

Third-Place: It's Components and Communiqué

¹Safiullah

¹Associate Professor

¹Department of Architecture and Planning

¹Integral University, Lucknow, India

Abstract: This study has been undertaken to investigate and explore about the Built Environment and its component which communicate to users and in ideal condition they set an environment which suits the user and they consider the particular built environment very soothing, reassuring, welcoming, hosting as after to their homes-which has been considered as first place; and their work places- which has been seen as their second place. Such built environment can be considered as 'Third-Place' for the users as Oldenberg says in their theory. Question of setting, the way of communication of these settings and other 'Third-Place' sceneries are hereby explored and investigated with a through critical literature review.

Index Terms – Built Environment, Third-Place, Urban Setting, Sociability, Community, Neighboring.

I. INTRODUCTION

Urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg defined a third place as a place of refuge other than the home or workplace where people can regularly visit and commune with friends, neighbors, co-workers, and even strangers. Oldenburg's (2001) treatise on third places mostly focuses on the social aspects, that a third place is welcoming and comfortable, is visited by regulars, and is a place to meet old friends and make new one. Even while Oldenburg was lamenting the decline of third places, but he has ignored the differences that may occur in developing countries like India where population and other infrastructure are in challenging situation and in consequence cities, streets are either overcrowded or underperforming. Furthermore, the consequence of places in linking the environment to social behaviour has already been elaborated by Canter (1991). This study thus aims to derive the dimensions and role of other built environment attributes for third place designation.

II. BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The term, built environment refers to the human-made surroundings that afford the setting for human activity, ranging in scale from buildings and parks or green places to neighborhoods and cities. In practice the term is used to represent all the factors and stimuluses that have impact on a particular object of study or consideration. In result, when we talk about the suitability of the place, it means the physical setting of so many variables are in better position. The built environment provides the setting by which we live our lives, and impacts on our senses, our emotions, participation in physical activity and community life, our sense of community, and general well-being. Meanings are generated by buildings and spaces, which we 'read' as we pass through them. Places are created and shaped by those in control of resources and with certain interests, which affects our degree of access to, and the way we use, those spaces (Butterworth, 2000)."

The term emerged in the 1980s and came into widespread use in the 1990s. To illustrate the term, built environment is an integral part of a new definition of landscape architecture approved in 2003 by the 'International Federation of Landscape Architects' who are involved in work including planning, design, management, maintenance and monitoring of functional and aesthetic layouts of built environments and, identifying and developing appropriate solutions regarding the quality and use of the built environment in urban, suburban and rural areas.

It is the fact that every built is the result of human need, to meet their most basic needs, people first created tools, harnessed fire, and developed shelter to survive in the wilderness. Once human survival needs became less uncertain; people turned their attention beyond survival and continued to modify the environment at an accelerating rate to make their lives safer and more comfortable, productive, and enjoyable (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Times have changed, change has accelerated, and populations have exploded, but the basic reasons for creating a built environment remain essentially the same as people design and construct tools and products, modify and manipulate space, build structures, plan and shape landscapes and cities, and manage regions and the Earth. We build the things and therefore make important contributions to the built environment; we design and build our lives from one experience to another; based on these experiences, components of the built environment emerge from human needs, thoughts and actions (Safiullah & Sharma , 2017). Sometimes the substances of human actions are grand, and we design and plan quality life experiences for ourselves and others; in other hand, these actions could be short-sighted, creating uncomfortable situation that are less fit for healthy human activities and negatively impact the surrounding environments (Safiullah & Sharma , 2017). Collectively, these products and processes of human creation are called the built environment.

III. CONCEPT OF 'THIRD-PLACE'

In search of a place which is neither home nor work, Oldenburg (1998) coined this term 'Third-Place'. A place to visit in a regular way, without any sense of host or guest, without any fear of hierarchy, with a clear absence of stress, and looking for some type of escape from both the previous places. Escape theme suggest a world of difference between morning coffee in the bungalow and that with the gang at the local bakery. Oldenburg sees the third place which is having another kind of potential to endure the people, motivate them for any kind of stationary, sustained, and lingering over the space. According to definition, the term defines as, public place that hosts the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work (Oldenburg, 1998). In support of third places, and in connection to America's policy of creating safe and sanitized areas, Oldenburg has mentioned ...people then become overly dependent on the first two places – home and work. He argues that these places do not have the capacity to meet the expectations of people and therefore "Multitudes shuffle back and forth between the 'womb' and the 'rat race' in a constricted pattern of daily life that easily generates the familiar desire to 'get away from it all' (Oldenburg, 1998).

The third place serves as a place where they can get away from it all and has explicit physiognomies that extricate it from other places that people visit. It is on neutral ground with no host or hostess, a level place where people are equal, there is lively conversation, the mood is playful, there are regulars who bring it to life, it is easy to get to and the hours are convenient, it has a low profile and can even be called plain, and it is a home away from home for regulars. Oldenburg's (2001) accords on third places mostly focuses on the social aspect, that a third place is welcoming and comfortable, is visited by regulars, and is a place to meet old friends and make new ones.

International acclaimed dramatist, guru, psychologist and trend scout Christina Mikunda draws on his extensive experience of working with marketers, designers and architects to show how to create pleasurable and memorable sensory experiences, slightly differ with the third-place perception; he sees the third place as being staged as a sight-seeing attraction, whereas Oldenburg described plainness as a critical aspect of third places. While plainness was a virtue for Oldenburg because it reduced self-consciousness and pretension, Mikunda argues that some third places can be places that allow people to 'reload themselves with their lifestyle' (Mikunda, 2004). Another perspective to the research on third places by introducing the views of Generation Y students in a developing nation, with a similar lines of Oldenburg neutral ground and no hierarchy, the virtual third place is another generational shift; describe it as a place where individuals may come into contact with new and old friends (Klang & Olson, 1999).

Thus, it could be concluded as the third places are the designation to a space which has an embodied characteristic fostering social activities with a main moto of communication either with themselves or with the other people present over the area. On a neutral ground, with clear absence of host or hostess, having a low-profile aura, and cheerful character supported by physical and environmental structures; third place should demonstrate a lively behaviour in whole.

IV. COMMUNIQUÉ OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND 'THIRD-PLACE' MECHANISMS

4.1 BUILT ENVIRONMENT COMPONENTS AND ITS COMMUNICATION TO USER

Every built form has a unique nature which could be easily perceived by the user and accordingly they prefer to go and enjoy. Now, why this question of selection arises, when this is the ultimate result of their need itself. Actually, this is true that, they prefer or not prefer amongst their own creations but, this happens because the said built patch is satisfying their single parameter either physiological or psychological need (**Error! Reference source not found.**), while the other parameter somehow overlooked. Every element such as line, plane, surface, mass, volume, material and structure has the contribution of their unique identity in formation of physical or visual character in the architecture of any area means, beside the individual building or surrounded space, the arrangement of buildings or surrounded space (architecture) also matters which is being overlooked somehow and affects the usability of area and not being choose by the user; in result, most of our urban spaces / built forms of the Indian cities or either underperforming or over crowded.

The term 'psychological need' which have the number of synonyms as 'user need in context to their psychology'; or the 'environmental-behaviour studies'; or in terms of research, it is called 'environmental psychology'; which is the matter of concern in this research. Environmental psychology is the field of study that examines the interrelationship between environments and human affect, cognition, and behaviour (Bechtel & Churchman, 2002; Gifford, 2007; Stokols & Altman, 1987). It means interrelationship (architecture) of the various components and elements of the built environment is to be taken care of for making the environmental psychology more appealing.

Since the time of Vitruvius thoughts; first century B.C., when he had given the basics for architecture to suits the human behaviour and make more appealing architecture of the environment; so many influencing factors have generated. Amongst that, three basic factors have been recognized which influence the architecture of any region viz a viz Utilitas, Firmitas, and Venustas, or in our language, it is 'Human Behaviour (function)', 'Technology', and 'Aesthetics' (Moore G. T., 1979). As the word has become more complex and the complete griping over all three domains is very difficult, it is obvious to get succeeded with more command over the greater number of domains. It means for better psychological environment; we would have to work on their basic influencing factors which directly interact to the users. Likewise, we can identify the real relationship of the various variables; and their associated functions viz-a-viz circulation flow, proximities between activities, symbolic values of the enclosure, form, its embodied technology, and aesthetics etc., all these turn into the commuters' behaviour, and physical environment.

Broadly speaking, the built environment can be understood as a system of spatial and physical conditions for human activities and the satisfaction of human needs and desires. Whether in the house, at the workplace, or in recreation, people are surrounded by elements of the built environment. Having regarded the reciprocal relationship, the impact of the built environment on its users has evolved into a distinct field of research. Almost 2500 years ago, Hippocrates spoke in his treatise on 'On Airs, Waters and Places' about the importance of the impact of environment on human health (Hippocrates, 2007). While the shaping of the built environment in accordance with the 'sense of place' represented a common practice in the past, technical-technological and socio-economic development altered the possibilities of transforming the natural into the man-made environment, and simultaneously changed mutual influences between built space and its users.

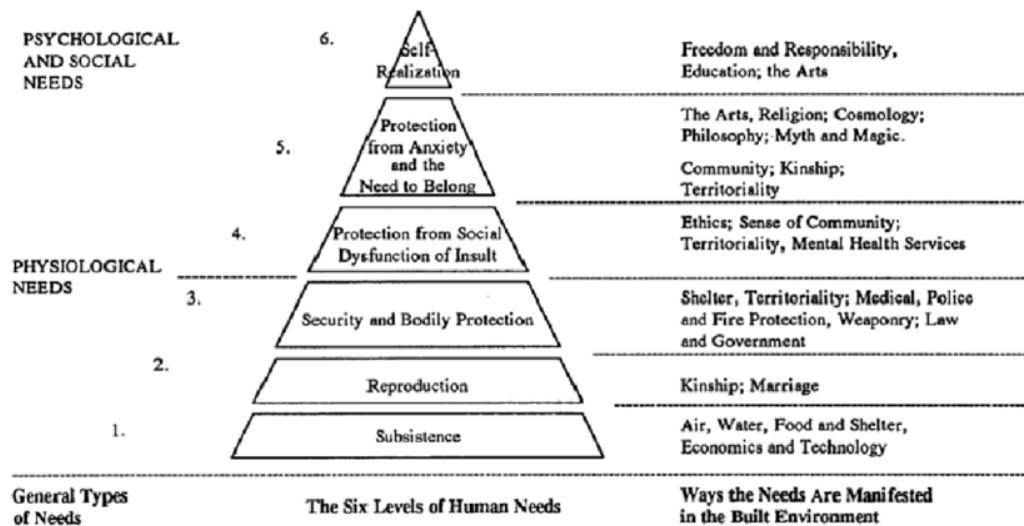


Figure 1 Human Needs and ways they are manifested in the built environment (Bartuska, 2007)

4.2 SOCIABILITY- MEANING AND DIMENSION IN ‘THIRD-PLACE’

Sociability is a term that is widely used in sociology, political science and psychology. Many times, it has been considered as an indicator of the social health of a community (Luhr, 2016). However, there is very little consensus on its actual definition. The concept generally looks at social relations, derived from attitudinal and behavioural aspects in three broad domains of human activities (Bernard, 1999): economic, political and socio-cultural. Researchers define it as interdependence, trust and mutual support among members of society (Jenson, 1998). Although sociability is a characteristic of a group or a society and does not claim for an ideal or maximum limit (Chan, To, & Chan, Reconsidering Social Cohesion: Developing a Definition and Analytical Framework for Empirical Research, 2006). As per Berger-Schmitt (Berger-Schmitt, 2000), social cohesion consists of mainly two dimensions:

- Reduction of inequality, disparity and social exclusion; and
- Strengthening of social relationship, interaction and ties.

Sociability is a key protagonist of public places in cities and neighborhoods. Through the good public places, a better communication and socializing behaviour can be established amongst the residents of the city. Social life has been acknowledged as everything that occurs in public spaces between buildings: sitting, chatting, walking, cycling, running, standing and playing, which form “the life between buildings” (Gehl, 1987). In this sense, public life is translated into the presence of people and residents in their practice of everyday life in the public spaces of cities and neighborhoods. In his book *Life Between Buildings*, Jan Gehl has focused about the qualities of urban life, and how the sociability achieved through the built environment can become a major landing stage.

Qualities that are believed to offer prospects for social interactions in public places comprise the factors that reassure residents to walk or the ones that encourage people to engage in stationary activities. The factors that encourage walking behaviour are density (Amick & Kviz., 1975; Franck & Stevens, 2007; Gehl, 1987; Jacobs J., 1961; Pendola & Gen, 2008; Talen, 1999), human scale development (Amick & Kviz., 1975; Gehl, 1987; Langdon, 1997), mixed land use (Alexander, 1977; Audirac & Shermyen, 1994; Jacobs J., 1961; Mehta, 2007; Montgomery, 1998), easy pedestrian access (Marcus & Francis, 1997; Gehl, 1987; Gehl, 2010; Gehl & Gemzøe, 2004), improvement in condition for cycling (Gehl, 1987), and soft facades (Gehl, 1987).

The qualities that are studied to encourage stationary activities in public places are provision of seats and sitting areas (Gehl, 2010; Gehl & Gemzøe, 2004; Mehta & Bosson, 2010; Mehta, 2007; Whyte, 1980), provision of community gathering places (Lofland & Lofland, 1998; Oldenburg, 2001), improvements in sidewalks and building edges (Mehta, 2006), greenery (Al-Hagla, 2008; Sullivan, Kuo, & Depooter, 2004; Whyte, 1980), and using a fine hierarchy (Chermayeff & Alexander, 1971; Chermayeff & Alexander, 1966).

4.3 SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Sense of community is considered a necessary tool to mitigate most of the social problems and also for the development of a community in urban areas (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Nasar & Julian, 1995). The concept was originally developed in the 1970s. Sarason (1974) defined sense of community as “The perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure” (p. 111). However, the most acceptable definition came after a decade. McMillan and Chavis (1986) defined this concept as a psychological construct, which consists of four elements:

- 4.3.1 Membership is an element that depends on the boundary, emotional safety, sense of belonging, personal investment and common symbolic features.
- 4.3.2 Influence indicates towards a sense of making a difference to a group or being a member adopting something from the group. It helps to fulfil the personal needs as well as the community needs through a member’s influence on the community and the community’s influence on the member, simultaneously.
- 4.3.3 Integration and fulfilment of needs explores one’s need, being part of the group and utilizing its resources.
- 4.3.4 Finally, the fourth element is the shared emotional connection, which involves the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share together, like, history and time, and carry similar experiences.

Places that help shape community attitudes, that provide a continuity from past to present, that may often cater to mundane but essential everyday functions, that help in establishing their community’s identity become significant to the neighbors and achieve a social value and meaning (Lofland & Lofland, 1998; Johnston, 1992). Johnston adds that these are places that “loom large in the daily comings and goings of life” and “are accessible to the public and offer the possibility of repeated use to build up associations and value to the community of users.” Often these are small local businesses or informal community gathering places in the

neighborhood and are what Oldenburg (1998) has termed “third places.” Hester (1993), contends that in neighborhoods these places are usually “public and ambiguously owned private spaces” and among many others, are likely to be favourite spaces, streets, sidewalks, storefronts, alleys, parks, and so on.

4.4 NEIGHBORHOOD COHESION

Whereas psychological sense of community signifies an individual’s psychological feeling in a particular setting, neighborhood cohesion is a group-level phenomenon. Based on the sense of community concept of Sarason (1974), Buckner (1988) developed the concept of neighborhood cohesion claiming the sense of community and neighborhood cohesion as the similar concept. Buckner (1988) identified three components to define neighborhood cohesion:

- 4.4.1 Users’ sense of community felt within the context of the place;
- 4.4.2 Users’ degree of attraction to live and remain in the place (place attachment); and
- 4.4.3 Neighbouring or users’ degree of interaction within the place.

4.5 NEIGHBORING

Unger and Wandersman (1985) defined neighboring as “the social interaction, symbolic interaction, and the attachment of individuals with the people living around them and the place in which they are breathing” (p. 139). This concept (Unger & Wandersman, (1985) of neighboring identified three core components: social (social interaction), cognitive (knowledge and experiences), and affective components (sense of mutual aid, the sense of community and the attachment to a place). However, the concept did not consider any negative aspect. Another concept of neighboring by Skjaeveland et al. (1996) considered both positive and negative aspects of social relations. Their neighboring has four dimensions:

- 4.5.1 Supportive acts of neighbouring combine the concept of the social act and sense of mutual aid (Unger & Wandersman, 1985; McMillan & Chavis, 1986).
- 4.5.2 Neighbourhood attachment is a social psychological process and similar to place attachment that includes place dependence and place identity (Brown, Perkins, & Brown, 2003; Mihaylov & Perkins, 2014). Place attachment, as described by Brown and Perkins (1992) and Scannell and Gifford (2010), is a positively experienced bond between people and place; it develops from the affective, cognitive and behavioural process and depends on characteristics of people and place.
- 4.5.3 Weak social ties or bridging ties refers to ties that develop among neighbours, from frequent face to face contacts and limited shared interests. The weak ties concept is derived from the theory of strength of weak ties of Granovetter (1973).
- 4.5.4 User annoyance measures the dislikes or negative aspect of neighboring that develops among co-users in a relatively consistent neighborhood.

V. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author is grateful and would like to thanks NIT Bhopal and Integral University to provide the library access, resources and all other required technical support to complete this manuscript.

REFERENCES

- [1] Johnston, C. (1992). What is Social Value? Canberra: Australian Heritage commission.
- [2] Jones, P., Boujenko, N., & Marshall, S. (2007). ‘Link’ And ‘Place’: A New Approach to Street Planning and Design. London: Landor Press.
- [3] Jonge, D. D. (1968). Applied Hodology. Landscape, 10-11.
- [4] Kaiser, H. F. (1960). The Application of Electronic Computers to Factor Analysis. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 141-151.
- [5] Kaiser, H. F. (1974). An index of factorial simplicity. Psychometrika, 31-36.
- [6] Kaiser, H. F., & Rice, J. (1974). Little Jiffy, Mark Iv. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 111-117.
- [7] Kweon, B., Sullivan, W., & Wiley, A. (1998). Green Common Spaces and the Social Integration of Inner-City Older Adults. Environment and Behavior, 832-858.
- [8] Lang, J. (1987). Creating Architectural Theory: The role of the behavioral sciences in environmental design. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co.
- [9] Langdon, P. (1997). A Better Place to Live: Reshaping the American Suburb. Massachusetts: Univ of Massachusetts Press.
- [10] Lennard, S. H. (2018, October 09). The Public Realm and the Good City. Retrieved from Making Cities Livable: www.livablecities.org
- [11] Lennard, S. H., & Lennard, H. (1995). Livable cities observed. California : Gondolier Press.
- [12] Liebermann, E. (1984). People’s needs and preferences as the basis of San Francisco’s downtown open space plan. 8th conference of the International Association for the Study of People and Their Physical Surroundings. Berlin.
- [13] Liebermann, E. (1984). People’s needs and preferences as the basis of San Francisco’s downtown open space plan. 8th conference of the International Association for the Study of People and Their Physical Surroundings. Berlin.
- [14] Linday, N. (1978). It all comes down to a comfortable place to sit and watch. Landscape Architecture, 492-497.
- [15] Development of Corporate Open Space in Downtown Los Angeles and San Francisco. Journal of Planning Education and Research, 1-12.
- [16] Low, S. (2000). On the Plaza: The politics of public space and culture. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- [17] Luhr, G. A. (2016). The Effects of Frequency of Social Interaction, Social Cohesion, Age, and the Built Environment on Walking. Portland: Portland State University.
- [18] Lynch, K. (1960). The Image of the City. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- [19] Lynch, K. (1984). Good City Form. Cambridge: MIT Press.

- [20] Maslow, A. H. (1954). The Instinctoid Nature of Basic Needs. *Personality*, 326-347.
- [21] Mehta, V. (2006). *Lively Streets: Exploring the Relationship between Built Environment and Social Behavior*. MD: DRUM.
- [22] Mehta, V. (2007). *Lively Streets: Determining Environmental Characteristics to Support Social Behaviour*. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 165-187.
- [23] Mital, R. (2002). *Evaluation of Residential Streets as Places for People*. New Delhi.
- [24] Moudon, A. V. (1991). *Public Streets for Public Use*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- [25] Moughtin, C. (2016). *Urban Design: Street and Square*. Abingdon, United Kingdom: Routledge.
- [26] Nasar, J. L., & Julian, D. (1995). The Psychological Sense of Community in the Neighborhood. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 178-184.
- [27] National Commission on Urbanisation, I. (1988). *India. National Commission on Urbanisation*. New Delhi: Government of India Press.
- [28] Nellthorp, J., Chintakayala, P., & Wardman, M. (2011). Valuation of Townscape Improvements Using a Two-Level Stated Preference and Priority Ranking Approach. *International Choice Modelling Conference*. Leeds: Institute of Transport Studies, University of Leeds.
- [29] New York City Department of Transportation. (2008). *World Class Streets: Remaking New York City's Public Realm*. New York: NYC DOT.
- [30] Newman, O. (1972). *Defensible Space: People and Design in the Violent City*. New York: Macmillan.
- [31] Oldenburg, R. (1998). *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community*. New York: Marlowe.
- [32] Oldenburg, R. (2001). *Celebrating the Third Place: Inspiring Stories About the Great Good Places at the Heart of Our Communities*. Boston: Da Capo Press.
- [33] O'Rourke, N., Hatcher, L., & Stepanski, E. (2005). *A Step-by-Step Approach to Using SAS for Univariate & Multivariate Statistics*. Cary, NC: SAS Institute.
- [34] Pendola, R., & Gen, S. (2008). Does "Main Street" Promote Sense of Community? A Comparison of San Francisco Neighborhoods. *Environment & Behavior*, 545-574.
- [35] Rayens, M. K., & Hahn, E. (2000). Building Consensus Using the Policy Delphi Method. *Policy, Politics, & Nursing Practice*, 308-315.
- [36] Relph, E. (1976). *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion.
- [37] Rybczynski, W. (1993). The New Downtowns. *Atlantic Monthly*, 98-106.
- [38] Safiullah, & Sharma, A. (2017). Built Environment Psychology A Complex Affair of Buildings and User. *International Journal of Engineering and Technology*, 503-509.
- [39] Safiullah, & Sharma, A. (2017). Setting of Urban Spaces: Human perception from Mediaeval to Modern. *Journal of Advance Research in Dynamical and Control Systems*, 1683-1694.
- [40] Sheldon, R., Heywood, C., Buchanan, P., Ubaka, D., & Horrell, C. (2007). Valuing Urban Realm – Business Cases for Open. *Proceedings of The European Transport Conference*. Leiden: Transportation Research Board (TRB).
- [41] Skjaeveland, O., Gilding, T., & Maeland, J. (1996). A Multidimensional Measure of Neighboring. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 413-435.
- [42] Skjæveland, O. (2001). Effects of Street Parks on Social Interactions Among Neighbors: A Place Perspective. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 131-147.
- [43] Skogan, W., & Maxfield, M. (1981). *Coping with Crime: Individual and neighborhood reactions*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- [44] Southworth, M., & Ben-Joseph, E. (1997). *Streets and the Shaping of Towns and Cities*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- [45] Steele, F. I. (1973). *Physical settings and organization development*. California: Addison-Wesley Longman, Incorporated.
- [46] Neighborhood Spaces. *Environment and Behavior*, 678-700.
- [47] T.Moore, G. (1986). Effects of the spatial definition of behavior settings on children's behavior: A quasi-experimental field study. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 205-231.
- [48] T.Moore, G. (1987). Environment and behaviour research in North America. In D. Stokol, & I. Altman, *Handbook of Environmental Psychology*. New York: John Wiley.
- [49] Talen, E. (1999). Sense of community and neighbourhood form: An assessment of the social doctrine. *Urban Studies*, 1361-1379.
- [50] Tauber, E. (1972). Why do people shop? *Journal of Marketing*, 6-59.
- [51] Thomas, M. (1991). The demise of public space. 209-224: cited in 43rd ISOCARP Congress 2007.
- [52] Tuan, Y.-F. (1977). *Space and place: the perspective of experience*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- [53] Unger, D., & Wandersman, A. (1985). The Importance of Neighbors: The Social, Cognitive, and Affective Components of Neighboring. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 139-169.
- [54] Whyte, W. H. (1980). *The social life of small urban spaces*. Washington, D.C: Conservation Foundation.
- [55] Whyte, W. H. (1988). *City: rediscovering the center*. New York: Doubleday.
- [56] Wicker, A. (1979). *An Introduction to Ecological Psychology*. Monterey, CA: Cole Publishing Company.
- [57] Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.
- [58] Yan W., K. Y. (2005). Simulating Human Behaviour in Built Environments. *Computer Aided Architectural Design Futures* 2005 (pp. 301-310). Vienna: Springer, Dordrecht.