



Recalling the Place of Public Realms in a Culture-Based City: A Space towards Resurrection of Sense of Public Belonging

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Abstract. By development of cities, urban spaces play a basic role as a place for establishment of cultural interactions. The public urban realms are designed as the most important objectives of quality promotion in the city. One of the most valuable dimensions in designing of public spaces of cities is creation and reinforcement of the sense of public belonging in such spaces and if this important issue is not noticed in such places the low sense of place belonging and ignorance of culture in cities will develop because of the lack of social partnership in decision making, non-observance of regulations, weak cultural cognition and other factors. So, the public urban realms in any society expresses the culture of that city formed based on the culture of its people and also reinforce and create the sense of public belonging in every space of the cities. The culture has an important role, as a stable and abiding element for leading the human towards his ideals and accomplishments and his identity. Therefore, paying attention to and thinking about the issue of public spaces and culture in cities, is one of the most important aspects effective on the life of human societies. The aim of this paper is cognition of public spaces, analysis of the concept of culture in city, analysis of their relations and factors effective on creation and sense of public belonging in city. The methodology of research is descriptive-analytical taking advantages of library studies' tools. The results of this paper show that the role and place of public ss with cultural – urban focus is effective on resurrection of the sense of public belonging.

Keywords: City, Urban Spaces, Public Realm, Sense of Public Belonging, Culture

1. INTRODUCTION

When we talk about a city, in fact we talk about a place that includes the highest concentration rate of power and culture of a society; a place that is crystallization of the widest network of social relations, a place the belonging to it and being a part of it brings a type of cognitive identity for the human (Majedi, Mansouri & Haji Ahmadi, 264:1390). Urban space is a place for formation of human activities and behaviors and establishment of social and cultural relations between humans. Various activities occurring in these places should be possible for all groups of people regardless of their age, sex and race (Rezazadeh & Mohammadi, 2009: 106). Cultural system and social relations are integrated and culture is the product of social relation, the intensity of which influences the culture; that is, establishment and stability of social relations reinforces the values and norms or culture and on the other hand, the culture determines the conditions and formation way of social relations, (Talebi, 2004:162). Losing the sense of place and lack of belonging to place is deeply related to lack of identity of residence place and ignorance of human culture in formation of living place (Khaki & Jahanbakhshian, 2013:494). By explaining the above issues, we aim to study and recognize the public places and analyze the concept of culture in city, analyze their relations and factors effective on their creation and sense of public belonging in city. Therefore, first we give a brief definition of public urban spaces and re-definition of the concept of culture and then study the factors effective on creation of public sense of belonging. Finally, public strategies are presented for promotion and resurrection of this sense of belonging in culture city.

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2. METHODOLOGY & MATERIALS

In this research, we have tried to study the effective concepts and factors in order to analyze the position of public places of cities on the basis of culture for resurrection of the sense of public belonging and this is a descriptive-analytical research taking advantages of library studies and written documents.

Theory & Analysis of Concepts

In this part, we have tried to analyze the basic concepts of public places, culture and their effects on cities in order to recognize the public places based on culture in city, formation of public places towards resurrection of the sense of public belonging.

Urban Space

Space is considered as an important organizing force based on the size of construction mass in the city and it should not be considered as a limit remained from construction of buildings (Bacon, 1974; Alexander, 1987:63). Some part of human activities and behaviors occur in space and according to Anthony Giddens "Space is a physical complex for social interactions" (Giddens, 1990:243). Urban spaces have several characteristics, the most important of which is that: "Urban spaces are considered as social space." (Bastie & Dezert, 2003:22-16). So, the importance of urban spaces is that much high that Lofer believes that any society has created a certain social space in its history where all its various needs are fulfilled (Hayden, 1996).

Public Urban Spaces

Public space in the cities lets the individuals move and perform general activities. It takes them out of the confinement of private space, links them together and "paves the way for people's participation".

The higher the dominance of private space on public spaces of cities, the more the ignorance of social relations and people are busier with their private lives (Banz, 1970:28). Lipton defines public space as "open-air living room" and "outdoor leisure center" (Lipton, 2003:1). Public spaces are the spaces that we share with the strangers, the people who are not our relatives, friends and colleagues. They are spaces for political activities, religious rituals, trade, games and other activities; a place for coexistence with peace and non-private interactions.

The personality of public place illustrates and adjusts our public life, culture of the city and our daily life (Walzer, 1986:470). Mamford emphasizes on social correlation and face-to-face mutual communication, movement of thought and thinking and the aesthetic importance of urban spaces and denies unilateral communication and self-centered profit-seeking.

On this basis, he doesn't agree to pay excessive attention to private spaces, because the social values are ignored in this case and urban dwellers became more isolated than before and collective life fades in urban spaces (Pakzad, 2006:78).

Constructive Concepts of Public Spaces

1. Walzer: Public spaces are the spaces that we share with the strangers, the people who are not our relatives, friends and colleagues. They are spaces for political activities, religious rituals, trade, games and other activities; a place for coexistence with peace and non-private interactions.

2. Mathew Cromona: the public realm has two dimensions: space and activity. Space dimension of public realm include: the spaces and settings with public or private ownership that support public life and social interactions or facilitates them. According to the activities and events happening in these spaces and settings, we can call them Sociocultural Public Realm. In a wider scale, the public realm includes all spaces which are available and used by people and includes the following items:

- "External Public Space": pieces of land situated between private real estates. In urban regions, they include: public squares, streets, highways, parks, parking lots and so on and in rural realm they are continuation of coastlines, forests, lakes, rivers and so on.

- "Internal Public Spaces": public institutes, foundations and buildings such as: libraries, museums, city halls and so on and also public transportation facilities such as train, metro and bus stations and airports, ...

-"External & Internal Quasi-Public Space": although they are legally private, the university campuses, sport grounds, restaurants, cinemas, shopping centers, trade complexes and, are parts of "public realms".

3. "Oldenburg, public space and concept of public life": Oldenburg presents a useful method for understanding of informal public life and its relation with public realm with the concept of "third place". The third place is a wide domain of public spaces that is open for regular, voluntarily, informal and joyful gatherings of people and happens beyond the space of home and work (Majedi, Mansouri & Haji Ahmadi, 2011: 275-276).

Definition of Culture

Culture is the set of values and norms, which emerges in the form of common beliefs, art, ethics, law, habits, customs and symbols (Rapaport, 1977:15). Culture includes the threads that link the human with its environment and outside world. In other words, culture is the mirror of values governing the individuals and society manifested by different figures in literature, art, history and philosophy or in other words, culture is the result of conventions, habits, customs, traditions and common practices of life (Bahreini. 2005:1).

Dimensions of Culture

Culture is among the words that have wide application in different types of texts and this wideness increases its ambiguity and complexity. Of course, this wideness of application shows highly hidden dimensions of culture that enables it penetrate in different issues. The importance of culture is such that some people consider it as the difference between human and animal; in other word, they say that: "Human is a cultured anima" (Rooholamini, 1998:16) and some others know it as a memory for the society (Terri Pandis, 2009: 26).

On the whole, we can mention three general dimensions of culture. It seems that one the following three issues or a combination of them are considered in definition of culture:

- Mentalities
- Behavior
- Artifacts or objectives, in other words

In some viewpoints, behavior should be considered as the style and way of living which is different from culture (Mahdavi Kani, 2009:100)

Definition of Cultural Relations

People need cultural patterns; because, first they are obliged to have a pattern to have a social life; second, they can keep their integrity with the society through this way. “Customs and habits” are in this category, which are very important for social integrity, reinforce common value elements and are considered as main defensive mechanisms of the society against tendency towards abnormality. “Common symbols” as non-verbal elements of culture include the objects that refer to more than their explicit and direct meaning; this is also their cultural value; otherwise they are not different from signs. Culture is very variable in “time” and “space”, but maintenance of cultural identity and survival of culture depends on protecting the traditional accomplishments, customs and habits (Lengerman, 1974: 82).

Cultural Environment

In today’s cultural life that grows out of natural opportunities, human interests and competences, there is no clear difference between earthly, living and cultural environments. In human’s history, the people who have immigrated from one part of the world to other parts have brought most of their cultural characteristics to those parts, such that the culture of most parts of the world is a symbolic heritage of the previous situation of people. Our beliefs and attitudes towards other people, earthly and geographic environment, our role in the society and type of daily activities are among the characteristics of culture (Shahbazi Rose, 1392: 5).

Factors Effective on Urban Public Spaces for Promotion of Culture-Orientation

Table 1. Factors Effective on Urban Public Spaces for Promotion of Culture-Orientation.

Source: Authors

Social Participation	The main results and consequences of urban participation include: -Awareness of people about their skills and abilities -Reinforcing the sense of trust and confidence in urban managers -Reinforcing the sense of cooperation among citizens and urban management -Emergence of creativity of citizens and offering plans and suggestions -Solving urban problems with the help of citizens -More sense of belonging to urban society (Nejati, Hosseini, 2001:8)
Security & Mental and Physical Welfare	As emergence of any behavior is the result of thoughts and mental and emotional issues of any person, so when a person feels being secure in a urban space as a behavioral place, we can expect positive behaviors and activities together with the sense of comfort and joy from him (Sadegh Falahat & Kalami, 2008:90)
Social Interactions	Creation of an opportunity for social interactions is among the most important dimensions and characteristics of public places. This can be assessed by determining the presence rate of different social groups, formation of social network and living in different hours of day (Daneshpour, 2007:21)
Sense of Pleasure & Satisfaction	Sense of pleasure in a space establishes an effective relation between the space and person such that the person feels the sense of belonging and people become more eager to use and appear in such an environment (Sadegh Falahat & Kalami, 2008: 91).
Sense of Place Belonging	The concept of the sense of place belonging influences the rate and type of relation between the individuals in the society and this relation increases social capitals and confidence of people who belong to a special place. (CURDS, ICCHS & BR& C, 2009 :8)
Place Identity	According to Harold Proshansk: place identity is a part of the infrastructure of human’s individual identity and the product of his general understandings about the physical world where he lives. (Proshansky, 1978: 147)

Urban Spaces & Formation of Collective Memory

Urban spaces are the bed for formation of memories. Civil life goes on in these spaces and events and accidents happen there; events and accidents that convert the civil life to spontaneous life to form the memories and make the mind a place for accumulation of memories. Memories never form without any event and what ends up in mind and at that time or accident remains in mine even after days and year and that is the space where that event or accident happens, a space free from material but full of figures. (Habibi, 2009:16)

The Meaning of the Sense of Belonging

In order to study the different dimensions of environmental sense of belonging and based on cognitive research method (Grott, 2005), we have analyzed the cognitive procedures of the sense of belonging in Table (2).

Table 2. Different Dimensions of Environmental Sense of Belonging.
Source: (Javan Forouzandeh & Motallebi, 2011: 29)

Propositions Dimension	Epistemological Propositions	Ontological Propositions
Qualitative & Quantitative	The relation between sense of belonging and human cognitive aspects	Nature of the sense of belonging from human dimensions

Different Dimensions of Sense of Belonging

Generally, two categories can be mentioned for sense of place belonging:

Social Belonging : this type of belonging which mainly happens based on interactions and social actions in the environment is formed based on social environment theory and from this perspective, the environment is a type of belonging, a combination of social elements where the person seeks for his attachment (Javan Forouzandeh & Matallebi, 2011:32).

Sense of Belonging to a Place: This type of belonging is taken from physical elements and components of place as a part of cognition process and human identity. Ridgero Lavarkas has hinted at the important and basic role of the sense of belonging to a place in his studies and mentions it as a root that the individual remembers the environment together with its physical elements in formation of the meaning of the sense of belonging based on it. Besides, Taylor in his studies with other group on public spaces in neighborhood hints at physical elements and mentions it as physical interaction which is equal to sense of belonging to place. Before these two researchers, Proshansky hints at the necessity of paying attention to physical elements in human environment and its role in formation and continuation of individual identity of human. Emphasizing on the role of the sense of belonging to place in the environment as a part of place identity, he knows it as a part of individual identity and finally as social identity of individuals in different environments (Proshansky, 1983: 57-83).

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Factors Forming the Sense of Belonging

Table 3. Factors Forming the Sense of Belonging.

Source: Authors bases on (Javan Forouzandeh & Matallebi, 2011: 33)

Individual Conceptual-Cognitive Factors	Recognition and understanding of an individual from a place are among the primary condition for creation of the sense of belonging to a place, so the environments with physical differentiation and compatibility are considered as desirable environments for users and individuals recognize them better (Javan Forouzandeh & Matallebi, 2011:33)
Social Factors	In fact, all people have social needs and seek for belonging to their relatives and friends in pyramid of human needs.
Physical-Environmental Factors	The activities in an environment are defined based on social factors, public interactions and actions of people and the place is assessed together with the variables of form and organizing of components, as the most important factor in formation of the sense of belonging to the environment.

Collective Belonging to Place

A series of individual and collective stories and narrations that occur with the place are effective on creation of social belongings to place (Habibi, 1999: 20). This sense results in a link between the individual and place and the human knows him as a part of the place and imagines a role for the place in his mind based on his experiences from signs, concepts and performances. This role is unique and different for him and as a result, the place becomes important and respectable for him. A place forms the sense of belonging and attachment because of occurrence of a common experience and social relation between persons (Pakzad, 2009: 319).

In environmental psychology, belonging to a place refers to a cognitive relation between the individual or a group and the environment and belonging to place is the identity relation between the individual and social environment in terms of identity. The sense of belonging and attachment to place is a higher level of the sense of place that finds a determining role in any situation and space in order to take advantages of and continue the presence of human in place (Falahat, 2006: 60). Social belonging of any individual to a place includes his experience in that environment and also his feelings there. On this basis, Cross divided different types of place belonging as follows: (Table 4)

Table 4. Different Types of Place Belonging.

Source: (Khaki & Jahanbakhshian, 2013: 504)(Based on Cross, 2005)

Place Belonging	Satisfaction	Residence	Local Identity	Type of Belonging	Future Interactions
Having root: integrated	High, Positive Evaluations	Here (Physical, Spiritual, Emotional)	Strong	Biography, Spiritual, Ideological	Continuation of Life
Having root: not integrated	Variable	Here (Physical, Spiritual, Emotional)	Discrete	Biography, Spiritual, Ideological	Variable
Alienation to place	Low, Negative Assessments Usually	There (Physical, Spiritual, Emotional)	Weak	Dependant	Tendency to leave but unable to leave
Dependence	Variable, no strong root in a specific society	Every where	Average	Adaptive, biographic, dependent	Living in an ideal place, anywhere
Non-committed Placeless	Average	Everywhere/no where	Weak	Non	There is no special expectations about place

Belonging of people to environment and living place is the product of internal relation, mental imaginations, environmental characteristics and cultural fundamentals and beliefs of residents. The sense of belonging to place on one side, has root in continuation of residence and mental experiences of people such as events, tradition, history, culture, beliefs and society and it is taken from objective and external backgrounds in the environment such as type of design, place organization and body and so on, on the other side (Khaki & Jahanbakhshian, 2013: 505).

Sense of Belonging to Place

By place we mean a special space on the earth limited to a situation with definable identity and also with specific and certain values (Rahnama & Razavi, 2013: 30).

Besides its material dimension, place has a non-material dimension and creates feelings in its residents. These feelings create a type of the sense of belonging to place that form the place identity. This spiritual force is called sense of place. The sense of place is a term used in different fields of humanities, social sciences, education and geography (Semken & Freeman, 2008: 1043).

Sense of place creates a sense of comfort in an environment and also protects the cultural concepts of people, social and cultural relations of the society in a certain place and recalls the previous experiences and brings identity for people (Falahat, 2006: 57).

3. CONCLUSION

Public urban realms have an important role in human interactions, entertainments, gatherings and participation of people. Now, if these places are formed according to principles and regulations based on culture and development of culture, education of citizens in promotion of culture enrichment, it will promote the quality of environment and vitality of city. Introducing the culture, social participations of people in urban decision-making or designing of public spaces creates the senses of collective belonging and immortality in urban space. Respecting the culture and identity, creativity in designing of spaces for using of all people in the society taking into consideration the facilities, security and mental and psychological comfort in cities result in emergence and reinforcement of public spaces based on culture enrichment towards creation of collective sense of belonging in cities.

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Recalling the Place of Public Realms in a Culture-Based City: A Space towards Resurrection of Sense of Public Belonging

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