



Analytic Attitude toward the Contemporary Urban Public Spaces Related to the Communal Rituals

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ABSTRACT: From the beginning of the urban history, the public realm has been the territory of the sociable people and has had diversity of form in different situations. The public urban space, which has a prominent historical background, is not exclusive for an extreme activity or specific form: but, it is the presence of the human being that not merely gives the meaning and identity to the urban spaces, but also provides some functional aspect for it. The communal rituals which play an important and crucial role in everyone's social life, for the most part, happen in the public urban spaces which are regarded as people's public territory. However, recently, the public spaces that were special for communal rituals are adversely affected by technology and numerous corollaries of modern life. Accordingly, the research is going to spell out the contemporary urban places bonded to communal rituals. In the first step of this research, some sundry types of contemporary public spaces and some diverse ritual activities are presented. The next step is about introducing some striking and telling rituals of world and their related urban spaces. The methodology used in the research is a combination of observational-descriptive method and qualitative content analysis. The most important resources of this research are existing documents which have written in term of the main topic or have published recently about it. Finally, taken as a whole, the most profound rituals of the worldwide are recognized based on contemporary urban spaces and analyzed according to urban framework factors affecting the mentioned rituals.

Keywords: Contemporary Public Spaces, Communal Rituals, Holding Place of Rituals.

INTRODUCTION

The public sphere is an area in social life where individuals can come together to freely discuss and identify societal problems, and through that discussion influence political action. The current public sphere is enlarged, diversified, fragmented, governed by commercial norms and marked by certain characteristics of modern communication: the preponderance of the visual speech in comparison to the argumentative one, the fragmentation of spaces, the unequal participation to public spheres, the superimposition of the professional and private life on the interaction situations. The ritual is an activity that comes from the concept of society and social life. In the human society, from the beginning, there were so many rituals that some of them are abrogated and some are remained as the culture and identity of

the nations. Rituals appeal to tradition and are generally concerned to repeat historical precedents accurately. The performance of ritual creates a theatrical-like frame around the activities, symbols and events that shape participant's experience and cognitive ordering of the world, simplify the chaos of life and impose a more or less coherent system of categories of meaning onto it. Most of these rituals are needed for an urban space to hold out. In the world over, the human societies have determined specific places for performing these rituals. Since most of the rituals have some social and interactive aspect and gradually large amount of people participate in it, their specific urban spaces are termed as public or semi-public spaces. Through the world wide there are some particular communal rituals and celebrations which have performed

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in the public spaces for a long time through the history. By the way, with appearance of the modernity in last decades of current era, the ritual pattern has changed and this alteration has affected some related concerns (like their related holding spaces) of these rituals.

METHODOLOGY

It is supposed that every communal ritual has to be held in a specific space and since these rituals are public in nature their holding spaces need to be public. Therefore we are trying to show how these communal rituals are linked with public spaces that are used in the contemporary era.

So, in this paper we are going to use both observational-descriptive method of research and qualitative content analysis one to recognize and analyze urban public spaces and their related communal rituals by a kind of naturalistic (or nonparticipant) observation. Based on this method we specify communal rituals in their setting. The sampling method in the research is random sampling by means of collecting and categorizing the statistical population randomly according to their geographical features. So, in general, we have two variables; urban public spaces and communal rituals that are supposed to be linked. The first variable-urban public spaces, are picked up based on contemporary public spaces. The second- communal rituals- are selected according to their holding places in some countries located in the various continents. These two variables have to be related according to a pattern that describes principles of urban framework factors affecting rituals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recognition of Urban Public Space

Basically, public spaces are environments that are used when they are needed: people have to use them, while they can use some other places. Public space is a mix of the physical milieu with various activities whose purpose is to show the social life visible for all. All parts of an urban fabric which are accessible physically and visually for all are considered as public space. They are the most important parts of towns and cities in which the greatest amount of contact and interaction among people takes place (Carmona, 2003, pp. 3-6). If public space should be full of vivid population, the solution is finding some characteristics that make people interested. Open public spaces should provide opportunities like

leisure, comfort in natural environment, places to hold out special celebration and opportunities to breath in the city. The public space means "a common context which people can do their ritual activities." These places are playing the main role urban social life and instead of having relationship with private space, are considered as places out of personal and gregarious boundaries. So from descriptive point of view, urban public spaces are environments for being accepted by the others. In such places, diversity leads to more knowledge. The Greek agora is the most famous public space of the history. It was a main square of the city and the place of gathering and celebrating people together (Ibid, pp. 106-107). Roman forum is also like the agora, it was located on an intersection of roman cities. It was included of an apron, with some column around it. The main temple, theater and them were near of the forum (Morris, 1994, p. 98). In the early Middle Ages the public space of the cities were formed influenced by church. During this time, the religious performances were performing near the church yards (Harvie, 2009, p. 62).

General Approaches toward Urban Public Space

Public space (broadly defined) relates to all those parts of the built and natural environment, public and private, internal and external, urban and rural, where the public have free, although not necessarily unrestricted, access. It encompasses: all the streets, squares and other rights of way, whether predominantly in residential, commercial or community/civic uses; the open spaces and parks; the open countryside; the 'public/private' spaces both internal and external where public access is welcomed – if controlled – such as private shopping centers or rail and bus stations; and the interiors of key public and civic buildings such as libraries, churches, or town halls. There have been some specific approaches towards public space from 1960s. Accordingly, there are so many notions to describe and classify the urban public spaces. Some experts have explained their opinions about urban public space who has introduced several kinds of spaces through their study;



Table 1. General Approaches towards Public Space

Authors	Public Space Type	General Features
Tibbalds (1980s)	Neglected Space	Public Space that is too Littered, Covered in Graffiti, Polluted, Unsafe,
Sideris (1996), Trancik (1986)	Lost Space	About Challenges of Public Space Management.
Robert & Turner (2005)	24 Hour Space	Increasing Emphasis on the Evening Economy and Support for 24-Hour City Policies.
Gehl & Gemzoe (2001)	Invaded Space	Spaces that are Reversed for Private Cars.
Jacobs (1984), Gehl (1996), Whyte (1980-88)	Exclusionary Space	Appropriate Maintenance of Public Space Qualities.
Hall & I mire (1999)	Disabling Space	Related to Poor Quality of Physical Public Space.
Lofland (1998)	Parochial Space	Occupied Space by Locals.
Miethe (1995), Boddy (1992), Oc & Tiesdell (1997)	Segregated Space	Space in Which Some Forms of User Activity Undermine.
Oldenberg (1989), Banerjee (2007)	Third Space	Semi-public Space that have been Emerging.
Graham & Marrin(1999), Aurigi (2005)	Virtual Space	Chat Rooms, Virtual Worlds, Radio Phone-Ins, and the Like

(Carmona, 2010)

Contemporary Approach toward Urban Public Space

A range of recurring critiques characterize discussions of public space, ranging from the prosaic to the abstract. Most are based on a view about what public space should offer, often predicated on an idealized notion of public realm as an open and inclusive stage for social interaction, political action and cultural exchange. Although each of these qualities has distinct historical antecedents, it is also probably true to say that public space has rarely, if ever,

achieved such a utopian state. Not least this is because the ‘public’ in public space is not a coherent unified group, but instead a fragmented society of different socio-economic (and, today, often cultural) groups, further divided by age and gender. Based on the assortment of Kohn (2004), there are twenty types of urban spaces (Carmona, 2010, p. 168-170). Accordingly, Carmona in Contemporary Public Spaces: critiques and classifications introduce these urban spaces, in the following structure we will illustrate those contemporary spaces that are linked to public sphere:

Table 2. Contemporary Urban Space Type

Space Type	Distinguishing Characteristics	Examples
Natural/Semi-Natural Urban Space	Natural and Semi-natural Features within Urban Areas, Typically Under State Ownership	Rivers, Natural Features, Seafronts, Canals
Civic Space	The Traditional forms of Urban Space, Open and Available to All and Catering for a Wide Variety of Functions	Streets, Squares, Promenades
Public Open Space	Managed Open Space, Typically Green and Available and Open to All, Even if Temporally Controlled	Parks, Gardens, Commons, Urban Forests, Cemeteries
Public ‘Private’ Space	Seemingly Public External Space, In Fact Privately Owned and to Greater or Lesser Degrees Controlled	Privately Owned Civic Space, Business Parks, Church Grounds
Third Place Spaces	Semi-Public Meeting and Social Places, Public and Private	Cafes, Restaurants, Libraries, Town Halls, Religious Buildings
Private ‘Public’ Space	Publicly Owned, but Functionally and User Determined Spaces	Institutional Grounds, Housing Estates, University Campuses
Visible Private Space	Physically Private, but Visually Public Space	Front Gardens, Allotments, Gated Squares
Interface Spaces	Physically Demarked but Publicly Accessible Interfaces between Public and Private Space	Street Cafes, Private Pavement Space

(Carmona, 2010)



Typology of Public Space Activities

Peattei(1998) speaks of public space and purposeful activities. This includes not only singing in pubs, street dancing, or “tailgate parties, but also “small-group rituals and social bonding in serious collective action, from barn raisings and neighborhood cleanups to civil disobedience that block the streets or invades the missile site clearly(Gehl & Svarre, 2013, p. 86). Therefore outdoor activities in public spaces can be divided into three categories, necessary activities, optional activities, and social activities. (a) **Necessary activities** include those that are more or less compulsory. These activities are more or less independent of the exterior environment and the participants have no choice. Activities like: going to school or to work, shopping, waiting for bus or person, and running errands, are specific samples of necessary

activities. (b) **Optional activities** are those pursuits that are participated in if there is a wish to do so and if time and place make it possible. These activities take place when exterior condition is optimal. This category includes such activities as taking a walk to get a breath of fresh air, standing around enjoying life, and sitting or sunbathing. (c) **Social activities** are all activities that depend on the presence of others in public spaces Social activities occur spontaneously, as a direct consequence of people moving about and being in the same spaces. Social activities include children at play, greetings and conversations, communal activities of various kinds, and finally- as the most widespread social activity- passive contacts that is simply seeing and hearing other people (Gehl, 1971, pp. 143-146). Based on the Gehl’s point of view we can assume communal rituals as a sub-categorization of social activities.

Table 3. Public Space Activities Type

Necessary Activities				Optional Activities			Social Activities			
Going to School/Walk	Shopping	Waiting for Bus/Person	Running Errand	Taking Awalk to Get Braeth	Standing Around and Enjoying Life	Sitting and Sub Bathing	Children Play	Greeting and Conversatio N	Communal Activities of Various Kinds	Seeing and Hearing other People

(Gehl, 1971)

Social Activities and their Linked Urban Public Spaces

When outdoor areas are of high quality, necessary activities take place with approximately the same frequency – though they clearly tend to take a longer time, because the physical conditions are better. In addition, a wide range of optional activities will also occur because place and situation invite people to stop, sit, eat, and play, and so on. In a good environment, a completely different, broad spectrum of human activities is possible. A social activity takes place people together in the same space, to see and hear each other, to meet, which is a form of contact, a social activity; therefore, outdoor activities that called urban public activities need to have some more places to be held. Since these kinds of activities are social in nature, we can evaluate their relationship with urban public spaces. So in the following table, we are going to

show connection between both outdoor social activities and urban public spaces.



Table 4. Relationship Between Social Activities and Urban Public Spaces

Social Activities \ Urban Public Space	Natural-Semi Natural	Civic Space	Public Open Space	Movement Space	Service Space	Leftover Space	Undefinite Space	Interchange Space	Public Private Space	Conspicuous Space	Internalized "Public" Space	Retail Space	Third Place Space	Private Public Space	Visible Private Space	Interface Space
Children Play	•	•	•						•	*1	•	•	•	•	•	•
Greeting and Conversation	•	•	•													
Communal Activities of Various Kinds	•	•	•						•				•	•	•	•
Seeing and Hearing other People	•	•	•						•				•	•	•	•

Ritual Activities

In the sociology and anthropology, the ritual is defined as a ceremonial activity that is including sacred religious meanings. Turner believes that rituals are the powerful tools for scrutinizing the complex layers of social performances; because they reveal the most internal cultural values of each social performance. Ritual is an activity that is social in nature. It is a socially agreed upon and socially relevant form of behavior, with an extra degree of fervor, passion and intensity. One could even say that the very act of ritual sanctifies the most prosaic aspects until they achieve a reverential standing (Kanekar, 1992, p. 17). All rituals are rites of passage: in other words, they presuppose phrasal movement, directionality, and positioning (Copper, 1992, p. 12). In other words, ritual “is a sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place”. Rituals may be prescribed by the traditions of a community, including a religious community. Rituals are characterized but not defined by formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism, and performance. Rituals are a feature of all known human societies. They include not only the worship rites and sacraments of organized religions and cults, but also rites of passage, atonement and purification rites, oaths of allegiance, dedication ceremonies, coronations and presidential inaugurations, marriages and funerals, and more. Many activities that are ostensibly performed for concrete purposes, such as jury trials, execution of criminals, and scientific symposia, are loaded with purely symbolic actions prescribed by regulations or tradition, and thus partly

ritualistic in nature. Even common actions like hand-shaking and saying hello may be termed as rituals. The field of ritual studies has seen a number of conflicting definitions for this term. One given by Kyriakidis is that a ritual is an outsider’s or “etic” category for a set activity (or set of actions) that, to the outsider, seems irrational, non-contiguous, or illogical. The term can also be used by the insider or “emic” performer as an acknowledgement. Nowadays, most of these rituals are performing individual or communal in all over the world. Besides, based on geographical, cultural and religious features of countries, the rituals have either introspective formation or extroversive appearance. Thus this culture oriented situation could be an impressive position on the rituals; it means that based on their context, rituals could either be introspective or be extroversive in activity patterns.

Festival

The term festival comes from two Latin words; “Festum”, which means public joy, merriment, revelry and “Feria”, which means abstinence from work in honor of gods. Festival means a cyclically recurrent social occasion, exhibited through events, in a multitude of forms, involving direct or indirect participation of people at various levels. Alessandro Falassi (1987) believes that a complete festival morphology will correspond to the complete festival cycle and several of its parts will form the configuration of each of the actual festive events (Kanekar, 1992, pp. 13-14). In the following structure some general festivals of the world are introduced briefly;



Table 5. General Festivals of the World

Festival	Country	Activity/Environment	Holding Space
-Fall festival	Australia	-Music and Art Performances (In an Extroversive Environment)	-Public open space -Natural/semi-natural urban space -Public private space
- Mask Festival	Burkina Faso	- Dance, Music Performances - Masquerade Performances (In an Extroversive Environment)	-Public open space -Natural/semi-natural urban space -Public private space
-SANFERMINES -LA TOMATINA -ENTROIDO	Spain	- Comedy Performance - Throwing Tomato to others -Dance, Music & Comedy Performance (In an Extroversive Environment)	-Public open space -Civic space -Public private space

Carnival

Folk etymologies reveals that the word “carnival” comes from the Late Latin expression “carne vale”, which means “farewell to meat”, signifying the approaching fast. The Italian “carne levare” is one possible origin, meaning “to remove meat”, since meat is prohibited during Lent.

The earliest mention of a Carnival celebration is recorded in a 12th-century Roman account of the pope and upper class Roman citizens watching a parade through the city, followed by the killing of steers and other animals. (Mauldin, 2004, pp. 4-23). Here some famous carnivals are introduced.

Table 6. General Carnivals of the World

Carnival	Country	Activity/Environment	Holding Space
-Bloco & Maracatu Carnival	Brazil	Dance & Stomp With Brazilian Origin (In an Extroversive Environment)	-Public Open Space -Civic Space
-Trinidad and Tobago Carnival	Port of Spain	Masquerade Celebration & Live Music (In an Extroversive Environment)	-Public Open Space -Civic Space
-Mardi Gras Carnival	U.S.A	Dance & Music with African-American Origin (In an Extroversive Environment)	-Public Open Space -Civic Space
-National Carnival	Italy	Aristocratic Performance & Street Theater (In an Extroversive Environment)	-Public Open Space -Civic Space -Natural/Semi-Natural Urban Space
-ASHURA Ceremonies & Carnival	Iran	-Taeziyeh -Dasteh Gardani (In an Introspective Environment)	-Public Open Space -Civic Space -Third Place Space

Celebration

Celebration is a combination of play and ritual. According to Victor Turner “to celebrate” means to perform ritual publicly and formally. Rituals celebrate or commemorate Trans- human powers which, though invisible, are regarded by believers as the first and final causes of natural and cultural phenomena. Celebrations could be referred to as connected with predictable, culturally shared events (Kanekar, 1992, p.17). Ritual celebration recreates mythological time and revives eternal events. The mythological time - instead of logical time - is full of multiple features and qualities. It receives

special mysterious quality in each different moment and this characteristic makes it special (Alialhesabi & Paykan, 2013, p. 28). We introduce some general celebrations in the following table.



Table 7. General Celebrations of the World

Celebration	Country	Activity/Environment	Holding Space
-Christmas Celebration	Christian Countries	Religious Song & Dance & Stomp (Both in an Extroversive and in an Introspective Environment)	-Public Open Space -Civic Space
-Lunar New Year Celebration	China	Dropping Lantern, Dragon Dancing and Agricultural Symbolic Dance (In an Extroversive Environment)	-Public Open Space -Civic Space
-CHAHASHANBESOURI Celebration (Last Tuesday of the Year) -NIMEH SHAEBAN Celebration	Iran	-Jumping Over the Fire Stomping & Dancing (Both in an Extroversive and in an Introspective Environment) -Singing the Moludy Distributing Beverages and Candy on the Streets Illuminating the Street (Both in an Extroversive and in an Introspective Environment)	-Public Open Space -Civic Space

Here, we introduce the place of foresaid rituals among their related countries and continents.

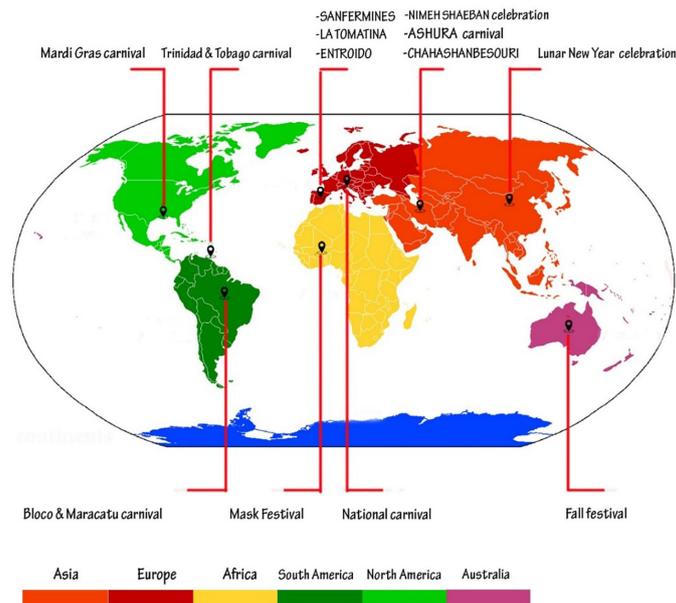


Fig. 1. Most General Communal Rituals of the World Over

Urban Framework Factors Affecting Rituals

Aldo Rossi makes an interesting relationship between monuments and ritual: both are the ‘permanent conserving element of myth’ and both are linked to the idea of retrieving the memory of the past. The fact that at times monuments are transformed and adapted is

what he calls ‘permanence’. Since the communal rituals of various kind are social in nature and need a common setting and context to be held we can imply them as social activities that involve movement in space and time. They could be held in particular dimensions such as time, place and culture. Processional rituals influence while are

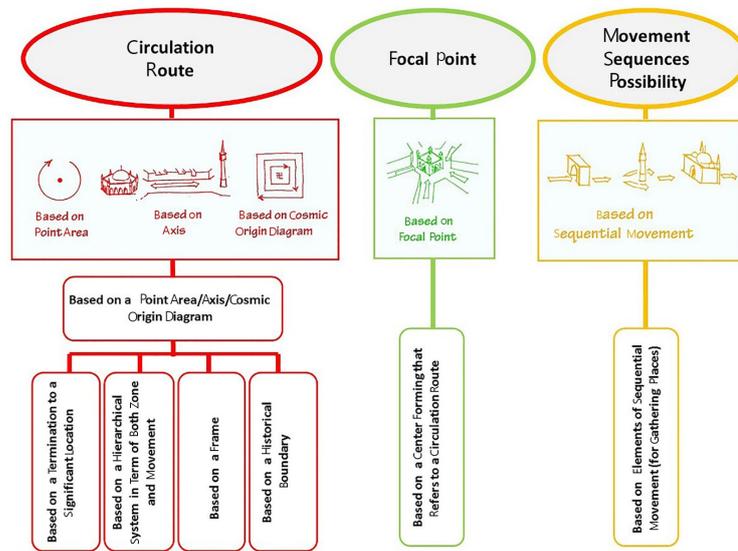


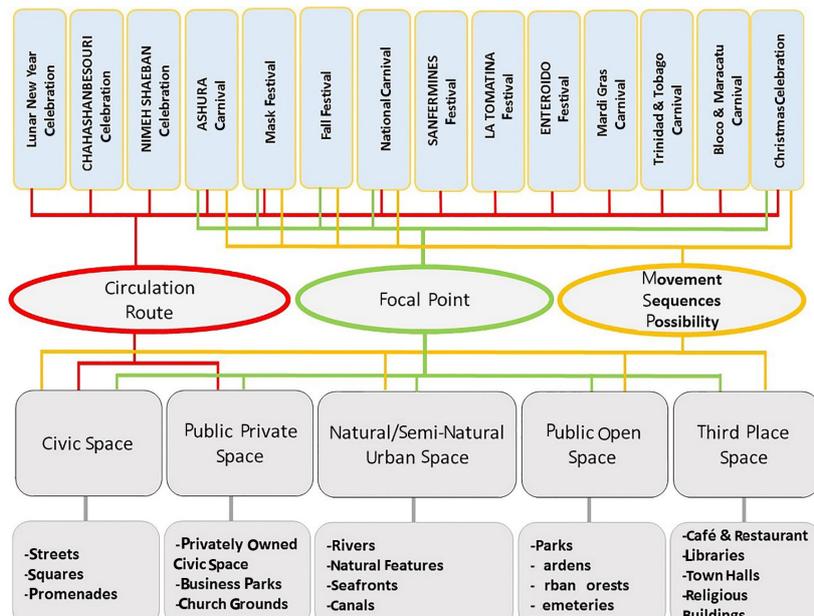
Fig. 2. Urban Framework Factors Affecting Rituals (Kanekar, 1992)

CORELATIONSHIP BETWEEN URBAN FRAMEWORK FACTORS AFFECTING RITUALS AND URBAN PUBLIC SPACES LINKED TO SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The mentioned rituals are holding in various cultures, countries and, continents of the world and are emerged from historical, cultural and, geographical aspects that

have influenced the nature and context of the social activities. Based on the three major factors of urban framework (introduced by Kanekar) that could be a pattern for ritual activities, there is a kind of relationship between rituals and urban public spaces. This relationship comes out of time, place and culture linked to the rituals.

Fig. 3. Framework Factors Affecting Ritual & Spaces Holding Social Activities





Recognition of Typical Public Spaces Linked to Communal Rituals

In the evaluation of urban framework factors affecting rituals and urban public spaces, we utilized those framework factors as a mediator to find some common

points between ritual manners and their holding spaces. In this part- based on Fig.3- we can introduce the typical places that the those rituals are holding through them. Accordingly, the following structure is extracted to show each communal ritual and their specific holding urban public places in the contemporary era.

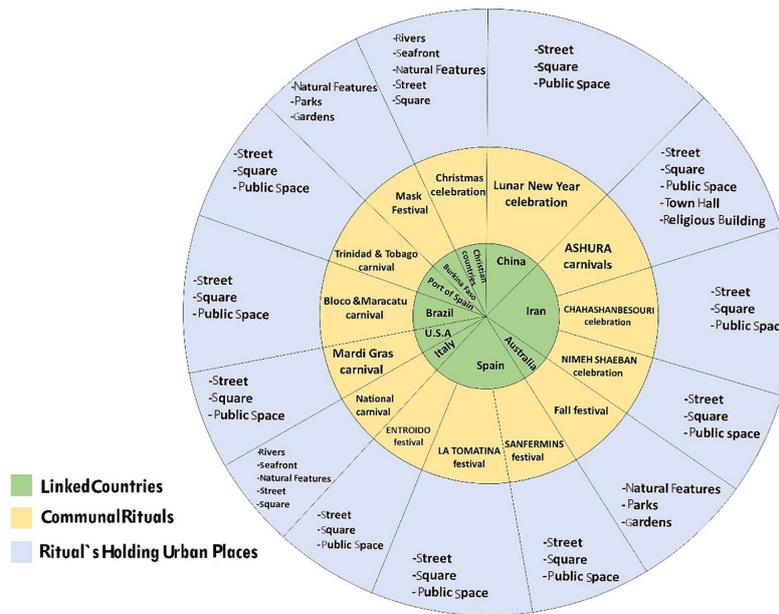


Fig. 4. Communal Rituals and their Linked Urban Public Places

CONCLUSION

Based on the main purpose of this study, we found out and recognized the contemporary public spaces related to the communal rituals to preserve nature and identity of each culture. Accordingly, in the first step it was needed to recognize public spaces and their subcategories in cotemporary era. Consequently, there were another recognition about urban outdoor activities that are embracing both social activities and comunal rituals. In the same breath, by using a concise comparison (Table. 4) it was possible to extract public spaces related to the communal rituals. Therefore, in the next step, some general communal rituals that are holding in various places among some countries were introduced. In this part the focuse was on the environment, context and manner related to each communal ritual. Finally, we utulized the principles related to urban framework

factors affecting rituals – as a mediator- and evaluated the relationship between mentioned rituals and their typical holding places (Fig. 3). It means, rituals as social activities are based on both environment activity and their related urban frameworks that come out of geographical and cultural features of related countries or continents.

The mentioned factors can link various parts of the city, making of them into a coherent entity at a particular time during the rituals. As an example of holding place National carnival (Venice), is based on its context, manner and environment while has seafront feature, rivers and public spaces; in the other situation Mardigras (U.S.A) carnival is holding the using places are mostly street,square and public space. Therefore, it is necessary to do more researches to analyze urban places related to the rituals that comes out of variousse cultures.



ENDNOTE

1. In Some Situations it is Possible



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