Applying design ideas to promote security of urban spaces

¹*Abbas Yazdanfar, ²Sepideh Ghaemmaghami, ²Paniz Ahmadpour

¹Assistant Professor of Faculty of Architecture, Iran University of Science and Technology, Tehran, Iran.
²M.A. in Architecture, Iran University of Science and Technology, Tehran, Iran

ABSTRACT: Security is one of the most critical factors affecting the quality of urban spaces. Nowadays, most of these spaces have become merely pathways with neither social life nor sense of belonging to it. Insufficiency of public surveillance along with weak sense of control and surveillance results in spaces with high crime rate. In the late 60s and early 70s, high crime statistics in open urban spaces around America and Europe, forced many city planners to provide physical and cultural solutions for it. Sensitive environmental design can simultaneously prevent the occurrence of crime and increase the control and surveillance over the public spaces.

The main purpose of this paper is to achieve the most critical factors enhancing safe urban spaces. The research method is descriptive analysis and is done by comparative study on three outstanding theorists' point of view toward the subject. Research findings identify that crime prevention is largely achieved through applying territoriality, surveillance and social interaction factors in environmental design.

Keywords: Security, Urban Space, Territoriality, Surveillance, Environmental Design.

INTRODUCTION

One of the pivotal design objections is improving the human-made environment and addressing human and environment interactions. Mankind inherently needs to make social connections with other humans and these connections are made in the urban zones. Accordingly Maslow puts social connections and belonging in the third place of his notorious hierarchy of human needs, just after the need for safety. John Lang too believes that if the environment is formed properly, then it can meet human needs such as survival and safety, as motivational needs, and subsequently the need for social connection.

Urban spaces, beside their tangible social, cultural and economical usages, would be useless without the active presence of people. Best urban environments are those which allow social presence while feeling safe and secure, for the citizens. Regarding issues with the urban environments without ecological elements and social potentials in the 60s and 70s and the subsequent impacts such as increase in criminal cases, designers' concerns and attention were attracted to the problem of security and environmental design impacts creation of spaces capable of the aforesaid qualities. A brief glance at the proposed theories it is revealed that those which particularly emphasize on the effective element in the formation of safe urban zones, namely Jane Jacobs (Eyes on Streets), C. R. Jeffery (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design), Oscar Newman (Defensible Space), are of greater significant. A general review and comparison between the aforementioned theories can be helpful in development of social spaces with an obvious safety attribute.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Safe Urban Space

Urban space is but the living space of citizens which is perceived either consciously or unconsciously en route-from the residence to the work place. A city street equipped to handle strangers can make a safety asset, in itself, out of the presence of strangers, as the streets of successful city neighborhoods always do (Jacobs, 1961, 30). The pleasance of a place depends on one hand to being protected against danger and physical injury and on the other hand it depends on psychological protection against insecurity, fear of crime and fear of vehicles transportation (Gehl, 2008, 162).

The idea of safe urban space is defined in contrast with the idea of unsafe urban space. Insecurity phenomenon has two aspects: one is objective and the other is subjective. It encompasses every single aspect of life. Insecurity from an objective perspective includes all insecurity factors such as burglary, murder, violence, etc; and insecurity from a subjective viewpoint leads to a general judgment in terms of regional safety and space. Insecurity is a phenomenon similar to poverty and it can be said that poverty is another introduction to other social disorders such as insecurity, urban violence and so on (Salehi, 2008, 107).

A safe and secure urban space literally includes both aspects of safety (against arson, environmental pollutions, car accidents and other unexpected natural elements) and security (crime against individuals and their properties), then the common surface between these fields can be defined as the safe urban place (Ibid, 112).

✉ *Corresponding Author Email: yazdanfar@iust.ac.ir

Theories
Eyes on streets

The first widely published studies of crime and the environment were done by a group of University of Chicago sociologists (Park, Burgess, Shaw, and McKay). The researchers viewed the social disorganization or lack of community control found in specific inner-city districts as generating high crime rates, which decreased in concentric circles away from the central business district. After the early works of Burgess, Park, Shaw, and McKay, urban planner Jane Jacobs (1961) developed the "eyes on the street" theory. Using personal observation and anecdote, Jacobs suggested that residential crime could be reduced by orienting buildings toward the street, clearly distinguishing public and private domains and placing outdoor spaces in proximity to intensively used areas. Jacobs's book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* gave police and planners the awareness of the value of "eyes on the street" as a crime prevention tool (Atlas, 2008, 53).

"A city street equipped to handle strangers, and to make a safety asset, in itself, out of the presence of strangers, as the streets of successful city neighborhoods always do, must have three main qualities:

First, there must be a clear demarcation between what is public space and what is private space.

Second, there must be eyes upon the street, eyes belonging to those we might call the natural proprietors of the street. The buildings on a street equipped to handle strangers and to insure the safety of both residents and strangers, must be oriented to the street. They cannot turn their backs or blank sides on it and leave it blind.

And third, the sidewalk must have users on it fairly continuously, both to add to the number of effective eyes on the street and to induce the people in buildings along the street to watch the sidewalks in sufficient numbers" (Jacobs, 1961, 35) (Fig.1).

Every single land-use pattern leaves some impacts on cities, and consequently on the urban spaces. Function classifications ushers into the distribution patterns of activities and duly several urban districts and, subsequently, some urban spaces will, concerning their nature and the dominant activities occurring within them, be almost evacuated in certain days, specifically during nights (Salehi, 2008, 68).

Best urban environments are those within which the functions are compounded and a diverse range of activities and professions emerge. In other words, division and segregation of functions and activities are fatal to the urban places. Integration of functions brings about safe and dynamic milieus – be it in the streets or individual buildings. This not only increases stimulation and dynamism in the environment, but also allows unofficial surveillance over the public places (Tibalds, 2003, 54).

Generally speaking one may find Jacobs coinage "Eye on Street" an interesting term. These eyes are installed in the structures with a view on streets and squares and the social behaviors and public security is monitored through them. From her viewpoint crime occurrences in residential areas can be diminished through three considerations: building streets toward streets, clear demarcation between public and private places, and the last, but not the least, providing open spaces just adjacent to the active functions.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

C. R. Jeffery is one of the earliest theoreticians who addressed crime prevention issues by means of environmental design. He, inspired by Jacobs' theories, published an article in 1971 under the title "Crime Prevention through Environmental Design" which is a turning point in the criminology studies. Jeffery's major emphasize regards crime circumstances while the previous hypotheses were stressed on the perpetrator (that is the "criminal").

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a design methodology suggestion based on which architects and civil engineers may contribute to the reduction of delinquency and fear associated with crime via applying proper and purposeful design in the human-build environment and improve the quality of human life, consequently.

In fact this theory of crime prevention through environmental design aims at specification of the crucial circumstances and the social milieu within which there is capacity of crime occurrence or acceleration of delinquency. It also targets beneficial outcomes such as reduction of fear associated with crime (namely increasing the security feelings), improvement of environment aesthetic qualities, increasing law-abidingness among citizens and, particularly, reduction of milieu capabilities to harboring criminal actions (Salehi 2008, 134). CPTED introduced through principal discussions in the scholar studies of Jacobs and Jeffery in the 60s and 70s, further theoretically developed through the hypotheses proposed by scholars such as Elizabeth Wood, Schomo Angel, and Oscar Newman.

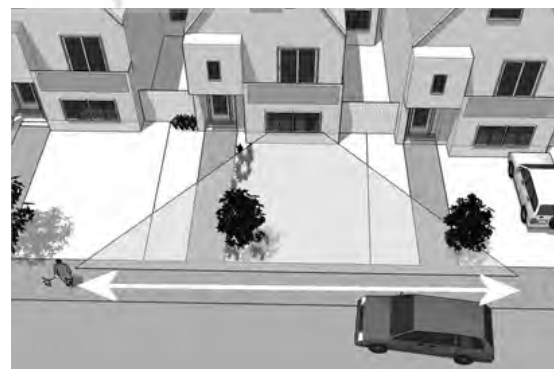There are three overlapping strategies in CPTED: (Crowe, 2000, 36-37).

Fig. 1:Surveillance is when people in their homes can observe the coming and going in the street and the people in the street can observe the homes and front gardens. (Source:Biddulph, 2007, 157)

Natural surveillance
Natural access control
Territorial reinforcement

Natural Surveillance: Surveillance is a design concept directed primarily at keeping intruders under observation. The primary thrust of a surveillance strategy is to facilitate observation and to accomplish the effect of an increased perception of risk. Surveillance strategies are typically classified as organized (e.g., police, patrol) mechanical (e.g., lighting) and natural (e.g., windows). (Crowe, 2000, 36).

Jacobs' theory asserts that monitoring and surveillance of the streets requires eyes, eyes of peoples whom one can refer to as the natural possessors of the streets. In order to achieve this goal first the space must be left exposed. Individuals' presence is one of the strongest monitoring factors. Because this way not only the citizens monitor the milieu but they can, if necessary, also get involved in order to prevent criminal actions. Therefore it stands to reason that we are better off providing and facilitating local residents' presence in the neighborhood street spaces. One of the factors attracting citizens to the street spaces is concentration and establishment of activities pertaining to individuals' daily life in these spaces. Individuals' presence during nightlong is more crucial, then in order to provide nocturnal activities in the local streets some nightlong activities must be devised over there so that they would encourage a part of citizens to stay at the aforesaid spaces in the nights (Pakzad, 2004, 223).

Natural access control: Access control strategies are typically classified as organized (guards), mechanical (locks) and natural (spatial definition). The primary thrust of an access control strategy is to deny access to a crime target and to create a perception of risk in offenders (Crowe, 2000, 36-37).

Accessibility is not only restricted by the economical factors, similar to the physical ones, but it could also be either restricted or eliminated through psychological motives. For instance, fear of peril in certain places or at certain times can restrict the freedom of movement or accessibility for most people or for specific social groups such as the youth, the elderly or the people with certain disabilities (Chapman 2006, 135).

Territorial Reinforcement: Territorial Reinforcement is the belief that physical design can contribute to a sense of ownership and responsibility for a space. Physical design can create or extend a sphere of territorial influence so potential offenders perceive that territorial influence. For example: low walls, landscape and paving patterns to clearly define the space around a unit entry as belonging to (and the responsibility of) the residents of that unit (Crowe, 2000, 36-37).

Ever since Jacobs outlined the basis for territorial control and eyes on the street (Jacobs, 1961) very little has changed with CPTED theory in the past 30 years (Atlas, 2008, 65).

Territoriality is the foundation for all First-Generation CPTED strategies. Access control modifies entranceways and exits so that legitimate users of a space can control access into buildings and neighborhoods. Natural surveillance suggests the same, except it employs sightlines, lighting, landscaping, and design to place eyes on that street. Symbolic signage, hierarchy of space, improving management and maintenance are also strategies to enhance territorial control in a particular area. They help legitimate users take ownership of areas and impinge on the ability of offenders to offend with impunity without notice or fear of capture. They are all opportunity reduction strategies. The definition of CPTED is all about "reducing the opportunity and fear of crime." (Crowe, 2000, 37)

In addition to the three basic classifications mentioned earlier, current CPTED practitioners and security planners also consider the following concepts. (Atlas, 2008, 65)

Management and Maintenance (The "Broken Window" theory): In order for spaces to look well cared for and crime free, they must be maintained to the standard of care that would be appropriate for that building type or use.

Legitimate Activity Support: This involves the appropriate use of building functional spaces, such as recreational facilities and common areas. Activity support fills the area with legitimate users so that any abusers will leave (Fig.2).

In 1998, Saville and Cleveland created Second-Generation CPTED. It expands the theory of First- Generation CPTED by moving beyond the design-affects-crime debate to include social factors. It is beyond the activity support strategy suggested by Newman and Crowe in First-Generation CPTED era. Second-Generation CPTED seizes on Jane Jacobs's (1961) original formulation that a sense of neighborliness and community are at the core of safe streets (Atlas, 2008, 80).

Second-Generation CPTED employs four new strategies-the four Cs:
Social Cohesion
Connectivity
Community Culture
Threshold Capacity

Incorporating the concepts of Second-Generation CPTED to the basics of First-Generation CPTED which lead to Develop and sustain a sense of community and involvement by the legitimate users of the built environment is the best insurance against social detachment, crime inflation, and occupant apathy (Atlas, 2008, 88).

In the end it can be affirmed that the criminological theories were previously given to stress on application of crime reducing means such as increasing the jeopardy for the criminal, diminishing stimulating factors in the milieu and wiping out the criminal behavior causes (by an emphasize on the wrongdoer); while CPTED stresses on reduction of crime
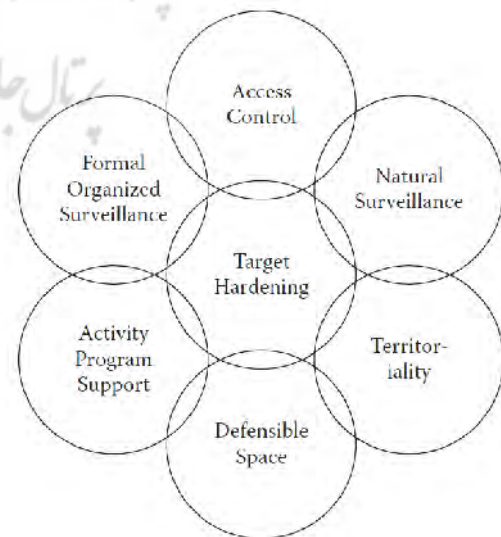

Fig. 2: CPTED interrelationships (Source:Atlas, 2008,59)

capacities through *environment design* and reduction of support for the *criminal behaviors*.

The second generation CPTED, as opposed to the first generation which aimed at improvement of territoriality and increasing surveillance; suggest that by taking into account the cultural, social, and emotional needs of people in the districts with high criminal rates, we can diminish the tendency toward committing delinquency and criminal actions.

Defensible Space

Oscar Newman published his study of CPTED in residential areas (1971, 1973) and how the architecture contributes to victimization by criminals in his work *Defensible Space, Crime Prevention through Urban Design*. In this work, Newman explored the concepts of human territoriality, natural surveillance, and the modification of existing structures to effectively reduce crime (Atlas, 2008, 56) (Fig.3).

Dividing a neighborhood into smaller vicinities encourages individuals to interact more with their neighbor fellows. While parents control their children at play in calm and tranquil street spaces, they can meet and get acquainted with other neighbor residents. People living in such an atmosphere would not feel confined to their homes at all (Newman 1996, 54).

All Defensible Space programs have a common purpose: They restructure the physical layout of communities to allow residents to control the areas around their homes. This includes the streets and grounds outside their buildings and the lobbies and corridors within them (Newman, 1996, 15).

The most fascinating finding to come out of the data analysis presented in *Defensible Space* (1972) was the influence of building height and number of units per entry in predicting crime rate. Regardless of the social characteristics of inhabitants, the physical form of housing was shown to play an important role in reducing crime and in assisting residents in controlling behavior in their housing environments (Newman, 1996, 31). Newman believed there is an extensive semipublic space between the public streets and private flat apartments which the residents of each apartment do not have any role in controlling it (Biddulph, 2007, 156). Increase in the populace density can leave either negative or positive impacts on the residents' safety. Concentration of residents on one hand can bring about potential inconveniences and on the other hand it may allow residents' monitoring and control over abnormal social behaviors (Eynifar, 2001).

A family's claim to a territory diminishes proportionally as the number of families who share that claim increases. When the numbers increase, the opportunity for reaching such an implicit understanding diminishes to the point that no usage other than walking through the area is really possible, but any use is permissible. The larger the number of people who share a communal space, the more difficult it is for people to identify it as theirs or to feel they have a right to control or determine the activity taking place within it. It is easier for outsiders to gain access to and linger in the interior areas of a building shared by 24 to 100 families than it is in a building shared by 6 to 12 families (Newman, 1996, 17-18) (Fig.4).

The four components of Newman's study were: (Atlas, 2008, 57)

Defining perceived zones of territorial influence

Providing surveillance opportunities for residents and their guests

Placing residential structures (public areas and entries) close to safe areas

Designing sites and buildings so those occupants are not perceived and stigmatized as vulnerable

Generally, from Newman's viewpoint, physical design of environment can provide space safety through developing a sense of belonging and encouraging the residents to be responsible for their neighborhood and residence. He utilizes lighting, restriction of public accessibility via gates and simple design elements such as fences and other barriers in order to improve the current structure and distinguishing between public, semipublic, semiprivate and private zones.

Defensible space puts the environment under its residents' control through territoriality, providing surveillance possibilities over places capable of criminal actions and improving current structure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The basis for Newman theories may be found in Jacobs' asseverations, but their viewpoints differ to some extents. Jacobs believed in developing integrated and lively neighborhoods within cities, by certain demarcations drawn between public and private zones as well as by the constant presence and surveillance of people over these zones; while Newman stressed on dividing a neighborhood into smaller vicinities in
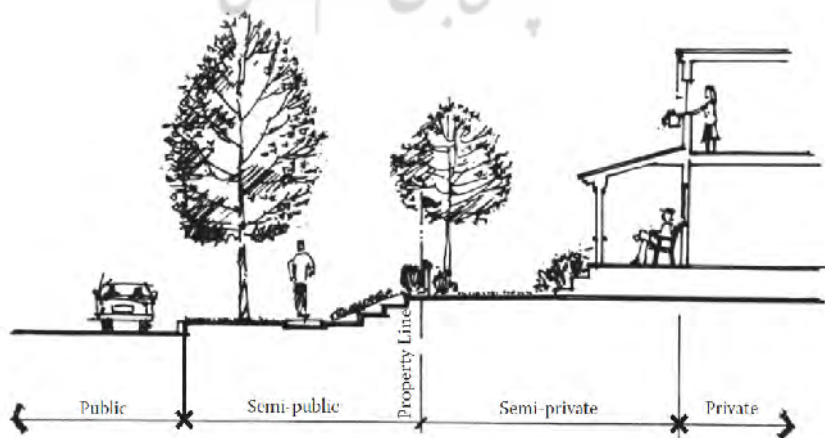

Fig. 3: Section showing the territorial layering from street to the residence, public to private space.
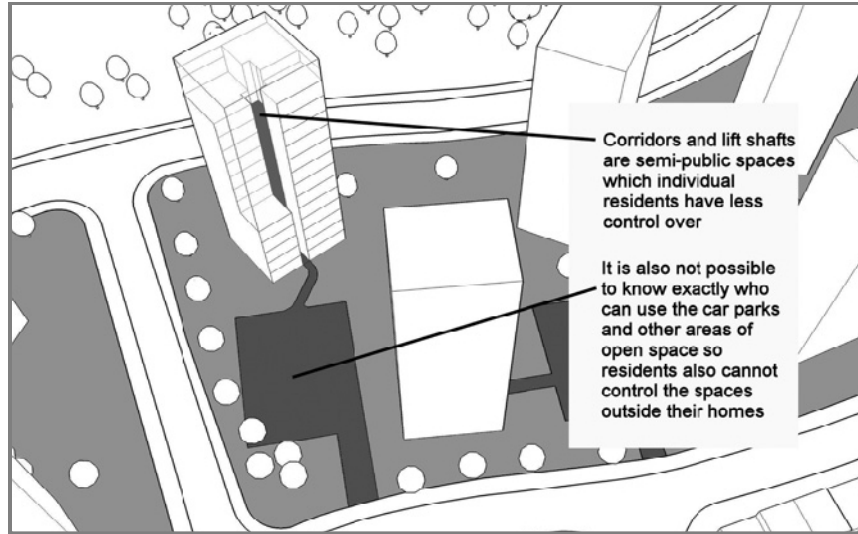
Fig. 4. The shaded areas highlight the lift areas and outdoor spaces that residents don't feel that they have much control over. (Source:Biddulph, 2007, 156)

order to obtain more control over these spaces. Jacobs, contrary to Newman's idea of designing a gate for each vicinity unit which could restrict natural population flaw into the neighborhoods; believed that providing lively and safe sidewalks, while being watched by the way, is necessary. First generation CPTED, which is closer to Newman's approach, reduces crime and violence through environment design and diminishing support for the criminal behaviors. Both of these viewpoints bring about a safe milieu and reduce environment vulnerability via surveillance, access control and territoriality. The second generation, as opposed to the first one, refers to the values introduced by Jacobs and considers social cohesion and meeting people's cultural needs as the vital factor in urban spaces safety.

CONCLUSION

In the present era finding a space with a safe and secure context for children's play and a comfortable and cozy place for the elderly to spend time, may rarely happen. Public zones are deprived of their functional property and are degraded to the passages through which people hastily pass by in order to get to their destinations. Providing proper contexts for social interactions within which the people presence is associated with calmness, safety and belonging,

is fairly possible through environment design- which is a pivotal means for developing suchlike neighborly, perceivable and safe spaces.

Jane Jacobs, accordingly, in her theory of "Eyes on Streets" provides definitions of public and private zones and boundaries between them, for improving territoriality and building structures towards the streets in order to increase control and watch; CPTED theory aims at development of certain spaces through environment design and increase of cohesion and social interaction in order to reduce crime capacity while Oscar Newman in his theory of the defensible space stresses on providing of space safety by means of developing and strengthening possession, belonging and responsibility in the residents which is achievable, as he asserts, through improving the structure of living spaces, access control and population presence in the public zones.

In the end the criteria providing safety in urban spaces, according to the viewpoints discussed above, can be listed respectively as follows in the Table1:

The ability to design a quality environment in definition of public and private zones, encouraging residents to be present in the public spaces and develop social communications, utilizing natural watch and control without restricting the natural flow of populace and reducing the milieu tendency to

Table 1 : Criteria Providing Safety in Urban Spaces

Territoriality	Demarcation of public and private zones
	Reduction of escape routes for criminals and access control
	Increasing the responsibility and sense of belonging among residents
Surveillance	Building structures towards streets
	Providing open spaces adjacent to the active functions
	Integration of functions and creating a diverse range of activities
Social Interactions	Taking into account the cultural, social and emotional needs of the populace
	Residents' involvement in events and decisions
	Improving neighborly connections and developing friendly relationships

support for criminal acts, are helpful in addressing many issues in terms of prevention or reduction of criminal actions.

REFERENCES

Atlas, R.I. (2008). *21st Century Security and CPTED: Designing for Critical Infrastructure Protection and Crime Prevention*. Florida: Auerbach Publication.

Biddulph, M. (2007). *Introduction to Residential Layout*. Oxford: Elsevier Limited.

Chapman, D. (2006). *Creating Neighbourhoods and Places in the Built Environment*. Translated by: Fariadi, Sh. Tabibian, M. Tehran: Tehran University.

Crowe, T.D. (2000). *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design*. (2nd Edition), Massachusetts: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Eynifar, A. (2001). Human – Environmental Factors Influencing the Design of Residential Communities. *Journal of Fine Arts*, 8, 39-50

Gehl, J. (2008). *Life between Buildings*. Translated by: Shasti, Sh. Tehran: Jahad Publications.

Jacobs, J. (1961). *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House.

Newman, O. (1996). *Creating Defensible Space*. Washington D.C: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban DevelopmentOffice of Policy Development and Research.

Pakzad. J. (1996). What Is Urban Design. *Journal of Abadi*. 25, 30-36.

Pakzad, J. (2004). *Designing Guidelines for Urban Spaces*. Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Tehran: Payam Sima Publications.

Salehi, E. (2008). *Environmental Features of Safe Urban Areas*. Tehran: Study and Research Center of Urbanism and Architecture.

Tibalds, F. (2003). *Making People-Friendly Towns*. Translated by: Ahmadinejad, Mohammad, Isfahan: Khak.

Cultural Spaces and Urban Identity

(Integrating Modern State of the Art in Cultural Spaces)

Behnam Ghasemzadeh

M.A. in Architecture, Islamic Azad University , Tabriz Beranch, Tabriz, Iran

ABSTRACT: Cultural spaces are used to identify urban places. They act as landmarks distinguishing one urban region from the other. Changes in the social-economic and political systems have led to the swallowing up of these spaces by newly established media environments. These media environments have made cities across the world appear uniform without distinct distinguishing features. This study reviews the role of cultural spaces as urban identities. The study also analyses whether it is possible to have cultural spaces which have been developed using the modern state of the art. The study relies on interview conducted through questioners issued via the email to university students and lecturers in selected American universities. The study revealed that it is possible to integrate modernity into cultural spaces. From the data collected, most people would be grateful to have urban spaces which both reflect their culture and technological advancements. The study concluded that although modernity has consumed cultural spaces as urban identities, this could still be reverted through proper artistic designing and position of structures present in the space.

Keywords: *Urban space, Cultural space, Media environment, Media architecture, Media facade, Urban identity.*

INTRODUCTION

Individuals remember or identify a place by distinct features or artefacts, either natural or human created, that they saw or know exists in the place particularly in metropolitan regions. Whether artificial or natural, the distinct features of a place give it an identity. Baris et al. (2009, 724) defines identity as the extent to which a person can recognize or recall a place as being distinct from other places. However, it is hard to find a natural feature in the city which distinguishes it from another city. For this reason, architectural works especially in public and parochial places help give the city an identity distinguishing it from another city. Different cities across the world are distinguished or identified using famous architectural structures, for instance, a person would easily identify Paris using the Eiffel tower, London by the clock tower, New York by statue of liberty and berlin by the Brandenburg gate. To successfully identify a place, the structures have to carry a sentimental or identifying history of the people occupying the city it is used to identify, for instance American freedom represented by statue of liberty. Other than structures, public and parochial spaces for instance the Vietnam veterans' memorial in Washington, DC., and the Oklahoma national memorial are used to identify cities. Dougherty tells, that due to their sentimental quality they carry, these public and parochial spaces reinforce ties and forester solidarity and patriotism (Dougherty, 2006, 5). These spaces reflect the history and hence the culture of the city they are found in, and could thereby be referred as cultural spaces. Other than identifying

a city, cultural sites may be used to identify a section of the city, a street, a building, a church or an ordinary historical site. Regardless of the place they identify, cultural spaces give the culture of a place through important landmarks erected on the spaces thereby giving the place an identity.

Any such cultural space should communicate the history and culture of the people. In addition, it should also be designed in a manner that reflects the age in which it was developed. Modern cultural spaces should thus have features which communicate the history and culture of the region in which they are found and be designed in a design which befits the modern age.

Problem Statement

Cultural spaces have been used for ages to not only to identify metropolitan regions but also to maintain the city's resident's culture by acting as constant reminders of the history of the cities. In the recent past, important land marks have been swallowed by urban media environments. Tscherteu (2011) indicates that today, cities have come to be identified using media architecture such as architectural designed urban screens which are more or less similar in appearance to those in other parts of the city or in other cities. These screens get mounted on existing land marks which bears historical meanings. The screen forms multilayers of the land mark concealing it from the eyes of the people whose interest it is intended to capture.

However, the media facades become more conspicuous than the original land mark due to the presence of animated objects they display. Hiding the original land marks behind the screen

✉ **Corresponding Author Email**: *behnam.ghasemzadeh@yahoo.com*

shreds them off their significance and meaning. This threatens eroding the cultural identities in cities. Despite this, it will be impractical to do away with media environments since they are integral parts of the modern life. There is need therefore to develop a strategy to integrate the media environments in cultural spaces and maintain the message communicated by the spaces.

Aims

This study focus on developing an understanding of how unplanned investments and establishment of media environments impacts the identity of the city they stand in. It will establish the relationship between massive media facades establishment in eroding the urban identities. Armed with this knowledge, the study will recommend steps that need to be taken to preserve the culture and identity of cities. This information will be beneficial to municipal councils while planning the city and giving permits for different ventures. It will also be beneficial to advertising companies who are the major installers of the media architectures in metropolitan regions. They will use this information to develop designs which are favourable and fit to be established in cultural spaces.

Research Objectives

This study seeks to:
Learn the importance of cultural spaces in identifying of urban canters;
Learn the effect of establishing unplanned media environments in the cultural spaces;
Develop a strategy that will help integrate media environments in cultural spaces and maintain the meaning of the spaces.

Research Questions

This study tries to answer the questions:
Is it possible to integrate modernity into the cultural spaces without altering the message the spaces communicate or are intended to communicate?
Has modern media spaces replaced cultural spaces thereby killing urban identities?
Has modern technology eroded the meanings carried by cultural spaces thereby losing the identities of urban places?
Is it possible to have a cultural space which will take into account the demands of the current technological advancement and still communicate the intended message thereby giving an urban centring a unique identity?

Literature Review

Urban spaces are developed and maintained in honour of historical events, a myth or legendary person(s) who has significantly affected the history of the urban centre or region (URBACT[1] Culture members, 2006). The practice of maintain public urban spaces is as ancient as the history of man (Romis, 2007). For instance the ancient Egyptians used to maintain carvings and drawings in special sites such as tombs and shrines to honour their kings and gods. The practice has been passed down the ages. Dougherty indicates that, today urban spaces seem to embody the cities in which they are found giving the history and culture of the cities (Dougherty, 2006, 5). For instance times square in midtown Manhattan, Washington square in Greenwich Village and River walk in San Antonio are some of the places which makes the particular cities they stand in what they are and how they are known.

Urban spaces can be grouped into three distinct classes (Lofland, 1989, 19; Keit, 2010). The first class is the private spaces which are spaces owned and maintained by a primary group which shares intimate ties with the space especially family members. The second class is the parochial spaces which are regarded as neighbourhood spaces and retain a sense of commonality among neighbours and acquaintances who are often involved in interpersonal networks. The last category is the public spaces which are generally inhabited by the general public made up of persons unknown to each other (Lofland). Parochial and public spaces can be regarded as public spaces because they are generally public places often open to any person and carries sentimental history that defines the inhabitants of the region. Dougherty indicates that urban public spaces must provide the users with a sense of attachment and identity both physically and emotionally (Dougherty, 2006). They act as memorials constantly reminding the users of a phenomenon or a quality which identifies and distinguishes them from the other people.

To be regarded as truly a public space, a place must possess a number of qualities. According to Taþkýn et al. (2006) a public space must be accessible by all, used by all and outlast more than one generation. Therefore, a public space must have meaning not only to the users of the age that it was established, but also bears meaning to the future generations. It should stand as an identity for the users across ages (Taþkýn et al., 2006, 2).

Baris et al. (2009, 5) appreciates that urban spaces created through urban designs come along as determining and guiding Parameters with respect to the urban identify. He suggests that having an appropriate design for any urban space helpsit last for more an age and act as a symbol defining the culture of the city for its life time. Padua (2007) says that the design of any public space should reflect the culture of the people as well as the modern practices. His argument suggests that the design of a cultural space should reflect the culture as well as the age during which it is developed.

Baris et al. (2009) say that urban spaces have for long successfully maintained the culture and identity of cities. However, as a result of "rapid urbanization which begun in 1950s and the irregular, unplanned and none-aesthetic structuring process going parallel to creation of stereotype cities… social economic and political changes, urban culture and urban identity generally begun deteriorating". Tscherteu and Tomitsch (2011) also made the same observation while carrying a research on designing of media environments as cultural spaces. According to their report, the media facades and architecture may be used as cultural spaces in urban centres. They indicate that it is possible to have media environments acting as cultural spaces in cities. They conclude that media environments can be used to serve both the purpose of advertising and maintaining the culture and identity of a town.

However, their research falls short of how this may be possible. Existing research findings suggest that it is possible to integrate modernity into cultural spaces and still have them remain aesthetic (Seifert, 2007; Reed, 2005). Although available findings support this position, there is none that suggests how this may be achieved. It is this gap that this research will address.

Conceptual Frame Work

Information from previous works indicates that cultural

spaces have been swallowed up by commercials particularly media spaces. In addition, media spaces have led close to extinction of urban identities. Development in media spaces has been the net effect of technological advancement. It was therefore hypothesised that cultural spaces as urban identities have suffered due to technological development but technologically advanced media spaces can still be established as modern cultural spaces and urban identities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study will adopt a qualitative research model. It will assess the views of the public on the role of media architecture and cultural spaces in maintaining the culture and identity of a particular metropolis. The study relies on interview conducted through questioners issued via the email to university students and lecturers in selected American universities. A survey using questioners will be conducted to collect data for the study. A short questioner with short structured questions will be emailed to the subjects of the study. The subjects will be selected from university students and lecturers in various colleges in different cities in the United States. The inclusion of international students in the survey will be emphasised. This is because, including intentional students will help diversify the scope of the study to include the views of persons from cities outside the United States. This will allow the generalization of the findings to cover more than US metropolis regions. This study was also conducted in 2012. The findings will then be or ganized and ethnologically analysed to make inferences. Basic statistical analysis will be used to help make inferences based on the number of views.

Limitations

This methodology is limiting in that, the survey will be conducted only in a small section of the society who have more or less the same lifestyle; college lifestyle. This limits the input from different environments and from persons with diverse experiences. The study is also limiting in that it uses the views of the immigrants to represent the views of the people in their countries of origin. They immigrants may not effectively reflect the views of the people in their homeland towns since their views may be influenced by their stay in the despotic land.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

All the respondents indicated that their home town had at least one public cultural space maintained and used by the people living in the city (Table1). 80% of these spaces are open to the public and any person may visit them at their own opportune time. Majority of these spaces (93%) are maintained by the municipality and no fee is charged to visit them while only a few are maintained by private organizations such as clubs, companies or government ministries. 6% of the public Cultural spaces are not freely accessible although they are open to the general public. A small maintenance fee is charged to all those who wishes to visit these spaces. All of these spaces are privately held and managed.

The responses indicated that cultural spaces represent a defining historical event which landmarks the current lifestyle and beliefs of the native residents of the area the spaces are located in. 40% of the respondents indicated that symbols of persons, who were central to the happening of the particular event, are the major defining structures in these spaces, 20% identified tombs and tomb related structures to honour those who perished during the given historical event, while the others identified varying structures all carrying symbolic meanings.

In at least 73% of the cultural spaces, especially those maintained by the municipality, there are massive media environments established in the recent past. 75% of the responds indicated that those media environments found in municipality managed cultural spaces do not in any way feature the message intended to be communicated by the spaces they stand on. On the other hand, 50% of those media environments that stands in privately owned and managed cultural spaces reflect the core intent of maintaining the space they are found in. The respondents indicated that given a chance, they would redesign the media environments to reflect the culture and the situation which the space alludes to. By so doing, the media space would become an enhancement to the space rather than a subtraction to its aestheticism.

Respondents indicated that the media environments should be established in cultural spaces since in most of the sites, persons are in no hurry and pays attention to the environment, which is good for advertisements. However, they indicated that such media facades should not be used to conceal important landmarks which carry the history and distinguish one space from the other. Respondents indicated that it should be ensured that the media facades are designed and placed in such a way that viewing them would require viewing of the landmarks rather than viewing them at the expense of the landmarks.

Public cultural places are established in every urban centre to remind the residents of their origin, heritage and who they really are. They allow the residents to gaze back into their past and relive the experiences that distinguishes them from persons in any other part of the world. In so doing, the urban spaces give the people in the region a special culture. Therefore, urban spaces else referred to as cultural spaces, may be used to identify a particular community or region. They stand as identifying features for particular regions in a city or the city at large and the residents in the same.

In the recent past, the quality of cultural spaces as the identity of a region and the culture of the region's residents has been shrinking with the establishment of media architectures, which have no special attachment with the people or the region they stand on. The media facades are only used for advertisement and are strategically positioned to enhance their visibility. In the quest of making them conspicuous, they are often positioned such that they hide the real aestheticism of the spaces in which they are found behind their moving and colourful displays. Their nature and positions turn the attention of the people from the real establishments which have a cultural meaning and aestheticism to what they communicate. This has seen the role of cultural spaces and structures lose their value as identifying features of urban places. It is the opinion of a few that doing away with the media environments may help maintain the aestheticism of the cultural spaces bring them back to the position they originally held as landmarks or urban places. However, such an action will be taking the cities back to ages long passed. If all the media environments were to be done away with, urban places would not carry

Table 1: Profile table indicating the distribution of the respondents, time they last visited the home town and the condition of the most valued cultural space in their home town at the time of their last visit.

Region of origin	Years since last visited home town	Number of respondents	Number of respondents whose city maintained the most esteemed cultural space in their native urban centre during their last visit	Respondents whose most esteemed cultural spaces in the native urban centre had been consumed by media spaces during their last visit	Municipality managed
North America	Less than 1	105	83	22	100
North America	1-5	81	61	20	73
North America	5-10	43	32	11	39
South America	Less than 1	13	10	3	13
South America	1-5	17	14	3	15
South America	5-10	11	8	3	10
South America	More than 10	9	6	3	8
Europe	Less than 1	13	8	5	13
Europe	1-5	5	3	2	4
Europe	5-10	8	4	4	6
Europe	More than 10	14	6	8	13
Asia	Less than 1	11	8	3	9
Asia	1-5	12	9	3	12
Asia	5-10	17	13	4	15
Asia	More than 10	19	11	8	19
Africa	Less than 1	6	5	1	6
Africa	1-5	14	13	1	14
Africa	5-10	5	3	2	5
Africa	More than 10	3	2	1	2
Total		406	299	107	376

any sense of modernity. We would not even know that we are actually in the twenty first century.

An even better solution may be redesigning the media environment. Tscherteu and Tomitsch (2011) argue that it is possible to use media environments as cultural spaces. This study agrees with their position. From the findings, redesigning the media facades so that they resemble or echo the architecture or the culture of represented by the cultural spaces allows them to act as cultural spaces.

For instance, a city clock may be just a clock, it does not have a special meaning, but when constructed in a design which reflects the traditional sunglass, or an object that the native residents of the city used as time indicator, it acts as a cultural space. One such a good example is the clock tower in Westminster, London. The design should also be coupled with the positioning of the media façade. If established in already existing cultural spaces, media architectures should be positioned in such a way that viewing them would act as a reminder of the history and culture of the space for instance placing them in positions where viewing require the defining structures. Media environments established outside cultural spaces should be strategically located. For instance, an advert against speeding and driving under the effect of alcohol should be strategically located in regions popular with accidents.

It is also important to establish modern cultural spaces which echo what an urban centre is renowned of. These spaces should be have explicit designs which tells of the achievements of the city's residents, for instance having media environments embodied within designs such as sports men in towns which are reputed for excellence in sports, wide screens in the form of books acting as identifying symbols for towns renowned for education excellence and high media architectures in the form of a globe for cities which has a prestige of environmental conservation. In addition, these structures should be designed so that they reflect the technological advancement and economic position of the town in the age they are established. These features should be erected in environments which have been developed to match the prevailing social economic conditions.

For instance, it was common to use timber in the construction of structures in urban public spaces in nineteenth century; however, this has become impractical in the twenty first century. Therefore, the design of any cultural site must reflect the social economic as well as history of the region in which it is found. Other than identifying an urban place, cultural spaces should be able to communicate as to when the history of the people they carry dates back to. This is only possible by adopting the right design and using the correct materials. Such design must embrace any advancement in technology and any changes in social-economic and political systems.

CONCLUSION

Technological advancements and changes in social economic and political systems have robed the urban canters off their identity and culture by replacing the identifying cultural spaces with modern media environments. These urban media spaces have significantly contributed to the erosion of meaning of the cultural spaces in urban centres. This has led to the emergence of urban places that cannot be distinguished from the other urban places in any part of the world. It is increasingly becoming hard to identify a city by just looking at its caption. This is because the identifying features have all been consumed or concealed behind newly established technological media environments, which are similar across the globe. However, all is not lost.

Appropriate architectural design of these media environments may help distinguish on urban place from another. Even more interestingly, if they are well designed and positioned, they may have duo services acting as points of advertisements as well as cultural spaces. In the modern world therefore, media facades may become useful as cultural spaces used to identify an urban region and communicate the region's history and culture bas well as for commercial use.

Further study needs to be conducted on the same but narrowing down to distinct urban places. This study should focus on a particular town or groups of towns which share common history and are at the same level of social-economic and political era. This study will help identify precisely what needs to be established in various urban regions. The study should narrow down to finding the most suitable designs of urban cultural spaces and locate the most suitable places where they should be established in various urban centres. It should also develop a strategy of developing the existing cultural spaces so that they embrace the changes that have taken place since they were established. The study should look at the needs and history of the regions of study to come up with conclusive inference.

ENDNOTES
1. URBACT is a Europen exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

REFERENCES
Baris, M. E., Uckac, L., & Uslu, A. (2009). Exploring public perception of urban identity: The case of Ankara, Turkey. *African Journal of Agricultural Research*, 4(8), 724-735.

Dougherty, D. L. (2006). *Embodying the city: Identity and use in urban public space*. Alexandria, Virginia: Virginia State University.

Keit, A. (2010). Arab culture and urban form. *Focus, 7*, 36-45.

Lofland, L. (1989). The morality of urban life: the emergence and continuation of a debate. *Places, 6*(1), 18-23.

Padua, M. G. (2007). Designing an Identity: The Synthesis of a Post-traditional Landscape Vocabulary in Hong Kong. *Landsc, 32*, 225-240.

Reed, P. (2005). *Groundswell: constructing the contemporary landscape*. New York: Museum of Modern Art.

Romis, M. (2007), *Cultural Industries in Latin America and the Caribbean: Challenges and Opportunities*. Washington D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank.

Seifert, M. J. (2007). Culture and urban revitalisation: a harvest document. *Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania*.

Taþkýn, Ö., Güçer, E., ÝnceKompil, E., Durmaz, B., & Can, I. (2006). Transformation of Urban Public Space in Reinventing Local Identity. *42nd IsoCaRP Congress*, (pp. 1-11).

Tscherteu, G & Tscherteu, G. (2011). *Designing urban*

media environments as cultural spaces. Vancouver, BC, Canada: The University of Sydney.

URBACT Culture members. (2006). *Culture and urban regeneration*, URBACT.