

Experience of Urbanscape Essence in International Award Winning Iranian Movies

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Abstract

Interdisciplinary subjects have always had a remarkable contribution in developing urban design concepts and theories. Among these contexts, cinema as a medium which broadcasts features of our cities and urban environments can have a significant role, but this instructional field is neglected among Iranian scholars. Thus, to fulfill this gap, it is essential to clarify the interrelations of cities and cinema in Iran. Iranian cinema, particularly after the revolution, received so many international awards in festivals. These prominent works have various urban sequences that can be a valuable source for urban designers and city policymakers. Consequently, the civic movies from these impressive works are selected and studied by the use of qualitative methods and content analysis. These analyses have been conducted in two distinctive sections. First, the repetition of cities, Urbanscape, and city aspects which were implied by Kevin Lynch had been inspected. Second, the role of cities and urbanscapes analyzed by the adoption of Carmona's dimensions. This paper indicates that Tehran has had the most presence in the movies, while few films have been captured in some coastal cities and some pictured in places with a special traditional architecture such as Bandar Lengeh. Within the city aspects, paths and districts have the most repetition while landmarks and nodes have the least depiction. It is conceded that the portrayed physical attributes of cities can be categorized into three parts which cover old and traditional environments, new and modern environments and outskirts suburban areas. Furthermore, from the social-perceptual point of view, Tehran because of its urban and civic issues is generally related with disorders and negative meanings, while other cities because of their nostalgic and traditional urban style are more respected within the society. According to the researches, urban facades and visual aspects in Tehran are usually not acceptable, while coastal environments and traditional designs sound more appropriate. As mentioned, the captured environments of Iranian cities are narrowed to some particular areas, which expresses the insufficient number of picturesque settings in urban environments. Therefore, this study can also perform as a tool for evaluating the enrichment of Iranian urban spaces.

Keywords: Iranian city; Film; Cinematic experience; Urban environment; Civic movie.

1. Introduction

Creation of urban spaces is a multidisciplinary subject which invariably requires precise attention to a variety of aspects such as the economy, sociology, psychology, architecture, and also different types of arts. Among these fields, visual arts and precisely cinema, because of its affinities to the real world experience of urban environments, can purpose new instructions for urban designers. Cinema is a medium, which demands to indicate variant meanings and evoke emotions. Cinematic works sometimes look like a report or representation, and occasionally profound and abstract. Meanings and messages are perceived from sequences which compose the whole concept of the movie and should be comprehended by the audience. Iranian cinema, after the revolution, receives different international awards like Golden Palm (Cannes Festival), Golden Bear (Berlin festival), Academy Awards and so many other titles. These award-winning films get benefited from urban spaces in their sequences toward concept manifestation, so reviewing these movies can be a valuable source for urban designers and scholars. Besides that, most universities around the world like Michigan (Strickland, 2006), and

Liverpool school of architecture (Hallam, 2010) recognized the relevance of films for pedagogical usages. Furthermore, it is apparent that in Europe and the United States, cinema has become both a product of the changing structure of cities and technology for understanding those changes (Shiel & Fitzmaurice, 2001). Urban environment will be made to succeed if there is communication between stakeholders and people (Rezapour, Bahrainy & Tabibian, 2017, p.49). Cinema as a medium can express the individuals' evaluations of our cities and can serve as a communicative tool. In contrast, Iranian scholars and policymakers do not show any interest or tendency toward these resources. As a response for this neglected field in the two successive years of 2007 and 2008 two conferences were held in Iran, which unveiled the relations between cinema and architecture (Rastin, 2009). Although these conferences had a remarkable contribution to the consciousness of scholars which includes foreign movies with the focus on buildings and architecture, Iranian cinema, especially the notable works, and urban spaces did not have a substantial appearance.

So this paper is an endeavor to fill the academic gap of using cinema toward urban designing which exist among

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urban faculties in Iran. In continue interrelations of cities and cinema, and depiction of cities in Iranian movies have surveyed, then notable works of Iranian cinema which were awarded internationally have been studied, and analyzed, using the qualitative methodology and related techniques.

1.1. Relations of cities and cinema

The physical built environment has a constitutive role in everyday experiences and in the construction of the cities' image (Lynch, 1960). It is good to mention that the variable elements shape a considerable part of the image of the space in the urban environment (Adibi & Goodarzi, 2017, p. 61). Thus, this image is a combination of multiple images and sequences which are the same as the film experience. This filmic montage for example; the fragmentation of the visual field and its reassembly into a narrative, is not too different from the way people experience real cities (Russell, 1992); (Hight, 2004). Cinema's emergence as a quintessentially urban set of practices has ensured that the city and the moving image have from the very outset remained inseparable constituents of the modern urban imaginary. (Koeck & Roberts, 2010) In other words; movie sequences are, in fact, the depiction of urban spaces, narrated in a selective manner (Madanipour, 1996). The early depictions of cities in cinema took place at the beginning of 20th century. In these movies, cities were used just as a representational element. Therefore, the preliminary emergence of cities in the 1920s resulted from a growing fascination with "metropolitan motifs, motion, and development" and from the assumption that the camera could capture visual evidence of a city in a documentary style (Weihsmann, 1997). However, these documentary representations were not the ultimate ambition of directors. As a result, the purpose of this art as a teleological framework for delivering a message (ideological, aesthetical) by various means of expression: narrative, casting and audio-visual aspects (Comolli & Narboni, 1998) defined a new role for urban spaces in films. Thus, cinema has been fascinated by the city as a setting, subject, and symbol. The city has featured as a living organism in a wide variety of genres (Mazierska & Rascaroli, 2003). In this process of visual storytelling - the same as Gordon Cullen's serial vision in which he recreates a walk in the environment recording the existing and emerging views of a moving observer (Cullen, 1971) - the 'background' of an event occupies an essential place. The setting - physical environment, or *mise en scène* - plays a major role in the main concept of the movies (Peri-Bader, 2016). At a very basic level, sets provide a film with its inimitable look, geographical, historical, social, and cultural contexts and associated material details, and the physical framework within which a film's narrative is to proceed. They help in creating a sense of place in terms of 'mood' or 'atmosphere' and thus evoke emotions and desires that complement or run counter to the narrative (Bergfelder, et al., 2007). Consequently, a film can be used for understanding, more precisely the characteristics of architectural environments and urban spaces because they are used as settings (Kronenburg,

2010). So, an analysis of a filmic representation of a city begins most helpfully with observing how individual films represent the conditions of the city or neighborhood at the precise historical moment. After that move beyond seeing the film as a mere representation of social reality to focus on the main concepts of cities and urban environments in the films (Mennel, 2008). This knowledge can then be used to improve contemporary design practices (Bentley, 2005). Furthermore, if urban space observed as a socio-spatial product, it is clear that urban design has much to learn from exploring the spatial structure of urban films. Thus, cinema as a socioeconomic medium can be useful for the understanding of urban space essence (Habibi, et al., 2015). And this supports Virilio's claim: "we have learned as much about cities from their cinematic representations as we have from urban scholarship" (Virilio, 1997, p. 384). Therefore, the primary target of this paper is to recognize the role of Iranian urban environment in the prominent international award winner movies, and as Persian directors have used the perceptual potency of the urban environment to reinforce the meaning of the film, the attached concepts to the cities can be revealed. As a result, this qualitative analysis can instruct urban designers, especially those in Iran to understand the essence and the meaning of the designed urban environment.

1.2. Cities in Iranian movies: depiction of cities in different eras and reason to choose Iranian movies.

Cities and urban environments always have a noticeable contribution to the production of Iranian films. This assistance was in a process that the history of Iranian cinema became worthless without urban spaces of cities, and especially Tehran (Hasani-Nasab, 2007). The first film produced in Iran was "Abi-and-Rabi" directed by Ovanes Ohanian which was a silent movie and some famous streets and public spaces of Tehran such as Bagh-e-Chehel Favare, Shah Reza (Enghelab) street, and Alaa-oldole street were the locations. After this experience, Ohanian produced his second silent movie by the name "Haji Agha, the Cinema Actor" which was a civic movie. In this film locations were practically in urban environments like Pahlavi (*Vali-e-Asr*) street, Takht-e-Jamshid (Taleghani) street, Lalehzar and Naderi Street (Omid, 1995, pp. 44-49). Simultaneously, the first sound film "The Lor Girl" was created. Although this movie was captured in India, the city of Tehran still was presented in the dialogues of the film with this slogan "Tehran is a beautiful city, but its citizens are bad" (Baharlou, 2007). As time goes by, the development and progression of film industry caused the cities not only to take representational roles but also to build positive elements for reinforcement of movie's concept. Cinema and especially Iranian cinema more than any other visual art have the possibility to penetrate hidden layers of civic life (Masoudi, 2006, p. 77). Thus, besides the representations cities made perceptual effects on Persian films. The manifestation of cities in Iranian films has two distinct periods of time, before the Islamic revolution and after the Islamic revolution of 1978. Before the revolution, four different images were drawn for cities (Ejlali & Gohari Pour, 2014). The first group was movies

such as “*Shelterless*”, “*Conspiracy*”, “*Desert Wolf*” presented cities as a symbol of deception in which a rural character was deceived by a person who lived inside the city. In these movies, the city was a symbol of ugliness and villainy affairs and contrasts between rural and civic life were depicted. In the second group cities were vacant places in which two or three people could be seen in the shots, even if the locations were crowded public places. For instance, Naghsh-e-Jahan Square or Si-o-seh Pol. Besides this strange prospect, City reinforced the concept of social difference in the movies. “*Ganj-e Qarun*” is an example of this category. In the era of the third group, little cities like Kashan or old districts of Tehran were the locations of the movies to disclose confrontations of traditional beliefs with modern ones. For instance, “*Qeysar*”, and “*Toughi*” both showed this concept through the use of urban environments. The fourth group illustrated Tehran as a metropolis and new modern places like hotels, shopping malls, billiard clubs, and big recreational centers were displayed. Besides these visual attractions, cities were places which were fulfilled by disloyalties. Movies like, “*Goodbye Friend*”, “*Impasse*”, “*The Deers*”, and “*Beehive*” are examples of this category. After the Islamic revolution, Iran approached new debates and political issues with the West. Besides that, some cities exposed to new threats. Metropolitan areas such as Tehran, Mashhad, Isfahan, Tabriz, and Shiraz became home to millions of new residents, and this rapid urban growth resulted in new social relationships, economic restructuring, and evolving political dynamics. Furthermore, issues engendered, include inadequate housing, unemployment, a largely rural to urban migration, class-based segregation patterns, gender inequities, traffic jams, inadequate service delivery in specific places, and an overall worsening of urban environmental conditions (Modarres, 2006). After a while, by the beginning of the long war, the rush of migration to cities not only decreased but also extend to a high degree. In this period, cities took different conceptual and perceptual roles (Ejlali & Gohari Pour, 2014). In some cases, such as “*Vasl-e Nikan*” city is emerged to unveil the filthy spirit of war, and this point of view repeated in several films. Furthermore, intensive immigration, housing problems, suburban area disorders portrayed in some films. Best examples are “*Canary Yellow*”, “*The Tenants*” and “*Soltan*”. Other films exhibited the city as a source of darkness and social disorders. Drug dealing, cultural difference, fugitive girls, and illegal parties presented in different ways. Films like, “*Tehran Nights*”, “*Boutique*”, “*Cafe Setareh*”, “*Santouri*” unveiled these social problems within the cities. Besides that, because of political issues, authorities dealing with movie products were changed and cinematic policies became stricter and more severe particularly in the case of the representation of controversial topics, including urbanization-related problems (Sadr, 2002, p. 342). As a result, directors tended to make superficial and shallow films; many of the opportunist producers and filmmakers fooled viewers and this trend led to an increase in the number of absurd comedians and cheap melodramas (Safarian, 2005). According to the mentioned information,

cities in Persian films always have an important role and sometimes they create the baseline and the concepts of the movie. Besides that, today, the Iranian cinema is one of the most highly regarded national cinemas throughout the world regularly winning festival awards especially after the revolution. In most cases concepts of the movies were the primary reason for these prizes in different famous festivals, and as told before cities had a significant contribution to these achievements. Iranian directors who won the big three festivals in Europe are Abbas Kiarostami (Cannes Golden Palm), Jafar Panahi (Venice Golden Lion) Asghar Farhadi (Berlinale Golden Bear). Also, Asghar Farhadi won two Academy Awards (Oscar). Besides that, so many other Iranian directors won different prizes in other festivals such as Nantes Film Festival, Locarno International Film Festival, Montreal International Film Festival, Chicago International Film Festival, and so many others. As stated previously, Iranian cinema has two key factors, which makes it a notable cinema for urban designers:

- City and urbanscapes have an important contribution to the production of movies during the history of Iranian cinema.
- Iranian cinema is one of the most highly regarded national cinemas in the world and got different international awards annually.

Thus, award winner films are the most prominent works of Iranian cinema and choosing the best and the most prominent movies of Iran, which used cities in their settings for analysis can have significant and irrefutable pedagogical notes for urban designers, urban planners, and even policymakers. So this paper’s ambition is to survey and analyze the urban environments displayed in these prominent works of Iranian cinema.

2. Methodology

Regarding the aforementioned contexts, which were provided in the previous sections, this paper planned for pursuing suitable answers to these questions:

- Which cities had the most affordance for presenting dramatic events?
- Which urban environments were represented in Iranian movies?
- What kind of concepts do the urban environments link with, positive meaning or negative ones?
- How directors and individuals perceive cities and urban environments of Iran?

Answering these questions will show us:

- The most picturesque city in Iran, and almost the most dramatic one.
- Detecting urban aspects and built environments which have the most contribution and repetition in the movies.
- The impact of urban environments on people and the manner they assess their surrounding environment. Therefore, urban designers can understand the effects of their works on society. They can evaluate people’s satisfaction from their civic places according to the attached meanings (positive or negative).

To analyze award-winning movies for answering mentioned questions, and to show the interpretation of displayed urban spaces and urbanscapes in those movies, this paper used qualitative strategies and techniques as the research method. This methodology is purposed based on the categories implied by (Creswell, 2014), (Cohen, et al., 2011), (Groat & Wang, 2002). This method is independent of numeric data and information and less interpretable, and it relies on expression (oral or written) and experiential practice (film), although a combination of these techniques could be applied in some stages of the research. The research items of this paper consist of two parts first are about the repetitions. In this section, an analysis was done

on the repetition of cities and major aspects of them which were implied by Kevin Lynch (1960). these aspects include paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. In the second part the roles of the cities in the movies were assessed, for this purpose, the basic dimensions which were introduced by Mathew Carmona (2003) used as a basic principle and reference, and these dimensions are physical/morphological, perceptual, social, visual, functional, and temporal. Furthermore, as noted in part 3.2, dimensions such as functional, and temporal are not so impressive for Iranian directors and were omitted. As a consequence, for a better classification Fig.1 reveals the research indicators and items which is suggested for this paper.

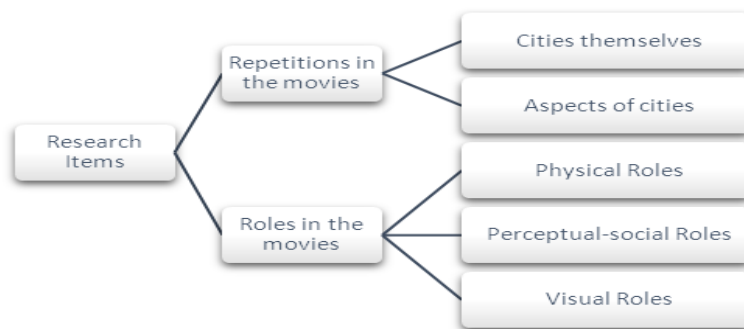


Fig.1. Research items and indicators used in this paper.

Annually various film festivals are held in different cities across the world and Iranian movies prospered in some of those festivals and got rewarded. However, all of these movies are not in the realm of this paper. Two main reasons separate them from our analysis:

- Documentary-style films. Examples: “*Taxi Tehran*,” “*Offside*,” “*A True Story*” and “*Dance of Dust*.”
- Movies directed by Iranian directors, which the locations are not in Iran. Examples: “*Goodbye Solo*,” “*The Past*,” “*Two-Legged Horse*,” “*At Five in The Afternoon*,” and “*The President*.”

Moreover, this paper insists on the main prizes of festivals. Therefore, some awards are omitted such as best actor or actress, best costume design, best visual effects, special mention, and similar ones. By this classification, 47 Iranian movies are qualified for our research, but all of them are not civic movies some of them captured in nature a building or rural environment. Therefore, by observing these instances, 28 of them were recognized as civic films. As (Habibi, et al., 2015) mentioned, three main criterions considered for diagnosing civic movies:

- A visual view of the city: buildings, streets, trees, monuments, slums, etc.
- The culture of the city: people in outdoor spaces, urban behaviors, talking style, urban concerns of citizens, etc.

- City identifier: historical events in open spaces, sports tournaments, elections, festivals, etc.

Table1 demonstrates the 47 movies, and their awards in international festivals and also specifies the civic movies by a checkmark. Cross mark stands for movies that do not contain urban environment and civic prospects.

3. Findings

3.1. The variety of cities and their aspects in the movies.

Table 2 suggests that most of the movies were captured in Tehran. Also, the southern cities which were located near the sea have the second importance, such as “*Bandar Abbas*,” “*Bandar Lengeh*,” “*Bushehr*,” and “*Abadan*.” Besides that, one movie was captured in “*Yazd*” to display the climates of that city. According to this evidence, Tehran has the most affordance for dramatic events, although being the capital, and its adjacency to facilities has an important role in this selection; modern buildings, towers, public spaces and crowded streets of this city made picturesque settings for filmmakers. Furthermore, portal cities because of their unique traditional urban designing, culture, and the sea as a natural factor has been the second choice.

Table 1
Internationally awarded Iranian movies and presence of city in them.

No.	Festival	Film Title	Director	Year	Award	Presence of urban/suburban environment
1	Berlin Film Festival (Germany)	<i>About Elly</i>	Asghar Farhadi	2009	Silver Bear	✘
		<i>A Separation</i>		2011	Golden Bear	✓
		<i>Snake Fang</i>	Masoud Kimiai	1991	Golden Bear (Nominee)	✓
		<i>The Girl in the Sneakers</i>	Rasul Sadr Ameli	2000	Best Feature Film	✓
2	Cannes Film Festival (France)	<i>Through the Olive Trees</i>	Abbas Kiarostami	1994	Golden Palm (Nominee).	✘
		<i>Taste of Cherry</i>		1997	Golden Palm.	✓
		<i>The Salesman</i>	Asghar Farhadi	2016	Best Screenplay	✓
		<i>The Circle</i>	Jafar Panahi	2000	Golden Lion	✓
3	Venice Film Festival (Italy)	<i>The wind will carry us</i>	Abbas Kiarostami	1999	Grand Special Jury Prize	✘
		<i>Secret Ballot</i>	Babak Payami	2001	Golden Lion (Nominee)	✘
4	Academy Awards (United States)	<i>Children of Heaven</i>	Majid Majidi	1999	Best Foreign Film (Nominee)	✓
		<i>A Separation</i>	Asghar Farhadi	2012	Best Foreign Film	✓
		<i>The Salesman</i>	Asghar Farhadi	2016	Best Foreign Film	✓
5	Golden Globe Awards (United States)	<i>A Separation</i>	Asghar Farhadi	2012	Best Foreign Film	✓
6	Montreal International Film Festival (Canada)	<i>Children of Heaven</i>	Majid Majidi	1997	Grand Prix des Amériques	✓
		<i>The Color of Paradise</i>		1999		✘
		<i>Rain</i>		2001		✓
7	Locarno International Film Festival (Switzerland)	<i>Where Is the Friend's Home?</i>	Abbas Kiarostami	1987	Bronze Leopard	✘
		<i>Captain Khorshid</i>	Nasser Taghvai	1988	Bronze Leopard	✓
		<i>The Blue-Veiled</i>	Rakhshan Bani-Etemad	1995	Bronze Leopard	✓
		<i>The Jar</i>	Ebrahim Forouzesh	1994	Golden Leopard	✓
		<i>Abadani-Ha</i>	Kianoush Ayari	1994	Silver Leopard	✓
		<i>The Mirror</i>	Jafar Panahi	1997	Golden Leopard	✓
		<i>I am Taraneh; I am Fifteen Years old.</i>	Rasul Sadr Ameli	2002	Special Jury Prize	✓
		<i>A Few Kilos of Dates for a Funeral</i>	Saman Salur	2006	Special Jury Prize	✘
8	London Film Festival (England)	<i>Delbaran</i>	Abolfazl Jalili	2001	Special Jury Prize	✘
		<i>Secret Ballot</i>	Babak Payami	2001	FIPRESCI Prize	✘
9	San Sebastián International Film Festival (Spain)	<i>Sara</i>	Dariush Mehrjui	1993	Golden Shell	✓
		<i>The Father</i>	Majid Majidi	1996	Special Jury Prize	✓
		<i>Turtles Can Fly</i>	Bahman Ghobadi	2004	Golden Shell	✘
		<i>Half Moon</i>	Bahman Ghobadi	2006		✘
		<i>Daan</i>	Abolfazl Jalili	1998		Silver Shell
10	Karlovy Vary (Czech Republic)	<i>Twenty</i>	Abdolreza Kahani	2009	Special Prize of the Jury	✓
		<i>Once Upon a Time, Cinema</i>	Mohsen Makhmalbaf	1992	Special Prize of the Jury	✘
		<i>The Last Step</i>	Ali Mosaffa	2012	FIPRESCI Prize	✓
11	Moscow International Film Festival (Russia)	<i>Under the City's Skin</i>	Rakhshan Bani-Etemad	2001	Special Jury Prize	✓
		<i>As Simple as That</i>	Reza Mirkarimi	2008	Golden George	✓
		<i>Daughter</i>		2016	Golden George	✓
12	Chicago International Film Festival (United States)	<i>Through the Olive Trees</i>	Abbas Kiarostami	1994	Silver Hugo	✘
		<i>Crimson Gold</i>	Jafar Panahi	2003	Golden Hugo	✓
		<i>Fireworks Wednesday</i>	Asghar Farhadi	2006		✓
13	Goa Film Festival (India)	<i>The Beautiful City</i>	Asghar Farhadi	2004	Golden Peacock	✓
		<i>Iron Island</i>	Mohammad Rasoulof	2005		✘
		<i>Daughter</i>	Reza Mirkarimi	2016		✓
		<i>The Runner</i>	Amir Naderi	1985		✓
14	Nantes Film Festival (France)	<i>Water, Wind, Dust</i>	Abolfazl Jalili	1989	Golden Montgolfiere	✘
		<i>Delbaran</i>		2001		✘
		<i>A Few Kilos of Dates for a Funeral</i>	Saman Salur	2006		✘
15	Mar del Plata International Film Festival (Argentina)	<i>The Cloud and the Rising Sun</i>	Mahmoud Kalari	1998	Golden Astor	✘

16	Thessaloniki International Film Festival(Greece)	<i>Bitter Dream</i>	Mohsen Amiryousefi	2004	Golden Alexander	Not released yet
		<i>Over There</i>	Abdolreza Kahani	2008	Golden Alexander	✓
		<i>Friday Evening</i>	Mona Zandi Haghghi	2006	Silver Alexander	✓
17	Warsaw International Film Festival(Poland)	<i>The Beautiful City</i>	Asghar Farhadi	2004	Grand Prix	✓
		<i>Malaria</i>	Parviz Shahbazi	2016	Grand Prix	Not released yet
18	Cairo International Film Festival(Egypt)	<i>Melbourne</i>	Nima Javidi	2014	Golden Pyramid	✓

28 Films approved: *A Separation - Snake Fang - The Girl in the Sneakers - Taste of Cherry - Salesman - The Circle - Children of Heaven – Rain - Captain Khorshid - The Blue-Veiled - The Jar- Abadani-Ha - the mirror - I am Taraneh I am Fifteen Years Old – Sara - The Father – Twenty - The Last Step - Under the City’s Skin - As Simple as That – Daughter - Crimson Gold - Firework Wednesday - The Beautiful City – Davandeh - Over There - Friday Evening - Melbourne*

Kevin Lynch’s (1960) introduced five aspects including; paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. Based on this category analysis was done on Iranian movies to reveal the repetition of these elements. This will show us which urban aspects have the most effects and presence in the movies. As mentioned in Table 2 paths portrayed in all of the movies as an inseparable aspect of the city in Iranian movies and among different types of paths urban streets are more repeated. For example, in “The Runner” main character of the movie, “Amiroy” spent most of his journeys in the urban streets of Bushehr (Fig 2). After urban streets, other paths such as alleys and pavements had the most appearances. Also, films which were located in Tehran used aerial roads and highways as a symbol of metropolitans, but their repetitions are less than three other types. The second frequent aspect of the city in the movies are the districts. In award-winning films, Tehran is divided into two different parts. Northern districts portrayed as a symbol of richness and modern design, while southern districts are assumed as a symbol of poor people, and traditional design. In contrast, districts in southern movies do not take symbolic roles. Edges are the third important element. In all southern cities, sea purposed a natural edge, while in Tehran edges are limited to some famous streets such as “*Vali-e-Asr*” street and some old alleys. Landmarks and nodes are at the least frequency. In Tehran, only “*Azadi Tower (Shahyad Tower)*” which was displayed in “*Daughter*” and some famous high-rises portrayed in “*Under the Cities’ Skin*” (Fig 3) is defined as landmarks. Additionally, in southern cities and especially in Yazd wind catchers are used as landmarks, for instance, “*Captain Khorshid*” used the wind catchers of “*Bandar Lengeh*.” Nodes like public squares are restricted into Traditional bazaars, some public open spaces near the sea, and small squares. Due to this analysis, filmmakers considered the city as a place of movement, and social interactions in the cities are disregarded. Another important thing is the symbolic role of districts, which is used as an element to enrich the concepts of the movie. Moreover, landmarks, nodes, and edges in Tehran are limited to just two or three areas, which can illustrate the weaknesses of this city in these aspects. Also, southern cities are not so rich in these aspects because they yet rely on natural elements like the sea, and old built environments, which followed the Persian traditional urban design and architecture.



Fig. 2. Use of urban roads in "The Runner."



Fig. 3. Using a tower as a landmark in “Under the Cities’ Skin.”

3.2. Role of depicted cities in the movies

For perceiving the attributes and characteristics of urban spaces, in continue findings categorized into three parts, based on six dimensions proposed by (Carmona, et al., 2003) which are physical/morphological, perceptual, social, visual, functional, and temporal. These parts include:

- Physical attributes of the cities in the movies
 - Perceptual-Social attributes of the cities in the movies
 - Visual attributes of the cities in the movies
- Other dimensions such as functional, and temporal are not so impressive for Iranian directors and were omitted.

Table 2
Cities and their aspects in the movies.

No.	Film Title	City	Paths	Edges	Districts	Nodes	Landmarks
1	<i>A Separation</i>	Tehran	•				
2	<i>Snake Fang</i>	Tehran	•		•		
3	<i>The Girl in the Sneakers</i>	Tehran	•	•	•		
4	<i>Taste of Cherry</i>	Tehran	•		•		•
5	<i>The Salesman</i>	Tehran	•			•	
6	<i>The Circle</i>	Tehran	•		•		
7	<i>Children of Heaven</i>	Tehran	•	•	•		
8	<i>Rain</i>	Tehran	•		•		
9	<i>Captain Khorshid</i>	Bandar Lengeh	•	•		•	•
10	<i>The Blue-Veiled</i>	Tehran	•		•		•
11	<i>The Jar</i>	Yazd	•				•
12	<i>Abadani-Ha</i>	Tehran	•		•		
13	<i>The Mirror</i>	Tehran	•	•	•	•	
14	<i>I am Taraneh; I am Fifteen Years old.</i>	Tehran	•		•	•	
15	<i>Sara</i>	Tehran	•	•	•		
16	<i>The Father</i>	Bandar Abbas	•	•		•	
17	<i>Twenty</i>	Tehran	•		•		
18	<i>The Last Step</i>	Tehran	•		•		
19	<i>Under the City's Skin</i>	Tehran	•		•		•
20	<i>As Simple as That</i>	Tehran	•				
21	<i>Daughter</i>	Abadan & Tehran	•	•	•		•
22	<i>Crimson Gold</i>	Tehran	•		•		
23	<i>Fireworks Wednesday</i>	Tehran	•		•	•	
24	<i>The Beautiful City</i>	Tehran	•	•	•		
25	<i>The Runner</i>	Bushehr	•	•	•	•	
26	<i>Over There</i>	Tehran	•				
27	<i>Friday Evening</i>	Tehran	•	•			
28	<i>Melbourne</i>	Tehran	•				
Total Number			28	10	19	7	6

3.2.1. Physical attributes of the cities in the movies

Findings imply that movies insist on physical or spatial concepts which contain movement. Therefore, alleys, street networks, pavements and so on are more desirable than open spaces, public squares, and gateways. Due to analyzed cities' physical environments which were used in the movies are divided into three types:

- Old and traditional environments.
- New and modern environments.
- Outskirt suburban environments.

3.2.1.1. Old and traditional environments

Films in the first category portrayed two types of places. 1. Movies which captured elder parts of Tehran city as their locations. 2. Movies presented traditional urban environments of other cities. These elder parts and their traditional designs imply spatial and physical concepts such as enclosure, human scale, organic fabrication, the priority of pedestrian, lack of transparency, compactness, public to private hierarchy, territoriality, and climatic consciousness. For instance, "*children of heaven*" portrayed the difficulties of a poor family, and struggle of the main character "Ali." He lost his sister's shoes and wanted to buy a new one for her, but they do not have enough money. This movie displays the organic structure of Tehran old alleys. Almost all paths in this movie have a traditional design, and pedestrian-oriented (Fig 4). Other

movies in these urban environments are "*Snake Fang*," "*Abadani-Ha*," "*I am Taraneh, I am Fifteen Years old*," and "*Sara*."

"*Captain Khorshid*," and "*The Jar*," are good examples of the second type. Both movies illustrate the traditional physical structure of *Bandar Lengeh* and *Yazd* cities.



Fig. 4. An old alley in Tehran pictured in "*Children of Heaven*."

3.2.1.2. New and modern environments

Movies in the second category exhibit the new and wealthy parts of Tehran. Directors depict high-rises, which used modern or classic architecture as a symbol of these districts. Some of the physical and spatial concepts purposed by these territories are congestion, overcrowdedness, transparency, the priority of cars, density, lack of attention to human scale, physical impermeability and spatial segregation. As in the first

type, dominant materials are brick, adobe, and wood; the second type used stone and glass as main materials. Also in Iranian movies, this physical structure resembles as a place without any identity, which suffered from unoriginal western architecture and urban design which is a symbol of ostentation. "Under the Cities' Skin" and "Crimson Gold" are good instances of this type. Both of them are captured in new residential districts of Tehran. Their lifestyles show social differences in this metropolitan. Main characters in these movies are captivated by luxurious manifestations of these environments and attempt to change their lifestyles, but at last, they could not reach their goals, and movies usually finished with failure and hardship.

3.2.1.3. Outskirt suburban environments.

The last group contains movies which are captured in outskirts of Tehran. In these movies, places do not obey any architectural or urban rules, and they have used primitive unorganized urban design. Their images do not have a detailed structure, and they are full of immigrants, which came from rural areas. These physical environments are symbols of Tehran's disorders and poverty. These places also show neglected theories, about urban development in Tehran which began after the long war. "Rain" and "The Blue-Veiled" movies have several sequences in these areas. In "The Blue-Veiled" brick furnaces located outside of Tehran exhibit and introduce the place, where the main character lives (Fig 5).



Fig. 5. Suburban area in "The Blue-Veiled."

3.2.2. Perceptual-Social attributes of the cities in the movies

Regarding evidence, Iranian filmmakers produce a variety of meanings and messages, which are founded by the use of perceptual affordance of the cities. In these movies, some urban environments are attached to positive meanings and some of them make negative meanings. Table 3 summarizes the messages of 28 award winner movies which were implied by the use of cities.

Although in movies such as "Children of Heaven" and "The Last Step" some positive concepts can be derived from the Tehran city, the majority of instances broadcast negative meanings associated with this city. This metropolitan with more than 8 million residents usually is assumed as a symbol of over-crowdedness, high density,

and social diversities. This city, because of its big area has several districts, and the level of richness is different in those districts. Southern parts of Tehran are places for low-income families, while Northern places are for wealthy people. This divides Tehran into two zones which are called uptown and downtown.

As a consequence, Tehran can be an exquisite example for understanding poverty and social difference concepts. In "Crimson Gold" social class conflicts exaggerated to the point that the main character preferred to kill himself instead of living in this city. Some other directors such as "Abbas Kiarostami" attached another perceptual meaning to Tehran. In "Taste of Cherry" Tehran resembled as a place suffered from lifestyle changes that direct people to suicide and depression. Furthermore, in this movie public places are used to induce symbolic meanings. "Dar Abad Wildlife and Nature Museum" take a symbolic role to show that the people who live in Tehran are almost the same as dead animals maintain in this museum, also polluted cityscape of Tehran was captured from this museum, to reinforce the sense of depression (Fig 6).



Fig. 6. Polluted cityscape of Tehran in "Taste of Cherry."

Another desirable perceptual effect of Tehran in award winner movies is gender problems and women issues. Several movies showed this aspect of the city. Besides that, family's gaps are another interesting subject for Iranian directors. This concept usually can be perceived in Tehran city. In "The Salesman" Emad says: "This city should be destroyed and constructed for another time."

Some other movies like "Snake Fang" and "Abadani-Ha" insist on after war perceptual concepts, such as inadequate services and facilities. In contrast, also it is notable that some places in Tehran did not get negative meanings in Persian movies, for instance, "Vali-e-Asr" street because of its urban design and variety of sights usually broadcasts beauties of Tehran. This sense also exists in some organic fabricated neighborhoods.

On the other hand, in other cities, the perceived meanings are changed to positive ones. In these cities, pretty views, nostalgic senses, and vernacular architecture reveal the original culture of Iranian people. Negative meanings and concepts usually do not have any role in them. Good instances are coastal cities in "The Runner," "The father" and "Captain Khorshid." The only perceivable negative meanings in those cities are related to climatic issues and crisis. For example, water scarcity in hot and dry cities of

Iran or air pollution of Abadan were presented in “The Jar” and “Daughter” movies.

3.2.3. Visual attributes of the cities in the movies

Iranian filmmakers, especially in these award winners and prominent works, get advantaged from aesthetic potentials of cities. As mentioned before, cities presence in films can be categorized into two groups of Tehran and southern coastal cities. The visual language of these two types is different. In Tehran because of its large expansion, and diversity of views usually wide panoramas from cityscape are so desirable. For instance, in “Melbourne” the first sequence is the silhouette of Tehran (Fig 7). Other desirable views of Tehran are towers and landmarks, which obey modernism rules, narrow old alleys of downtown, which follow the traditional urban design in Iran, and also some famous streets which are fulfilled by cars. According to the analysis, filmmakers did not show any interest in details of urban design and usually they broadcast an overcrowded city via medium or long shots and close shots are not preferable. Additionally, the visual attributes of Tehran came to dialogues of the movies such as “The Last Step.” The man says, “Nothing bothers me anymore even the nasty appearance of buildings in the city” (Fig 8). Although Tehran has diversity in views and cityscapes, this city does not sound so beautiful among directors.



Fig. 7. Cityscape of Tehran captured in "Melbourne."



Fig. 8. Chaotic urban facades in "The Last Step."

Table 3
Perceptive meanings of cities in award winner movies.

Films	Perceived Meaning of City	Positive	Negative
<i>A Separation</i>	Over-crowdedness, pollution		●
<i>Snake Fang</i>	Lawless city, inadequate services		●
<i>The Girl in the Sneakers</i>	Family gaps, poverty, gender problems, pretty views	●	●
<i>Taste of Cherry</i>	Sense of Depression		●
<i>The Salesman</i>	Congestion, Sexual disorders		●
<i>The Circle</i>	Gender Difference		●
<i>Children of Heaven</i>	Purity and sincerity	●	
<i>Rain</i>	Unorganized development, Foreigners migration	●	●
<i>Captain Khorshid</i>	Nostalgic concepts	●	
<i>The Blue-Veiled</i>	Unwanted suburban areas		●
<i>The Jar</i>	Climatic issues, impacts of traditional lifestyle	●	●
<i>Abadani-Ha</i>	Lack of facilities, migration disorders		●
<i>The Mirror</i>	Social diversities, and viewpoints	●	●
<i>I am Taraneh; I am Fifteen Years old.</i>	Gender Problems		●
<i>Sara</i>	Nostology, over crowdedness	●	●
<i>The Father</i>	City as commercial center, and recreation	●	
<i>Twenty</i>	Sense of Depression, Poverty		●
<i>The Last Step</i>	Nostology	●	
<i>Under the City's Skin</i>	Poverty, social difference, gender problems		●
<i>As Simple as That</i>	Family gaps, Depression		●
<i>Daughter</i>	Family gaps, Pollution, beautiful views	●	●
<i>Crimson Gold</i>	Social difference		●
<i>Fireworks Wednesday</i>	Family gaps, disordered traditional ceremonies		●
<i>The Beautiful City</i>	Collision of ideologies	●	●
<i>The Runner</i>	Social diversity and activities	●	
<i>Over There</i>	Family issues, illusions		●
<i>Friday Evening</i>	Gender problems		●
<i>Melbourne</i>	Migration to foreign city	●	●
Total Number		13	23

On the other hand, in southern cities, that harsh looking does not exist anymore. In reality, traditional architecture of those cities and elements like wind catchers created a unique panorama for these cities which has Iranian identity. For example, in “Captain Khorshid” the wind catchers of “Bandar Lengeh” make sense of place and take aesthetic roles in the movie (Fig 9). Furthermore, being located adjacent to the sea made another visual affordance for directors, and all the southern movies get benefitted from this visual potency.



Fig. 9. Wind catchers of the city in "Captain Khorshid."

4. Conclusion

According to the findings, this research unveiled the impacts of cities on Iranian award-winning movies. It is notable that even though the regulations and policies for filmmaking in cities are so tight, directors do not reject the opportunity to depict open spaces of cities. As mentioned from 47 award winner movies 28 of them have cities as an undeniable setting, major results, and findings of this paper depicted in Table4. Also, seven other movies which are omitted from this list has used rural environments. These rural environments like cities had irrefutable contributions in filmmaking procedures, for example; *Abbas Kiarostami* has used the affordance of rural spaces in several movies such as “*Where is the friends’ home?*”, “*Through the Olive Trees,*” and “*The wind will carry us.*”

Among all cities, Tehran has the most picturesque attribute, and it has several reasons. First, Tehran as capital has the most facilities for film making. Second, the people in Tehran are more familiar with the camera, and they do not show dissuasive reactions, but in other cities, this familiarity does not exist. The last but the most important is the multi-dimensional character of this city. It is the biggest city in Iran, with a variety of urban aspects which can provide diverse settings and subjects for filmmaking. However, directors of these international award winners did not broadcast a fine and appropriate picture from this city furthermore, almost all of them insist on filthy aspects of this city. The concepts which were believed by the city of Tehran are including rush of rural to urban migration and lack of urban facilities, unorganized suburban areas, lack of identity in urban design and architecture, modern towers that occupied the

cityscape and skyline of that, car-oriented city with traffic jams, and social disorders such as women problems, depression, and family gaps. By the side, the amount of this harsh appearance is not similar in all districts of Tehran. Suburban areas and uptown of the city reinforce these concepts, but downtown in some cases because of its nostalgic urban design reduces these concepts. Most of the movies were captured in paths and streets of the city, and metropolitan of Tehran resembles as a city of passages. For instance, *Jafar Panahi* in “*The Mirror*” or *Rasul Sadrameli* in “*The Girl in the Sneakers*” captured all the sequences in pedestrians and urban streets. Beside this undesirable image of Tehran in the award winner movies, southern cities of Iran are the second important settings for filmmaking. Despite some climatic issues, poverty, and lack of facilities which are represented in them, their problems are less than Tehran. Iranian directors portrayed these cities as places that have their own traditional character and identity. The traditional structure of these cities evokes nostalgic senses of audiences. For instance, physical-spatial concepts such as human scale, organic fabrication, compactness, and priority of pedestrians are configured artistically to stimulate nostalgic senses and making sense of place. Also, rustic materials which have used for urban facades and local architecture of these environments caused filmmakers to reduce vigorous aspects of their works. Besides that, the sea as a natural factor has an undeniable role in these movies, not only its aesthetic potency has used but also its contribution to urban life is portrayed. For instance, in “*The Runner*” and “*The Father*” coastal public spaces are portrayed as places of recreation and commerce (Fig 10).

Table 4
Categorized Major findings of the paper based on the research items.

	Research items	Classification of findings
Repetitions in movies	Cities portrayed in the movies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tehran, Bandar Lengeh, Yazd, Bandar Abbas & Bushehr. Tehran has the most appearance in the movies with 24 out of 28. Therefore, Tehran can be assumed as the most picturesque city in Iran.
	Cities' aspects portrayed in the movies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most repeated aspects in the order are: 1.Paths 2.Districts 3.Edges 4.Nodes 5.Landmarks This shows that most of Iranian directors prefer to capture their sequences in the paths and some famous districts.
	Physical attributes of cities in the movies	<p>According to this research The physical built environments used in the movies can be categorized into 3 parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old and traditional environments. New and modern environments. Outskirt suburban environments.
Roles in movies	Perceptual-Social attributes of the cities in the movies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iranian filmmakers produce a variety of meanings and messages, which are founded by the use of perceptual affordance of the cities In the most of the cases negative meanings attached to Tehran city, while other cities usually provide positive meanings. Negative meanings include: lack of identity, over-crowdedness, pollution, lawless city, inadequate services, family gaps, poverty, gender problems, congestion, social difference, migration disorders, traffic jams, unorganized development, illusions and climatic issues. Positive meanings include: purity and sincerity, has identity, nostalgic concepts, diversity and wide range of activities
	Visual attributes of the cities in the movies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Tehran usually wide panoramas from cityscape and silhouettes are so desirable also towers and landmarks, which obey modernism rules, and narrow old alleys of downtown used as settings for the movies. In other cities traditional architecture, and coastal areas has the most potency for filmmakers. Although Tehran has diversity in views and cityscapes, this city does not sound so beautiful among directors.



Fig. 10. Public place near the sea in "The Runner."

Moreover, Iranian filmmakers have used urban spaces in their movies, but in comparison with worldwide cinema, this usage is not so impressive. While Iran has near 31 provinces and each province has at least five cities with different types of urban design and architecture, the captured outdoor sequences just limited to Tehran and some coastal cities. So this is a neglected part in interrelationships between cities and Iranian cinema. Finally, it is remarkable that cinematic arts can influence designers' ideas about urban spaces and urban forms and show the amount of public satisfaction. Therefore, this can have pedagogical usage for urban designers (Pizarro, 2011). As filmmakers displayed, people are not satisfied with the urban essence of Tehran. Different civic problems are purposed in these movies which are previously mentioned. This suggests that urban designers and planners and policy makers of this metropolitan should change their ideas and designs. According to the satisfaction of the urban environment in some rural and southern cities which was reported in these movies, the favorable urban environment for Iranians has some identical attributes. Considering the human scale, pedestrian-oriented cities, and having original Iranian identity are the most significant properties in the movies. Thus, in the end, it is remarkable that paying attention to these visual sources which are neglected among urban faculties of Iran can have constructive effects for making more desirable cities.

Appendix. 1.

Filmography

A Few Kilos of Dates for a Funeral (*Chand kilo khorma baraye marasem-e tadfin*, Saman Salur, 2006).
 A Separation (*Jodaeiye Nader az Simin*, Asghar Farhadi, 2011).
 A True Story (*Yek Dastan-e Vaghe'I*, Abolfazl Jalili, 1991).
 Abadani-Ha (*Abadani-Ha*, Kianoush Ayari, 1994).
 Abi and Rabi (*Abi va Rabi*, Ovanes Ohanian, 1930).
 About Elly (*Darbareye Elly*, Asghar Farhadi, 2009).
 As Simple as That (*Be hamin sadegi*, Reza Mirkarimi, 2008).
 At Five in The Afternoon (*Panj é asr*, Samira Makhmalbaf & Hana Makhmalbaf, 2003).
 Beehive (*Kandu*, Fereydu Gole, 1975).
 Bitter Dream (*Khab-e talkh*, Mohsen Amiryousefi, 2004).
 Boutique (*Boutique*, Hamid Nematollah, 2003).

Cafe Setareh (*Café Setareh*, Saman Moghadam, 2006).
 Canary Yellow (*Zard-e Ghanari*, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, 1988).
 Captain Khorshid (*Nakhoda Khorshid*, Nasser Taghvai, 1987).
 Children of Heaven (*Bacheha-Ye aseman*, Majid Majidi, 1997).
 Conspiracy (*Dasiseh*, Ali Kasmayi, 1954).
 Crimson Gold (*Talaye sorkh*, Jafar Panahi, 2003).
 Daan (*Daan*, Abolfazl Jalili, 1998).
 Dance of Dust (*Raghs-e-khak*, Abolfazl Jalili, 1998).
 Daughter (*Dokhtar*, Reza Mirkarimi, 2016).
 Delbaran (*Delbaran*, Abolfazl Jalili, 2001).
 Desert Wolf (*Gorge Sahra*, Saeed Nivandi, 1961).
 Fireworks Wednesday (*Chaharshanbe-soori*, Asghar Farhadi, 2006).
 Friday Evening (*Asr e-Jome*, Mona Zandi Haghghi, 2006).
 Ganj-e Qarun (*Ganj-e Qarun*, Siamak Yasemi, 1963).
 Goodbye Friend (*Khodahafez Rafigh*, Amir Naderi, 1971).
 Goodbye Solo (*Goodbye Solo*, Ramin Bahrani, 2008).
 Haji Agha, the Cinema Actor (*Haji Agha actore cinema*, Ovanes Ohanian, 1933).
 Half Moon (*Nimeh Mah*, Bahman Ghobadi, 2006).
 I am Taraneh; I am Fifteen Years old (*Man, Taraneh, panzdah sal daram*, Rasoul Sadrameli, 2002).
 Impasse (*Tangna*, Amir Naderi, 1973).
 Iron Island (*Jazireh ahani*, Mohammad Rasoulof, 2005).
 Malaria (*Malaria*, Parviz Shahbazi, 2016).
 Melbourne (*Melbourne*, Nima Javidi, 2014).
 Offside (*Offside*, Jafar Panahi, 2006).
 Once Upon a Time, Cinema (*Nassereddin Shah, Actor-e Cinema*, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, 1992).
 Over There (*An ja*, Abdolreza Kahani, 2008).
 Qeysar (*Qeysar*, Masoud Kimiai, 1969).
 Rain (*Baran*, Majid Majidi, 2001).
 Santouri (*Santouri*, Dariush Mehrjui, 2007).
 Sara (*Sara*, Dariush Mehrjui, 1992).
 Secret Ballot (*Raye makhfi*, Babak Payami, 2001).
 Shelter less (*Bi-Panah*, Ebadia Gorji, 1953).
 Snake Fang (*Dandan-e-mar*, Masoud Kimiai, 1990).
 Soltan (*Soltan*, Masoud Kimiai, 1996).
 Taste of Cherry (*Ta'me guilass*, Abbas Kiarostami, 1997).
 Taxi Tehran (*Taxi*, Jafar Panahi, 2015).
 Tehran Nights (*Shabhaveyeh Tehran*, Dariush Farhang, 2001).
 The Beautiful City (*Shah-re ziba*, Asghar Farhadi, 2004).
 The Blue-Veiled (*Rusari Abi*, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, 1995).
 The Circle (*Dayereh*, Jafar Panahi, 2000).
 The Cloud and the Rising Sun (*Abr-O Aftaab*, Mahmoud Kalari, 1998).
 The Color of Paradise (*Rang-e khoda*, Majid Majidi, 1999).
 The Deers (*Gavaznha*, Masoud Kimiai, 1974).
 The Father (*Pedar*, Majid Majidi, 1996).
 The Girl in the Sneakers (*Dokhtari ba kafsh-haye-katani*, Rasoul Sadrameli, 1999).
 The Jar (*Khomreh*, Ebrahim Forouzes, 1992).
 The Last Step (*Pele akher*, Ali Mosaffa, 2012).
 The Lor Girl (*Dokhtare Lor*, Ardeshir Irani, 1933).
 The Mirror (*Ayneh*, Jafar Panahi, 1997).
 The Past (*Le passé*, Asghar Farhadi, 2013).
 The President (*The President*, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, 2014).
 The Runner (*Davandeh*, Amir Naderi, 1984).
 The Salesman (*Forushande*, Asghar Farhadi, 2016).
 The Tenants (*Ejareh-Nesheehna*, Dariush Mehrjui, 1986).

The wind will carry us (*Bad ma ra khahad bord*, Abbas Kiarostami, 1999).
 Through the Olive Trees (*Zire darakhatan zeyton*, Abbas Kiarostami, 1994).
 Toughi (*Toughi*, Ali Hatami, 1971).
 Turtles Can Fly (*Lakposhtha parvaz mikonand*, Bahman Ghobadi, 2004).
 Twenty (*Bist*, Abdolreza Kahani, 2009)
 Two-Legged Horse (*Asbe du-pa*, Samira Makhmalbaf, 2008).
 Under the City's Skin (*Zir-e poost-e shahr*, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, 2001).
 Vasl-e Nikan (*Vasl-e Nikan*, Ebrahim Hatamikia, 1991).
 Water, Wind, Dust (*Aab, baad, khaak*, Amir Naderi, 1989).
 Where Is the Friend's Home? (*Khane-ye doust kodjast?* Abbas Kiarostami, 1987).

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