approaches are analysed, and possible future improvements are discussed.

It is important to understand the relationship between heritage and place as conceived through ritualised practices within the buffer zone. This will shed new light on the changes that heritagisation induces in the daily lives of residents in such zones (Smith, 2006).

The practice of everyday life is a framework for investigating issues of practice in relation to space and place making. 'Places are not operational (meaningful) without practice in them. Thus, de Certeau (1984) discussed that practice is a tactical art that plays with the structures of place that are provided. This concept will be discussed and developed in relation to the buffer zone studies. The dominant strands of everyday life

concepts will focus on the period from post-Second World War to contemporary culture, favouring the everyday of modernity and the public sphere. Power is seen to be the controlling and major effect of all conditions occurring in the buffer zone. It will be argued that power and control are linked to liminal places. The everyday is the very soil on which the great architectures of politics and society rise. The subject of everyday life provides an indispensable context for the work on the buffer zone conditions.

The daily activities in such possible liminal places contribute to a common space of combined emotional experience through changes to the daily scenography of city spaces. Daily life establishes momentary citizen solidarities, with different forms of communication and cooperation in public spaces. Spatial structures are deemed to produce certain types of behaviour that add to the emotional experience, while certain constellations of the buffer zone elements encourage local people to participate actively in the reorganisation of their surroundings. In most instances, such initiatives aid in the resolution of issues such as deactivated public spaces, and propose citizen-driven formats for participating in urban planning on a micro scale, as seen in the forthcoming illustrations.

This literature review introduces the outline of a theoretical approach which brings together divergent aspects of Pasargadae or SKSEA buffer zones under the rubric of place. It will provide examples of Pasargadae's and SKSEA's buffer zones transpositions and possible candidates for groups or collectives that play a role in interpreting such places.

## **Making Place**

Bourdieu's (1971) studies provide an early example of addressing the spatial as part of a cultural structure. The relevance of Bourdieu's concept of 'social space' for studies of heritage buffer zone opens a window for analysing a buffer zone's social construction. Bourdieu (1984) argued that living in and experiencing different spaces means that residents become active in reproducing and constructing the spaces around them. Bourdieu's study establishes the close relationship between power and spatial organisation. Bourdieu's concept of social space is relevant for examining the conditions of the buffer zone. Pries (2013) discussed that this concept is primarily a spatial metaphor and not 'an explicit concept of the relations between social and geographic space'. It provides an opportunity to explore metaphors of social distance and proximity that are connected to a process that generates inequality and social domination (Reed-Danahay, 2017). As Bourdieu succinctly puts it, taste functions as a sort of social orientation; it conveys a sense of one's own place, guiding the occupants towards the social positions adapted to the properties of the space (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 466).

It should be noted that Bourdieu (1977) gave the name habitus to this everyday canon: a 'socially constituted system of cognitive and motivating structures' (p. 76). It is a central concept of Bourdieu's perspective on social space. He considered social actors as embodied habituses. He connected and articulated between habitus and social space—between the individual, the social, and the spatial. For Bourdieu, a person is a habitus. Therefore, in social space each habitus is positioned differently in a physical space such as that of a buffer zone. He emphasised that each embodied habitus shapes every day in the social world (Reed-Danahay, 2017, p. 7).

Bourdieu has written about changing meanings that can arise because of the differential interpretations in the international circulation of texts, since the production

of social and spatial contexts circulates beyond places of origin to be interpreted by people whose views are linked to other fields of knowledge (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 263). Following this view of Bourdieu, the stated epistemological goal of this study is further underlined: to overcome oppositions between theoretical knowledge of the social world as constructed by outside observers and the knowledge used by those who possess a practical mastery of their world.

Significant situated and partial knowledge (Haraway, 1991) holds the potential to create alternative narratives in the same physical space. This condition requires the analytical component of the research to capture and transcend the distinction between the space of the real, the visual, and the material place, and the space of the imagined representation of that place.

The concept of place making in this thesis follows Lefebvre (1991) in his production of space, as will be developed in the following sections. For instance, Lefebvre considered structural relationships from his Marxist point of view of the relations of production that construct social space. While Lefebvre emphasised the physical and material aspects of social space (1991), he also identified social space in terms of a system of relations, consisting not only of relations of production but also of relations of power dominance based on different forms of capital (economic, cultural, social, and symbolic) (Reed-Danahay, 2017, p. 6).

Human practices challenge the conceptual basis of current cultural geography, which Thrift (1996) argued, ‘often seems to have taken representation as its central focus to its detriment’ (p. 318). Having considered these author’s viewpoints, this study looks at how these elements are combined and how they speak to questions of placemaking and the temporality and materiality of the everyday practices and events inside the buffer zones. Both aspects of heritage—heritage as a social process (Harvey, D. C,

2001; Smith, 2006), and its meaning and effects (Bushell & Staiff, 2012) on buffer zones— should be considered in analysing the conditions of buffer zones.

The development of the concept of place construction in geography can be traced through Massey's writings. In *Spatial divisions of labour* (1998), she argued that place is a fluid and historically specific, structured entity. In *Space, place and gender* (1994), she argued that place should be viewed as a 'progressive sense of place', a socially constructed entity. Massey (1992, 1994, 1997, 1998, and 2005) has encouraged us to think of place in a way that combines bodies, objects and flows in new ways of construction. Place, in this sense, becomes an event (Creswell, 2004, p. 40). This is a constructive approach; places are constructed in relationship with objects and processes from outside. According to Massey (1994), 'Instead of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around them, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings' (p. 154).

The empirical application of the theoretical issues above can be followed in Mozaffari's work (2014). Mozaffari (2014) analysed the Pasargadae site as a place; the basis for this approach is that, as a contested site, Pasargadae is imagined and constructed differently by various groups or collectives; it is a multiple place.

Pasargadae's multiplicity has been considered as rooted in its long history. This is compounded by the contention of political, economic, and representational discourses. All these discourses operate upon the site at different scales, local, national, and even international (as World Heritage). Pasargadae's or SKSEA's buffer zones have divergent aspects which this study brings together under the rubric of place. It will provide examples of Pasargadae's and SKSEA's buffer zones potential transpositions and possible candidates for groups or collectives that play a role in interpreting such places.

As previously mentioned, prior to this study, Mozaffari (2014) studied the geography and the history of Pasargadae and identified actors relevant to this place. He posited place from a collective perspective, as the outcome of a process of associating identities with sites.

In this sense, collectives are bounded group formations of human actors assembled for a specific purpose. Mozaffari (2014) identified state and non-state actors as the two broad (but overlapping) collectives for a specific length of time. He then investigated their interpretation of the Pasargadae site. Finally, he concluded that Pasargadae is a microcosm, indeed a metonym, for the current situation of Iran. Thus, Pasargadae is not an isolated World Heritage site, nor purely a symbol of abstract state politics. Pasargadae and its immediate vicinity in fact constitute a living landscape occupied by villagers, nomads, and tourists (Mozaffari, 2014).

To expand on this important insight, this section reviews place theory, which conceptualises the buffer zone as a place or potential metaphor for place. Over the last two decades, the spatial turn in social sciences has provided an instructive lens through which heritage sites can be better understood. In the spirit of using this new perspective, social constructivism is one of the main approaches to place theory used in this research. This study considers a buffer zone to be a place (an analytical concept) that involves the process of constructing meaning and practice in material space. The following passage will present a theoretical framing of lived space.

The buffer zone can be analysed from different spatial aspects through the literature. Reflections on place have been rigorously developed in the fields of geography and philosophy. Walsh (1992) finds that such reflections are broadly in harmony with human geography, especially the theory of place. D. C Harvey (2001) is as the human geographer who has written extensively about heritage in process and influences of heritage in places. This review of place theories highlights the application of theories

of cultural geography in the context of place and place making. Some cultural geography influences the historical significance of some places (Bennett, 2005; Cresswell, 2011; DeSilvey, 2006; Houston, 2012). The important point of place construction with references to cultural geography is about the value of local and communities and acknowledging their role in environmental monitoring and quality (Della Bosca, H., & Gillespie, J, 2019) especially in the selected buffer zones of this study.

Reflections of place theories on heritage buffer zones as places are considered to be part of a long tradition and are referred to as cultural geography; that is, the study of the cultural and social characteristics of place, or in other words, place theories. Among foundational works are those of Tuan (1974, 1977), Relph (1976), Gillespie, J. (2012), Labadi S. (2017) and philosophers Casey (1993) and Malpas (1999). Rohl, paying tribute to the generative effects of these ideas, wrote ‘Other writers have elaborated on the ideas of these theorists, creating a rich body of place-centred works across multiple disciplines’ (Rohl, 2014, p. 2).

This study conceives of place as having the capacity to ‘remember’, to hold traces of past activity, in the loosest sense. While it remembers, it does not necessarily do this in a human way. The memory of place may be thought of as fluid, transitory, and openended, activated only by those who passed through. The memory of place is not bound to one particular social group or time. (Andrews & Roberts, 2012, p. 40)

Some writers focus on place attachment (e.g., Agnew, 1987, 2002, 2005; Auburn & Barnes, 2006; Cresswell, 1996; Devine-Wright & Lyons, 1997), while others focus on sense of place (Feld & Basso 1996; Harvey, 1992, 1997; Hornstein, 2011; Massey, 1994; Saar & Palang 2009; Seamon, 1979). Because the buffer zone is a place, in view of the disparity in views on the subject, this research provides an overview of place theories. This backdrop of the unclear status of buffer zones points to theories of buffer

zones as liminal places. From this perspective, the study introduces the spatial aspects of the work of Bourdieu (1993, 1984), Lefebvre (1974, 1976, 1991, 2004), Harvey (1982, 1985, 1990, 1996, 2000, 2008), D. C Harvey (2001), and social constructivists such as Massey (1992, 1994, 1997, 1998). Following Lefebvre, scholars such as Harvey, Bourdieu, and Massey considered the power-geometry of spatial relations in the context of capitalist development (Bourdieu, 1984; Harvey, 1989; Massey, 1993). The most significant and influential theory used in this research to interpret the buffer zone conditions is that of Henri Lefebvre. He produced a sophisticated account of space in which he distinguished between abstract space (measured by its economic value) and lived and meaningful spaces (measured by their social value) (Lefebvre, 1991). Lefebvre (1991) did not discuss the social practices that form abstract space's ultimate power of transformation; he located a form of human agency in 'class struggle. Lefebvre (1991) allowed that the social practices constituting abstract space may be sufficient to repel the otherwise ideological hegemony of market forces.

Individuals' actions, the sites, and circuits through which social life is produced, are all caught in the mesh of abstract space (Lefebvre 1974). Yet the everyday is colonised by the workings of capitalism through abstract space. Gregory (1993) described how abstract space is produced through two major processes, each of them 'doubled' in modern times. First, he discussed how modernity is shaped by an intensified commodification of space, which imposes a geometric grid of property relations and property markets on the earth, and by the installation of economic grids of capital circulation, by means of which abstract space leaves its impression on abstract labour and the commodity forms. Second, he argued that modernity is shaped by a highlighted bureaucratisation of space, whereby each administrative system maps out its own territory, stakes it out and signposts it, and by the installation of juridical-political grids by which social life is subject to systematic surveillance and regulation

by the state. These processes reinforce each other to constitute abstract space. Thus, space is colonised by both the state and by capital.

Returning to an examination of the effects of capital on abstract space, we find that in talking about the ‘commodification of space’, Lefebvre (1974) discussed how property relations and markets are imposed, marking up space in terms of capital. In this sense, ‘space is a constantly productive encounter, assembly; a simultaneity of everything that there is in space: living beings, things, objects, works, signs and symbols’ (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 101).

#### **i. The World Heritage Buffer Zone, Place, and Abstract Space**

The signs of life and everyday practices of people in a buffer zone are often ignored by the urban explorer who views locations as static, isolated and empty (Fraser, 2012). Lefebvre (1974) developed a conceptual triad of spatial practice, representations of space and also spaces of representation. For the purposes of this discussion, space is viewed in three ways: perceived, conceived and lived: *l’espace perçu, conçu, vécu*. This Lefebvrian schema sees a unity (a Marxist totality) between physical, mental, and social space. The first of these takes space as physical form, real space, space that is generated and used. The second is the space of *savoir* (knowledge) and logic, of maps, mathematics, of space as the instrumental space of social engineers and urban planners, of navigators and explorers. This type of space is a mental construct; an imagined space. The third views space as produced and modified over time and through its use, spaces invested with symbolism and meaning, the space of *cognisance* (less formal or more local forms of knowledge), space as real-and-imagined (Elden, 2007).

Harvey’s studies are of considerable importance, particularly his 1990 study of how the condition of places could be occupied and controlled by power and authorities.

The question could be considered that these heritage buffer zones (in this study) could be resulted from their occupation by strong national and international conventions, legislations and regulations, which serve as an important sign of authorities and power? Harvey (1990) has distinguished between ‘absolute space’ and social space (place). His discussion about two different spaces is helpful to understand and analyse the buffer zone condition. He suggested that the only interesting question that can be asked about places (such as buffer zones in this study) is ‘by what social process[es] is place constructed?’ (1996, p. 261) He argued for a view of place that sees meaning transcending materiality, i.e. as social constructs: ‘Space came to be represented, like time and value, as abstract, objective, homogeneous in its qualities’ (1985, pp. 12–13).

Harvey’s (1982) study of the creation of distinct spaces of capitalist economic circulation and accumulation are central to this theory. In Harvey’s earlier 1975 work, ‘The geography of capitalist accumulation’, space clearly trumped place. Space was where the action occurred, and places were merely staging posts for spatial transformation: ‘Familiar places and secure places are annihilated in the whirligig of time’ (Harvey, 1985, p. 28). Further, places were not even places, but ‘structured coherences’, sites characterised by ‘a dominant technology of both production and consumption and a dominant set of class relations’ (Harvey, 1985, p. 126). However, by the mid-1990s, Harvey moved to a more nuanced theory of place, formulated most explicitly in *Justice, nature, and the geography of difference* (1996). Places were now seen as internally heterogeneous (Harvey, 1996, pp. 313–316), potential sites of resistance to capital, and producing militant particularism.

What goes on in a place cannot be fully understood outside of the concept of space relations that support that place any more than the space relations can be understood independently of what goes on in particular places.

Harvey (2008) observes that by extending our examination of heritage both backwards and forwards in time, it is possible to imagine a history of heritage. It can be placed not in terms of growing heritage concern, nor even in the context of our time, but in the context of our psychological needs and hopes for a specific past and our desires for a particular future. This identification of the space condition is of considerable importance to discovering the character of the selected buffer zones.

In addition, there is the concept of 'abstract space' and commodification of space presented by Lefebvre (2004). In order describe the effect of the later, Lefebvre needed to show its effect, i.e., what was being disrupted. He argued for a concept he called rhythm; in his own words, 'everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time, and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm'. Through examining this rhythm, we can identify the construction of variations and repetitions of movements, performances, rituals, and other actions inside these zoning areas. In drawing attention to these spatiotemporal specificities, he contended that 'every rhythm implies the relation of a time with space, a localised time, or if one wishes, a temporalised place' (1976, p. 230).

Lefebvre is concerned with taking the concept of rhythm and transforming it into 'a science, a new field of knowledge: the analysis of rhythms; with practical consequences' (Elden, 2004, p. 8). By identifying the 'polyrhythmic ensemble' (Crang, 2001) of place, we can explore the particular ways in which changing rhythmic processes afford buffer zone distinctive temporal events of varying regularity. How the rhythms of buffer zone might be augmented, transformed or challenged in people's everyday lives can be investigated.

## **ii. The World Heritage Buffer Zone, Place, and Rhythm**

In the context of this study, an understanding of rhythm as a tool for understanding everyday life and practices in a buffer zone, i.e. the rituality and intangibility of heritage, is crucial. The concept of rhythm is applied to be involved the place, the analysis of events in terms of ritual, place, space and time. As stated previously, rhythm shapes these interrelated and mutually dependent forces in everyday life (Cragg, 2001).

In both case studies, rhythm will be produced and analysed through walking and learning about people's everyday lives and practices and the events that take place. 'Walking studies' have been considered as the most basic of human activities. The important elements of the walking have been recognised: 'the walk, as an event; the walker, as a human subject; and, walking, as an embodied act' (Hayden Lorimer, 2010, p 21). Walking study is especially relevant to geographers. Novoa, A. (2015) expresses that 'walking as a natural propensity can deal with mobile phenomena, which has been increasingly pushed into the core of geographical reasoning'.

Rhythm analysis means listening to our bodies as we directly observe everyday life and practices within the buffer zone and understand the rituality of life in these spaces. The rhythm analyst strives to rehabilitate sensory perception, performances, and ritual (Goonewardena, Kipfer, Milgrom & Schmid, 2008, p. 149).

Lefebvre's rhythm concept is applied to everyday life in buffer zones, to see and experience how the people live and work and what lies outside of their everyday routine, their practices and events, the impact of state power and the challenges they face inside the zoning areas. Additionally, this approach considers how politics and heritage can influence life and activities inside the selected buffer zones (Goonewardena et al., 2008, p. 158). The concept of rhythm in this inquiry into the

conditions of the buffer zones illuminates everyday life and possible alienating or transformational experiences within the buffer zones (Goonewardena et al., 2008).

There are several things going on at once in a buffer zone, and to see them all at once, we need a new perspective. Lefebvre (1974) noted that rhythm and measure are more significant than biological laws and linear understandings of time for understanding human life. For Lefebvre (1974), music is a useful analogy, a privileged glimpse into the importance of rhythm in contrast to linear understandings of time. As well as a way of pondering issues of spatiality and temporality together, elements of rhythm analysis are used in Goonewardena et al.'s (2008) *The critique of everyday life*.

Using the music analogy and following Goonewardena, this thesis considers buffer zones as polyrhythmic areas compounding everyday life rhythms and rhythmic spatial patterns (Goonewardena et al., 2008, p. 9). In this study, it is considered that rhythms can be understood through examining 'three categories: sociocultural rhythms, natural rhythms, and spatial rhythms' (Wunderlich, 2008, p. 15). Sociocultural rhythms in buffer zones relate to cultural rhythms in the area, i.e. 'regular patterns of associated social events and activities' (Zerubavel, 1981, p. 2).

In considering the multiple rhythms of place, we can identify seasonal, climatic, and tidal rhythms and other non-human pulses of animal and plant life (Lefebvre, 2004).

This project focuses on people's everyday lives and practices. Rhythms in a place can be discussed in the form of social and cultural rhythms such as rituals and events originating from people's everyday lives and practices in a place (Wunderlich, 2008, p. 12). In the rhythm of daily life in a place, time, rituals, and events create a sense of place and community (Wunderlich, 2008, p. 15). Importantly, the place rhythms influence people's feelings about the place and can create feelings of connectedness, satisfaction and relaxation, or disconnectedness, dissatisfaction, ambiguity, confusion

and stress, depending on the intensity and dominance of place rhythms in that space (Wunderlich, 2008, p. 17).

What can make people's lives harder within a space? In *The critique of everyday life* (1974) Lefebvre used a Marxist materialist critique of 'everydayness'. He discussed everydayness—i.e., controlled consumerism and bureaucracy—as an unavoidable, soul-destroying feature of modernity, social interaction, and the material environment. In this study of buffer zones, there are moments, snapshots of the everyday that involve collective and individual rituals of resistance (Crang & Thrift, 2002, p. 179). Distinctive characteristics in the ensemble of rhythms are identified. The place produces a mixture of moments of varying regularity and feelings (Edensor, 2010). As noted earlier, 'commodification of space', according to Lefebvre (1991), is how property relations and markets are imposed upon the Earth, marking up space in terms of capital. 'Space is a constantly productive encounter, assembly, and simultaneity of everything, such as living beings, things, objects, works, events, signs and symbols' (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 101). All these categories in buffer zones can create rhythm and affect people's emotional reactions to place, to events, performances and rituals that produce a succession of moments.

### **iii. The World Heritage Buffer Zone, Place, Performance, and Ritual**

In addition to the instantaneous and the present experience at the surface, the past experience of a place gives it a rootedness; Harvey emphasised that place is often seen as the locus of collective memory, with people's past memories attached to a place's shape, resulting in the creation of identity (Creswell, 2004, p. 61). Certainly, the representational and symbolic value of heritage in constructing and giving material reality to 'identity' is well recognised. Heritage often constructs national identity. A great deal of critical attention has been paid to the ways in which the ideologies of

national identities have been consciously articulated and legitimised using heritage, such as through ritual; this will be explored through encounters with the selected buffer zones in this study (Carrier, 2005; Crouch & Parker 2003; Díaz-andreu & Champion, 1996).

The concepts of identity, ritual, and performativity in Iran are inherent in the selected heritage buffer zones. Performativity's lineage is generally traced to the British philosopher J. L. Austin's interest in speech acts, particularly the relationship between saying and doing. Jacques Derrida offers important notion of performativity. Butler elaborates Derrida's notion of performativity through Foucault's understanding of the productive effects of regulatory power in theorising the notion of identity performativity in liminal places (Barad, 2003, p. 808).

In this study, performativity is seen as enabling a critical revision of everyday living conditions and construction of ritual scenarios and daily activities in the selected buffer zones (Harvey, 2001; Smith, 2006). According to the situationists, spatial structures help produce certain types of behaviour and emotional experiences, while certain constellations of the buffer zone elements encourage local people to participate actively in the reorganisation of their surroundings. (Debord, 1956).

The daily activities in places help shape a common space through common emotional experiences, and ritual bring changes into an everyday scenography of city spaces and establishes momentary citizen solidarities (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 101).

#### **iv. The World Heritage Buffer Zones, Place, People's Everyday Life and Practices**

Exploring the people's everyday life and practices inside a place analyses the buffer zone condition from a social perspective. With this goal in mind, this section explores the meaning of material space by focusing on the everyday life and practices of the inhabitants inside the place. This will involve studying the gaps between the various

interpretations of a place of different actors, which is crucial to understanding how the buffer zones in this study are socially constructed, and how these constructions affect everyday human life and practice inside a place. Social relations are regarded as spatial, embedded in social meanings within places. Creswell argues:

‘The social constructivist approach places an analytical concept that involves the process of shaping meaning and practice in material space. Research on place in this sense is necessarily concerned with how these meanings and practices are produced and consumed’ (Creswell, 2004, p. 81).

Everyday life theory focuses on the everyday of modernity and the public sphere, based on the ideas of Lefebvre (1991) and de Certeau (1984). Drawing from de Certeau’s work (1984), it can be concluded that the buffer zone as a place is the product of people’s everyday practices. De Certeau’s (1984) account of the practice of everyday life is useful to investigate issues of practice in relation to different types of use of space and place. Places are not operational without practice in them. Thus, practice is a tactical art (de Certeau, 1984) that plays with the structures of place that are provided; the concept of tactical art is used to analyse people’s practices inside the selected case studies. De Certeau’s concept of tactical action is geared towards the clever use of time that resists its erosion (de Certeau, 1984, p. 31).

Everyday life is shaped by power. Power happens to be the controller and major influencer of all conditions occurring in the buffer zone. Power is both ‘absolute’ (Harvey, 1990) and ‘abstract’ (Lefebvre, 1991) through creating space, which it generates. The everyday is the very soil on which the great architectures of politics and society rise. As Lefebvre noted, ‘It is the everyday that carries the greatest weight’ (cited in Elden, 2004, p. 120). The notion of everyday life provides an indispensable context for the work on the buffer zone’s condition, and, to a lesser extent, for the question of power dominance.

De Certeau (1984) explains that many everyday practices like reading, talking, and cooking, are tactical in character. There are ways of operating and opportunities for victory for the fragile over the strong: ‘The functional ways of operating create a certain play in the machine through a stratification of different and interfering kinds of functioning’ (de Certeau, 1984, p. 30). These styles of action intervene in a field, which regulates them at the first level, but they introduce into it a way of turning it to their advantage that obeys other rules and constitutes something like a second level interwoven into the first (de Certeau, 1984).

In order apply this perspective to an understanding of the everyday lives of people within the buffer zones, we need to examine their actions, uses, and tactical ways of operation within the places. Highmore (2002) follows de Certeau, advocating an approach to the study of the everyday that emphasises the examination of action. In addition, he echoed de Certeau’s emphasis on the elusive quality of the everyday, and thus its near-invisibility. As he stated in *The everyday life reader*, everyday life is compared to ‘inner-speech’—that barely heard rambling, conjuring memories and an uncensored response to life around us. De Certeau’s (1984) attachment of theory to practice (and practice specifically as it occurs within the everyday) transformed the everyday into a subject matter applicable to a stunning variety of disciplines.

The focus on everyday practices does not mean ignoring the structures. Seamon (1979) considered the idea of ‘place ballet’: He opted for a phenomenological approach to study place. He reached beyond the individual body movements to group behaviour. When many time–space routines are combined within a particular location, a ‘place ballet’ emerges, which generates a strong sense of place (Seamon, 1979). According to Seamon (1979), it is through participation in these daily-everyday-life practices that people begin to know a place and to feel part of it.

In such spatial studies, a constructive approach to the buffer zone links space with the notion of lived experiences and explores the socially constructed nature of the spaces we inhabit. In this approach, buffer zone places are always constructed through people's practices (Harvey 1992, 1997; Massey 1994; Saar & Palang 2009; Seamon 1979). Lefebvre (1991) emphasised that place and space are both a product of social construction but the difference between them is that place is a *representation* of space.

### **Place, Transformation, and Liminal Places**

Analysing a place from different perspectives is key to understanding the buffer zone condition. Relph (1976) argued that in the modern world, people have encountered a new 'placelessness' that does not allow them to have an authentic relationship with place; this situation is named inauthentic placelessness, and is created by several mechanisms: tourism, increased mobility, and modern travel.

The concept of 'out of place' is changed to the concept of 'placelessness' in the work of Relph (1976). Relph's (1976) comprehensive study of place is aimed to contribute to the maintenance and restoration of existing places and the making of 'new places'. Without a proper comprehension of place in the context of human significance, it is hard to describe the reason why some places are deemed special and understand how to fix existing places in need of mending (Seamon & Sowers, 2008).

Relph (1976) distinguished between the experiences of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in a place. To be inside a place is to belong to it, and being outside involves a sense of alienation from the place. He considered that existential 'insiderness' in place is unself-conscious, like experiencing home, community or region. The opposite of this experience of place is existential 'outsiderness', a sense of strangeness and alienation. Existential 'outsiderness' can be experienced when people, having been away from their birthplace, return and feel like strangers because the place is not the place they

knew earlier (Seamon & Sowers, 2008). ‘Insideness’ (Relph, 1976) can be an important existential sign in buffer zones, which can be experienced without any selfconsciousness unless the place is changed or transformed in some way—for example, one’s home and community are changed by the dominance of power.

Augé (1995) described the concept of ‘non-place’, which does not seem to fit within, or interact with its local surroundings and their residents. He identified airports, motorways, and hotels as ‘non-places’—transitory, temporary spaces in which we physically dwell only momentarily.

Many other terms also have been used to describe critical physical conditions and features or characteristics of an uncertain or indeterminate place. Among them, Foucault and Miskowiec (1986) used the term heterotopia. They described spaces with greater aspects of meaning or relationship to other places than people immediately observe. Heterotopia is a physical metaphoric representation of a utopia, an undesirable combination of duality and contradictions (Foucault & Miskowiec 1986). Foucault and Miskowiec (1986) argued that a mirror is a metaphor for duality and contradictions, reality, and unreality, and at the same time is a metaphor of utopia. The image it bears does not exist. However, it is a heterotopia because the mirror is a real object that shapes people’s relationship with their own image.

‘*Terrain vague*’ (terrain from the Latin *terranum* [or land in French] and vague from the Latin *vacuus*) is used to describe ‘empty land’. Barron and Mariani (2013) used this term to describe uncertain or indeterminate space. The concept of terrain vague describes the ambiguous spaces within a city—the places that exist outside the cultural, social and economic norms of urban life. Some examples of terrain vague are vacant lots, railroad tracks, and more diverse interstitial spaces. This is an innovative way of looking at marginal urban space (Barron, 2013).

Doron (2000) used terms such as ‘bad lands’, ‘blank space’, ‘border vacuums’, ‘brown fields’, ‘dead zones’, ‘derelict areas’, ‘ellipsis spaces’, ‘empty places’, ‘free space’, ‘liminal spaces’, ‘nameless spaces’, ‘no man’s lands’, ‘polite spaces’, ‘post architectural zones’, ‘spaces of indeterminacy’, ‘spaces of uncertainty’, ‘smooth spaces’, ‘terrain vague’, ‘urban deserts’, ‘vacant lands’, ‘voids’, ‘white areas’ and ‘wasteland’ in architectural discourse. These scholars, Relph, de Certeau, Augé, Foucault, Miskewicz, Barron and Mariani, have sought to describe transformation of land, suspension, ambiguity and uncertainty. In all terms and positions, there is an obvious expression that changing places share the condition of liminality.

While Augé’s (1995) polar comparison of ‘place’ and ‘non-place’ or Relph’s (1976) concept of ‘placelessness’ are perhaps overly simplistic, they nonetheless usefully draw our attention to these sorts of spaces. All notions of place, non-place, being out of place, spaces of indeterminacy, spaces of uncertainty, smooth spaces, tabula rasa, temporary autonomous zones, terrain vague, and other similar terms are close to the concept of liminality, because there is a state of ambiguity and uncertainty implied in all these terms, and this is a key aspect of liminality.

It is thus essential to see the concept of liminality from different points of view. The imprecise and intangible nature of the experiences described within the concepts discussed above highlight the relationship of these states of being, experiencing, and living, with liminality. Awareness of these perspectives helps us to identify the selected buffer zone conditions and analyse them through the concept of liminality. Understanding different kinds of liminal places can help to categorise the similar qualities of the liminal condition.

**Summary:** This chapter reviews place theories, which conceptualise the buffer zone as a place or potential metaphor for place. The spatial turn in the social sciences has

provided an instructive lens through which heritage sites' buffer zones can be better understood. From this new perspective, the chapter highlights the concept of social constructivism as one of the main approaches in place theory and an important consideration for analysis of the World Heritage buffer zones' condition. A buffer zone is considered to be a place where meaning and practice are constructed in a liminal material space. This chapter provides a theoretical framing for analysis of the condition of World Heritage buffer zones.

The key theories of place making are discussed to since they are critical for analysing the condition of the buffer zones. The buffer zone can be analysed from different spatial aspects. The experiences of people in lived spaces can be understood by examining the interplay of power relationships, rituality, rites of passage, events (rhythms) and everyday life. The effect of the intangible and shifting conditions in spaces where place is disrupted by the exertion of power over the powerless or by ambiguity (or by both) can be understood through the lens of liminality and other similar theories.

The next chapter (methodology) will describe the method used to investigate and examine the thesis problem through the theoretical frameworks. It will also explain how the selected techniques help to identify, select, process, and analyse information (data) from the two heritage sites in Iran that are case studies. It will discuss how the project can be critically evaluated for validity and reliability by examining the thesis assumption inside the selected buffer zones. The methodology chapter will illustrate and discuss the key considerations of data collection and analysis.

## Chapter 3: Methodology, Research Design

### Introduction

How can the selected buffer zones of Pasargadae and Sheikh Safi al-Din Khānegāh and Shrine Ensemble (SKSEA) be understood and interpreted to answer the research questions in the research study? Understanding people and the places like buffer zones that they occupy through a spatial construction determines the research approach to answering the critical questions:

- How do people live inside the buffer zones?
- How do they interpret those heritage zones?
- How do they think and interpret their place?
- How do they make choices with the condition?
- How do they act in their everyday lives?
- How could their practices change their surroundings and networks?
- How have the buffer zones been constructed and how have the conditions affected people's perceptions, their everyday life, and how they use the place?
- How best could this information be collected and used?
- Which methodology could be the most effective strategy to explore the combination of people and places spatially from different points of view?

The underlying philosophical assumptions and the design plan underpinning this research have determined the methodology. Suitable strategies will explore the meaning and materiality that construct the buffer zone conditions through a spatial analysis. The key concepts, tools, and methods applied in this research are explained. Many methodologies are used for exploring a place. Numerous methods of interpreting buffer zone conditions as a place are available, but there is no single standpoint that can provide a complete picture due to the various realities of these

areas. The realities of buffer zone features can be explored from different perspectives, cultural, economic, social, and political. The methodology must have the capacity to explore and interpret the buffer zone condition based on the critical questions in the spatial context.

The aim of the research is to understand the place through hearing the voice of people, walking inside the selected buffer zones in Iran, seeing, touching, talking, and using tools to record the moments and places as the data. The methodology must provide the opportunity for body and mind involvement with the heritage zones so as to understand the heritage zoning, not from a distance, but through all the human senses (somatic understanding). The data is gathered from real conditions with bodily involvement, staying on the ground to interpret the heritage buffer zones' condition, not from a distance. A qualitative research strategy was chosen to explore the quality of these places and design a plan to answer the research questions.

The concept of 'direct research' by Mintzberg (1979) guided selection of a suitable approach to analysing the two Iranian heritage buffer zones' condition to test the theoretical framework of this research. The research is conducted observation (seeing, hearing, walking, touching, and talking) with direct interactions and somatic understanding from real-life settings. Among different qualitative research methodologies, the ethnographic approach is an effective strategy to gain direct insights into the condition that is the object of the study. Information gathered from direct involvement with the buffer zones is translated and coded using word cloud from tools of SPSS and NVivo software to identify and analyse the buffer zone's conditions in real life, in order to fulfil the study objectives.

Mintzberg's (1979) concept of direct research is supported by Eisenhardt's (1989) use of case studies for analysing and examining qualities of the World Heritage buffer

zones. The ethnographic approach is theorised as a 'placemaking' aid to analysing the nature of the buffer zone's condition, materiality, and meanings.

Ethnographic methods of participant observation and interviews to analyse buffer zones and their characteristics are informed by theories of the construction of place. The vision and experience of these zoning areas informs the analysis of how people interpret and react to the places in their everyday lives. Theoretical dimensions of embodied space and the social construction of space or 'placemaking' (Pink, 2008) are applied.

The first section of this chapter discusses the methodology used in the study, the stages by which the methodology will be implemented, and the research design; the second section details the field work in the study; the third section discusses how the data is analysed. Finally, the last section discusses the ethical considerations of the research and its problems and limitations.

## **Methodology**

This research was undertaken with an interdisciplinary, interpretative and constructionist approach and has been designed around two key points. The first is the critical analysis of existing literature on place and liminality. This research finding is consistent with previous work on the idea of social construction of place and the spatial aspects of social constructivists' work. As discussed in the literature review, the constructivists' Marxist approach to place remains the most influential theory that directly addresses 'making place' (Pink, 2008). The second key point is the ethnographic use of a case study method. This focuses on the two selected cases from Iran in which a mix of observation and in-depth interviews has been used.

People constitute urban environments through embodied and imaginative practices within places (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011). The ethnographic method of walking with a camera or mobile sensory ethnography has been adopted to explore the material and sensory environments of the selected heritage buffer zones. An understanding of the deep meaning, beliefs, feelings, and ideas of people (interview participants) is achieved through in-depth interviews, which promote an empathetic atmosphere and go beyond the surface of conversation.

## **Research Design, Context, Qualitative Research, and Methodological**

### **Approach of Ethnography**

This section explains why an ethnographic approach is effective in this project because it provides direct and reliable information. Qualitative research allows the collected data to ‘speak’ without preconceived ideas of what the investigator would find.

The direct approach included notetaking, visual observation, and in-depth interviews based on organised questions and friendly conversations. Visuality involved taking images from objects, rituals, performances, ceremonies and people’s everyday lives and habits. The data gathered is analysed for meanings and themes. An ethnographic study can provide a new and compelling interpretation of a phenomenon and capture the real-life qualities of time–space and the experience of place and place-making (Seamon, 1980). It is novel, unique, and engaging as well as logical, and is supported by rich descriptive examples that engage the reader in the interpretation of the text.

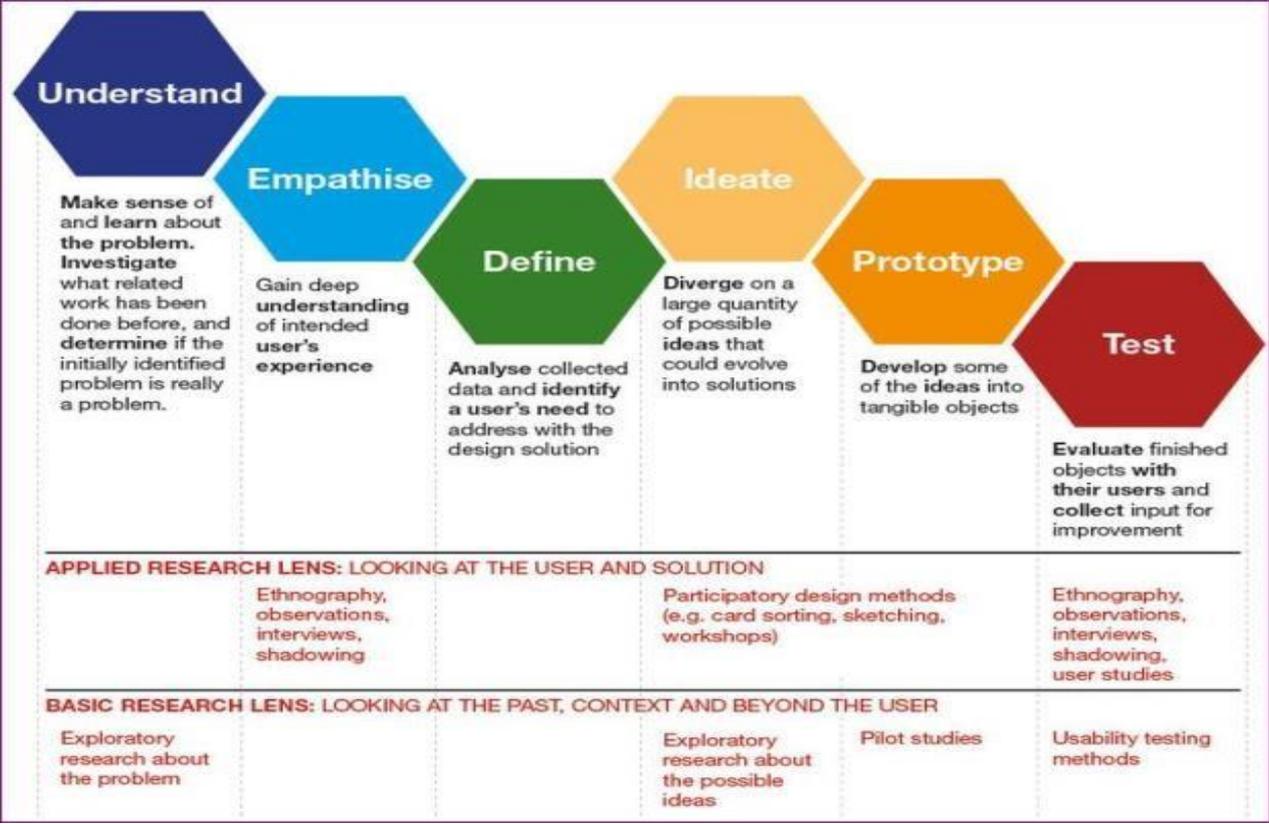
## **Ethnographic Approach**

How does ethnography help to explore the buffer zones' condition and answer the research questions?

As mentioned, heritage social buffer zones are complex places because their primary role is heritage site protection, yet they are also social places for people's everyday life and practices, particularly for locals. The daily practices of residents, tourists, international and national heritage authorities' disciplines inside the area create a zone of different perspectives and voices, and various meanings and uses. Ethnography provides a comprehensive method to identify the more subjective components of the spatial matrix in these selected cases. This includes listening to the research participants, seeing and observing material objects, and understanding the meaning and heritage intangibilities behind cultural ceremonies (performances), rituals, daily events, and different behaviours in the selected buffer zones in Iran. It will provide a story about the experiences of people who live inside these buffer zones and serve as a method for analysing the gathered data. This work will explore whether a buffer zone has been changed, not only as a physical area that separates two places (a heritage site and an ordinary social place) without belonging to either, but also as an emotional barrier.

When searching for people's voices to listen to inside the buffer zones, one must consider the ways in which the heritage buffer zone creates an echo effect (Lawrence, 1997). In such circumstances, the buffer zone is both an experience of intimacy within ordinary social conditions and an individual experience inside these places. The selected ethnographic approach for this study allows local people, visitors and in some cases, heritage agents to answer the interview questions freely, and may open the kinds of communication that risks asking unanswerable questions. There is something 'real' in the sense of place which permits and even relies upon the maintenance of

communication and community (Lawrence, 1997). Figure 3.1 below outlines the design plan for this research.



**FIGURE 3. 1: DESIGN THINKING REVISED, RESEARCH DESIGN CHART**

Source: Diagram modified based on Pontis, 2015.

Figure 3.1 shows how ethnography helps to identify the two buffer zones in Iran in terms of case study characteristics and values as the conditions that benefit all human life. The selected ethnographic method includes processes of information gathering, evaluation, synthesis and analysis of data from the selected case studies of Pasargadae and Sheikh Safi al-Din Khānegāh and Shrine Ensemble in Ardabil. It is like a traditional ethnography, but the key point is how the ethnographic approach uses various techniques to answer the thesis questions and analyse the places of interest. Following on Wolcott (1999), the ethnographic approach is more than just a fieldwork method; it is ‘a way of seeing’, hearing, understanding, involving, and experiencing

through the whole senses of the body (somatic understanding). The question here is, how does this kind of engagement with the buffer zones enable the research to explore the relationship between place and people?

### **Ethnography: Place-Making**

Understanding the condition of these buffer zones is fundamental to this study because the condition has a direct effect on people's feelings and senses inside these areas. According to Tuan (1977), a place encourages people to dream. At the same time, it grounds them through its physicality. These buffer zones achieve this through components that can easily be touched and viewed (Suhirman, 2014). While the selected buffer zones create different emotional and geographical experiences, these experiences and the associated activities continually keep shaping and reshaping these areas.

If places are to be more thoroughly analysed and understood, the researcher needs to be in the place so that particular locational experiences can be identified in terms of the intensity of meaning and intention that a person and a place hold for each other. A 'body-subject' concept is considered because the relevance and value attached to the heritage buffer zones make them a point of interest for different individuals. The bodysubject (body involvement observation) is relevant to this study's ethnographic method, which not only observes the selected buffer zone's physical environment but also seeks to understand people's emotional reactions, their practices and ritual events towards the zone's condition. The body-subject's effect is usually intertwined with the environment at hand, and people have the freedom to continue with the more significant events of daily life (Tiwari, 2010).

The world Heritage buffer zones are places where human activities occur and where environment and these activities influence one another. Just as a stage set is designed

to

create a distinct ambiance, these heritage zonings may take on a similar instrumental role. The vigorous and dynamic interactions between the various physical features of the buffer zones as well as the people, activities, the meanings behind those activities, and the actions and performances based on the meanings in these places, have formed the buffer zone condition in a complex network. Social constructive Stephenson referred to this as a ‘bond’ that is uniquely spatial or differs according to spatial perceptions (Stephenson, 2010). The concept of ‘bond’ is developed from familiarity with the place, either through repeated encounters by visitors or from constant engagements and lived-in experiences. Seamon (1979) referred to this sense of familiarity as a form of ‘place ballet’ (1979), where recurring activities conducted within a familiar space become second nature (Suhirman, 2014).

Edensor’s (2016) concept of ‘places in a process’ has been considered in the research methodology. He argued that an analytic lens is necessary to understand the construction of the place and social practices and to explore how places are always in a process of becoming, seething with emergent properties, but usually stabilised by regular patterns of flow in people’s activities that possess rhythmic qualities. Lefebvre’s (1974) concept of rhythm will be considered here when interpreting people’s experiences during their everyday lives and practices. It is understood that everyday life cannot be static; it is always in motion, resulting in a pattern of changing rhythms and creating moments within these buffer zones. Therefore, rhythm in this study is a key aspect of the production of space.

Ethnography allows a physical engagement with place (Crossley, 2004, p. 53), in order to explore the unique experience of people's daily life and practices. Seamon & Sowers’ (1980) term, ‘place ballet’, considers the body’s interaction with place, through which a distinct place temporality is created. When considering the concept of people’s practices (Simpson, P., 2012), joining the body with the buffer zones also

offers a rethinking of buffer zone's time-space as it is produced in practice rather than as a container in which practices play out. Therefore, ethnography and the central idea of embodied experiences allow this study to investigate how these selected heritage buffer zones in Iran might be constructed, augmented, transformed, or challenged.

Following Massey (1994), these buffer zones are experienced as an entity that has not inside or outside, and is both porous and unfixed (Orley, 2012). Place making is a core concept in this study. By considering the selected buffer zones in Iran as areas with no clear boundaries, they can be experienced, embodied and understood through features like the rhythm of life, the material objects, and people's activities, perceptions and emotions in the network of social relations. The large portion of these relations, experiences, places, events, and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than is defined as the place itself at that moment (Massey, 1994).

The ethnographic approach uses case studies and various techniques to answer the thesis questions. Wolcott (1999) describes ethnography as more than just a fieldwork method; it is 'a way of seeing', experiencing, of bodily involvement in the events and their rhythmic qualities of life inside the places. This is a study conducted through the process of sensory and body involvement. It helps to identify the buffer zones' characteristics and important values and includes processes of information gathering, evaluation, synthesis, and analysis of the data from two selected case studies in Iran Pasargadae and Sheikh Safi Al-Din Khānegāh and Shrine Ensemble.

The foundation in the ethnography of space and place allows this study to present and interpret these buffer zones and analyse those conditions. The study will examine liminality perspectives from anthropology in two selected Iranian buffer zones as two symbols of Iranian identity, in the context of the social construction of place or placemaking.

## **Data Collection**

As mentioned above, the ethnographic perspective is described as a unique ‘way of seeing’, using Wolcott’s concept (1999). Ethnography observes the materials, people’s daily lives and activities, social practices and performances as serving greater functions—beyond the obvious—and having symbolic meanings. Therefore, this study needs to go beyond the appearances and explore the place with all the senses involved. The question is, can in-depth observation through walking within the elected buffer zones in Iran and in-depth interviews enable a deep understanding of the embodied meanings?

### **i. Mobile Sensory Ethnography (Observation)**

Observation and interviews are the traditional ethnographic method that enables the researcher to practice interaction with a specific setting and people. It allows the construction of realistic opinions (Flick, 2009, p. 222). According to Flick (2009, p. 222), ‘Observing without participation in the activities is a way of discovering a buffer zone’s materiality and production of place but cannot be connected to people’s perceptions and emotions’. The combination of observation and interview provides involvement with the people’s perceptions, daily life, practices, and meanings, as well as the materiality inside the areas of study. While the method undertaken in this research involves depth observation and interview, observation is not a mere ‘watching’. Observational engagement (Gunn, Clark & Asboe, 2008) can go beyond the seeing towards recruiting all the senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste) and feeling with the whole body (Flick, 2009, p. 222; Whitehead, 2005, p. 10).

### **I. Embodied Field work**

In the vast environment of a buffer zone surrounding a heritage site, people move dynamically in different localities such as routes, detours, squares, alleys, streets,

houses, and stores, to perform their daily activities. It is important to observe how the buffer zones have been constructed, not only physically but also emotionally, through bodily engagement with the places. The buffer zones have been shaped by both materiality and meaning. Therefore, we need to consider how the fieldwork can provide this research with the information that can help to interpret these buffer zones, and how both body and mind are connected to these places and understand the condition. Bendiner-Viani (2013) suggested that we are woven into a place by our embodied experiences and movements, and by our ascription of meaning to our moves.

Analysing a buffer zone's condition requires involvement in the place itself, where its activities occur, memories and meanings are constructed, and thoughts and feelings are experienced. As stated before, the observation should be carried out by the practice of seeing, hearing, feeling, and touching while walking inside the buffer zone. This method enables us to move through the place and engage with everyday activities and meanings as they naturally occur.

If the daily lives of humans are not immobile, then the process of understanding human life should also take place in movement. The use of walking as an incorporated multisensory technique originated from an epistemology—especially considered by Merleau-Ponty—emphasising bodily sensation as central to understanding. Referencing Merleau-Ponty, Ingold (2000) suggested that all organs of the body are linked in a way that makes bodily perception multi-sensorial. Ingold (2004) believed that walking is a highly intelligent activity that involves the whole body and mind, not only the foot.

Ingold (2007) found the practice of walking to be relevant to ethnographic practices. It is a practice of everyday life (Ingold & Vergunst 2008) and is increasingly considered as a useful method (e.g., Büscher, Urry & Witchger, 2010; Lee & Ingold

2006; Pink, 2007; Sheller & Urry, 2006; Yi'En, 2014). Ethnographic walking observation is chosen as a method to question traditional ethnography, which studies people in stationary snapshots and considers them in the frames that ethnographers draw around social lives. Sara Pink (2007, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2015), describes the interconnection of bodily sensing and achieving knowledge as 'sensory ethnography', which is highly significant in this research.

Considering how walking enables the processes of learning and knowing, the type of flâneur that Walter Benjamin (1999) considered in his Arcades Project as the aesthete of modern life is also a critical theoretical tool that is parallel with ethnographic walking in the fieldwork of this thesis. For Benjamin (1999), a flâneur is not a person who walks around the city in tranquillity, nor do they aim to reach a certain destination. Instead, they expose themselves to supervening encounters and moments. In the framework of a flâneur, the process of knowing occurs not with the domination of sight—as traditional ethnography implied—but through the whole body. This characteristic multisensory engagement with place is something that the flâneur and ethnographic walking share.

Walking and space are interconnected; all movements on foot take place in the physical aspect of the buffer zones. The people's emotions or pauses and the way they engage with and perceive the space partly depend on the quality of the physical environment. Referencing Lefebvre's (1991) differentiation between abstract space (formed by power) and social place (lived and meaningful space), Cresswell (1999) concludes that walking is an embodied experience of rhythm inside the social space, which has been transformed to 'place' as it comprises actors' meaningful interactions. During this research, walking inside the buffer zones followed both the existing common routes and irregular routes or 'pathways' (Ingold, 2007) to observe different areas of heritage zones. This is what Sara Pink (2008) described as 'place-making'. In

this sense, the fieldwork was undertaken by seeing (gaze), smelling, touching and hearing the environment and even tasting any edibles encountered. Edensor (2010) stated that ‘walking produces time–space and the experience of place’ (p. 69). By adopting this approach of ethnographic walking during the fieldwork, the researcher was able to engage with the areas more deeply than by simply passing through the streets and observing. Instead, walking through the buffer zones became a full ontological experience that embodied all senses in the fieldwork journey.

Ethnographic walking was naturally related to the different dimensions of everyday life, from experiencing time and space to the social aspects. Walking provided a mediated engagement with a buffer zone and allowed a visceral experience of the social complexities, daily mobilities, and physical environment, while encountering both the material environment and socio-cultural life. This full-body observation (somatic observation) of the buffer zones of interest used visibility and photography while walking to conceptualise and reflect on these places.

## **II.     Visibility: Fieldwork Visual Practices**

One of the key aspects of the full-body involvement of mobile ethnography during the fieldwork is deep observation through seeing and visibility by using photographs. A justification for using visual methods is that they offer an opportunity to achieve effective communication with the audience. This is a practical reason for applying these methods, especially in the study of these selected buffer zones, which are areas unfamiliar to Australian or even some Iranian scholars. Beyond their academic function, visual methods allow communication with an audience outside academic space. Images and photography provide this study with an opportunity to publicise activist practices such as those affecting politicians or allowing ordinary people to engage with social research findings.

Grady (2007) described three major propositions for photography as a visual research method. The first notion is that images are iconic constructions and should represent something meaningful; photographers create them for a purpose at a particular point in time. From this perspective, the fieldwork photography carries different meanings and messages in this research. Grady stated that images contain both behavioural and symbolic information. For the third proposition, he argued that images are part of communication strategies (Grady, 2007). The photographs in this thesis were unplanned and are frames taken at the scene to capture a meaning. Every time we took an image, our goal was to represent a meaning. The meanings go beyond the physical appearances, the objects and daily practices, into the relationship between the individuals and zoning areas and the different uses of these places and their functions (Corcoran, 2002). The thesis photographs represent both the content and the way this content is interpreted.

The visuality follows on the thesis's epistemological and methodological assumptions (Prosser & Schwatz, 1998). The theories applied to this research are the central consideration underlying its use of visuality and photography. Following on Pink (2006), the interpretation of visual images from the selected buffer zones should emphasise four key areas: (1) the context in which the image was produced; (2) the content of the image; (3) the contexts in and subjectivities through which images are viewed; and (4) the materiality and agency of images (Pink, 2006).

This study's visuality becomes a legitimate merging of theory and practice. Following Pink (2006), the visuals have been considered as a form of 'experience' (practice) and a medium for its representation. The two key concepts of place and practice are (and have long since been) important in theoretical debates in this study (Pink, 2012). Practices have come to be loosely defined as the sets of human actions that can be

associated with each other in some way and that can form a category for case study analysis (Pink, 2012).

The study's ethnographic fieldwork is performed through sightseeing (gazing). The objectives of the study's visuality are informed by the gaze theory (Urry, 1992).

Following the 'gaze' theory (Larsen & Urry, 2011; Urry, 1992a, 1992b, 2002), John Urry (1992 a, 1992b) argued that the gaze is a matter of socially and historically organised and patterned seeing. This patterned, constructed gaze has some consequences for the way the selected heritage buffer zones are typically sensed (Urry, 1992a, 1992b, p. 1) in that it is the organising sense that classifies these places. Gazing, in this study, is mediated by photography, which is recognised as a way of deep seeing and objectifying the buffer zones. It is intertwined with the practice of gazing at and visually consuming through the eyes, visual technologies, reproductions, and photographs (Larsen & Urry, 2011; Urry, 1990, 2002). Engagement with the buffer zones through mediators (like cameras) regularly requires deep gazing practice besides other senses of the mobile body to discover the place condition (Pink, 2015). In this way, gazing and the whole body are employed harmonically to make the data rich and reflexive.

However, based on the gaze theory, this work cannot be reduced to a simple visual act; rather, the zones are bodily and mentally experienced through the engagement of deep seeing and gazing. According to Urry and Larsen (2011), the gaze is a mutual act in a power relationship. The fieldwork considers bodily sensations and emotions that are involved in a physical experience of the buffer zones and enables the active performance of place gazing rather than simple observation of it. Urry and Larsen (2011) reconciled these two paradigms by finding their similarities and further developed the gazing theory to be a more embodied and intersectional approach.

Visuality is performative way of and was developed within the 'performance turn' of heritage studies (Coleman & Crang, 2002; Haldrup & Larsen, 2010; Larsen, 2001; Larsen & Urry, 2011; Perkins & Thorns, 2001). Performance is an important aspect of this study's fieldwork in the context of ethnographic area management, which allows us to function, see, feel, think, and live in harmony with the environment. Therefore,

direct involvement and connection with the buffer zones provides this research with a deep understanding through gazing at the buffer zones' condition.

The current fieldwork is a systematic, functional strategy of bodily involvement and visual practices in studying the condition of the buffer zones of interest. The study's photography is a visual and representational practice and the objects photographed, the people's activities, and the practices which are inside (or even outside) the frame are part of this practice. Moreover, visual practice is a relational act that involves interaction with others, objects, and meanings in the place, and is thus affected by them. Photography in this research will indicate how important the presence of significant acts is, especially within a significant place (such as a heritage buffer zone) that is instrumental in constructing communal identity and people's performances. In this re-enactment, photographs and objects both show and occupy. They are materials that represent an empirical research site. The study's visual practices encourage the emergence of policies of research in heritage studies that engage with the place's rhythms and moments, performances and encounters.

One of the key considerations in this study is that the buffer zones have different meanings for different groups and any group or individual may have different interpretations of and uses for these places. The fieldwork pays attention to understanding the meanings behind the physical features of these two buffer zones by sensory engagement with the place and people's practices inside the heritage zones

and represents them by using photography. Through using the gazing technique inside the selected heritage zones, people's everyday life, symbolic or aesthetic activities such as events, rituals, and their practices could be captured and experienced with sociohistorical and emotional values.

In sum, visibility is a significant representational method for analysing the buffer zone's condition by using photography. The photos are a constant reminder of the subjective aspect of this study.

These subjective and assumptive areas have influenced the images, and these assumptions will be analysed as in conducting the research. Photography as a methodological tool has an important role in gathering images as data in the research findings (Griebing et al., 2013; Moore et al., 2006). The visual data (images) are analysed to clarify the meanings behind them and will further and more deeply represent the buffer zones and their values. They will be combined with interpretations and explanations to explore the visual and sensory experiences (Pink, 2006).

### **III. Fieldnotes**

As mentioned before, this study's sensory ethnography was the active enterprise in the field of study (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). The study found its way into new place experiences and new relationships with the materials and meanings inside the heritage zoning areas. What was observed and understood was also recorded in a written form. 'Doing' and 'writing' should not be viewed as mutually exclusive, but as dialectically related and interdependent activities (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011). Writing accounts of what happened during bodily encounters with the selected buffer zones in Iran during the two trips was a significant part of this ethnography fieldwork; as Geertz (1973, p. 19) emphasises, 'the study "inscribes" social discourse' (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011).

## **ii. In-Depth Interviews, People's Notions, Perceptions and Emotional Experiences of the Place (Participants)**

It is important to ask the following questions:

- What local beliefs, emotions, interpretations, values, and ideas about the buffer zone illuminate buffer zones' construction?
- How can people's voices be heard, and why do we need their ideas?
- How do locals living inside these heritage buffer zones see and orient their places of living?
- How do different people interpret and use these places?

People's emotions, challenges, collective trauma pain, satisfaction, ignorance, confusion, hopes, their collective unconsciousness, national identities, fears, and perceptions, are explored using their responses to each interview question, including their tone of voice, behaviours, and expression. People's interpretations of place have important role in understanding the condition of place. Their voices must be heard as one of the important components and dimensions of the data. People cannot be ignored and are considered through in-depth interviews in an empathetic atmosphere. Therefore, in-depth interviews are another part of the sensory ethnographic fieldwork practices.

In-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face while walking with participants and actively listening to their stories about the area. Interviews conducted through ethnographic walking (mobile) sensory practice in participatory observation are known as 'participatory walking interviews' (Clark & Emmel, 2008; Ingold & Lee, 2008). They include most elements of face-to-face, in-depth interviews, but are conducted while walking in the setting (following an approximate route) rather than sitting in a specific location. In ethnographic interviews (Flick, 2009; Spradley, 1979), the discussions while walking are often more spontaneous and sometimes induced by

regular field contacts. This technique of in-depth interview combines structure with flexibility (Legard, Kegan & Ward, 2003, p. 141). The conversation is managed to ensure that the main themes are covered. The participants (interviewees) can freely and spontaneously identify and discuss the key points. In the current study in which a 'buffer zone' is considered as something that is both constructed by and responsible for the construction of the actor's meanings, discussion through walking and exploring the buffer zone itself allows discussion of the spatial elements as they are observed. Therefore, places, people, and daily activities directly inspired the interviewer's questions concerning the different aspects of the heritage buffer zone under investigation.

The initial questions were open-ended, as the semi-structured format opens paths through which the participant is encouraged to progress (Flick, 2009). Further guidance of the interview is suspended until the discussion deviates, a lack of information calls for more discussion, or the answer given requires expansion or explanation. Finally, the interview ends with a provocative question. This question is chosen to challenge the buffer zone participant's notions, perceptions, thinking and emotional experiences of place by raising alternatives (Flick, 2009, p. 153).

### **iii. Sampling in the Setting of Heritage Buffer Zones**

It is impossible to analyse and cover the heritage buffer zones' condition on a full and large scale because of limitations on the timing and size of the project. Based on the research questions about the heritage buffer zones' condition, the process of data gathering was done through fieldwork in the selected heritage buffer zones in Iran and from limited participants inside these zones. This project sampling includes two levels of sampling, following Creswell (2007, p. 128):

**1- Site-level Sampling** includes the buffer zones of two different heritage settings in Iran: Pasargadae town as the part of buffer zone of Pasargadae cultural heritage site, a pre-Islamic archaeological place where the tomb of Cyrus, the founder of the Achaemenid Empire, is located, and the buffer zone of SKSEA, where the tomb of Sheikh Safi-ad-din Ardabili, prominent leader of Islamic Sufism and the founder of the Safaviyya order, is located).

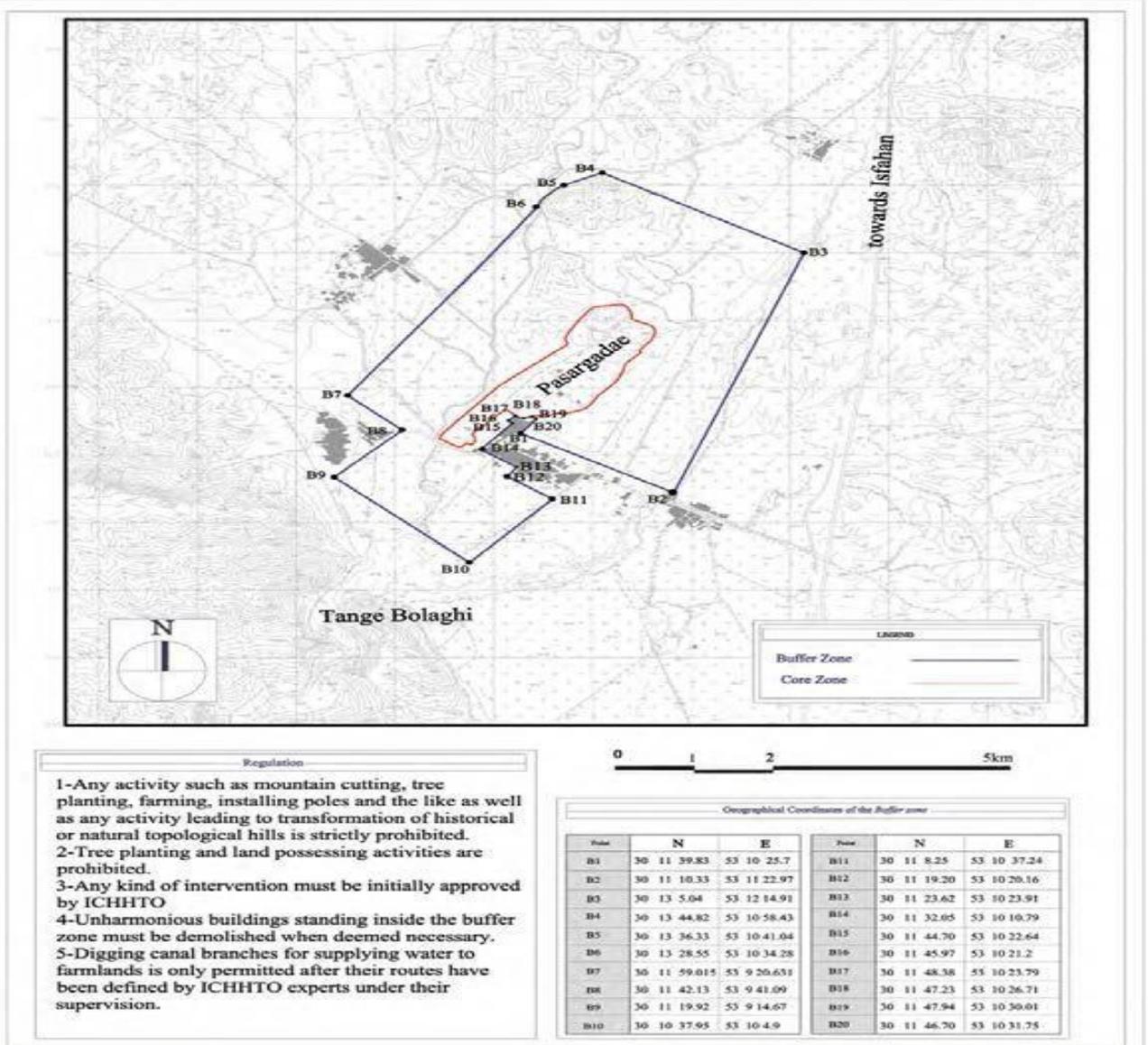
**Case study 1, Pasargadae:** In the words of Sami (1971, p. 140): Pasargadae is located approximately 90 kilometers northeast of the City of Shiraz, the capital of the province of Fars, in southern Iran. It is within the Morghab Plain, an area of 20 × 15 kilometers with diverse geographical features comprising mountain passes, riverbeds, agricultural and dry land, permanent village settlements, archaeological sites, and annual nomadic encampment and migration routes.

The current location includes 160-ha of archaeology (Figure 3.2) that has some of the ancient manifestations observed in Persian art and architecture. These are among the great monuments and limestone tombs present in the Morghab Plain. The geographical location is divided into two parts: northern and southern. Mashhad-e Morghab is in the northern part, located within the limits of Khorram-beed County, including Morghab and Qader-abad. The main body of Pasargadae Plain is in the southern part, within the limits of Pasargadae County. This part consists of Madar-e Solaiman, Kordshul, Abolvardi, Mobarak-Abad and Dehno. Mozaffari (2016) stated ‘Madar-e Solaiman or Pasargadae town has now been designated a town according to national administrative divisions’ (p. 65). In this case study, Madar-e Solaiman or Pasargadae town was the main focus as the first case study.

Pasargadae became a prototype utilised by Persian gardens because of its four different quadrants, which were formally divided by waterways and pathways. This

architecture meant that all were characterised by different details made from slim vertical ties (UNESCO, 2004, list 1106).

The thesis will explore how the Pasargadae site has been viewed in present day Iran and the powerful impact that this heritage site has on people’s behaviour and practices.



**FIGURE 3. 2: PASARGADAE**

Source: UNESCO World Heritage Centre

## **Case study 2, Sheikh Safi al-din Khānegāh and Shrine Ensemble's buffer zones**

**in Ardabil (SKSEA):** The heritage site is located in Ardebil, the capital city of Ardabil province. This north-eastern region of Azerbaijan lies at 38 degrees on the northern latitude and about 48 degrees on the eastern longitude (UNESCO, 2010, list 1345).

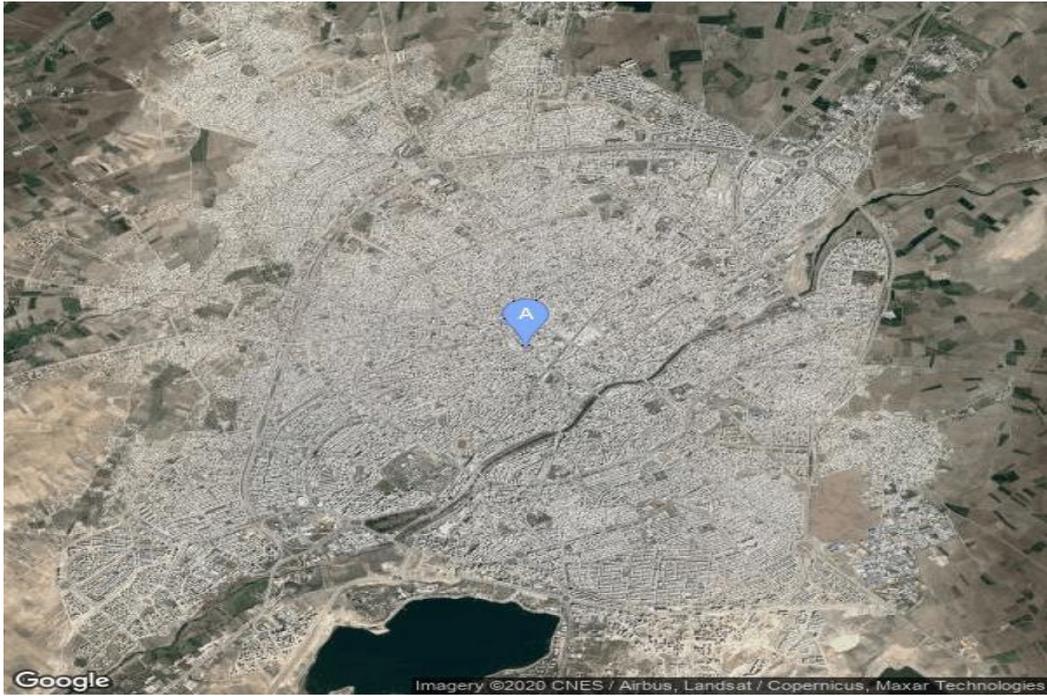
The city is at the south-western part of the Caspian Sea, between the Sabalan and Baghro mountains, the latter of which rises to 1,263 meters (Asmin, 2014).

This heritage site itself is a symbol of spiritual retreat in the Sufi tradition.<sup>5</sup> The building represents an example of Iranian traditional architecture. It has multiple uses and functions, including a library, mosque, school, mausolea, cistern, hospital, kitchens, bakery, and some offices (UNESCO, 2010, list 1345).

The thesis describes how the case studies were chosen and which method is undertaken for examining the research hypothesis and problem. This section focuses on the latter—how the research into the specific cases is designed and organised.

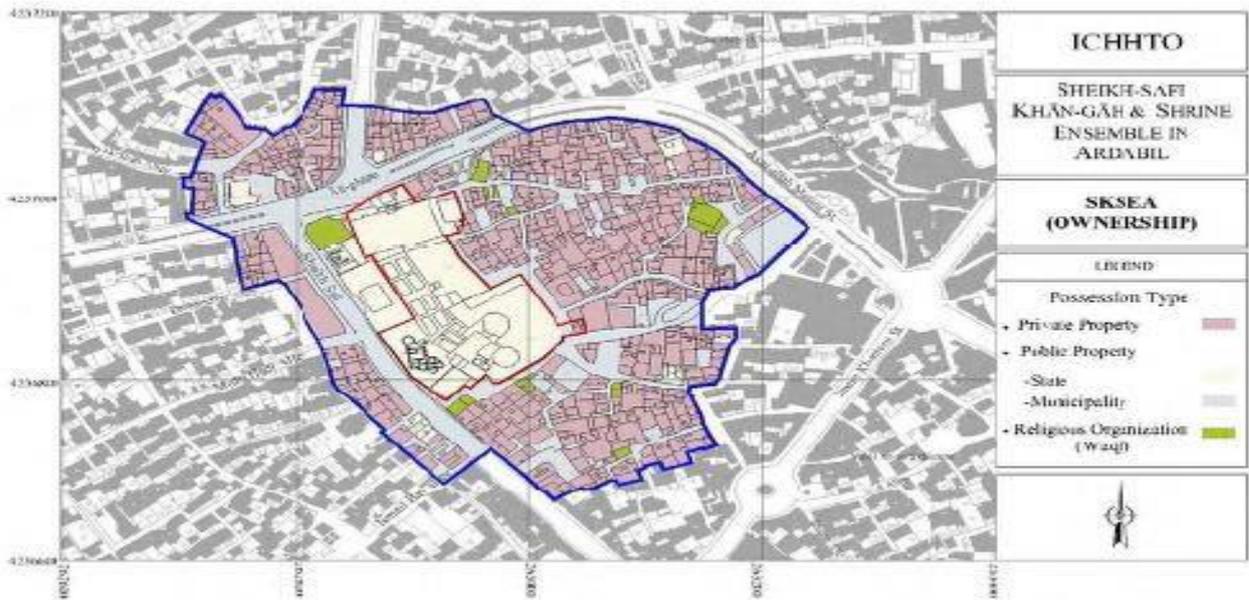
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<sup>5</sup> Sufism is a form of mystical Islamic belief and practice in which Muslims seek to find the truth of divine love (Trimingham, 1998).



**FIGURE 3. 3: SHEIKH SAFI AL-DIN KHĀNEGĀH AND SHRINE ENSEMBLE’S  
BUFFER ZONES IN ARDABIL**

Source: UNESCO ID, 1345.



**FIGURE 3. 4: WHC NOMINATION OF PROPERTIES FOR INCLUSION ON THE WORLD  
HERITAGE LIST, THE OWNERSHIP MAP.**

Source: UNESCO ID, 1345.

**2- Participant-level sampling includes** the participants selected from these buffer zones. These individuals are residents (including inhabitants, traders, or officers), tourists who visit temporarily and, where possible, heritage agents. Due to the unpredictability and complex nature of these places, the sampling is opportunistic, as suggested for ethnography by Miles and Huberman (1994). People of any status, group, and community have a chance to be involved in the interview through this method.

The fieldwork gathered creative and diverse data, including the materials and meanings inside the selected buffer zones. The aim of this fieldwork is to provide multidimensional data and use the data to study the buffer zone's condition by considering the relationships between different actors from a network perspective inside these areas. The key consideration is how the buffer zones are experienced and constructed by meanings and materiality.

The main argument shifts away from studying these heritage buffer zones as a collection of static objects like houses, streets, shops, and sites, and considers them in relation to people's emotions and their interpretations of these places. The way people express their emotions and the process of producing meanings are taken into consideration.

The meanings are produced from people's actions, such as cultural, social and political practices, ritual performances, and everyday activities. De Certeau (1984) characterises tactics as being opposed or resistant to power strategies as a reaction to the environment. People and particularly locals figure out how they should act in these controlled zoning areas. The diverse collected data is used to answer the following questions:

- How are the heritage buffer zones experienced emotionally and interpreted by different groups?
- How are the meanings produced and interpreted in the material places?
- In what ways do people express these meanings?
- How can the data be interpreted and analysed for meanings?
- How can the research answer the fundamental questions about the heritage buffer zones' condition?

The materials and objects are physical features inside the field of study, including buildings, signs, statues, and graffiti, and will be observed by a maximum variation strategy that is based on heterogeneous sampling to represent diversity and to offer multiple perspectives (Creswell, 2007, p. 128). This manner of sampling aims to capture and describe the key themes that arch over a heterogeneous field (Patton, 2002, p. 235). The creation of a matrix helps maximise the sampling of materials, using dimensions such as age, visibility, geographical location, and mobility.

### **Procedure in the Buffer Zones Fieldwork**

The fieldwork is the most characteristic element and shapes the design of this project's sensory ethnographic approach inside the sample case studies of two heritage buffer zones in Iran. The heritage buffer zone of Pasargadae ((575–530 BC) is a pre-Islamic heritage site which was the former capital of the Achaemenid Empire under Cyrus the Great (575–530 BC). It is famous as a great expression of the Achaemenid Architecture era, and an important phase in the evolution of classical Persian art and architecture. The buffer zone of Sheikh Safi al-Din Khānegāh and Shrine Ensemble (SKSEA) (built between the beginning of the sixteenth century and the end of the eighteenth century) is a post- Islamic heritage site of outstanding global value, located inside Ardabil city in Iran. According to the UNESCO website, buffer zones of

SKSEA have provisions for property protection, which is referred to as a buffer and landscape zone around the heritage site.

The people inside these selected heritage buffer zones were observed to have different interactions with the place, objects, and meanings. We conducted the fieldwork with the following considerations:

1. Site observation and bodily involvement with the selected heritage buffer zones and studying and discovering the condition in networks of social, cultural, political and economic context to be done through multiple visits to the research sample site. This meant approaching and getting involved with the people, communities, objects, meanings, everyday lives, and practices within the sample heritage buffer zones.
2. Participants' observations and interviews to be collected on-site. Observation of the sample participants was conducted at the field sites where the people's everyday lives and practices were happening. One strong point in the thesis fieldwork was that the people, behaviours, or events were culturally known and familiar to investigators and interviews were done in the native language (Persian).

This study will interpret the buffer zones around the heritage sites and analyse their condition through the data collected in the fieldwork. In this fieldwork, long term, continuous data gathering was neither possible nor desirable; limited resources compelled me to apply ethnographic techniques within this study's time limit, rather than conducting a full-blown ethnographic study. The central element of the fieldwork was being there to observe place and people, to ask seemingly naïve but insightful questions, and to record what was observed and heard as data.

The fieldwork in the selected sites was conducted first in December 2016; the second round of fieldwork took place in May 2017. The two trips were made in winter and

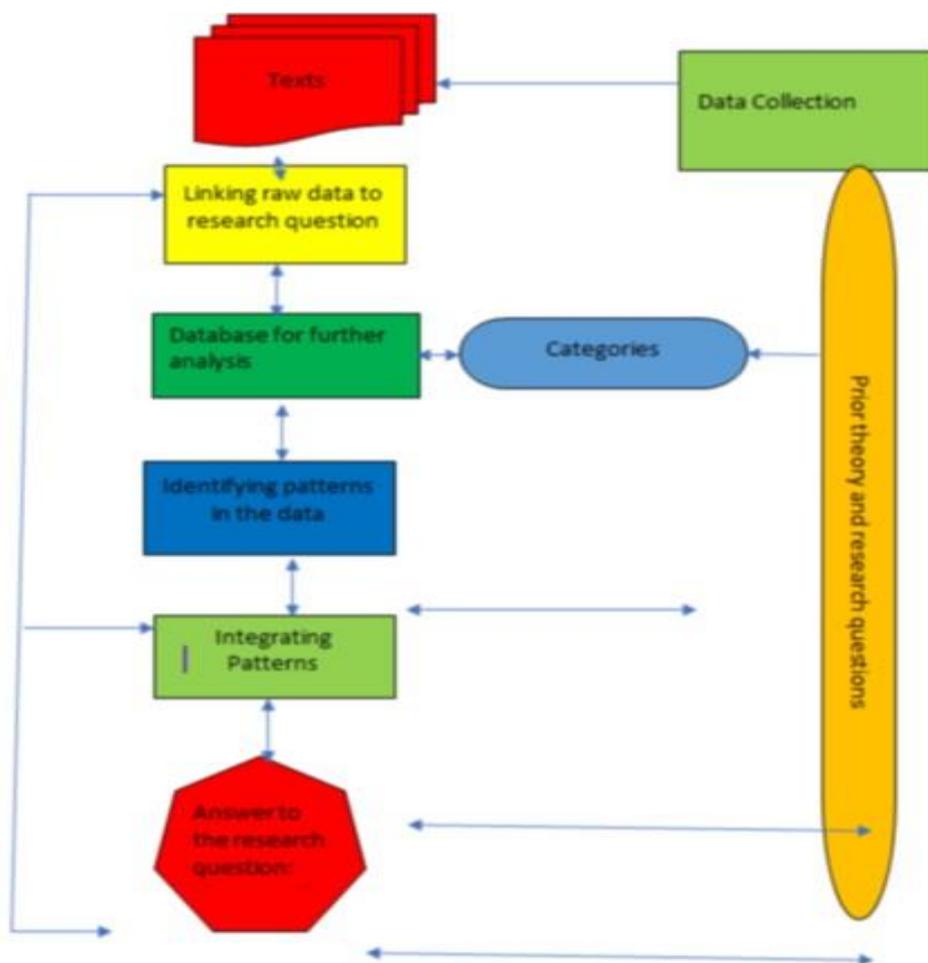
spring. Two episodes of fieldwork were necessary because there are different features in these heritage sites and their surrounding areas as buffer zones during the cold weather in winter and the tourist season in spring and summer. Before the fieldwork commenced, a friend photographed some special religious ceremonies from SKSEA on Wednesday, 12 October 2016; these religious performances are a feature of this buffer zone, as will be interpreted in Chapter 5. The fieldwork process included observation, in-depth interviews, data interpretation and analysis (Figure 3.4).

The fieldwork began with in-depth observations and interviews to learn the basics: the meanings, people's practices, kinship ties, census information, historical data, and the basic functions of the heritage in the buffer zones. The language used was Persian. The research tested specific hypotheses and information gathering proceeded inductively. The practical fieldwork adopting the methodologies outlined in selected literature about the concept of theoretical sampling and interpreting the data through the theoretical framework. After this period of 'getting acquainted', clearer geographic and conceptual boundaries were drawn (Fetterman, 2010). During the fieldwork's two phases, significant raw data, themes based on the raw data, and problems or basic understandings of the selected heritage buffer zones were identified. Through the different methods of collecting the data relating to the condition of heritage buffer zones, all the information was crosschecked, compared, and triangulated. This triangulation enabled the fieldwork to gather the data from different dimensions and analyse them from different perspectives. Careful organisation of the data facilitated this process; index cards, electronic sheets, and extensive, flexible data storage space were used. By keeping the data organised and readily accessible, it was possible to test mini hypotheses throughout the investigation of the buffer zones condition.

Interim reports, papers, and digital recordings are important in the final analysis stage.

The analysis covers the data collected from both the insiders' perspectives and from an ethical social science process of observation (based on HRECs: Human Research Ethics Committees). Verbatim quotations support the presentation of credible reports of the research. They allow readers to judge the quality of the work and how the thoughts of natives in the field were tested. The interpretation of the data is the most important stage in presenting the findings in this research. Charts, pictures, and text presentations are also used.

Figure 3.5 below shows how the fieldwork has been designed based on the methodological approach.



**FIGURE 3. 5: RESEARCH DESIGN FIELDWORK**

### **i. Observation Using Field Notes**

The principal method of direct observation and gazing was the creation of research field notes which detail behaviours, people's practices, ritual performances, people's conversations, participants' interviews, and the environmental characteristics. Visual observation using was followed with an active gazing method to capture the data. Conducting direct observation in private without the knowledge or consent of the observed was not considered because it was likely to raise ethical concerns. This research conducted the fieldwork observation by following Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011):

- What is observed and ultimately treated as 'data' or 'findings' is inseparable from the observational process.
- Attention is given to the participants' meanings and concerns of the people studied while writing field notes.
- Contemporaneously written field notes are an essential grounding and resource for writing broader, more coherent accounts of others' lives and concerns.
- Such field notes should detail the social and interactional processes that makeup people's everyday lives and activities.

Field notes were accounts describing experiences and observations that were made while participating in an intense and involved manner. However, writing descriptive accounts of experiences and observations was not as straightforward and transparent a process as it initially appeared to be. Writing descriptions did not just involve accurately capturing the observed reality or 'putting into words' the overheard conversations and witnessed activities (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011). To view the writing of descriptions simply as a matter of producing texts that correspond

accurately to what has been observed is to assume that there is but one ‘best’ description of the particular event. But in fact, there is no one ‘natural’ or ‘correct’ way to write about what one observes. Rather, because descriptions involve issues of perception and interpretation, different descriptions of ‘the same’ situations and events are possible (Belk, Fischer & Kozinets, 2012, p. 71).

The inscriptions of social life and the practices and discourse of the fieldwork research were considered important elements of the field notes. According to Geertz (1973, p. 19), ethnography represents social discourse. All events and performances have been represented visually and textually as ‘moments’ (Lefebvre 2004). The field notes reflect moments, meanings and proximity to the field in the described events (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011).

Lefebvre's work on everyday life was an important guide for taking note of events in this fieldwork, as was his idea of the festival, and the notion of the situation that is spatially and temporally situated. The notion of moments in the festival is especially important (considering Lefebvre's notion of the moment). Moments of life—in the practical community, food, the relation with nature—are reunited, amplified, and magnified in the festival (Elden, 2004, pp.116, 117) and rituals.

The next section elaborates on interviewing as a technique to describe specific features of social life and emotions.

## **ii. Field Interview (Participants’ Interview)**

In response to the research questions, the fieldwork was planned to consist of interviews to collect information from participants’ perspectives, their perceptions and interpretations of the research topic. The interviews were contextual because:

- They were conducted in multiple contexts and interviewees were diverse, including people in the field, i.e. tourists, officials, and a very small number of heritage agents.
- Specific and contextual follow-up questions were often necessary to obtain a better understanding of the concepts conveyed by each participant.
- The questionnaires administered were non-evaluative, people-centred, temporal, partial, subjective, and non-neutral.

The interviews conducted for this study:

- 1) Were semi-structured
- 2) Included open-ended interview questions.

Before the interview, a list of predetermined questions based on the research questions with an open-ended form was devised so that each interviewee responded to a similar series of questions regarding their interpretation and conception about the buffer zones (Figure 3.1 and the list of interview questions in Appendix). Other topics were considered and discussed as they emerged during interviews.

The set of questions (see Appendix) was provided before the interviews, which minimised the chance of irregularities in the wording, and they were posed to each interviewee in the same order for consistency. This enabled comparability across interviewees and systematically captured the data from each interview. The participants were allowed to discuss each question in more detail but as relevant to the focused questions. The disadvantage was that it did not offer flexibility to approach new topics that emerged during the interviews. All irrelevant answers were removed from the subsequent analysis.

The following sets out the guidelines for construction of the interview questions:

- Experience and behaviour questions: these focused on what a person had done, would do or was currently doing.

- Opinions and values questions: these were designed to explore what a person thought and believed about the research questions, their experiences, phenomena or events and the value they placed on them.
  - Emotional questions: these explored what people felt and their emotional experiences.
  - Knowledge questions: these sought facts and information that interviewees knew about a specific topic, phenomenon, event or context.
  - Sensory questions: these probed people's sensory experiences—what they saw, heard, touched, tasted or smelt.
  - Background or demographic questions: these focused on people's social locations, identities and positions as they conceptualised and described them.
- (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013)

The in-depth interviews captured appropriate feedback for qualitative analysis to discover the condition of heritage buffer zones and their effect on people's everyday lives and emotional experiences (see Chapters 4 and 5).

## **Thematic Analysis**

The fieldwork provided raw data based on the research questions to examine, understand, and analyse the buffer zone condition. The raw data consists of the field note observations, photos of objects (materiality), ritual performances (heritage intangibilities, events, and people's emotions), understandings and interviews. The analysis was included in the processes used to interpret the data. The process of data analysis started with the data collection. After gathering the data, the analysis was developed by following these key steps:

1. Understanding the data by reviewing it and finding the meaning and values.
2. Translating the interviews into English.

2. Focusing on the research questions that must be answered through the analysis.
3. Organising the data and categorising relevant pieces through a framework of coding or indexing. The data was categorised by understanding and linking raw data in the texts to the research questions (see Figure 3.4). In this step, the key themes were identified in physical characteristics and meanings such as emotions, ideas, concepts, performances, behaviours, etc.
4. Clarifying the themes and relationship between them.
5. Analysing the findings based on the key questions.

The different steps follow Gläser & Laudel's (2013) guidelines, including identifying, locating, and structuring raw data or categorising it to find the themes and analyse them.

Each step will be clarified with more details in below sections.

### **i. Structuring Raw Data**

In this research, structuring raw data involves detailing the links between the data and the research questions and between items of data, and removing all irrelevant and unnecessary information. The key tool for this step was a system of categories (Gläser & Laudel, 2013). These were derived from empirical information in the text and later reviewed in the light of the selected theories (Gläser, & Laudel, 2013). Organising the data was a complicated process including several coding steps, as follows.

### **ii. Searching for Patterns in the Data**

Following Gläser and Laudel (2013), when the stage of recognising patterns in the data was reached, the data was ordered according to various principles. The points

considered were time, actors, actions, words, events, and locations. Finding the patterns in the data included:

- 1) Sequences of events occurring more than once;
- 2) Combinations of conditions, processes, and outcomes occurring more than once;
- 3) Conflicting accounts of events or processes. (Gläser, & Laudel, 2013)

The technical requirement of this search for patterns was that the database constructed in the previous steps enabled an easy rearrangement of data. Pattern recognition involves identifying characteristic combinations of data, and this was most easily achieved when groupings of data were tested and examined under the same category. Thus, data manipulations, such as sorting, selection, and variable rearrangement, were performed (Gläser & Laudel, 2013) based on the research questions. Once the patterns were found, it was important to integrate them. This research examined whether all the patterns were different or whether some of them could be merged into one. The categorising of data based on this structure helped to code the data.

Each code was assigned to pieces of data and the data labelled to make it easier to organise. The thesis coding provided a framework to structure the data. The important consideration was that the framework was based on the research questions.

### **iii. Coding**

According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 56):

- 1- Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. Codes usually are attached to 'chunks' of varying size—words, phrases, sentences, or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting. They can take the form of a straightforward category label.

- 2- Codes are applied to data from the fieldwork interviews for generating categories and transforming categories to text. These need to be structured and consist of paragraphs that characterise narrative units. Codes are applied to text segments of all lengths—from single words to whole texts (Gläser & Laudel, 2013).

Therefore, the function of codes in this research was to indicate what is discussed in a segment of text. Thus, codes supported the retrieval of text segments, which could be used to group these segments according to the thematic aspects of the data they contained.

SPSS and NVIVO qualitative analysis software was an essential tool in this research coding. This research used Microsoft Excel, SPSS and NVivo Software. SPSS saved time, as data were easily imported using the graphical user interface. Similarly, the automated task of value labelling was conducted quickly using Excel. SPSS supported the qualitative analysis by calculating descriptive statistics, which validated the themes developed from the different data (interview questions, photographs, etc). This description of coding texts was converted to coding numeric units that SPSS was able to fully understand while analysing the data.

Since this research was qualitative, it used NVivo 11 Plus, which performs open-ended coding variables automatically (see Figure 3.6). After data were imported into the program, the first step was to explore and visualise the data to build a sense of what they involved.

The presentation of qualitative data was achieved in a synthesised format. The analysis involved summarising or synthesising the raw data from each session of fieldwork within the appropriate parts of the thematic framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process was done by reviewing the data many times and reducing them to find themes and synthesising the data. As mentioned, the thesis's theoretical framework

determined the process of data analysis and the working hypothesis by which the relevant data was categorised and analysed. A word cloud was constructed containing thematic meanings which began to answer the research questions. The definition of codes, which described the themes and relevant evidence from the data, was found to support these questions.



**FIGURE 3. 6: METHODOLOGY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STEPS OF ANALYSIS USED BY NVIVO**

Value Labels was an SPSS function that created a codebook in the dataset. Using value labels in the data allowed timely analysis of the data. The value labelling format was created by using value statements, which were available for all procedures that used that dataset. The value label list below provided a kind of codebook for the values and labels from the fieldwork data.

**TABLE 3 1: CODING- VALUE LABELLING**

<b>Coding-Value labelling</b>
1. 'Existence of tourism but lack of accommodation facilities'
2. 'Financial gains from tourists'
3. 'Construction forbidden'
4. 'Generally good but no personal benefits accrued'
5. 'Inadequate services'
6. 'Poor benefits from tourism'
7. 'Less farm produce'
8. 'Limitations to accessing livelihood needs'
9. 'No financial benefits'
10. 'No positive effects'
11. 'No privacy policies in this area'
12. 'No right of manufacturing'
13. Ritual events 'special national and religious ceremonies'
14. 'Taxes levied do not improve the place'
15. 'Tourism does not provide industrial benefits'

#### **iv. Finding themes (thematic analysis process)**

Qualitative approaches are incredibly diverse, complex and nuanced (Holloway & Todres, 2003); thematic analysis has been this research's foundational method for the data analysis. The thematic framework allows the researcher to classify and categorise the raw data according to key themes. It provides core capabilities for the data analysis in this study (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The patterns identified were related to theories to make sense of the rich and complex data collected. Existing literature was an important consideration that was reviewed when the themes were organised. Insights or ideas about the data were recorded so anything requiring further clarification or testing was identified.

The connections between theories and data were gathered in different ways. Finding themes was the substantive foundation of the analysis. Following Ryan and Bernard (2003), repetition highlights 'topics that occur and reoccur' (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 83) and the same ideas are categorised under the same topics.

The process of thematic analysis was complicated, because there was not just one right way to identify themes; some techniques were more effective under some conditions than others. The techniques were evaluated based on the following dimensions:

- datatype
- expertise
- number and type of themes to be generated
- reliability and validity. (Bernard & Ryan, 2010).

Following on Ryan and Bernard (2003), during the field observation and interviews, the important themes were included in the field notes. The important data were collected and selected, and other irrelevant data were ignored and excluded. Field notes were important records that initially helped identifying the themes. Interview answers were mostly long responses to open-ended interview questions (see table in

Appendix). Essential techniques of thematic analysis in the data analysis were included by making the text answers shorter and searching for keywords related to the theoretical framework. The fieldwork benefited from the notes and photos, which were a critical part of identifying themes and supported interview themes and keywords. Interviews were supported by observation and field work observations (especially depth visuality) were supported by interviews along the same line. Using NVIVO 11 helped to organise the collection, meta-coding, organisation, and analysis of data from the interviews and conversations (some irrelevant).

#### **v. Reliability and Validity**

As Dey (1993) noted, ‘there is no single set of themes waiting to be discovered. There are as many ways of “seeing” the data as one can invent’ (pp. 110–111). Reliability in the field research demonstrates that the collected data are internally and externally consistent. Reliability in this research is based on the field observation of people’s behaviours, feelings and emotional responses to the interviews and using verbatim quotations to interpret the qualitative data from different angles and perspectives (Sangasubana, 2011). Using verbatim quotations can demonstrate a deep understanding of data and reliability. People’s use of words and careful translation of their responses show their ideas and their feelings in ways that the narrative could not reveal. Knowing the native language (Persian) and culture were important for understanding each word, its deep meaning, and the participants’ emotional responses. The answers illustrated some important key findings. People used their narratives to express their fear, anger, dissatisfaction, confusion, appreciation, hopelessness, or conflicts of interest. People's own words are the reliable expression of their feelings and are directly quoted in the data analysis chapters.

Following on Neuman & Kreuger (2003), validity in this research is the confidence placed in the ability to collect and analyse data accurately, representing the buffer zone condition from different social, economic, cultural, and political contexts, using multiple strategies to collect data. Using different methods provided this research with adequate findings and relevant data.

## **Ethics and Limitations**

### **i. The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007**

The research fieldwork was reviewed and ethically accepted by the Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs) based on the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 before the fieldwork was conducted.

Generally, the research was followed by considering the ethical criteria, such as ‘informed consent’, ‘anonymity and confidentiality’, ‘explaining the risks and benefits to participants’, by following Adler & Adler (1987). Seeking participants’ consent was one of the central ethical concerns that standard regulatory bodies like human research ethics committees require (See National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007). Potential participants were made aware of the following information while obtaining informed consent for the interview:

- 1) The nature of the research
- 2) The purpose of the research
- 3) The procedures used during the research
- 4) The risks and benefits of the research
- 5) The voluntary nature of their participation
- 6) Their right to stop the research at any time
- 7) The procedures used to protect the confidentiality
- 8) Their rights to have all their questions answered at any time

- 9) What is required of them as consenting participants
- 10) That refusal to participate or withdraw at any time will not lead to foreseeable consequences
- 11) That no financial compensation is offered for participating.

An important challenge in the fieldwork methods was that some of the people's consent (in the Persian language) did not cover their presence in photographs. In Iran, which is as culturally sensitive as many other developing countries (Mollet, 2011), children, youths, and vulnerable groups (in addition to women) are generally considered not to have 'competence' to express consent. To prevent legal and social harm, which must be minimised according to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2015), these people were given a form that required both their approval and that of their guardians, but they refused to be involved in the research interviews. In such situations, participants were encouraged to participate in this project along with their family members, particularly when tourists were involved in the interviews with their family members present.

The weakness of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 is that the criteria has been designed based on western countries' conditions, and Iran could not be fully covered because ethical consent should be considered within the different social, cultural, and political contexts. But the research made every effort to follow the ethical criteria, as further explained below.

## **ii. Limitations of Research**

Sensitive cultural and political fieldwork sites such as Pasargadae and SKSEA generate several risks. Conducted individually, this fieldwork was an isolating and lonely experience. It was a time to be away and separated from friends, family and

basic comforts, and on a limited budget, which contributed to frustrating and stressful situations.

There were considerable issues regarding obtaining national ethics research approval in the country. This study was primarily concerned with applying for permission for localised ethical rese localised ethics approval throughout the course of this fieldwork, mostly relying on the guidance of local facilitators. This fieldwork needed access to heritage sites and some Iranian government-authorised organisations or heritage documents. For whatever unknown and unexplained reasons, such as national security or risk of spying, access was largely denied or limited in many ways, since those documents were politically regarded as confidential information. However, based on the Australian Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007, the fieldwork was undertaken.

The essential element of obtaining informed consent based on Ethical Conduct (2007) is to ensure that participants are fully aware of the risks and potential benefits that accompany their involvement in the research. By considering politically sensitive heritage settings, this research encountered additional factors that made it difficult to obtain signed consent from the participants. In the social and political context of Iran, where so much rests on the ability to keep quiet, to self-censor, and to be anonymous and unknown, silence can be one of the hardest things to deal with in the field. While this highlights how the entire research experience was plagued by fear, it is important to consider the role that fear played in setting the research context.

People's fear and anger in engaging in a free conversation through the interview was one of the considerable issues in the fieldwork. The reluctance of the participants to answer the questions provided this study gives a deeper insight into the everyday reality of fear and anger that the selected heritage buffer zones must cope with. After the request for permission to take audio recordings of interviews was denied, only

written notes were taken. Some potential interviewees expressed that some subjects, such as political issues, were too sensitive to discuss. The validity of the data collected from interviews could be diminished by these factors. The researcher's identity and intentions as an Iranian expatriate female may also have influenced the reliability of the collected data.

Ensuring confidentiality and the anonymity of all research participants during fieldwork was essential and imposed a lot of pressure and stress during the two fieldwork trips. In this regard, interviewees were assured that their identities would be kept strictly confidential. This meant that they would never be identified to anyone else, verbally or in writing, as having participated in the research and their statements would not be attributed to them. One of the main issues in this fieldwork was that many potential participants who were approached did not want to be involved in this research and, in some cases, initiating the conversation was too difficult.

The respondents were informed that they could, at any time, completely refuse to participate in the research or decline to answer particular questions in interviews. At any point during an interview, they could withdraw from further participation in the process. In some cases, the participants did not want to continue the interviews and left the interview unfinished when it was only halfway.

If they suspected that this interview was conducted by state agents, their expressed point of view could have been compromised during the interviews and conversations rather than expressing their sincere thoughts. The task of the researcher was to take people's fears and suspicions seriously and try to allay them as much as possible. Given the issue of the validity and reliability of the collected data, this research triangulated the methods of mobile observation and interviews to avoid relying too heavily on inaccurate data. Unfortunately, the nature of the fieldwork did not allow long periods in the field; only two brief time periods were available for this research.

This prevented repeated visits to fieldwork sites and limited the opportunities to build trust with respondents over time, further affecting the reliability of the collected data. Nevertheless, I tried to build trust during the interview by using the native language and local methods of courtesy and respect.

However, due to the security concerns of staying in one place for more than a few weeks at a time, as well as time and funding limitations, this obstacle could not have been totally avoided. Such limitations become even more problematic when an accidental open conversation with an informant could be about a serious political problem or crime—as was the case in this research. Therefore, one of the most critical issues during the fieldwork in this research was to convince people to talk. Regarding people’s fear of talking freely about what they think, Taussig (2005, p. 12) maintained that ‘knowing what not to know becomes not only an art of survival but the basis of social reality’.

This research aimed to interview heritage organisation members (in addition to locals and tourists) but encountered problems with gaining access to this particular group, and the approach was burdened by tension on both sides. Therefore, access to these people was extremely limited, with only one or two cases at each selected site. This meant that the field interviews were done only by approaching a ‘safe’ group with whom the researcher felt comfortable—which risked the dilution of the research.

**Summary:** This chapter has developed the research methodology framework and described how the research was undertaken in the fieldwork. The discussion demonstrated how the key buffer zones’ characters and values could be understood by using a qualitative research methodology with an ethnographic approach. It was discussed how an ethnographic approach offers a common basis for analysing, representing and understanding the buffer zones’ condition, and how the method

supports the fieldwork by considering the concepts of place-making, which provides common ground for various disciplines.

Theorising ethnographic methods as ‘place-making’ aids the discovery of the nature of people's practices in everyday life. The chapter discusses how people constitute urban environments through embodied and imaginative practices. A buffer zone is a zone of different perspectives and various meanings. Ethnography can provide a comprehensive way to analyse the more subjective components of the spatial matrix of heritage buffer zones using different techniques.

The second section of this chapter discusses the project's fieldwork and the practical method of sensory mobile ethnography inside the selected field studies, including indepth observations and interviews to explore material and sensory environments. The methods used for the fieldwork and the ethnography approach to data collection are described. The following chapters analyse the data to uncover understandings of the deep meaning, beliefs, feelings, and ideas gathered through in-depth interviews, which promoted an empathetic atmosphere and went below the surface in the thematic data analysis.

Data collection based on the adopted methodology took place in two fieldwork periods. The analysis of data from the selected case studies is presented in Chapters 4 and 5, where all data is analysed and interpreted within this thesis's innovative theoretical approach. The intent is to open a new perspective on the World Heritage buffer zone condition.

## **Chapter 4: Fieldwork Presentations, Case study 1:**

### **Pasargadae**

#### **Introduction**

Conducting observations and engaging directly with the subject material in Pasargadae town were important components of data gathering in the first fieldwork project. The fieldwork provided insights into people's everyday life and practices and helped to provide better understanding of interactions between the participants and the place. Previously discussed in the literature review is the fact that heritage and national policies on conservation have not addressed the issues of ambiguity, confusion, uncertainty, and complex characteristics in the buffer zone; these will be discussed in this chapter. There are a relatively wide range of applications and different interpretations from different actors in the buffer zone, such as the legislations on urban development, agricultural plans, and heritage limitation laws, among others. This chapter observes the differences and changes that the buffer zone creates, and that alter daily living in Pasargadae town (buffer zone) around the Pasargadae heritage site, and assesses whether these observed differences give the buffer zone a liminal character. Interpretation of the gathered data and strategies for analysis of the complex, and in some areas, paradoxical data can be quite challenging. An attempt will be made to classify the different types and the complex collection of data as sources of evidence for claims about the different meanings and analyses of the buffer zone characteristics. To answer the research questions, the best pattern for classifying the data and themes under the relevant topic was sought. Making sense of the data from the fieldwork, the different graphics, text interviews, and filed notes, required clear thinking that was aided by the thesis's key theories and concepts from the different perspectives. The data from all of the observations and participant interviews

are thus analysed and presented to get a clear understanding of this complex place condition.

This chapter details all the results of fieldwork in Pasargadae town, all the relevant data linked to the research questions. The data will be presented corresponding to each main question from the study objectives listed in Chapter 1 and the theoretical framework from Chapter 2.

### **Case Study 1: Pasargadae**

Pasargadae is a selected case study, due to its international fame and status as a symbol of Iranian national identity. The site therefore draws an international crowd to itself, with tourists not only from all over Iran, but from all over the world. Visitors descend on the site every year, because, although sanctions against Iran have impacted potential tourism of Iran and created a negative image about the country (Pratt & Alizadeh, 2018), the value of Pasargadae has not been lost.<sup>6</sup> The local population is very different from the tourists who visit the site. Mozaffari (2016) explains that the town is within the vicinity of a pre-Islamic heritage site and acts as a buffer zone. Several ethnic groups living in this region and the densely populated areas include the Bakhtiari, Tajik and Basseri groups. Therefore, one reason for selecting Pasargadae for this research is that the town is designated a heritage town according to national administrative divisions. Another obvious reason is the international fame of the site, as well as the uniqueness of the ancient indigenous population in the town.

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<sup>6</sup> The economic impact of the lifting of sanctions on tourism in Iran: A computable general equilibrium analysis. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21(11), 1221-1238.

## Demographic Information

The following demographic information relates to the participants from Pasargadae in this current study. This includes their daily lives as seen through personal profiles and interviews. The formation and population of different areas include those within Pasargadae town, which has been influenced by a wider economic situation. The welfare and living conditions are in part shaped by the opportunities for work that affect the younger generations. The future rates of growth of the population in Pasargadae is uncertain. Factors that will affect the changes are observed in the economic conditions, tourism development, technology, and even climate. Table 4.1 analyses both the female and the male gender respondents to the interview questions. An attempt was made to get both genders to participate in answering the research interview questions. It was important to get both genders involved in an open conversation about themselves and their living areas.

**TABLE 4. 1: DISTRIBUTION OF GENDER**

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<b>Valid Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid percent</b>	<b>Cumulative percent</b>
Female	2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Male	8	0.0	0.0	00.0
Total	0	00.0	00.0	

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The first percentage indicates the number of different participants according to gender.

The cumulative percentage adds the percentage from the first fieldwork to the

percentage of the second fieldwork. This calculation shows how the percentages add together over the two fieldwork periods.

Other considerations in the interviews were to explore the possible differences in interpretation and opinions about the buffer zone for different ages and genders, which could show differences in how the condition of buffer zone living is perceived for the older and the younger members of the population. Evidence of unclear demographic situations came from interviews as well, in which most of the participants reported that ‘there is a different range of ages living in Pasargadae town but because of the difficult conditions there, young people moved to other big cities for better job opportunities.’ Also, the emergent themes varied according to the age groups: 28–40 years and 40–65 years. Most of the participants were young and middle-aged.

Essentially, there is a huge gap in the present knowledge in line with demographic information and gender. The missing information, relating to gender and age, has nevertheless affected how the different genders, the roles of gender groups, and their rights, shape the environment. It further involves the community and daily lives of people in terms of their power relations with the heritage authorities, susceptibility to the heritage and governmental authorities, and the complexity of different kinds of arrangements that relate to the activities of people that evolve under different buffer zone conditions.



**FIGURE 4. 1: PARKING: FIRST POINT OF WALKING**

The town condition was understood by using a combination of observation, notetaking, and interview approaches. The actors' activities and behaviours and the physical features of the place where they play out their behaviour were observed by using the 'gaze' technique in order to collect data. At the first attempted gaze (the first fieldwork, December 2016), I started from the car park and chose two different walking paths along the road; one path runs off the road and into the township of Pasargadae, and the second path leads to the core zone of the World Heritage site of Pasargadae. The images were taken mostly from traces of the physical structure of the city, and people's everyday life and practices inside the Pasargadae town in both physical and emotional dimensions.

Walking through Pasargadae town, I looked attentively at the advertisements and the peddlers; the scenes appeared very different from the normal patterns of historic landscape fabrics. The major street appeared to be a space occupied by male peddlers, while peddlers (Figure 4.2) within the town showed that poverty prevailed among the people, including children. This clearly showed the way

human behaviour introduces changes and impact living conditions (December, 2016).



**FIGURES 4. 2: PASARGADAE TOWN, PEDDLERS AND STREET VENDORS**

**RESPECTIVELY**

In my both fieldwork visits (December 2016 and May 2017), I started the gaze technique from the same place to compare the two fieldwork observations and findings; the results were the same.

The weather was cool in my two trips, but it was much better in May 2017, when the site attracted more visitors. I walked with my camera into the alleys and buildings inside. I continued to walk along the street and observe through the alleys inside the town. The surface of alleys had been covered with cobblestones

similar to those seen in old villages. I stepped on the stones and listened to the sound of the alley. I touched the walls, which had a poor-quality surface. This indicated no growth or development had occurred in the area. I surprised people because I paid attention to people's lives around the heritage site and its area. They were surprised because it was unusual for visitors to take photos; they did not imagine that visitors would care about the alleys and the living areas of the natives. I saw a man who walked through the alley and told me that nobody had paid attention to their buildings: 'Why are you taking photos from here? The main road is not here'. He (a resident in the alley) said and continued to say that there was no such thing as an intrinsically wonderful subject there. (December 2016)



**FIGURE 4. 3: ALLEY INSIDE THE TOWN**

Figure 4.3 was taken from an alley. As observed in the photo, the rubbish on the ground shows the neglect and lack of attention that the zone area has received (there was no rubbish bin inside the alley).

Poverty is one of the most noticeable characteristics of this area's inhabitants, when considering the style of the buildings and the materials used. The physical features of the buildings, a function of building materials, construction techniques, small

buildings, and the arrangement of living and farming spaces, all result from poverty in this town. The place was quiet and did not attract visitors to the local's living areas. There were buildings, mostly small, with cheap and undesirable materials that reflected a sense of poverty. Some of the new constructions have been left unfinished with different historical fabrics and fragile sub-standard materials.

The nature of the housing conditions clearly shows the area lacked proper housing unit constructions and there was no attention paid to the buildings surrounding the Pasargadae heritage zone (see Figure 4.3).

Trying to take photographs in the area was a strange experience, as there were no intrinsically wonderful things in the area. I woke up early in the morning and tried to conduct my observations in the local everyday environments, gazing and taking photos while talking with local, shopkeepers, and people who came into the shops and used a product, observing how they conduct their everyday lives, seeing and hearing who they are and what they complained or expected about. I tried to observe everything and focus on the conditions impacting their lives. Some of the local people asked me if I needed overnight accommodation or if I was not comfortable in my small room. The people in the area were hospitable, as they were ready to host strangers or visitors in their homes; an indication that they used other ways of earning money from tourists. (The second fieldwork, May 2017)



**FIGURES 4. 4: TYPES OF BUILDINGS**

The construction appeared non-standard and unfinished, with no traditional or historical fabric materials used. Neighbourhood houses in the town manifested similar poverty and limitations. I had walked into a historical town of Pasargadae that was rich in culture and history, but I, unfortunately, found no beauty or historical significance in the unique and traditional neighbourhoods. Disappointed, I questioned where the original beauty of this area with the Pasargadae Persian Gardens was, such as the Persian Chahar Bagh. What was missing in this area? (December 2016, May 2017 notes)

## Pasargadae Daily Life

**TABLE 4. 2: DAILY LIVES OF THE LOCALS**

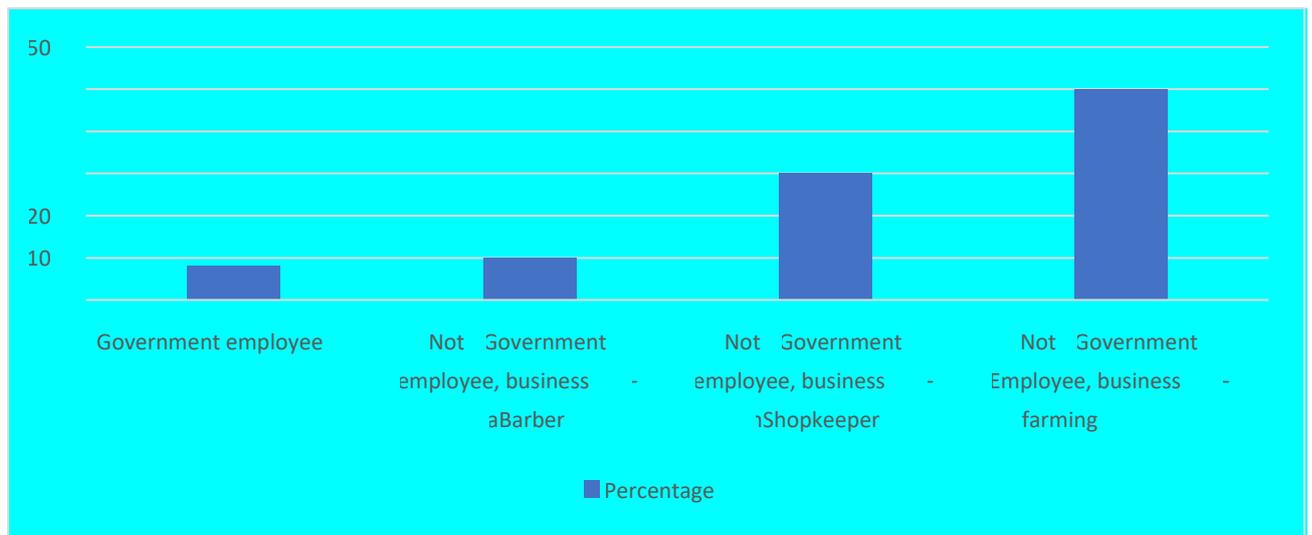


Table 4.2 represents the daily activities within this buffer zone. The emergent themes are non-government activities such as shopkeeping, farming agricultural produce, and livestock farming that are all under pressure and at risk.

The agricultural landscape is part of the Pasargadae site, one that people in the area continue to cultivate. This is the main identified pressure on the heritage site. The themes from my fieldwork describe how agricultural activities are important in shaping social structures in Pasargadae's local life and in framing relationships with other people and with their places.

The existence of agricultural equipment outside the houses indicates that people in the area practice farming as their primary livelihood, though climate change in the area is a problem, as it endangers the farming that many people depend on. Equipment is not frequently available—it is not on the farm because there is usually no water or free land use (see Figures 4.5).



**FIGURES 4. 5: AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT NEAR HOUSES**

How can the data be validated? For this purpose, I started to combine my gazing experience with the participants' interviews. The field research was defined as a reliable data collection activity that was geared towards observing, interacting with, and understanding people and their perceptions and opinions while they lived in the buffer zone. Conducting the interviews and observing the behaviour of the participants during the interviews, taking note of the way they responded to the open-ended questions, helped me to understand how they reacted to the conditions around them.

Before the interview, I opened a friendly conversation to help them feel comfortable talking; I tried to explain the topic and clarified how I planned to use their answers to my questions. I tried to get them to sign a consent form in

Persian, but they did not want to sign any formal form. Therefore, I began with easy questions that were not too technical. (December 2016, May 2017).

Fieldwork Interviewee 16 (a farmer) responded to the question about daily activities. He said he depended on ‘... livestock and selling its products to the shops but mostly not enough for my family.’ He explained that ‘there is a huge change in climatic conditions, with resulting socio-economic problems for the purpose of developing our agricultural condition, lack of advanced technological infrastructure in this place as a buffer zone, the untrustworthiness of the agricultural sector that prevents private individuals and companies from investing in it in this area, because of the strict regulations and laws’.

The above challenges are putting the local people in Pasargadae under pressure. The loss of their agricultural tradition is manifested in the social disintegration of local cultural and everyday practices.

Pasargadae has not planned to take advantage of cultural tourism opportunities, or the growth of tourism benefits for locals although the land is facing drought challenges; nor has it a planned risk management strategy to manage the drought conditions. Lack of a planned response to the issues is a contributing factor to the conditions of the buffer zone.

I tried to observe how everyday life happens during my fieldwork, in and out of the farmer’s home that I was accommodated in. I woke up at six a.m. to watch the daily life of the family. The man (a farmer) went out and worked in a grocery shop. His son moved to Shiraz looking for a job. There is nothing to do on their farm. His two kids went to school and came back to home in the afternoon. His wife started to do the housework and cooked lunch. She complained that they could not work on their farm and they could not get ahead. She blames the government for incorrect application of interest rates when they applied for a lawn. She said sadly that her husband could not work on their land and had

abandoned farming. She said that their land was not only their source of food, but it was their everyday life practices. (December 2016)

The interviews showed that the residents in the area have shifted to other means of livelihood such as the non-agricultural economies of shopkeeping and other businesses, or working for grocery stores.

The farmer in the neighbourhood sadly expressed the same feelings, that the people here must feel that these agricultural lands and this city belong to them. But, he said, 'we are losing our feeling of ownership and lifestyle'.

There is an increase in rural-to-urban migration, spurred by the search for new opportunities, as evidenced by children engaging in activities such as selling. Generally, this has led to some easing of poverty in the area. However, the shopkeepers are still struggling because of the association of the buffer zone with heritage and its power. The heritage-related controls and other government laws have increased to such an extent that limited redevelopment opportunities within the buffer zone make it hard for the locals to take advantage of the tourism potential.

Interviewee 18 (shopkeeper) said: 'It is also to our detriment that there are no purchases here at all with the travel restrictions of the tourist destinations and goods are mostly purchased in big cities. There has been a wide change in terms of the politics involved in promoting, displaying and either playing up or downplaying heritage styles [my note: the 1979 revolution marked a shift in this] which plays a vital role inside the zoning area'.

Pasargadae settlements have experienced several types of changes in the economy. It is obvious that this further impacts the differences faced in the daily lives of people (Massey 2013, p. 202).

The next section discusses various elements such as deficiency, transition, and associated experiences. The problems and challenges facing both locals and visitors in addressing the town's deficiencies will be briefly considered and discussed in the

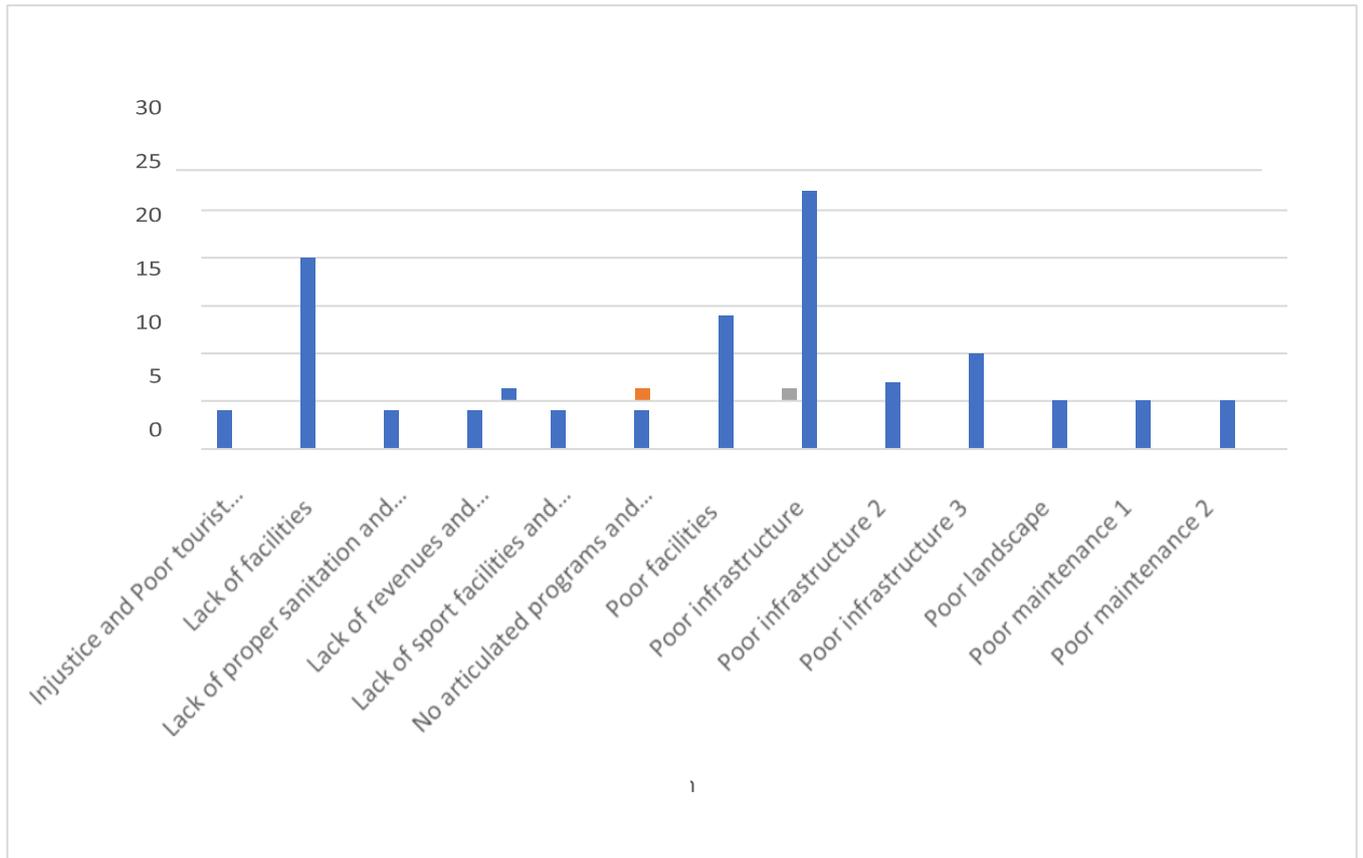
following sections. The need for the future town facilities to be integrated into urban environments to give a better quality of life and to reflect locals' and communities' emotions and perceptions will be emphasised.

The following data were classified in analytically relevant ways and all irrelevant data were removed. The fieldwork process is presented and the relevant data analysed into topics that are discussed in the following sections.

## **Deficiencies in the Town**

Table (4.3) lists the deficiencies in the town. Based on the interviews, the emergent themes are lack of governance with insufficient planning resulting in poor infrastructure in the form of hotels, visitor's maps, poor transportation, few hospitals, libraries, parks or green spaces, lack of access to nearby ATMs, museums and clinics, lack of proper sanitation, no playgrounds for children, and water system failures.

**TABLE 4. 3: PASARGADAE TOWN DEFICIENCIES**



This section discusses the deficiencies and needs of the town have impacted the locals and their everyday life and emotions, and how the various factors create the conditions within the buffer zone from both physical and emotional perspectives. The obvious insights gained through the interviews and observation were that poor governance, lack of people’s involvement, deficiencies in planning, and a high level of political power control of heritage sites are all major contributing factors in the conditions.

The data from interviews that are believable and trustworthy have been interpreted from multiple perspectives. The interviews proved to be one of the most important ways to establish the trustworthiness of findings.

Participant 4 (a local farmer) said with anger: ‘The drinking water is constantly interrupted, there isn’t any hospital and the green space is not suitable for its purposes.

There are no proper sanitary facilities for passengers and tourists; there is no museum

in the area of legacy, or even a platform for sitting in the vicinity of the tomb. We are lost’.

In most of the interviews, harsh words and anger could be heard from some frustrated individuals. These are some common key reactions to the interview question, when I asked the participants to tell me about the town deficiencies:

‘Nobody cares about the people here’.

‘We are forgotten’.

‘The authorities only want to fill up their pockets’.

‘Who would like to be seen?’

‘Nobody cares about our children’.

‘Our kids do not even have a space to play football’.

‘All benefits go only to big cities’.

‘We live in an isolated area with poverty and difficulty’.

‘Even when we complain, we are punished for speaking freely’.

Participant 15 (a shopkeeper): ‘I have three children; there are no facilities for my children, no sports, no playground, and no money to support them. I swear to God, I was a farmer, but now I am nothing because my financial situation is not good enough to support my family’. (May 2017)

Participants 12, 13 (local farmers): ‘We have worked on our own lands for many years. We have been suffering from the drought for years. We are facing very hard conditions. This prolonged drought has devastated our financial situation and our families’ health and wellbeing. The government have not given people any assurance that affected families will be supported by them’. (May 2017)

Participants 2 and 3 (local participants): ‘This long continuing drought in Pasargadae has had a very serious impact on individuals, families, and the whole community. The impacts are both physical and emotional. We are waiting and wishing for either rain or government support, but right now we feel hopeless. (May 2017)

They continued that ‘the financial hardship has increased family tensions, traumas and migration.’

The key themes derived from the interviews are ‘poverty’, ‘inequality’, ‘neglect’, ‘exclusion’, ‘isolation’, and ‘migration’, which become very obvious challenges in the buffer zones. Local poverty and inequality are also driven to a large extent by people’s decisions to move and live in different cities and look for better opportunities. The neighbourhood families who lived around my accommodation had to deal with many hardships. They are facing unpredictable climate changes and drought, government mismanagement, financial strain, heritage law restrictions, and long working hours in non-farming activities. Many farming families respond to hard times by cutting the household budget and spending less on food and clothes. The farmer whose house I stayed in effort cannot provide for his family and he decided to sell the farm. He was so sad, because his family tradition of farming is strong, as the farm has been in their family for generations. He said that ‘selling the farm is like a betrayal of the past and my children’ (May 2017).

The poor living conditions and lack of any prospect for a better life led to a feeling of despondency which is reflected in the responses in all the interviews. The interviews showed that the critical point here is that the lack of governance and poverty makes localities the focus of emotional dissatisfaction, national inequality, separation, and isolation from more equal distribution of human capital elsewhere. Local dissatisfaction is the focus theme of emotional reactions, especially from those who were interviewed who felt disadvantaged in developing their lives. This has produced fear of living in this situation and of the future, and the feeling of powerlessness to deal with these disadvantages.

Several notable issues emerge in identifying the buffer zones’ condition both physically and emotionally. Several disadvantages have caused different kinds of poverty, with the absence of welfare leading to problematic migration, famine, and

multiple difficulties in the farmers' lives. The deficiencies have aroused considerable emotional themes of anger, dissatisfaction, annoyance, and disappointment with the authorities and with their everyday life conditions.

### **Pasargadae: Place Experience**

Further to the previous sections on the town's deficiencies and local daily activities, it became clear that locals are under pressure from the conditions both physically and emotionally.

The data used in this section comes from the observations, visuals, and interviews that revealed the main concerns. The people in this town have been under multiple physical risks that have resulted from the inadequate and undefined government planning. The findings show:

- Loss of their land (farms and gardens) caused by drought and lack of government water management.
- Lack of government support such as adequate investment in infrastructure, town facilities, services, employment opportunities, and health care.
- Lack of government support to enhance the local quality of life and to eliminate overt poverty leading to the observed increase of migration, unemployment, and poverty, and finally leading to emotional problems due to loss of a sense of belonging to the place.
- Lack of professional skills and training in areas such as in creativity and in entrepreneurial skills or in cultural awareness in the mentioned heritage sectors.
- Lack of effective control of the local daily activities related to developing industrial agriculture or switching to other activities and seeking employment opportunities in other places, on the part of different laws, authorities and international, national, and state organisations.

- Uncontrolled, undefined and inadequate government development plans such as that of the Sivand Dam<sup>7</sup> construction by the government and its effect on the climate change, the physical and the chemical effects, such as fog formation and raising the relative humidity, increased surface evaporation, rising groundwater levels, changing lands, damage of native species and the natural resources and ecosystem change of aquatic organisms (Heydari, Othman & Noori, 2013).

- Destruction of the historical and archaeological sites.

These categories have been derived from the fieldwork, the interviews, documentation, and in-depth observation. There are some critical points here that reveal emotional effects (Thrift, 2008) under the surface. Through the interviews, locals claimed that they were suffering from:

- Economic pressures on the local people who were relying on their land for making a living, which caused an increasing sense of ignorance and exclusion.
- Poverty and inequality increased emotional dissatisfaction.
- The power dominance and control exerted by international and national heritage institutions and other governmental authorities caused an increasing sense of loss of freedom, anger, and a high level of conflict and dissonance.

It was previously mentioned in this study that agriculture has a long history and tradition as the main source of the income in this area. The agricultural activities were key to forming the human habitation of Pasargadae and were an ancient feature of the historical town. The themes from the data described how agricultural activities were important in shaping the social structures in Pasargadae's local life and framing relationships with other people and with their place. However, issues such as the

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<sup>7</sup> In the water resources management field, Iran started to construct large dams such as Sivand Dam unprofessionally and without regard for the historical places. The Sivand Dam construction greatly affected the local environment. It is located 80 kilometres north of Shiraz and is near to the historical site of Pasargadae.

inadequacy of local governance, physical risks of climate change, strict heritage regulation, and limitation of land-use changes, put substantial pressure on people's everyday lives, with no choice but to shift to other cities and start life from the beginning again.

Place and absence of place demonstrate the power of place over people's lives that is exercised through different aspects of heritage regulations, limitations, government deficiencies and controls, uncontrolled governmental economic development plans, and ignorance of local people's rights.

The challenges were met by the locals switching from their agricultural activities to such small businesses as small groceries, vendors, or working for other small businesses in the town (though in this endeavour they were found to be unsuccessful). For example, from the interviews with shopkeepers 6, 8, 9, 11, 18, 21, 28: 'One of the important behaviours of tourists through the main path to the tomb is the speed of their walking and their heedlessness of visiting the town or even purchasing from our shops; it makes it difficult for us to develop our businesses'. (December 2016 and May 2017) (See Figure 4.6).



**Figure 4. 6: Speed of walking and lack of tourist attractions in buffer zone**

Visitors usually pass through the town very quickly (Figure 4.6), moving from where they have parked their cars directly to the site. They are uninterested in visiting the town because there are no attractions to see and not many suitable places to rest and spend their leisure time.

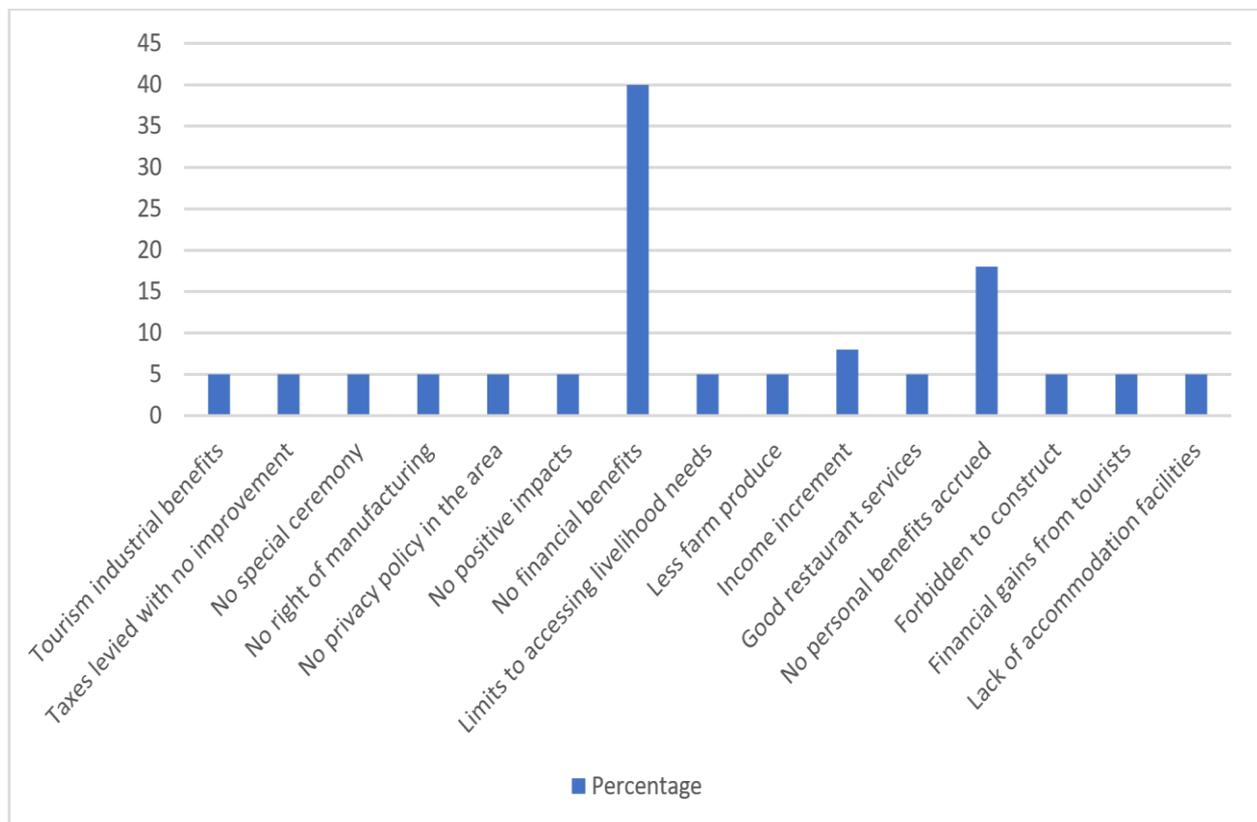
From the interviews with shopkeepers 6, 8, 9, 11, 18, 21, 28: 'As owners of the small businesses in the Pasargadae town, we are disappointed and desperate about our future development. We have a hard economic situation, especially with the new conditions of Iran sanctions and lack of tourism industry damaging our life on the one hand and causing national hardship on other hand. The interviews with owners showed that the percentage of failing small businesses has considerably increased because of problems like the indifference of tourists and the government and the failures of town planning. Most shopkeepers would prefer to develop their small business as a way of attracting tourism. However, since there is no government support, they have no expectation or hope of bettering their living conditions in the future.

From responses by respondents (6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 18, 21, 28): 'Common reasons for small businesses' failures are lack of funding and inefficient management programs in this historical place. How can we develop our businesses when we have no support? We are unsuccessful in meeting tourists' demands when they enter this heritage area'. Conversely, owners very much want to go back to their traditional and historical agricultural activities, though this is risky because of the changes that have occurred with the climate, the drought, the limitations and controls, and government failures to apply risk management strategies. My close observation of the conditions shows why the locals express high levels of dissatisfaction and a strong sense of abandonment.



**FIGURE 4. 7: BARREN AND UNUSED LAND**

Figure 4.7 shows barren land conditions that are due to damage to the environment, lack of effective governmental planning, poor facilities, and a general lack of support that affects farming life. The result is that the agricultural lands have been lost or left unused. Table 4. 4: Impacts of living in Proximity to the Monuments



The deficiencies and inadequate local living conditions have emotional impacts on the people inside the heritage buffer zone. Table 4.4 presents the important effects of the monument identified through the interviews. The emergent themes relate to the livelihood of the local people, such as lack of financial and personal benefits from tourism, and having no right to manufacture products or to change use of land or develop agricultural industries within the vicinity. When we observe the real-life capacities of this town as both an ancient place and a heritage buffer zone, the visible issues that affect the locals are evident: there is a lack of tourism services and a failure to address the needs of the locals to provide accommodation, tourist facilities and food; the underlying circumstances are lack of income from tourist attractions and unused agricultural capacities. All these failures contribute to the dispiriting conditions experienced by the locals in this historical town, aggravated by the lack of sensitivity of outsiders and ongoing economic hardship without hope of improvement. The locals particularly complained of not benefitting from the historical buffer zone through the tourism industry and also of the endangerment of their traditional agricultural activities. This is based on the information provided in the interviews by many participants.

Participants 5 and 10 (local residents) asserted: ‘On the one hand we have not received any benefits from the heritage site and on the other hand our agriculture is endangered, and our traditional lifestyle has been changed. Many people have left here and some of the houses have been used as summer houses by a drug user. Our children have left the town and are seeking for jobs in other cities. We are in hardship conditions. Our agricultural activities will disappear if the authorities don’t manage the conditions better. We have lost hope for the future. We are so disappointed, and it is not a good experience for us, living in these hard conditions’. He expressed all the words angrily.

The recurring themes of disappointment and dissatisfaction were uncovered through the interviews from people who are dependent on this place and feel strong affection for it.

Similar emotions are expressed in the tourists' voices. An interviewee in a family of tourists said: 'An important attraction of this place is the special features of the ancient essence of this town. There is a good opportunity for this town to participate in the heritage culture that has become more attractive to potential tourists, but unfortunately nothing is here. (Group interviews, family). Another tourist (participant 30) said: 'I came from the south of Iran to visit this site and its surroundings as a heritage city and its traditional agriculture, but I was shocked. This heritage town is not a place for staying overnight. I am so grateful for this historical site, but the surrounding area did not (positively) affect me. I would not be interested to visit this town again'.

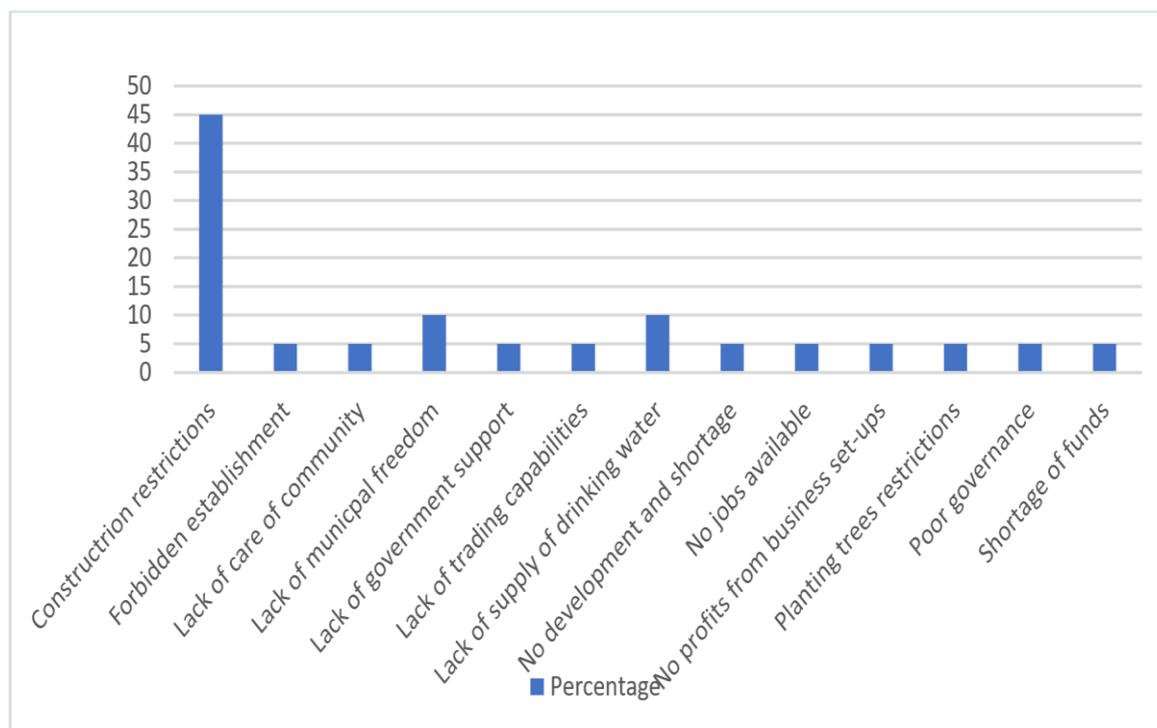
Participant 16 (city council agent) said: 'Most residents have been waiting for a new town plan that has been called 'Hadi'—a plan made by different government authorities. A conflict arose among the different heritage authorities who had developed policies and guidelines relating to external impacts on the local area and the agricultural activities on one side, where there is a high level of local dissatisfaction. This serious issue of unpleasant relationships between locals and the heritage authorities has brought many local complaints about the loss of residential amenities'.

The interviews indicated that the local people of Pasargadae are going through a complex process of reviewing their ideas about the liveability of the buffer zone, and reflecting on their own lives and emotional experiences within the place and its meanings.

The themes that emerge from an examination of the challenges in protecting the area are construction restrictions, lack of municipal freedom to build homes, lack of government support for local loans, lack of agricultural supplies and drinking water,

lack of a risk management strategy, and people’s ignorance of the tourism industry (see Table 4.5).

**TABLE 4. 5: CHALLENGES IN THE ZONES**



A local interviewee (19) said: ‘Because of the heritage limitations and the municipality, we cannot build freely on our land or switch to other activities and have not been supported by government funds’.

Another local with a bachelor’s degree, Interviewee 17 (unemployed), stated: If the government receives funding and a legacy that says we are under UN supervision, all these limitations will help to make money from the city and create jobs related to tourists. We will have more security. For example, I cannot now advise my children to stay here and run a business or build a house. I have not enough money and know nothing about the future in this town. I am in a quandary. I can’t even go for my traditional job. I would like to stay in my homeland because we have buried our great

grandparents and our ancestors here. On the one hand, we cannot go anywhere else and on the other hand, this is not a good and suitable place for our children’.

The Pasargadae population has continuously suffered from these conditions, especially from governmental ignorance and perceived indifference. The alienation that the Pasargadae residents have felt across their region emerged strongly in both interviews and observations.

The lack of clarity in heritage and other government authorities’ plans, control mechanisms, political sensitivity, the pressure of uncontrolled and inadequate economic governmental development, environmental impacts, and a lack of risk management strategy, all create a highly sensitive situation in the heritage area at Pasargadae, besides having effects on the historical and rural character of the heritage buffer zone landscape.

The interviews showed that residents are suffering from their embattled economic conditions and emotions of separation, homesickness and placelessness (using the concept of Ralph, 1976). Locals complained that they do not have equal access to employment opportunities, and they do not receive support from agricultural services or other government funded support to develop their businesses in heritage activities and renovate their houses.

They expressed that they felt excluded from everyday life activities. Interview 24 (local farmer) said: ‘Inadequate and unclear heritage policies and governmental authorities including the national and heritage laws are all obstacles in our daily life and we have not received any benefit from those laws’.

From my field notes: ‘During my interview, the questions often led them to lose control over their harsh words and actions. I did not ask them to control their anger.’ (May 2017). That is, their emotions were strongly expressed.

The local’s anger and emotional and physical hardship indicate a problematic process of alienation or exclusion and a sense of placelessness (using Ralph, 1976) or of being

out of place. These issues were observed in people's lives and status in town of Pasargadae and expressed in their use of harsh words in the interviews.

Pasargadae buffer zone has emerged as a space dominated by international conventions, national laws, and other heritage authorities, all reflecting a neglect of the needs of the people, including tourists and locals, and elevated levels of conflict and dissatisfaction. Conflicts of interest and power are characteristic of conflict zones such as this field study. Following Lefebvre (1991), it could be considered that Pasargadae town has been occupied and controlled by several political forces. The town has been monitored by the national and international heritage legislations. Pasargadae town heritage conservation plan has been designed through international, national and local principles. The heritage conservation is currently one of the most challenging management issues in Pasargadae due to the local's rights in the town. Interview 17 (local): 'There is not adequate potential plan that can recover people everyday life and our traditional activities, we cannot feel freedom. We are disappointed'.

It is also notable that Iran has been led by Islamic clerical since the revolution in 1979 who are not interested in the value of Iranian cultural heritage and national identity to support economic instruments and requirements that improve education, local engagement and active involvement in the historical town management. Therefore, the local interest in the environmental, social, political and economic sustainability of the town has been ignored and controlled and administrated by power dominance of government.

During the second fieldwork session (May 2017) and ethnographic observation through walking and talking, the questions focused on seeking a deeper understanding of the complex issues of Pasargadae town and the present quality of the buffer zone from an examination of the locals' viewpoints and through employing deep gazing. The fieldwork was guided mainly by considering the current conditions and people's

resistive patterns of behaviour, everyday life, and feelings in the context of all the vague and unstable characters of the buffer zone. The aim here was to understand the effect of the complex challenges and pressures on locals and to explore means that would allow for the transformation of the conditions of the place.

### **Pasargadae Town: A Place of Transition**

The key themes uncovered here supported the analysis of the undefined land use condition, the exclusion of the community from decision making, ambiguous, restrictive, unplanned carelessness about town conditions, and the negative impacts on people's emotions and behaviour. The themes were uncovered through interviews and observation and revealed both physical and emotional perspectives.

It is worth remembering that, for over 3000 years now, the region has been inhabited by pastoralists who were nomadic in nature. An examination of the entire village revealed the agricultural features that have had a long history in shaping the natural Pasargadae zone context (Behbahani, Bahrami & Samani, 2010). The presence of the heritage archaeological sites of Pasargadae defines the importance of the whole area, including its buffer zone. The town of Pasargadae has been regarded as an old traditional agricultural field where the main source of livelihood for the people was farming. However, various pressures have affected this landscape. This study acknowledges that agricultural activities are important in shaping social structures and the lives of the local people in Pasargadae and framing relationships with other people and with their place. This section examines those themes from different perspectives, interpreting how local people experience the new and complex processes within the Pasargadae heritage zone to frame and understand the emotional experiences of their lives, place, and meanings.

Across the years, the changes have been felt throughout the population and have effected structural changes in the natural, economic, political, and social contexts of the villages. Breaks and interruptions have affected the natural and cultural sequences

across the region (Behbahani, Bahrami & Samani, 2010). The presence of agricultural equipment indicates that people in the area have farmed as their main source of income and livelihood since ancient times. The exercise of the heritage authorities has many shortcomings that sabotage farming activities.

The restrictive heritage laws have brought changes in the environment that have had a profound impact on the daily lives and practices of people. Among the greatest issues are the Sivand Dam. Sivand Dam has significant flooding episodes that wreak destruction throughout the region. For this reason, various routes are utilised for migration by nomadic pastoralists in search of newer opportunities. Climate changes compound the effect of the heritage regulations and make agriculture even riskier and will have greater impacts in the future.

Throughout the interviews, people expressed that they looked to the non-agricultural economy to provide them with new, more secure and different opportunities. These tribes have remained alive to the cultural memories by maintaining their way of life and rituals.

Some dwell in tents while their cattle go through the Parse–Pasargadae area biannually. The nomadic lifestyle of these people has had an intimate relationship with the natural environment and seeks to maintain itself across the entire empire. The modern-day pastoralists belong to Oashqai and Basseri tribal groups. They are known as dry farmers across the plains of the region. The interference of climate change and government regulations across the entire landscape has had irreparable impacts on the unity and consistency of the cultural landscape (Behbahani, Bahrami & Samani, 2010).

Industry and technology are pervasive contexts for changes across the population. Pastures and agricultural farms have been replaced by cottages, vendors, roads, and workshops, which have distorted the natural and cultural landscape of the region. In the Marghab plain, the mountain–plain area has permanent and seasonal flows of

several water-courses running through the region. The change from the pastoral conditions of the region has had a distinct effect; most native plants have been destroyed in the region (Behbahani, Bahrami & Samani, 2010).

The resuscitative flow of the Polvar (Sivand) River has linked the historical plains from ancient times; however, underground water levels have changed because of the action of the dam and climate changes. Several villages in the region have managed to thrive for ages as birthplaces of human civilisation between the mountains and the plains that spread across the Pasargadae area. Presently, the natural area of the plains has been covered by farming lands that are irrigated through both vertical and horizontal water canals which branch out of the Polvar (Sivand) River. Most of these areas have been brought under dryland farming and utilised by the pastoralists in the area. Lands have been planted along the migration route (Behbahani, Bahrami & Samani, 2010). Most people have left their homeland to survive and improve their financial situation, looking for better living conditions because of pressure from heritage authorities and drought. This has caused huge changes in the demographics of the town. Most locals (such as interviewees 3, 4, 10, 18 and 21) made comments such as: ‘There is no other option for us—we have to change our minds about staying here. We are disappointed now compared to how it was in the past’.

Farming is important in determining the nature of the landscape, towns, villages, and other landscape features that are equally integral in nature. The cultural landscape running through the ecosystem cuts across the various regions (Behbahani, Bahrami & Samani, 2010). Pasargadae has responded to various natural and cultural challenges by changing the traditional agricultural features of the town. The farmers complained that there is significant potential for farming, but issues such as: the lack of government strategies for managing dangerous level of drought and climate change; inadequate government development such as appropriate dam construction; lack of government funded support for agricultural activities; unclear heritage laws and

regulations; the restrictions of heritage laws on the use of agricultural mechanisation in farming; carelessness about the dead lands; and exclusion of communities in decision making, all put their land in danger.

In interviews 4, 25 and 26, local farmers said: Our lands face a number of serious risks. There are not the risk-management tools from the town planners and heritage authorities that put our agriculture activities in danger. The heritage authorities shape patterns of the land use in this town. We have not involved in our town decision making. We are facing with many challenges such as lacking the agricultural resources, technical support, training or a supportive governmental planning and fund or any policy to help us them in our farming activities.'

Farmer 25 continued: 'The prohibitive heritage policies identified what is appropriate or desirable for heritage conservation and what are illegal farming activities.'

The main activity of farming has been suspended for other activities such as peddlers and shopkeepers. The locals look at the different ways of living in this area and switch to other jobs. The themes emerging from the data are around how occupation and use of the land and exploitation of its natural resources have transformed. A farmer interviewed (Interview 4, local farmer) said: 'I lost my land. Can you see my farming equipment outside of my land behind the door? There is good potential for the tourism industry here, but we have not been involved. Sometimes we can rent our rooms to a few tourists for a couple of nights, but there is nothing here to attract tourists to stay more than one or two nights'.

This kind of informal hospitality has been growing between people who were farmers before.

There is ambiguity in the land-use history from the perspectives of the locals and heritage organisations, particularly inside the protected heritage zone. The following interviews reflect this. Interviewees 25 and 26 (farmers), stated: 'There are vague and uncertain land-use laws in this heritage buffer zone; we have been waiting for new

heritage decision-making for many years and unfortunately every day we lose our hope and become more disappointed’.

Interviewee 20 (local): ‘We challenge undefined international processes with national laws and institutions that all put our farms under pressure and raised unsolved tensions between us and heritage authorities’.

Interviewee 27 (farmer): ‘The lack of clarity of laws about our activities in the town and on our lands creates uncertainty and dissatisfaction for a wide range of locals. If farming and using the agricultural technologies or switching to any other activities are found to be illegal under the heritage laws, then what should we do instead of our traditional lifestyle? We are under vague conditions and often found to be excluded in decision making or lacking in our democratic rights. The conflict between the community residents and conservation groups and heritage authorities is a result of the exclusion of our participation in our town’s decisionmaking’.

The analysis of data clarifies what has been neglected, either socially or concerning the local community and town residents' features. These data represent the social dimensions that complicate the definition of important features. The data analysis here defines the most important features in the daily practices and their meanings in the buffer zones that cause changes in both physical and emotional dimensions.

**TABLE 4. 6: PLANS TO REMAIN IN THE TOWN**

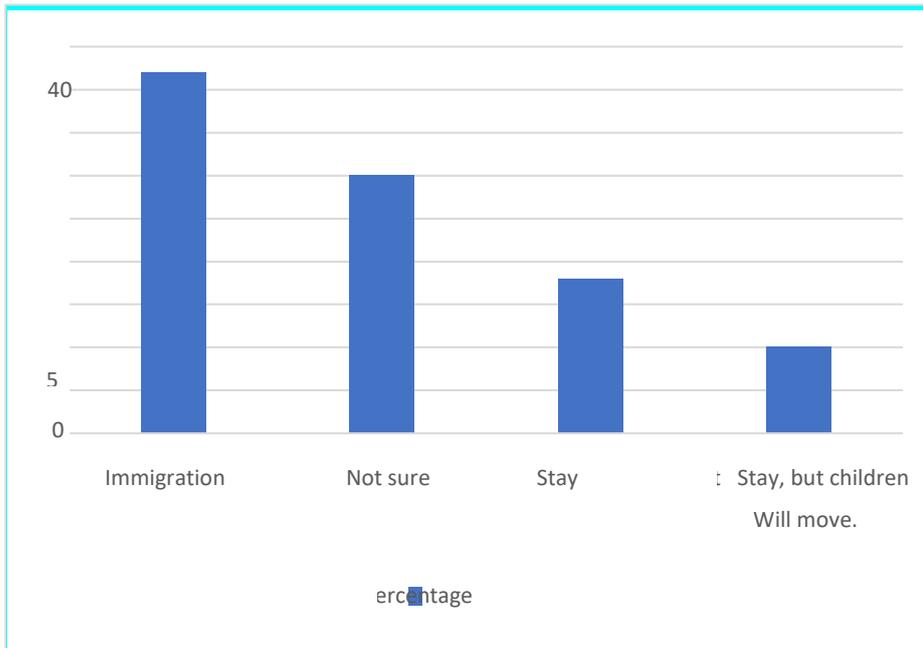


Table 4.6 reflects the responses from participants. They were asked about their plans for remaining in the city. The question was: ‘what is your plan for your residential future here under the present conditions?’ Most participants had difficulty in answering this question, which sought to know whether they planned to migrate or wanted to stay in the context of the town’s future. I repeated this question in my two fieldwork sessions (December 2016 and May 2016) and received the same responses. Interview 18 and 19: ‘We do not know who makes decision for our town and what about? or how? and when? We are not notified when they start to do something, no notification, no consultation, just we see something may be happening. Can you imagine how we struggle in our daily life? How can we trust our future and endure these conditions?’

The lack of consultation with the local community about effective conservation or town management contributed to the loss of sense of place among the local communities and misunderstandings about the processes of town planning.

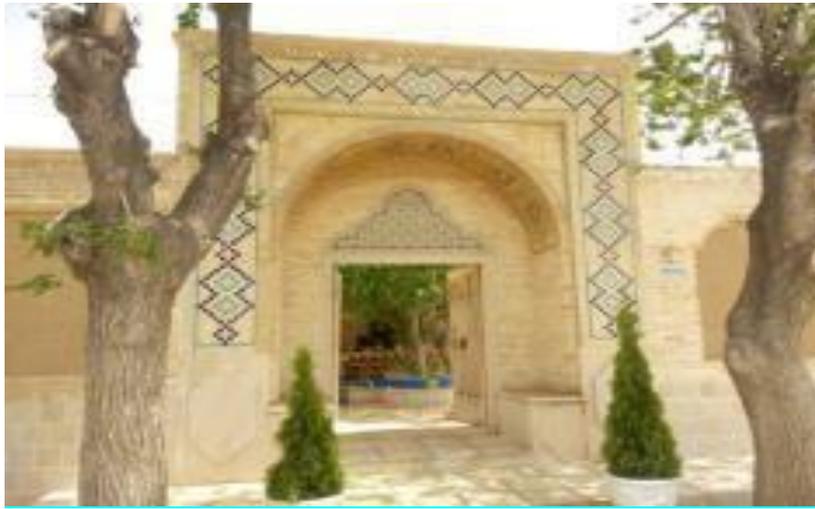
Interviewee 21, a local, stated: 'I am no longer able to emigrate from here, but my plan for my children's future is to try to send them wherever jobs and income are available with a stable life condition'.

Interviewees 6, 7, 10 and 14 (locals) answered, 'we are confused and do not know.'

Most interviews (43% of participants) with farmers found that they would like to switch to a non-farming economy or to migrate to other cities, but they were unable to change their land use based on the heritage limitations and limited funds and the lack of trade for small businesses as well from tourists. They said that there was a huge rural-to-urban migration, with youths and adults from rural areas moving to cities to find better jobs and provide better opportunities for living by starting and running their businesses or working for others in factories.

On the other hand, the interviews with shopkeepers who had businesses such as small groceries expressed the same problems as farmers who had lost their lands. One shopkeeper (Interviewee 6) said that 'we cannot improve our small businesses because of the lack of support from the government, unstable buffer zone conditions, and unclear heritage regulations. Owners do not know if there will be future heritage and authority legislation to improve business conditions or switch back to their traditional farming activities; so, they opt for other job opportunities. But they said that their small businesses were at risk, as there was no improvement in the area, and they did not know about the future'.

Figure 4.8 below shows the only traditional restaurant in the town that has followed the traditional pattern. But they said that their business was not doing well, and they were unsure about the future.



**FIGURE 4. 8: THE ONLY TRADITIONAL STYLE RESTAURANT**

These findings show that the people of Pasargadae are not satisfied with the conditions of the area and their solution is to migrate to other cities. There is no clear, stable situation inside the buffer zone, which has become a place of considerable ambiguity and uncertainty. The key themes that emerged were that people inside the town of Pasargadae are living in unstable and uncertain conditions that impact the depth of the emotional connections between locals and their homeland conditions so that they cannot decide to stay or move. Their identity, the sense of belonging and meaning attached to their living area, is beset by insecurity. The local struggles and dissatisfaction with their everyday lives and practices complicate the meanings and spiritual value attached to the place they live in. They are proud of their origin, but this pride is afflicted by conflict and dissatisfaction.

The main challenge is to understand how the people's complex emotions can be supported by a different approach to understanding heritage buffer zone conditions.

Here, the key finding of data analysis is that undefined use of the land creates an ambiguous tension between the locals and heritage organisations and government authorities. The themes provide an analysis of the unknown, forgotten, ambiguous, forbidden, unplanned, ignored conditions of living in the town. The themes were uncovered through the interviews and by observing local activities and everyday life

conflicts and paradoxes within these conditions that are as negative by the people living inside the town.

Thirty in-depth interviews combined with observations and sensory walking and gazing through the town provided an understanding of the uncertainty around the continuity and sustainability of people's lives in the town today and of people's hopes and aspirations for their children's future. Changes in industrial development or land use make decisions difficult. The town exemplifies a new-old, ambiguous mixture of rural and urban. Ambiguity is inherent in the town's definition as a heritage place with a high level of control, while it still works as farmland with a high-level of spirituality and cultural meanings. The interviews and my observations help understand how these men and women have been emotionally and physically affected by the town conditions under strategies of control and limitations.

Participants expressed that they have no hope in the future. They believe that their living conditions have been forgotten and they have been excluded, living in vague, obscure conditions. In the current conditions, the people living inside heritage places have been ignored.

The magnificence of ancient Pasargadae is in stark contrast to its current abhorrent condition. Knowing the glorious local history and faced with the current situation, an educated observer experiences complex and paradoxical emotion.

People interviewed in the fieldwork sessions said that they always dream and mostly imagine their ideal past. But nostalgia has failed to unify or create a consensus view of previous traditional land use. A consensual view of previous significant glory and traditional land use has been utilised for remembrance purposes and tactical performance, but a nostalgic sense of satisfaction, cohesion and even identity and belonging in the past is challenged by the isolation and marginalisation of the community from the wider narrative of history and culture in current time. The condition of the site is a heritage in process but must be seen against the trauma,

confusion, fear, and distress in the community and their conflicted sense of identity and place.

Heritage is created or recreated by utilising the process of memories and practices of the past as a reaction to the current conditions. Pasargadae has been tasked with the maintenance and re-creation of interpersonal relations that have been knitted into the identity of the local community, their traditional farming life, and their senses of place and use of heritage. This study reveals that the conditions of the heritage site have been imperfectly constituted and there are many problems that have arisen in the community in which it is embedded.

Recalling the perspective of ancient Pasargadae can better understand the condition of the local people as they struggle to manage the complex processes arising from living near heritage—the conditions imposed by the powers controlling the heritage on the one hand and on the other, the values, materiality and meaning associated with it. By drawing from the testimonies of the locals who go through these difficult processes, by understanding their emotional experiences of this heritage place's meaning and materiality, we can arrive at a more complete understanding of their predicament.

In the light of de Certeau's (1984) iteration of 'tactics' as an adaptation to the environment which has been created by the strategies of the powerful, the Pasargadae buffer zone has a high potential for complex movements, tactics, cultural and heritage events, actions, and reactions to ambiguity, uncertainty, and instability. The Pasargadae town is a place where there are opportunities for broader engagement within the heritage, which is deeply meaningful. The role of the heritage site and its intangibilities in Pasargadae town will be explored in the following section.

## **Pasargadae: Place of Ritual**

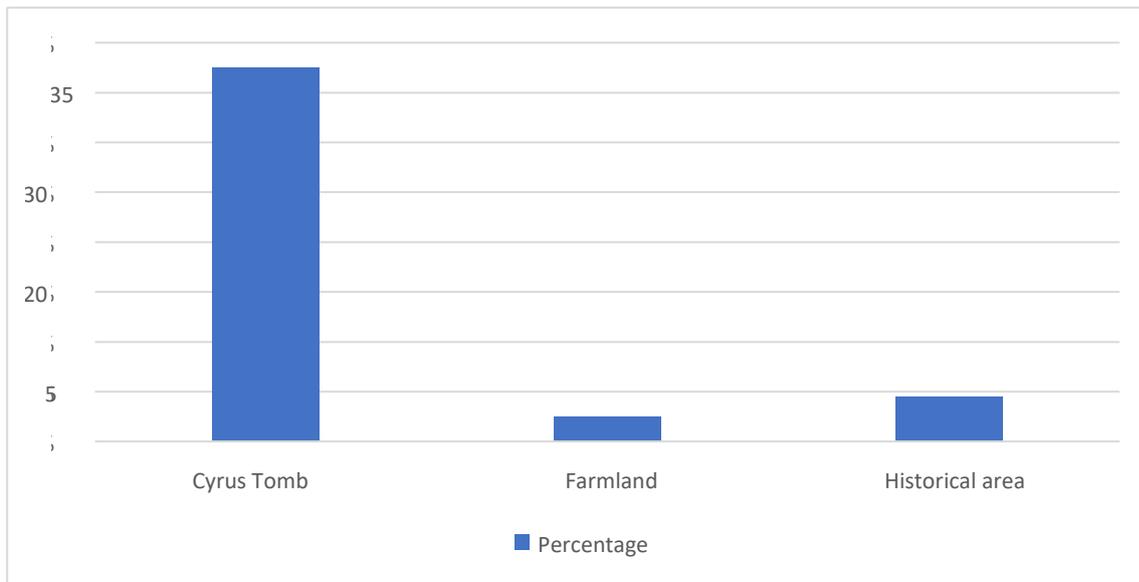
The Tomb of Cyrus is focal to the story of the Pasargadae town people. It is a significant cultural heritage site that has spiritual and intangible meanings, not only for the locals, but also nationally and internationally. This signifies the importance of Pasargadae for the people and the whole world. The Pasargadae heritage site has become the symbol of justice, power, and greatness, and Iranians' sense of identity derives from the Tomb of Cyrus and the honour of the past. The interviews conducted for this study clearly show that to the locals, the most important thing in Pasargadae is the tomb of Cyrus the Great. Locals (participants 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 18, 21, 25, 26, 28) made comments such as: 'it embraced the body of one of the greatest souls in human history, a powerful king who used his power to create a multi-cultured nation with justice, fairness, and integrity, and who gave his nation the freedom to choose their religion without 'owning people'.

The interviewees insisted on 'Cyrus as the founder of human rights' and 'founder of the system of justice in Iran's pre-Islamic era'. For example, Interviewee 5 (a resident) said: 'it reflects the greatness of Iran in the past because Cyrus was the ruler of a large part of the world. I belong to this holy place. When I become angry and hopeless, I recover by thinking of the glory of the tomb'.

Participants honour the historic site because they believe that Cyrus's ethics established the grounds for having a universal declaration of human rights, as he founded 'his empire on generosity' instead of violence and dictatorship (Bodil, 1989, p. 232). Thus, this heritage site is associated with the collective national identity and performative memory. Instances of this are found in the celebrations of Cyrus the Great's birthday and the Nowruz ceremony. Another example is the designated international day of Cyrus the Great, which is October 29. The monument is used for festivities on these occasions, and to the participants it represents the brilliance and benevolence of his soul.

There are important ritual performances on special dates, such as the birthday of Cyrus (seven of Aban, in the Iranian calendar) and the Nowruz Iranian new year celebration, which indicate that the people cherish their cultural heritage, and their memories are identified with their present wishes.

**TABLE 4. 7: EFFECTS OF RITUALS AND CUSTOM ON PEOPLE EMOTIONS 1**



The reactions of the interviewees to the important ceremonies of festivals indicate that they saw participation in these ceremonies as a tactic to create a meaningful space beside or inside a place controlled by power. Most of the interviewees, both local and tourist, said ‘the birthday of Cyrus’ when asked what the most important ceremony was. It celebrates the freedom of religion—they are free to live in any religion and take a job if they do not violate the rights that were stipulated. Also, Table 4-7 indicates the spiritual and emotional effects of Cyrus’s tomb. The heritage site reminds viewers that Cyrus the Great is celebrated as the liberator and rightful successor of the crown; he was a follower of the faith of Zoroaster. Many residents said that these national ceremonies give another meaning in the place.

Nowruz is the most widely celebrated holiday in the Islamic Republic of Iran; it is also evident that the people of Pasargadae accept its importance in their lives. Nowruz means ‘new day’, which marks the first day of the spring and the Persian New Year, and it is celebrated on the spring equinox. Nowruz and the birthday of Cyrus the Great can be seen as signs of a national resistance to the clergy and their mores through these performances. Iran’s current supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said such a ceremony is contrary to the Sharia, or Islamic law (see Figure 4.9) (Iran Focus, n.d.). People from everywhere in Iran have gathered under the banner of Cyrus the Great on his birthday in recent years. A statement from the National Council of Resistance of Iran (Iran Focus, n.d.) said that government officials place considerable pressure on Pasargadae and its surroundings for a few weeks before the ceremony of Cyrus’s birthday (7 of Aban in the Iranian calendar, 29 October). This has been represented as an illegal event that gives another feature to the town Pasargadae.

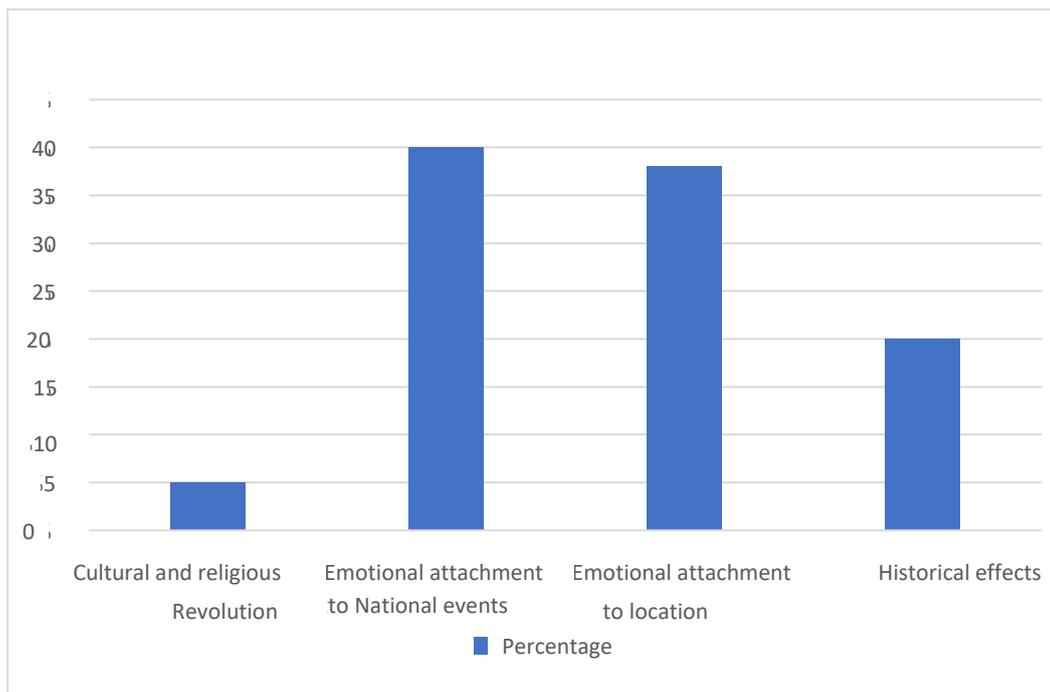


**FIGURE 4. 9: SCREENSHOT FROM IRAN FOCUS (N.D.)**

The participants (both local and tourists, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 30) expressed that these national events, such as Cyrus the Great’s birthday,

are an opportunity for the Iranian opposition who dissent to express their protest against the ruling system. A strong emergent theme is the meaningful place of protests and national debates about the current political and social conditions. These ritual ceremonies reflect the changing attitudes of people to the memories of the past and the use of the heritage to express their anger against the current conditions of the political system. This theme is associated with keeping intangible elements and rituals of the past alive and using them differently in the current days of the Iranian political system, in the struggle for Iranian rights. Many of the locals posited that these national events in the core zone directly affect their life, and they supported them. Their area is monitored during the birthday of Cyrus by government's security guards.

**TABLE 4. 8: EFFECTS OF RITUALS AND CUSTOM ON PEOPLE EMOTIONS 2**



The themes graphed in Table 4.8 show locals' emotional attachment to the events and locations that associated with the glory of the past. The attitudes of the people of Pasargadae are somewhat divided in the areas of cultural engagement and strong ritual performance. Several people felt that their culture's identity implies holding on to the culture and passing it on to the coming generation. However, several groups felt that

the cultural impact of rituals is limited by the current absence of value in the life and culture that people face in present day conditions.

Imagination is a way of collapsing the past into the future to recover from the current situation or act in opposition to current conditions. For the locals in Pasargadae, heritage elements link experience, identity, memory, and the intangibilities of the heritage site, and encourage them to struggle to improve their conditions.

Interviewee 5, a young resident, said: ‘the ceremony makes me feel good because people from all over Iran attend this ceremony and before it, the government implements a lot of security, but the people come and perform the events anyway. The town’s condition is changed by the presence of all of these people and the high security’.

Interviewee 12, a local, said: ‘I am happy with the national ceremonies of course, I am honoured by my past, but for my life, it has no particular effect, and people live in the same way as before in terms of religion and the ideals of revolution and blood of the martyrs. National pre-Islamic ritual ceremonies can be analysed as tactical performances or acts of embodied meaning and effects. Past identity has been an active ritual performance and present events and ceremonies are ritual performances mediated by the experiences of the present. These events reinterpret the past as a collective memory, which provides a refuge and resistance in the face of the present situation. Pasargadae is seen as a ritually and spiritually protected area. This potential for creating meaning can be seen in how some people make handicrafts. The locals provide some traditional tents for selling traditional foods and crafts outside the town or on the hill, to protect the cultural heritage of the place for the next generation’.

The Pasargadae heritage site creates a shared emotional experience for visitors as well as residents in ritual events. This kind of meaning-making implies the emotional effects of pre-Islamic ceremonies and culture as the main Iranian identity behind the pressures imposed by heritage and government authorities.

The representational and symbolic value of heritage in constructing and giving material reality to identity is well recognised, often articulated in terms of national identity. A great deal of critical attention has been paid to the ways in which the ideologies and practices of national identities have been consciously and unconsciously articulated and legitimised in terms of heritage ceremonies and performances in the Pasargadae site (Carrier, 2005; Crouch & Parker, 2003; Díaz-andreu & Champion, 1996; Meskell, 2002, 2003). These heritage practices represent how the heritage intangibilities create collective identities and meaningful places, and are continued and recreated in the present by people's ritual performances. Heritage both as a social process (Harvey, 2001; Smith, 2006) and as rituality provide a model for the definition and interpretation of the heritage buffer zone. This model helps us to understand the condition in the heritage zone itself. From the heritage government authorities' point of view, the story of Pasargadae has been considered as merely a tool for conservation and a protected area and activities within the site are closely monitored. The government has monitored the area for a political point of view and seen the place as a sensitive political area. The interviewees stated that government controls this area for protests. For government, this buffer zone is a place under heritage influence and administrative control and is not seen as a place of rituality and meaningful events.

The definition of a buffer zone can be confusing. There are no international treaties or conventions specifically dealing with different buffer zones' dissimilar and sometimes contrasting needs, expectations, and functions (Ebregt & Greve, 2000, p.17).

In my fieldwork, I have discovered the same ambiguity, with a buffer zone viewed as a tool to implement conventional views similar to any other buffer zone; but at the same time, it is interpreted with different meanings of intangibility and rituality. The question remained unanswered in my first fieldwork session (December 2016); does

the lack of proper and comprehensive international meaning and definition for buffer zones lead to different perceptions and descriptions of buffer zones in Pasargadae? I reviewed my findings from my first fieldwork (December 2016) and concentrated on the question in my second fieldwork (May 2017). It has been established that the Pasargadae buffer zone has complex and complicated conditions. It is analysed both as a place occupied by power and as an undefined place, a place of ambiguity, neglected and ignored on the one hand, and a place full of meaning, spirituality, and rituality in the other hand, with special characteristics. Another form of ambiguity should be considered. Is the town of Pasargadae a place only occupied by power? or it is also an abstract place (Lefebvre, 1974), a meaningful place with spirituality attached to the heritage site?

## **Protection and Management**

The analysis of questionnaires and observational data is completed in this section. It has been conducted under the themes that combine and further support each other. The presence of relevant heritage national laws and international conventions on the protection of heritage sites put the buffer zone under different pressures and controls. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, there are different sorts of heritage laws in Iran for protecting and conserving the cultural heritage of the region. The Law of Conservation of National Monuments approved on November 3, 1930 is considerable. Based on this, all the monuments registered in the National Heritage List should be under the State's protection and supervision. The protection laws are:

- The Law of Foundation of National Council of City Construction and Architecture;
- Law of City Construction and Architecture;
- Law of City Properties approved September 12, 1982;
- Law of Purchase of properties, buildings and archaeological monuments;

- The Law of City Halls; some parts of these laws regard local plans for the extension and management of village areas;
- The law of Islamic Punishments for any illegal excavations (UNESCO, 1106).

The major categories of relevant legislation concerning buffer zones are the HCAUP (The Law for establishing the Higher Council for Architecture and Urban Planning).

All urban plans, including the selected field of this study, should be confirmed by HCAUP before their approval. They are responsible for adopting urban development control regulations.

The following organisations are directly responsible for the Pasargadae site:

- ICHHTO (Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization);
- PPRF (Parse-Pasargadae Research Foundation);
- Marvdasht Cultural Heritage Organization;
- Madar-e Soleyman (Pasargadae) rural district;
- Ministry of Islamic Orientation and Culture (former Ministry of Culture and Art);
- Iran Tourism Organization;
- Fars Provincial Organization;
- Natural Resources Organization;
- Governorship (Ministry of Interior);
- Safa-Shahr City-hall;
- Prosperity Projects Organisation (UNESCO, 1106).

Pasargadae's particular plan has been prepared by the established Parse–Pasargadae Research Foundation, which is associated with the ICHHTO. The program focuses on the management of Iranian cultural heritage. It also guides the preservation of values and the significance of the archaeological and cultural landscape of the site.

However, the people of Pasargadae are waiting for a new heritage program, as it is the core of the development of appropriate conservation and presentation measures of

ancient cities and monuments. Locals are waiting to see whether the new plan will pay full attention to improving the social conditions of the local people and improving the economic, cultural, and social values of the area. The many interviews with the locals regarding the management of the town in recent years have revealed that buffer zone management has been unclear and unsatisfactory for them. It is clear that the buffer zone in Pasargadae has been considered a tool for conserving important areas of the historical site, while there has been a failure to address the development issues in the people's everyday life, the problems of farming, and the change of land use in this town and the surrounding areas. The heritage and authority plans have not provided a stable strategy for the further development and management of buffer zones by considering all the issues that people are faced with. Despite all the issues, the management of the Pasargadae buffer zone has been strictly based on conservation and protection policies.

The management of Pasargadae includes the establishment of commissions that protect the heritage site from harmful human activities around the heritage site. The intention was to prevent clandestine diggings and illegal excavations or illegal construction. The conservation plan has included examining, developing, and implementing methods for controlling the erosion resulting from a range of physical or chemical factors, environmental issues, and minimising some physical damage. The main focus of the buffer zone conservation is also on the heritage site. The result is poor governance and a lack of attention to the town and the people's lives. The management plan and management system are inadequate and not fully implemented.



**FIGURE 4. 1: THE ALLEYS IN PASARGADAE TOWN**

Looking closely at the photo in Figure 4.10, one can see that the road and pathways are badly demarcated, and the electric wires are sagging below a safe level. This is endangering people's lives and no measure has been taken to rectify the issue. We can conclude from the lack of any sign of road repair that the road authority has neglected the area. The welfare status of the town has been abandoned; this is apparent from conditions such as no running or channelled running water, the lack of power, telephone coverage network, proper sewerage disposal systems, no health services, and a lack of educational and commercial environs in the area. These conditions were illustrated through the analysis of data from interviews, where people complained about these deficiencies. People in the government have abandoned the area. The people of Pasargadae are suffering from governmental neglect and poor management. Pasargadae is revealed as a place of neglect, isolation, alienation and mismanagement.

Through the interview and my observations, it was apparent that poverty results from a lack of assets, limited economic opportunities, poor facilities, education, and capabilities. It also results from the uncontrolled and inadequate government development plans, strict legislation and heritage laws, in addition to the disadvantages rooted in social and political inequalities in this zoning area. Jobs are insecure and unregulated, there is drug abuse, especially in some summer houses that are vacant when the tourism season is over. This shows a society that has lost direction and has been impacted by government neglect.

The heritage legislations have not yet addressed or considered the creation of the buffer zones as an area of different functions and meaning for different actors. Nor have the heritage organisations and other authorities planned for a diversity-oriented approach. Therefore, the multiple buffer zone legislations have not kept pace with the new developments or conflicts. As mentioned, the most obvious feature of the Pasargadae management is the lack of development for the people, as the authorities of Pasargadae have not planned stable policies for the overall wellbeing of the people. Another close examination of the interviews helped to elicit what is missing in this buffer zone and how the people think about the place.

Interviewee 13, a local, stated: ‘due to the limitation in this municipality we cannot build freely on our land... If the government receives funding and legacy that says we are under UN supervision, all these limitations will help to make money from the city and create jobs. We will be free of doubt. For example, I cannot now leave this house for my kid. I live in doubt. Because we have buried our dead here, we cannot go somewhere else’.

Improving the management of Pasargadae’s buffer zone thorough evaluation and analysis of the conditions of the buffer zone is thus a pressing issue. It is critical to understand the concept of the buffer zone and its systematic application as a ritual and meaningful living area and, importantly, as a multifunctional place. The buffer zone

management have taken a multidisciplinary approach. Framing this buffer zone only as a protection zone for the historical site is inadequate.

Moreover, proper buffer zone management demands a process that uses a participatory approach, which also takes time to implement. The buffer zone has been managed as if it were only an important tool for conserving areas (Martin, 2008). However, Pasargadae's core historical zone not only involves agricultural production industries but also marketing for the locals. The main objection raised to a multidisciplinary planning process with all actors at various levels involved—ranging from local people to government officials at the national level—is that it takes a long time to establish a stable institutional structure for effective decision-making, when trying to apply such an inclusive approach.

By considering the condition of this town and theories of place-making, this buffer zone should be interpreted based on people's everyday practices of occupation. The missing angle here is that the approach to managing the buffer zone has ignored social place-making and failed to recognise that the local is an important actor in the construction of the changing situation.

**Summary:** The findings show that the local people of Pasargadae are under pressure from the loss of their agricultural traditions, satisfaction in their way of life, and stability. These losses manifest themselves in their disconnection from their accustomed local, cultural, and everyday practices. The Pasargadae buffer zone generates a space with an indeterminate status and ownership. Through this, there has been unclear right of access and use, which, being undefined, transmits this quality to the social structure and everyday life. The fieldwork points to an ambiguity that undermines everyday life and people's activities in the buffer zone. The findings showed that the buffer zone suffers from many tensions that may be associated with dissonance, power, and strict bureaucratic regulations. Division, boundaries, isolation,

exclusion, and neglect create a transitional, unstable condition in this town. The ambiguity and uncertainty of the buffer zone, its uncertain state, and the tight control of place by international and governmental organisations, all create a condition in which doubt, dissatisfaction, disconnection, loss of traditional lifestyle, lack of concern from the government, and unstable conditions are the realities on the ground. On the other hand, the buffer zone is a place of cultural values and intangibilities.

Pasargadae has been represented here as both a place of ambiguity and uncertainty and a place where rituality is performed. It is also in a state of transformation and tension between the ambiguity of place, confusion, and disorientation and its inheritance as place of rituality.

Living in and experiencing different spaces means that residents become active in reproducing and constructing the spaces around them. From this point of view, the constructing and shaping of the buffer zone cannot be only in the abstract because it should be understood from within the relative social space. It is understood that Pasargadae town is shaped by strong, meaningful, intangible heritage and rituality that people use to create special and different, oppositional, tactical ritual performances in the core zone area that turn this town buffer zone into a new condition of meaning and transformation as well.

The next field work session will provide this research with more rich data. The selected data from the second field study will be examined and interpreted to answer the research questions.

## **Chapter 5: Fieldwork Presentations, Case study 2: Sheikh Safi Al-Din Khānegāh and Shrine Ensemble (SKSEA)**

### **Data Analysis**

#### **Introduction**

After collecting data from Pasargadae fieldwork and interpreting the first case study's qualitative data and strategies for analysis, this chapter presents the second case study data analysis developed by collecting data from the field study of SKSEA as sources of evidence for interpretation. The collected data are in the form of graphics, images, and a selection of interviews and texts, which, after proper analysis, are expected to clarify thinking and to add substance to this study. The qualitative data analysis is interpretative, and the objective is to discover new viewpoints about the buffer zone condition with this additional case study. The techniques, strategies, and procedures have been developed to inform this study's findings. This chapter begins with the data presentation, and proceeds to analyse the data in the context of the relevant theories' frameworks.

#### **Context**

It is important to understand that the heritage site of SKSEA has some exceptional global significance. The site is a Sufi example of Islamic architecture with significant heritage value (UNESCO, 2010, list 1345) and ideological and intellectual values that are manifested in the structure. Architectural techniques and methods have been credited to the Safavid dynasty, whose only base is believed to have been the Khānegāh and shrine ensemble of Sheikh Safi al-din. It is the heir to

the human values of the earlier credos in Sufism (UNESCO, 2010, list 1345). SKSEA is rich in architectural and conceptual acts and, importantly, symbols from the Shia denomination of Islamic religion and mystics, which can be examined in the artworks of the ensemble (UNESCO, 2010, list 1345). Therefore, the heritage site performs several valuable functions for the public and commerce.

The geographical situation of the SKSEA buffer zone extends up to more than two hectares from its core zone. The buffer zone has two distinct areas, buffer zone 1 and 2, that together constitute the buffer and landscape zone of SKSEA. The size of zones 1 and 2 is 10 hectares each. Legally, projects concerning protected monuments in Iran need to be approved and supervised by ICHHTO, which is the authority in charge of the protection of Iranian monuments (UNESCO, 2010, list 1345).

The management framework established for the nominated property integrates the regulations for SKSEA and the provisions of the Ardabil master plan (UNESCO, 2010, List 1345). The provisions for the core, buffer, and landscape zones relate to the master plan and other planning instruments in force for Ardabil. These provisions include information on the approval and enforcement of a time frame, and its relationship with the core, buffer, and landscape zones defined for the nominated property. The proposed regulations and zones listed in the master plan revision were expected to be implemented in late September 2010 (UNESCO, 2010, List 1345). The conservation plan has been established to control the limitations and permitted development rights within World Heritage Sites. Therefore, the heritage conservation plan was intended to control the changes which over time could erode the SKSEA'S authenticity, integrity, and its characteristics (UNESCO, 2010, List 1345).

As mentioned, the conservation strategies have considered the protection of the heritage site and focused on problems and best practices concerning buffer zones and

issues related to the integrity of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List (UNESCO, 2010, List 1345). But the report from ICHHTO (2009) represented that there are still many problems in the heritage site of SKSEA; for example, in 2009, ICHHTO reported that the destruction of parts of Shahidgāh<sup>8</sup> and the construction of walkways has damaged the gardens of residents. The current pressures to develop this region led to significant damages. Even during the two trips for fieldwork, operations were underway to expand urban facilities inside the buffer zone. This included excavations for installing gas and water pipes. These activities harmed the sections beneath the passageways, which may contain historical relics and historical information. Additionally, constructions inside the buffer zone adjacent to this ensemble are likely to affect it adversely.

ICHHTO (2009) reported that a firm set of rules and regulations regarding new constructions has strictly controlled the area, and the schemes and programs included in the detailed and comprehensive plans for the city of Ardebil should be regarded as a form of protection plan for SKSEA. The issues show that the report by ICHHTO that the well-preserved condition of the ensemble is satisfactory, based on the assessment of cultural heritage experts, needs to be questioned by considering the exclusion of the local people from the inspection. During the fieldwork investigation, one of the issues raised was the role of local authorities that do not have the power to be involved in the protection and any other management plans for the historic environment of SKSEA.

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<sup>8</sup> The Shahidgāh (c 1502) is a part of the heritage site cemetery that occupies the east and south sides of the Shrine. (UNESCO nominated site)

It is important to observe who holds the power and can set the strategies (de Certeau, 2004) to manage these sites and buffer zones, and who experiences daily living in the buffer and landscape zones and does not have power to make any decisions. Several other issues have raised questions about the meaning, ownership, power management and the effects of planning on the daily lives of people inside the zoning areas.

The questions have been remained unanswered; does this mean that, by continuing the conservation measures outlined in the ICHHTO report, the condition continues to be same? Could the condition affect people's daily lives? Does the buffer zone condition cause damage to the quality or character of the site selected for the case study? What is important in the buffer zone and why? How can the heritage buffer zone area be identified, used, and interpreted from different point of views through analysis of the data?

## **Demographic Information**

Demographic information about the population inside the buffer zone was largely unclear. Unclear information regarding the SKSEA buffer and landscape zone density and the development projects was clearly an issue during the fieldwork and after it; as a result, there is no clear information on the growth of the buffer zone area and the region's population.

The request for demographic information on the buffer zone from the official heritage site has not been successful. Sociodemographic characteristics of the buffer zone, including population, age, education, gender, and income were sought through the web sites of the official organisations. The digitisation of this information appears not to be a priority for the heritage buffer zone, regardless of its unique cultural and historical status. Moreover, the women's role in formation of the city has been

ignored. It was hard to engage women in the semi- structured interviews, but eventually, the pool of interviewees, in terms of gender, was balanced by engaging the women in a friendly chat using the same questions as for the men.

The fieldwork commenced with the sensory ethnography stage, which involved walking and taking field notes and photographs, and conducting interviews.

I used the technique of gaze when I walked through the buffer zone to capture important elements of this place. The first phase of gazing was surprising, as there were no signs to inform people that they were entering an ancient place: SKSEA. It was somewhat confusing for the people unfamiliar with the region. However, the observation was undertaken by considering the important traces during the two fieldworks (December 2016 and May 2017).

## **Observation**

This section describes my observations in general while conducting the fieldwork for this case study through data gathering, along with the problems and emotions which I encountered. In fact, my observations helped me to better understand the buffer zone's characteristics from various perspectives.

At the beginning, it was difficult to take field notes; I was faced with a variety of features that, in most cases, could have diverse and sometimes opposite meanings, functions, and characters. My field notes were a bit messy and scattered, since numerous elements in the buffer zone were not in harmony with the fabric of the heritage place and sometimes were not related to each other. I stayed in the main street inside the core zone for hours and used the technique of gazing to find clear features of the buffer zone. I was disappointed in my first fieldwork (December 2016).

There were so many different elements that I could not organise them under a specific category. I was confused about this place and the variety of its numerous functions. I even wondered if I could manage to observe this buffer zone, and if I could, which perspectives could help me to analyse the area. I asked myself how I could be involved with the place, and started to gather the data and analyse the different kinds of information.

I decided to go for the second fieldwork trip (May 2017) and stay a bit longer. The second time around, I organized the trip with a friend of mine, to help me capture photos from some distinct events inside the buffer zone and get a deeper understanding of this place and its role. I planned to do this observation in order to compare the second data with my first fieldwork data (collected in December 2016). I tried to redefine my questionnaire in my second fieldwork, because many questions that were unanswered in my first fieldwork were related to issues like the relationship between the buffer zones and the heritage site, important characteristics of the buffer zones, importance of the environment, functional abilities of the buffer zones, different users and interpretation, appearance of the heritage sites, and some other elements of the place. I also asked my friend, who was a local, to be my translator and help me to understand the place better.

I started the observation from the same point as in my first fieldwork (December 2016) and experienced the place for the second time (May 2017). Following Pink (2015), the sensory fieldwork in both my trips involved a reliance on many senses, such as touch, smell and sight. I walked with my friend and watched the alleys, discussed the style of the buildings, the materials used, traditional life style, foods, their daily life, religion, mosques, and traffic, while smelling the aromas wafting out from food shops, mixed with the sounds emanating from the mosques. I felt the cold weather in winter

(December 2016) and the cool winds of spring (May 2017) from the mountains in the city, while touching and feeling the walls of the alleys in my fieldworks during both these seasons.

As part of the gaze stage, in the second visit, I walked with my friend along sidewalks of the main street (called Mellat Street) where the SKSEA is located, and later, the alleys around the site within the buffer zone to conduct interviews and take photographs. My friend explained about the building and its value for the locals. In both my fieldwork visits, I had the same feelings about this heritage site as at the beginning, but I was more confident in my second fieldwork (May 2017) because I was visiting the site for the second time and reviewing the data from the first visit. Therefore, I knew what I had missed in my first visit, and that I needed to observe many things this time. I started to review what I got in my first fieldwork. I found that the SKSEA heritage site was described as highly artistic and architectural (UNESCO, 2010, List 1345), and was set inside a complex area with religious, everyday, and commercial characteristics. This masterpiece is an excellent representation of the symbols of Sufism and Shia from the Safavid period (c. 1597-1722 A.D) (Keyvani,1980). This was evident in the site's artworks as well.

What is noticeable in the main street is the effect of Sufism and the Shia tradition. The SKSEA is an artistic building and its physical function is a place for worship, but at the present time, its major effect on the whole character of the main street could be felt. This street can be considered as one of the key features of the identity of the city of Ardebil; socially and physically, I could observe many significant and unique architectural and urban features as well as traditional shops and foods in this street. This area of the city is the old area of Ardebil. The street is the heart and social centre

of the city, filled with religious spaces, mosques and traditional shops (December 2016 and May 2017).

My local friend pointed out that this street and the old Bazaar of Ardebil in the city's historical area has a quite dense collection of traditional shops and buildings. He mentioned that the street's neighbourhood used to enjoy a stable economic growth, but in current times, economically, this place has lost its prosperity.

An interview with a tourist (Participant 13) showed that the combination of the meanings, intangible influences (Sufi and Shia elements) and decorative elements of the site affected her. Both visitors and locals expressed that they feel spiritual about the historical site, especially in the main street (Zone 1). This heritage site has various characteristics in terms of intangibility, political status, residents' livelihood, Shia religious connotations, and Sufism functions, as well as commercial activities (Field note May 2017).

The versatility of the functions, together with strong elements of Sufism and Shia, created a combination of similarities and divergent intangibilities in this site. Scholars hold that this Safavid period (c. 1597-1722 A.D) marked a definitive point of change in Persian history (Nasr, 1974), with its Shia denomination dominating during the Safavid dynasty. Despite a clear change of character over time, significant links to the past remain. Other long-standing religions have continuous and documented histories that prepared them for different political contexts in the Persian region. The Shia denomination of Islam has continuously transformed and grown over many centuries. The theology and jurisprudence of the Sufi<sup>9</sup> orders, combined with other elements of

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<sup>9</sup> Sufism saw a rise among the Mongols and Safavids. This flourishing lifestyle was exemplary in the sense that greater poles appeared to be sanctified. During this period too, Sufism started out as

Shia, established the politics of the region in the first decades of the Safavid period (Hossein Nasr, 1974), but the most notable elements of Shia religion at this era arose from the fast growth that led to Shia dominance (Hossein Nasr, 1974). Shia became the most powerful political system during that period and is still the current political system of Iran.

At the present time, Shiite religious dominance shapes the Iranian political and cultural system, while Sufism, by and large, is suppressed by the Iranian government, and the practice of Sufism in most cases is considered a crime and punishable by law (2018 Report on International Religious Freedom: Iran).<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the heritage site of SKSEA has two different conflicting intangibilities (Sufi and Shia concepts) that directly affect visitors from different backgrounds as well as the locals inside the area of the buffer zone (finding from interviews 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 15). These intangibilities of the heritage site are important in giving meaning to people's experiences and practices inside the buffer zone. The intangible characteristics of the SKSEA heritage site provide ways of understanding public practices and themes of ritual activities inside the heritage core and buffer zone.

A photo can represent selected characteristics of a street, usually drawing on a single image. But this street had very different features and characteristics that made me so confused on my first visit (December 2016). I tried to represent features of this main element of religion at this era involved the fast growth that ended up being Persia and

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Sunnism and Shiism that ended up creating grounds for its growth. The Persian Shiites grew through dynasties existing from the origin. Safavid lead to the growth of the order by itself.

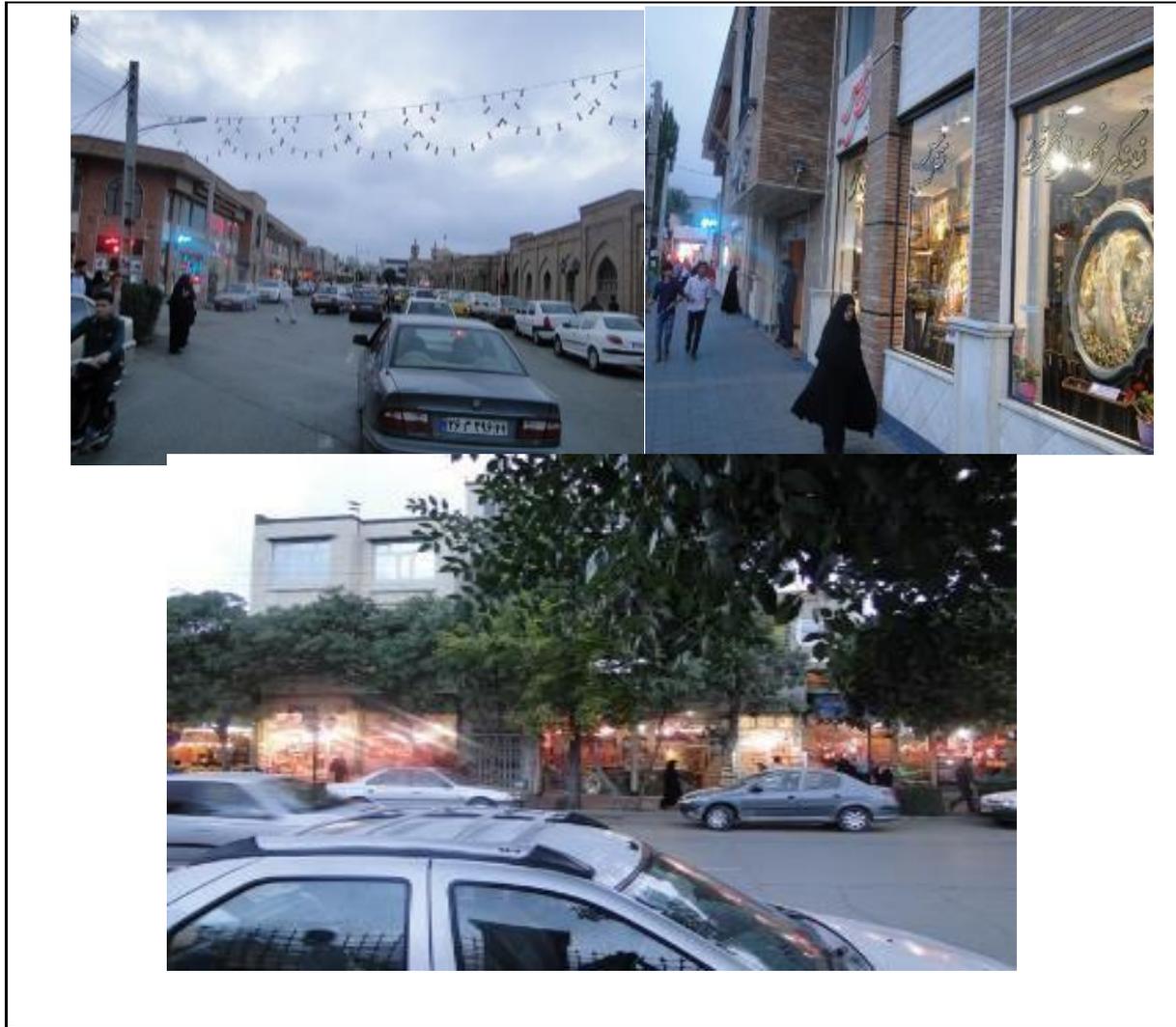
<sup>10</sup> Office of International Religious Freedom, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-report-oninternational-religious-freedom/iran/>, Accessed July 2018.

Shia (Hossein Nasr, 1974), and the Sheikh Safi Al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble is an important symbol of this Shia practice.

The main street did not have a simple and visual way in both my fieldworks (December 2016 and May 2017) by showing sizes and shapes of different feature such as shops, settlement patterns, traffic, graphics, advertisements, banners, street design, and so on, or showing locations of shops in the street's neighbourhood. It was impossible to have all of different features of the street in a single frame because the different features represent different aspects of the street's reality that cannot be gathered in one frame. I took so many photos in my first fieldwork (December 2016) that were not useful. In my second visit, before starting my second gaze, I talked to my friend about what area should be displayed and what type of data my project needed to present. I considered the needs of the thesis questions and the purpose of the study (May 2017). This goal determined what kind of data I needed to gather, and what sorts of details should be included. I decided to combine my observation and fieldnotes with the following images from the main street. The photos give an overview of different aspects of this main street (Melat Street).

Beside these intangibilities of the SKSEA heritage site, there are several other physical characteristics inside the buffer zone, particularly in zone (1). The main street has an appearance that features different aspects of commercial, political, and everyday living, which I tried to capture with my camera gaze. The pedestrian sidewalks of SKSEA have two different features on two sides of the main street (Figure 5.1).

Figures 5.2–5.4 display the distinctive elements linked to the main street.



**FIGURES 5. 1: TWO DIFFERENT FEATURES IN THE MAIN STREET (MELAT STREET)  
SHOPS ON ONE SIDE OF THE STREET AND HERITAGE SITE ON THE OTHER SIDE.**

Figure 5.1 shows one normal day in the main street of the heritage zone during my second research visit (May 2017). Traditional shops structured with traditional materials such as rugs and foods were more visible because it was springtime and the peak season for tourism. The heritage buffer zone had traditional food shops with sweet confections. An elderly owner of a traditional sweet shop, a generous man, offered me a taste of halva free of charge. It was a good time to open a conversation with him and get him involved with my interview's questions. I asked his opinion (interview 1) about the buffer zone. I simplified my questions and asked him about

the old shops in the main street, how he felt about the conditions in the street, and how they influenced the neighbourhood businesses or social habits and the locals' feelings of freedom.: 'the condition is difficult here since all the stores in this street are required to sell traditional handicraft products such as rugs and other traditional things. It is also difficult for anyone to switch trade; the main reason is the lack of government support and funds'.

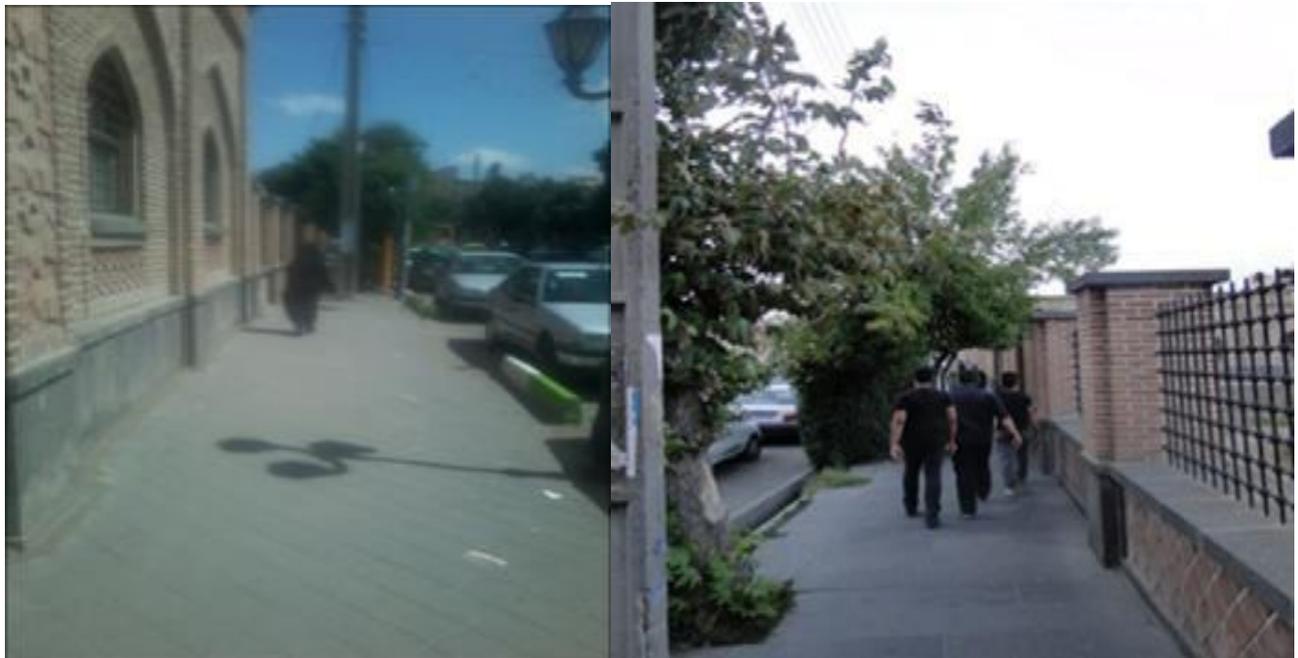
A shopkeeper (interview 18) stated: 'There are so many problems here, including a shortage of transportation such as buses, trains and airplanes for tourists, and also a shortage of support to increase the level of commercial activities inside the buffer zone for the locals ... There is a lack of cooperation between linked organisations and the restrictive laws and regulations in relation to tourism and development of small business in this area, which puts all of our small businesses in danger'.

Yet there are some small businesses that may not align with the business restrictions and regulations. Market and business economic activities should sell only cultural productions related to the ensemble in this area, such as handicrafts, carpets and rugs; this puts at risk small businesses who cannot sell those products and have not received funding from the government.

Inappropriate, undefined, unplanned and unclear construction, such as in the modern commercial complex or the unfinished project of excavation inside the main street on the opposite side to the shops has damaged the old texture of the street and created unsuitable conditions in terms of location and physical access for people. The construction of new architectural elements in cultural–commercial complexes inside the buffer zone does not create the same sense of intimacy that the heritage site does, and they cannot attract tourists and locals. Also, these unplanned projects and physical

elements of them have impacted the old area's collective memories and sense of the place (fieldnote, May 2017).

I tried to support my notes with the camera's gaze. Figure 5.3 represents the undefined excavation field around the historical complex; it had been marked by fences by the heritage organisation, and access to this area was restricted (see Figure 5.3). Here, the pedestrian pathway became unexpectedly narrow and difficult to pass through; people mostly used the other side of the street (where the shops were). Essentially, the pedestrian path of SKSEA has become the major street (see Figure 5.2).



**Figures 5. 2: Opposite side to shops; different public behaviour was observed.**

This narrow pathway triggered a moment of reflection for me (fieldnote, May 2017). These photos represent a lack of appropriate and defined space for pedestrians to cross the pathway. most participants (locals 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 15, 22, 29, and 30) complained about the exclusion of citizens' rights in this plan.



**Figure 5. 3:Excavation around the historical complex, separated by fences**

My friend said that ‘a distinct part of the historical area shows a slow social transformation ... There are obvious changes in the economic condition of old shops, unplanned and inappropriate street construction, and inadequate heritage plans; these gradually affect people’s sense of place and damage the street’s identity’.

These photographs (Figures 5.3, 5.4) show socio-economic neglect of locals and tourists in this area and also exclusion from appropriate use of the main street in the buffer zone. I considered the main street’s invisible border to be the physical expression of the exclusion of people and appropriation of urban space.

SKSEA and some historical places around it are the main elements of the heart of Ardabil city and play an essential role in its general appearance. The

many different inappropriate activities in the street damage the old texture of the buffer zone (main street). Many of peddlers including children, wage workers, and other low-income people are seen in the main street who are more vulnerable. (Fieldnote, May 2017).

Many illegal peddlers and other vendors in the main street established their businesses in the buffer or even the core zone (see Figures 5.4 and 5.5, core zone).

I tried to use my camera gaze to support my fieldnote. These different inappropriate and incorrect land uses in the area indicate the hardship of life and social transformation. I tried to take some photos from the other illegal activities but they snatched my camera and did not allow me to gather more images. (Fieldnote, May 2017).



**Figures 5. 4: Peddlers at the core zone.**

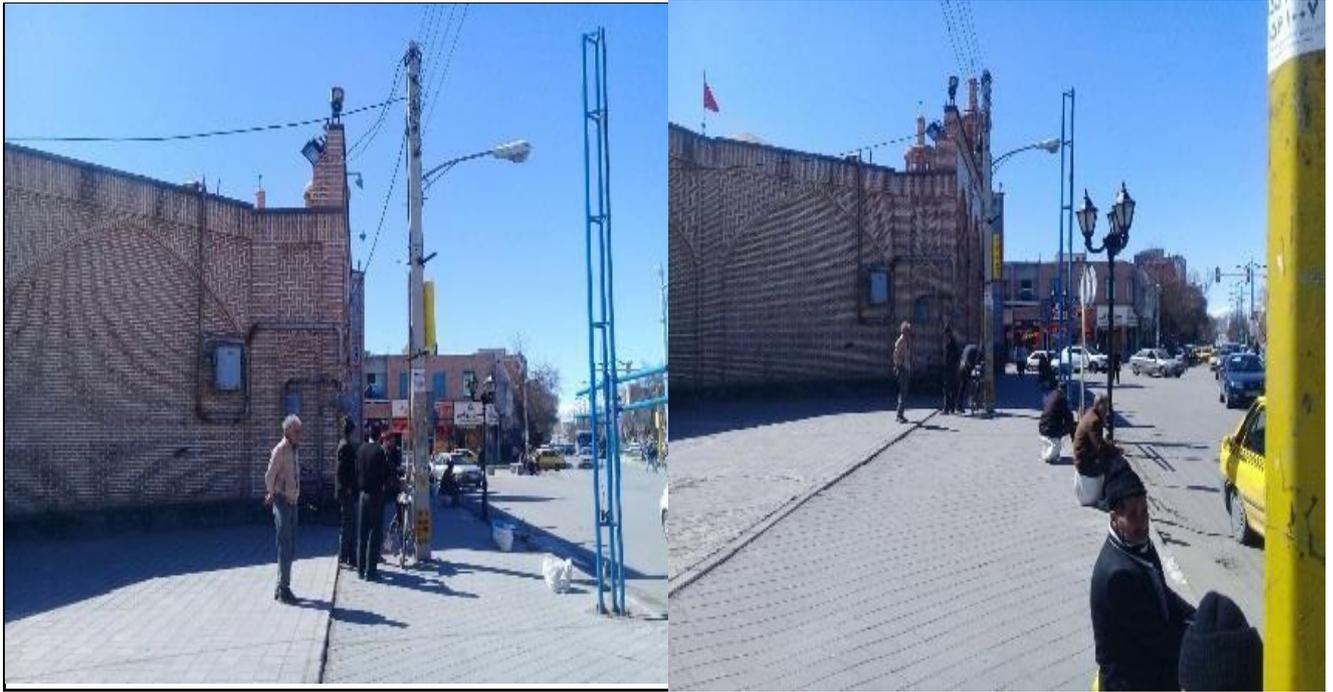
Many workers stay at the corner of the heritage side (core zone) in the Main street every day early in the morning to be picked up for a casual work (see Figure 5.5). These casual workers have been engaged on a very short-term or for some hours in days or weeks. The Main street (buffer zone) is the dominant location in Ardebil. The heritage site in the Main street is used to describe Ardebil physical and spiritual characteristics. How it has been understood, structured, interpreted and used depends on different actors' perceptions and function of the place. The street is the most important part of the Ardebil framework because of the heritage site and its value in this place. It was mentioned that the main street has a very important commercial role in the city. This street is the centre of Ardebil that has been used differently by the different actors. The low-income people activities are also part of the Main street feature.

This buffer zone can be experienced and used differently at various times by individuals and groups. A geographical area may just be a location on the map, but meanings and interpretations attached to the place by different groups may be diverse and conflicting. Most people in Iran suffer from a wide range of economic problems, especially after sanctions. The BBC reported in 2019 that ‘the economy in Iran has fallen into a deep recession and Iran's economy was badly affected for several years by sanctions imposed by the international community over the country's nuclear programme.’<sup>11</sup> Some of the workers (Figure 5.5) said: ‘I came from the downtown. there are not enough job opportunities for us therefore we come to the main street as the heart of the city to find a job and survive. This place gives an opportunity for us to find a casual job’.

For most shopkeepers, the main street is a commercial place where traditional shops provide goods, food, handicrafts, and services for local residents and tourists. Tourists have different experience and interpret this place as a historical area with so many meanings attached to the heritage site. Locals use the place for major rituals, religious events, customs, or national celebrations as well as their daily life and activities. Heritage authorities use the buffer zone under the current designation as a marketing tool to increase the place’s attractiveness as a tourist destination. The use of place for its designation will be discussed further in more detail. A sense of this place, then, refers to both the meanings and functions that can be experienced differently by different groups and people. The following sections will discuss how the historic place could be used by different groups.

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<sup>11</sup> BBC News, 2019. Six charts that show how hard US sanctions have hit Iran, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-48119109>



**FIGURES 5. 5: PHOTOGRAPHS OF WORKERS ON THE STREET. THEY ARE WAITING TO BE SELECTED AND COLLECTED FOR WORK.**

Figures 5.4 and 5- 5 illustrate the incorrect uses and functions of heritage sites and buffer zones. Many temporary workers come and remain at the corner of the heritage site to be selected and collected for work. The various photographs represent the sense of what occurs in these buffer zones and illustrate the different behaviours of people who use the area.

Furthermore, these images indicate that the area and its uses are interpreted subjectively by different groups. The physical representation of the area appears quite objective in terms of the products and businesses represented, and the sacred and heritage meanings of SKSEA. Other visual experiences of these zones further represent different aspects observed during the fieldwork, connected to subjective, multisensory elements of the environment and its occupation.

## Livelihood

One of the most important factors in relation to the SKSEA cultural heritage buffer zone's condition is the spirit of the place's local population and their everyday life.

The city's population was 567,912 in 2020.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, official statistics about the number of the residents, their gender, occupations, and social status, particularly living inside the heritage buffer zone, could not be found.

I tried to contact the Statistical Centre of Iran before my fieldwork. I did not get an accurate response. They referred me to the website. The population in the buffer zone has been affected by factors such as the migration of young people to the other city's areas or big cities. This has led to changes in the number of families in the buffer zone. I will discuss why the families have moved from the buffer zone or migrated to other places. (Field note: December 2016 and May 2017)

It is understood that in terms of growth and development, the population structure of the buffer zone in age and gender composition should give clear information about the people's status and the social, cultural, and economic conditions of the area. The interviews found it was unclear what numbers of residents had migrated; but it was clear that they would not move back to the area because of lack of appropriate lifestyle and secure and stable conditions in this area.

The fieldwork was focused on the livelihood patterns and conditions in the selected buffer zone. The daily life activities in the zone were quantified and demonstrated based on the fieldwork's in-depth interviews and participants' responses to the

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<sup>12</sup> Statistical Centre of Iran, <https://www.amar.org.ir/english>.

interview questions. The nature and essence of the words used by participants in the Persian language, their facial expressions and body language in the context of the local culture, represented the essence of what they wanted to express and how they felt about the place.

Ardebil is one of the oldest cities in Iran; this heritage site is not only valuable as a world heritage site but also as the heart of the city; the heritage buffer zone is an old traditional area and still alive and active. Socially, people in this region are from different backgrounds and circumstances. My local friend mentioned that a large number of old family lineages still live in the neighbourhood. The style of shops also demonstrated the traditional atmosphere (Fieldnote, May 2017).

Ardebil has two distinct physical features—old and new areas. The old areas are integrated with narrow alleys and passages in comparison to wide alleys and streets of new areas of the city. The narrow alleys, mosques, the traditional historical bazaar and its different parts, handicrafts shops, traditional carpet shops, traditional cafés, food shops and traditional shopkeepers, represent the old texture of the buffer zone (Fieldnote, December 2016).

An interview with an old shopkeeper, interview 19 (traditional sweet shop) uncovered that most families are from the traditional family structure and same social group. He said: ‘many of residents here were born and raised in a traditional household in this area and we have continued the tradition.’ My friend explained that ‘the neighbourhood families have historically been more religious and most of families have followed the tradition.’

I tried to find accurate family studies about the SKSEA buffer zone’s traditional lifestyle pattern, but the lack of social research in the buffer zone was an issue. My

Iranian background helped me to understand my friend's explanation about the buffer zone's family's traditional lifestyle (May 2017). The local participants represent traditional, typical Iranian families that are sensitive about their traditional values and the religious rituals and practices. However, these families encounter major challenges related to their livelihood conditions.

The focus here is on the livelihood issues and the role of government, its power and authority to control the small businesses, people's everyday life, practices, and other activities inside the heritage zone. My friend said: 'government political factors are major barriers to communities' participation in the buffer zone's heritage activities.'

This issue is explored in the interviews as well. My observations and interviews suggest that the small role of the tourism sector is due to heritage development plans and suspension of some of local services by heritage authorities' control. Local people expressed angrily that they need to have a certain level of control of their living area. Unfortunately, governmental organisations seem to obstruct or limit the engagement of social entrepreneurs or business activities in heritage sectors. Studies of the world heritage buffer zones have found that community involvement in heritage conservation is important (Wells & Brandon, 1993). This issue will be considered from different perspectives in this study. Government power plays a critical role in shaping the buffer zone. They have excluded the inhabitants from the decision-making process. The citizens recognise that they have the right to be engaged in decision making, but they have been excluded by heritage authorities and government. This serious issue highlights dissonance and conflict between heritage organisations and locals. The heritage agent said: 'It is difficult for the heritage authorities to get people involved in decision making, because the people that participate in a consultation process need extra funds. There are not enough funds available for community

involvement on the one hand; on the other hand, the heritage authorities will not lose their control over heritage management’.

The government’s absolute role in the economy (Maloney, 2015; Tabar & Noghani, 2019) and heritage sites is an important determiner of local involvement in cultural activities in Iran. Most heritage authorities are government controlled. The economic management within heritage buffer zones faces ongoing barriers. Conversely, as the agent explained; ‘government authorities do not want to permit local participation in heritage policy decision making because of budget constraints and the conflict of interest between people and heritage authorities. Thus, locals who could play a crucial role in shaping policies that affect their lives and practices are largely excluded.’ The lack of local control in the buffer zone labour market has led to job insecurity and exclusion.’

Unemployment is high across Iran in general (Tabar& Noghani, 2019; Yıldız, 2020) with high levels of frustration and anxiety, particularly in the selected heritage buffer zone or other heritage jobs such as tourism industry. Most participants spoke in their interviews of the government’s mismanagement of the rising unemployment in the country, especially in heritage sectors. They believed that absence of appropriate policy and accurate planning has not only caused business owners numerous problems in this zone; it has also endangered the livelihood of people and made life more difficult for the low-income sector. The interviews showed that job insecurity in the zoning area as a traditional part of the city has been a big issue. The job insecurity and exclusion of people in the decision making about heritage activities in this buffer zone has create a strong disconnection between locals and government heritage authorities who have absolute power and control. Many participants expressed that job insecurity is influenced by government mismanagement and the economic crisis after sanction.

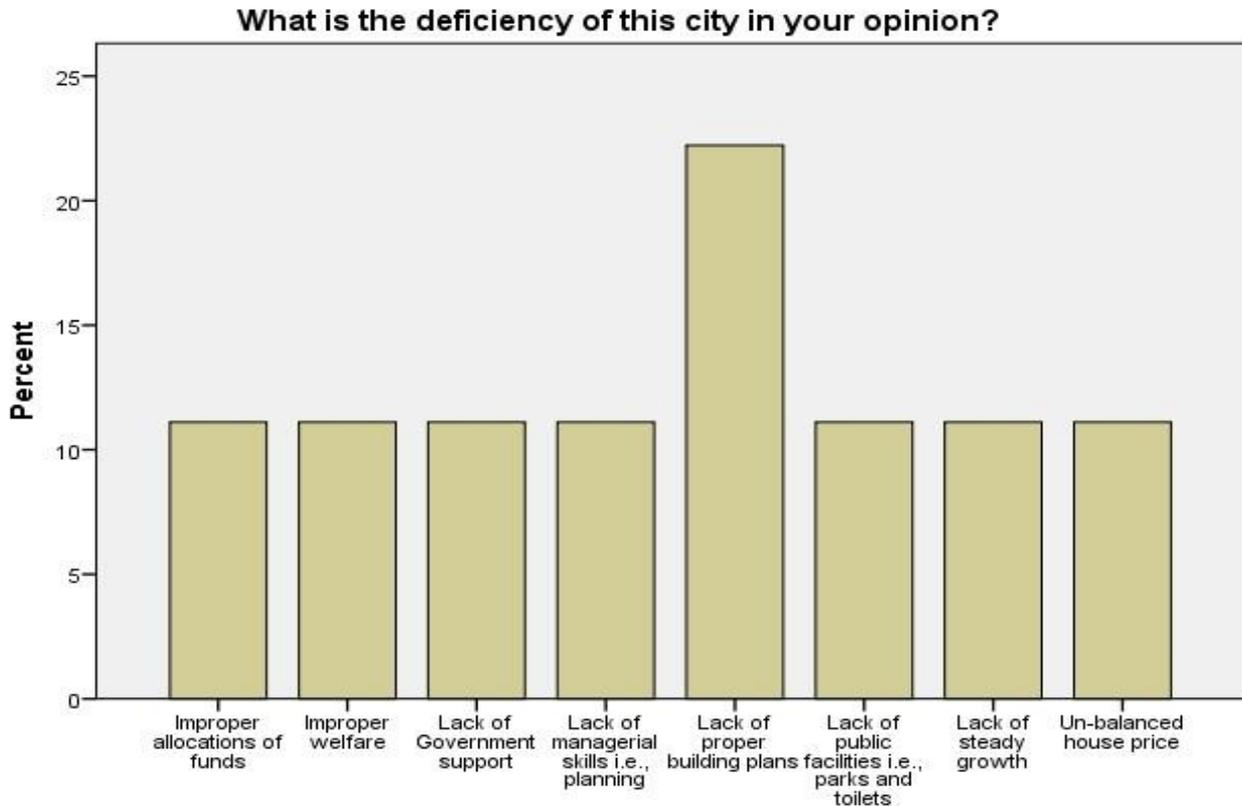
The following sections will give an overview of the participants' points of view about the deficiencies in the zone from different points of view.

The data will be shown to reveal the transformation of the place, which will be interpreted as an abstract place (Lefebvre, 1974) occupied by power and the meanings people give to it.

### **Deficiencies in the Buffer and Landscape Zone**

Table 5.1 lists participants' views of city deficiencies. They stated that the area lacks a proper building plan and stable housing conditions, and balanced property prices compared to city dwellings and other properties outside the buffer zone. In addition, residents were concerned about the lack of steady growth, inept local managers, and shortage of government support such as funds and welfare services. The presence of peddlers and the absence of social amenities such as green space, parks, and toilets, are a clear indication that the needs of the locals and visitors have been ignored.

**TABLE 5. 1: DEFICIENCIES OF THE BUFFER**



The question was about the lack of facilities and deficiencies inside the zoning areas.

We encountered many people whom we did not formally interview, but in casual conversation, they complained about public facilities, service provision, and safety issues. The interview participants expressed the same opinion. Moreover, most of these individuals insisted that the management of public facilities, financing options, waste disposal and handling, libraries, school systems, public spaces, public amenities, and fire stations are poor. Table 5-1 shows the same percentage for the impact of key issues that were discussed by different interviewees. The high percentage is the lack of proper building plans.

Conceptualisations of local conditions have broadened here, expanding the basis for analysing the issues and deficiencies in the buffer zone. The multidimensional characteristics of buffer zone deficiencies such as poverty, poor public facilities, lack

of insurance, lack of government support, disempowerment, social exclusion, and ignoring local residents' needs are a major consideration in this section.

The themes represent the effect of urban conditions on people whose lifestyles are defined in terms of social, political, and economic power as they engage in their society. The notion of the rights to the city (Lefebvre, 1991) is relevant here. In reality, the local communities would like to draw upon their buffer zone's resources to meet their basic needs and interests (Goonewardena et al., 2008).

Harvey (2006) considered local participation an element of fairness in the Marxist tradition, relating to transformative politics. Lefebvre's (1974) notion of the rights to the city was developed by Harvey (2006), based on the notion that local participation could lead to improved decision-making processes. This is only available to people who understand social relationships, with clear ownership and involvement in decision making and individual property. The rights to the city are seductive but difficult for people who struggle to exercise their rights (Goonewardena et al., 2008).

The key point here to understand is, why have people suffered exclusion and become frustrated with their everyday life?

### **Dominant Power in the Buffer and Landscape Zone**

In the previous section, the important points from the fieldwork have been captured. It was revealed that the people in this buffer zone are frustrated with their everyday life. Participant 24 (local resident) said: 'Our everyday life seems like a fight against exclusion, frustration, control and a continual cycle of losing our belongings.' The project observation and interview design helped to consider more themes and bring them back together and continue the process of synthesising. The fieldwork was designed to identify patterns and themes from the data, searching for consensus. It was

overwhelming at the beginning to organise the scattered evidence under the specific topics in the final analysis. The strategy of data analysis was challenged by missing information and ambiguities; the best strategy was found to be taking small steps to find the answers that the project sought. A synthesising strategy helped to identify the key considerations from the notes taken when out in the field.

It was very difficult to establish a clear and trustworthy understanding of people and their needs, because they were sometimes unaware and confused about the current situation they were encountering, and they were also confused about what they wanted to say about their neighbourhood and future social improvements in their lifestyle. The field observations were done through considering the ideas and research questions, and after each step, the approach and the problem definition were reviewed.

During my first visit (December 2016):

I walked 200 m away from a ‘Halva’ (a kind of Persian sweet) shop within the main street and found myself in the middle of a local residential area. It was the last shop that I visited in the main street and I decided to continue my observation from the main street (the closest area to the heritage site) and enter the residential area where community life should be more focused. It was almost Muslim prayer time. I could hear the sound of a nearby mosque. The sound of the mosque symbolised Islamic Shia practice inside the buffer zone. I went through the alleys around the SKSEA. The alleys were quiet, and I looked for someone to involve in the interview. Some of the locals did not answer me. I found it difficult to open a chat with people. I did not succeed in find someone to talk with about their living area. (Fieldnote, December 2016)

The findings of my second field trip in May 2017 made clear some of the key points and showed that there are major issues in the residential areas in buffer and landscape

zones. On this visit, I asked my friend, a local resident, to assist me with my observation and interviews. He talked to the locals using Azari dialect and tried to convince them that there was no need to be concerned about answering my questions. During our walking, he explained that the area was divided into two zones: Zones 1 and 2. There are strict building limitations, especially in Zone 1. He said that most people in this zoning area complain that they are not able to expand their properties, since the maximum building height in this zone is 5.5 m and only one level is allowed.



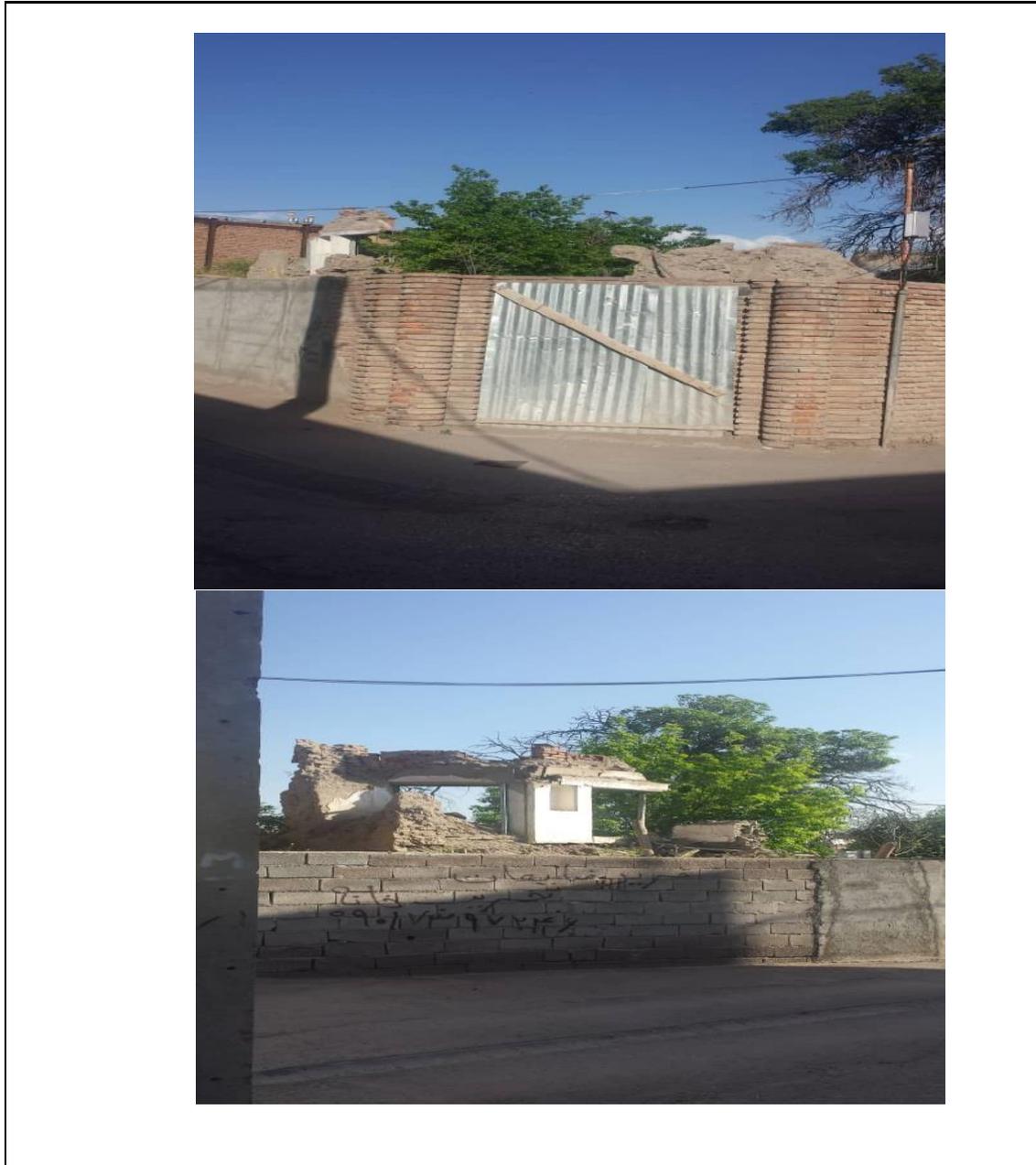
**FIGURES 5. 6: LIVING AREA IN ZONE 1 (ONE LEVEL PERMITTED)**

Zone 2 buildings, on the other hand, are permitted to have two floors, with a maximum total height of 7.5 m.

My friend lives in Zone 1. He talked about young families without children that are increasingly favouring living in other parts of the city, preferably new parts. He told me about his cousin's house in this zoning area that was old, and that they moved to the new and modern part of the city. Within the narrow alleys,

evacuated houses could be seen (Figure 5.7). I walked slowly and examined the houses more carefully. I used my camera gaze to capture these moments.

(Fieldnote, May 2017).



**FIGURES 5. 7: ZONE 1 (NARROW ALLEY AND EVACUATED HOUSES)**

In Zone 2, there were unfinished buildings and many inappropriate constructions (Figures 5.8 and 5.9) inside the alleys.

The local dialect was Azari and my friend acted as translator. The participants did not sign the consent form and left the interview when I asked them to sign this form. Therefore, I tried to open a friendly, informal conversation about their living area and not worry about their signature. Insight into their opinion was supported by considering their expression and behaviour. The interviewees were upset and angry and complained about lack of support for low income locals and shortage of loans for reconstruction. They wanted adequate government support since their houses were expected to be compatible with the construction and appearance of historical buildings. (May 2017, Fieldnote observation walking with my friend)

Respondent 15 (local and shop owner) shouted that ‘No one cares about people here. If you work for the government, let them know that there are people living here’.



**Figure 5. 8: Unfinished house in Zone 2 (two floors permitted)**



**Figures 5. 9: Inappropriate spaces for parking in Zone 2**

The locals (interviews 5, 10, 9, 15) said: ‘we are not granted the right to think and live in suitable conditions and nobody cares about our living situation. We are living under difficulties and limitations imposed by the government and the heritage authorities’. A local (interview 7) said: ‘this area belongs to the people who live inside it. We never get the chance to talk freely what is our right or what is wrong about this place. Is this our living area or a heritage property?’

The interviews and conversations reveal that the locals who live in the buffer zone have constantly been constrained by the heritage and government authorities and external controls, which have ignored the people’s need to occupy the place and live sustainably.

By considering the construction of meaning and materiality in social processes inside the buffer zone, the condition of these areas can be seen as a heritage zone in terms of Harvey’s definition of ‘absolute space’ that has been commodified and shaped by power. Harvey (1985) argued that ‘space ... came to be represented, like

time and value, as abstract, objective, homogeneous in its qualities' (pp. 12–13).

Through commodification, absolute spaces become relative and thus brought within the framework of capitalism. Thus, the buffer zone also becomes 'a concrete abstraction with real power in relation to social practices' (Harvey, 1985, p. 13).

That is, these spaces and the social practices within them are owned and controlled by government power, which, because of ongoing mismanagement, directly and negatively affects the relationship between locals and heritage authorities and diminishes residents' everyday life satisfaction.

The buffer zone is a complex and multi-functional place that is facing numerous challenges, since the place is a protected heritage area under many legal enforcements and restrictions and, at the same time, is a residential region for ordinary people.

## **Challenges**

A practical approach to understanding the challenges in these zoning areas is to listen and reflect on what locals say. Below are couple of responses of local to the interview questions: 'I am a resident here and my shop is close to my house. The key challenge is poor policies, which tend to hurt us all. They hurt whoever lives inside this damned area and they ignore (exclude) us as members of the society'.

Local (Participant 3): 'I am a resident here. Judging by the lack of rights to my own property and poor enforcement of the heritage laws, the opportunities become less and less and it is very disappointing. People are not cared for; only a few people are happy with government plans because their houses have been located in a better location in

the street. I think since these actions by government are done without consulting the locals and without their consent, they should be considered unlawful and criminal’.



**FIGURES 5. 10: UNFINISHED HERITAGE DESIGNATION PLAN**

Figure 5.10 illustrates the unfinished projects that causes uncertainty and pressure on locals due to unclear plans and heritage regulations. Lack of attention to local residents’ values, perceptions, interests and community narratives about their living conditions puts pressure on daily life in the buffer zones (Breglia, 2006; Dicks, 1999; Herzfeld, 1991, 2006; Jimura, 2011; Nicholas et al., 2009; Rolf & Windle, 2003). Notably, O’Reilly (2014) stressed the importance of the role of local residents of buffer zones in the management of a heritage resource that occupies extensive territory.

Many participants expressed that numerous houses have been purchased by the heritage organisations and then destroyed to make space for heritage projects. They were concerned that if the government intended to purchase their houses, they should receive a fair price that would enable them to move to a similar neighbourhood.

I interviewed some residents, heritage experts and real estate agents on this subject. I questioned real estate agents about property conditions and pricing in the buffer zone. In their opinion, the price of houses could not be determined clearly because of the uncertainty and ambiguity of heritage buffer zone regulations for residential areas, the unclear future of heritage plans and projects, and the lack of coordination between heritage plans and other development plans in the area. A local real estate agent (interview 11) said: ‘The condition of the houses is not stable because they are within the protected buffer zones. Many property owners would like to sell their properties and move from this area, but being located inside the buffer zone discourages potential buyers from purchasing these properties due to current conditions’.

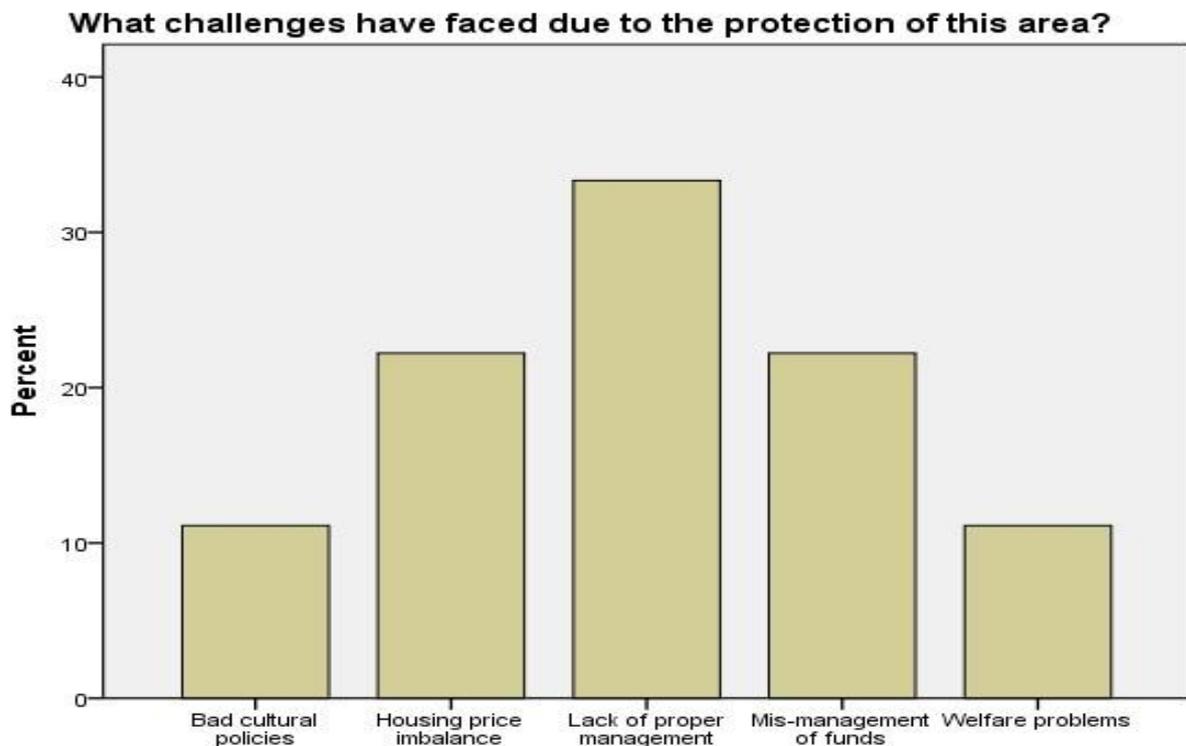
Some locals stressed that the prices are unfair; if they were, they would have preferred to sell their properties and move. The main concern was about the ambiguity of the property conditions in this heritage area and the unstable living conditions. A major complaint was the absence of local residents’ representation in decision-making processes for the area, and therefore, a lack of a hope for new, fairer heritage laws.

Yet, the local community’s views of the changes since WHS designation should inform long-term tourism development.

In most interviews, similar sentiments were expressed; for example, (interview 23): ‘Decision-makers should count on locals’ knowledge, beliefs and opinions and treat them fairly and protect their properties and livelihoods, since the locals are the ones who are majorly influenced by heritage projects’.

Most questionnaires featured similar responses, such as, ‘We feel our private space has been invaded by the heritage and government organisations involved’. Participants mostly had very negative feelings about these ‘unknown’, ‘unclear’, ‘unfinished’ and ‘vague’ changes and plans, except for the owners of the houses that would be better located after the implementation of the heritage plans. These opinions reflected their perception of the changes rather than objective opinions of the changes. Several locals with negative opinions of heritage organisations and government said that they had expressed their views but were ignored, excluded. Some of them opted not to respond to the fieldwork interview questions. Some participants spoke in coarse language when asked about their opinions on the topic. Table 5.2 graphs the views of respondents who did agree to be interviewed about the many challenges that the protection the area has brought.

**TABLE 5. 2: CHALLENGES**



The main question here (Table 5.2) here was ‘what challenges has the protection of this area brought?’ Several factors have affected the physical and emotional lives of the people living within the buffer and landscape zone: poverty, lack of employment and opportunities compared to other city regions, substandard and unfinished housing, and employment discrimination in the heritage sector. Continual analysis of these elements ensured the maintenance of useful and reliable notes.

Power and high levels of bureaucracy shape life in the buffer zone. Following Lefebvre (1974), the installation of juridical–political grids have subjected social life to systematic surveillance and regulation by the state. These processes reinforce each other to constitute ‘abstract space’ (Lefebvre, 1974), that is, the place occupied by owner in the buffer zones, and cause a high level of conflict and dissonance between heritage organisations<sup>13</sup> and the local regions.

### **The Buffer Zone Experience**

The fieldwork informed the exploration of the buffer and landscape zone conditions and the effects (Thrift, 2008) of these conditions on residents. As previously mentioned, these observations helped me to understand and feel the impact of buffer zones conditions on people’s everyday lives. It allowed a full emotional engagement with the place while listening to the people who talked to me or even shouted at me. How they were abused or mistreated by different organisations in the area was reflected throughout the interviews in their use of words and body language. (Fieldnote, May 2017)

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<sup>13</sup> Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Organization collaborates with ICOMOS, UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOM, and institutes like: IsMEO Asia, and the British Institute of Persian Studies.

A greater impact on the locals has resulted from particular forms of design, discussed below. This is considered as an example of the power and control of heritage authorities and other governmental organisations inside the buffer zone (living area), in which at least some built features and facilities are shared with the people, properties and small businesses inside the heritage buffer zone. The high level of conflict, dissonance, anger, dissatisfaction, and confusion held by people towards authorities has led to tensions in social relations and restrictions on behaviour in respect to the use and maintenance of buildings and common areas. Residents' satisfaction is highly dependent on their properties' location, income levels, the degree of involvement in decision-making, and their sense of belonging and freedom.

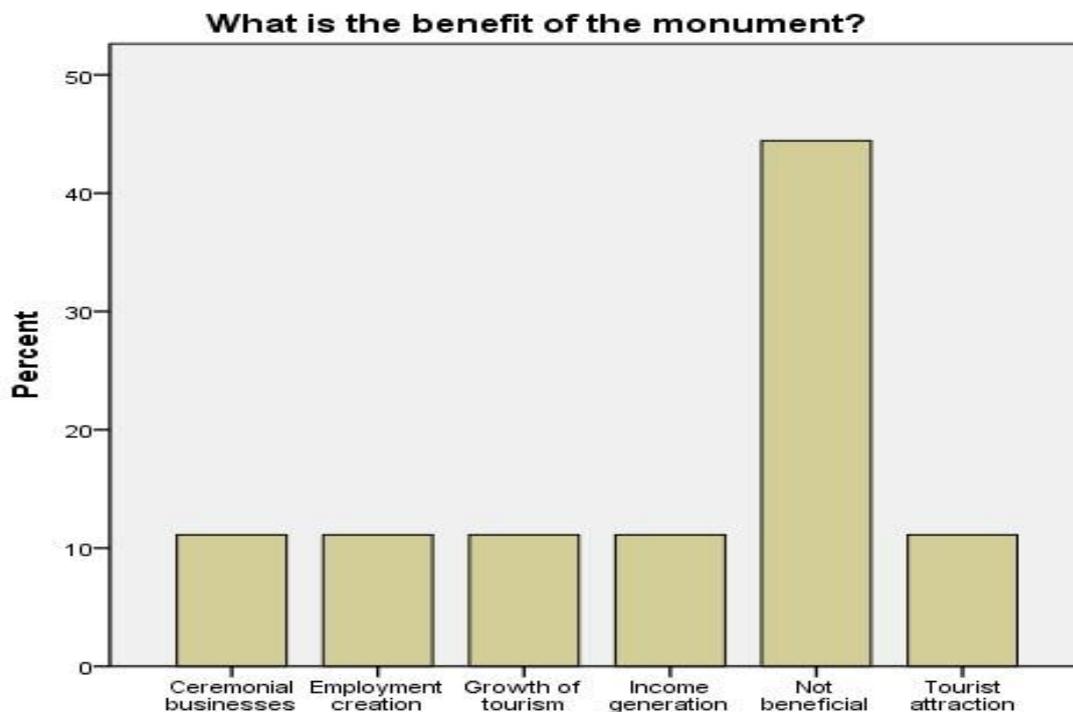
Several residents mentioned that development plans have constantly had negative impacts on their lives (Table 5.3). For example, the heritage development plans in the area have shown poor coordination between authorities and the local communities. Authorities did not involve locals in the planning. Many participants claimed they were absent when decisions relevant to them were made. This fieldwork shows that, in heritage conservation and designation plans, the focus cannot solely be on the physical patterns of place development. The planners in this case study did not consider social factors that may affect local communities under the power of authorities.

Throughout the interviews with locals, I observed high levels of dissatisfaction. Some subquestions were asked to deepen the scope of the interview. For example, I asked a participant (interview 3): Has any transformation time frame been specified whatsoever? Respondent 3 (local): 'the area has had a plan of transforming the establishment into a specific design by purchasing and destroying local houses'.

Was there any element of public consideration in this? Respondent 3: ‘none whatsoever. This has led to a lot of negativity in people’s lives, physically, and more importantly, emotionally’.

Table 5.3 represents other aspects of living near the monuments as identified by participants. Clearly, most interviewees viewed it as being of no benefit and perhaps having a negative impact on their lives.

**TABLE 5. 3: BENEFITS OF THE MONUMENT**



The issue of dissatisfaction is one of the fieldwork’s major focuses as a key theme in the two Iranian selected heritage buffer zones. The elevated level of dissatisfaction was evident in participants’ views of the benefits of the monument (see Table 5.3). The respondents gave similar answers to the question. To yield a rich and accurate result, I repeated the question in different forms. People responded differently to the same question by pointing out different aspects of the heritage site benefits. All themes

except 'Not beneficial' had the same value. I got higher response rates from participants that used negative words to express their dissatisfaction, such as 'we have not had any benefit from this historical building'. It is clear that regulatory power over the buffer zones has had obvious negative impacts on daily life for the residents.

Politicisation of the heritage buffer zone has caused dissatisfaction and a high level of dissonance. Lefebvre's (1991) exposition of the impact of politicisation on poor, underprivileged, and marginalised people is relevant to the findings of this field study. Disuse and decay of the buildings have prompted efforts to restore the order and aesthetics of the site. However, several problems have continuously led to destruction in the buffer zone.

The dominance of heritage planning has brought local dissatisfaction and environmental transformation. The findings from this research show that local dissatisfaction has attended programs of heritage development, with politicisation and conservation planning being dominant forms of control. Inconsistent and poorly planned changes have brought physical regeneration, but also feelings of exclusion, confusion and pressure. The heritage development plan without local power for decision making and financing are the most serious issues.

A thorough comprehension of place and the significance attached to it by humans is necessary for effective maintenance and repair decisions in a complex, contested space (Seamon & Sowers, 2008). According to Relph (1976), there are considerable differences in the experiences of humans outside or inside these buffer zones.

The effects of external forces exercised upon a place create feelings of strangeness and alienation that makes people inside this buffer zone feel they no longer belong here and are dissatisfied with this place, to the extent that many of them opt to migrate.

This is exactly the same as in the Pasargadae buffer zone. These places have lost their

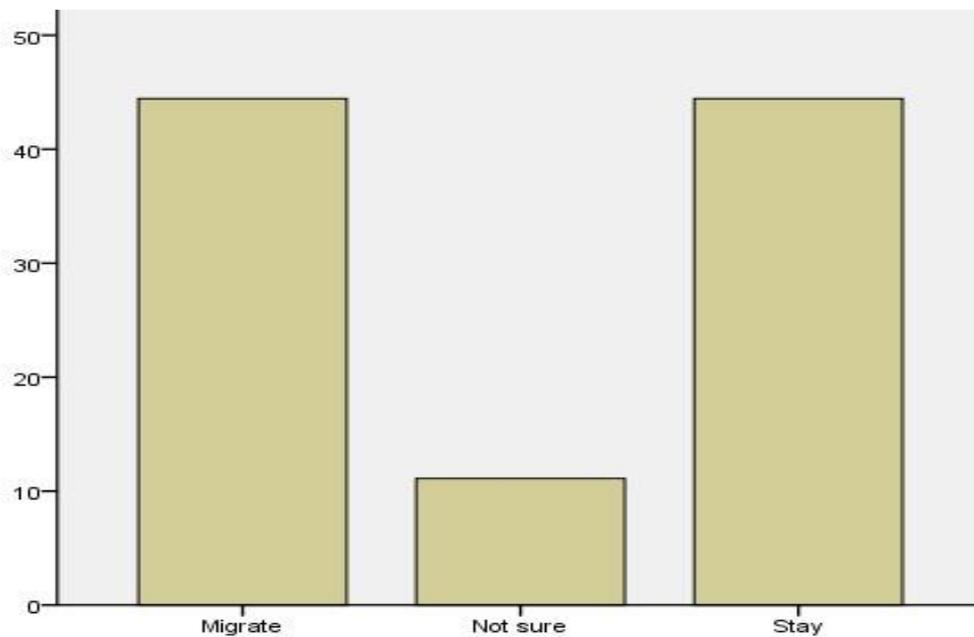
traditional structure and shape and are experienced with dissonance, physically and emotionally.

## Transitional Aspects

How does being in the vicinity of the monument affect the lives of locals? Table 5.4 illustrates locals' intentions to remain or not to remain in the area long term. It was a critical question that pushed me to a deeper level of understanding about the participants' vague, ambiguous feelings. The confusion this question was met with reflected the locals' liminal state. Ambiguity was a shared response to their condition in the buffer zone. This deep question was unanswered in my first fieldwork (Fieldnote, December 2016). I tried to repeat my interview in my second fieldwork more critically (Fieldnote, May 2017).

**TABLE 5. 4: PLANS TO REMAIN IN THE TOWN**

HOW HAS LIVING IN THE VICINITY OF THE MONUMENT AFFECTED YOUR LIFE ?



There are three key themes that emerge from response to the question: how has being in the vicinity of the monument affected the participants' lives? Table 5-4 shows equal percentages for migrating and staying in the responses. This suggests that while it is not easy for either group to deal with the conditions, their responses were different and opposite. This may indicate that they have different senses of connectedness or belonging to the place, or that they try to express their dissatisfaction in different ways. My visual observation of the buffer zone revealed some inadequate houses, some in such poor condition that residents had to evacuate and migrate elsewhere (hence the evacuated and unfinished dwellings). This helped me to simplify my question and expand it. Therefore, I started with the below question to complement my observations in my second fieldwork (May 2017).

What is the real reason for several unfinished houses in this area? Respondent 5 (local): 'the main reasons are evacuation and renovation. Some houses have been evacuated while others have been renovated. The owners constantly have been waiting for new policies about this heritage buffer zone. I wanted personally to rebuild my house because nobody would purchase the property and the only option was the heritage organisation's offer with their cheap valuation. I would never ever sell my property to the government. Their heritage designation project has been stopped, maybe because of budget shortages. I am just waiting for the new law. Here is my home. I would never ever leave my father's home'.

Why is the property market in this zone unstable and the prices unfair? Respondent 6 (real estate agent): 'the main reason is the unclear future of policies, regulations and, most importantly, development plans coming from the government. Some houses are constructed to be sold while others have been destroyed because of different designation plans in this heritage zone. However, the government funds, even to

implement their current plans, seem to be insufficient, and therefore, everyone is waiting for new solutions or modified policies’.

Other questions were asked of participants in a different manner. Would future generations live here? Respondent 6 (resident): ‘there is no hope at all for this damned area. This is because there is shortage of access to even basic services and locals are not engaged and have no say in decision-making’.

Repetition of the interviews and my second observation (May 2017) provided me with a deeper understanding about the conditions in this zone, especially the residential area. The ambiguity about rules and regulations among those people living under different heritage or state development plans is an issue linked to power and authority. The common terms for such buffer zones are uncertain areas and/or ambiguous places, in other words, liminal spaces. These buffer zones are considered as undefined places from the local perspective because of unclear future heritage laws and unplanned development projects and lack of heritage organisation clarification of the meaning and functions of buffer zones. I expanded my question to support my thinking in the second fieldwork (May 2017). I was confused in my first fieldwork and could not answer this question (December 2016). I asked my friend to help me to organise an interview with a heritage expert (May 2017). There were many questions in my mind, because for the second time I was faced with unclear and unstable heritage principles and regulations which I found in Pasargadae as well.

What do you think about the residents’ conditions related to the stability of heritage regulations? Respondent 7 (Heritage agent): ‘poverty is spread across the nation. However, most people in the area around Zone 1 are from the middle class and mostly come from old and traditional families. They may have improved conditions in terms of their housings, which may not currently be as good as expected, but people are

mostly waiting for the new heritage policies. The new policies' effect may be good or bad for some locals or businesses around the site, but if they knew the new conditions, locals could better evaluate and make more informed decisions about their living arrangements'.

Do you think that locals will be satisfied with the new regulations? Respondent 7 (Heritage agent): 'the law-making process is complex. However, rules and regulations are made by different heritage and state organisations, so sometimes these rules are not in line with each other. On many occasions, the regulations are conflicting, which causes more uncertainty. Therefore, many properties owners would like to sell their properties but being inside the buffer zone, with all of its conflicting regulations, pushes back the potential buyers'.

I tried to interview with more people, particularly local residents. It was so hard to open a conversation with them in my first fieldwork, but my friend helped me to find some who would talk to us in his neighbourhood. All the interviews were done in Azari and my friend translated the answers, but I could see their anger.

(Fieldnote, May 2017)

Many of the local residents (interview 18) believed that 'there is no hope for future generations to remain in these areas.' This local's face turned red in anger.

A participant (interview 17) said that 'my home is my father's home, and I would not want to move to anywhere else in the world, but I'd like to wait for the new heritage laws ... My grocery is in the main street and if I move from here my life will be destroyed for ever. There is inadequate access to employment for future generations as well as unfair income shortfalls, especially in heritage activities, so we do not know what is going on and I want to keep my business for my children'.

Locals have never been invited to participate in the stakeholders' consultation process, which the heritage agent said would enable more sustainable plans and other heritage conservation projects waiting to be developed. Furthermore, locals complained that they had not been notified about the processes of law making. Heritage projects have become complex and vague, complicated by the conflicts of interest between local and heritage organisations and other heritage authorities in Ardebil. It is a shared heritage, which means many other authorities, such as municipalities, state government, and international regulations play a role in decision making. Each of these organisations has their own decisions, plans, actions and definitions that in many cases may be in contrast with another organisation's views. The theory of dissonant heritage, formulated by Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996), frames issues of shared heritage and heritage dissonance. They define heritage as created by interpretation, which implies the existence of different definitions which could be cause dissonance because of conflicting views and the vagueness of planned projects. Excluding locals from the decision-making process is a key source of dissonance in this study.

The relevance of Bourdieu's (1971) concept of 'social space' helps to understand the buffer zone's social construction. Bourdieu (1984) discussed about the active role of residents in constructing the social space that establishes the close relationship between power and spatial organisations. His concept of 'social space' is important here for examining the conditions of the buffer zone and the lack of local participation in the decision making.

One major concern is migration; some of the interview questions were designed to measure stability in this buffer zone. Table 5-4 shows that while many participants in the area preferred to migrate, an equal number preferred to stay in the same area;

despite being dissatisfied with their living conditions, the stayers hoped and waited for suitability and stability.

Figures 5.11 represents homes that are waiting for the new laws so they can restructure or renovate the houses. The themes of confusion, ambiguity, vagueness and lack of clarity are linked to the role of government and heritage firms shaping the lives of the local residents in many aspects.



**FIGURES 5. 11: HOUSES AWAITING NEW HERITAGE POLICIES (OLD TRADITIONAL HOUSE INSIDE OLD ALLEY STYLE)**

Such buffer zones are areas of conflict and ambiguity.

Summarising responses of participants 17, 18, 21, 22 and 30: ‘we are confused because nobody has invited us for any decision making. We do not know who makes

the laws? How? When? Where? Why? There are many questions in our mind about our bloody life condition that nobody will answer them. How can we feel stability and safety? They started to do some projects and then stopped them. There is no clarity for us. We are the local voices.'

There are similar findings in other heritage buffer zones around the world. However, in this study, these particular areas are analysed from a new perspective. Different heritage and state authorities manage sites in diverse ways, which is a key consideration in this research. The creation of and involvement with different uses of place from different actors in these zones have been interpreted differently and regulated by many organisations, using varied practices, rules, and conventions (Graham & Howard, 2008).

The concept of private property refers to the rights of owners, but with high levels of ambiguity. The participants' critique of daily living in this buffer zone demonstrates the costs of living and remaining in a buffer zone, an ambiguous place. Boundaries around buffer zones generate specific situations in these places, allowing for certain status and ownership patterns. It is difficult for people to understand ownership and status in places with such unclear and ambiguous characteristics. The vague conditions separate living in these zones from normal daily social life. The data shows that the buffer zone typically involves different types of controls (power) that put people under pressure, while the modes of governance within the zones create ambiguities. The important consideration here is how (or whether) heritage authorities define people's status, daily activities, and different uses of buffer zones to determine what is permitted in these areas. Authorities impose strict structural restrictions while excluding people from the decision-making procedure and failing to inspire a stable feeling of ownership. The various governmental controls of this buffer zone

(strategies) began as an objective issue for locals, but have since become an emotional issue, with significant signs of ambiguity, confusion and exclusion. This zone has transformed into an undefined inequitable system with vague and unstable living conditions.

These areas are ambiguous places for local. This is especially relevant in situations in which there are normal experiences that have since been suspended, perhaps due to heritage development chaos.

### **Meanings of the Buffer and Landscape Zone for Different Users**

During the research trips to Ardebil city, additional information about the heritage site and its buffer and landscape zones was sourced (December 2016 and May 2017). The heritage features in this site include several Shia rituals events, such as Muharram, that originates from Imam Hossein (the third Shia leader and grandson of prophet Mohamad). People have continually perceived this site as a place that has divine meaning for this Shia ritual practice. The influence of this site on the surrounding area (buffer zone) is obvious; several shops are named after Sheikh Safi in remembrance. After categorising the themes from both fieldworks, liminality has distinct manifestations here, including the kind of place, meaning, and character throughout the buffer zone. The Shia tradition of Muharram is the most powerful element of SKSEA. A large number of people come from all over to gather and express their devotion collectively under the sacred power of Muharram Shia ritual performances. Thousands of people wearing black dresses (colour of mourning) from different suburbs gather around the SKSEA to practice one of the most important Shia events, directly associated with the key Shia ritual practices. The mourning of Muharram takes place in the buffer zone around this heritage site every year. Interviews

confirmed that people believe the heritage site is the symbolic spiritual Shia place in the city. The main street and the places around the street become the central stage for Shia worship and rituals during Muharram. Thousands of people gather inside the buffer zone until the Noon of Ashura to watch and practise the rituals in the main street and surroundings. This Shia practice, like Pasargadae's ritual national event, resembles the pilgrims who come in a spirit of *communitas* (Turner, 1969). The engagement of people, especially in their Muharram event (performance), is collective in its ritual practices of homogeneous form and equality. People from lower to higher status experience equality through ritual performances in a place where status is not relevant. This implies that there is a solidarity that transcends social and cultural differences.

There is a shared element of belonging for all people who gather for religious ceremonies as well as national events in Pasargadae, regardless of their social or cultural backgrounds. These people assemble to practice their religious performances, which have played a key role in the era of Shia and Safavid. Figures 5.12 and 5.13 represent the Muharram (Ashora, the tenth day of Muharram) ceremony directly around the buffer zone (Zone 1). This section analyses the details of the ceremony, in which there is a clear connection between the event of Muharram (Ashora) and the symbol of the SKSEA, according to Islamic Shia culture and practice.



**FIGURES 5. 12: ASHORA**



**FIGURES 5. 13:MUHARRAM, CHARITY FOOD OR FREE FOOD (NAZRI)**

Source: Mohamad Ali Mohammadpour

Muharram ceremonies tend to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussien (the third of twelve Imams in the Shia sect of Islam) in a location called Karbala. This occasion is widely commemorated ceremonially across Iran. It is a Shia religious drama. In this Iranian Shia ritual, someone narrates the disasters of religious saints. The narrator tells a story of the event of Muharram in rhythmic poetry to express the sadness of the event. The narrator provides an atmosphere to engage people in imagining the place and the story's characters. Another part of Muharram ceremony is the dramatic tradition of Taziye. It is a symbolic performance in the structure and context of Iranian Shia religion. The importance of this performance is that it remembers Imam's pain and hardship under the dictatorship of the time and his battle for freedom. This is a dramatic ritual performance that represents the ethical passage of Imam for freedom. Using elements of the text, religious music with huge drums

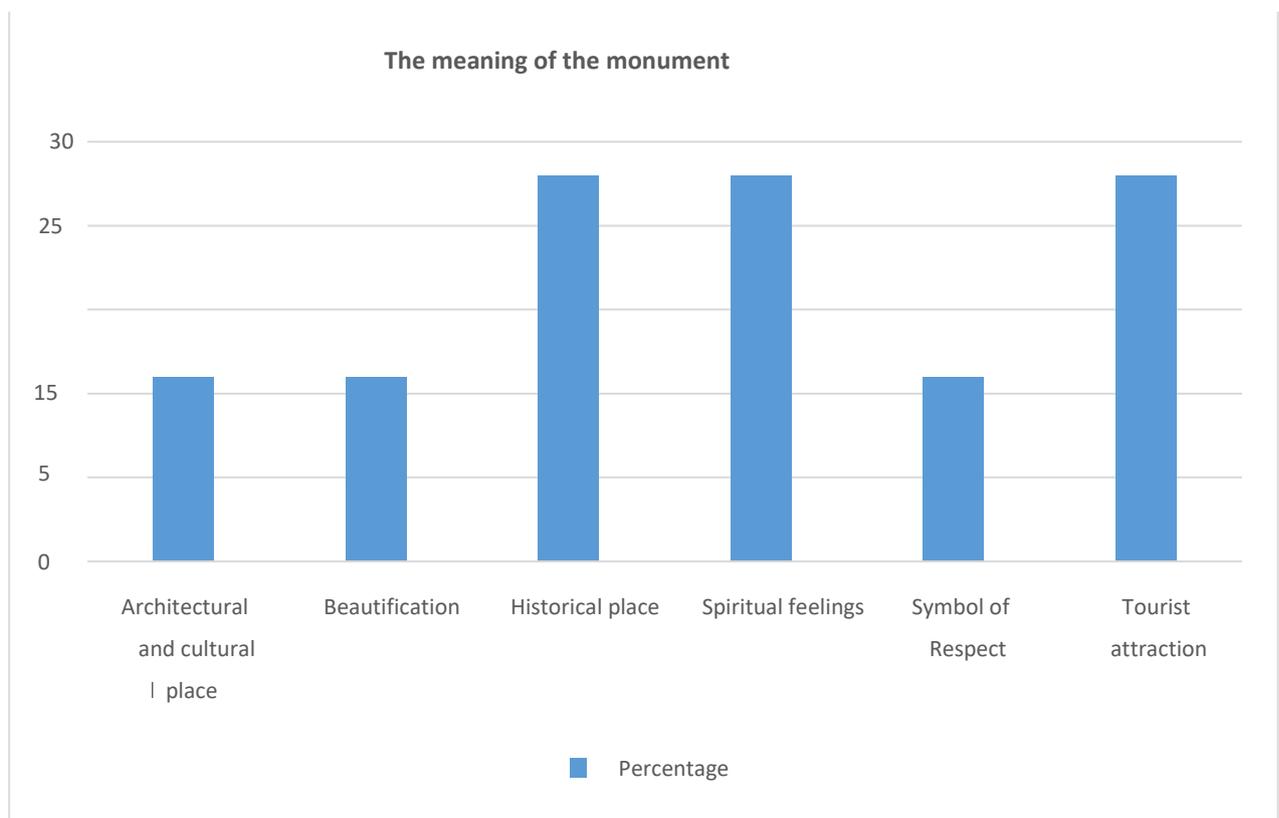
(Tabl), objects, costumes, and so on, represent the divine value of Imam's passage to freedom through martyrdom. The rhythmic sound of the drum is a symbol of the battle in Karbala. In recent decades in Iran, the month of Muharram and reconstruction of its events has been an effective religious performance that could develop political awareness amongst public. In the event, *Rozeh-khani* is performed, which is a form of mourning and religious representation with poems and texts that are related to the event of Karbala. Throughout the month of Muharram, free food is another part of this ritual performance. Iranian Muslims, who constitute the majority of the population, participate in this ritual at large. This social and religious event has complex patterns, in which different individuals in different roles perform together (*communitas*, Turner, 1969) in a coordinated manner. Buffer zones in the region create a unique sense of place-based identity while encouraging community cohesion and reinforcing such events.

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, several religious affiliations have been linked to the heritage site of SKSEA. As discussed in Chapter 4, Pasargadae has been regarded as a national pre-Islamic site. This site is sometimes used for protest against the government, centring on historic Persian identity. However, there is another Shia practice ritual in the SKSEA. The area calls for the practice of Muharram ritual, which is encouraged and supported by the state, but the Sufi character of this site is under constant restraint and bans by the Iranian government.

It is notable that Shia Islam is not only the state religion, but also it forms the framework for a theocracy and the Iranian political system. However, on many occasions, people perform this religious event in their own way and even sometimes use the ritual to express their anger against the current political system in the country. Therefore, the intangible qualities of SKSEA are subtle and may go against the grain.

In recent years, the Muharram ceremonies which mark the martyrdom of the Imam Hossein symbolise the Shia battle for freedom against the political power. In most Iranian cities, the events are used as an occasion for reciting texts or verses against the recent injustices of the Iranian political system. The patterns of Shia rituals have changed recently, and the place and rituals may be used for political awareness. I watched many videos on the internet of the Muharram ceremony that showed how people use Muharram symbolism to express their opposition against political power.

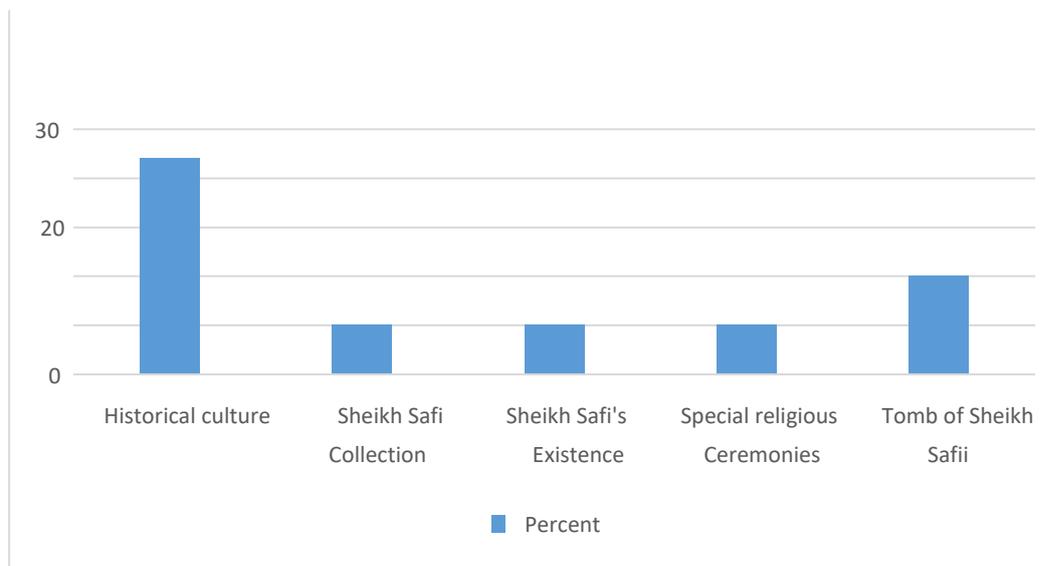
**TABLE 5. 5: MEANING OF THE HERITAGE SITE**



Participants in the fieldwork interviews acknowledged that the heritage site has valuable qualities, not only in the value of the heritage site itself, but also in the effects

of its intangible meanings, and spiritual and ritual values for the surrounding areas as buffer zones and the whole city (see Tables 5.5 and 5.6).

**TABLE 5. 6: IMPORTANT MONUMENTS**



The value of Sufi intangibility, its philosophies and spirituality are integral parts of the heritage site’s meaning besides the Shia elements that provide the value system for the majority of people and thereby influence their practices. The spiritual value, in accordance with social and cultural practices, was an important theme in the analysis of ritual performances inside the heritage areas.

Sufis currently are under considerable threat of persecution because of their rival Shia clerics who have continually been present, powerful, and active in Iranian government and politics since the Iranian revolution of 1978. Sufi elders have constantly been prosecuted and charged with disturbing the public order. Many interviewees expressed their concerns about Sufis being under pressure and their fear of expressing

their philosophical points of view freely. Most interviewees chose to express their opinion of the significance of Sufi messages.

Sufism is a doctrine which has been defined as the mystical version of Islam (Ahmed, 2008). Sufism's artistic thinking and humanistic interpretation of religion has influenced Iranian culture, literature, and society (Ghadamyari, 2012) and is opposed to the Shia Iranian political system. Sufis believe that people can find the truth of divine love and knowledge through direct personal experience of God, not Sharia.

Shia represents a religion that has both inner and outer elements, including some distinct aspects that are contradictory in nature. Political Islamism in Iran, under the leadership of clerics, has a clear link to exoteric Islam. This places them in an opposite position to the mystic tendency of Sufism, which lack interests in exoteric Islam and avoid rules that are conflicting in nature. Mysticism is linked to intangibility and there is a looseness in religious rules regarding people's daily lives. The hidden spiritual meaning of Sufism attached to the site could not be ignored.

Sufism and the site's intangibility contribute to its liminality. There is a religious aspect to it that differs from the state religion. The mystical sense that surrounds this heritage site provides individuals with feelings of respect and emotional closeness to supernatural and spiritual forces (Varul, 2008).

The ethos of longing, daydreaming and expressive individualism is inscribed in the use of heritage in the sphere of the sacral. Thus, the intangibility of Sufism in this zone may play an active role in the development of place meaning through the religious nature of the site (Varul, 2008). The intangible sense of identity prompts many people to seek assistance from rituals as a source of power to cope with difficulties and struggles in their daily lives; they use religious ritual practices as tactical acts.

In fact, the heritage site is a place for the performance of rituals by people inside the buffer zone. This reminds the central concept of Bourdieu's perspective on social space (1977). By considering Bourdieu's concept of habitus (1977), each person is as an embodied habitus that 'socially constituted system of cognitive and motivating structures' (p. 76).

These rituals continue to be conducted despite the ongoing social and political issues in Iran and boost the tactics of livelihood of those who occupy and visit the site. Muslim society has learnt to relate to its surroundings and incorporate its beliefs into people's daily lives. SKSEA has always been, and continues to be, close to the heart of Sufism and Shia intangibility. The intangibility and meaning of Sheikh Safi challenge the idea that heritage audiences are passive. Its audiences are allowed to be active agents in the mediation of the meanings of this heritage site. Importantly, this site represents an understanding of heritage as a process. Within its spatial structures, Sheikh Safi has produced certain tactical behaviours (de Certeau, 1984) and emotional experiences that have influenced the buffer zone and ritual practices inside it. The site creates a shared experience of emotional performances for visitors as well as residents and establishes momentary ritual events and moments (Lefebvre, 1991). The intangible meaning attached to this site implies 'playful–constructive' patterns of tactical and ritual practices and generates awareness of emotional effects, despite the pressure of heritage and government authorities (Debord, 1956). The heritage buffer zone is a symbol of rituality and rite of passage that represents a crossing of borders into a culturally, socially, and politically different area.

## Critique of Management

According to the ICHHTO, the SKSEA base was established in 2002. Since then, all protection, preservation, restoration, research, and tourism management actions have been planned and implemented with the approval of the base, and closely monitored by supervisory bodies discussed later in this section. Notification of the national registration of the cultural heritage property of SKSEA has been transmitted by ICHHTO to all relevant state authorities and bodies, informing them of the laws applicable to these properties.

This notification is to ensure that any actions that may affect the properties are authorised by ICHHTO prior to planning and implementation. The long duration of the cold season also affects the ensemble, which makes the protection of the monuments difficult; physical works, such as tiling and decoration, are more complex to organise due to weather changes. Cold weather and frost adversely affect construction materials and brick structures, as does rising damp in the wall bases. A comprehensive plan for monitoring the ensemble has been developed to control and study the influence of climatic elements and to offset the degree of weather-related damage. The most probable danger threatening the buffer and core zones of this ensemble is earthquake. Historical records confirm this view.

Generally, this ensemble has adequate capacity for the accommodation of visitors due to the presence of multiple spaces; however, controlling the number of visitors entering the interior spaces during peak tourism season is a necessity. Also, public entry to sections such as the Sheikh Safi shrine (Allāh Allāh dome) and the Shāh Ismāil tomb must be restricted due to space shortages and the need to minimise damage (UNESCO, 2010, list 1345).

The number of floors in all valuable structures inside the buffer zone is defined within the relevant rules and regulations. If not specified, buildings should not be higher than the shortest of the heritage buildings (UNESCO, 2010, list 1345). ICHHTO is responsible for the submission of all relevant regulations about these buffer zones to a specialised committee.

All substantial or superficial repairs and renovation of plaques and valuable buildings must be undertaken in accordance with the architecture of those buildings and the architectural plan for structures and installations. Further, works should be ratified by ICCHTO.

There are different governmental projects beside the heritage plans in Ardebil that have impacted the buffer zone's conservation plan as well as local's everyday life, such as the Ardebil Master plan. There are many issues regarding the city's master plan. The plan's vague timeframe and unclear conditions about the approval, implementation of the Ardebil Master plan and the provision of the core and buffer zones related to this plan are critical. Another unclear condition is related to the heritage authorities' management plan regarding the Ardebil Master plan; there are not clear strategies. Exclusion of locals in decision making, not only in the heritage conservation plan but also in the Ardebil Master plan, is another issue. The locals have not been involved with the heritage or other decision making and have no knowledge about the buffer zone's regulations or new plans. There is not clear information as to whether these plans work together or in conflict. The question is, where are the locals' rights related to the heritage or city plans? In the case of the buffer and landscape zones of SKSEA, the conservation programs and uncertain zoning principles that apply in the heritage zone are not clear. The vague regulations that apply in the

heritage zones do not suit living areas; regulations and heritage plans are normally multifunctional and do not cover development in living areas.

In the interviews, many people complained that their local communities' practices and their traditional lifestyles have been ignored in the heritage regulations or in conservation policies and the site's management.

What challenges do you face when trying to protect this area and/or living in this zone?

Participant 3 (local): 'I am a local resident here. The key factor is not only poor policies which tend to hurt us all but also unclear rules. This includes all those living within this damned area'.

There is a call for detailed examination of environmental impact to allow for the identification of appropriate perimeters to create a protective buffer zone.

According to Leask and Fyall (2006), the areas of heritage buffer zones have been designated for protection both from outside and inside the perimeters. Thus, the selected buffer zones remain within the peripheries of protected regions of activity. The Iranian state and other heritage organisations appear to support existing governance tools and the exercising of bureaucratic control over people's lives. The existing buffer zones have created tensions due to their vague boundaries and unidentified impacts from different governmental authorities.

Bureaucracy has called for the installation of juridical-political grids for systematic surveillance for regulatory purposes. These processes aim to cooperatively strengthen one another to yield the abstract space necessary for buffer zones. This does not ensure there will be no ongoing issues. However, it does provide some stability (Gregory, 1993, p. 402).

The buffer zone is analysed through the use and changes of 'space' as a key word. In line with Lefebvre's (1991) scheme concerning the production of space, the SKSEA

buffer and landscape zone are typically defined as peripheral to dominant spatial practices. The buffer zone is a place of resistance to the dominant power exercised by heritage authorities,<sup>14</sup> government officials and national and international institutions that have controlled the zone through international treaties and conventions and national and local legislations. On the other hand, the place has been constructed by social practices. Therefore, the buffer zone has been the site of various land use restrictions by state power management, national regulations, and international conventions that are usually in conflict and compound management problems. There is no collaborative management between local communities and heritage authorities over the buffer zone's decision-making and plans to enable a better understanding of conditions and exercise of management processes.

Thus, these buffer zone areas are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed' by such practices and issues (Turner, 1987). Individuals can be initiated into a new state of being through exploration of the buffer zones, either as difference (for those not familiar with the place) or as different kinds of place experiences occupied by power (for those already oriented to daily spatial practices that emphasise some representation of place). By simply being exposed to such differences of type and degree—constitutive as they are of new ontological and epistemological relationships—the individual's knowledge of her ordinary spatial practice and her relationship to it is increased (Lawrence, 1997).

Therefore, these findings show that this buffer zone is a state where people are excluded from heritage decisions and heritage authorities dominate and control, creating disadvantage and dissatisfaction in the people in an ambiguous place between

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<sup>14</sup> The heritage authorities are introduced in Chapter 3 under the case study topic.

the two structured world views of Shia and Sufi and institutional arrangements (Thomassen, 2016); a place that is also the site of events (moments) and rituals.

**Summary:** Many activities have been implemented, controlled, and managed in the SKSEA heritage buffer and landscape zone area. The main aim of these actions has been to maintain a positive image of the site and lower the negative impacts of conservation on neighbouring communities. To summarise the findings, the site encompassed politicised meanings embodying power rationale in the governance and regulation of the political and cultural legitimacy of Iranian cultural identity.

Policymakers and state bureaucracies have a considerable effect on people's everyday lives and practices. The ordinary people, as one of the key actors, are not satisfied with the management and conservation of the areas, which has triggered a sense of loss of place and difficulties relating to heritage, identities, and places. Most participants have recognised elements of exclusion, ambiguity, uncertainty, alienation, and dissatisfaction, and interpreted the zoning area as ambiguous places waiting for clear new policies. All appeared ready to embrace and manage new arrangements if they addressed their issues.

Analysis of the themes discovered paralysing ambiguities. During the examination of SKSEA buffer and landscape zone, where many ambiguities were evident in the zones. This study demonstrates that the condition of people waiting for new heritage policies and regulations in the buffer zones is uncertain and beset by doubt, anger, and fear of the future. The buffer zone is a significant feature that requires to be seen as an abstract space to define the use and ownership of constituent parties. In other words,

these zones are not easily defined emotionally and physically, and are not clearly 'owned' by a particular party or government organisations.

The intangibility of SKSEA is considerable. The intangible meaning attached to this heritage site is generated by constructive tactical and ritual practices inside the heritage buffer and landscape zone. The intangibility of this heritage site is evident in the patterns of ritual practices that will be analysed in the concluding chapter.

The next chapter will synthesise the findings in this thesis, first by restating the research objectives and questions. Conclusions, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research will be discussed. The last chapter will review the theory, future directions, and practical implications. The aim is to lead the reader to a deeper understanding of all the implications of the buffer zone conditions within the limits of this study. The study could be useful for heritage policy makers nationally and internationally.

## Chapter 6: Conclusions

The purpose of this study is to identify the buffer zone condition(s) of Pasargadae and Sheikh Safi Al-Din Khānegāh and Shrine Ensemble (SKSEA) and to analyse how such condition(s) affect the status of buffer zones and how subtle, tactical practices (such as national and religious performances) and rituals are used to maintain the limitations of these spaces, rather than allowing them to fully transform into a generic protected area. This chapter begins with a summary of the purpose of research and the research questions. There follows a review of the approach to answering the research questions. Conclusions are drawn from the themes and findings discussed in the previous chapters with comparisons and evaluations of the findings. Potential future research directions are suggested. Finally, the significance of the findings and their contributions to the field of study are presented.

### Introduction

The research aimed to answer:

1. What everyday practices and meanings exist in the selected World Heritage Buffer Zones that contribute to the social processes of their construction?
2. Can the concept of liminality illuminate the constructs and the problems within the World heritage Buffer zones?

To answer the questions, the study examined the principal social processes involved in creating and describing the complex conditions in these buffer zones from different perspectives. A key premise is that a heritage buffer zone is not a 'place' by the merit and virtue of the individual elements, physical features or meanings within it, but it is

a combination in which all of the elements are important, as they may not constitute a heritage buffer zone by themselves.

This research has explored different issues in the buffer zones studied which may tend to confuse, alienate, or create ambiguity in people's everyday lives. Ethnographic methodology and fieldwork have been used to explore the emotional and physical complexities of the buffer zone condition.

The thesis observed the World Heritage sites of Pasargadae and SKSEA through fieldwork, specifically, mobile sensory ethnography using depth observation (the technique of gaze) and qualitative data (interviews and notetaking from observations) and identified key themes through which the buffer zones can be examined.

The problems of unemployment, lack of appropriate policies and accurate planning, deficiencies and lack of facilities, poverty, migration, considerable displacement of people in both buffer zones, lack of improvement of the zoning areas, shortage of government funds, the neglect of people's needs and views in decision making, unclear and vague governmental heritage policies, power and high levels of control, all have caused emotional problems such as confusion, uncertainty, ambiguity, dissatisfaction, exclusion, alienation and isolation. The major objective of analysing these complexities has been to examine the various aspects of social life in these buffer zones through the theory of liminality.

In these buffer zones, unemployment and the lack of development of small businesses, products that are irrelevant to heritage, all contribute to severe financial hardship and poverty inside the zoned areas. The effect of social inequalities on the socio-economic structure of the area and the physical features of the buffer zone results in the creation of many odd jobs such as street vending. The long wait for new heritage legislations, unclear heritage buffer zone regulations, confusion, dissatisfaction, and even migration constitute the buffer zone condition. This social and environmental context

has a significant effect on people's everyday lives and health-related habits (such as physical activity inside these zones), which has greatly changed the quality of these places. On the other hand, strong tactics (de Certeau, 1984) associated with heritage intangibilities create particular places for performance of rituality which affect buffer zone place-making. These findings demonstrate the complicated features of these buffer zones.

The fieldwork analysis identified detrimental themes, including power dominance, unclear heritage laws and conventions in the buffer zones, exclusion of communities from the decision-making processes, constant surveillance, political intolerance regarding the heritage places and the buffer zones, inadequate governance, poverty, inequality, and unemployment. These have widely changed peoples' perceptions of place, their living patterns, and their reactive tactical performances. These findings imply that authorities need to take more serious steps to ensure community connection and ownership of heritage decisions.

Findings of the high levels of social alienation in buffer zones provide a concrete account of prevailing poverty and the constant intrusive control of the government's regulatory agencies over the quality of life, which may lead to social alienation, exclusion, and/or separation. Social exclusion here refers to the individuals' emotions and behaviours, which reflect the failure of governments to provide an atmosphere that strengthens social identity and cohesion.

In summary, these buffer zones demonstrate the following characteristics:

- A high level of ambiguity and doubt, especially in administrative and social power structures, evident in various forms;
- A sense of uncertainty or marginality;
- Temporal and spatial suspense;

- A sense of danger and dissatisfaction or crisis involving the objects and the people around or within the zone (e.g., when heritage is at risk or endangered or when people are forced to relocate);
- Shifting or ambiguous boundaries;
- A potential suspension of what is considered normal daily life;
- Strong signs of tactical reaction (practice of rituals).

These findings are consistent with previous research on the ‘social construction of place’ or place making understood through theory of social constructivism. Marxist perceptions of place making approaches (Bourdieu, 1984; Creswell, 2004; Harvey, 1989; Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 1993) informed analysis of the data. The meanings of these heritage buffer zones in their present condition or in process have been analysed through the concept of place making, which unites all heritage points and revolves around the notions of who we are and who others want us to be (Graham & Howard, 2008). People construct perceptions of their own identity through tactics as they perform their rituality in connection with intangible heritage factors; heritage is performed as people remember, forget, communicate, react, and assert identity and cultural values (Crouch & Parker, 2003; Díaz-andreu & Champion 1996; Meskell, 2002, 2003). This aspect of heritage creates particular and different places inside buffer zones through rituality, moments, and events.

The theme of remembering and the sense of identity (identified in the fieldwork data) in buffer zones illuminates how the experiences offered by heritage are a process (Smith, 2006) that contrasts with buffer zones’ abstract condition as a place occupied by power and control. Heritage not only engages with acts of remembering and with the development of tactics (ritual practices and performances), but it also impacts on the creation of shared experiences and the memories of these processes (Edensor, 2010).

The study identified the buffer zones' strong link with heritage and with influences that are powerful but intangible, all of which may create particular, different, and complex conditions. Heritage relates to a process which legitimises the power of tactical, national, and other cultural/social identities and rituals that have shaped and affected the buffer zones.

The ethnographic study depicted conditions within the buffer zones. Certain questions need to be answered: Have the conditions of the buffer zones and the qualities of these areas changed? If so, how do these changes affect people's everyday lives and practices physically and emotionally? Have they also affected the heritage area's character? What are the sequences of the changes within the structure of these conditions? What are the social processes within the buffer zones that can be analysed from a liminal perspective, in addition to other social and cultural aspects which have contributed to conditions in the border zones studied?

### **Everyday Experiences of the World Heritage Buffer Zones**

The key themes are reviewed to answer the question of the world heritage buffer zone transformation and people's everyday experiences. While all participants expressed ambiguity, dissatisfaction, confusion, disregard, exclusion, and uncertainty across all age demographics, they related their doubt about the zoning areas in both heritage sites to physical and emotional experiences.

- (a) The participants believe that there is a high level of deficiencies in the buffer zones resulting from governmental neglect and lack of oversight.
- (b) There are not clearly defined or stable conditions in those buffer zones because of unclear regulations and heritage laws, lack of clear definitions locally or nationally, absence of local people in decision making processes, different interpretations of the heritage buffer zones nationally and internationally from different actors'

perspectives, particularly for the eastern countries, unclear future heritage laws and regulations, different unplanned and uncontrolled government development or heritage projects, the absence of a concrete functional policy towards the buffer zones, different uses of the buffer zones from different actors, and vague and unclear ownership and status in places under such strong control and restrictions.

(c) There are feelings of dissatisfaction, insecurity, exclusion, and ambiguity among the locals that have been raised because of disengagement of local in decision making processes regarding their place of living, lack of clear information from heritage authorities, inappropriate governmental development projects, vague and unclear ownership, control and management by different international, national, state, and heritage authorities, and long waiting for clear heritage laws and regulations.

Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) considered that heritage appears to be quite dissonant in the perceptions and inscriptions of nation states. Notably, dissonance and conflict are apparent throughout the commentary, theorising, and discussion of heritage-related issues. The key themes are people feel confusion and ambiguity. The descriptive terms which can be used for such buffer zone conditions are ‘undefined’, ‘uncertainty, and ‘ambiguity’.

Previous studies on the subject of buffer zones have highlighted the fact that they do not contribute to the value of the heritage site, but nevertheless, they act as a protective tool (Martin, 2008). The findings of this study suggest that buffer zones are a tool of protection and power, with conflicts of interest and feelings of dissonance, dissatisfaction, and confusion that transform the zoning areas into absolute or abstract places (Lefebvre, 1974). Power and control generate emotional experiences of dissatisfaction, disregard of authorities, confusion, ambiguity, exclusion, and a sense of being forgotten and isolated.

Heritage buffer zones also link to different factors, both public and private, official and non-official; insider and outsider actors, materiality and meanings of heritage sites, all serve as actors that vary and echo their objectives. For these reasons, identification and management of heritage sites involve elevated levels of dissonance, ambiguity, uncertainty, dissatisfaction and confusion among people, particularly the locals (Ashworth & Graham, 2005).

This study agrees with Relph (1976), who distinguished between the experiences of insiders and outsiders in a place by considering the themes of alienation and dissatisfaction. The findings showed locals experienced dissatisfaction and alienation in relation to the conditions of the buffer zones, a state of 'outsideness'. Relph's (1976) comprehensive study of place argues that understanding this perspective can contribute to more effective maintenance and restoration of existing places and the making of new transformed places (in this study buffer zones).

Lefebvre (1991) throws light on how these buffer zones act as places where power and control (dominance) create confusion, conflict and dissatisfaction. The data analysis demonstrates that the selected buffer zones are indeed shaped by bureaucratic control, whereby each administrative system maps out its own territory, stakes it out and signposts it, with the installation of juridical-political grids within which social life is subject to systematic surveillance and regulation by the state.

These processes reinforce each other to constitute 'abstract space'. This research agrees with Harvey (1990) that power is 'absolute' and 'abstract' (Lefebvre, 1974, 1991) in its generation of space. These findings differ from previous studies in interpreting how the meaning of heritage affects these selected heritage buffer zones' condition.

Observation of the buffer zones from different angles in this study reveals a high degree of intangibility in the effect of heritage on the selected buffer zones and their

surroundings as well. The findings showed that people were proud of the perceived glory of the past and its spirituality. The intangibility of perceived past human experiences intersects with present experience in these zoning areas. People remembered and rebuilt the past through contemporary interactions, such as ritual and daily pursuits of family life and earning a living, with the physical sites.

This research supports de Certeau's (1984) argument that buffer zones are places for tactical actions and ritual performances. Tactics are a way of resisting established solutions to strategies of power. Conflicting influences (that are only noticeable when we view the buffer zones from new perspectives) shape buffer zones as places of liminality.

### **The World Heritage Buffer Zone's Liminality**

This study has methodically analysed the defects present in the buffer zone system through the lens of the liminal conditions, which highlight the key themes of dissatisfaction, exclusion, confusion and ambiguity and of the tactical practices that react to these conditions and are understood as the essence of heritage meanings and intangibilities.

The key finding is that the heritage buffer zone users inscribed their interpretations on the spaces through their everyday activities and different or novel uses of the spaces. Data analysis shows that some tourists have realised that the buffer zones are temporary spaces and may not meet their expectations of satisfying places for enjoyment and cultural enrichment (see observations of tourists regarding Pasargadae in Chapter 4). The fieldwork showed that native residents also expected the zones to be better cared for and protected, and hoped to have a chance to express their needs to government officials (Herzfeld, 2006). The finding is in line with Herzfeld (2006),

who found that communities are threatened by power strategies and governmental planners because their plans have priorities over local needs. Fraser (2012) also argued that the signs of life and everyday practices of people in a place are often ignored by the urban planners, who view locations as static, isolated and empty. The data represented how the condition of heritage buffer zones results from their occupation by strong national and international conventions, legislations and regulations, which serve as important signs of authorities' desires for power over these selected buffer zones. In line with these concepts, these buffer zones have been transformed into abstract places (Lefebvre, 1971) which have been occupied by authorities' power strategies and. However, beside the immediate and present experiences at the surface, the intangibilities of heritage give these buffer zones a rootedness. Harvey emphasised that place is often seen as the locus of collective memory, with people's past memories attached to a place's shape, resulting in the creation of identity (cited in Creswell, 2004, p. 61).

It is important to note that the story of heritage buffer zones in these case studies is different from the concept of concrete abstract place discussed by Lefebvre (1971).

The buffer zone conditions of people's everyday life and practices inside these selected case studies are viewed from a social perspective. Analysing the everyday life and practices of the inhabitants inside these places provided this study with various interpretations of a place of different actors. This is crucial to understanding how the buffer zones in this study are socially constructed, and how these constructions variously affect everyday human life and practice inside the zones. The buffer zones are analysed through an understanding of how meaning and practice are shaped within material space. Research on place here is necessarily concerned with how these meanings and practices are produced and consumed by people (Creswell, 2004, p. 81).

The heritage buffer zones of this study are full of meanings and intangibilities, which create meaningful ritual performances and rite of passage.

The concept of liminality as a condition of the heritage buffer zones is one of the major contributions of this study. Themes from the fieldwork data have led to a better understanding and analysis of the World Heritage buffer zones in Iran; the understanding of change and transformation as forces that shape liminal places may be applicable to similar places in the global South and North such as in Turkey and Greece. The study could be useful to understand about the buffer zones' function in different countries not only physically but emotionally.

Heritage buffer zones consist of different kinds of place experiences controlled by power and characterised by ambiguity and uncertainty, where ritual performances around traditional, national, and religious events have been designed to achieve purposes beyond group cohesion. Shields's *Place on the Margin* (1991) invokes the concept of liminality to clarify how power in place has given rise to conditions of alienation, exclusion, confusion, and ambiguity, perceived to be outside normative everyday conventions. Shields uses marginality synonymously with liminality.

People's tactical responses to power are a paradoxical characteristic of these abstract places. As described in Victor Turner's analysis (1969), people separate from ordinary daily life to perform with others in a homogenised group (*communitas*), expressing a sense of shared experience; they react tactically from different viewpoints in a collective moment of rhythm in national and religious events. This feature in the buffer zones studied is a spiritual form of the nation's identity.

In the *Critique of Everyday Life* (1974), Lefebvre argued from the standpoint of a Marxist materialist critique of 'everydayness'. By everydayness, he was referring to soul-destroying features of modernity, social interactions, and the purely material environment. From this perspective, the concept of the moment is important in the

study of these buffer zones, and is applicable to studies of other buffer zones, where snapshots of short term performances may reveal collective and individual rituals of resistance to power (Cragg & Thrift, 2002, p. 179). Such rituals are ensembles of rhythmic moments. Occupation and movements in the buffer zones produce a mixture of moments and rituals of varying regularity and emotions (Edensor, 2010). The rites of passage are represented in these tactical ritual performances.

This thesis has approached the buffer zones as liminal spaces that exist parallel to more formal spaces, which are defined by mainstream uses that, characteristically, have clear boundaries and practices within the interwoven net of emotional and physical social expectations, routines and norms (Shortt, 2015). The findings are consistent with previous research on liminality that refers to any 'between' situation or object (Turner, 1974). In-between space and time there are times spent waiting or wasted, states of suspense and confusion, places of ambiguity, undefined spaces, a time or moment between two structured world views or institutional arrangements, and rites of passage that are directly associated with rituality. The themes from the interview data show personal changes (e.g., in anger and confusion over living conditions and livelihood) on an individual scale, as well as change and transition on the macro level of social, cultural, and economic life. The concept of liminality ties the micro and the macro scales together through an approach of operating in-between, i.e., from the 'middle' (Thomassen, 2016, p. 7).

Liminality opens a quite new and illuminating view of the conditions of the buffer zones from physical and emotional angles, where the place is saturated by power and resistance, and characterised by events and transitional moments, intangibilities, performances of rituality, and meanings complicated by ambiguity, confusion and uncertainty. The liminality in buffer zones permeates the physical social context as well as the emotional.

## **Contributions and Limitations**

Researchers have explored places where networks of social relations are configured contingently and are seen through localised and contested power and other factors. This research contributes to the literature by examining place making and liminality in the context of SKSEA and Pasargadae. These sites contribute to the richness of the data in their political, social, historical, and religious significances.

This study supports Lefebvre's (1974) view of places and groups through which social space (Bourdieu, 1977) is produced. Everyday activities are monitored by the power of authorities, organisations, and strict rules and regulations within abstract space(s), sites of living beings, objects, works, signs, and symbols (Lefebvre, 1991). In these absolute (Harvey, 1990) or abstract spaces (Lefebvre, 1991), changes in the quality of life are analysed from both physical and emotional perspectives. Intangible meanings and rituality are revealed through different actors in transitional moments. Interestingly, participants interviewed were ready to accept new physical and emotional situations, but complained that their needs and experiences had not been considered. The needs of the great number of citizens are dependent on democratic organisations to provide fairer rights for citizens and equality. The heritage and national laws are important in advancing fair rights for inhabitants in the World Heritage buffer zones. However, in the social, cultural, economic, and political context of Iran, there is a lack of citizen participation in heritage policymaking. There are serious issues in these buffer zones, especially when citizens are disengaged from decision making. Participants complained that they did not know how the policies were made and what will be the consequences of the final decisions. The heritage policies have been made by restrictive, powerful measures of government and heritage

planners who lack adequate knowledge about people's everyday life and their practices. The data analysing represented how the local have been excluded in heritage decision making. The study analyses different factors that local people are not in a position to enjoy and exercise their rights in the government heritage decision making. In addition, government authorities have rarely recognised the special needs of local or communities or attempted to involve them in decision making. The interview in the two selected site shows how people suffer from dissatisfaction and vague condition. This is one of the significant emotional characteristics of the buffer zone condition. The result is a high level of dissatisfaction and sense of exclusion among occupants. Under these conditions, the places can be understood as 'abstract spaces' (Lefebvre, 1971) occupied by power and control; the buffer zones are places full of ambiguity and uncertainty. However, the effect(s) of spatial concepts and various other categories necessary for analysing these buffer zones could not be analysed wholly as abstract places. In fact, these zoning areas are influenced directly by heritage intangibilities and the spiritual values of heritage sites that transformed these places into meaningful buffer zones and places for ritual performances. This point of view changed the conclusion of the data analysis, to show that bodies, objects, meanings and flows combine in new and sometimes unexpected ways in the construction of place. Heritage as a social process (Harvey, 2001; Smith, 2006), and its meaning and effects, as well as the effect(s) of spatial concepts (Bushell & Staiff, 2012) on buffer zones was considered and investigated in the analysis of the conditions of buffer zones as liminal places.

It was discussed in chapter 3 that sensitive cultural and political fieldwork sites such as Pasargadae and SKSEA generate several limitations. The fieldwork was very stressful for a range of political issues in Iran such as security and restriction in all over the country. One of the big issues was that this fieldwork needed access to

heritage sites and some Iranian government-authorised organisations or heritage documents. Due to the high level of national security or risk of spying, access was largely denied or limited in many ways, since those documents were politically regarded as confidential national information.

It was difficult to obtain signed consent from the participants. In the social and political context of Iran, where so many rests on the ability to keep quiet, to self-censor, and to be anonymous and unknown, silence and fear be the hardest things to deal with in the field.

People's fear and anger in engaging in a free conversation through the interview was one of the considerable issues in the first fieldwork. Therefore, in the second SKSEA's fieldwork, it was tried to build trust during the interview by asking a friend to help and guide me as an interpreter and using the native language and local methods of courtesy and respect. Audio recordings of interviews was denied, only written notes were taken. Some potential interviewees expressed that some subjects, such as political issues, were too sensitive to discuss. Therefore, one of the most critical issues during the fieldwork in this research was to convince people to talk freely.

It was difficult to take people's fears and suspicions seriously and try to allay them as much as possible. Limited budget and the nature of the fieldwork did not allow long periods in the field; only two brief time periods were available for this research.

This research aimed to interview heritage organisation members but access to these people was extremely limited, with only one or two cases at each selected site. This meant that the field interviews were done only by approaching a 'safe' group with whom the researcher felt comfortable—which risked the dilution of the research.

## Research directions

For further study of heritage buffer zones, specific concepts outlined by Lefebvre could be pursued: everyday life and the people's rights to city spaces are revealed by the analysis of rhythm and bodily involvement. Lefebvre's (1974, 1991) right to the city is an argument for a new perception of meaning and value in time and space, short and long term ritual performances and resistance in relation to power strategies and the current structures of social life, bringing significant changes to social–political systems and paving the way for making inalienable places.

Analysis of the rhythms of everyday practices and understanding of places as spaces lived through experiences and performances has been the guiding approach of this thesis. The body is not merely a physical body but includes thoughts, emotions, meanings, and memories as its key components in space, with the possibility to be transformed. Embodied subjects encompass ideas of the physical and mental realms, as well as the social and political dimensions (Tiwari, 2010, p. 18). Future research may examine other buffer zones using analysis of rhythm and performances of ritual moments as a key methodology.

Steve Pile (1996) considered the relationship between the inner and outer world of the individual vital to understanding the links between the environment, spatial behaviour, and the mind. Both phenomenal and objective aspects are considered in observing bodies and behaviour in buffer zones, and in the relationships between the implicit emotional and the explicit material realms. But the focus on how emotional, bodily and external conditions connect to create meanings in heritage buffer zones could be applied, in terms of intangibility and materiality, in a totally different context of emotional and meaningful places. Further socio-spatial research could use the ideas of Massey (1997), who radicalised a structural approach by rejecting the objective and

static notion of place in favour of a progressive or global sense of place (Massey, 2010).

## **Conclusion**

This study argues that in buffer zones, communities live with different conditions, uses and interpretations of the histories and traditions of the surrounding places, and endure the effects of government control. The heritage buffer zones in the case studies are distinct cultural entities, able to contain and convey multiple and often conflicting and dissonant narratives for representing human experience(s). People undertaking daily activities in these buffer zones experience feelings of ambiguity, dissatisfaction and confusion, such that suspension of normal work life and disruption of family life are everyday features of these spaces.

Based on the evidence provided in this research, in the selected heritage buffer zone areas, depending on various inputs, a number of different conditions dominate. The buffer zones are often designed, influenced, structured and administered by a combination of actors, including local authorities, NGOs (such as the ICSASP), regional people, and international organisations such as UNESCO, whose decisionmaking processes take place far from the sites at which they are implemented (Mitchell & Kelly, 2011). Spaces may get trapped between the different meanings and definitions attributed to them by interest groups. Based on the data analysis, these buffer zones have been defined and maintained in an ambiguous condition in terms of definitions, interpretations, lack of clear regulations and heritage laws. Usages and experiences can complicate the management processes, create ambiguities regarding boundaries, function and meanings, and lead to discontent, alienation and confusion among both residents and tourists. The locals' tactical resistance in both selected heritage buffer zones is observed in reaction to unclear heritage regulations and power

strategies; short term activities, practices and ritual performances may attract the threat of suppression and the restriction of activities. These buffer zones are not only a geographical place in a map for conservation of the heritage sites; they are places full of meanings and intangibilities, with different actors constructing the place in these liminal zoning areas.

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# Appendices

## Interview questions

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what is your age?

What does this monument mean to you? Please explain this?

How do you feel about the surrounding area protected by the cultural heritage organisation) of the area you live in?

What is the most important thing in this area? Why?

What in this place is important or interesting to you?

How do the rituals and customs that are in place affect your feelings? Why?

What is your daily life? Describe it.

What is the positive or negative effect on your life of being near this monument? Are you happy with the buffer zone?

What is the benefit of this monument?

What are the deficiencies of this buffer zone in your opinion?

What has been a challenge for you because of the protection of this area?

Do you have any plans to stay in this place for a long time or are you in doubt about this?

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