

# THE ROLE OF NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY IN CREATING THE SENSE OF ATTACHMENT TO THE PLACE IN THE RESIDENTS OF THE TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL FABRIC OF TEHRAN (A CASE STUDY ON FIVE MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS OF TEHRAN)

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## ABSTRACT

In the modern society, it is necessary to consider the neighborhood identity which plays a critical role in socialization and human-orientation of the urban structure. The social events in residential regions of cities which are known as the urban living cells are very determinant in residents' liveliness. Therefore, the current research studies the neighborhood identity and the sense of attachment in urban residents. This research is a survey study, during which required data were collected using a questionnaire and an interview. After data had been collected and encoded, they were analyzed with statistical softwares. The statistical population of this study includes five municipal districts of Tehran (i.e. Tajrish, Navvab, Moniriyeh, Rahahan and Bahar). Sample size was calculated using the Cochran formula. Thus, 300 people were determined as the statistical population. According to the findings of this study, the age of people is an effective factor on their attachment to their neighborhood identity. Furthermore, those people who are more satisfied with their neighborhood have a stronger attachment to their neighborhood identity and as a result, these neighborhoods are essentially safer. The native inhabitants, compared to the non-natives, have a stronger attachment to the neighborhood identity. Those who have a stronger sense of attachment to the place participate more actively in the activities related to their neighborhood. Residents' attachment to the neighborhood increases by the increase in the safety of the residential areas. Besides, the satisfaction of the urban performance affects on the attachment to the neighborhood identity. This will be effective on the increase in social interactions and liveliness of these neighborhoods.

**Keywords:** *identity, neighborhood, safety, the sense of attachment to the place, social interactions*

## INTRODUCTION

Concurrent with the changes in urban development projects related to the traditional residential fabrics, these parts of cities have attracted the planners' attention due to having the proper factors of identity and social liveliness. Lynch believes that a neighborhood is a wide area which can be identified according to some common and specific features and the person mentally feels entering it (Chapman, 1384 quoted by Azizi, 1385:44). According to these claims, studying the dimensions of the lack of the sense of attachment and identity leads in weakening the concepts depth, attachment and the diversity of the spatial experiences. Place other than the physical dimension, has also the spiritual dimension and creates some kind of feelings in its residents. These feelings bring a kind of attachment to the place in a person which leads in shaping the place identity which is basically considered for urban neighborhoods by the postmodern planners (Rahnama and Razavi, 1391:22). From the distant

past, the residential neighborhoods of the cities as the urban living cells have played an important role in their inhabitants' lives (Ghasemi and Negini, 1389:31).

This research aims at studying different dimensions of the neighborhood identity and analyzing it in five specified neighborhoods of Tehran, Iran. In the globalized life of the modern world, one of the most important questions is related to determining an identity and a sense of attachment to a place or a specific neighborhood. The possibility of creating an identity for different places in the city, especially neighborhoods, is among the significant topics in modern sociology and urban planning. However, it seems that more important issue is the lack of knowledge of individual and collective needs. The matter of gaining knowledge is less noticed in those urban fabrics and spaces in which the design takes place. Thus, the lack of comprehensive and cognitive researches is felt in the studies with the purpose of identification. Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to investigate the neighborhood identity and the sense of attachment to the neighborhood in the residents of Tehran neighborhoods.

Hence, it is assumed that those who are satisfied with their neighborhood have a stronger sense of attachment to their neighborhood identity. Therefore, there is a meaningful relationship between the sense of security and the sense of attachment to the neighborhood. This is an analytical exploratory research and was conducted as a survey research during which the required data were collected through using a questionnaire and an interview. After data had been collected and encoded, they were analyzed with statistical softwares.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Different identities of human beings are considered as the social structures – those meanings and expectations which are defined interactively and culturally- and as some aspects of the formation of themselves and of those structures that show the identity of a person or of a society of people (moren,1391:62).

Places are composed of three dimensions including physical, activity and meaning dimensions. The meaning is associated with the psychological and social aspects of the person which form his imagination. (steadman, 2002) The cultural features are also integrated with the person's emotional imagination and his functional needs and affect on the place identity.

(Rose,1995) divides the theories by the geographers, sociologist and anthropologists into three categories. The first group includes those who consider the sense of place as something natural. These scholars believe that it is one of essential human's needs to have a place to which he has a sense of attachment. This need is sometimes called territorial instinct. The second group includes those who associate the human's sense of place to the substructures of power. These scholars believe that it is the ability of thinking and rethinking that makes the human different from other creatures. They claim that the sense of attachment to a place or to a neighborhood means the active role of human in making his life. This kind of explanation can be called the cultural explanation of the sense of attachment to a place. Thus, from this point of view the sense of attachment to a place can be considered as the human's cultural interpretation of his surrounding world. The third group knows the sense of attachment to a place as a part of identity policy. These scholars focus on the relationship between power and place and analyze the relationship structures between these two. They analyze those structures of the power that bring a special meaning out of minds. The sense of attachment to a place was first operationalized by and (Mc Milan,1986). They introduced a theoretical model for the sense of place which is consists of four parts including membership, influence, unity and meeting the needs, and the common emotional connections. Membership refers to the sense of attachment to a group and is consisted of four parts including emotional security which means the membership criteria prepare a kind of security to protect the group. Attachment and creating an identity include those senses, expectations and beliefs that a person has about his peaceful life in that group and his living place. Individuals' investments is each person's share in building a place and shows the way people affect on each other. Unity and meeting the needs mean that group associations promise a kind of reward for their members. The common emotional connections, based on the common identification of the members, are according to the common past experiences.

The attachment to a place is the development of the principal connections or relationships between the people and special places (Hernandez, 2001). According to Pakzad, that part of each person's personality that creates his personal identity is a place by which that person knows himself and introduces himself to others. He believes that when a person thinks of himself, he finds himself attached to a place where he is living in and he knows that place as a part of himself (Ghasemi and Negini, 1388). The attachment of the inhabitants of a neighborhood to their living place, a memory of the neighborhood which has remained in the inhabitants' minds and the collective memories of the inhabitants are the important elements of the neighborhood identity (Ghasemi and Negini, 1388, Vahida and Negini, 1391).

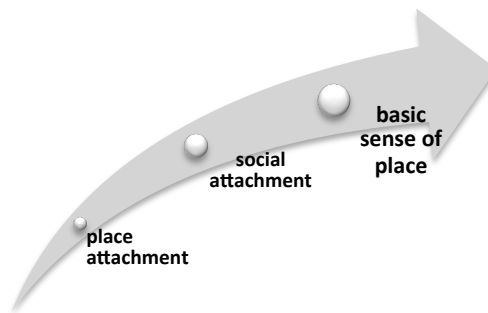
**Table 1-** Summary of the Theoretical Framework

<b>Theory</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Theorist</b>
The identity can be divided into three types: social identity (role identity), situational identity, personal identity	identity	<b>Voriyan (2007)</b>
Places are consisted of three dimensions: physical, activity and meaning	place	<b>Montogemery (1998)</b>
The attachment to a place is the development of the principal connections or relationships between the people and special places	Neighborhood identity	<b>Hernandez (2001)</b>
He offers three groups of theories of the sense of attachment to place: the first group believes that it is a natural sense; the second group considers it as a cultural issue and the third group relates it to the power structure	The sense of attachment to a place	<b>Rose (1995)</b>
They offered a theoretical model for the sense of place which consists of four parts: membership, influence, unity and meeting the needs, and common emotional relationships	The sense of attachment to a place	<b>McMilan (1986)</b>

**Table 2-** Dimensions of the Neighborhood Identity (reference: Vahida and Negini, 1391)

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Dimensions of the Neighborhood Identity</b>
Ghasemi (2004) Behzadfar (2006) Doran (2006) Rafi zadeh (2000) Pakzad (2004)	1. it is encouraged to live in a neighborhood for a long time 2. the meeting and gathering places in the neighborhood are maintained and strengthened 3. the required facilities in the neighborhood are accessible 4. health in the neighborhood 5. problems are not solved by the trustful people in the neighborhood	<b>The sense of attachment to the place</b>
Doran (2006) Rafi zadeh (2000) Pakzad (2004)	1. the probability of criminal behaviors in the neighborhood 2. the level of inhabitants' supervision on general areas 3. inhabitants know each other increasingly	<b>security</b>
Ghasemi (2004) Behzadfar (2006) Doran (2006)	1. inhabitants know each other increasingly 2. the meeting and gathering	<b>Social interactions</b>

Rafi zadeh (2000)	places and collaborative activities in the neighborhood are maintained and strengthened 3. inhabitants' relationship with the cultural, religious and recreational spaces available in the neighborhood 4. the existence of strong connections in the neighborhood	
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**Figure 1-** the levels of formation of the sense of attachment to the neighborhood (reference: Pirbabai and Sajjadzade, 1390)

(simon,1988) conducted a survey study with a sample of 10905 people, in Britain, and studied the personal and social factors of the attachment to the place and to the neighborhood in two levels. According to his findings some factors such as number of meetings, density and duration of meetings are important in the people's attachment to the place. Park , Sanchez prove that the inhabitants of deprived areas, due to having restricted options to chose, have to go back into the specific limitations and like this their social identity is created and organized. This situation can also provide common benefits and strengthen the person's sociability ( Amirkafi, 1383).

(Smith,2011) claims that besides physical factors such as parks and personal factors such as the house ownership and the duration of residence in the neighborhood, the attachment to the neighborhood and social support are the effective factors on the satisfaction with the residence of the inhabitants of urban neighborhoods. According to him, the neighborhood sense, the sense of attachment to friends and family and people's senses about the place they live in affect on the satisfaction.

(Mellor et al,2008) showed that the sense of attachment to the neighborhood will lead in the creation of the neighborhood identity and therefore, inhabitants' satisfaction of the neighborhood increases (Yang et al., 2004). The sense of attachment to the neighborhood strengthens the interconnection between the neighborhood and the human (Gilliro et al., 2010). This interconnection is the one between the person and the physical and social situation (Gilliro et al., 2010, Menarini and Fadi, 2009). Those interactions which are the result of the sense of attachment to the neighborhood increase the idea of neighborhood quality and this also can increase inhabitants' satisfaction (James et al., 2009).

**PSYCHOLOGY  
METHODOLOGY**

This is an analytical exploratory research and was conducted as a survey research during which the required data were collected through using a questionnaire and an interview. After data had been collected and encoded, they were analyzed with statistical softwares.

### STATISTICAL POPULATION

The statistical population of this study includes five municipal districts of Tehran (i.e. Tajrish, Navvab, Moniriyeh, Rahahan and Bahar).

### STATISTICAL SAMPLE

Sample size was calculated using the Cochran formula. Thus, 300 people were determined as the statistical population.

### SAMPLING METHOD

Sampling method is the random cluster sampling. Thus, city was divided into several districts and a few blocks and then some houses in those blocks were selected. The questioner offered the questionnaire to each of selected houses.

### SAMPLING TOOLS

The most appropriate sampling tool in the survey study is the questionnaire. Thus, in the current study the data collection tool is the questionnaire.

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### DESCRIPTIVE DATA

According to results obtained from the age variable, 144 answerers (48 percent) had ages less than 20 years old, 54 answerers (18 percent) were in the age rate between 20 to 30 years old, 53 answerers (17.8 percent) were in the age rate between 30 to 40 years old and 48 answerers (16 percent) had ages more than 40 years old. The highest frequency was observed for the ages less than 20 years old. The results related to the sex variable show that 109 answerers (36.3 percent) were male and 191 answerers (63.7 percent) were female. Thus, female answerers have the highest frequency. The results related to the answerers ethnicity show that 92.7 percent were Turk, 3 percent were Kurd and 4.3 percent were Fars. According to the results obtained from the answerers' residence duration variable, 54 answerers (18 percent) are living in the studied areas less than 10 years, 45 answerers (15 percent) between 10 to 30 years and 192 answerers (67 percent) more than 30 years. The results related to the ownership state of the house showed that 191 answerers (63.7 percent) are the owner of the houses they are living in and 109 answerers (36.3 percent) live in rental houses. According to the results associated with the answerers' birth places, 201 answerers (67 percent) were born in cities and 99 answerers (33 percent) were born in villages.

### ANALYTICAL FINDINGS

In the current study ANOVA tests, T-test and the Pearson correlation coefficient are used. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 1. These results show that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between the main variables (age, sex, ethnicity, residence duration, satisfaction of the residence, birth place, participation in neighborhood activities, the sense of security, satisfaction of the municipal performance) and the dependant variable (neighborhood identity).

**Table 3-** the results of the analytical findings and of the tests on the study hypotheses

Confirmation or rejection of the hypothesis	Significance level	Test value	Test type	Dependant variable	Independent variable	Hypothesis	
confirmed	0.000	R=0.206	Pearson correlation coefficient	The attachment to the neighborhood identity	age	There is a significant relationship between the age and the attachment to the neighborhood identity.	1
confirmed	0.000	T=0.714	T-test	The attachment	sex	There is a significant relationship between the	2

				to the neighborhood identity		sex and the attachment to the neighborhood identity	
Rejected	0.9	F= 0.52	ANOVA	The attachment to the neighborhood identity	ethnicity	There is a significant relationship between the ethnicity and the attachment to the neighborhood identity	3
confirmed	0/000	F= 68.03	ANOVA	The attachment to the neighborhood identity	the birth place	There is a significant relationship between the birth place and the attachment to the neighborhood identity	4
confirmed	0.000	R=0.537	Pearson correlation coefficient	The attachment to the neighborhood identity	Residence duration	There is a significant relationship between the residence duration and the attachment to the neighborhood identity	5
confirmed	0.000	R=0.431	Pearson correlation coefficient	The attachment to the neighborhood identity	The satisfaction of the residence	There is a significant relationship between the satisfaction of the residence and the attachment to the neighborhood identity	6
confirmed	0.000	F=8.024	ANOVA	The attachment to the neighborhood identity	participation in neighborhood activities	There is a significant relationship between the participation in neighborhood activities and the attachment to the neighborhood identity	7
confirmed	0/000	R=2.77	Pearson correlation coefficient	The attachment to the neighborhood identity	the sense of security	There is a significant relationship between the sense of security and the attachment to the neighborhood identity	8
confirmed	0/000	R=0.273	Pearson correlation coefficient	The attachment to the neighborhood identity	the satisfaction of municipal performance	There is a significant relationship between the satisfaction of municipal performance and the attachment to the neighborhood identity	9

**CONCLUSION**

The results obtained from testing the study hypotheses show that the resulted significance level of the age and the neighborhood identity (0.00) indicates that the attachment to the neighborhood identity differs for different people with different ages. Older people have stronger attachment to the neighborhood identity. The same value for the sex and the neighborhood identity implies that the attachment of people to their neighborhood identity is different considering their sexes. Men are more attached to their neighborhood identity compared to women. The significance level of ethnicity and

the neighborhood identity shows that the attachment to the neighborhood does not change significantly for different ethnicities. There is a significant relationship between the birth place and the neighborhood identity. This means that those who were born in cities have a stronger attachment to the neighborhood identity. There is a significant relationship (0.000) between the residence duration and neighborhood identity. Longer the residence duration in a neighborhood is, stronger the inhabitants' attachment to the neighborhood identity will be. The relationship between the satisfaction of the residence and the neighborhood identity is also significant. More satisfied are people with their residences, more attached they will be to the neighborhood identity. There is a significant relationship between participation in neighborhood activities and the neighborhood identity. More involved are people in the neighborhood activities such as participation in neighborhood sport groups, participation in neighborhood councils, participation in celebrities and religious mourning, more attached they will be to the neighborhood identity. The relationship between the sense of security and the neighborhood identity was significant. The findings imply this fact that greater security in the neighborhood increases the sense of attachment to the neighborhood in inhabitants. There is a significant relationship between the satisfaction of the municipal performance and the neighborhood identity. Better performance of the municipal in the neighborhoods will lead in deeper inhabitants' satisfaction and the sense of attachment to the neighborhood will thus increase. Based on the findings of this study, following items are suggested in order to fulfill the aims:

- 1- Establishing local institutions and centers such as the neighborhood house, the neighborhood health care center and etc. in order to improve the cultural identity of the neighborhood inhabitants.
- 2- Offering methods of improving the capacities of the cultural identity and social attachment in order to promote the life quality of inhabitants.
- 3- Studying how the interactions between the governmental organizations and people can form the neighborhood identity and neighborhood attachment.

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