Critical Reviews
No. 8
September 2026
13

Urban Landscape Green Network: A Comprehensive Solution for Reconsidering the Distribution and Efficiency of Urban Green Spaces in Iran in Iran

Mehdi Fatemi

Faculty Member, Department of Architecture, Imam Khomeini International University

Abstract

Urban green spaces in Iran, despite the continuous emphasis of urban management on increasing quantitative and per-capita indices, face numerous structural and discursive challenges, including fragmented island-like dispersion, the dominance of statistical approaches over qualitative considerations, the neglect of ecological connectivity, and unfair spatial distribution. This situation has reduced green spaces into passive, single-function elements standing in opposition to vehicular dominance and physical development.

Adopting a critical discourse approach and deconstructing the traditional paradigm governing green space management in Iran, this research introduces the concept of the «urban green network» as an integrated framework to reconsider the distribution and efficiency of these spaces. Addressing the fundamental question of «why the quantitative approach to creating green spaces has failed to achieve spatial justice and ecological resilience in Iranian cities,» this paper critiques existing structures.

Along this path, a major portion of the theoretical foundations serves to elucidate the problem and provide a critical reading. Through a comparative examination of global experiences, it demonstrates that transitioning from the traditional system of passive green islands to a continuous, multifunctional green network is not a decorative choice, but a necessity for confronting climate crises and enhancing livability.

Meanwhile, the issue extends beyond the mere quantity and distribution of green space; the quality of the urban green landscape, the manner in which green elements interface with the city's spatial structure, its visual readability and continuity, and its impact on citizens' perception, psychological calm, sense of belonging, and everyday experience also constitute part of the network›s true efficiency. From this perspective, an urban green network achieves full efficiency only when it functions simultaneously as an ecological infrastructure and a landscape-perceptual structure.

Keywords: Ecological connectivity, Quantitative reductionism, Urban green landscape, Landscape quality, Environmental perception.

DOI: 10.22034/2.8.61
Email: mehdifatemi@gmail.com

[Downloaded from jcr-sj.com on 2026-10-07]

[DOI: 10.22034/jcr.2.8.61]

Critical Reviews
No. 8
September 2026
14

Why has the quantitative and fragmented approach to urban green space management in Iran been inefficient in fostering ecological connectivity, spatial justice, and climate resilience, and how can the "Urban Landscape Green Network" discourse deconstruct and improve these flawed structures?

Extended Abstract

In contemporary Iranian urban planning, green space has often been reduced to a tool for generating managerial statistics and justifying per-capita metrics. This quantitative reductionism, by neglecting landscape quality, ecological connectivity, and spatial justice, has resulted in the creation of "passive green islands" that fail to address climate crises and citizens' psychological needs.

Adopting a critical approach, this study deconstructs the traditional paradigm of park-making and introduces the concept of the "Urban Landscape Green Network" as a holistic alternative. The green network represents a transition from isolated patches to "green flows," redefining the city as a living organism. In this approach, the efficiency of green space is measured not merely by acreage, but by the quality of the interweaving of elements including parks, corridors, and hidden infrastructures within the city's spatial structure and the citizens' subjective experiences.

A comparative analysis of global experiences (ranging from Singapore's ecological corridors to Copenhagen's sponge infrastructures) demonstrates that developing green networks is an intelligent response to specific crises such as floods, environmental fragmentation, and spatial inequality. These cases prove that successful networks operate simultaneously at both the functional (ecological) and qualitative (landscape) levels.

To implement this model in Iran, urban management must move beyond the monopoly of traditional park organizations and reorganize the city's physical structure by leveraging latent potentials, such as abandoned lands and rooftops. This transition requires a shift in bureaucratic mindset, viewing green space not as an isolated destination for leisure, but as a continuous, infrastructural thread woven into daily life. Ultimately, this leads to a resilient, legible, and equitable landscape that enhances citizens' sense of belonging and psychological well-being while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the urban fabric.

Municipalities' exclusive focus on quantitative per-capita metrics for green space has led to the neglect of landscape quality and ecological connectivity. This reductionist approach has turned green spaces into passive islands, inefficient against climate stressors and citizens' biological needs. To transition toward sustainability, we must move beyond "quantitativism" and prioritize landscape quality, visual readability, and citizens' perceptual experiences alongside ecological functionality.

[Downloaded from jcr-sj.com on 2026-10-07]

[DOI: 10.22034/jcr.2.8.61]

COPYRIGHTS
Copyright for this article is retained bye the authors with publication rights granted to Journal of Critical Reviews (JCR); The Iranian Journal of Critical Studies in Place. This is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution License (https://creativecommons.org/version4/)