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Original Research Article

Landscape Approaches in Development Planning: A Comparative Analysis with Iran's Latest Territorial Spatial Planning Document

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ABSTRACT

The historical trajectory of development planning has evolved through human experience, progressing toward increasingly sophisticated methodologies. While various typologies exist for development planning approaches, this study focuses on the most contemporary framework: The Territorial Spatial Planning (TSP) document. Originating in France approximately 50 years ago, this document rapidly became a global standard. Over recent years, its diverse stylistic iterations have demonstrated the dynamism of its theoretical foundations, progressively encompassing broader dimensions of planning and development.

This paper elucidates the Landscape Approach within development planning and conducts a comparative analysis between the latest principles outlined in Iran's TSP document and the core tenets of the Landscape Approach.

This comparative analysis, grounded in a case study and operational dimensions of Iran's National Territorial Spatial Planning document, reveals that the divergence between the Landscape Approach in planning as a place-based development strategy and the prevailing intellectual and policy framework of the TSP document stems from their fundamentally different conceptualizations of "place." The philosophical underpinnings of Landscape Science and its derived planning methodology offer novel definitions of place, marking the critical point of departure from the TSP's established planning paradigm.

Although the TSP document is framed using contemporary planning concepts such as "AMAYESH" (spatial planning) and "Sarzamini" (territory), its origins and evolution are rooted in reductionist scientific traditions within planning. Consequently, it lacks the capacity to fully encompass the ontological concepts of holistic sciences, such as Landscape Science, particularly regarding the notion of "place." This limitation is examined in this research through a comparative analysis of definitions of space, place, and territory across various theoretical and operational layers, juxtaposed against the definition of "place" within Landscape Science.

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Introduction

Development and its planning have long served as a primary criterion for categorizing nations worldwide and remain a paramount objective for many human societies, aspiring to join the ranks of developed or advanced countries. However, development planning, as an evolving practice, has continuously matured. By integrating new perspectives and approaches that encompass various dimensions of development, it remains a dynamic and perpetually evolving subject. The typology of planning is remarkably diverse, ranging from: Spatial/Physical Dimensions: Physical, demographic, and urban planning. Scale: Macro, meso, micro, regional, national, and local planning. Function: Strategic, operational, tactical, and comprehensive planning. This diversity reflects the multifaceted nature of the discipline as it adapts to complex societal needs.

These classifications across the historical periods of the development of planning science have emerged on the basis of different approaches, and they have been categorized according to various dimensions. A broad and general categorization within the types of planning distinguishes between sectoral planning and spatial planning. The findings of studies and accumulated experience in the field increasingly accord primacy to spatial planning as a more effective form of planning. This study seeks to articulate a new approach to spatial planning, referred to as the landscape-oriented approach.

Problem Statement

New forms of planning have consistently remained a national and transnational concern for managers, policymakers, and planning specialists across diverse countries. Whenever a novel planning methodology is introduced at any scale, each society, driven by its specific needs and contextual imperatives, develops unique interpretations, definitions, and adaptations of that approach.

The adoption of diverse planning types and emerging approaches in development planning serves as a key indicator of a society's advancement. This adoption often precedes formal classification into specific development categories. Consequently, the competition to produce up-to-date documents grounded in the latest theoretical perspectives has become increasingly intense and fierce. "The central concern of this paper is to introduce a new approach to development planning, which we have termed the landscape approach. As its name suggests, this approach is rooted in the discipline and science of landscape architecture. This approach can be considered broadly influential in development planning because, as mentioned, in the general categorization of contemporary planning paradigms, spatial planning has gained greater consensus compared to sectoral planning a consensus arising from various experiences of planning and decision-making based on either spatial or sectoral logics. Landscape, as a novel perspective on the environment, encompasses conceptual frameworks that can define a unique approach to planning." However, the method chosen to introduce this approach and present the issue is to compare it with the most recent type of spatial planning document, namely the National Spatial Planning document. By aligning the components of these two frameworks, the study seeks to clarify the point of divergence or distinctive advantage of this approach, that is, what it contributes to development planning. "To this end, the method of this research for elucidating the landscape approach in development planning, in comparison with the dominant approach in spatial planning (Amayesh-e Sarzamin), is a comparison of the perspectives that these two hold on a shared issue. As noted, the reason the landscape approach enters the domain of planning under the rubric of spatial planning is its engagement with the concept of 'space.' Similarly, spatial planning (Amayesh-e Sarzamin) as its name suggests, and which distinguishes it from other planning documents focuses on the object of planning, in its own terms, 'territory' (sarzamin). Territory whether in the course of translating the title of this document from French (which will be discussed in detail) or as a novel interpretation of the locus for which planning is undertaken places the intended space at the core of this document. This research seeks to achieve an understanding and introduction of the newer approach by examining how concepts converge around this common point.

Hypothesis: The Landscape Approach in development planning is inherently place-based. This characteristic is clearly discernible through a comparative analysis with the prevailing approach of Iran's Territorial Spatial Planning Document, primarily stemming from the fundamental divergence in how "place" is conceptualized within these two frameworks.

The Territorial Spatial Planning Document

To achieve the research objectives, three primary

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sources were selected for the study and analysis of the Territorial Spatial Planning (TSP) document: The underlying intellectual and theoretical foundations. The historical trajectory of its inception, evolution, and growth. A case study of Iran's National TSP Document to examine its operational and practical dimensions.

• Foundations and concepts

The term "Amayesh". Translated from the French term Aménagement, derives from the Persian root Amudan or Amayidan. Dictionaries define it with the following nuances:

- To mix, adorn, decorate, prepare, organize, or establish (Mo'in, 2004).
- To adorn, prepare, and enable (Khalaf Tabrizi, 1962).
- To make ready, arrange, and equip (Padshah, 1957).
- To mix, blend, or become intermingled (Dehkhoda, 1994).

This etymological richness suggests a concept that transcends mere physical arrangement, encompassing elements of preparation, harmonization, and strategic organization.

Territorial Spatial Planning (TSP) is defined as the optimal utilization of resources within a specific geographical domain to enhance both material and spiritual well-being. In this framework, the natural, social, and economic advantages of a space are organized and systematized. This process aims to establish a logical relationship between population distribution and activities across the territory, accounting for the spatial characteristics of various regions.

As Alavi (2017) states, "TSP is the science of logically and rationally organizing economic, social, cultural, environmental protection, and development aspects; it delineates the current and future development landscape of a region in terms of development axes and poles." Consequently, TSP is defined as creating equilibrium among three core elements: humanity, space, and activity. It represents an interdisciplinary synthesis of economics, geography, and sociology.

The primary macro-function of the TSP document is to regulate the relationship between these three elements. As further elaborated: "TSP involves regulating the relationship between humans, space, and human activities within that space. Its goal is the rational utilization of all available resources to improve the material and spiritual condition of society, grounded in religious values, environmental conditions and contexts, cultural heritage, and guided by scientific knowledge and historical experience over time." (Massumi Eshkevari, 2006). "TSP is an integration of population settlement systems with the spatial structure of socio-economic activities, incorporating socio-cultural considerations based on the foundational theory of national development" (State Management and Planning Organization, 2021). In another definition, it is described as "regulating the relationship between humans, the territory, and human activities within that territory to achieve sustainable and appropriate utilization of all resources, aiming to improve the material and spiritual condition of society over time" (Makhdoum, 2022). Finally, the official definition within Iran's TSP system states: "TSP is the regulation of the interaction between human and environmental factors to create a territorial organization based on the optimal utilization of human and environmental potentials" (State Management and Planning Organization, 2021).

In summary, drawing from Jean-Paul Lacaze's definition, TSP aims to achieve "the most desirable distribution of population through the best form of socio-economic activity distribution across the territory" (Lacaze, 1995). Thus, the objectives of TSP are consistently positioned at the intersection of the human/space/activity triangle, articulated in various forms.

• History

The second source for understanding this document involves tracing its genesis, evolution, and growth. The term "Territorial Spatial Planning" (TSP) was first coined by Claudius Petit, the French Minister of Reconstruction and Housing, in the 1940s, and it rapidly gained widespread acceptance (Alavi, 2017). The documented and academic history of the modern scientific TSP paradigm traces back to France. Motivated by the need to repair World War II devastation and to rebalance its diverse regions, France was the first nation to formulate the fundamental principles of TSP. Based on these principles, the country successfully implemented its own large-scale national plans (Lacaze, 1995)."Consequently, the initial impetus for the formulation of territorial planning documents was the rectification of the aforementioned economic imbalances. In France, territorial planning is defined as a central government policy aimed at achieving economic equalization across the nation. The primary objective of this policy is realized through direct intervention in the geographical distribution of enterprises and infrastructure equipment" (Tofigh, 2005, 21). Subsequently, the focus shifts to the distribution of activities and population, which

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represents the human dimension within the "territorial planning triangle." In France, the earliest instruments of territorial planning emerged in the latter half of the 1960s (1340s SH), driven by a critical approach to the concentration of activities and population in the Parisian hub. Key milestones included the publication of Gravier's seminal work, Paris and the French Desert, in 1947; the establishment of the Territorial Planning Directorate within the Ministry of Reconstruction in 1950; and the formation of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Territorial Planning (CIAT) in 1960. This trajectory entered a new phase with the establishment of the "State Representation for Territorial Planning and Regional Action," commonly known as DATAR, in 1963. This agency was mandated with the responsibility of balancing the nation's territorial structure through the development and implementation of inter-ministerial plans. "Efforts were made to channel the capacities of various ministries toward achieving regional objectives goals that fell outside the exclusive jurisdiction of any single ministry through the mediation of DATAR (ibid., 128). Since DATAR's inception, profound economic, political, and social transformations have occurred, culminating in the establishment and subsequent replacement of DATAR by the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness (DIACT). This new institution aims to facilitate desired economic shifts. To this end, it employs a cross-sectoral team tasked with: Facilitating the restructuring of economic activities and labor markets in crisis-stricken regions; Promoting regional integration; Advancing balanced development of urban and rural areas; Implementing European Union policies; Negotiating contracts between the central government and local authorities (Mirzaei Nezhad Abadi, 2017). As a macro-level mandate, DIACT holds the authority to make key decisions regarding spatial planning. Consequently, in France, the confrontation with increasingly deep-seated challenges has necessitated a redefinition of territorial planning concepts and a restructuring of its implementing bodies: "Ultimately, France's spatial planning policy was established by the central government approximately 45 years ago to address challenges arising from cultural and social transformations in the post-war era. The primary objective was to achieve a more balanced distribution of population, industry, and culture among regions, thereby overcoming the overwhelming dominance of Paris at the national level" (Ministry of Interior, 2011). These shifts and evolving definitions of territorial planning have not only transformed the concept in France its country of origin but have also spurred the emergence of distinct schools of thought globally. Consequently, three primary schools of territorial planning have been identified:

1- The European School

The term "territorial planning" was first coined in 1949 by the French to address economic challenges, specifically the need to adjust centralization and optimize the distribution of activities in accordance with regional capacities (Yazdani, 2022).

2- The Anglo-Saxon School

Emerging in the late 1950s and early 1960s, this school introduced a holistic assessment of territory. It integrates four key characteristics: ecological capacity, technological infrastructure, human resources, and financial resources (ibid.).

3- The Euro-American School

Rooted in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, this school distinguishes itself by emphasizing a dual assessment of both natural and human capacities. Furthermore, it prioritizes the integrated planning of natural systems alongside economic and social needs (Makhdoum, 2022).

"The European Charter for Territorial Planning, presented in 1983, established four core objectives: Strengthening balanced social and economic development across regions; Enhancing the quality of life for citizens; Ensuring the conscious and responsible use of natural resources and environmental protection; Promoting the purposeful utilization of national and European space" (Alavi, 2017).

A review of the evolution of the concept and function of territorial planning reveals an evolutionary trajectory that aligns, in many ways, with Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. This progression illuminates the shifting focus from purely economic needs and economic balance to the nature of human interaction with one another and the natural environment, ecological concerns, human capital, and socio-cultural development. While this trajectory may experience fluctuations and adopt varying priorities across different European, American, or Asian nations and societies, the underlying drive toward inclusivity and a holistic perspective remains undeniable in all contexts.

• The Iranian Experience

"The concept of territorial planning was first introduced in Iran in the mid-1960s (mid-1340s SH). In Dey 1345 (January 1967), a report titled The Issue of Tehran's Population Growth and Points

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on National Development was published by the University of Tehran's Social Studies and Research Center. Following this report, the Planning and Budget Organization, in the late 1960s, initiated negotiations on the subject by sending experts to France and inviting the responsible managers of these studies to Iran" (Alavi, 2017). Consequently, unlike other European and English-speaking countries particularly the UK, where the concept of "physical planning" was adopted rather than the French model of aménagement du territoire Iran's theoretical foundations and conceptual framework were heavily rooted in the French tradition (Ministry of Interior, 2011). In summary, the process of drafting this document in Iran followed these key stages:

- First Experience: Initiation of Setiran Consulting Engineers for the preparation of Long-Term Territorial Planning Strategy Studies (1974): In the 1350s SH, Setiran Consulting Engineers defined territorial planning as follows: "Territorial planning refers to the planning and organization of space occupation, determining human settlement locations, activity sites, facilities, and interactions among various factors within the social and economic system."
- Second Experience: Initiation of Studies for the Islamic Territorial Planning Master Plan (1983): In the 1360s SH, it was defined as: "Territorial planning refers to regulating the relationship between humans, space, and human activities within that space, aiming for the rational utilization of all resources to improve the material and spiritual condition of society based on religious values, considering cultural heritage, and the tools of science and experience over time."
- Initiation of Studies for the Territorial Planning Master Plan (1998): The definition from the 1370s SH is: "Territorial planning is the engineering of arrangements for the optimal utilization of social and natural capacities. In other words, utilizing capacities means the diversity, scale, and spatial location of activities that lead to the optimal exploitation of those capacities."

• Continuation of the Process

Following this trajectory, the studies for the Territorial Planning Master Plan, over the two decades of the 1380s and 1390s, ultimately, after numerous ups and downs, led to the approval of the National Territorial Planning Document in Esfand 1399 by the Supreme Council for Territorial Planning. Following this, the statement of this vision, planned until the year 1424, is presented below:

In the year 1424, Iran will be a land that, by embracing a vibrant society, an ancient civilization, a distinguished Islamic-Iranian culture, national cohesion, the harmonization of sub-cultures, human talents, and a God-given territory, alongside a surge of technological innovations, will present to the world the prominent manifestations of the realization of the Islamic-Iranian Development Model and will have achieved the following:

- A diversified economy and Iran's pivotal position in the network of international communication flows have created dynamic interaction rings with the world, generating value in the regional and global economies.
- Social justice, welfare, and a dignified quality of life have been secured for residents of all regions.
- Food, water, and energy security have been established, and Iranians will uphold the dynamism and sustainability of the country's diverse and numerous ecosystems by protecting natural resources and the environment.
- A balanced, networked system of settlement and activity, A cohesive and interconnected system of settlement and activity is established (Fig. 1).
- Iran, relying on people-centered tourism, culture-based approaches, and the protection of cultural and natural heritage, attracts the world's tourists.
- A country with rising, people-centered security and possessing both active and passive defense capabilities, plays an active role in the security of the interconnected region and the international community.
- A developmental, justice-oriented, and people-centered territorial governance system has been established (Supreme Council of Territorial Planning, 2020).

As the trajectory of the National Territorial Planning Document's experiences and its corresponding definitions for each period demonstrates, the same pattern observed in intellectual currents in France and Europe during those times is evident here. With the caveat that in the second period and after the Islamic Revolution, emphasis was placed on ideological values and cultural heritage, influenced by the change in government. This itself indicates the document's inherent and strong dependence on the context and, in the terminology of the document itself, the "territory" in which it is defined and drafted. Furthermore, the various achievements outlined in the statement of this document can be considered to cover economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

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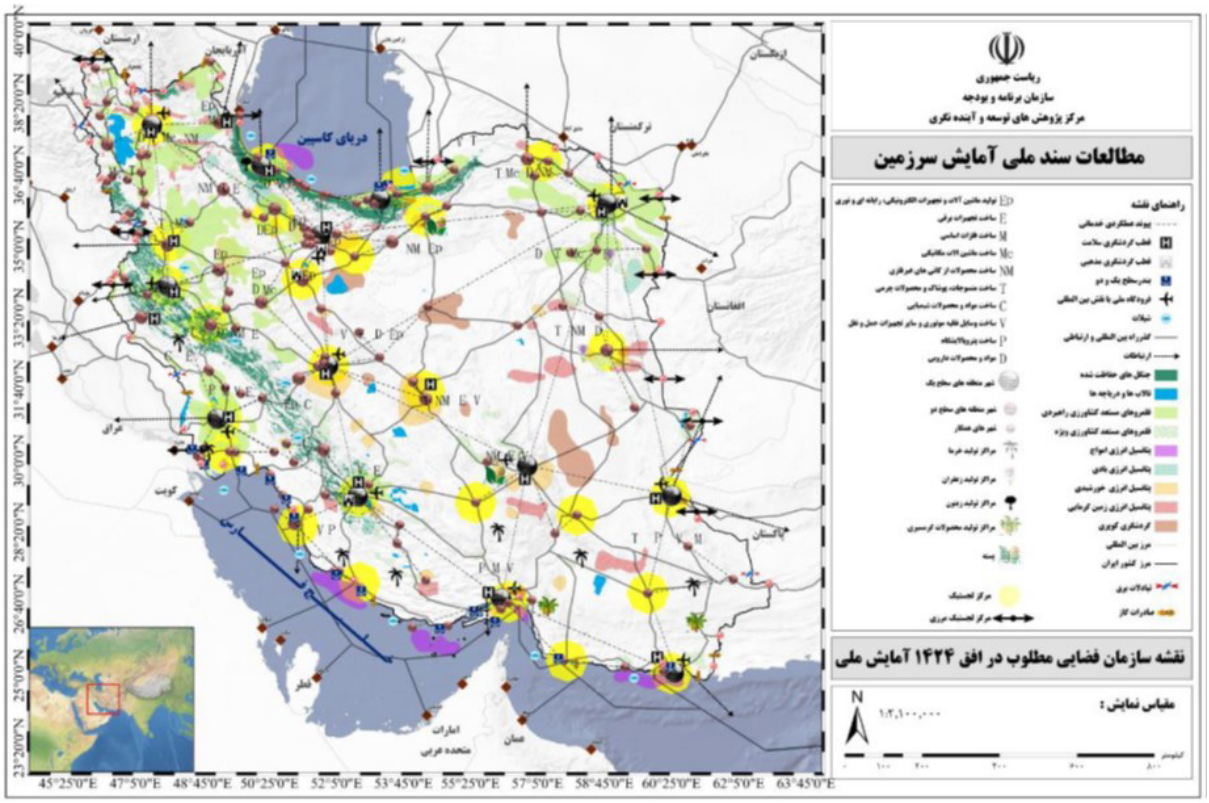


Fig. 1. Desired spatial organization map for the national territorial planning horizon 2045. Source: Supreme Council of Territorial Planning, 2020.

The Landscape Approach in Spatial Planning

Before delving into the landscape approach in spatial planning, it is preferable to briefly examine the concept of "landscape" and its evolutionary trajectory within contemporary scientific discourses.

In Europe, the term "landscape" emerged in the 15th century, concurrently with the Renaissance and Modernity, formed by adding a suffix to the word "earth." Etymologically, it acquired two meanings: 1) A portion of the earth presented to the observer's eye by nature. 2) A canvas representing a specific portion of the earth and nature (Alehashemi et al., 2020). The scientific revolution, which arose from the separation of the objective world from the subjective world, marked the beginning of the destruction and loss of landscapes in cities where modern construction and industry had fostered development. This was the era where the separation of modern science and art reached its zenith, giving birth to the concept of landscape. Landscape was born by questioning the relationship between the subject (human) and the object (nature), and the formation of the modern subject as the complete perceiver of the world; it emerged as an aesthetic and individualistic perception and representation of a portion of the earth and nature.

Towards the late 19th century, with the emergence of new philosophical views, the relationship between subject and object entered a new phase.

And in the 20th century, phenomenology made it possible to develop approaches in studying the human-environment relationship and provided the context for the transformation of landscape (ibid). Understanding landscape was recognized as requiring a passage through the cultural, religious, and historical contexts that shape our interpretation of the world. From the second half of the 20th century, relying on phenomenology and contemporary cognitive sciences, Augustin Berque introduced landscape as dependent on the human gaze rather than the perceived object. He defined landscape as the set of relationships between humanity and a specific land area, considering it the result of a reciprocal transfer and relationship between physical and mental existence. This objective-subjective relationship between the physical world and the phenomenal world, and this exchange between the inner and outer, not only pertains to visual perception but also to the connection that human society establishes with its environment. "Landscape is nothing but an intermediary that is both physical and phenomenal, ecological and symbolic, dependent on reality and sensation" (ibid). Thus, landscape is

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defined as the individual or collective interpretation of a place within a geographical and historical context. "Landscape is an objective-subjective phenomenon, in the interaction of humans with nature and within the context of history" (Mansouri, 2013).

Consequently, landscape has, through its historical evolution, arrived at a new perspective on the environment and space. What emerges based on this perspective, within the context of contemporary philosophical shifts as mentioned, can collectively be described as an approach and methodology for environmental sciences, termed the "landscape approach." Within this framework, other concepts also acquire new meanings, including city, place, space, and territory, all of which have undergone fundamental intellectual transformations in their definition and conceptualization.

Comparative Analysis of the Landscape Approach and the Dominant Territorial Planning Approach

The point of convergence between the landscape approach, as a novel perspective on the environment, and the Territorial Planning Document, as a spatial planning instrument, is the issue of "space." It is from this vantage point that the comparative analysis begins. The relationship between the landscape approach and space is evident, as both pertain to the surrounding environment that encompasses humanity. "In the discourse of territorial planning, the category of space and the analysis of the laws governing its formation play the most critical role in planning. Spatial organization defines the overall appearance, the distribution and settlement of populations, the distribution of economic and social structures, and the interactions between them" (Ranani Kabiri, 2017). The centrality of space is also manifested in the title of the document and its objectives. "Territorial planning is not a corrective policy for better organizing the remnants of sectoral development; rather, its goal is integrated spatial development oriented toward the future" (Faraji Dana, 1992).

But how does each of these two approaches address space under the title of "territory"?

• Space in the territorial planning document

As mentioned, the triad of human/space/activity is the triangle that the Territorial Planning Document seeks to regulate and interact between. The centrality of this interaction, or the context of this interaction, is the second element, namely space. The manner in which the Territorial Planning Document addresses any spatial position stems from its understanding of space and what constitutes it. This position has evolved over many years; the three styles and the nature of their changes indicate that the Territorial Planning Document initially understood space merely as a physical environment for economic activities, and gradually came to view it as a place for human and social interactions and a part of the environment that must be protected from damage. Furthermore, "achieving sustainable and comprehensive development in all aspects of national life in a specific territory along economic, social, and political axes" has been stated as the objective of the Territorial Planning Document. This highlights a key point.

Territorial planning, as a spatial approach, possesses four characteristics:

Comprehensiveness: (Comprehensive nature of fundamental development plans)

- Holism: (Adherence to the strategic level of issues)
- Long-term Vision: (Commitment to a specific and long-term time horizon)
- Geographic and Spatial Planning: (In terms of general orientations, without specific spatial determinations)

This point is the effort of Territorial Planning documents to address space comprehensively and holistically, refusing to neglect any dimension of the "human activity" within "space."

• Space in the landscape approach

Conceptual transformations of landscape in the contemporary era have followed philosophical shifts and the ensuing reflections regarding the environment. "Landscape is a type of place" (Mansouri, 2010), and the emerging concept of landscape stems from new concepts of place. "In recent theories, place is a physical-spiritual concept that arises from the occurrence of an event in a location... Since time and human experience in space are constitutive elements of place and are constantly renewed, place acquires a fluid, flowing, and non-static nature; the combination of 'space and human perception of space' constitutes the essence of place" (ibid.). Theories such as Relph's, which views place as a multi-faceted phenomenon, or Williams's interpretation of place as a physical location imbued with value and meaning, are relevant here. Furthermore, Relph considers place to comprise three components: physical form, activity, and meaning, attaching greater importance to the third component. In other definitions, the creation of place and meaning is seen as a continuous process flowing from the interaction between the individual, the social environment, and the physical form. While

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new interpretations in the realm of place are extensive and span various angles, what is common among all of them is the centrality of meaning in place. Thus, landscape theory is built upon the concept of "place," allowing us to define landscape as a type of place that does not separate the objective and subjective dimensions of place. "The most important principle in landscape is the synthesis or superimposition of the physical component and meaning, in an inseparable and indivisible manner, which stems from its holistic nature" (Hosseinzadeh et al., 2024). Given the theoretical roots of landscape in the concept of place, landscape-oriented planning can be considered "place-based" or "place-oriented" planning.

Summary

Now, in a comparative context, we can follow two paths: one is comparing the characteristics each of the discussed approaches raises regarding the concept of space, and the other is comparing the National Territorial Planning Document of Iran with the theoretical foundations of the landscape approach mentioned earlier.

Table 1 presents a parallel comparison of the dimensions of definition and perspective on space in both the Territorial Planning approach and the Landscape approach:

The evolution of Territorial Planning documents reflects the prevailing thought's struggle to achieve a comprehensive and all-encompassing document and perspective on space. In this regard, this approach is similar to the Landscape approach. That is, both acknowledge the various dimensions of space and its multi-faceted nature. Although this similarity might initially seem to lead to identical results, the manner of this comprehensiveness or the definition of space thereafter forms the basis of the difference between the two. What has driven the growth and evolution of the Territorial Planning document's perspective on the land is the incorporation of new dimensions regarding the human-space relationship. These are dimensions that were gradually recognized as a void alongside other spatial components through experience. This comprehensive view of space differs from the holistic view of landscape. The landscape approach, in addition to encompassing all dimensions of space, aims for a holistic synthesis that results in the production of a "meaningful place."

The comprehensiveness of the Territorial Planning document's perspective is, in fact, an abstract combination (additive), where various social, cultural, environmental, and other contexts and characteristics are appended to the primary economic characteristic attributed to the land. In contrast, the holistic landscape view sees different dimensions of space merging in an organic union rather than an abstract combination to produce a singular identity or semantic characteristic that constitutes the essence of "place" or the "placeness" of space.

It is precisely this "definition of place" that marks the divergence between the two approaches: the former, despite achieving the most complete comprehensiveness regarding space, will never attain this "placeness," whereas the latter considers its existence as a fundamental premise for planning from the outset. Undoubtedly, these two approaches will lead to different results at the beginning of the planning process.

The landscape approach can fill the conceptual gaps of the Territorial Planning approach by offering this specific perception of space. In other words, by understanding the "placeness" of space, this approach answers many questions that cannot be derived from the simple algebraic sum of various spatial dimensions in the Territorial Planning model.

These questions sometimes arise in new dimensions of space, dictated by the dynamic nature of place, and at other times require a superimposition (synthesis) of different spatial layers. This synthesis cannot be achieved merely by placing side-by-side the information and data collected through Territorial Planning studies. Consequently, the sheer volume of

Table 1. Various dimensions comparing the landscape and territorial planning approaches. Source: Author.

Similarity	Difference	Landscape Approach	Territorial Planning	Approaches / Comparison Dimensions
	•	Holistic	Comprehensive	Scale of Perspective
•		Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Dimensions of Space
	•	Place	Physical environment of human activity	Definition of Space

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collected data is no longer sufficient. Instead, it is the analytical and holistic perspective of the landscape approach that will guide decision-making for the land.
In the second comparison, as noted in the description of Iran's experience in drafting the National Territorial Planning document, the theoretical foundations and definitions align with the evolutionary trajectory of European documents previously discussed in relation to the landscape approach. In terms of execution and operational aspects, beyond the achievements of the National Territorial Planning Statement which are categorized into economic, social, and environmental dimensions the document's goals, strategies, and policies are similarly structured.
However, the text of the statement and its achievements reveal that the lack of a specific definition for the spatial identity of Iran's territory (beyond general slogans such as "Islamic-Iranian culture") has resulted in outputs that lack exclusivity for Iran. Consequently, these outcomes are often applicable to any geographical region with characteristics similar to Iran's. Although efforts were made to incorporate all criteria for defining a territory for planning purposes, the specific elements that define Iran as a unique "place" are neither articulated nor reflected in the document's components.

Conclusion

The prevailing approaches in recent documents adopted for spatial and territorial planning in countries, including Iran, have consistently been evolving and growing. Among these, the landscape approach, as a novel perspective on space, operates within a distinct realm of human thought. It offers a holistic view of phenomena and introduces new definitions of "place" and "space."
A study of the various approaches shaping territorial planning documents, and their comparison with the landscape approach, reveals that the fundamental point of divergence and distinction between the two lies in their definition of "place." While recent approaches have succeeded in covering a broader spectrum of spatial dimensions, they ultimately fail to grasp the spatial essence of space what the landscape approach terms as "placeness."
This failure stems from a reductionist and ontological (thing-focused) perspective. In contrast to the existential (being-focused) perspective of the landscape approach, the former is incapable of comprehending the meanings and synthesizing the various dimensions of space.
Consequently, the aspect of space that is actually perceived by its inhabitants and which sustains its identity over time has been overlooked. Gradually, despite all detailed considerations regarding economic, social, cultural, environmental, and physical dimensions, this approach will fail to ensure the continuity of life and the sustainability of spatial development. This is because the concept of "place" and its meaning have been neglected in the process.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there was no conflict for them in conducting this research.

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