

THE CONCEPT AND SENSE OF PLACE IN ARCHITECTURE FROM PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

There are different views about the place and its related concepts such as place sense. According to phenomenologists, the place is at a higher level from space and it is regarded as an abstract place. Sense of place means a mental appreciation of environment and the creation of feeling among the viewers in relation to the environment. Therefore, it is necessary to study the concept of place and its sensation and it can help designers in building places with identity and meaning by focusing on place and its related concepts. The purpose of this study is to present a comprehensive understanding of place from the phenomenological viewpoints such as Shulze and thereby it can be able to recognize place variables and the factors playing a role in the creation of place and its sense by considering the phenomenologists' viewpoints and their implied analysis. The results of the study indicated that meaning, performance, and structural characteristics play a significant role to make space alive and change it into place and receive place sense.

Keywords: Phenomenology, Place, Place Sense

INTRODUCTION

Place is where we have a complete perception of the universe and our own existence (Habibi, 2008). From a phenomenological perspective, sense of place means to link a place by understanding the symbols and everyday activities. This feeling could be resulted in the place where individuals are living and expanded as time passing (Relph, 1996). Very broad definitions have been raised in relation to the place. The specific feature of the place considered in this paper is the concept of place from the perspective of Schultz phenomenology, its features and distinction to the space. This study aims to identify the concept of place and its sense and understanding its features to create a sense of place and a good place in architecture and urban development today. This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What elements are needed to provide a place got out of the space so that it could have the characteristics of the place?
2. What are the constituent and effective elements in creating a sense of place, which can contribute to environmental design?

Many researchers have conducted extensive researches on the concept of place and sometimes the problem of man-made features and were trying to adapt them to the today's urban issues (Habibi, 2008; Purmand, 2010). Some researchers studied the Heidegger's views and features as one of the phenomenology indices. This article aims to extract the features of a place and its concept from Schultz (as a phenomenologist - architect) point of view, and to take effective actions to improve the architectural space and turn it into a place. As quality of space and the way to design affect sense of place, this study aims to identify the constituent elements of a sense of place and to direct designers to create a more dynamic environment. The research method in this study is analytical. As phenomenologists describe and avoid explaining they try to extract and analyze the elements in the experts' comments in order to promote the space and turn it into a place, and also to take major steps to identify elements of a sense of place.

Place Phenomenon

According to Oxford Dictionary of Geography, the word "place" is defined as a specific point on the earth identifiable for a location in which human values were formed and grown. According to Webster's

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Dictionary of English, in addition to the geographical concept place refers to the placement of individuals in society and in certain areas (social aspects of space). Place is part of space with specific value and meaning (MadaniPoor, 2000). Afsharnaderi (1998) thought that place is the result of interaction of the three components: 1) human behaviors, 2) concepts, 3) physical features.

Architecting responsibility is to change a space into a place which means to turn potential content into actual content which according to Afsharnaderi, designing the Compidoliosquare in Rome by MichaelAnj was fulfilling potential value and feeling located in the Hill. Place is a combination of human and natural order, in which identity, home, and community are the basic concepts (Relph, 1996). According to Relph's view, the spirit of a place depends on the perception of deep space due to the occurrence and formation of memories during specific time. The spirit of a place is something beyond physical structure of a place and individuals understand it because of conceptual, individual, and collective memories and also associations which have been created for them (Habibi, 2008).

Place in Schultz Theory

Schultz has presented his ideas about architecture and in general about "bio- location centers" based on the ideas of people like Husserl and Heidegger. He refers to phenomenology of the environment as talking about Phenomenology of Architecture and knows its subject as the nature and structure of the place in relation to the life. In this regard, he pointed out: when something happens, we say the place was. This statement implies that the place or places form the inherent bio – world, so we cannot have our life by one hand and place by another hand, but we should have coherent whole of these two together (Schultz, 2003). According to Schultz, today's individuals without a place led to the loss of identity and, lack of understanding of certain mental picture of environments.

In this regard, he pointed out: In the past, human life was intimately linked with the things and places. Despite the difficulties of life and social injustice, human had a sense of belonging and identity in total. The world was experienced as a universe of quality and meanings. So, the world which created the basis for partnership and cooperation was public (Schultz, 2003). He refers to three main principles about place and its formed mental picture creating meaning and sense in a place:

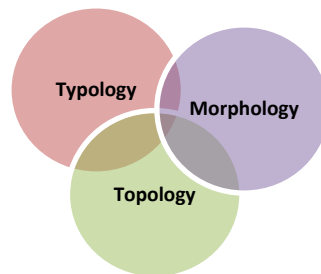


Figure 1: Constitutive elements of place (Source: author)

Typology: it refers to the conceptual architecture and can be done by symbolization in a place which indicates four features in human: mood, understanding, dialogue, being with others.

- **Mood:** This means that the human mind interacts with its environment in a period of time without the need for intermediaries, and this implies the existence of certain features in the environment that people identifies the environment by using them and registers their mental images in their memory. In fact, it is what a man feels from their environment.
- **Understanding:** it implies the perception and understanding the environment through diagnosis of the direction and way and to understand the features of their environments. He thinks of the mood and understanding as the signs of the original unity of thought and feeling.

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- Dialogue: it refers to the meaning and connection between people and places and engaging the world of place with the world of human. It means dialogue expresses the identity of places. Based on his view, architecture as part of human conversation reveals the identity of the world often identified by borders.
- Being with others: this refers to the fact human share their world with others which Schultz named it sharing identity with others.

Topology: according to Schultz's point of view, this concept emphasizes on the investigation of the properties and facilities of living space or actual by insisting the designer work on discipline and environment characteristics and utilizing the Gestalt principles and geometry because the properties of a place are specified by things with special features in it. In this context, he refers to entities in nature which are the things of earth including rocks, grass, plants, and waters since everything between heaven and earth should have such attributes and characteristics to be alive and complete (Habibi, 2008).

Morphology: In this regard, he meant how to get and remain in a place, the relationship between inside and outside space (inside and outside dialectic), equality with the environment space, and feeling of being surrounded and central. And the environment could be complete and meaningful through this way and human finds their identity.

Morphology of Place According to Schultz Point of View

As Schultz's perspective, place is a space felt, understood, and associated with memories. Therefore, the feeling towards a place commonly called "Sense of place" is formed in human's feeling and memories. As a result of this view, Schultz calls place a space where human knows their presence. In this regard, Schultz named four characteristics for human by which communicate with the environment (Schultz, 2004).

Topology According to Schultz Point of View

Schultz examined phenomenology of place in "descriptive approach" with landscape words (natural entities) and biological complexes (entities synthetic) and in analytical approach, with the words: space and characters. In relation to the perception of space, principles governing the morphology of space in the form of geometric rules and geometry are Gestalt which reveal the place and make phenomenology of natural places, based on the following five components possible:

- Object: things or objects in the universe;
- Order: the Gestalt principles of geometry;
- Character: special indices of quality in the artificial and natural environment;
- Light : things in the heaven against the earth and gods against the creatures;
- Time: about the historicity of understanding (Purmand *et al.*, 2010).

Morphology According to Schultz Point of View

In analytical approach and based on the morphology of the place, the phenomenology of a place is connected to the concepts of space and the characters investigable in the structure of daily languages. Places are the environment totalities which words such as forests, woodlands, courtyards and streets and squares are used to name them. The concepts like up and down, before and after are in the perspective of space used with prepositions such as in, inside, outside and above. The character of the place comes along with a word probably an adjective which could indicate the nature of a place and a way to authenticate the identity and meaning in architecture and accommodation (Purmand *et al.*, 2010).

As Heidegger said, in spaces resulted in places, distances are called space and in these distances space is present such a pure extension. Expansion and development always make it possible to measure the distance, length, and direction of all things created based on space (Relph, 2000). Relph also believed that a combination of space and time where space is at a time are static and dynamic and thought that space in the world is the same as part of daily experiences of life and human existence is spatial so that it includes features such as distance, direction, continuum, and dissociation as ways of 'being -in- the world "and" poetic life ".

Morphology and Defining Elements of Space According to Schultz Point of View

In the phenomenological approach, space has distinct definable components including the "dialectic of inside and outside, and spatial center, and spatial boundary.

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Morphology, space, and the dialectic of inside and outside: according to Schultz spaces can be distinct from each other through the interaction of inner and outer realms and it can be created in the existence of the floor, walls and ceiling. Simon noted that the walls, floors and ceilings provide conditions to form internal area against external area during this process. However, floor through "up and down", wall through "in and around, and ceiling through "above and bottom" make it possible. Schultz stated that designing from outside to inside and from inside to outside create tensile force that helps to create architecture formed at the confluence of inside and outside of the consumer and initial forces which is different in various cultures (Purmand *et al.*, 2010). So, due to the nature of continuity of Japanese culture, Japanese, instead of rising walls that breaks the connection with nature and creates interior space, build their homes in front of outdoor spaces and nature (Ashihara, 1983). Ettinghausen and Grabarin the book *Islamic Art and Architecture*, called Iranians rotating dome a dome which has an amazing view from outside and is a shelter from the sun and light (Ettinghausen and Grabar, 1999).

Morphology, Space and Realm According to Schultz Point of View

Borders can be the point of separation and rupture of inner and outer spaces which Heidegger calls it not a point but a place where things start to exist (Purmand *et al.*, 2010). Schultz says, traction between center-oriented and centrifugal forces, create any places. As Michael Anj Built Capitonilo square in Rome, found that the contradiction between wide oval or statue of the emperor in the center and expanding its scope and boundary in the square, had main issues (existence world) and give it a tragic sense. He also thought the realm was a key component in the sense of mental imaging of a place which can be seen in the environments with distinct borders and with a certain identity. Realms show an area or region owned by an individual or group specified by physical and graphical symbols such as (walls, fences, and changes in texture and color).

Morphology of Space and Enclosure According to Schultz Point of View

The enclosed space is said to be surrounded by physical or symbolic elements. In other words, if the space was confined in any structures by any methods, an enclosed space would be created and spatial enclosure is considered as the most important component of the identity maker of places. Quality of enclosure space is determined by the eight factors: 1) size, 2) shape, 3) continuity, 4) height, 5) body, 6) flooring, 7) features of the nearby buildings, 8) statues (Hedman and Yazosky, 1991). Quantity of enclosed space is primarily calculated by the distance of watchful eye from confining body height. The best definition for space is the time when it is confined by four vertical walls. Madanipoor stated that the perception of a place as an enclosed space with a static ID is due to the lack of effective mobility and place is a field to show the development of social relations not the quality of a piece of land (Madanipoor, 2000).

Morphology of Space and Centralization According to Schultz Point of View

It is from the center that space expands with a wide degree of continuity and in different directions. The main directions are 1) horizontal centralization, 2) vertical centralization which is actually the earth and sky direction (Shultz, 1996). The need for centralization has prompted the human to imagine the world as a concentrated existence (Bolkhari, 2005). Every place revealed in that meaning can be a center and the essential property of the artifact places is concentration and fence.

Morphology and the Character of the Place According to Schultz Point of View

Character represents a whole or gestalt in which each component functionally depends on the whole. Schultz in the book *“Meaning in Western architecture”* calls characters as qualitative concepts and classified them in three categories: 1) Natural characters (qualities of objects and materials), 2) Spiritual characters (human values and beliefs), 3) Human characters (human interactions and behaviors). Since architecture has a language through meaningful forms, caring to the character of the building or architecture can familiarize us with the spirit and its meaning with natural sources. The tasks of architecture and urbanization are to build and create places with identity, so that without payment to the character of each place, urban environment remains only in the level of abstraction (Purmand *et al.*, 2010). Character determines the nature of the elements of space. In the article *“phenomenon of place”* Schultz believed that each activity needs special places based on specific characters and we can link to a place just through the element “place”. The character of the place is associated with the time so that it can

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be determined with the change of seasons and even the way sun shines. When human settle down, in fact they are placed in a space at the same time and exposed to environmental characteristics accompanied with two psychological functioning, "orientation" and "identification". Accordingly, orientation and identification are considered as essential components in the character of the place (Schultz, 1975).

Morphology, Character, and Perception and Recognition

If a person can be directed in a place without enough diagnosis of the environment, actual sense of belonging to a place also depends on correct diagnosis of the environment and can be a good place to be, direction which makes the character of place. One reason for the sense of alienation and disorientation of contemporary places can be viewed at this point that in today's world, direction is only paid attention and nothing is done in order to identify the environment. Identification means to have friendship feelings with the environment, which turns into the sense of self and psychological dependence and creates emotionally safe feeling and to enjoy the places. In addition to performing better and more efficient in the environment identifying the place creates a sense of belonging to a place, so that enhances our sense of place, sense of personal identity (Purmand *et al.*, 2010). According to Schultz, human identity is dependent on the identification of a place, as identification is the basis of people's sense of belonging to a place, and direction is the only function that makes it possible for him to move in a place. He says, the purpose behind building is to change a site into a place which means to reveal the meanings available in the environment. The structure of a place is not permanent but it does not mean that the sense of a place gets changed or removed. Supporting the sense of a place means to try to make its nature in the new field as our objectivity (Schultz, 1996).

Morphology, Character, and Direction

In order to settle down, human should know where they are and to be aware of how to move in space. In the urbanization, Lynch pointed out to the concepts such as edge, path, node, and sign and thought they were necessary in directing city structures and identifying the places. He supposed that good environmental imagination meets safety and a sense of emotional safety. Therefore, direction is a process in which human is placed in space and time and get the ability to deploy environment. Schultz speaks about vertical characters and descent showing the size of the space from the ancient times. Rappaport thinks social activities are effective in directing the space and direction is in relation to the elements of the physical and the social rules. Le Corbusier refers to the direction as follows: maybe the way could be called the first presence of human which human actions are implemented with (Schultz, 2002).

Sense of Place

Sense of place means people's mental perception from the environment and more or less conscious emotions from their environment, which put the person in the inner relationship with the environment. So that their understanding and feeling link to the context of the meaning and get integrated. This sense is a factor that makes a space become a place with specific emotional and behavioral characteristics for the particular individuals. Besides the sense of place makes you feel comfortable in an environment, it supports public cultural concepts, social and cultural relations of the society in a specific place and remind us of past experience and achievement to the identity (Falihat, 2006).

Sense of Place According to Phenomenology Point of View

According to Phenomenologists, sense of place means a place to link with a place through understanding symbols and daily activities. This feeling can be created in the place the person lives and expanded and developed by passing the time (Relph, 1976). According to Relph, the original meaning of a place is beyond the functions provided by a place, higher than a community that occupies it, and beyond the artificial and material experiences of a place. However, all of these cases are required aspects of a place, but the nature of a place in experiences, from the unconscious attention to the place, identifies a place as a rich and deep center of the world and human existence (Seamon, 1996). In place phenomenological, experience is the most important element in perception. Experience of Phenomenological is meant to cleanse the mind and reach the essence of things due to the porosity of the things through the person which is important in the sense of place (Falihat, 2006). A place is a piece the environment expressed by feelings and it is the feelings that give us a better understanding of the nature of a place. Primary level of

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the sense of a place is to recognize it including being in a place without any attention to its qualities or meanings. A lot of people experience places just during their visits, and their relations to some places are only through some activities. These people do not care exactly to the place itself and experience kind of places which make people not see the real places and not participate in their activities (Relph, 1976). These people have no sense of place and geographically have a sense of alienation.

Perceptual and Cognitive Factors

Sense of place is a complex mixture of meanings, symbols, and the quality that a person or a group percept from space or specific area consciously or unconsciously (Shamai, 1991). Concepts and meanings decoded by person are the factors in creating the sense of place. In this way, the sense of place is not just a feeling or emotion or any other relation to a specific place, but it is a cognitive and structural system by which individuals get a sense of belonging to the issues, people, things, and concepts of a place. In this concept, sense is not meant a stage before perception, but it means affection, stage after understanding. In this way, places make senses different in different people and the role of human’s personality and past experiences to get this sense are effective (Falahat, 2006). Sense of place links the person to the environment so that his perception and feelings get integrated to the semantic field of the environment (Hummon, 1992). Steele believes that sense of place of each environment depends on the individuals’ relationship to that environment. From his point of view:

1. The relationship between humans and places are interactive which means people give positive or negative things to the environment then take them. So people’s activities affect the quality of the environment impact on them.
2. Place imagination is not only physical, but mental or interactive and sense of place as an experience created by combination of a place, behavior, and whatever human gives it. In other words, things people create in a place could not be created without him.
3. Some places have so strong spirit of place that has similar effects on different people (Steele, 1981).

Physical Factors

According to Steele, the most important physical factors influencing the perception and sense of place include size, location, and degree of enclosure, contrast, scale, proportion, human scale, space, texture, color, smell, sound, and visual diversity. He also thinks features such as identity, history, imagination and fantasy, mystery, joy, surprise, security, vitality, and passion cause intensive memory relationship with the place. Salvesen believed that impatience, buildings integrity, and the digital age are considered a threat to the sense of place. In his view, the physical character includes ownership, authenticity, residents and comforts, nature, water, plants, sky, sun, and private and public spaces, components of a place which are effective in creating a place (Salvesen, 2002). According to Lynch, a sense of place is a factor creates a link between human and place and makes unity, and space should also have perceptible identity and should be identifiable, memorable, and obvious to make sense of place (Lynch, 1997). Carmona presents the concepts and sense of place in the table (1).

Table 1: Sense of place and place of Punter and Montgomery, Source: (Carmona, 2006)

Sense of place	Measures
Meaning	Cultural cooperation, cognitive functions, diagnostics and quality assessment
Activities	Utilizing the place, ongoing pavement, ongoing motors, behaviors, patterns, readability, smell and sound
Physical structures	Urban landscape, landscape, permeability, the construction, furniture
Place	Measures
Mental picture	Memory and symbolism, readability and visibility, sensational experiences, psychological communication, personal perception
Activities	Diversity, vitality, live street, watching the people, culture café, traditional- local entertainment, hours of work, activities, attractions, business and economy
Form	Scale, centralism, permeability, signs, created spaces, relations, public spaces

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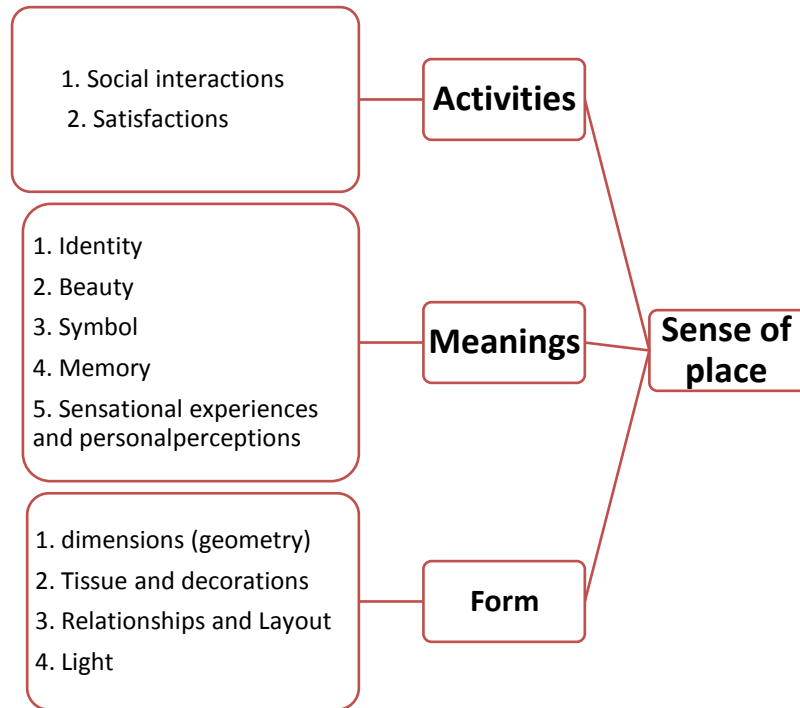


Figure 1: Factors Shaping the place and sense of place in architecture (Source: author)

CONCLUSION

From Schultz’ point of view impressed by Heidegger and Husserl, the following items can be stated:

- According to Schultz, the elements of a place are divided into two categories. first, the elements assumed by independent natural nature such as water, wind, and those gained their existence from human named man-made artifacts. Therefore, the cities and the urban environment involve a combination of both types of entities.
- Schultz’s segmentation is based on analytical approach “Heideggeri an phenomenology” and on “typology, topology and morphology”.
- In the typology, Schultz pointed out four stimulators of human existence including mood, understanding, dialogue, and being with others.
- In the topology, Schultz pointed out the investigation of properties and equipment of living space and emphasis on discipline and the use of geometric and Gestalt principles of the five components (discipline and the use of Gestalt principles and geometry and application of geometric principles, light (sky against the earth) and finally the factor of time (historicity of understanding).
- In relation to the morphology Schultz pointed out the two factors (the space character) which divides the space into the form of sub-factors of inside and outside dialectic, and centralization and spatial enclosure, space borders and walls, and character factors (perception or recognition) and direction.

To achieve the place, Schultz considered meaningful space in which to get there upper levels should be available. He also stated that Lynch’s thoughts (nodes, ways, edges, marks) were efficient in making a place memorable and creating identity in visual discipline in order to qualify man-made artifact environment. He also emphasized activating space in order to turn into a place are directed (Purmand *et al.*, 2010). Schultz thinks that the idea which brings about individuals’ identity depends on owning meaningful places. These signs can be memorable and familiar to people and ultimately, the feelings and space understanding means the place perception. He thinks group activities and participation in space makes the place comfortable. He confirmed the relationship between inside and outside which means caring the features of the environment and considering the elements such as ceilings, walls, and floors which creates inside and organizes outside is the principles.

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Sense of place is affected by mental features and on the other hand affected by the characteristics of objective features. Mental features include memory and symbolism, readability and visibility, sensational experiences, psychological communication, personal perception and objective features that include features such as landscape, design, smell and sound.

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