

# Time, Urban tempo and Pace of life

R. Rezazadeh. Ph.D.

In contemporary cities, it seems that urban culture and social relations have changed. Urban life has a faster pace, and social relations are more distant than before. Researches have attributed these socio-cultural changes in urban culture to several factors. Some have emphasized on the behavioral changes in the society over time, and conceive the emergence of individualism responsible for these behavioral changes. Others have emphasized on the city size in terms of extent and population as the main factor influencing the urban cultural and social relations. One major viewpoint emphasizes on the role of the urban pace and tempo on city life.

Urban tempo and pace of life are the subjective understanding of the passage of time. This is mainly related to both environmental quality as well as personal characteristics. Several non-temporal characteristics are involved in this subjective understanding of time. Among these, the number of events occurring in a given period of time, the complexity of the event, its size and intensity, the affective state of the person and finally the level of time emergency are the notable ones. Studies show that the conceptual dimensions distinguishing the fast - paced environments from the slow-paced environments are mainly the arousal-activity dimension, affective-evaluative dimension and finally the overhead cost of living.

Although the quality of life in large

cities is not generally desirable, but the adaptability of humans have made these conditions tolerable. It must be noted that the tolerance of the environment is not necessarily equivalent to the desirability of the environment. Our tolerance and adaptability could even induce perceiving problems. In such case we accept which in the long run would be fatal to both our natural and socio-cultural existence. The fast-pace of contemporary city life itself is a result of this attempt for adaptation to the urban environment. But this adaptation requires speeding up the activity rate and reducing the length and depth of social relations; this will finally halt the social life of the city.

Since one of the major aims of urban planning is creating pleasant physical environment, in which desirable social relation is glorified and concepts such as identity and place attachment strengthened, we must think about the appropriate strategies to achieve these goals. Urban design strategies could reduce the perception of urban pace and tempo and create the suitable context for strengthening social relations. Through physical planning and design, the feeling of fast pace of urban life could be reduced and a relaxed and convenient life be provided within the contemporary city. Hence we could use the urban design tools provided to reduce this dilemma of the contemporary city.