



## Rereading the Image of Paradise in the Spatial Components of Chaharbagh Abbasi Street Based on Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory

Bahare Alsadat Ziraki Esfahani<sup>1</sup>, Seyyed Mohammad Rashtian<sup>2</sup>, Mahmood Mohammadi<sup>3</sup>

1- PhD student of urban planning, Department of Urban Planning, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran

Tourism, Architecture and Urban Research Center, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran  
(Corresponding author).

2- Assistant Professor, Department of Urban Planning, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran.  
Tourism, Architecture and Urban Research Center, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran.

3- Associate Professor, Department of Urban Planning, University of Art, Isfahan, Iran

### Abstract

**Introduction:**The aspiration to create a paradise on earth has long existed in the beliefs of many cultures. Isfahan's Chaharbagh, with its gardens, streams, and rows of trees, is one of the manifestations of this vision in Iran. This study, using an interpretive approach and drawing upon Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, examines the spatial components of Chaharbagh Abbasi Street. It explores the legal and philosophical foundations of the utopian discourse of the Safavid era and analyzes how the meanings and concepts of this discourse are reflected in the spatial organization of Chaharbagh Abbasi Street.

**Methodology:**This research was conducted using an interpretive approach and library resources. To analyze the spatial components of Chaharbagh, Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis method was employed. This method focuses on discourse and the reasons behind the emergence of specific signs within a text. Through a semiotic reading of Chaharbagh Street, the study investigates the influence of the Safavid-era utopian discourse—aimed at creating an earthly paradise—on the formation of the street's spatial elements.

**Results:**The research findings indicate that the primary motivation behind Iranian garden architecture has been the creation of a paradise-like space. The visual perception of the four heavenly streams, represented as two perpendicular axes, has played a crucial role in shaping the structure of Chaharbaghs. The combination of Chaharbagh geometry with intersecting water streams in post-Islamic gardens can be understood as an interpretation of the allegorical dimensions of paradise in the Quran and an attempt to materialize this vision on earth.

The spatial components of Chaharbagh Abbasi Street, modeled after Quranic descriptions of paradise, are categorized into five elements: water streams, trees and plants, heavenly gardens, palaces and dwellings of the blessed, and the entrance gates to paradise. These components, derived from Quranic imagery, are harmoniously integrated within a symbolic framework, forming a unified representation of the Iranian-Islamic utopia.

**Conclusion:**The research demonstrates that the architectural and urban structure of Chaharbagh Street is shaped by a discourse that seeks to materialize an Iranian-Islamic utopia in the capital of the Safavid era—an attempt to create an earthly paradise. The interplay between natural and man-made elements, along with the surrounding garden architecture, collectively embodies a vision of the promised paradise. These elements serve not only an aesthetic purpose but also function as integral components of a broader philosophical and cultural narrative, aiming to reflect an ideal model of human life in harmony with nature and divine order. A discourse-based reading of these spatial narratives reveals how spiritual concepts can influence the creation of meaningful, identity-driven urban spaces.

**Key words:** Chaharbagh Abbasi, Discourse Analysis, Pardis, Paradise, Utopia