

ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Forming a unique identity derived from cultural values hidden in the collective memories of citizens

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES: The city is not just about appearance. People are present and live with architectural and urban spaces. The changes of Bojnord city after becoming the provincial capital have had many and sometimes destructive effects on the city. The issue of bad identity of cities is not a new one, but how to deal with it, despite the history of the problem, is still unclear. The present research tends to shape the specific identity of Bojnord city based on the cultural values of the city (collective memories and narratives). Therefore, the concept of collective memories of the city has been investigated based on the experiences of residents of Bojnord.

METHODS: The research was carried out using the Grounded Theory method and qualitative paradigm. The participants included 51 people including 32 women and 19 men, residing (as native) in Bojnord. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data.

FINDINGS: According to the findings, the results of the review of the data were inferred in the 6-core categories, 41-Categories, 55-main Concepts, and 156-point (code) in the Maxqda software. Also, "location tagging (Space labeling)" (46.8percent/73 referrals) and "Native Arts and Local Events" (22.4 percent/35 referrals) were identified as the two main categories with the highest frequency of referenced indications. "The history of the city and its structure" (12.3 percent / 19 referrals) and "wall design" (7.7percent/ 12 referrals) are in the next priorities, respectively.

CONCLUSION: Results indicate the urgent need to identify the particular concept of "collective memories" of each city to revitalize cultural value and the individual and social identity of it, over time.

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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era, consideration of values in a period in which "Identity Crisis" has become apparent is considered as an integral part of urban development. Recognizing and identifying the cultural values existing in cities and generalizing them in the form of a particular use and structure that created these values would be a major contributor to the urban development process. Cities with high cultural values may exhibit their culture, history and civilization, and play an important role in improving the image of the city. From a specific point of view of urbanization, the category of identity is, at least for the sake of facilitating the perception of the meaning of the environment, is one of the most important qualitative concepts in human-environmental discussions (Daneshpour, 2004). The idea that cities symbolically relates to values, lifestyles and specific ideas has a long background. The interpretation of the city, the production of new urban imagery and stories, and identification processes, correct our understanding of particular cities (Hobard, 2015). The urban society should be such that citizens in their daily lives achieve unique experiences, like creating artworks. The link between culture and city is not a new idea, as Mumford places the city where the complexity of culture is revealed (Mumford, 1970). Qualitatively, in the contemporary period, the modern city has replaced the old city, and this transformation is a kind of comprehensive Cultural Revolution; whereas, the ancient Iranian city was the center of the historical and ancient Iranian culture and tradition, where the Iranian urban thought has been realized. But the modern city is the origin or source of modern culture or modernity (Fazeli, 2013). In other words, the change in the attitude of man in the world has led to the transformation of identities. The traditional man has searched his identity out of the material world, and a modern man has come to make himself and the world as he wishes. Identity is common in the traditional society and in modern, dispersed and acquired society (Hojjat, 2005). Through the perceptual relation between man and the environment, the environment of meanings and concepts is induced into the minds of men, and thus the values are also reminded and regarded. In the past, Structure inspired the city of Human Scale, Balance and Equivalence and most importantly, spirituality to man, current urban environment, causing insanity,

stress, inconsistency, disproportionality, ugliness and worse of all, is the dominance of materialism and quantity on human life (Naghizadeh, 2002). Since cultural identity is a fundamental feature of human mentality and thought, so this identity and belonging should be reviewed and revised at all levels and ways of improving cultural capacities should be evaluated to improve human quality of life (Rezvani, 2016). Indeed, a city without memory lacks identity, and it also gives the opportunity to grasp and reciprocate the inexhaustible experiences of subsequent generations (Ebrahimi Nezhad and Moghadasian, 2014).

The city of Bojnord, the capital of the North Khorasan province, has undergone significant and quick structural changes, especially in the last decade due to becoming the capital city of the province. Despite the significant development of the city of Bojnord in some aspects, the unpredictable and hasty trend of the city in the worn-out contexts (Especially at the core of the city and the city market), and the lack of attention to the elements forming the mental image of citizens, the collective memories contained in some of these places have been considered Notable. The most important places in the formation of the city's collective memories include: Mirror House Mansion, Besh Qardash complex, Sardar Mofakham Mansion, Sabzeh Meidan complex, Shahid Square, Baba Aman complex, Husseinieh Jajarmi, etc. The lack of proper management of metamorphoses and metamorphosis of urban elements has led to a gradual decline in cultural values. The present study tends to create a "special" identity of the city of Bojnord based on the cultural values of the city Collective Memories (CMs and narratives) to identify the past experiences and achieve identity with the city of Bojnord. Therefore in a few steps, the cultural values of the city were explored with an emphasis on CMs and narratives. Then, with the help of Qualitative Content Analysis and Grounded Theory methods, the concept of CMs is proposed in accordance with the city of Bojnord. Toward this, the main question of the research is that which of the CMs and narratives of the people may be more effective in preserving and enhancing the identity of the city of Bojnord on the basis of cultural values. Therefore, two questions that were intended to provide an adequate response to the original question were considered in the study process. How can cultural values in urban identity be manifested, and how can cultural values help citizens to preserve identity through CMs?

Literature review

The city is not just about appearance. People are present and live with architectural and urban spaces. So they have a sense of belonging to them. In everyday conversations, they talk about them, address them, and even proverbize them in popular culture, creating unique concepts. In this way in the minds of people, a mental image of the city and its components are formed through which the city understands and communicates with it (Massoud and Beygzadeh Shahraki, 2012). Culture has its own values, which these values are represented in ideals, mental images, mental schemas and meanings (Rapoport, 2008). Culture, Structure, and City Identity have an interactive relation with each other; each of which has effect on each other and has implications. City Structure, in addition to the buildings, has a spirit that has emerged from the city's social layers. In addition, since it is a non-verbal communication platform, it induces meanings and concepts to the mind and causes perception of the environment. Indeed, more strength of these meanings in the matter of subject exposure, the decoding and perceptual operations of the environment will be easier. In this regard, referring to Rapoport (2008) point, as the pioneering researcher in the combined study of structure, culture and theology of spaces, in essence, symbols of common social environment and environmental capabilities in the meeting and developing human needs characterize the structural environment as the basis for non-verbal communications - the theoretical literature of research is pre-established. However, since he regards particular importance to behavioral and social values in addition to the implications of the meanings and perceptions (or symbols) of local culture, and acknowledging that the daily lives of urban residents are affected by the process of gaining experience and learning from the urban environment, the discussion of CMs of the city's residents was emphasized by the research. By reviewing the views and studies of researchers in the arena of CMs, the origin, definition, concept and process of analyzing CMs of citizens can be better identified and developed in the present study. Weitz (1972) in his famous book on Aby Warburg's biography, discusses the topic of Social Memory. Warburg pointed out for the first time that familiarity with mythology, literature, history, and social and political life of a particular era are the requirements for the analysis of any artwork. Huyssen (1997) pointed out that Berlin is something like a charter that can concentrate on issues

of urbanization and contemporary architecture, identity and government, memory and forgetfulness. For example, the Berlin Museum is a symbol of collective and general memory, which holds the history of the people (alive or dead). According to Confino (1997), collective memory is the discovery of a common identity that constitutes a social group, a family, or a nation, although its members have different interests and motives. CM creates images of the past for each community. However, a specific time is not chosen from the past to create a difference in society. CM must direct emotions, motivate people to do something; in short, they must become a social-cultural practice. Aby Warburg (1829-1929) used the term "Memory of the Social", although never systematically developed the concept of social memory. French sociologist Halbwachs (1939) was the first who has systematically used the concept of CM. Eyerman (2001) refers to a tragedy of slavery as a CM; a comprehensive reminding that brings people together and prefers them to live in close proximity to one another. Bayliss (2004) explores Ireland's creative planning based on the fundamental role of culture. As part of his work, he quotes from Quinn (1998) that Irish immigrant communities are developing social acts and habits around musical activities; thereby, they create Collective Irish identity. Nowadays, regarding this historical tradition, the music culture of Ireland has flourished at the international level. Yuen (2005) explores the identity of the place in Singapore. He pointed out that the urban landscape is the storage of memories; identity is an important aspect of the planning process, as seek to maintain more buildings to preserve the collective personality and memory of the places. In this situation, the inhabitants of the city, along with memories that are an important part of the collective identity, feel that "this place is theirs" and a great deal of elegance is added to the modern view. In his book with the subject of urban memory (history and forgetting in the modern city), Crinson (2005) pointed to CM as something to be seen from a personalized concept. Lewicka (2008) studied CM in residents of two cities. The existence of an ethnic background is well-known. Misztal (2010) points out in his research that a city with preserved and forgotten memories must be able to adapt to the global community, evolutionary and democratic society. On the subject of CMs, Ryan and Ogilvie (2011) by focusing on values and insights through the photo; Dogan and Sirkeci (2013) by Concluding that when urban

collectable memory is erased from the city, the city's physical and imaginative sources disappears in people's mind; Tighe and Opelt (2016) by doing a research in Asheville, North Carolina on the problem of Collective Memory and Planning as a continuation of the urban heritage renovation; Harolda and Fong (2017) by showing how Collective Memory influences the residential patterns of Jews in Toronto and residential choices and Jein et al., (2017) by concluding that CM is a very selective process in the urban landscap, have conducted various studies which have an effective role in CM theoretical and conceptual advancement. In urban planning, the discussion of CMs has been adopted by the creation and preservation of collective identity, regarding that CMs are the foundation of the "common identity" and the common identity of the reflective CMs. To identify CMs, simply, some researchers concentrate only on a particular topic, for example, only party celebrations and occasions, but it should be noted that these cases alone are not enough. Reviewed studies have shown that the importance of the history of a city is significant in finding common ground among the people of the city. Since the history of the city goes on, the identity of the city is also not fixed. Therefore, in order to avoid differentiation of the future of the city from the past of which, it is necessary to identify the common historical points of the people to be considered in the future planning of the city.

Some of the common points and historical-cultural-social image of a city have a negative side, and others are a positive aspect. CM, which must be preserved, has a selective nature. The people and planners of the city must find out in a constructive intercourse that which memories should be preserved and get objective views. Unrealized CM will be forgotten, and it will not have the cultural-memory transfer values. The current study have been carried out in Bojnord city in 2018-2019. Based on what has been reviewed in theoretical literature, as well as the reviewed researches, it can be said that the experience of the urban environment is a process that is takes place constantly; and the urban experiences that make collectible memories (or individual memories) of cities continue to be the unique identity of a city. It is an identity that differs with the identity of another city. Therefore, the impact of "culture" on the "Structure" of the cities is due to the induction of "cultural values" and its relation with CMs and "identity of the city" was shaped, which will be the main framework of the research. Thus, in the current research, CMs are those memories commonly agreed upon by the public, which reveals the cultural values of a community. Recognizing these memories in cities and displaying them in urban development, in addition to the identification of specific identity areas for the people, play a role in preserving and sustaining the city's identity. CMs occur in urban spaces of the

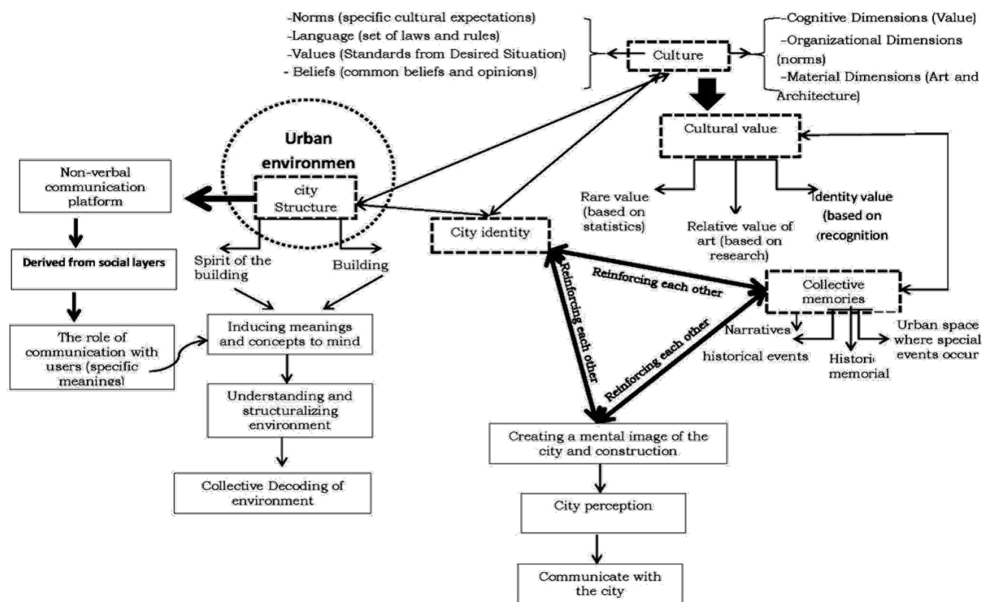


Fig. 1. The Relation between the Main Components of the Research

site of the occurrence of a particular event, historical monuments, narratives, historical events, and mental images of citizens. In the meantime, the mental image of the city bears a more general concept, and memories (individual-collective) and city experience have a direct role in promoting the mental image of citizens. The relation between the main components of the research is presented in Fig. 1.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present applied research is a descriptive-analytical research, and has a qualitative approach. The methodology of Grounded theory has been used to analyze the collected data. "Grounded Theory" is a qualitative research methodology applied to investigate the social processes involved in human interactions (Khankeh *et al.*, 2007: 87). While acknowledging that CMs are not realities outside of humans, but in the mind, knowledge and experience and that they are interpreted and defined through interactions between users of places with the human environment.

Grounded theory begins with a theoretical sensitivity defined as the ability of the researcher to understand points and delicacies in the data (Farasat, 2011). For the first time, Glaser and Strauss (1968), introduced the theory of theoretical sensitivity. The methodology of the grounded theory involves understanding the foundations of it under the "concepts" and "categories". "Concepts" are the fundamental units of data analysis in the field theory. The key points of the extracted data are based on analogy and questioning, for which a "code" is determined. Then the identifiers pointing to the common aspect of a phenomenon are read by comparing the category and under the title "Concept." The "categories" in the grounded theory are more abstract than the concepts, and they are at a higher level. The "Category" is formed of the combination of "Concepts." "Categories" provide the foundations for the development of the theory and provide a means to integrate the theory (Rahimnia *et al.*, 2015. Lak, 2014). Grounded Theory is a method for producing a theory that continuously continues from the beginning of the study to the end.

Data Collection Method (data collection tools)

The initial data of the present study were collected using interviews and field observations. Theological and visual data (cognitive plans) for representing experiences and CMs, relates to the qualitative approach of studies.

Writing the text of the interview and defining the appropriate questions have been considered in such a way that all respondents understand the similarity of the question. It is notable that in an interview, a meaningful dialogue was conducted to grasp the context and factors. All interviews were recorded and then written word by word.

Research Process and Data Analysis Tools

Given that the variables of the study are both quantitative and qualitative; the subjective analysis of citizens was the basis of qualitative analysis in order to extract CMs and narratives derived from their potential cultural values. This qualitative study has applied Grounded Theory.

Statistical Population and Sample Size

The statistical society of the research was the population of Bojnord. In this research, a semi-structured interview is used to access the initial data. Selection of people was based on the length of residence and recognition of the past of the city of Bojnord. Acceptability of Data was analyzed with a variety of methods; continuous review, simultaneous analysis of data and feedback to the research, allocation of sufficient time, and the selection of the main information were observed and reviewed for this purpose. In relation to the credibility and reliability of the data, the data of this study was examined with the participants, associates and field experts. Information from the interview was analyzed at the same time using the continuous comparative method. Open coding, axial and selective coding methods were used for this information. Interviews have taken place face-to-face on the neighborhood level and even participant houses (with the permission of the individual, the sound is recorded.). The age range of interviewees is 17-61, with an average age of 33 years.

Scope of Research

The city of Bojnord is the capital city of North Khorasan province, with longitude of 57.19 degrees and latitude of 37.28 degrees. The scope of the research is shown in the Fig. 2.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Participants in the study included 51 people (63% women and 37% men) who had the living experience in the city of Bojnord (informed persons). The average

age of the participants in the interview was 33 years. In terms of education, 18% had high school diploma or less, 31% had undergraduate degrees (bachelor's degree and associate degree), and finally, 51% had graduate or PhD degrees. It is notable that 43% of respondents were single and 57% were married. In terms of age, the average living age was 15 years and the average age of residence in Bojnord is 25 years. The grounded theory is explained in the field of research and uses the data obtained from observation and interviewing. After the implementation of interviews in the process of analysis and coding, 55 "Concepts" have been extracted in the open coding stage, which are categorized into 41 "Category" and six "core categories." Core categories are: space markings (specific locations), shell and wall design, structural elements - specific functions, native arts and local Events, historical backgrounds and history

of the city and its structure. A total of 156 referrals are referenced in line-through interviews and qualitative analysis of mental image plans. All the extracted factors are first considered as code. Then, regarding the concept of each code, they are categorized in the same concept. In this way, the main categories of research are formed. The basis for categorizing these codes is the degree of similarity of different codes. In Table 1, the core categories, concepts and signs are presented. 156 codes were identified in reference software of Maxqda5. In this regard, taking into account the frequency of a total of 790 codes, extracted with frequency. The process of monitoring the interviews is shown in Fig. 3.

The most important signs taken from the perspective of Bojnord interviewees (shown in table 1) are: Mofakham Mirror House (N=60), Bash Qarshash Promenade (N=36), the word or term of Bijan Yord

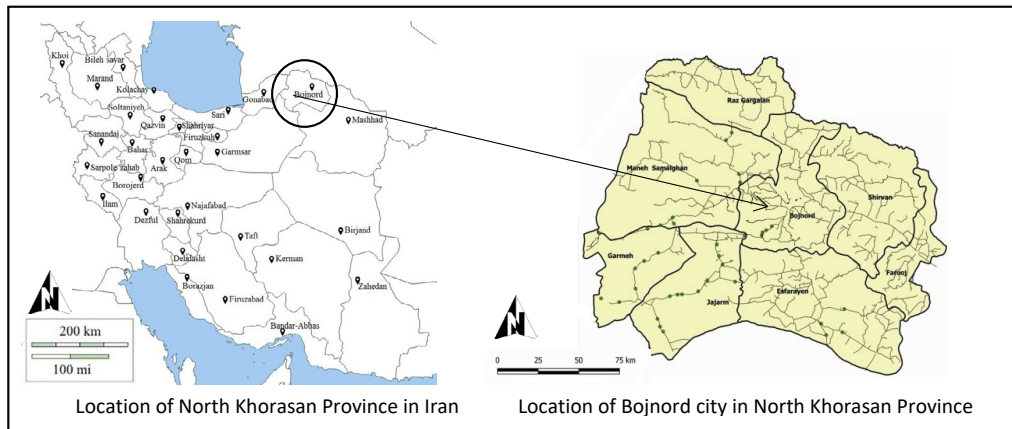


Fig. 2. Location of the city of Bojnord in the country divisions and North Khorasan Province

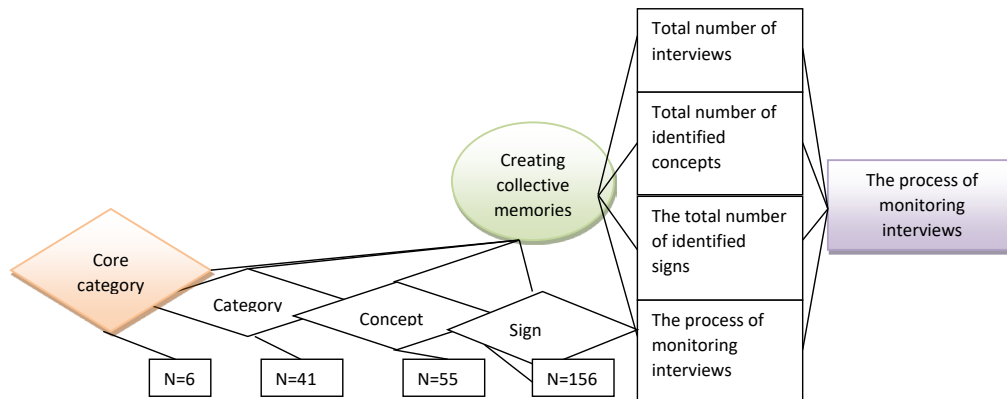


Fig. 3. Interview Monitoring Process (Process Identification of CM in Bojnord)

Table 1. Frequency of extracted codes

Core category	Frequency of codes (symbols)	Relative portion (%)
Space labeling (specific place)	73	46.8
Shell and wall design	12	7.7
Specific functional – structural elements	10	6.4
Native Arts and Local Events	35	22.4
Historical cultures and spatial dependencies	7	4.5
The history of the city and its structure	19	12.2
Total	156	100.0

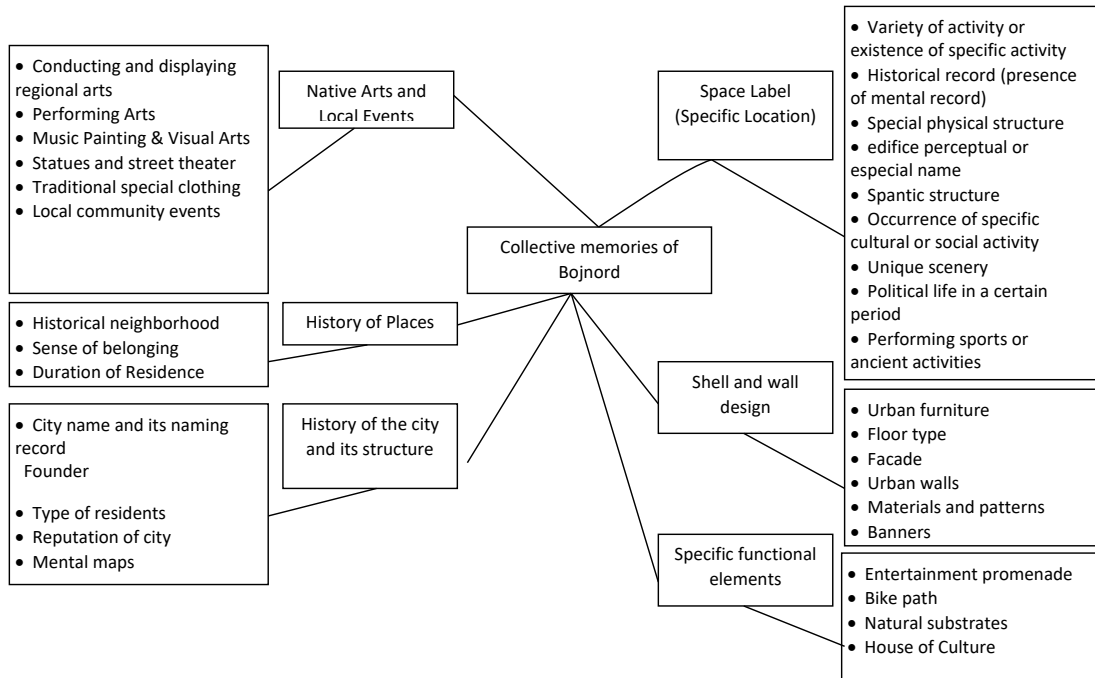


Fig. 4. Core Categories and Main Category in the re-production of the CM concept in Bojnord

(N=34), Sardar Mofakham Mansion (N=29), Sabzeh Meydan Complex (N=26), the phenomenon of new and old views alongside each other (as the citizens, in view of the ever-increasing changes in the development of the city of Bojnord, see these in their minds, and sometimes use them in addresses) (N=24), the phenomenon of the province of North Khorasan (the centrality of the city of Bojnord in 2005) as a turning point in the minds of citizens, the factor that has been mentioned as the source of urban development and consequently the increase of urban facilities (N=24), Shahid Square (city center) (N=23), the sense of belonging to the city and the importance of living in it (N=23)⁶, Baba Aman complex of Bojnord (21N =), the term of Bijangard (N=17), new changes in the city in terms of urban furniture and sidewalks (N=16), local

dance (N=16), local music - traditional and Maghami (N=15), Hosseiniyeh Jajarmi (N=14) and Masoumzadeh Hill (N=14). Among the Core categories, the labeling of space (specific place) is 46.8 percent, and "Native Arts and Local Events" with relative frequency of 22.4%, respectively, are the most referenced and important.

Consequently, the conceptual model and the theoretical framework of the CMs in Bojnord (Fig. 4 and Fig 5) can be inferred. The location of defined Key signs (the ones in the city) is shown in fig. 6 however, the key signes Besh Qardash and Baba Aman, are two Park Complexes, located at the exit of the city towards Mashhad and Tehran. Therefore, planning for cultural values based on the CMs of the citizens, and according to the findings of the present study, should be based on 6 identified Core categories. In fact, Bojnord residents

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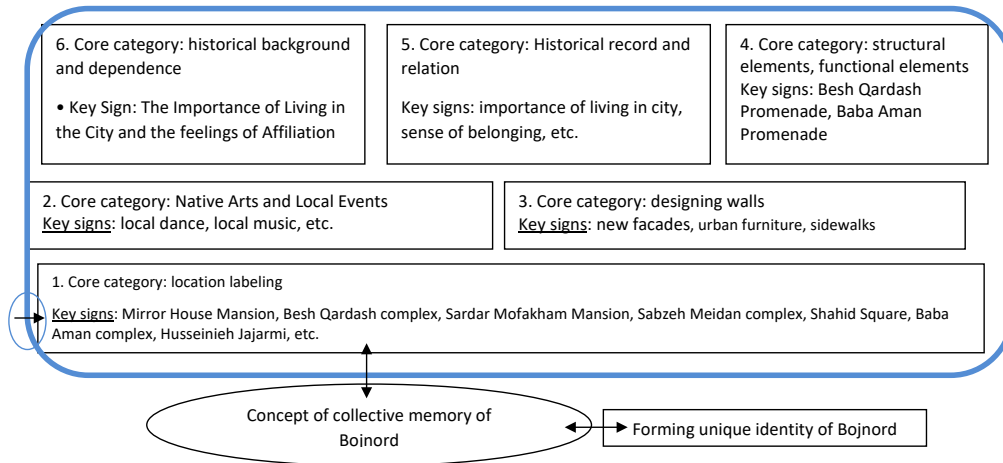


Fig. 5. The most important Core categories identified for extracting the concept of CMs in the city of Bojnord



Fig. 6. The location of defined Key signs in Bojnord city

have most of their memories from these identified categories. Therefore, these categories should have the largest share in the cultural planning of the city. In this case, the unique identity of the city of Bojnord will be formed by emphasizing the CMs of the citizens. Compared to other studies reviewed in the paper, none of them applied the role of collective memory in urban management and planning. However, the reviewed articles are considered important in the theoretical and conceptual development of collective memories (Weitz (1972); Hussen (1997); Coinfo (1997); Lewicka (2008); Misztal (2010)).

CONCLUSION

“Memory”, as an explicit and semantic memory, is one of the most important elements in preserving the experiences of the past generation and the memory of cities. Essentially, a city without memory is a city without identity and CMs have a great contribution to the transfer of cultural values governing society and its continuity. Regarding the “shared” nature of CMs between the inhabitants of a city, these elements can be identified as a symbol of the city’s identity, which is a symbol of the commonalities of a group of human beings. In present study, attempts

were made to identify signs and examples of CMs in Bojnord using 51 semi-structured interviews. In the study process, 156 codes were identified in the referenced Maxqda software. It is noteworthy that some identified codes have several frequencies. In this regard, 790 codes were extracted taking into account the frequency. Among identified codes, exploration and re-production of core concepts, core categories, and main categories were considered based on research background and subject. 6 core categories were identified; in the meantime, core category (in the unstructured category) with 46.8%, the category of the Native Arts and Local Events (in non-structured categories) with 22.4% of the most referenced code have been included in there. Finally, the conceptual model of the CMs in Bojnord can be inferred which will play a significant role in forming the Unique identity the city. Establishing a tangible relation, and consequently a tangible interrelation of society and the city, Potential Identity Symbols can transform a city into the minds of citizens, apart from the monotony of life, into symbols with a dynamic identity. The identity elements of a city, if they are in the process of adapting to the imaginary form, acquired acquisition habits, memory, recollection and successful experience, will have a stronger function in structuring the city's objective and subjective structure. At the same time, if Structure represents the values of the identity of a community, it will also be more successful for the transfer of the city's culture and its cultural effects from one generation to its subsequent generation (the identity element will be identified to humans). The culture of a city is a matter of great concern, to the point where they regard the importance of culture for a community with an allegory such as Memory for the individual. In other words, these cultures are essentially forms of human and social life. From this perspective, identity as a social concept is considered a social structure that is heavily influenced by the culture of society. Culture as the field of all values of the society, the factor of the relation between the different generations experiencing the city and, in other words, the factor that identifies the generations with different experiences of the city, historical periods and in general Memory of the cities. Meanwhile, if the current identity crisis of cities, which is in conflict with the identity of the traditional and modern world, can establish the identity of the cultural values that govern the community, in fact, we keep the memory of the cities, that is to say, preservation and shaping to the unique and native identity of a city which has

been discussed in this research in the codification of the theoretical model and the concept of CMs of citizens in the city of Bojnord. The application of the explanatory model in the management and planning of Bojnord city is accompanied by the following recommendations:

1. Urban planners can design urban development plans more purposefully, considering the variables that are more important such as the elements which remain in the minds of people; if they are regarded in the designs, a stronger structure of the city is formed in the minds of residents. A structure that in some of its development centers represents the emergence of CMs and incidental lives.
2. Regarding the knowledge of the elements and signs of CMs in Bojnord (the findings), case studies may be implemented about the capacity of the general arenas of the city to produce CMs.
3. Regarding the identification of 156 effective signs in the production of CMs in the city of Bojnord, It would be noteworthy if signs are quantitatively prioritized with multi-criteria assessment techniques.
4. Organizing special events and occasions, exhibitions of indigenous products and crafts.

Ultimately, any management, planning and urban design of the city of Bojnord should emphasize on the identity, memory and meaning of urban environments. Improving the quality of the spaces in Bojnord should be done in order to balance the structure between the elements of structural and non-structural identity in the creation of CM of Bojnord. In this case, the set of urban spaces of Bojnord will have unique features; by confronting the values and concepts that exist in other places. This brings a unique identity to the city of Bojnord.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

This article is extracted from a PHD course in Tabriz Islamic Art University. Motalbi, Gh. and Sedaghati, A., designed the model and the computational framework and analyzed the data. Also they carried out the implementation. A.S. performed the calculations and wrote the manuscript with input from all authors. GH.M. and A.S. conceived the study and were in charge of overall direction and planning.

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CONFLICT OF INTREST

The authors declare that this study has no conflict of interests in the publication of this manuscript. So also, the ethical issues were observed and informed consent of the participants were sought with plagiarism check.

ABBREVIATION

CMS	collective memories
CM	collective memory

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