

Sense of Community Through Neighborhood Center

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ABSTRACT

Understand and perception of place happened due to connection between Humans and their surrounding environment. In this study, feature of a neighborhood center as community is considered as the base of research. Against conducted researches just through attention to physical factors cannot achieve to cohesion and sense of place. In this paper argued that physical place affected by social relations of people. People's activities also are effective in their environmental perception. For recognizing the sense of place dimension have reviewed argument and results of scholars. In this paper analyzed researches that have done, to some extent. Furthermore, in the important part of those researches Sense of place has three dimensions include, (identity, attachment, dependence) and measurement has done with another dimension such as the social relation (activity, behavior, and habit), and sense of community. At the final we draw important factors to measurement of sense of place relation income principle that existed in the neighborhood center. This analysis will be investigated with the effect of a variable on another variable. The aim is benefited of places potential to strengthen the people's feeling about their environment. Thereupon local community is formed due to neighborhood capabilities. Hierarchy of human needs, lead to enact roles of sense of place by social context for making sustainable urban.

Keywords: *Neighborhood Center, Sense of community, Sense of Place, Social Behavior, Social Relation.*

INTRODUCTION

Traditional beauty in the historical fiber was product by coordination between urban dimension and other dimensions. It has been shown in the general spaces of social behavior. Nowadays new towns have developed without concern and respect for cultural identity. Urban settlements differentiate in the way they develop which can be spontaneous or planned. The difference between traditional (unplanned) and contemporary (modern) cities bring both some advantages and disadvantages and they affect the quality of urban life.

Urban in the Islamic period are include the mosque, Madreseh (religious school), bazaar, Maidan (square), neighborhood, and specially neighborhood center which will remain important part of culture and social life of Iranian urban areas. The influence of Islamic values also is deniable on social life of the people and development of traditional Iranian cities. Public open spaces are the most fascinating parts of historic cities. Open spaces in historic areas are based on the hierarchical movement from the central part of the city, the main streets, alleys which lead to neighborhood (Mahalle) centers, secondary alleys, 'Hashti' (the traditional entry halls to several houses) of the houses, entry halls and the court yards. This hierarchy is a movement from public space to private space. The central space of the neighborhood is the most excellent manifestation of urban design in a period of time by the people who used it.

The sustainability of a place depends on a series of factors, which contribute to the quality of life, sense of place and recognition of identity (Sepe, 2006). Williams and Stewart (1998) defined a sense of place as a kind of affective attachment to a place that exceeds its use value. Meaning is central to this definition. Mere space becomes the place when given meaning by an individual or group (Tuan, 1997). Marcus and Sarkissian, 1996; Berglund, 1998 argued that the identity of the neighborhood grows from the continuous relationship between the place and its residents, the neighborhood is expected to become its residents' cultural creation and at the same time a means for the preservation of the cultural continuity of the city (Oktay, 2002).

Sense of Place was defined as a multidimensional construct comprising: beliefs about the relationship between self and place, feelings toward the place, and the behavioral exclusivity of the place in relation to alternatives (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001). This general evaluative dimension was more explanatory of observed responses than were the three univariate dimensions having interpretations consistent with place identity, place attachment, and place dependence. Place identity involves those dimensions of self who defined the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscience and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals and behavioral tendencies and skills relevant to this environment (Proshansky, 1978). Place attachment is described as a positive bond that develops between groups or individuals and their environment (Altman and Low, 1992; Williams, 1992). Place dependence is defined by Stokols and Shumaker (1981) as an occupant's perceived strength of association between him or her- self and special places.

Public open spaces are the most fascinating parts of historic cities. Open spaces in historic areas are based on the hierarchical movement from the central part of the city, the main streets, alleys which lead to neighborhood (Mahalle) centers, secondary alleys, 'Hashti' (the traditional entry halls to several houses) of the houses, entry halls and the court yards. This hierarchy is a movement from public space to private space. The needs of the people and function of these spaces determine their order and compositions. Main access and streets are wider and alleys, which terminate at houses, are very narrow. In this hierarchical system, the most important urban spaces are the covered semi-private spaces between groups of houses called 'Hashti', and the central square of the neighborhood. The central space of the neighborhood is the most excellent manifestation of urban design in a period of time by the people who used it.

The square is the most distinct element of the urban structure. As a clearly delimited place it is most easily imaginable, and represents a goal for movement. The square is determined by the same formal factors as the street, with the difference that the buildings should form continuity around the space. The 'Maidan' (Square) is the main public space in each neighborhood. Normally every neighborhood has a square, which is surrounded by cultural and service elements. This squares mostly located in the centre of each neighborhood. Therefore, traditionally in Iran's gates were separate semi-private and private parts of the network from the public spaces.

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER AS COMMUNITY SPACE

Urban spaces in historic areas are based on the hierarchical movement from macro to micro. This hierarchy is a movement from public space to private space (Figure 1). The needs of the people and function of these spaces determine their order and compositions. In this hierarchical system, the most important urban spaces are the covered semi-private spaces between houses and the central square of the neighborhood (neighborhood center). The central space of that is the most excellent manifestation of urban design in a period of time by the people who used it. Public space can be defined as a space that allows people to access and it with activities that happen there. ~~Totally, the role of public space appears to be helping to establish the~~

distinctive identity of the place and create the conditions in which the neighborhood population can develop their relationships.

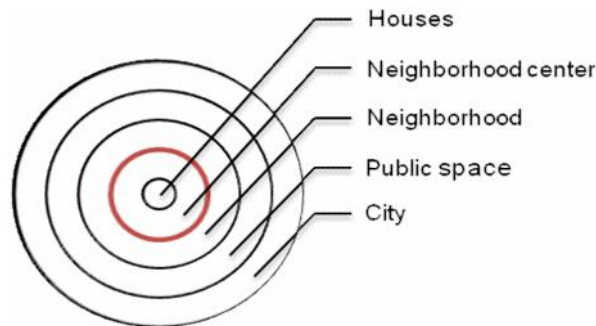


Figure 1: Hierarchy of neighborhood center in urban spaces (Author)

Community space is one of the main urban spaces where has flow the civil life on Neighborhoods. In the past community space were places for social cohesion and urban spaces where social institutions rooted in the lives of urbanization. Furthermore neighborhood center as collective space is a space for social meetings and staying in all hours of the day. Hence it can recreate the social relationships by its dimension that effected to dwelling like physical features, place dimensions, and meaning. However, neighborhood center has more depth and social meaning because of simultaneous access to several spaces, and creates the space experience by continuous motion. Public spaces of the city are spaces of sociability, where social encounter can and does take place. For example, the formation of distinctive neighborhoods, with a centrally located public space aimed at facilitating social interaction and integration, is one way of giving a distinctive flavor to the spaces of sociability (Madanipour, 2003).

REVIEW OF SENSE OF PLACE COMPONENTS

There have been several attempts to measure sense of place. The Environmental Protection Agency's Community Culture and the Environment: A guide to Understanding Sense of Place offers a practical means of assessing sense of place using qualitative methods. The guide outlines six steps in conducting a community assessment project. These involve defining a community's goals and identifying key factors that capture the essence of the place; measurement of community characteristics, analyzing results, and implementing best strategies.

According to Todd Bressi in the theory of new urbanism was programming for local communities and value of public place that has more priority than privet values (Madanipour, 2003). Generally these communities must to support the feeling of local life. Across the goal of town makers will be mutual contact of society, place attachment, Place dependence, and place identity. Also Canter argued that sense of place has three factors: the physical local, activities linked to this locale, the subject's conceptual meaning linked to this locale (Canter, 1976).

In measuring sense of place response to urban growth over time, we take the perspective of adult life cycle theorists who posit that changes in adult lives are related to significant biological, social, and psychological periods corresponding to age groups (Walsh 1983; Levinson 1978; and Levinson 1996). moreover for measurement of sense of place and related construction is conducted using for quantitative and qualitative

methodologies. Sense of Place has been referred to as an over arching concept which subsumes other concepts describing relationships between human beings and spatial settings (Shamai, 1991). Sense of place has three dimensions include, (identity, attachment, dependence) observantly to unidimensional and multidimensional models.

Some authors such as Altman and Low (1992) have dealt with this question meaning that places are repositories and contexts within which interpersonal, community and cultural relationships occur, and it is to those social relationships, not just to place qua place, to which people are attached. They used the term “place attachment” to refer to the phenomena of human–place bonding. While they stressed that “affect, emotion and feeling are central to the concept”, they also indicated that these emotional elements “are often accompanied by cognition (thought, knowledge and belief) and practice (action and behavior)”.

In 2001, Jorgensen and Stedman suggested that place attachment is a distinct component of a broader and more encompassing concept called “sense of place.” They drew on attitude theory to defend a tripartite conceptualization of the construct consisting of affective, cognitive and conative components, and they emphasize that Sense of place was defined as multidimensional construct comprising: beliefs about the relationships self and place , feeling toward the place , and behavioral exclusivity of the place in relation to alternatives (Figure 2 & 3).

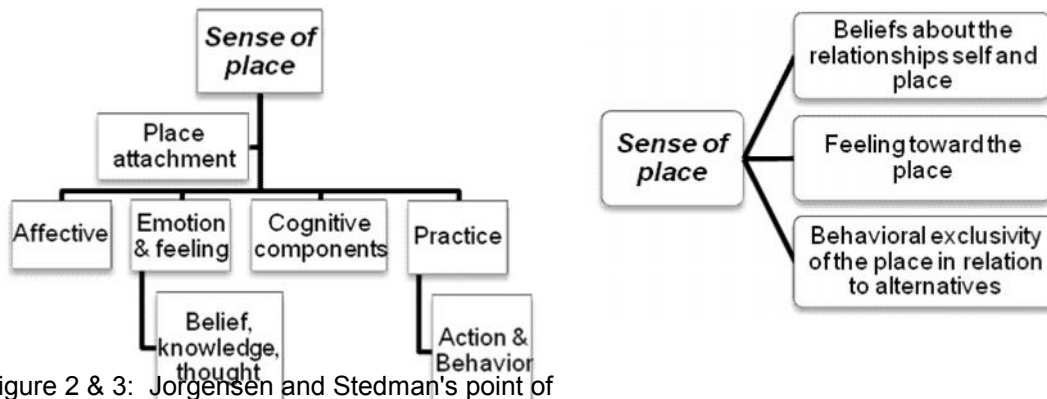


Figure 2 & 3: Jorgensen and Stedman's point of view about sense of place (Author)

From this perspective we might be led to assume that place attachment is in reality attachment to the people who live in that place. Entrikin in 1991 discusses the fundamental problems of accounting for human perceptions as variables in place analyses. The subjective meanings, feelings, and symbols which comprise sense of place are difficult to adequately quantify with standard positivistic measures such as Likert scales.

Hay (1998) collected data from residents of a small coastal community on the south island of New Zealand and distinguished sense of place from the concept of place attachment suggesting that sense of place takes into account “the social and geographical context of place bonds and the sensing of places, such as aesthetics and a feeling of dwelling”. He suggested, “Sense of place studies ...can be broader than those on place attachment by assessing... subjective qualities (the sensing of place to create personal meaning) and social context in a geographic region, as well as community and ancestral connections to place” (Figure 4).

Hummon in 1992 suggested that sense of place was dual in nature “involving both an interpretive perspective on the environment and an emotional reaction to the environment”. He indicated, however, that in the everyday world of personal and social life, emotional components likely dominate and perceptions of what places are like are always couched in a language of sentiment, value and other personal meanings (Figure 5).

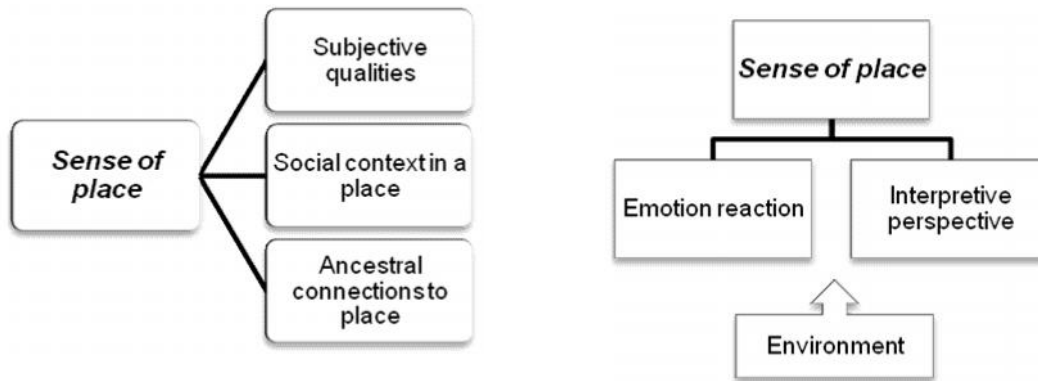


Figure 5: Hummon's point of view about sense of place (Author)

Creating mental image and identity: Historical neighborhood center has given a specific identity to that city. The existing elements in a neighborhood center create effective sustainability factors in fixing the city image in people's memories. According to Kyle and Chick (2007) the meanings tied to place were ground in memory, experience and social relations (Figure 6). In this way, according to Kim (2006), the effect of specially compages in places is including to perception: Dependence of local community, notice to pedestrian mobility, social identification, and social identity. Recognizing the value of a place as a fundamental component in urban identity serves as a reference point both in terms of the wishes of the collectivity and in safeguarding and constructing a sustainable urban image and design.

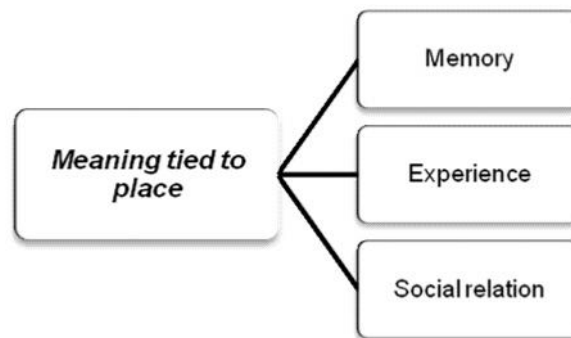


Figure 6: Kyle and Chick's point of view about meaning of place (Author)

Sense of community is associated with the social environmental characteristics of place, although resident's perceptions of it have been linked to physical features of the built environment (Plas and Lewis, 1996). Place identity involves those dimensions of self that defined the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment. Some researcher have suggested that place identity is a cognitive structure which contributes to global self-categorization and social identity processes

(Proshansky, Gustafson, and Fried). Hence place identity develops from acts of locating oneself with environmental contexts throughout daily routines as well as during exceptional circumstances.

McMillan and Chavis (1986) argued that membership, mutual influence, fulfillment of needs, and a shared emotional connection are the four major elements that should be distinguished in sense of community (Figure 7). Their model has contents in terms of affective, cognitive and behavioral components. Kim in 2006 said that their model of sense of community is more applicable to a community of interest, not a community of place like a neighborhood. He expressed sense of community is includes dependence of local community, notice to pedestrian mobility, social identification, and social identity (Figure 8).

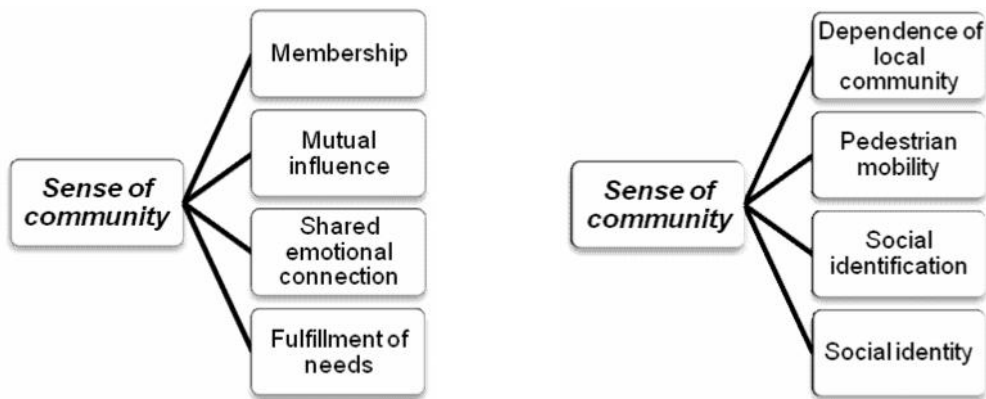


Figure 8 : Kim`s point of view (Author)

Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk frequently emphasized the importance of achieving a sense of place and identity or community along with maintaining community bonding, neighborhood intimacy, and social interaction with neighbors, all of which collectively contribute to the formation of a sense of community. Moreover, sense of community is an important determinant of general quality of life among all social classes (Rogers and Sukolratanamete, 2009). Sense of community is the extent to which any member feels connected to and committed to others in the community, which bears on a sense of security and belonging.

ANALYSIS

A forementioned investigations have clarified that for measurement of sense of place it is necessary to notice three dimension of sense of place (place attachment, place dependence, and place identity). Although social relation, social behavior, and culture are important factors to fulfillment of this evaluation and achieve to sustainable cities. After analyze, we can find the important subject to perception of place in the hypothesis and researches that have done such as:

- Walsh and Levinson`s point of view about two factors to measurement of sense of place: Qualitative methodologies and Quantitative methodologies.
- Jorgensen and Stedman's point of view about sense of place: Beliefs about the relationships self and place, Feeling toward the place, and Behavioral exclusivity of the place in relation to alternatives.
- Hay's point of view about sense of place: Social context of place and Geographical context of place about Dwelling.
- Hummon's point of view about sense of place: Emotion reaction and interpretive perspective in environment.
- Mc Millan and Chavis 's point of view about sense of community: affective, cognitive and behavioral components

- Kim's point of view about sense of community: the effect of specially compages in places is including to perception: Dependence of local community, notice to pedestrian mobility, social identification, and social identity.

Scholars' points of view evaluated in term of social activities and social relation that existed in sense of place on neighborhood center. We decided to draw a guideline (Figure 9) that have choose the reviewed factors to attainment and measurement of sense of place in traditional cities to access for transmission to modern cities of this research. According to figure 8, measurement of sense of place had relation income principle to social factors that existed in neighborhood center.

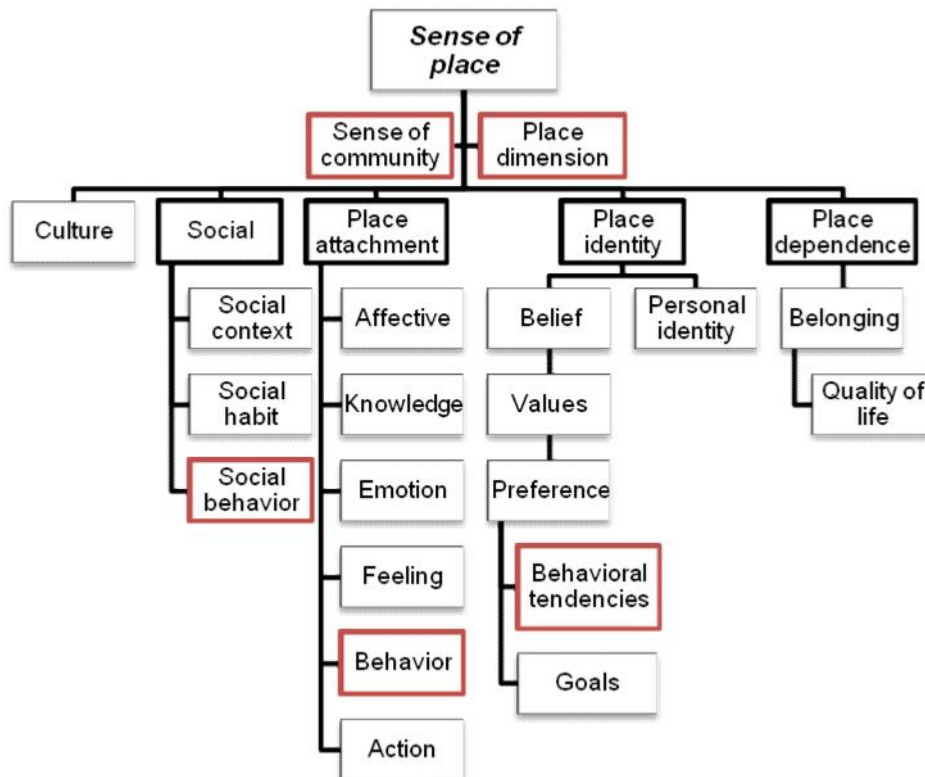


Figure 9: Social factors according to place for evaluation sense of place in traditional urban for transport to contemporary cities (Author)

In this paper, have suggested figure 9 by comparing the fundamental goals of sense of place components .This figure is logical model that seems for arrange them as main axioms model, and consists 4 sections, including dimensions of place (place attachment, place identity, and place dependence), sense of community (social behavior and identity, dependence of community). Analysis of each of these sections shows that relations among sub-criteria and the importance of these sub-criteria compared to other criteria grouped and the non-group.

Briefly, their measurement is impossible without communication with each other. This figure provided series of integrated communications between place, environment and human that they are important factors to fulfillment of this evaluation. Although to focus on sense of community and social identity as components of sense of place in neighborhood center have chosen community behavioral factors in a place

including (activity, habits use, time use, needs) as amplifiers of sense of place in a public place.

CONCLUSION

In many studies, identity and sense of the place knows as prefers to stay in a place or leave it. While leaving a place occurred because of many various (lack of facilities, transport, and quality of place). Necessarily, being in a place or leave it is not means to have a sense of place and cannot be decisive. At the urban level, the environment should be such that it encourages people to express themselves and to become involved.

This study shows the importance of neighborhood center as collector space. This environment provide basis for the occurrence of social behavior. It encourages people to participate and achievement to daily and social needs. We suggest that behavioral commitment in an appropriate place is related to having a sense of community (cognitions of affiliation and belonging within the community). Neighborhood center as prominent urban areas improve some local facilities within easy reach can reduce some of the trips that a household has to make, and strengthen the sense of place.

The objective of this work would assist to find a best way to evaluate and to measure the sense of place in traditional neighborhood centers especially Islamic period of Iran which that result help to create new towns that respect social needs, place attachment, place dependence. Use the Conceptual guideline for examining sense of place response. In this way, we draw a guideline (Figure 9) that we choose best factors to attainment and measurement of sense of place in traditional cities to access for transmission to modern cities of this research.

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