

Cultural spaces in urban identity

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Abstract: Looking at valuable tissues, it is noticed that cultural spaces have the most important position in urban identity. City identity is the resultant of all forces for changing the city to a cohesive physical-social arena and to strengthen cultural-social prestige and structural phenomenology of urban identity using the effects of these arenas. What creates the urban identity is the coordination between architectural and urban spaces with the performance and the content of physical-social phenomena in a city. Cultural performance spaces are among the most important of these spaces which have the important and valuable role in the hierarchy of urban identity. This study investigates the importance and clear position of the spaces with the cultural using for strengthening and promoting the urban identity. This research in regard to implementation process is qualitative, descriptive and then analytical. The investigation and the concepts are based on library and documentation methods. The results indicate that cultural spaces can be considered as one of physical-social phenomena of a city. Despite of different problems in the design, cultural spaces should be built in coordination with the framework determined in the principles of urban identity. Hence in creating these spaces, a suitable design of the city identity can be imaged by benefiting from past experiences and new thinking. Whatever systematic principles of urban and architectural design have more effective communication with urban identity structure, the stability of urban identity will be provided.

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1. Introduction

Urban competitiveness imposes new agendas on the cities of the future: work is now being done on how to improve the interaction between urban regeneration, economic growth and social renewal in order to achieve more comprehensive development of the city. The greatest challenge is to integrate place-identity, urban sustainability and globalization (Gospodini, 2004; Massey, Jess, 1995). Hence, the importance of mental and immaterial aspects of urban identity is based on commonalities, history, city history and people; and mental and emotional requirements for citizens.

The function of urban cultural spaces and its ability to meet citizenship cultural requirements not only is not considered by attitude on special areas of cultural activities and the type and number of them but also needs attention to the interrelationship of cultural elements and urban space in its totality. Along with changes in physical/social dimensions of urban spaces and their effective resultants, their related cultural elements are also changed. From old times, cultural spaces have been places for the communications and social/cultural interactions.

However, the importance of these spaces was different in various societies and has changed over time but the need for them has always been felt. Cultural function spaces are among public buildings that in the entire world are considered as the model of

urban area and architectural index of that period. City development is coordinated with the development of its cultural spaces. It is important that over time, the function of cultural spaces should be balanced with their own problems which are the dynamics of cultural spaces. Among the issues raised in this context, the following cases can be pointed: no capitation and specified criteria for cultural spaces, no certain criteria for locating cultural spaces and their neighborhood and lack of construction regulations for cultural spaces that all should be considered.

City identity is an inherent and internal state that affects on city body; therefore, it distinguishes the body feature of the cities dependant on a special culture and worldview from other social culture and structure. In fact, body identity is formed in a mutual context. After formation of city body, it causes continuous developments and consequently the dynamic changes in concepts and identity components of a land will become mutual in interactive context (Habib, Naderi and Forouzangohar: 2008).

Cultural spaces in contemporary urban design and construction have important role in organizing and making the urban structure qualitative. Hence, it is necessary to study the characteristics of spaces which promote the urban identity. Urban spaces can provide sustainability development in architecture and urban

construction by promoting social and cultural relations. This study seeks an answer to this question: in fact, what is the role and position of cultural spaces in urban identity structure? and how can indicate it in urban body structure?

2. Research Objectives:

- Recognition of cultural spaces positions in giving identity to the urban structure
- Investigating the effect of cultural spaces in qualitative promotion of urban spaces

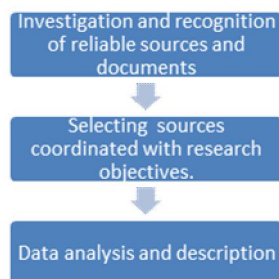
3. Research Questions:

- How can help to sustainable development of urban socio/cultural body by distinguishing the role of cultural spaces in urban identity structure?
- Is there any relationship between cultural uses exist in urban identity structure and cultural development of the city?
- Do cultural spaces play important and distinctive role in the continuity of urban spaces structure and promoting its quality level?

4. Methods

This research in regard to research performing process is qualitative and in regard to goal is descriptive and then analytical, and in regard to the results is developing. Library and digital studies have been used for gathering information from reliable sources and documents (diagram 1). The scope of this research study is investigating the cultural spaces in urban identity. In this study, urban identity is investigated as independent variable in dealing with cultural spaces and the relationship between expression and interpretation is the variables dependant to these two variables.

Diagram 1- Data collection process



5. Cultural spaces and urban identity

5.1 The relationship between the city and cultural context

There is a causal relationship of primitive culture between civic life and cultural context of the city. But

its space reflections which are cultural events center, are more emphasized. But in this area, there has not been a comprehensive and common view part to draw the relationship between cultural context and the city. In superior sectoral area, mainly it is dealt with city identity and natural- historical- cultural structure of the city. (Superior sectoral) is identifiable and forms the civic life in relationship principles between culture and the city and the ratio between both of them in this area. Amid sectoral area recognizes what flows in the city space and creates cultural-behavioral patterns; and sectoral area also points out on what occurs at the locations. There is no more dynamic than cultural spaces in the topic of civic context and civil life. Perhaps, this fact can be shown by concrete examples of streets that lost.

Obviously, the existence of cultural spaces in each city scope and area has outer effects that reflect in amid sectoral spaces, but these amid sectoral elements are only effective when have outer condition effects and the cultural spaces are considered more important because of these same condition effects.

5.2 The identity of the city

One of human social needs is sense of security and belonging. In this regard, the identity and identity elements cause calmness; create confidence and having a desire to continuous effort along with feeling of security in human life (Movasaghi and Airamlou, 2006). Identity is a part of each human personality which makes his/her individual identity and a place to recognize himself / herself. In fact, there is a deeper relationship between individual and the location than uniqueness or the experience of that location (Rezazadeh, 2001). By evoking public memories, the identity in the city creates a fixation in citizenship and leads them to urbanization which is more active than just getting settled. So although, city identity is the effect of citizenship culture but affects on the process of citizenship education and can cause criteria related to partnership and judgment of observers and residents can be codified (Nofel, Kalbadi and Pro Jaffar, 2009). Overview of the concepts related to identity indicates that regard of the identity has both immaterial and spiritual; and material and physical aspects. Different aspects of identity cannot be considered separate and independent from each other, they impact on each other, moreover, each object not only has an identity but also this identity connects to the traits result from that object action and introduces spiritual attributes which has manifested in its appearance and body (Naghizadeh, 2006). What displays in public mind is belonging or not belonging to collective and sustainable identity. In this view, a work with identity is a work in the line of collective identity such as a

historical monument in a historical tissue; and non-identity work is a work that its identity is in conflict with collective identity, like a modern building in a historical tissue. An architectural work can reveal a collective identity (religious, land, race, ...) or simply to express the characteristic and identity of its manufacturer and designer independent of collective norms (Hojjat, 2005).

Identity as an objective-subjective concept is not only a complex topic but also the most important factor to reach urban sustainability (Tavakoli and Zarabadi, 2009).

Since architecture is related to environmental characteristics of human, it has had an important role in maintaining and promoting identity and considered as a symbol of differences and local priorities from the past. Thus, one of the main axes of making local identity coherent is the regard of architectural heritage and urban design of each area; and its occurrence in the artificial environment (Mir Moghtadaie, 2004). Urban space as a physical structure is for social interactions which are accessible to urban community members. The factors for making urban identity should be identified based on constituents components of that space character, constituents components of a city character are: natural, artificial and human components (Behzadfar, 2007).

Identity means distinguishing from alien and similarity to own. The identity of a dynamic city affected by time and while maintaining itself, remains the same. The sense of identity and fixation to the city is always along with sense of unity and

awareness of the presence of plural components. So, the semantic field in urban body <similarity/differences> gives the definition of identity. Identity is an oriented and a multi-value concept. In other words, when the body of the city has valuable cultural identity, implicitly refers to the desirability of identity. The concept of identity in connection with the city and urban construction is an issue which several scholars have always offered theories in relation to it. Due to the nature of the subject, obviously those who have specially considered social areas and environmental psychology have more shares. The concept of identity in connection with city bed and urban construction is a topic which several scholars have always offered theories in relation to it. The city identity will be meaningful when has been objectively manifested in the physic of the city and in fact the outer body and physic of the city is the symbol of urban identity to the special.

Urban identity is a functional and systematic structure in the city and a discipline in architecture of a city with identity. An identity which is a growth criteria for the city, in other words, when a city or community is developed, a part of its identity traits are changed during the development; and a new organization will be obtained. Urban identity should be discussed in this structure as a criteria for development and a factor to promote environmental quality for providing participation and security fields for individual (conceptual model 1).

Conceptual model 1- Macro abstract model in regard to authentication (Komeili, 2008)

Understanding the identity process (the relationship between human and the body)	Human as identifiers	The body as a subject to identify
Focus, sense, belonging, memory	Language, race, literacy, customs, memory	Natural elements, artificial elements

5.3 Cultural spaces

The space will have identity when from one side to be considered as an independent and objective thing and on the other side as an objective thing for acting and treating in it; and finally the objectivity resulted from its conception can be adapted with our mentalities (Behzadfar, 2007). The most effective factors on sense of place are considered in two groups of meanings and activities. There are identity and beauty in meanings group and social interactions, sense of society and satisfaction in activities level.

Moreover, the quality of relationship and previous experiences are also effective in sense of place. Other factors such as selection quality, the relation with place and personal/social characteristics of users are

also the factors influencing on sense of place (Falihat, 2006, page 7).

Undoubtedly, culture and cultural spaces should be considered as the most important and richest source of identity, in this regard people achieve identity by relying on components and several cultural elements, in other words cultural background also makes differences and coherence in the space (Behzadfar, 2007). Unlike traditional look at development of cultural spaces which is mainly summarized in physical aspect of urban construction, today urban planners' view in development of cultural spaces besides attempting to necessary constructions and continuing construction of cultural collections is based on new definition. This definition emphasizes on the importance of mental and immaterial aspects

of culture element including: commonalities, background, history of the city, people of the city, emotional and mental requirements of citizenships, the role of metropolitan management in constructing culture or development of necessary facilities and preparation in developing public culture. More attention to the immaterial element of urban construction like urban aesthetic and answering to general needs of people such as calmness, sense of security and social respect and individual rights of citizens; and more specific needs like culture and art are some characteristic of this viewpoint. Material and spiritual investment for long-term cultural efficiency and more positive and deeper influence on citizens mentality for further flourishing of the potential forces and macro level of creativity in different generations of society is also a definition of development in cultural spaces. Other important part of development in cultural spaces is attention to cultural roots in all fields including in the scope of urban structures.

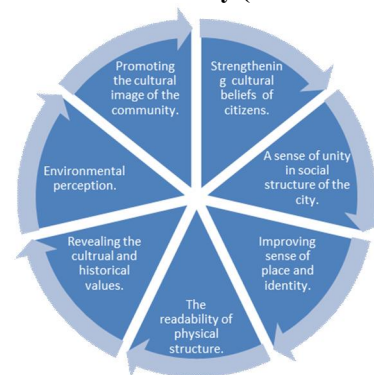
Cultural and physical identity means the descriptions and features that differentiate the body of city identity from general body and reveal this distinction with the issues related to general structure of the city (conceptual model 2).

From social standpoint, cultural spaces are suitable places for the formation of social institutions, promotion of cultural values, development and strengthening of social relations; and safeguarding of human values and national and local identities. The form of cultural spaces in Islamic cities is defined based on meaning and the body of the city gains its identity from this content which influenced by theoretical foundations of Islamic architectural art in which the ratio of format and content like the ratio of spirit and body are also detected in the foundations of worldview. In social standpoint, cultural spaces in the cities are suitable places for the formation of social institutions, promotion of cultural values, development and strengthening of social relations; and safeguarding of human values and national and local identities.

Cultural function of urban space and the ability to respond to cultural needs of citizens cannot be studied just with attitude on special spaces of cultural activities and their type and numbers but requires attention to the interactions of cultural elements and urban spaces in its generality. The related cultural elements are changed along with transformation in social and physical dimensions of urban space and its effective vectors (Rahnamaie and Abbaszadeh, 2011). Cultural spaces can be called as signs which identify different parts of the city that observer cannot find his/her way into it (Rapoport, 1990).

Urban spaces are not only the arena of expression and occurring community culture but also provide the beds for production, cultural consumption and cultural signs exchange; and are also the performer of cultural functions besides economic exchanges. In aesthetic, social, economic and symbolic aspects, cultural functions have an important and lasting impact on the form and function of the cities (Evans, 2001).

Conceptual model 2: Effective dimensions on cultural spaces in urban identity (source: authors)



5.4 Factors for giving urban identity:

The identity of the city should be recognized on the basis of constituents components of that space character; among the components forming the character of a city are: natural, artificial and human components which each of them has its special characters and variables.

Among the variables of these components, the following cases can be pointed:

- Natural components: mountain, river, hill, plain .
- Artificial components: single buildings, road, neighbourhood, square, urban blocks.
- Human components: culture, language, religion, custom, literacy (Behzadfar, 2007).

5.5 Physical-space identity

Physical tissue and place- space structure of the cities form one of the most important dimension of identity in the cities, because the formation of urban physical tissue affected by ideas, beliefs, activities and cultural level of the society. Thus, the recognition of this part of the cities can result in more recognition of other social, economic and cultural dimensions. Actually, physical tissue provides visual recognition of urban identity so has more importance among other urban dimensions.

The most important dimensions are considered in physical identity, briefly are: formation of the city (residential history and the emergence of the city and evolution process over time), physical features and

structure of the city (organization system map, size, density and spatial distribution of urban phenomena), archeological and old places (tombs, fire-temples, the shrines, schools, bridges, cemeteries, buildings, monuments and etc.), access traits (urban and suburban communication network), performance characteristics of the elements and constituent component of physical tissue of the city (recognition of old neighborhoods, tourism axes, open and public areas of the city), demonstration of city architecture and construction (urban facades, construction methods, architectural style, scale and ...), mobility characteristics of the city (the effect of time factor in visual aspects of the city, sound and smell) (Nofel, Kalbadi and Pro Jaffar, 2009).

5.6 The relationship between identity and environment

Environment consists of a set of behavior setting which placed inside each other and have common interfaces. The main elements of these behavioral settings are behavior index pattern and physical environment. After referring to "quality without a name" that cause buildings and cities to be survived, Alexander said that for defining this quality in buildings and cities, the work should be started with understanding these subjects that identity of each space results from continuous frequency of special patterns of the events in that place (Alexander, 2006). Rapoport considers the environment as the result of meaningful communication. In his view the environment can be seen as a series of communication between objects and objects, objects and people, and people and people. They have pattern and structure (Rapoport, 2005).

What blazons a work in public view with or without identity is belonging or not belonging of work to collective and sustainable identity. In this viewpoint, with identity work is a work which its identity is in the line of collective identity, like a historical monument in a historical tissue; and without identity work is a work which its identity is in conflict with collective identity like a modern monument in a historical tissue. An architectural work can be the result of a collective identity (religious, land, racial) or only independent from collective norms expresses character and identity of its own planner and manufacturer (Hojjat, 2005).

Since traditional architecture is the manifestation of sustainability principles which architects and so architecture are formed through it, is known with identity. The principles such as unity, wisdom, honesty, contentment, architecture for dynamic and transient identities come and go in other arts and literature; and leave some works. But mixing identities and in other words without identity is only

considered in architecture due to naming of the work and get together buildings (Hojjat, 2005).

6. Results

Each city in its components and organizational form including social body and behaviors and cultural activities, has some characteristics which determine its identity. So, identity promotion with cultural areas is in fact a type of valuation or quality determination which establishes a full connection between space and person's mental reserves from direct experiences to culture and tradition. In recognition of city identity, architecture of cultural spaces has often similar characteristics, so, in designing the cities it is necessary to organize their spaces through appropriate and coordinate way. Cultural spaces in the cities are the places for holding face to face meetings, political protests or even public celebration, so, include the concepts like citizen participation and civil society.

Civil life or civilization is not also apart from people, their participation and human social relationships but its constructive symbolism is the cultural spaces existed in the cities. The recognition of the quality of impact of the spaces with cultural function in urban identity requires understanding the processes of evolution in the structure of urban space. With designing urban cultural spaces such that environments with identity are made, personal identity of citizenship can be promoted and also the attendance rate of citizenship and their interactions increased.

7. Conclusion

It can be said that architecture and urban construction has a mission to preserve ancient cultural values in its nature and therefore is considered as an element to give identity to cultural structure, as an obligation standardization is seen in the culture and architecture of the world. Human activities in social, cultural and political arenas guarantee the survival of collective life and sense of citizenship which is manifested and developed in the city through cultural spaces. Therefore, it can be stepped in strengthening the cultural spaces to promote urban identity by applying the following cases:

- 1- Maintaining and orienting the cultural spaces in urban structure.
- 2- Strengthening the development in cultural areas of the city through existing cultural spaces.
- 3- Maintaining cultural components and preservation of physical-social security.
- 4- The role of cultural spaces in providing continuity of social physical structure.

- 5- The impact of cultural spaces as the elements for giving identity in urban body.
- 6- Identity construction particularly for new and ancient areas, cities and metropolitans.
- 7- Determining the rights of citizenship to discuss city pattern and cultural structural identity.
- 8- Clear defining of cultural spaces at different scales in various structures.
- 9- Defining of cultural identity in physical context.

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