

SENSE OF PLACE WITHIN THE ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENT IN CULTURAL FRAME: A REVIEW

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Abstract

The numerous aspects of physical as well as the subjective features of environmental elements can affect social behavior and social interactions. The designated environmental element such as green open space, landscapes, water body as well as other environmental amenities that are bestowed by the nature such as natural weather, natural weather routes, natural topography and natural can provide amenities and benefits that contribute to the quality of life. The study is attempted to discover individual's perception, experience and responses towards their surroundings based on elements that relate to their culture. Despite of land scarcity, new developments do not seem to recognize and respect the importance of cultural aspect resulting in the disorientation of residential property development area. Furthermore, the land use pressures are interrelated internally for fiscal benefits and externally for creating the preserve land for habitat. The literature reviewed in terms of sense of place was conducted to rediscover the fundamental conception of place, perception and experience. This paper was born from the attempt to understand why people fall in love with places and extends an ongoing progress of a study about the environmental elements in the context of culture. The concept of sense of place appeared to explain much of the ways in which people relate to place, and for this reason, many of the works reviewed for this study were written by scholars who have analyzed this concept. Hence, the background of reviewed study was to structure the work and concludes that places will add the value to establish the urban setting and place in economics context.

Keywords: *Sense of place, environmental element, quality of life, residential property, urban habitat.*

1.0 Introduction

For decades, scholars from a variety of field have discovered people's emotional relationships. A few key ideas have emerged in the literature, particularly 'sense of place' (Buttimer, 1980; Tuan, 1980; Steele, 1981; Hay, 1998), 'place attachment' (Altman & Low, 1992; Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001) 'place dependence' (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981) and 'place identity' (Proshansky, 1978, Sarbin, 1983; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). These concepts are rather broadly defined. For example, sense of place is described as 'an experiential process created by the setting, combined with what a person brings to it' (Steele, 1981, p. 9). Place attachment considered 'the bonding of people to places' (Altman & Low, 1992). Meanwhile, place dependence is described as the perceived strength of association between a person and specific places (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981). At the beginning, sense of place has particularly been favoured as a concept when examining issues such as place preference, access to and control over the landscape and natural resources. The meanings and culture in terms of resource use as well as the participations of various groups in local decision-making were also recognized by this concept. The concepts provides opportunities to examine the social and cultural processes affecting the environmental and landscape valuation, including a broader range of

voices and values, especially those of residents (Cheng et al., 2003; Relph, 1985; Saar & Palang, 2009; Soini, 2007). As sense of place is expected to translate into harmony between people and nature, as well as care for the place, thereby contributing to the aesthetic quality of life and culture (Thomson, 1998). It provides an informative concept in an environment with the heterogeneous expectations for urban environmental development.

For the other side of this related discussion, the term “place” is defined as a space between people and the environment settings (Mastura et al., 2013). It is important to have a better understand to discover the people’s perception, experience and response towards their surroundings based on element that relate to the culture and basic activities. A sense of place within urban environmental elements gives detail definitions of terms place. Due to extensive referencing and eagerness to understand more, the character and strength of sense of place have been examined through various components (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2006).

Matsuoka & Kaplan (2008) stressed the nature needs, directly linked with the physical features of the environmental setting, were categorized in terms of contact with nature, aesthetic preference, recreation and play. The role of the environment is less immediate in the human-integration group, which includes the issue of interaction, citizen participation in the design process, community and identity (Matsuoka & Kaplan, 2008). Previous research indicates the important roles of natural environment play in human being. The design of urban landscapes strongly influences the well-being and behavior of users and nearby inhabitants. Urban residents worldwide express a desire for contact with nature and each other, attractive environments, places in which to recreate and play, privacy, a more active role in the design of their community, and sense of community identity.

Although Russ et. Al (2015) is one of the contemporary leading author regarding this topic but there is still relatively few studies that have been carried out on the relationship between sense of place and other elements for urban environmental development. Hence, the aim of this article is to use the concept of sense of place to explore the urban environmental elements perceptions of residents at the urban development fringe, and in this way examine the relationship between these concepts. It is suggested that the concept of sense of place indicates the complex relationships people have with the environment they experience (Soini et al. 2012).

2.0 Materials And Methods

This study reviews the literatures from various sources such as journals, reports, proceedings and related documents on sense of places and environmental elements in the global perspectives. The literatures were identified through a comprehensive search by using electronic and non-electronic databases. Several electronic databases (Science Direct, Springer and Social Science Citation Index) were searched for published literature in a systematic way using a range of keywords relating to concept of sense of place, issues and challenges. Internet search engines were also used to find the related documents and reports published by the organizations undertaking research in this area. The references cited in the literatures were searched and important studies were collected in full text. In addition, both electronic and non-electronic searches were also supplemented by a network of colleagues who provided related literatures and documents. In the review process, only the documents written in English were considered. This study reviewed the literatures that included the discussions and demonstrated data, findings and evidences related to sense of place within the environmental element in cultural frame.

3.0 An Overview Of Urban Environmental Elements

The urban environmental elements- whether it is understood as a physical, scenery is in the midst of change in many areas in throughout the world. This is due to the changes in urban settlement as well as for the purpose of sustainable development, however the change is varied in speed and according to the area, municipal commitment and progress in adopting with the element. Classification of three different types of environment either (1) nature with water, (2) nature dominated by vegetation, or (3) urban environments without water and vegetation (Ulrich, 1981). In other hand side; urban green spaces, water bodies and good environments quality provide amenities and services that contribute fundamentally to the quality of urban life (Shafer et al., 2000; Van Herzele & Wiedemann, 2003; Chiesura, 2004). Due to their non- commodity and unpriced nature, and largely intangible benefits, their contribution is usually difficult to assess and quantify. Their importance to the well-being of cities and citizens is often neglected in mainstream urban planning and policy making related to development (More et al., 1988; Luttk, 2000; Tyrvaˆinen and Miettinen, 2000; Tajima, 2003; McConnell and Walls, 2005). In recent years, the increasing concern about urban green space and environmental quality has grown in tandem with rapid urbanization. Natural areas located in and near residential areas in developing cities, closely related to the amenity and health of residents, are of particular concern due to their vulnerability to damage and usurpation.

For instance, the urban green space is the example of urban environmental element and the closest common place where residents can undertake the outdoor recreational activities. Instead for stress release, the social roles of public green space are for health benefits, older people life satisfaction, human needs and sustainability and sense of community. The green space in urban areas provides a relatively low-cost contribution in order to improve and maintaining people’s physical and physiological and human well-being (Zhang et al, 2012).

Change in the urban environment in urban development challenges the environmental elements perception of urban residents, residents, visitors and potential users, who have different expectations concerning what the urban environmental elements should be like and what it should be used for. The natural landscape is advancing the process of urbanization rapidly as the landscape planning are required to afford high-quality residential environment and achieve esthetical, social, economic and ecological benefits (Zhang et al. 2012).

4.0 Theoretical Context

4.1 Sense of place and its components

The sense of place is a group of concept exists that aim to describe the quality and strength of the embed people in a “place”, of which sense of place is probably the most often referred to. Although having multiple definitions, sense of place usually refers to the experience of a place, which is gained through the use of, attentiveness to and emotions toward the place (Relph, 1976; Stowowski, 2002). Relationships with places are also dynamic in the sense that they develop along with the human identity (Manzo, 2003). Factor such as physical size and other characteristics independent of human perception, geographical distance from the home, place related activities, environmental attitudes and association between environmental value orientations have all been suggested to contribute to a sense of place.

The character and strength of sense of place have been examined through various components (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001). Place attachment, which has been used as synonyms for sense of place, describes the positive emotional bond that people have with a place. Place attachment may arise from history and family, the loss or destruction of land or a community, ownership or inheritance, spiritual

relationship, or storytelling and naming of places. Place attachment is not always positive, as it might also include negative feelings (Brown et al., 2003; Manzo, 2003). Besides that, place satisfaction or Stedman (2002) calls “judgment of the perceived quality of a certain setting” viewed as “the utilitarian value of a place to meet certain basic needs” ranging from the sociability of services to physical characteristics (Stedman, 2002).

Place dependence concerns how well any setting given impact an existing range of alternatives (Stokol & Shumaker, 1981), for example how the setting is compared to another setting for what a person likes to do. Thus, place dependence refers to connections based specifically on activities that take place in a setting, reflecting the importance of a place in providing conditions that support an intended use (Brown & Raymond, 2007). Place identity, in turn, involves those dimensions of self that define an individual’s or community identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals and behavioural tendencies and skills relevant to this environment, and how the physical settings provides meaning and purpose to life. (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983; Mihaylov and Perkins, 2004 Brown & Raymond, 2007).

In exploring more on this research interest, Stedman (2002) described sense of place as a collection of symbolic meanings, attachment, and satisfaction with a spatial setting help by a group or individual. The reviewed literature reveal that sense of place has different levels. Hummon (1992) differentiated between a numbers of different types of senses of place in a study on community sentiment. These included rootedness, alienation, relativity, and placelessness. Hummon noted people’s satisfaction, identification, and attachment to communities has cause different kinds of sense of place. In other study, Cross (2001) defined sense of place as a combination of relationship with place and social activities. Cross clustered the relationships with place in biographical, spiritual, ideological, narrative, commoditized and dependent. Shamai (1991) has determined the three major - belonging to a place, place attachment and commitment toward a place stages. Shamai further categorized it into seven levels, which is:

1. Knowledge of being located in a place: in this level people are familiar with the place; they identify the symbols of the place but they do not have any particular emotional connection to the place and its symbols. Therefore, they do not integrate themselves with the place.
2. Belonging to a place: in this phase, people not only are familiar with the place but they have an emotional connection with the place. In this stage, people distinguish the symbols of the place and in contrast to the previous stage those symbols are respected
3. Attachment to a place: people have a strong emotional relationship with the place. The place is meaningful and significant to people. In this regard, the place has unique identity and character to the users via its beloved symbols.
4. Identifying with the place goals: in this level, people are integrated with the place; moreover the goals of the place are recognizable by the people. The users also are very satisfied with these goals; hence they have a deep attachment to the places.
5. Involvement in a place: in this level people have an active role in the place. They would like to invest their own resources such as money, time, or talent in the activities of the place. Therefore, as opposed to previous levels that were mostly based on attitude, this stage is probed mainly through the real manners of the people.
6. Sacrifice for a place: this level is the last and also the highest point of Sense of place. Deepest commitment to a place is the main aspect of this phase. People would like to sacrifice of important attributes and values such as prosperity, freedom, or, life itself.

4.2 Sense of place and urban environmental elements

There has been considerable debate on the relationships between environmental elements, place and sense of place. The theory of urban environmental emphasizes that environmental element is as a “text” within the systems of cultural, political and economic power, where the individual experience of environmental is seen as a result of this power.

Substantially, environmental is considered as the subject analysis (physical or subjective wise) emphasizing the character as a mixture of natural and cultural elements, and have reserved “place” as a term for the context of experience (Lucy & Philips, 1997). “Environment” and “place” cannot be seen as the opposite, but rather as inseparable (Shafer et. al, 2000). Thus, every place is a part of some environmental and conversely, every environment is part of some place (Taylor et. al, 1995).

Besides these conceptual discussions, a relatively small number of empirical studies have examined how the perceptions of specifically discuss i.e. landscape and sense of place encounter each other in the human-environment congruity; how does sense of place affect the way people perceive the environment. Proshanky et al (1983) found the physical attributes of places to be important for an individual’s self-concept. A study conducted among residents having strong sense of place had positive images of the environment in that they perceived their surroundings as less degraded from a natural state by human actions. Kaltenborn’s (1998) assumed that residents with a strong sense of place could be interpreting the surround positively to rationalize and justify their existence in the area, or they were likely to be more involved in it and know it better. Most importantly, space can be of beneficial for sense of place, as it’s creates flexibility and reassemble point around the sense of place. However, space can also limit the diversity and transformability, making its difficult for some communities to move to new patterns or integrate into the new community. The question seems to be how sense of place could have result in physical characteristics and how it can be associated with the social activities.

4.3 Sense of place promote desire to contribute to urban environmental development.

Besides the linkages between sense of place and environmental element characteristics, there is also some empirical evidence that sense of place influences individual and social action through different mechanisms. (Cheng et al. 2003). Vaske and Kobkrin (2001) has found positive relationship between place attachments and specific environmental behaviours. Kruger and Shannon (2000) asserted that citizens with a high level of place-related knowledge seem to create knowledge, new opportunities for social actions. Kaltenborn and Bjerke (2002) found that sense of place could be a good predictor of how people will react to environmental changes; those with strong sense of place seem more committed in solving problems. However, differences in the sense of place or environmental perceptions do not necessarily always lead to differences in the aims of the urban environmental development.

4.4 Socio-demographic and cultural groups

It is important to acknowledge the differences between people with the consideration to sense of place and urban environmental perceptions. It is due to the dissimilarity between insiders (people who involved in place) and outsiders (separate or alienated from a place) resulting from the distance of the place, even the outsiders have will have the sense of place outside their neighborhood (Relph, 1976). Besides, gender differences have also been establish in attachment Stedman (2006) has shown that sense of place of part-time residents is primarily related to the environmental quality, whereas permanent residents emphasizes social relations in their sense of place

5.0 Environmental Sense Of Place: Integration User And Place.

In this article, the concept of sense of place is used to explore the relationship between humans and the urban environmental elements at the urban culture fringe. Examines how the urban environmental elements perceptions of local residents can be understood from the basis of their sense of place in their locality. The spaces with trees attracted larger groups of people the use of outdoor public spaces in public housing development. The presence of natural encourages the greater use of outdoor by residents (Coley et. al, 19970). The results indicate that natural elements such as trees promote for social interactions, monitoring of outdoor areas, and impoverished urban neighborhood.

Physical characteristics of spaces can also promote more productive social interactions and attract people and encourage social encounters (Osmond, 1957). To date, previous researcher has discussing on features in the urban environment that support social interactions among residents have focused on man-made and structural characteristics of buildings. The availability of natural element may attract residents to have more frequent access to other neighbors thus result to have a greater sense of territoriality over those spaces. Areas that are likely to attract residents to enjoy the areas with trees especially with the physical and psychological comforts associated with trees. In other aspects of our culture for state of privacy, the presence of green elements qualities may be especially appealing for urban public housing residents for urban public housing residents living in often crowded, poorly maintained, and dangerous settings with few opportunities to experience more pleasant and safe surroundings (Coley et. al, 1997).

Natural elements strongly affect people peoples’ perceptions and feelings about their surrounding environment. Open spaces have proved to be particularly important increasing perceptions of crowdedness in high-density residential areas (Brown et. al, 2004). Low levels of nature contact may be the factor in the higher rates of certain causes and nature of disease observed for urban population compared to rural residents (Ulrich, 1981). For example residents have positive influence on subjects’ psychophysiological states to urban with nature content rather than urban scenes lacking nature. In fact, the nature environments with presence of water give more positive influences to the residents (Ulrich, 1981). In return, it can be effects of how people feel and appreciate place and other related contributions thus include strong psychological bond that may encourage revitalization among existing residence (Brown et. al, 2004).

Perception is can feel emotionally described as opinions, likes, dislikes and attitude, beliefs values and rationalization. Perception is a cooperative effort between memory, reason, imagination and creativity, or what is called mind. The thoughts and feelings are always “turned on” and partially occupied by whatever is happened surrounding. The boundary of perception begins where sensation ends. The spectrum of experience shows three types of experience on perception sensation and feeling that relate to place attachment.

Table 1: A Framework for organizing Psychological Concepts that focuses on community in both its physical and social aspects (Manzo & Perkins, 2006)

Community-related Dimensions		
	Place	Social
Cognitive	Place identity	Community Identity
Affective	Place attachment	Sense of Community
Behavioral	Participation in neighborhood planning, protection and improvement.	Neighboring activities, participation in crime prevention and community celebrations.

It is important to understand the psychological dimensions of community specifically focusing on both place and social related aspects to the community. In Table 1 above, it is an alternative framework

to identify the reflect the multiple ways that people experience their community both as place and a community of neighbours. In the cognitive dimension, there is both place identity and community identity (i.e., one's sense of self as informed by neighborhood places and by social interactions/neighborhood respectively). The affective dimension refers to one's emotional relationship to the neighborhood or specific places within it (this takes the form of place attachments), as well as one's emotional relationships with neighbors and other local community groups (this takes the form of sense of community). Finally, the behavioral dimension includes participation in community planning, preservation, and development efforts (in regard to place-focused action) as well as engaging in neighboring and other social activities (in regard to socially oriented behavior) (Manzo and Perkins, 2006).

Sense of place has significant impact in cultural aspects by integrating the users and place. The definitions of urban environmental elements and the specifically the urban environmental development contribution described by other authors are reviewed. The incorporation of all the urban environment elements by contributed the community with quality of life through land use patterns (Shafer et al, 2000) and by focusing on the relationship among resources, it is understand that human are part of nature and not separate them from it (Taylor, et al, 1995).

Hence, besides to create physical benefits for potential recreation, urban environmental elements with their multifunctional capacity within the involvement from resident will offer best solution in planning, designing as well as maintaining urban settings. By working to integrate the different visions of feature expressed by urban environment, planners and architects can build the cultural support needed to sustain natural processes and functions (Gobster, 2001) to make a neighbourhood space suitable and livable and that allow for growth of individuals and their community in a context of holistic development (Abu-Ghazze, 1996). In urbanization, the role of planning and design includes creating and adapting physical characteristics which helps turn territories into places and communities or enhance the place status that has previously been achieved (Lucy and Philips, 1997).

6.0 Discussions And Conclusion

This study discovered the individual's perception, experience and responses towards their surroundings based on elements that relate to their culture to support the development and urban orientation towards environmental base surroundings.

Significant relationships were observed such that residents' place-based elements have different levels of sense of place that contribute to social activities. The significant is based on the relationships of place meaning. However, the limitations of study related to what extent one could modify the natural environment. Further study that emphasized self-report-data, to verify the conditions of the physical environment should be done. Yet the social and economic significance of rearrangement and revitalization is important to conduct.

Significantly, in terms of health and bonding of the community concerned well as the rampant crime and unemployment concentration of poverty, abysmal condition in such areas have led to more concentrated public discussion of the dangers of incompatible area. The presence of environmental element in urban spaces near homes may provide fundamental benefits to residents' of inner-city neighborhoods. Peoples were attracted with outside and in doing so, the casual social encounters among neighbors. The consequences of this condition thus increase interaction include more greater sense of levels of safety precaution for children under care during play in presence of adults.

The discussion concerning characteristics of urban housing that support healthy functioning of families and communities is a primary concern. This work helps to provide a base knowledge of how we can build and support better neighbourhood and communities. Environmental element shows an important role by means of attracting people to outdoor public spaces as well as improving opportunities for social interaction thus imply greater resources toward planting and maintaining trees and other natural elements in urban public housing developments. The participation of local residents in such attempt may bring heightened interest in and upkeep of such resources.

The notions of place theory as well as issues and problems of people response towards the surroundings have been given thought. Previous study confirms the suggestions that perceived sense of control over an area is often an important consideration for developing a deep sense of trust in and identity with a place (Brown, 1987). The better predictors of confidence in the future of place attachment and satisfactory neighborhood conditions were including good parks and presence of nature. Coley et. al, 1997 indicate that the often neglected aspect of place, the presence of nature, seems to play an important role in the overall picture of how environment influences urban residents of impoverished public housing developments.

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