



Examining the Way of Local Identity Perception in Historic Neighbors (Case of Study: Dodangeh Neighbor in Borujerd)

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Abstract

Place is a manifestation of subjective and social thinking, symbol of life and is a source of symbolic memories; it also is a part of our imaginations and attachments, though at present human and identical dimension of cities and places may be undermined. Place as a collection, helps to develop a process in which people' sense of place and attachment and identity all are developed and maintained. These days, the loss of identity and lack of connectivity of human life spaces with historical and cultural contexts has been turned into one the main pre-occupations of current architectures and urban planners. Modern neighbors only cause to create non-places in lack of sufficient facilities for specification of human identities. This is while, a place is accounted as a litter for being situated and a part of human existence while is considered as a main identity source. So, it is essential to analyze the way of perception of local identity by people and the bilateral relationship of person and the place. In this paper, with the aim of assessing of the way of local identity perception in historic neighbors, we have tried to review theorists' views on the basis of related documents. Examining different effective factors in that, model and the process of forming local identity were been specified. Finally, using SPSS 19, we examined mentioned model in Dodangeh neighbor in Borujerd. Results highlighted the importance of the staying time as well activity and memorability in creating local identity in historical neighbors.

Keywords:Identity, Local Identity, Place Attachment, Iranian Neighbor, Dodangeh Neighbor

Introduction

On the issues these days has been considered in today cities is identity crisis and low level of citizens' quality of life. This place identity crisis can be to some extend due to lack of being real place as its exact concept. A place which face people with their own other conceptual layers and these layers help people to recognize surrounding environment and themselves. According to studies have been done by environmental psychologists and theorists since the late of 70's, place identity is effective on the quality of bilateral relationship between human and the place, hence on the formation of local identity as well individual identity. In this regard, Norberg-Schulz emphasizes that the places are those which they should be and human inventions in places will lead to create livable spaces just when people recognize the dominated atmosphere and move with them in the spaces. The differences in meaning and function of

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urban places navigate local interactions and identities of residents. So, local identity can be considered as a part of human identity and their overall recognition about the universe (real and perceived environment), where they live there. This recognition include of memories, emotions, views, values, preferences, concepts and human goals about places which orient their perceptions and behaviors. Hence, a place can be named place when it has a connection with human mind and can be reminded and turned into a part of human mind. Humans understand objective environment (place), while this environmental understanding differs from objective environment for different people. So, the concept of perception and identity are influenced by individual and social characteristics. From the other perspective, perception, receive process, translation of peripheral drivers all are the factors which define people' views and perceptions from their environment. So, perceptual environment is a part of actual environment and is accounted as a subjective image from the phenomenal environment. As a result, along with the extension



of perceptual environment, operational environment will extend. Borujerd belongs to Lorestan province in west of Iran. On the basis of evidences and software maps from Borujerd historical context, this area includes of 7% of legal city domain and has been recorded by cultural heritage organization. Today, due to prevalence of new buildings, these old spaces have been neglected along the time. This increases the importance of reviewing and attending to concept of place and related factors in formation of these places identity. The purpose of this paper is to determination, maintenance and manipulation of effective factors in local identity of historical neighbors and examining the way of perception of local identity in these historical neighbors. Reviewing theorist's views and showing intended research model, finally, we examine the way of perception of local identity in historical neighbors such as Dodangeh neighbor in Borujerd by statistical SPSS19 software.

Reviewing Identity Concept

Identity is a response to the question of creatures about their quiddity which is equivalent to the word of (Identity) in English. The meaning of this word in oxford dictionary is: the quiddity of a thing or a person (Moein, 2002). In addition to humans, other creatures have their own especial identity. Pry and the need for defining ourselves through connecting to environment cause people to explore the quiddity of other objectives rather than their own nature. In order to reach the answer of other events quiddities, the same is true. So, individuals compare their own subjective image with an objective and another objective, while this process is the basis of phenomena (identity identification), (Afroogh, 1998). Identity means distinguishing from the others and similarity to relatives. Dynamic identity is influenced by the time and simultaneously preserve itself. The sense of identity is usually associated with the sense of pantheistic as well as awareness of plural components. So, the conceptual domain of difference and similarity define identity and also introduce other two areas of continuation/ evolution and unity/ multiplicity and its conditions (Daneshpoor, 2000). One of the main meanings of identity which comprises all of things, is place identity as in following would be introduced.

Local Identity:

Place can be a point which usually is the most little spatial unit or is a system and an irrisolvable

structure which is created by the relationship of people with their environment (Hafeznia, 2006: 158). According to Martin Heidegger, place is the human complex experience from the universe. The relationship between human and place is bilateral since human needs and intentions relate meaning to the space and turn vacant space into experienced place hence place can has mutual effects on humans. This is because it is affective on human interactions and values so place identity is a part of individual identity. Place identity grows by direct experience of physical environment and it is a reflection of cultural and social aspects of the place (Khodayi and Poorkheiri, 2010: 192). This is while, place identity plays a major role in individual characteristic richness since a part of everyone characteristic is a place where he or she identifies himself or herself and introduces it to others. When a person thinks about himself, he imagine that he is attached to a especific place and he accounts that place as a part of him and there is a strong relationship between individual and place; a relationship beyond only touching or experiencing that place (Park, 1979). According to Gabriel Marcel, a person is not seperated from his place and he is a part of that place. Wagner believes that the time, place, human and action all make an irrisovable identity so meaning and action are mixed components which should be considered in undestanding place identity. Overall , place identity include consolidation inevitable componenets while they are connected together whithin our understanding from different places. Physical image, activities and meanings are the pure elements of place identity and the dialectics between them is structural relationships of this identity. According to Foucault, attending to place identity is result of Lynch's researchs in 70's as a production of map understanding, social activities and visual situations. Regarding place identity, Norberg-Schulz emphasizes that places are those which they should be and human manipulations in them lead to creating livable spaces while determines space atmosphere and move along with it (Moein, 2002). To be more precise, place identity mentions distinguishable features of place which can refer to anonymous or identified place. To be more precise, place identity is related to distinguishable outer space features which can refer to an identified or anonymous. We should note that



place identity affects on quality of local identity though it is another concept (Khodayi & Poorkheiri, 2010: 192). Human through manipulation in surrounding environment try to identify themselves and organize environment as it could provide their space related needs. At first step human try to explore identification conditions for identifying through connecting with them (Rappaport, 1987). Place identity is a sense in a person or community which is motivated by connection with a place (Ghasemi, 2004: 74) and is been known as a part of individual identity. Ian Tierney (1965:78) suggests that there are place identities just the number of humans. Identity in experience, look, mind and user's intent exists as it is in landscape. Although a person may relate his identity to specific place consciously or unconsciously, these identities are merged together and form a common identity (place identity) in people's minds (Carmona, 2007:104). Charts 1, 2 and 3 shows local identity components.

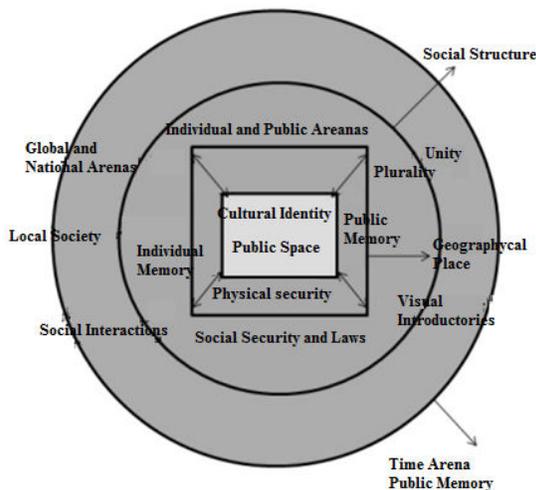


Chart 1. Place identity components

Source: Piran, 2005: 8

Classification
Place attachment

One of the main effects of environment on individuals is place attachment while it has close relationship with local identity largely. Place attachment means an integrated relationship between human and environment and it is of effects of identification. By this relationship, place is turned into a psychological anchorage. Usually this place

attachment is related to cognitive experimental sensitive levels and also is related to public

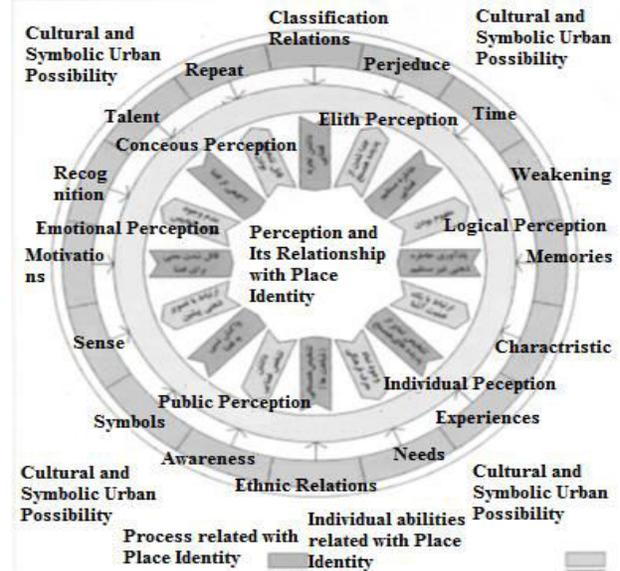


Chart 2. Examining effective factors on place identity

Source: Zadrafiee, 2005.

common sense in more vast spatial areas. Regarding this fact, according to Alexander in (Pattern Language) book: people need identified spaces for belonging to them. Needing to this place attachment is as even a person wants to neglect his attachment to a place, do this through attaching himself to another place (Jabibi, 2008). Many studies prove that emotional attachment to a place can be occurred to physical and social environment (Jorgensen, 2001; Kyle, 2005). According to some documents the sense of attachment to a physical environment can be occurred in absence of social interactions (Hidalgo, 2001). Regarding to the sense of place in different approaches and different levels of the sense of place, formation factors and measurements of the sense of place can be as follows:

Physical Factors. According to Norberg-Schulz, the sense of place is found in places which have specific and different properties and environmental property while it is made of tangible things which have materials, form, context and color (Norberg-Schulz, 1997). Jennifer Cross also suggests the ways of relationship with place and sense of society as effective factors on the sense of place. She also categorizes the relationship with place in form of



biographies, spiritual, conscience, narrative, physical and obligatory attachment while these create five levels of sense of place with some factors such as identity, innermost and satisfaction (Cross, 2001). Although environmental studies at first, only relied on psychological approaches and science and knowledge, they did not attend to physical environment and its dimensions. Next studies, however, introduced physical features as well as environment dimensions by defining some concepts such as individual space, density, holy places and similar things (Falahat, 2006). Salvasen believes that the sense of place is made of three components as situation, landscape and individual interconnectedness while each of these is not enough solely, for creating the sense of place. Different factors are accounted as threats for the sense of place such as being impatience, building monotony and evolvment of digitalism era (Salvesen, 2002). According to Yan Zhu, space meaning structures and built environment have important role for creating the sense of place and making collections of specific qualities (Xu, 1995). So, studies show environment physical features are effective in creating the sense of place by making meanings and providing specific activities.

Human and Social Factors. Milligan defines two conceots in process of social interactions. Past interactions and interactive possibility. The first is reflection of prevous social experiences in environment and is an implicit mentioning to memories. Also, interactive possibility is one of user charachtristics which is created by environment for reinforcing and affecting on social interactions (Milligan, 1998). Ralph argues that mental imaginations are the most effective factor in place identity and believes that when we seek place meanings in physical structure and its related activities we would not be able to find anything. However, we have to seek meaning in subjective images as well as human exeriences in places (Habibi, 2008). The role of ownership or housing rent also can be examined as effective factors on subjective perception and citizens' imaginations from environmental perspectives (Low, 1992). The staying time also can be considered as one of effective variables. Some studies have suggested that staying time has significant directly effect on tendency to have social interactions and place attachment (Relph,2006; Tuan, 1997). This is

while, these reports are contradictory when compared to other studies which have questioned the effects of staying time on on the sense of place (Stedman, 2002). However, staying time in environment can be tested as a factor with indirect effect on sense of the place dimensions.

Cognitive and Perceptual Factors. As it was discussed, sense of place is a combination of meanings, symbols and qualities while individuals or groups understand it consiously or unconsciously in space or in specific region (Shamai,1991). Concepts which are decrypted after person' place understanding are of sense of place factors. So, sense of place does not mean solely a sense or a feeling or any relationship with specific place, but is a cognitive system in which a person is attached with subjects, individuals, objectives or a place concepts (Falahat, 2006).



Chart 3. The relationship between place identity and the sense of place

Source: Kashi & Bonyadi, 2013: 51.

Einifar (2009) enumerates place identity related and place attachment variables as is shown in below table:

Tbale 1. Effective factors in place attachment

1- Physical Factors	4- Individual Fcators	7- Interactive Factors
2- Social Factors	5- Memories and Experiences	8- Time Factor

- 3- Cultural Factors
6- Place Satisfaction
9- Participation in Place Designing

historic documents in current time, from first Pahlavi period to now, there have been major changes in social and physical structure of Iranian cities while these changes have been more significant in late of Ghajar period (from Nasereddin-Shah onward). These all affected on neighbor structure and its domain began to be demolished. Also, changing in neighbor social structure as well as changing in neighbor physical structure and integrated neighbor divisions lead to create series of decentralized layers and considerable changes in accommodation systems. Different social unities also placed by social networks. So, the concept of neighbor began to weakening (Seghatoleslami, 2008: 82).

Offering local identity pattern in current urban neighbors

The property of a place can be affected by different factors. The most important factor in this regard belongs to contrast with the environment. Contrast here, refers to topology, form, material and color. It is possible that a place be very important it faces with a unique event. Many of monuments and pantheons are of this kind (Habibi, 2008). Places are separated units while are independent and act as a scene of life for people. This scene can be situated in Kabul, Tehran or Baghdad where daily experiences of people are formed there, however we should mention some points in this regards: firstly, a place is built by social, economic and political activities. Secondly, we should note that in assessing a place in local scale, it does not have objective scale but it is built socially. So, scale related policies should be considered (Jones et al, 2007: 177). Regarding neighbor concept which mentioned previously in this paper, neighbor can be a place while has its specific property. Assessing identity in neighbors is importance since it refers to two concepts of individual and public identity. These two concepts have been shown briefly in conceptual research model regarding studied literature as it is shown in chart 4.

Source: Einifar, 2009

Reviewing neighbor concept, neighbor center Iranian City

Appearance of neighbor concept has a long history in the world and Iran and it is rooted in public life and social relationships (Smith, 2010; Mumford, 1961). In dictionary neighbor means (district, quarter or a part of city), (Dehkhoda, 1957). In western culture neighbor is also defined with some words such as Neighborhood, Quarter and District. Reviewing Iran urbanism history shows that in historic cities of this country, the spatial and social structure of city has been built with neighborhood systems and neighbor has been considered as the basis of cities since these neighbors were the fundamental spatial and social structures which formed cities (Falamaki, 1995: 131). Overall, the concept of neighbor can be defined from social, mental, perceptual, physical and political perspectives. Each of these aspects have their own specific definition from the neighbor. In addition, these definitions can be different in different communities and times. The neighbor is distinguished with walls and borders from other places in terms of administrative borders, it also is separated socially by residents' perceptions and the neighbor is distinguished with local services districts functionally. The neighbor also is defined by quality and safe traffic features environmentally and it also is defined aesthetically through having age or specific properties (Barton, 2003:16). Mumford suggests that the neighbor is recognized by specific borders and a central position in city (Mumford, 1945). According to Mackenzie, one of Chicago school authors, idiom of neighbor is defined in two social and physical territories. He suggests that the neighbor is close units physically and the place of social connectivity (Blummer, 1984). In term of physical features, in Iran, neighbors have been formed differently and have been a land mark for their own cities due to their historic background (Habibi, 2001: 48; Falamaki, 1995: 214; Naghizadeh & Doroodian, 2008: 78; Pakzad, 2003: 32; Tavasoli, 2002: 24). Reviewing





Chart 4. Research conceptual model

Source: Authors, 2015.

Statistical Analysis of research conceptual model in Dodangeh neighbor in Borujerd

The case of study is traditional and historic Dodangeh neighbor in Borujerd. Historic context of Borujerd comprises 280 hectares of east and center of this city while today this area is mainly situated in Jafari, Safa, SHohada and Bahrololum streets. This context includes Borujerd territory which was shown in a map, produced by Russian army in 1849. Historical context of Borujerd have had four neighbors: Dodangeh, Safavian, Yakhchal and Razan. Dodangeh is its economic and commercial neighbor. Each neighbor has a core while includes other cores.

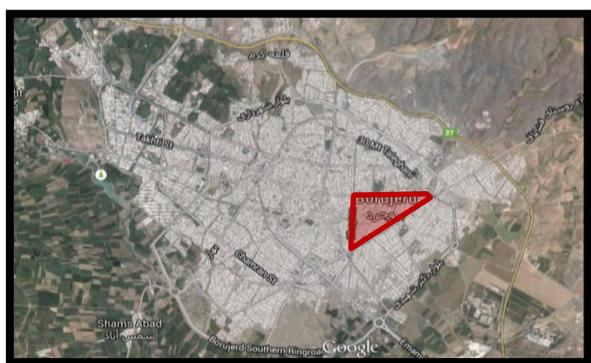


Figure 1. The situation of Dodangeh neighbor in Borujerd.

Source: Google Earth, 2015.

Statistical model and questionnaire

In this section for examining the research model in Dodangeh neighbor in Borujerd, statistical analyses were used. Gathered data from questionnaires were

entered into SPSS19 software and were analyzed by Pierson correlation analysis.

As it is shown in table 2, descriptive information and respondents' status have been listed. 54% of respondent are men. The education level of respondents also has been shown. 2% of respondents had literacy level less than diploma, about 34% of respondents were licensing, and 38% were in higher education that this shows respondents were highly educated. About their employment, 44% of them were clerk. (Table-2) Overall, 21 questions were designed from 7 main research factors. Overall condition of place identity in Dodangeh neighbor was evaluated and as it was mentioned in methodology, questionnaire was designed using Likert scale. Regarding reliability of analysis in intended questionnaires, the amount of this index was calculated regarding Cronbach' alpha as it follows:

Reliability of statistical analyses	
Cronbach' alpha	Number of Items
0.812	7

As it can be seen, the amount of statistics is higher than 0.7 while it is representative of reliability of intended questionnaire for next analysis.

Analyzing research findings

As it was mentioned in theoretical, physical indexes, activity, identity, perception, memorable, individual factors, staying time, cultural and social factors and satisfaction indexes were considered in questionnaires as criteria for assessing local identity from individuals' perceptual perspective in Dodangeh neighbor. (Table-3)

According to research process, correlation analysis was used as methodology in statistical analysis.

Correlation research is one of descriptive research methods which examines the relationship between variables on the basis of research aim. Correlation researches can be categorized into three sections. Correlation for examining type and the amount of variable relationships. Correlation coefficient is a mathematical index which describes the direction and the amount of relationship between two variables. Correlation coefficient is used for two or multi-variable distributions. If the amounts of two similar variable change together, there is a



correlation between these two variables the means increasing or decreasing both of them is together (Habibi, 2012).

As it is shown in table 3, on the basis of P-value in indexes more than 0.05 there is significant relationship between time, activity, perception, memorable, physics and the existence of individual factors with local identity. This is while, there is not any significant relationship between social, cultural and satisfaction with local identity. Table results show that time factor (staying time), has the most

important effect on Dodangeh neighbor local identity by 0.651 β from residents' perceptual perspective. This means that when the duration of staying time in neighbor increases the amount of local identity there, will increase by 0.65. Activity index in neighbor has played role in local identity as significant factor with coefficient of 0.503 β . regarding correlation coefficient of this factor and the importance of activity in neighbor for

	Item	Frequency	Percentage	The cumulative percentage
Sex	Man	108	54	54
	Woman	92	46	100
	Overall	200	100	100
Education	Less than Diploma	8	4	4
	Diploma	20	10	14
	Associate Degree	24	12	26
	Bachelor	68	34	96
	Master of higher	76	38	100
	Overall	200	100	100
Employment	Self-employed	56	28	28
	Clerk	88	44	72
	Student	32	16	88
	Housekeeper	24	12	100
	Overall	200	100	100

Table 2. Respondents' individual status

Correlation Analysis					
Analytical Model	Not Standard Coefficient		Standard Coefficients	T	Significant Level
	B	Standard Deviation	Beta		
Physical	0.069	0.114	0.104	0.602	0.053
Activity	0.303	0.137	0.503	2.215	0.037
Perception/Memorable	0.261	0.216	0.387	2.008	0.035
Individual Factors	0.115	0.270	0.085	1.872	0.045
Staying Time	0.587	0.109	0.651	3.245	0.000
Cultural/Social	0.352	0.326	0.407	1.079	0.287
Satisfaction	0.117	0.230	0.117	0.507	0.617

Table 3. The relationship between local identity in Dodangeh neighbor in Borujerd with main indexes of research from subjective perceptions of people

sense of identity in space, this factor is strong and it can be said that local identity would be increase by reinforcing activity factors. Another significant

factor is perception and memorable which play major role in enhancing local identity with standard coefficient of 0.387. Table results show that physical index with standard coefficient of 0.114

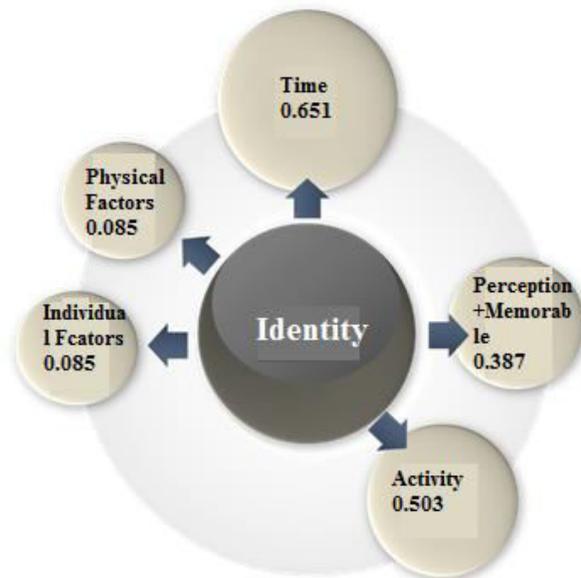


and individual factors index by 0.085β are other effective factors on local identity of space. Also, it can be concluded that these factors play less role in creating local identity.

Discussion and Conclusion

Along with changing in nature of urbanism, urban neighbors which were like urban cells also were changed and were reformed. These reforms have reflected in neighbor physics, social, cultural and economic interactions. Today neighbors have been changed as they have not their previous structure and operation and are not similar to other neighbors in form of traditional frameworks. These neighbors also have not their previous components such as neighbor center, networks and accessibilities, squares, houses and neighbor services. This deconstruction has led to local anonymous and decreasing residents' place attachment. Place identity is an identity which distinguishes places and represents individuals' common subjective images. In this paper, we tried to emphasize on one of less studied aspects of identity, place identity. Although identity concept has been mentioned in most of human knowledge as a public issue, this paper has tried to study it in a historic neighbors of perception. In this regard, the aim of this research has been perception of sense of place and identical indexes in these neighbors. Following, Dodangeh neighbor in Borujerd was been selected as the case of study. Reviewing local identity in Dodangeh neighbor in Borujerd which is one of city historical

neighbors, shows that in this neighbor there is significant relationship between staying time, activity, perception, memorable, physical and individual factors. So, these factors are most important indexes which are affective on perception of this neighbor residents. In other words, for assessing the way of perception of local identity and its relationship with integration and enhancing of these indexes we tried to enhance local identity. Finally, mentioned studies have been shown in chart 5.



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