

# Assessment of Sociopetality Components of City Hall; Case Study: Ardabil\*

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## ABSTRACT

In developed societies, citizens are fully involved in the administration of city affairs considering the definition of the concept of citizenship. In such societies, public spaces and buildings have a fundamental character in the development of social relations and citizen participation due to the existence of NGOs and the expansion of urban democracy. As one of the most citizen-oriented public buildings in the world, the city hall has a high status; it is a place to carry out all of the social affairs of a city and is considered a symbolic home for citizens. One of the most important features of the city hall is its sociopetality to all classes and social groups. This study aims to identify the sociopetality components of the city hall. This research assumes that the presence of a city hall in Ardabil will increase the level of citizen participation and thus the sociopetality of Ardabil. In this regard, a question arises: what are the sociopetality components of a city hall? To meet the stated purpose, the concept of city hall, public spaces, sociopetality, physical and public qualities of sociopetal(oid) spaces, and then the project context are studied first. Physical, activity and semantic-perceptual components have been formulated based on studies. A questionnaire was designed based on the obtained components. The results of the questionnaire were obtained using SPSS to measure the components and to answer the research hypothesis and questions. According to the results, the important sociopetality components of city hall include legibility and visibility, distinguishedness of the city hall, inviting entrance, the existence of transparent spaces, creation of gathering spaces, holding national/religious rituals and ceremonies, cultural function, and collective memory.

**Keywords:** City Hall, Sociopetality, Social Sustainability, Public Participation, Ardabil.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, no one can deny the importance of urban life, the city experience, and its consequences throughout the world, especially in anthropology, sociology, urbanism, and architecture. Thus, as an individual/social life container of societies and through its role in the production of living space, architecture has always played an influential role in the shape and quality of individual/social life in societies throughout history. Procedures affecting community social issues can be explored and identified by identifying social sustainability aspects as consideration of social issues is an inevitable and integral part of urban projects in the urban planning process. The existence of sociopetal public is considered as an important complement to the sociopetality of individuals. Besides, sociopetal public spaces promote a spirit of solidarity, personal growth, the development and improvement of appropriate behavioral patterns. The most important problem in this paper is the lack of context for sociopetality. Consequently, this paper focuses on presenting the components of sociopetality in the city hall that can bring social spirit back to urban life. These components are used to design, plan, manage, and create a desirable city hall. This research assumes that the presence of the city hall in Ardabil will increase the level of citizen participation and thus the sociopetality of Ardabil. In this respect, the following questions arise: What are the sociopetality components of city hall? How can we improve the spatial quality of city hall by taking into consideration the components of sociopetality in design? Sociopetality is regarded as one of the most important factors in spatial desirability in the city hall as a public space. This complex is primarily a space for the establishment of one of the most democratic urban institutions, namely the city councils, and then a center for public gatherings and communication/interaction between people in the field of urban affairs and cultural activities. According to the studies on the design of the city hall, it can be said that the city hall must have architectural sociopetality as a place for public presence and participation so that it can fulfill its institutional role in the process of sociopetality of citizens. The shortage of spaces such as the city hall is felt in Ardabil due to the lack of such public spaces. Therefore, city officials are expected to create such spaces.

## 2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

City hall is considered as one of the public spaces; therefore, the present study is composed of two major concepts, i.e., sociopetality and public space, which have been widely explored individually. There has been a lot of research on public spaces, many of which have examined the positive characteristics of public spaces.

As a result, these studies consider sociopetality and social characteristics to be essential factors in public spaces. For example, according to the results of a study on more than 1,000 pieces of urban public space in different countries around the world, four key factors influence the success of public spaces: access and interconnection, comfort and mental imagery, uses and activities, and sociopetality. Much research has been done on sociopetality as a key component. Take, for example, Lerup's (1972) research that considers social characteristics as one of the successful characteristics of public spaces. Gehl has done a lot of research on public spaces. In 1987, he considered supporting social activities as one of the requirements for successful public spaces and activity as the best opportunity for interaction. Global research and experiences in urban public spaces suggest that they should be used as places for social interaction and collective life (Raffian & Khodaei, 2009), such as Goodman (1986), Berman (1986), and Wozer (1986), Glaser (1987), Francis (1989), Tibbens (1992), Sorkin (1992), Warpole (1992), Kalsrope (1993), Dan (1993), Hayden (1995), Wolfgang (2000), Rogers (2003), Myers (2003), Pasagulari (2004), and Dratley (2004). In Iran, there has been a great deal of research on public spaces in light of the importance of this topic, including Raffian (2005), Rahnamaei (2007), Kashanijo (2009), Raffian & Khodadad (2009), Daneshpour & Charkhchian (2009).

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of sociopetality is an important complement to the sociability of individuals in the architectural space concerning the creation of favorable social relationships and the existence of sociopetal public spaces. Besides, sociopetal public spaces promote a spirit of solidarity, personal growth, the development and improvement of appropriate behavioral patterns. Therefore, as a context for improving communication and enhancing social interactions between individuals, architectural public spaces should be considered in terms of sociopetality (Ghamari & Mardomi, 2011). As one of the most important factors in the dynamics of urban spaces, human beings need a suitable context for an effective presence in public spaces. Meeting the social needs of human beings and providing opportunities for his or her social experiences requires physical space and setting. Public space is considered as a huge capacity in response to this aspect of human life in urban societies. Human beings have always fulfilled their inherent need for social relations by establishing a variety of structures in the city, socially active spaces providing the opportunity for human face-to-face communication within the urban community, and within an organized body.

**Table 1. Theoretical Perspectives on the Sociopetalities of Spaces**

No.	Researcher	Subject	Indicators Provided
1	Ghanbaran & Jafari (2014)	Investigation of the Factors Affecting the Promotion of Social Interactions among Residents of Residential Neighborhood (Case Study: Darakeh Neighborhood-Tehran)	The socio-political structure of the city, the spatio-physical structure, and the mental states of space users influence the promotion of social interactions among Darakeh residents.
2	Naqavi Shangdehi (2014)	Sociopetalities in public spaces of the city	Better responding to the social needs of individuals is influential in a public environment.
3	Moayeddi (2014)	Explanation of the Components Affecting Urban Landscape Sustainability to Improve the Sociopetalities of Urban Public Spaces	Appropriate physical space in the urban landscape is based on human needs and the components of sociopetalities are a prerequisite for better sociopetalities of urban public spaces.
4	Rahami, Heidari, & Eskandari (2014)	Sociopetalities and Its Importance in Designing Public Spaces (Case Study: Yasuj Central Library)	The components of social interaction are presented in library design.
5	Samipour (2014)	Physical Factors affecting the sociopetalities of public spaces	The physical, activity, and semantic components are the three factors that influence the sociopetalities of public spaces.
6	Mohammadi & Ayatollah (2015)	Factors Influencing the Promotion of Sociopetalities of Cultural Buildings (Case Study: Farshchian Cultural and Art Complex, Isfahan)	There is a direct relationship between the degree of sociopetalities and the physical and activity components of the constructed environment.
7	Hall (2010)	Sociopetal and sociofugal environments	Sociopetal spaces encourage social interaction; sociofugal environments reduce the amount of social interaction.
8	Salehi Nia & Memarian (2009)	The sociopetalities of the architectural space	The issue of sociopetalities in architectural space arises concerning the creation of favorable social relationships and the enhancement of opportunities for social interaction in individual and group communication.
9	Hafezifar (2009)	Urban Design with the Approach to Build a Sociopetal Urban Space (Case Study: Armenian Neighborhood of Ardabil)	Sociopetalities based on the presence of people in urban spaces and the social interactions between them is based on the human need for a sense of social belonging and being with others.
10	Gehl (1987)	Life between buildings	The inviting urban space is the space that enables us to meet face-to-face with our fellow citizens and gain experience directly by our senses.
11	Lang (1987)	Creating Architectural Theory: The Role of the Behavioral Sciences in Environmental Design	Environments that can improve the human experience, are human-scale, form the basis of a variety of behaviors and activities, and can accept citizens' desired behaviors.
12	Lennard (1998)	Urban Space Design and Social Life	Multipurpose spaces provide many of the activities employed by users and also provide social coordination of users

#### 4. PUBLIC SPACES

The mass of urban spaces is generally divided into two categories, namely public spaces and private spaces. In the Oxford English Dictionary (1993), the word "Public" is employed to mean "general" and as an antonym for "private" in most senses. It is interpreted as belonging to all peoples, belonging to, influencing or belonging to the community, done or constructed by the whole community, selected by the whole population,

accessible, used or shared by the whole community, not restricted to private use, provided by local or central government for tax-supported communities (Carr, Francis, & Rivlin, 1992). The common space between us and strangers, the space for quiet coexistence and impersonal encounters (Waltzer, 1986, p. 470), or the creation of spaces where different people interact. It can be stated that urban public spaces have acted as a physical context for social interaction between people

since long ago. The main role of public space is to provide the opportunity for public presence. Urban public spaces should be places for social interaction and collective life (Raffian & Khodaei, 2009). Hence, as a context for improving communication and enhancing social interactions between individuals, architectural public spaces should be considered in

terms of sociopetality (Ghamari & Mardomi, 2011). Sociopetality is one of the most important elements of spatial desirability also in Ardabil City Hall as a public space. A wide range of definitions and expressions has been addressed in most of the literature on the public spaces, a part of which is offered in Table 2.

**Table 2. Various Definitions and Concepts of Public Spaces**

Author and Title of the Work	Term	Definition
Brown (2006), <i>Contested Space: Street Trading, Public Space, and Livelihoods in Developing Cities</i>	Urban Public Space	This book emphasizes the term urban public space, i.e., all physical spaces and social relations that specify the use of that space within the impersonal territory of cities. Urban public spaces include official squares, roads, streets, as well as vacant and marginal lands and other edge spaces. This includes all spaces that accept public access or use rights, whether publicly owned or private, shared, or indefinite. It is regarded as a source of public property, but its boundaries may change over time (Brown, 2006, p. 10).
Lofland (1998), <i>The Public Realm: Exploring the City's Quintessential Social Territory</i>	Public Territory	The public territory consists of areas and urban settlements where individuals tend to be together, that is, remain unknown, or only absolutely known to another. In other words, the public territory consists of a series of spaces in a city occupied by strangers or those who know each other merely as occupiers or other impersonal identity classes (Lofland, 1998, p. 9). The term public space covers the diversity of legal relationships between the public and space (Ibid, p. 8).
Carr et al. (1992)	Public Space	We consider public space as a common ground (shared land) where individuals perform the ritual and functional activities interconnecting the individuals in a community, whether in the normal routine of daily life or periodic festivals (Carr, 1992, p. 9).  Three main values guide the development of our vision of public space: We believe that public space must be accountable, democratic, and meaningful (Ibid, p. 9).
Kohn (2004), <i>Brave New Neighborhoods: The Privatization of Public Space</i>	Public Space	My proposed definition of public space has three essential components: ownership, accessibility, and multi-agency. In everyday speech, the public space usually refers to a state-owned place, with unlimited access for all, or the promoter of communication and interaction (Kooheh, 2004, p. 11).
Zukin (1995), <i>The Cultures of Cities</i>	Public Space Public Place	Public spaces are important because they are regarded as places where strangers intermingle freely. They also continuously discuss the boundaries and symbols of human society. Like sites, insights, meeting places, and social scenes, public spaces empower us to conceive and represent the city to build an ideology of acceptance power for strangers, tolerance of differences, and opportunities to enter a full social life, whether civil or commercial (Zukin, 1995, p. 8).  Many social critics have begun to write about new public spaces shaped by the exchange space of telecommunications and computer technology. However, this book addresses my interest in public spaces as physical locations, symbolic and geographical centers, gathering points, places where strangers intermingle (Ibid, p. 45).
Mitchell (2003), <i>The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space</i>	Public Space	The public space creates a series of fears, the ones that arise from sensing a public space as an uncontrollable space, where civilization is extremely fragile (Mitchell, 2003, p. 13).  In a world defined by private ownership, public space, as a space for display, is of paramount importance. The very act of representing a group (or partly a person itself) to a larger public, creates a space for representation, a representation both for demand and for a public space (Ibid, p. 34).

Author and Title of the Work	Term	Definition
Staehele & Mitchell (2008), <i>The People's Property. Politics, and the Public</i>	Public space/ public Property	Public space is not the same as public property. The quality of the popularity of space seems to consist of established relationships between the property (both as an object or thing and a set of relationships and rules) and the resident population as the originator of the property (Staehele & Mitchell, 2008, p. 116).  Public space is a kind of volatile, complex, and variable space (Ibid, p. 117).
Low (2000), <i>On the Plaza: The Politics of Public Space and Culture</i>	Public space/ public property	Human efforts are manifested in public urban spaces. Artifacts of the social world are designed, adapted, discussed, and interpreted within the context of this environment (Low, 2000, p. 47).  Nevertheless, the important point is that public spaces are regarded as a series of important areas for public discourse and expression of dissatisfaction (Ibid, p. 204).
Gehl (1996), <i>Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space</i>	Public Space	All in all, the presence of other people, activities, events, inspirations, and provocations, precisely encompasses one of the most important qualities of public spaces (Gehl, 1996, p. 15).
Gehl & Gemzoe (1999), <i>New City Spaces</i>	Public Space	Even though its pattern of use has varied throughout history, public spaces have always acted as places for meetings, markets, and traffic space despite differences (Gehl & Gemzo, 1999, p. 10).
Tibbalds (1992), <i>Citizen-oriented. Urbanism</i>	Public space/ Public Place	I believe that the public territory is considered to be the most important part of the city and towns, with the greatest amount of human contact and interaction, all sections of the urban context with physical and visual access to the general public. Thus, it extends from the streets, parks, and squares of a city or town to the buildings that surround them (Tibbalds, 1992, p. 1).  Public places in a city belong to the people of that city, not to developers or investors, police or traffic monitors. Their nature can be affected by their scale, shape, and size, the ways connecting them, the applications and activities they involve, and how all types of traffic are used.
Madanipour (2003), <i>Public and Private Spaces of the City</i>	Public space/ Public Place	I have used the term public space (and public place) to refer to a part of the city's physical environment with public meaning and functions. Nonetheless, the term public territory is used to refer to a broader concept: the whole range of places, people, and activities that constitute the general aspects of human social life. Public space is regarded as a part of the public sphere (Madanipour, 2003, p. 4).  Using the criteria of access, representation (agency), and interests, a space under the control of public authorities, addressing people as a whole, open or accessible to them, used or shared by all members of society, can be identified as a public space (Ibid., P. 112).
Orum & Neal (2010), <i>Common Ground?: Readings and Re.ections on Public Space</i>	Public territory / public place	Although there are different ways of defining public space, there is a consensus that "public space" covers all areas open and accessible to all members of a community (in principle and not necessarily in practice) (Orum & Neal, 2010, p. 1).
Scruton (1984), <i>Public Interests</i>	Public Space	A space becomes public because of the nature of its boundaries. It is a space where anyone can enter and leave without permission from strangers and without any declaration, even implicit, of an explanatory purpose. The boundaries that create a public space are both permeable and open to public use (Scruton, 1984, p. 15).
Jacson (1984), <i>The American Public Space</i>	Public Space	A public place is usually defined as a place (or space) created and maintained by government officials, accessible to all citizens. It does not give us any information about the different methods we use and the different people involved. Given the new public spaces such as parking lots, garbage dumps, and highways, it is clear that the public space well provided for this area is not only very far from the areas intended for use but also functions beyond expectations (Jacson, 1984, p. 277).

Author and Title of the Work	Term	Definition
Mensch (2007), Public Space	Public Space	Public space is where people engage in public affairs while at the same time seeing and being seen by others. Therefore, this is the venue for town hall meetings, the legislative assembly, or any other place where public businesses are conducted (Mensch, 2007, p. 31).
Goodsell (2007), The Concept of Public Space and Its Democratic Manifestations	Public Space	I propose a general (though specific) definition of public space close to these different orientations beyond each of them. My definition is a spatio-temporal continuum for political discourse. What I mean by this term is the capacity for a cross-linked human process for communicative experience and political discourse that addresses the nature and future of society and the public interest (Goodsell, 2007, p. 370).
Carmona (2008), Public Space: The Management Dimension	Public Space	Public space (a broad definition) relates to all parts of the built environment, natural, public and private, indoor and outdoor, urban and rural. It is a place where the general public is free, though their accessibility is necessarily limited. These spaces include all streets, squares, and other passageways with the predominant residential, commercial, or social/civic use, open spaces, and parks, suburban open spaces, both public/private indoor and outdoor spaces, where public access is encouraged. It is, however, also controlled - such as private shopping malls or bus and rail stations, and the interiors of key public and civic buildings such as libraries, churches or town halls (Carmona, 2008, p. 4).  Public space (a limited definition) relates to a part of the natural and built urban environment freely available to the public. Such space shall include all streets, squares, and other passageways with a predominantly residential, commercial, or social/civic use, as well as open spaces, parks, and public/private spaces available to the public without restriction (at least during daylight hours). This includes communicating with key private and internal/external spaces freely available to the public (Ibid, p. 4).

(Ashrafi, Pur Ahmad, Rahnamaei, & Raffian, 2014)

As shown in Table 2, different authors use different concepts such as urban public space, public space, third place, public territory, public place, and public sphere when explaining the public sector of the human environment. In some cases, some authors use a variety of terms. In some other cases, authors use these terms in conjunction with one another in a completely vague way. However, architectural public spaces as a context for improving communication and enhancing social interactions between individuals should be considered in terms of sociopetality.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

This research is among qualitative and quantitative research. It uses an analytical descriptive research method. It is descriptive in that it describes and identifies the sociopetality of the city hall and the factors that promote and create it and analytical in that it needs to examine the relationship between different factors and the sociopetality of the city hall. In the main part of the study, i.e., the case study, the field method was used. In this method, information is collected through questionnaires, observations, and presence in public spaces. The questionnaire is designed so that it can measure the criteria and sub-criteria of

sociopetality in the city hall and answer the research questions and hypotheses. The data were analyzed using three separate methods. This analysis was performed by a researcher based on content analysis. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics are two other methods of data analysis in this study. According to the subject and scope, the research hypotheses are selected as non-oriented relational hypotheses to describe the inferential statistics of the research. Finally, the sociopetality components of the city hall have been obtained based on studies conducted so far. A questionnaire was designed based on the obtained components whose options are "completely agree," "agree," "disagree", "completely disagree," respectively. The results of the questionnaire were obtained by using SPSS to measure the components and answer the research hypothesis and questions. According to the SPSS results, among the 22 items in the questionnaire, the items related to the components of security and comfort, legibility and visibility, locating in a low-traffic area, distinguishedness of city hall, inviting entrance, beautiful landscape, transparent spaces, gathering spaces, holding national/religious rituals and ceremonies, cultural function, the use of symbolic elements, identification and

collective memory have all values above 90% agree and completely agree, respectively. Questions related to the components of sociopetal furniture, presence of diverse activities, provision of privacy and spatial territory, creation of social events, facilitation of public participation also had values ranging from 86% to 90% agree, respectively. Moreover, items related to the components of chat spaces, center for politics (statesmanship) along with the public, creation of vitality, creation of a sense of belonging, narrowing of the gap between people and officials with less than 82% agreement, is the least valuable items. In this paper, the statistical population is 140 people living in Ataie town in Ardabil province. Cochran sampling method with a coefficient of error of 5%, i.e., 95% accuracy, was used for sampling. According to Cochran's formula, 100 questionnaires were prepared and distributed to 140 people. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire or measurement tool are some of the most important issues in collecting information and observations. It is necessary to prove that the questionnaire used in this thesis is reliable and valid using statistical methods. The reliability of the questionnaire is 0.84, indicating that the questionnaire has very good reliability.

## 6. SOCIOPETAL AND SOCIOFUGAL SPACES

According to John Lang, the use of the words "sociopetal" and "sociofugal" denotes spaces that bring people together or keep them apart (Kasmaei, 2004). In other words, sociopetal spaces cause an increase in social interactions, and sociofugal environments cause a decrease in social interactions. Sociopetal spaces provide the opportunity for face-to-face contact and the distance between seating areas in social distances

is determined through consultation. Sociofugal spaces encourage avoidance of social interaction, for example, back-to-back benches. These practices have also been used in the design of open spaces. In public or quasi-public places, sometimes the spaces available are sociopetal facilitating meetings between people and sometimes sociofugal where no gathering space is provided. The face-to-face interaction in sociopetal places reduces the public presence. For such behaviors to occur, there must be a prior tendency and behavioral settings/places must be located in publicly acceptable spaces (Daneshpour & Charkhian, 2007).

### 6.1. Physical Qualities of Sociopetal Spaces

Physical qualities of public space are related to accessibility, location, physiological comfort under climatic conditions, and security. Besides, the presence of natural elements in sociopetal spaces contributing to an increase in the excitement and vitality of the environment, inviting passers-by to these spaces and providing people with rest, enjoyable experiences, and greater health is also of paramount importance. Elements such as memorials, stairs, fountains, and other factors that encourage people to be present and interact in space are among the factors that enhance the physical aspects of public spaces. Designing qualities such as the determination and integration of space, dimensions, proportions, flexibility, form, geometry, materials, enclosure, bodies, and physical and spatial continuity can affect the perception of space as a whole and thus have a favorable impact on perception. On the contrary, taking into account these factors make the current sociopetal spaces not desirably responsive in terms of sociopetality. Figure 1 shows the physical qualities of space sociopetality.

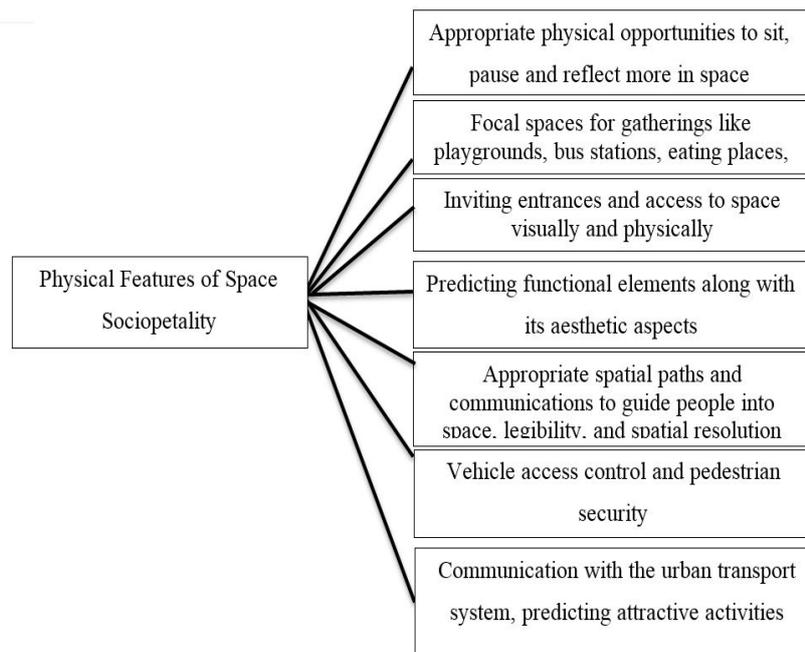
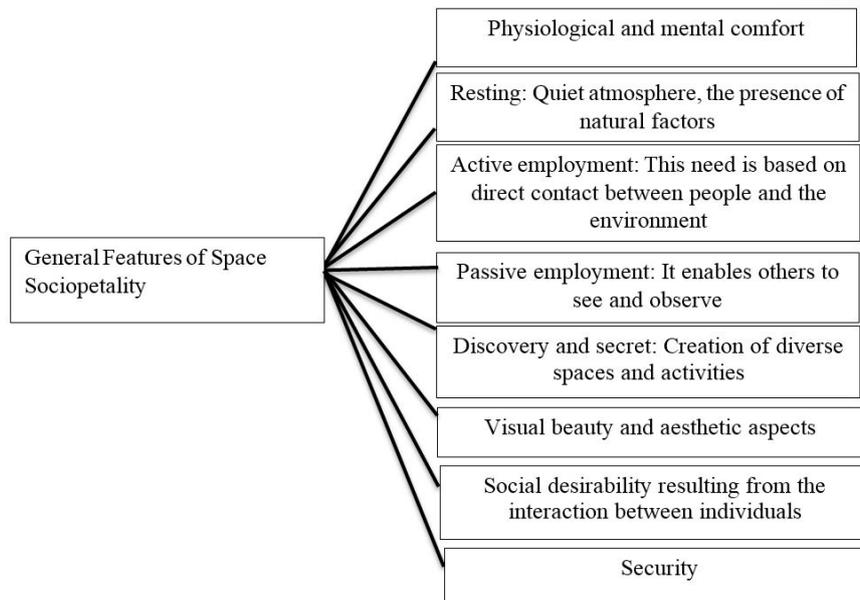


Fig. 1. Physical Qualities of Space Sociopetality  
(Daneshpour & Charkhian, 2007)

## 6.2. General Features of a Sociopetal Space

Spatio-physical elements of architecture are considered as one of the effective elements in creating and improving special and appropriate spatial qualities for social interactions and thus the sociopetality of architectural public spaces. It should be noted that this is a controversial claim that design can have specific behavioral outcomes regardless of the desires and motivations of the populations under study. There is little likelihood that environmental design, in any way possible, will lead to such behaviors if there is no

overt/covert desire for social interaction among people (Lang, 2009). For Holland, Clark, Katz, and Pace, factors such as the presence of furniture, motifs and shapes, the amount of space lighting, materials, sound, and adjacent functions influence the promotion of social interaction in public spaces. Along with physical factors, spatial characteristics (i.e., factors, elements, characteristics, and location of the space in building foundation) have been introduced as another possible factor affecting the interactivity of the architectural space. Figure 2 illustrates the general features of space sociopetality.



**Fig. 2. General Features of Space Sociopetality**  
(Daneshpour & Charkhian, 2007)

Therefore, in creating a successful public space capable of accommodating various individuals and groups, the following factors must be considered:

1. Providing territory, security, coherent structure, continuity and legibility, and predictability of space;
2. The presence of appropriate facilities in space, responsiveness, convenience, and environmental comfort;
3. The amount of information, environmental excitement entails the existence of dimensions such as complexity and mysteriousness, training, self-expression, diversity and conflict, choice, identification, solitude (retirement), and attachment to space;
4. Social interaction (Lerup, 1972, p. 394).

## 7. CONCEPT OF CONFERENCE HALLS AND CITY HALL

City hall is recognized as a popular monument in most urban societies in the world, especially in societies where the concept of democracy and people's sovereignty in determining their fate (self-determination) is valid. In general, a city hall is a place belonging to the people of

the city separate from the municipal administration. The nature of the independent functioning of the city hall stems from the independent functioning of citizens in the administration of their city affairs (Kharazminejad, 2009). Today, the concept of "city hall" is so important in societies that citizens remember their urban identity through it, not through telecommunication towers. They remember their city hall and remind others of it to introduce their city while mentioning its natural and historical potential. Where is the city hall? Simply put, in one sentence, the city hall is the heart of every city's management, a center for urban management institution decision-making, a place with specific characteristics. These characteristics are defined and determined based on a citizen-centered urban management position and the goals that these institutions have been established to achieve, and the mission that these institutions have. The city hall acts mainly as the city council building, along with the municipal macro-management of each city completed by designing a series of buildings for party offices, unions, syndicates, NGOs, newspapers, and the local media of that city. The most important areas of the city hall include an urban open space, the presence of citizens, a meeting place, monitoring the

activities of the council and the municipality, conveying citizens' views in the form of rallies and marches, and city management representing people directly (in the city council) and indirectly (in the municipality) (Naqipour & Chenari, 2012). Another measure that can enhance the status of the city hall, both internally and internationally, is the creation of conference halls, lectures, and international conferences as a platform for presenting achievements in the management of each city or exchange information and acquire knowledge from the experiences and management of other cities. The city hall is a symbol of the public presence and has always been a role model in building the city's landscape. The city hall building should be an identity-forming body with a genuine and unique identity of the city, an identity that introduces the city deserving its name. City hall is a symbolic and individual monument in all major cities of the world with slight differences. Another program considered for any city hall is the performance of political ceremonies (Naqipour & Chenari, 2012). In its broad form, the city hall is

described as a main space and city gathering center with three main types of activities:

- 1) Administrative activities including city council offices and specific municipal departments such as urban beautification agencies, tourist guides, and the like related to city council activities. Numerous meetings and gatherings of the guild/city/county/provincial council are held here.
2. Community-wide collective activities including lecture halls and a field to host large-scale socio-political celebrations/gatherings of people and to welcome the country's great personalities.
3. Cultural activities including a city history museum, documentation center, libraries, etc. Thus, city hall is a complex of administrative, ceremonial, and cultural activities, somehow a physical manifestation of the concept of civilization and citizenship. This complex is a lasting symbol for the city, possessing a spatial ability to create memory and identity for the citizens (Kharazminejhad, 2009). Table 3 lists some of the world's most famous halls.

**Table 3. Design History of the World's Famous City Halls**

No.	World's Famous City Halls
1. London City Hall, the UK	The London City Hall was designed by Norman Foster in 2002. It resembles a translucent egg-shaped ball on the south bank of the River Thames. It consists of a municipal building and a complex of buildings adjacent to it, including public commercial and cultural spaces such as hotels, restaurants, cinemas, amphitheatres, and an underground car park. This building is known as a symbol of the new era because it is based on transparency and freedom. Its glass shells are designed like a dome over the German parliament in Berlin. Citizens and tourists can easily enter the building, stroll through its spiral ramp, enter its many floors and segments, visit its exhibits, have coffee in its coffee shop. Interestingly, they can meet their elected members in the city council and municipality while working.
2. Toronto City Hall, Canada	Toronto City Hall was designed by Viljo Revell in 1969. It is considered one of the most prominent urban landmarks and one of the city's most important tourist attractions. Its modern, unique, and beautiful architecture have not lost its influence four decades after its inauguration. Due to its cultural value, the building was protected by the Ontario Cultural Heritage Act of 1991 as a historic and architectural property. The city council's saucer-shaped hall surrounds the eastern and western towers of the city hall. The Toronto City Hall complex consists of two curved office towers made of reinforced concrete and glass elevated to varying heights surrounding a convex saucer-shaped hall with two hands. This hall is the venue for city council meetings. Toronto citizens can closely be informed about council meetings in this hall. The east tower of the city hall has 27 floors and the west tower has 20 floors ( <a href="https://www.hamshahrionline.ir">https://www.hamshahrionline.ir</a> ).
3. Tokyo City Hall, Japan	Tokyo City Hall was designed by Kenzō Tange between 1988 and 1991. The complex consists of three separate buildings: Tower No. 1, Tower No. 2, and the Great Hall (Auditorium) adjacent to each other connected by a series of bridges. It is located next to the central park and several high-rise buildings. Alongside the complex, an underground railway station has been built to better access and connect the complex with other parts of Tokyo. A large square is designed in the center of the complex to connect with other locations. This semi-oval square surrounded by the auditorium on one side is designed with a gentle slope towards a stage for open-air public gatherings. A high altitude has been used to distinguish the city hall.
4. Seoul City Hall, South Korea	Seoul City Hall was designed by the Studio Mass Architecture Group between 2006 and 2011. The old Seoul City Hall, a 4-story 8800m <sup>2</sup> space built in 1962, was rehabilitated in 1986. Instead of a random complex of architectures at different times, the whole complex wants to create an effect of a complex. The exterior spaces of this complex act as a framework in this building so that they are also present in the renovation of existing interior and exterior portions of the new building. The specifications of the new hall designed by the Mass Architecture Group are as follows: 24 floors and 5 basements, 3 floors of which are dedicated to parking with 124 seats, total area: 12709 m <sup>2</sup> , total floor area: 94398 m <sup>2</sup> , and landscape area: 2087 m <sup>2</sup> ( <a href="https://www.hamshahrionline.ir">https://www.hamshahrionline.ir</a> ).

As a sociopetal public space, Ardabil City Hall should have both public and physical features. Finally, in sum, the components affecting the sociopetality of the city hall can be defined as follows: (1) the

physical component, (2) the activity component, (3) the semantic-perceptual components, each containing several variables, presented in Table 4.

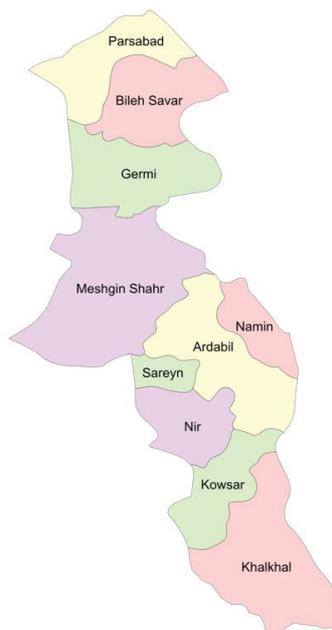
**Table 4. Spatio-physical Characteristics Affecting Sociopetality of Ardabil City Hall**

Physical Component	Activity Component	Semantic-perceptual Component
Security and comfort	Variety of activities	A sense of belonging
Access and Communication	Active employment (walking, talking, etc.)	Meaningful space
Legibility and visibility	Passive employment (viewing and watching)	Symbolic perceptions (gestures and metaphors)
Distinguishedness	Providing privacy	Identity and collective memory
Welcoming and inviting	Creating social events	Creation of vitality
Sociopetal furniture	Create seating, pausing, gathering spaces	The narrowed gap between the government and the public
Beautiful landscape	Creating collaborative spaces	
Visual beauty and attraction	Increasing social interactions	
Spatial transparency	Creating gathering spaces	
Form and geometry	Holding celebration and rituals	
Colors and materials	Creating cultural spaces	
	Creating a place for statesmanship with the public	

## 8. RECOGNITION AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of designing Ardabil City Hall is to create a space for Ardabil City Council and connect people and the government, on the one hand, to compensate for the lack of cultural spaces in Ardabil and to meet the needs of the public in enjoying recreational, educational, and leisure time in an appropriate space as well as organizing a range of urban contexts with urban divisions and a lack of urban, cultural, and recreational

amenities on the other. The lack of a city hall in Ardabil for public activities and the connection between the government and the people designed specifically for this application explains the importance of addressing this issue. The city hall is intended in such a way that everyone in all classes and ages can use it. It is the place for the formation of councils, the place for leisure and education, and the place of education included in a single complex.



**Fig. 3. Cities of Ardabil Province**  
(<https://en.wikipedia.org>)

### 8.1. Questionnaire Analysis

The following table relates to the gender of

questionnaire participants comprising a total of 100, 42 (42%) males and 58 (58%) females.

**Table 5. Gender of Participants**

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Male	42	42.0	42.0
Female	58	58.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

The following table relates to the education of questionnaire participants comprising a total of 100 consisting of 24 persons with a diploma and less, 8

with an associate degree, 56 with a bachelor's degree, and 12 with a master's degree.

**Table 6. Education of Participants**

Education	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Diploma and Less	24	24.0	24.0
Associate Degree	8	8.0	32.0
Bachelor's Degree	56	56.0	88.0
Master's Degree	12	12.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

The following table shows the occupations of questionnaire participants including a total of 30

unemployed, 26 businessmen, 5 students, 20 workers, 9 employees, and 10 housewives.

**Table 7. Occupation of Participants**

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Unemployed	30	30.0	30.0
Businessman	26	26.0	56.0
Student	5	5.0	61.0
Worker	20	20.0	81.0
Employee	9	9.0	90.0
Housewife	10	10.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

The following table shows the reliability of the questionnaire, i.e., 0.84, indicating that the

questionnaire has very good reliability.

**Table 8. The Reliability of the Questionnaires**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	100	100.0
	Excluded	0	0
	Total	100	100.0

\*Listwise Deletion Based on All Variables in the Procedure

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
0.840	22

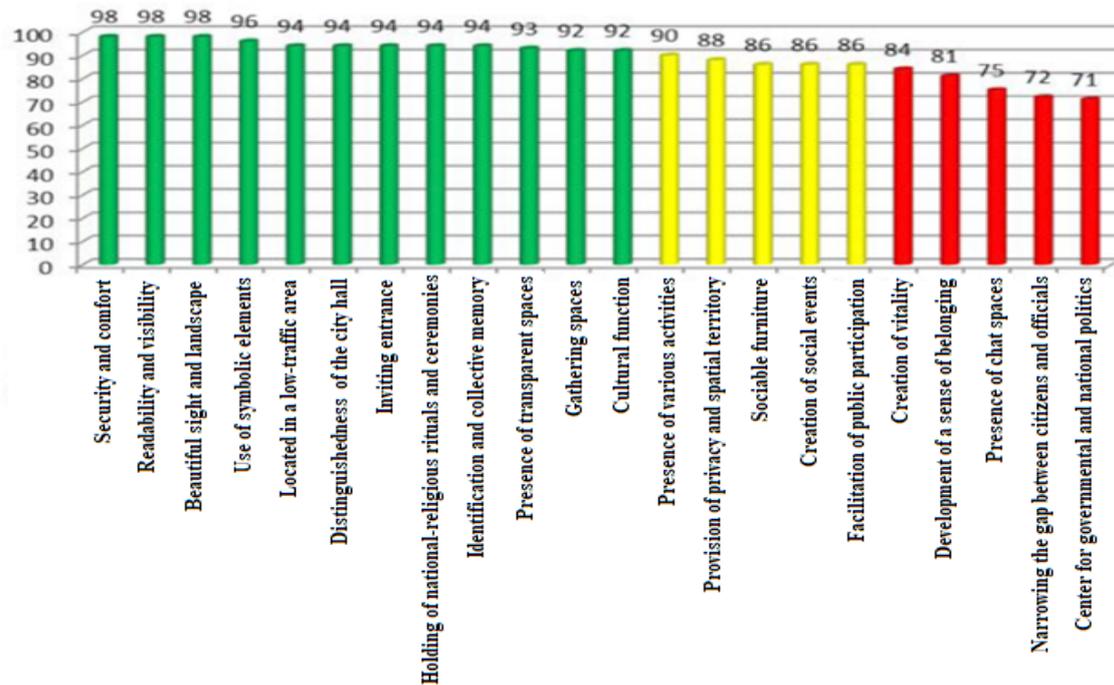


Fig. 4. Results of Questionnaire

## 8.2. Prioritizing the Results of Questionnaire

### 1. First Priority

Security and assistance, legibility and visibility, beautiful landscape, symbolic elements, locating in a low-traffic area, distinguishedness of the city hall, inviting entrance, national/religious rituals and ceremonies, identification and collective memory, transparent spaces, gathering spaces, and cultural function.

### 2. Second Priority

The presence of various activities, providing privacy and spatial territory, sociopetal furniture, creating social events, and facilitating public participation.

### 3. Third Priority

Creating vitality, creating a sense of belonging, the presence of chat rooms, narrowing the gap between people and officials, and the center for governmental and national politics.

## 9. CONCLUSION

This research discussed the components of sociopetal and its impact on the design of Ardabil City Hall. This study aimed to determine the factors causing sociopetal in Ardabil City Hall. Since, unfortunately, Ardabil does not have such public spaces as city hall, the authorities are trying to construct several public spaces such as a city hall to increase social

desires among the people, meet the social needs of the people, and encourage public participation in the administration of the city. According to the studies on the design of the city hall, it can be said that the city hall, as a place for public participation and use of urban gatherings, must possess the characteristic of architectural sociopetal to play its institutional role in the process of sociopetal of citizens. This paper studied the public spaces, the sociopetal of public spaces, as well as the general and physical characteristics of public spaces and then the study area, namely Ardabil. According to the studies, the sociopetal components of the city hall were obtained. Finally, in sum, the factors affecting the sociopetal of Ardabil City Hall can be defined as follows: 1) physical component, 2) activity component, and 3) semantic-perceptual component. A questionnaire was designed based on these components and distributed among the people of Ardabil (Ataie Street) using simple random sampling. The components influencing the design of Ardabil City Hall are categorized into three priorities. The first priority includes the following components: security and comfort, legibility and visibility, use of symbolic elements, locating in a low-traffic area, distinguishedness of the city hall, inviting entrance, holding national/religious rituals and ceremonies, identification and collective memory, presence of transparent spaces, gathering spaces, and cultural function, considered the most in the design of Ardabil City Hall. Finally, some guidelines have been provided to enhance the sociopetal of Ardabil City Hall.

**Table 9. A Set of Guidelines to Enhance the Sociopetality of Ardabil City Hall**

No.	Components	Some Guidelines to Enhance the Sociopetality of Ardabil City Hall
1	Security and Comfort	-Creation of a psychological sense of security in space -Removes visual and audio contamination -Increased space monitoring
2	Variety of Activities	-Prediction of attractive activities around space -Considering various activities in space at different times -Considering the possibility of the occurrence of a variety of activities, including opportunities to eat, talk, watch, etc.
3	Legibility and Visibility	-Predicting porosity and transparency in the body for visibility -Possibility of observing surrounding spaces from within the desired space -Legibility and comprehensibility of space and avoid ambiguity
4	Create Sitting, Pausing, and Gathering Spaces	-Proper location of furniture and seating places -Prediction of a series of spaces for halting and small gatherings -Creation of focal spaces for gathering in space
5	Active Employment	-Considering open spaces for eating, talking, and slightly watching others -Prediction of the possibility of walking with friends -Possibility of standing
6	Natural Landscape	-The presence of a good landscape toward the green space to comfort the users in the environment -Considering green spaces and appropriate vegetation in parts of the space increases the presence of individuals
7	Providing Privacy (Enclosure) and Territory	-Creation of a desirable, yet monitorable enclosure that creates a sense of cozy space -Separation of territories
8	Identification and Collective Memory	-Identification of space by installing statues, signs, furniture, and special symbols -The use of symbolic elements that enhances a sense of nostalgic place -The use of stairs, sculptures, and other environmental elements can cause mental conflict and a desire to be in space and to increase the sense of comfort.
9	Visual Beauty and Attraction	-The use of dynamic shapes and forms in design -Creation of rhythm, harmony, contrast, and diversity in architecture
10	Horizontalities	-Increasing horizontal levels and paths to increase interaction in space (using ramps)
11	Space Porosity	-Creation of voids and frames on horizontal surfaces and wide space with few columns
12	Spatial Transparency	-Avoiding rigid walls in space
13	Semi-open Places	-Design of terraces and balconies in structures
14	Attractive Spaces with Enclosed Bodies	-Creation of sunken courtyards and using elements such as trees and water in interior design
15	Sociopetal Furniture	-The use of a range of furniture makes it possible for people to relax in addition to rest
16	Indirect Lines in Building Geometry	-Creation of indirect lines in building geometry creates dynamics and more excitement in the audience



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