Placeness and Placelessness in Urban Context: An Overview on Urban Sustainability

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Urban Spaces

To be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and to know your place (Relph, 1976)

- Personal experience is one of the most important factors that construct a place and determine place meanings.
- City space functions actively to influence socio-cultural processes, identities and, indeed, the ways in which the city itself is represented.
- Does the design of streets and neighborhood encourage more people to walk or drive?
Sense of Place

- Urban has appeared in a startling variety of representational forms. The making of urban space is a complex endeavor (Porto and Renne, 2005).
- Urban landscape is a fluid amalgam of settings, events and actions. It involves spatial history, cultural particularities, residents’ lived experiences, daily lives and memories to illustrate the sense of place.
Space in Urban Setting

• Space: It is geometrical and quantifiable.
• Space is what designers illustrated in their drawings.
• Managing space for optimum use is the concern of city authority.

A shopping mall in Nagoya

A small square in CBD of Hiroshima City
Places in Cities

- Place: It is subjective and relational, and generate affective response.
- People located in space but act in a place.
- A space is what it is, but a place is how it is used.
- Place, not space, frames appropriate behavior.
Place and Behavioral Planning

- A place is a space which is invested understandings of behavioral appropriateness, social meaning and cultural expectation.
- What is the difference between out of space and out of place?

A scene of shopping ‘street’ in Banjarmasin
A scene of shopping street in Hanoi.
Place and Behavioral Planning

Chaos

Order
Place and Behavioral Planning

• Are these places appropriate for the children to have sense of control, set their own boundaries, and associate with their own buddies?
Space and Place

• Human experience of a space turns it into a place. Spatial experience are instinctive, bodily and immediate.

An outdoor eating space in Tokyo

A street in Hanoi turns into an eating space.
Studies of People, Space and Place

- Human geography, Environmental psychology and Urban sociology: Emphasize on human experience with urban space resulting to affection, attachment, socio-economic and placelessness.

- Urban design, Architecture, Landscape architecture: Concern on Forms and Functions of urban space, rules and regulations

- Pragmatic, Perceptual, Existential
Urban Spaces

• Components of urban spaces are physical, psychological, economic, political and cultural

• Are these spaces sustainable enough for economic, environmental and social concerns?

Banjarmasin waterfront, South Kalimantan

A street in Manado, North Sulawesi
Urban Spaces

- Urban spaces as becoming, as possibilities, as shifting political formations.
- How well are these communities with the provision of bicycle-way?

A street in Nagoya

A street in Delhi
People and Environment

• Human interactions with an environment are closely intertwined with the social system, culture and hierarchical systems.
• They are interested in shared sense of place derived from collective activities and cultural practices.
• Place meanings and values are influenced by social norms and produced by socio-cultural systems and ideologies.
Familiarity towards Urban Spaces

• Familiarity of a place allows us to understand the structure of a space with an interpretation.
• Space is the opportunity; place is the understood reality (Harrison and Dourish, 1996).
• Place derives from a tension between connectedness and distinction.
Human-environment Bonding in Everyday Landscape

• Understanding of a place requires comprehending the intimate human-environment bonding and larger social-cultural contexts which create the relationship.

• Place: Multifaceted human experience and emotional responses.
Complexity of a Place

• Complexity of a place can be understood through various levels of human interactions with space, a multifaceted human experience (Relph, 1976).
• Place is an experiential landscape.
• If space is a setting open for movement and experience, place is a pause in movement. The construction of place is influenced by new experiential knowledge (Lee, 2009).
New Urbanism and Everyday Urbanism

- But, designers’ major interests lie on physical forms and functions rather than actual people and ways people use and occupy spaces.
- **New Urbanism** emphasizes on regional culture, materials and urban forms without taking account on people, their lived experiences, and socio-cultural contexts.
- As **Everyday Urbanism** is based on a deeper understanding of the interplay between existing people’s landscape experience and environments, the design process better implements the full meaning of the place.
- In turn, the Everyday Urbanism perceives urban spaces as **experiential landscape**.
Design of a Place

- Design should be developed in accordance with the particular characteristics of a specific place, regional materials, and local cultural values.
- Design should strive to create a connect between people and the landscape, as well as building a sense of community.
Place: Visible versus Social

- Designers focus on ‘Visible Place’ rather than ‘Social Place’.
- **Visible place** incorporates particular architectural pattern, physical setting, and spatial composition to design.
- **Social place** is a complex intertwined with individual experience, culture, memory, politics, and many more; an experiential landscape.
Everyday Urbanism Design Forms

1. Enabling form that promotes people interacting with each other,
2. Resilient form that withstands environmental degradation,
3. Impelling form which provides centeredness to bind people together.
4. Orientation and identification are characterized as two most fundamental components which prove one’s existence, establish identity, and building personal bond to environments.
Urban Ecological Processes

• It means whereby spatial distribution of people and activities change.
• They include:
  1. Centralization clustering of economic and service functions.
  2. Concentration tendency of people and activities to cluster together.
  3. Invasion entrance of new kind of people or activity into an area.
  4. Succession completed replacement of one kind of people or activity by another.
Conclusion

• Phenomenology is part of landscape urban design study.
• Urban design should consider place not only as form and function, but as social landscape.
• Place is an experiential landscape.
• Orientation and identification of an individual are components which prove one’s existence, establish identity, and building personal bond to environments.
References

• Lee, Sungkung (2009). Narrated Landscape as Counterweight to Perception of Placelessness in Contemporary Urban Landscape: Re-Visioning Place in Gwangbok-Dong and Nampo-Dong, Busan, South Korea, PhD Dissertation at Uni of Illinois, Urban-Champaign.