

A Semiotic Approach to the Elements of the Historical Axis of Sepah Street in Qazvin and Reading of its Spatial Identity from a Phenomenological Perspective*

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Received 09 November 2017; Revised 02 February 2018; Accepted 21 May 2018; Available Online 20 June 2020

ABSTRACT

Landmarks are among the outstanding physical elements of urban spaces and play an effective role in forming spatial identity due to their presence in citizens' collective and individual memories. Thus, the process of reading landmarks and studying their different semantic layers can be considered as a valuable tool for assessing urban identity. Given the wide range of components of urban identity, in the present study, it is attempted to use a semiotic and phenomenological approach to the elements of the historical axis of Sepah Street in Qazvin to read landmarks and thereby, sense of identity to space. Since Sepah Street, as the first designed street in Iran since the Safavid era, has an organized physical and conceptual structure, the study of which as one of the elements introducing the city identity is significant. To do this, it is assumed that the semiotic relationship between important and historical landmarks of Sepah Street plays an effective role in reading the spatial identity of the street in citizens' mental and objective perception from a phenomenological perspective. Accordingly, the present study aims to identify the nature of landmarks in Sepah Street in relation to its identity using descriptive-analytical and survey methods. First, using a descriptive-analytical method, the characteristics of landmarks identifying an urban space are identified, and then, through a survey method, the selected components are phenomenologically tested using a research-made questionnaire, interview with citizens and observation of the case study. Then the data are analyzed using a coding method and SPSS 20 software. The results of the present study indicate that there is a significant semiotic relationship between the common phenomenological components of identity and landmarks so that the rich relationships between landmarks, their physical, functional and semantic characteristics and mutual interaction with citizens in the process of perception of street and being stable and memorable in citizens' minds directly play a role in forming the identity of the street and making it perdurable in people's collective and personal memory.

Keywords: Semiotics, Landmark, Phenomenology, Spatial Identity, Historical Axis of Sepah Street in Qazvin.

* This article is an excerpt from the M.A. dissertation by the first author under the title of "Paradise design of the Iranian culture, art and architecture by a phenomenological approach with consideration of semiotics aspects" under the supervision of the second author in architecture department of architecture and urban planning faculty of Islamic Azad University, Qazvin Branch.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Landmarks are one of the components making the identity of urban spaces and play an effective role in citizens' interaction with and perception of space. The present study aims to study the social, cultural and physical dimensions of the landmarks in the Sepah Street in Qazvin with using a semiotic approach to examine the relationship between the characteristics of the landmarks in the historical axis of Sepah Street and citizens' perception, mental image and memory of it and thereby, its identity. About the importance of citizens' perceptions and mental image of the stability and identity of urban spaces, a phenomenological attitude was used to read the identity of place by considering socio-cultural contexts and also the evolutionary relationship in choosing its components with semiotic attitude. First, the criteria of landmarks were collected from a semiotic perspective using a descriptive-analytical method, and then they were phenomenologically matched with the components identifying the place to test the results on a considerable case study considering its context and location in the urban space by using a questionnaire and interviewing with citizens.

2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

In the present study, the available references on the application of phenomenology and semiotics in the field of architecture and in relation to the concept of place were studied. About the application of semiotics in architecture, following references can be mentioned: Hall's books on a topic of space, in one of which semiotics is applied in studying the use of personal and public spaces and the relational function of space is emphasized by relying directly on the behavior of audiences influenced by different human groups' cultures (Hall, 1990), and in another one, the concepts of space and time are discussed as a means of conveying the message influenced by the cultural structures of users (Hall, 1959); Chandler's book on the key issues discussed in semiotics, the analysis of cultural issues by semiotics as well as the breadth of this approach in various fields of art and architecture (Chandler, 2017); Ankerl and Ankerl's book on the relationship of architectural elements and relationships with semiotics, the relationship between identity and spatial position, the expression of spatial features by relying on the paradigms of semiotics and linguistics in the geometric and morphological features of space (Ankerl & Ankerl, 2013); Eco's article on the role of conceptual aspects in the performance of architectural space and as its result, communication with the audience through performance, semantic and syntactic codes, along with the function of the building, in relation to the type of space and its meaning and implicit and explicit meanings in spatial classification of environment (Eco Cited in Leach, 2005); Articles

on following subjects: the use of spatial semiotic approach in examining the effect of space users on the spatial identity and analyzing and understanding the conceptual signs of space with regard to the context and related factors (Gaines, 2006), identification of the characteristics of architectural language as a symbolic art from the perspective of semiotics and attention to the cultural and historical contexts, in addition to its symbolic and aesthetic values (Lazutina, Pupysheva, Shcherbinin, Baksheev, & Patrakova, 2016), the use of Algirdas Julien Greimas' semiotics theory in space analysis in order to adapt the appearance to the content for the significant reading of the architectural space (Juodinytė-Kuznetsova, 2011), explicit reading and interpretation of the hidden meanings of signs in the field of architecture in relation to cultural, social, historical codes using a semiotic approach (Botwina & Botwina, 2012), the ability to convey meaning through place-making with respect to the analysis of human perception in semiotic reading (Gawlikowska, 2013), the study of identity and spatial belonging to international outstanding places considering semantic concepts in order to pay attention to the conveying of meanings, sociological and symbolic concepts (Mueller & Schade, 2012) and the use of a layered semiotic approach in examining the city form, its function, meaning and identity (Daneshpour, Rezazadeh, Sojoodi, & Mohammadi, 2013). About the application of semiotics in architecture and its relationship with the subject of place identity, the following referenced can be mentioned: the book entitled "Place and Phenomenology" on the place and its related concepts from a phenomenological perspective and human tendency to historical spaces permanent in mental memory (Donohoe, 2017); The book entitled "Spatial Belonging" on the sense of identity to place based on people's belonging, memory and cultural and social conditions (Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014); The book entitled "The role of place identity in the perception of built environments" which focuses on the issue of spatial identity and its relationship with individual identity and factors affecting space users' perception of environment and phenomenological experience of it (Casakin & Bernardo, 2012); Articles on the study of importance of place and its identity using a phenomenological approach, the study of the formation of spatial identity and effective factors (Taban, Pourjafar, & Pourmand, 2012), and the study of the relationship between identity and place using a phenomenological approach to historical fabrics (Pourjafar, Pourmand, Zabihi, Hashemi Demneh, & Taban, 2011). The background provided is apparently and generally limited to the relationship of semiotics and phenomenology with architecture, in which the issue of spatial identity has been directly or indirectly addressed. Although the issue of phenomenology and semiotics of place identity has been scrutinized considering different components and elements of place and in physical, functional and conceptual

aspects, the phenomenology and semiotics have been not applied in a coherent way in examining specific components of urban space (landmark) and also, they were not applied simultaneously in assessing the place identity. Therefore, the present study aims to apply a semiotic approach to study the landmarks in the case study to examine the identity and durability of this historical street considering existing social, cultural and historical structures and reading audiences' mentality with a phenomenological approach. In this way, it seeks to show the key role of landmarks in identifying space in citizens' cultural, social, mental, and behavioral contexts.

3. RESEARCH LITERATURE

Since in the present study, the nature of landmarks is phenomenologically studied in relation to citizens' identity from a semiotic perspective, in the theoretical

foundations part of this research, semiotics and its application in architecture, characteristics of landmarks and the identity of place from a phenomenological perspective are discussed.

3.1. Semiotics and its Application in the Field of Architecture

Semiotics is the study of phenomena through the study of a set of factors affecting the emergence and interpretation of signs and marks (Pourjafar & Montazerolhojjah, 2010, p. 17). It studies signs in the form of words, images, sounds, movements and objects (Chandler, 2007a, p. 2). Semiotics is one of the efficient methods that examine the meanings of phenomena or, in the words of Roland Barthes, deal with the "process of being meaningful" (Strinati, 2001, p. 153). In Table 1, the most important definitions of the concept of sign are collected.

Table 1. The Meaning of the Sign from a Semiotic Perspective

Researcher	Definition of Sign	Remarkable Characteristic
Saussure	Saussure expands the concept of sign "into forms of social communication such as rituals, ceremonies, etiquette, etc." (Giro, 2001, p. 16). The sign is a "physical" and also, "meaningful" subject (Chandler, 2007b, p.21). The tangible side of it is the signifier that is received by human sensory perception, and its hidden side is called the signified, i.e. the meaning that the audience creates in his mind and the concept that is created (Ahmadi, 1992, p. 33). The value of a sign is due to its relationship with other signs. No meaning and concept is created without resorting to the sign system and external textual and material expression of signs (Mohammadi, 2011, p. 157).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social connections such as rituals, ceremonies - A physical and meaningful subject - Signifier (tangible) - The signified (hidden) and mental - The signs are valuable in relation to each other - The creation of meaning depends on the sign system and the textual, and material expression of signs
Peirce	The sign is a universal concept. Anything that signifies anything else in any way (Ahmadi, 1992, p. 34).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Universal concept
Eco	The sign is all those things that introduce something instead of something else, based on a social contract (Ahmadi, 1992, p. 32). From an ontological point of view, about the nature of signs, it can be stated that the existence of signs depends on time and is inferred under the influence of man and his existence (Eco, 1986, p. 16).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social contract - Introducing something instead of something else - Inference of the existence of a sign depends on time and is influenced by man and his existence
Foucault	The sign enables things to be distinguished and maintain their special identity (Foucault cited in Kachooyan, 2003, p. 114).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationship with identity preservation - Possibility of being distinguished
Turner	Being a sign requires that there be a physical form pointing to something other than itself (Hall, McRobbie, Bennett, Turner, Fowler, & Parry, 2011, p. 104).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A physical form - Pointing to something than itself
Sojoodi	Signs signify concepts (Sojoodi, 2008, p. 21).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The implication of concepts

The semiotic method used in this study is in the form of an analytical method that reveals signifying and identifying factors by prioritizing social and cultural contexts and focusing on the reading of

the audience's mental presuppositions when facing architectural objects. In fact, the ability to convey meaning through place-making is one of the issues that have led to the recognition of the relationship

between semiotics and architecture (Gawlikowska, 2013, p. 50). Understanding the meaning of each element and sign occurs when a person analyzes the context of the formation of the subject and, faces it his perceptions and emotions according to the subject. In semiotics, to achieve the original concept and meaning of phenomena is of great importance. Thus, it can be said that semiotics of architecture did not emerge as a result of architectural practice, and its influence was previously thought, especially in terms of seeking meaning (Norberg-Schulz, 2004, p. 101). Finally, it can be stated that the semiotic approach to architecture provides an insight to architectural works as an artistic work in which functional, aesthetic, social, political and economic considerations can be considered true (Juodinytė-Kuznetsova, 2011, pp. 1270-1271).

3. 2. Landmark and its Characteristics

Considering the purpose of the study which was to study the relationship between the landmarks on the historical axis of Sepah Street and its identity, the characteristics of landmarks and their relationship with citizens are explained. In urban literature, landmark is a concept that has been fundamentally used in various ways. In a general statement, some authors have used the term "landmark" as a reference point to make decisions on space (Pourjafar & Montazerolhojjah, 2010, p. 32), because landmarks are often remembered for their visible and outstanding body, as well as their social and cultural significance (Appleyard

Cited in Golledge, 1999, p. 17), and as key points, make cities and their different parts memorable and recognizable (Pourjafar & Montazerolhojjah, 2010, p. 5). Landmarks are "reference points whose symbolic role is experienced by most people" (Bentley, Alcock, Murrain, McGlynn, & Smith, 2014, p. 121). One of the specific characteristics of landmarks is their uniqueness. That is a factor that is unique and memorized. Thus, if landmarks have a clear form, or they are contrary to their context, or their location dominates their surroundings, it will be easy to know and imagine them semantically (Lynch, 2010, p. 144). Also, landmarks can have symbolic and national aspects that are created based on cultural and radical experiences and reserves of society (Pourjafar, 2009, p. 83) and can be considered as social phenomena (Lynch, 2005, p. 178). As a result, there is a mutual relationship between man and landmark, because human action and desire relate meaning to the landmark and convert the landmark to an experienced element and the landmark emphasizes human values and concepts through its meaning. That is why the identity of the landmark depends on human identity and grows as a result of the direct experience of the environment. It is therefore a reflection of social and cultural aspects (Pourjafar & Montazerolhojjah, 2010, p. 50). In Figure 1, the landmark can be considered as an element, which is distinctive in a range of physical to conceptual issues, and as an urban space in relation to citizens' memories. It is a factor that can create sensory richness and stability of urban space in order to pay attention to citizens' intellectual and cultural contexts.

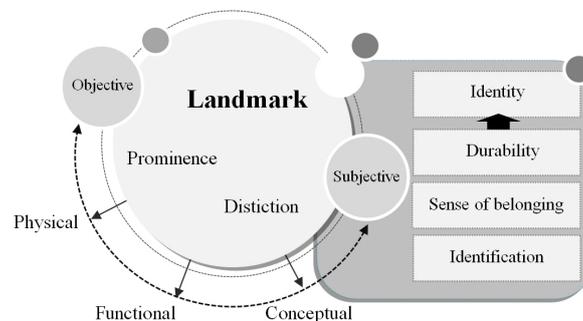


Fig. 1. Characteristics of Landmarks

3. 3. The Identity of Place from a Phenomenological Perspective

The identity of place means the mental image, the production of experiences, the purposeful interpretation of what is and what should be, immediate thoughts, memories and emotions (Aminzadeh cited in Daneshpajouh & Modiri, 2014, p. 200). Since place is a phenomenon related to everyday experience, it takes precedence over all academic concepts and perceptions. Phenomenology is an approach acknowledging the complexity of this experience and aiming to clarify the dimensions of this experience (Relph, 2010). In the field of architecture, One of the most important accomplishments of the phenomenology philosophy is the concepts related to place, which considers

place as a space with certain characteristics that is the manifestation of human presence (Alborzi & Parvineyan, 2019, p. 6). Phenomenology can to return to the essence of the subject or (object) using individual knowledge and help an individual to return the objective subjects to subjective ones (Bachelard, 1994, p. XIX). Therefore, in the present study, the relationship between city identity and citizens was examined in terms of different aspects from a phenomenological perspective, because the inseparability of mentality in phenomenology, which is created through the connection between an individual's past and present experiences or the experiences of other people (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 21), can be effective in reading the spatial identity. Table 2 shows some of the components identifying urban spaces.

Table 2. Components Forming the Identity of Place

Theorist	Components Forming the Identity of Place
Steele	History, imagination, secrets, enjoyment, wonder, security, deliberation and vitality and memory (Partovi, 2008, p. 122).
Relph	Specific natural factors and their appearances, observable activities and functions, concepts or symbols (Relph Cited in Shakuie, 2006, p. 275; Relph, 2010, p. 80); experiences, relationships between society, beliefs and values (Relph, 2010, pp. 45-60).
Norberg-Schulz	The impact of events on the identity of place, shapes, colors and textures (Norberg-Schulz, 1979).
Rapoport	Important, meaningful and memorable events, symbols and activity provision capabilities (Rapoport Cited in Daneshpajouh & Modiri, 2014, p. 211).
Lynch	Memorability, belonging, dependence (Daneshpour Cited in Ansari, 2014, p. 85). Being unique from other places (Lynch Cited in Daneshpajouh & Modiri, 2014, p. 212).
Appleyard	Sense of belonging, individually and collectively, to a part of the city (Behzadfar, 2007, p. 42).
Partovi	People's mental images and memories (Partovi Cited in Daneshpajouh & Modiri, 2014, p. 212)
Pakzad	Valuation in relation to one's mental reserves, from direct experiences to culture and tradition (Pakzad, 1996, p. 100).

Thus, the factor forming the place identity should be studied in terms of both special physical characteristics and sensory richness and social, historical and cultural dimensions of place in relation to the collective

identity. According to the theoretical foundations, the initial coding performed to summarize the theoretical framework is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Selected Codes of Theoretical Foundations Regarding the Relationship between Identity and Landmark

Characteristics of Landmarks From a Semiotic Perspective	Phenomenological Components of Place Identity	Characteristics of Landmarks From a Semiotic Perspective	Phenomenological Components of Place Identity
A form of social communication, ritual and ceremonies	- Being consistent with values, culture and social conditions	Having subjective concepts (the signified)	- An individual's mentality - Experience - Dependence
Signs are valuable in interaction with other signs (attention to the sign system)	- Being mixed with citizens' lives - Being belonged to the community and public participation	Being perceivable for the audience	
The creation of meaning depends on the sign system and textual expression	- Being present in collective and individual memories		
Having a tangible aspect (signifier) and being perceived through sensory perceptions	- Prominent shape, form, color and texture	Physical subject while being meaningful	- Activity and function - Deliberation and vitality
The implication of something than itself	- Concepts and symbols - Imagination - Secrets and codes	Being distinguished and effective in identity preservation	- Being unique

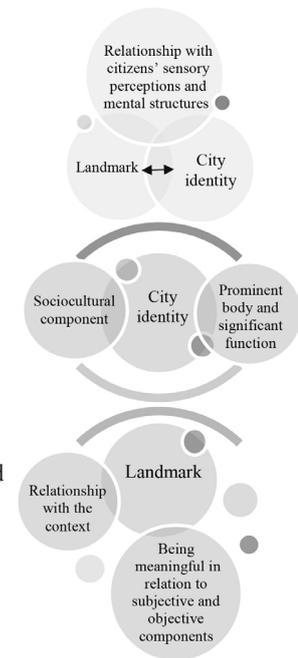


Table 3 shows that the set of physical or non-physical landmarks has an identity load and a major part of the city identity has been and is influenced by them. In short, having an identity means having a sign, and this sign can be a behavioral, linguistic, cultural, architectural or urbanism pattern, whose presence and dominance in space, especially the relationship

between near and far architectural and spatial elements induce this identity (Mojabi, 2009, pp. 95-139).

4. RESEARCH METHOD

The present study aims to identify the nature of landmarks on Sepah Street in relation to street identity using a descriptive, analytical, survey method.

A qualitative method, with a phenomenological approach, was descriptively and analytically applied to study various documents, books and views on the key research topics, and then, a coding method was used to summarize data in order to analyze and scrutinize theoretical studies. Finally, the codes extracted from the theories were examined using a survey method in the observation and examination of citizens' behavior and landmarks, leading to the provision of components which were used to develop a questionnaire and analyze the data obtained from it. Since a phenomenological approach was used in reading the identity of place, the questionnaire was developed with three groups of open, closed and sketching questions. According 10 closed questions were designed based on a 5-point Likert scale in a range from very high to very low, 7 open questions were used in an interview form and one sketching question with the title of "sketching people's personal perception of landmarks on Sepah Street" was asked by providing a paper and drawing tools to respondents. Considering the type of questions, statistical analyses in SPSS 20 software were used to analyze the data. Cochran formula was used to estimate the sample size. the validity and reliability of the questionnaire were examined using a pre-test method Cronbach alpha coefficient, respectively. Moreover, to inferentially analyze the data obtained from the closed questions, after the application of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the non-parametric Spearman correlation test was used to know the effect of the research variables and their significant relationship with each other. To inferentially

analyze the data obtained from open and sketching questions, the average data were used to obtain more accurate results on the consistency of theoretical basis, observations, interviews and citizens' opinions about the importance and interaction of landmarks on Sepah Street with its identity.

5. CASE STUDY

Since the landmarks in the historical spaces and their identities are valuable, the historical axis of Sepah Street in Qazvin City was selected as the case study of the present study. In terms of tissue, the street has a space including streams, curbs and a row of plane and cypress trees (Mojabi, 2009, p. 215). Such a wide and long passage with two narrower passages on both sides and a stream and trees on both sides, for the first time in Qazvin, was constructed by Tahmasp I in the Safavid era (930 to 980 A.H.) (Dabirsiaghi, 2000, p. 202). Sepah Street (now Shohada Street) has multiple landmarks; Shahr bani Portal (Ali Qapu Portal), Jame Mosque, historical houses on both sides of the street and the bazaar are some of its components and landmarks. The stability of these landmarks since the first Safavid era until now is one of the remarkable instances of urbanism experiences in Iran (Mojabi, 2009, p. 323). The present study aims to examine the importance of the historical landmarks of the street in citizens' sense of identity to it, and to read different dimensions of these landmarks to provide the physical and conceptual meaning of them. Table 4 shows the location and landmarks of the street.

Table 4. Introduction and Location of Sepah Street in Qazvin

Location of Sepah Street in Qazvin City and its Significant landmarks			
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ali Qapu Portal 2. Sepah Street 3. Jame Mosque 4. Bazaar of Sepah Street 5. Sheikh al-Islam Mosque-madrasa 6. Ab-Anbar (water cistern) of the Jame Mosque 	 
Sheikh al-Islam Mosque-madrasa	Ali Qapu Portal		
			
Jame Mosque	Bazaar of Sepah Street		
(Administration of Cultural Heritage of Qazvin, 2015)			

6. HYPOTHESIS AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL

In the present study, it is assumed that the relationship between important and historical landmarks of Sepah Street from a semiotic perspective has an effective role in reading the spatial identity of the street according to citizens' subjective and objective perception from

a phenomenological perspective. According to the research hypothesis regarding the relationship between the components of landmarks and phenomenology of place identity, the codes extracted from theoretical studies, in accordance with the observations of the case study, are presented in Figure 2 to develop the questionnaire.

Table 5. Conceptual Model

Characteristics of landmarks from a semiotic perspective	Phenomenological components of place identity	Relationship between the components of place identity and landmark	Characteristics of landmarks from a semiotic perspective	Phenomenological components of place identity	Relationship between the components of place identity and landmark
-A form of social communication, ritual and ceremonies	- Being consistent with values, culture and social conditions	-The meaningfulness of the landmark in relation to the context and reading of its dependent elements	- Having a tangible aspect (signifier) and being perceived through sensory perceptions	- Prominent shape, form, color and texture	- Physical prominence and distinction
-Signs are valuable in interaction with other signs (attention to the sign system)	-Being mixed with citizens' lives	-The meaningfulness of the landmark in relation to collective and individual memories and its stability over time	- The implication of something than itself	- Concepts and symbols - Imagination - Secrets and codes	- Conceptual prominence and distinction
-The creation of meaning depends on the sign system and textual expression	-Being belonged to the community and public participation		-Having subjective concepts (the signified)		
- Being distinguished and effective in identity preservation	- Being unique	- Being identifiable, stable, unique and legible		- Audience' mentality - Experience - Attachment	- Presence of landmark in audiences' experience, mentality and emotions
- Physical subject while being meaningful	-Activity and function -Deliberation and vitality	- Functional prominence and distinction	-Being perceivable for the audience		

7. POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE

Given the importance of Sepah Street in Qazvin and citizens' sense of belonging to it, the statistical population of the study included the population of Qazvin City (596932 people) in 2016 according to the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization in Qazvin and Qazvin Municipality. According to Cochran formula, 384 questionnaires were required

to answer the research questions. The questionnaires were distributed among citizens on Sepah Street and on different days of the week.

$$n = \frac{\frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}}{1 + \frac{1}{N} \left(\frac{z^2 pq}{d^2} - 1 \right)} \quad n = \frac{\frac{1.96^2 * 0.5 * 0.5}{0.05^2}}{1 + \frac{1}{596932} \left(\frac{1.96^2 * 0.5 * 0.5}{0.05^2} - 1 \right)} = 384$$

8. DEVELOPMENT OF A QUESTIONNAIRE BASED ON OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH COMPONENTS

According to the conceptual model in Table 5, first, the components introduced in the observations of the case

study are investigated in the form of Imaginations in Table 6, and then, according to the facilities and characteristics of the case study, research questions are discussed.

Table 6. Examination of the Role of Landmarks in Citizens' Behavior and Sense of Belonging to Sepah Street According to the Research Components

Manifestation of the components effective in the place identity and the landmarks on Sepah Street in observation process			
Being identifiable, stable, unique and legible		Physical prominence and distinction	
	Uniqueness of landmarks for being identified at different times		Scale, proportions, and apparent beauty of historical landmarks
The meaningfulness of the landmark in relation to collective and individual memories and its stability over time		Conceptual prominence and distinction	
	Observing the presence of citizens, especially the elderly, and their attention to the landmarks, indicate the sense of belonging to the space and the presence of landmarks in citizens' memories.		The vitality of the bazaar due to the citizen presence at different times
Presence of landmark in audiences' experience, mentality and emotions		Functional prominence and distinction	
	The three main landmarks of the street, which represent the signs of government, people and religion, make it easy for landmarks to be experienced by citizens.		The forecourt of Jame Mosque is a place for conservation and interaction
The meaningfulness of the landmark in relation to the context and reading of its dependent elements			The commercial functionality of the Bazaar in meeting daily needs
	Holding Muharram religious ceremony; Ali Qapu Portal (Gholikhani, 2018)	Creating a different feeling in the face of landmarks; the forecourt of Jame Mosque (Dadashi, 2013)	Ali Qapu Portal in connection with Sepah Street (gathering place in February 1978) (Administration of Cultural Heritage of Qazvin, 2015)

According to observations and existing components, the questions developed for the assessment of the

importance of landmarks in identifying the street are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Open, Closed and Sketching Questions about the Research Components

Relationship between the Components of Place Identity and Landmark	Questions
The meaningfulness of the landmark in relation to the context	1. Do you have different feelings when being in different parts of Sepah Street? Introduce those parts. 2. To what extent do the proximity of the landmarks and their direct connection with Sepah Street strengthen their role in identifying the street? 3. To what extent are the events (religious ceremonies, national celebrations, etc.) occurred at the sites of landmarks (religious ceremonies, national celebrations, etc.) effective in making landmarks meaningful?
The meaningfulness of the landmark in relation to collective and individual memories and its stability over time	4. To what extent is the impact of landmarks on your collective memory significant? 5. To what extent is the impact of landmarks on your individual memory significant? 6. To what extent are the passage of time and the antiquity of landmarks effective in identifying the street and creating a lasting image in the mind? 7. Describe the street for someone who has never seen or experienced it before. 8. What factors motivate you to choose this street? 9. To what extent will the identity of the street be influenced if the main landmarks of the street are removed?
Physical prominence and distinction	10. To what extent are the landmarks prominent and unique in terms of form and appearance?
Conceptual prominence and distinction	11. To what extent are the landmarks prominent conceptually?
Functional prominence and distinction	12. To what extent are the landmarks prominent functionally?
Being identifiable, stable, unique and legible	13. Draw a sketch of the street and mark the important points. 14. Score the importance and prominence of Ali Qapu Portal, Jame Mosque and Bazaar by giving a score of 1 to 3, from the viewpoints of a pedestrian and a driver and also, in day and at night. 15. How easy is it for you to identify the street? 16. Is your ability to identify different in different parts of the street? If your answer is yes, please name them. 17. According to you, what are the factors making the street identity recognizable? 18. Which part of the street has the greatest permanence in your mental image?

8.1. Examination of Closed Questions

The data collected from 384 questionnaires distributed among citizens were analyzed using SPSS 20 software,

as shown in Tables 8 and 10. Among the data provided, relative frequency and percentage are given for comparison.

Table 8. Statistical Results of Closed Questions Based on the Five-Point Likert Scale

Variable	Question	Option	Relative Frequency	The Highest Percentage of Relative Frequency	Variable	Question	Option	Relative Frequency	The Highest Percentage of Relative Frequency
The meaningfulness of the landmark in relation to the context and reading of its dependent elements	2	Very High	279	72.7	Presence of landmark in audiences' experience, mentality and emotions	9	Very High	371	96.6
	3	Very High	301	78.4	Physical prominence and distinction	10	Very High	321	83.6

Variable	Question	Option	Relative Frequency	The Highest Percentage of Relative Frequency	Variable	Question	Option	Relative Frequency	The Highest Percentage of Relative Frequency
The meaningfulness of the landmark in relation to collective and individual memories and its stability over time	4	Very High	261	68.0	Conceptual prominence and distinction	11	Very High	203	52.9
	5	Very High	281	73.2	Functional prominence and distinction	12	High	207	53.9
	6	High	207	53.9	Being identifiable, stable, unique and legible	15	Very High	31	86.2

8. 2. Examination of Sketching Questions

In order to read citizens’ mental perceptions of the importance and permanence of landmarks, the drawing tools were provided to the respondents, and they were

asked to draw a simple drawing of the street and its outstanding points has. Totally, 384 sketches were collected and out of every 25 sketches, one sketch was randomly selected and presented in Figure 2.

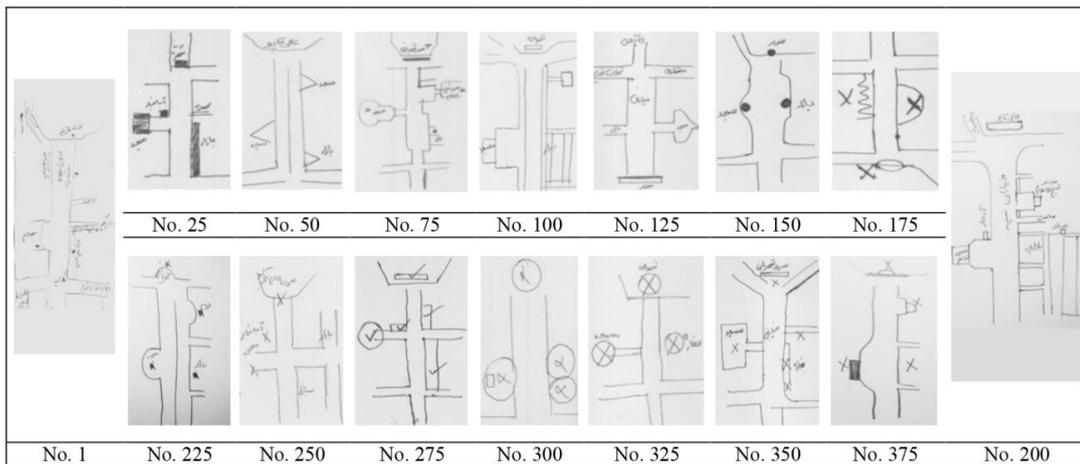


Fig. 2. Free-Hand Sketches of the Street Drawn by Citizens

All the sketches presented in Figure 2 indicate the studied landmarks (Ali Qapu Portal, Jame Mosque and Bazaar in Sepah Street) and their importance was clearly stated by writing their names or marking them. Also, in many sketches drawn by a greater mental image, other landmarks such as: Sheikh al-Islam mosque-madrassa, Ab-Anbar (water cistern) of the Jame Mosque and function such as: compulsory military service office and cinema, as well as side and important passages related to the street. In addition, all the sketches show the positions of landmarks relative to the street and their physical structures. For example, the recessed space of the forecourt of Jame Mosque and Ali Qapu Portal relative to the street and the elongated form of the bazaar and its location in front of the mosque are clearly visible, indicating a clear image of the street in citizens’ mentality and the physical, functional and conceptual identities of landmarks in relation to Sepah

Street as well as citizens over time. Table 9 provides the analysis of open questions, descriptions of the characteristics shown in citizens’ sketches and related descriptive statistics.

8. 3. Examination of Open Questions

Due to the application of a phenomenological approach in research, it is necessary to design open questions and interview with citizens to read their personal views and mentalities of the factors identifying the street and its landmarks. Thus, using open questions, citizens were asked to freely describe the street, their feelings of and interest in it. Moreover, some questions were developed about their attention in identifying landmarks and the permanence of the images of the street in their minds. The analytical results of these questions and related descriptive statistics are presented in details in Table 9.

Table 9. Statistical Results of Open and Sketching Questions with a Phenomenological Approach

Question	Categories of Answers to Open and Sketching Questions				Relative Frequency	Percentage of Relative Frequency	Chart
1. Having different feelings in different parts	Yes	379	Limits of historical monuments (outstanding landmarks of street)	Ali Qapu Portal	376	97.9	
				Jame Mosque	358	93.2	
				Bazaar of Sepah Street	341	88.8	
				Restored walls and facades	164	42.7	
				Secondary landmarks in relation to the street	73	19.0	
				No	5	-	
	%98.7						
7. Description of the street	Description with the main landmarks				381	99.2	
	Description by old				374	97.4	
	Personal memories of landmarks				296	77.1	
	Description with missed landmarks (such as: inn, compulsory military service office, street cinema, etc.)				53	13.8	
	Description with pointing to proper accessibility of the street (main way)				101	26.3	
	Description based on appearance and body (dimensions and proportions, connection with nature and paving)				209	54.4	
	Various land-uses and function of the street				206	53.6	
	Description with restored walls				197	51.5	
	Description with old houses on both sides of the street				10	2.6	
	Discipliner (correct placement of components)				278	72.4	
	Secondary landmarks (Zurkhaneh located in Bazaar, water cistern, Sheikh al-Islam Mosque, etc.)				194	50.5	
	8. The reason persuading to choose	Existence of landmarks and their beauty and originality				384	
Nostalgia (connection to historical past; sense of identity)				377	98.2		
Appropriate access				376	97.9		
Visual appeal of the street (through restored sections)				327	85.2		
Possibility of meeting friends in the sections provided as gathering place by the landmarks (Bazaar and the front of Jame Mosque)				372	96.9		
Originality and historicity of the street (knowing that it is the first designed street in Iran)				361	94.0		
Old shops				12	3.1		
Variety of functions				289	75.3		
Citizen presence and vitality				319	83.1		
Attachment and belonging to the street				293	76.5		
Attractiveness through connection with nature				23	6.0		

Question	Categories of Answers to Open and Sketching Questions				Relative Frequency	Percentage of Relative Frequency	Chart				
13. Result of the drawn sketch	Attention to the landmarks in the sketch				379	96.7					
	Three landmarks (Bazaar, Jame Mosque and Ali Qapu Portal)				1	0.3					
	Bazaar and Ali Qapu Portal				1	0.3					
	Bazaar and Jame Mosque				3	0.8					
	Jame Mosque and Ali Qapu Portal				384	98.0					
	Selection of landmarks as important points				372	94.9					
	Proper placement of landmarks in the sketch and showing their connection with the street				211	53.8					
14. Scoring the prominence of main landmarks, from 1 to 3 (3: high prominence, 2: moderate prominence and 1: low prominence)	Landmark	Night	Day	Pedestrian	Driver	Percentage of prominence of landmarks relative to each other	Percentage of prominence of landmarks relative to time				
	Jame Mosque	273 3 103 2 8 1	384 3	384 3	324 1 51 2 9 1				88.07	Night 61.46	
	Highest percentage of frequency	%69.6	%100	%100	%82.7				88.07	Day 98.96	prominence of landmarks relative to each other
	Ali Qapu Portal	213 3 171 2	384 3	384 3	113 3 262 2 9 1				70.77	Pedestrian 100	
	Highest percentage of frequency	%54.3	%100	%100	%28.8				88.27	Driver 69.06	prominence of landmarks relative to time
	Bazaar	237 3 19 2 8 1	380 3 4 2	384 3	375 3 8 2 1 1				88.27	Driver 69.06	
	Highest percentage of frequency	%60.5	%96.9	%100	%95.7						

Question	Categories of Answers to Open and Sketching Questions	Relative Frequency	Percentage of Relative Frequency	Chart
16. Assessment of the ability to identify different parts	Yes	376	In the part of historical works and landmarks, more identifiable	
	%95.9		In the part of restored walls	
	No	8	Since the street is paved, all parts are identified identically	
	%4.1			
17. Factors making the street identity recognizable			Main landmarks	
			Appearance and body (street paving, longitudinal and straight axis with rows of trees on both sides)	
			Presence in memories	
			Restored elements and walls	
			Functions	
			Constant citizen presence	
			Secondary landmarks along with main landmarks	
18. The greatest permanence in the mental image			The location of main landmarks (bazaar, mosque and Ali Qapu Portal)	
			The location of secondary landmarks next to the main ones	
			Restored walls	

9. RESULTS OF THE INFERENTIAL STATISTICS OF CLOSED QUESTIONS

To inferentially analyzed the data obtained from closed questions, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used as a criterion for determining whether the test was parametric or non-parametric. According to the results

obtained for the questions (2,3,4,5,6,9,10,11,12,15) in Table 10 and considering the error level of 0.05 and the obtained level of significance less than 0.05, it can be concluded that the test is significant at the given error level. Thus, it is proper to use a nonparametric test for inferential analysis of data.

Table 10. Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

Questions	2,3	4,5,6	9	10	11	12	15	
N	384	384	384	384	384	384	384	
Normal Parameters	Mean	1.2656	1.4236	1.03	1.17	1.49	2.15	1.15
	Std. Deviation	.47084	.49360	.181	.407	.564	.719	.384
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.440	.252	.540	.502	.338	.290	.512
	Positive	.440	.252	.540	.502	.338	.290	.512
	Negative	-.286	-.195	-.426	-.334	-.286	-.249	-.350
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	8.627	4.943	10.588	9.838	6.630	5.690	10.040	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

According to the research hypothesis about the effect of landmarks in Sepah Street on spatial identity in citizens' minds and the need to be aware of the relationship between the components selected in the fields of semiotics of landmarks and phenomenology of spatial identity, Spearman correlation test, a

nonparametric test, is used. This test examines the relationship between the components and shows that all the components related to landmarks influence the identity of place. Table 11 shows the results of Spearman correlation test with an error level of 0.01.

Table 11. Results of Spearman Correlation Test

Research Components	Questions	2,3	4,5,6	9	10	11	12	15
The meaningfulness of the landmark in relation to the context and reading of its dependent elements	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.815**	.378**	.779**	.657**	.829**	.709**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	384	384	384	384	384	384	384
The meaningfulness of the landmark in relation to collective and individual memories and its stability over time	Correlation Coefficient	.815**	1.000	.330**	.627**	.865**	.846**	.580**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	0	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	384	384	384	384	384	384	384
Presence of landmark in audiences' experience, mentality and emotions	Correlation Coefficient	.378**	.330**	1.000	.442**	.260**	.325**	.485**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	0	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	384	384	384	384	384	384	384
Physical prominence and distinction	Correlation Coefficient	.779**	.627**	.442**	1.000	.492**	.617**	.906**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	0	.000	.000	.000
	N	384	384	384	384	384	384	384
Conceptual prominence and distinction	Correlation Coefficient	.657**	.865**	.260**	.492**	1.000	.719**	.450**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	0	.000	.000
	N	384	384	384	384	384	384	384
Functional prominence and distinction	Correlation Coefficient	.829**	.846**	.325**	.617**	.719**	1.000	.564**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	0	.000
	N	384	384	384	384	384	384	384
Being identifiable, stable, unique and legible	Correlation Coefficient	.709**	.580**	.485**	.906**	.450**	.564**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	0
	N	384	384	384	384	384	384	384

Since the level of significance was estimated less than 0.01 and the correlation coefficient was estimated between zero and one, it can be concluded that among all the components in different areas, from objective to subjective, there are significant and desirable relationship between those components making the identity of place, which influenced by the semiotic reading of landmarks in the case study.

10. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Given the variety of questions and the existence of open, closed and sketching questions, the validity of the research assessment tool was investigated using a pre-test design in order to obtain relative knowledge

of the expected answers, the characteristics of the studied population and the ability of the questionnaire to answer the research questions and goals. Moreover, the complete consistency of the questions with the research components used to measure the spatial identity influenced by landmarks according to the reading of citizens' mentality can be considered another reason for the validity of the questionnaire. To examine the reliability of the questionnaire and its capability in measuring the research components, Cronbach's alpha test was used in the pretest and final test, and the values obtained in both test were close to each other and both of them were acceptable. The result of Cronbach's alpha calculation in the final test is presented in Table 12. Since the obtained value is greater than 0.7, the reliability of the questionnaire is assessed desirable.

Table 12. Calculation of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.921	7

11. DISCUSSION

In a general look at the answers to open questions, the priority of landmarks in Sepah Street according to citizens' feelings, and personal interest in choosing this street due to landmarks in it and their importance as recognizable and outstanding points in sketches, it can be pointed to the prominent role of landmarks in street identity. In line with the commonality of landmarks in all open questions, the statistical results of closed questions in the Spearman test also indicate the relationship between these components and the importance of landmarks in the phenomenological study of place identity. Figure 3 was provided to generally investigate the results based on the highest frequencies of open and closed questions. Since the statistical results of the answers were evaluated to be common and positive for all components and their relative frequencies are in the range of 52.9 to 100, the significance of the research hypothesis regarding the relationship between landmarks of the street and its identity can be considered correct. In a closer look, among the proposed components, being identifiable, unique and legible, stability of landmarks in citizens' mind, and communication with citizens' feelings and experiences and being perceivable, have the highest degree of importance and effective role in citizens' subjective and objective perception of street identity, followed by the meaningfulness of landmarks, which is important in communicating with social and cultural contexts, and physical and historical privileges. The findings of present study, in comparison with the research background, while being consistent with the general structure of other research studied in the field of spatial identity and the application of semiotic and phenomenological approaches, raise other different aspects, because the importance of landmarks in identifying space was discussed and phenomenology

and semiotics theories were used to develop the conceptual model. The research background on "the importance of communication and interaction of space with the audience and with great emphasis on the examination of audiences' behavior, attention to their cultural and social structures and relationships and appearance, form and location in relation to content and meaningful reading of space, attention to cultural, historical and social contexts and codes, the ability of space to convey meaning and citizens' explicit perception of it, the importance of mental memory, sense of belonging and sense of identity to historical places" has similarities with the present study and overlaps it. The results of the present study and similar research are different in the issue of spatial identity according to the landmarks of the historical case studied. Accordingly, it is necessary to consider the characteristics of landmarks from a semiotic perspective in interaction with the phenomenological components of the place to present the components related to the main research topic (identity of place and landmark). The mentioned components have been introduced with a focus on citizens' mentality, in addition to attention to the factors effective in converting an element into a landmark in relation to the identity of place from a phenomenological perspective. Compared to the research background, other differences are as follows: in the present study, the originality of the foundations on phenomenological approach was kept, asking citizens using in-depth interviews and sketching questionnaire was performed to read their mentality of landmarks in the case study more deeply to be aware of audience's sense of identity to space. Accordingly, the significance of landmarks in relation to the context, connection with audiences' mentality and experience and the outstanding characteristics of landmarks were discussed as the most influential factors in the spatial identity of the studied area.

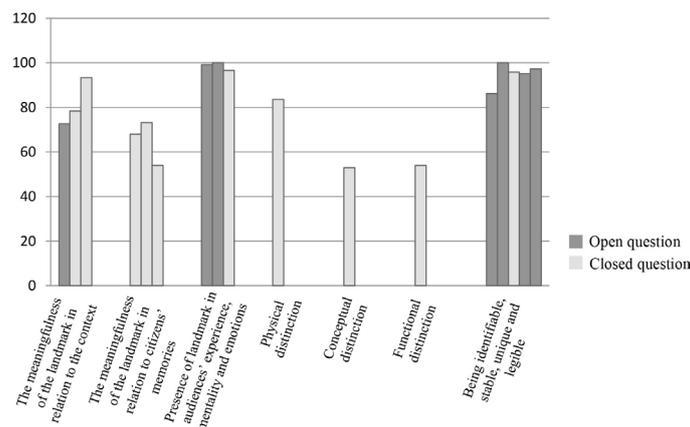


Fig. 3. Results of Answer Open and Closed Questions

12. CONCLUSION

Landmarks are one of the most important elements of the physical structure of urban spaces. In addition to their outstanding appearance, landmarks provide a ground for the identity of urban space, if they have significant features and deep relationship with citizens' collective and personal memories. The present study aimed to investigate the landmarks of the historical axis of Sepah Street as a memorable urban space for citizens, from a semiotic perspective and in relation to the phenomenology of place identity. To this end, according to theoretical studies and observations of the relationship between citizens and landmarks as well as spatial identity, some components were identified to develop open, closed and sketching questions in a range of physical, social, cultural and semantic issues. According to the descriptive-analytical study of closed and open questions, perceptions obtained from citizens' sketches, interviews and descriptive statistics, it can be said that the phenomenology of place identity in relation to landmarks was evaluated positively under the influence of factors such as the meaningfulness of the landmark in relation to the context and reading of its dependent elements, its meaningfulness in relation to collective and individual memories and its stability over time, its presence in audiences' experience, mentality and emotions, physical, conceptual and functional prominence and ultimately, being identifiable,

stable, unique and legible. Figure 4 introduces the relationship and influence of the landmarks examined from a semiotic perspective with the phenomenology of identity according to the theoretical and statistical studies. According to the figure, the two main subjects of the research, i.e. urban identity and landmark, along with the approaches applied to study each of them were identified. In the phenomenological study of identity, "attention to values, culture, activity, vitality and belonging, interaction and communication with citizens' lives and the uniqueness of space" were identified as significant components and in the reading of landmarks, the most important components were including "the importance of context and location, meaningful objective and subjective concepts, and meaningful relationship of landmarks with each other". In this regard, the landmark, from a semiotic perspective, and in relation to it, the identity of place, from a phenomenological perspective, together identify the main components, including common features of identity. According to the analyses conducted based on sketching and interviews with citizens, the three characteristics of "the meaningfulness of landmarks in relation to context, being present in audiences' experience, mentality and emotions and being legible, stable, unique and identifiable" were ultimately identified as the most effective characteristics. Signs have been introduced in the identity of space.

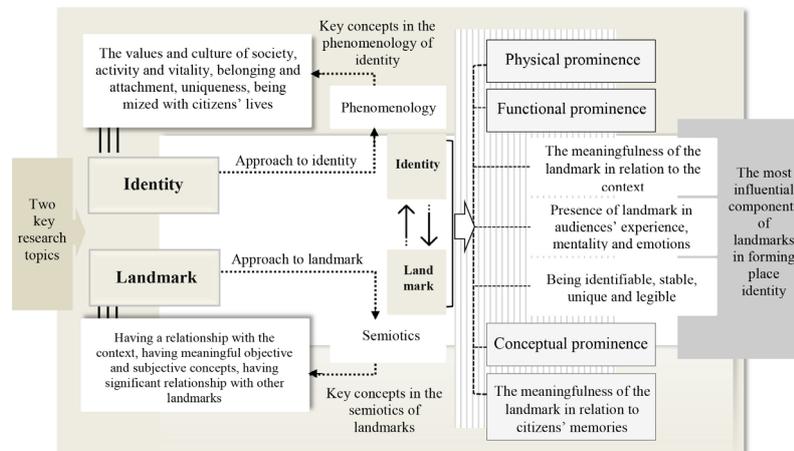


Fig. 4. Relationship and Influence of Landmarks in the Creation of Place Identity

According to the investigations and scoring of each of the mentioned components in relation to the type of relationship between the landmarks and the identity of the case study, the landmarks have become a stable and impartible factor in the sense of identity to Sepah Street because they are high potential for being legible, making a clear visual image of the street and interacting with citizens' experiences and emotions to allow them to interact with social and cultural contexts, indicating the rich relationships of landmarks with each other and with citizens in the process of perception of the

street and their stability and durability in people's mentality and their collective and individual memories. Thus, the studied street, in addition to being old and having a designed structure, has a significance role and influence in inducing a sense of identity to citizens due to important landmarks such as Ali Qapu Portal, Jame Mosque and Bazaar, as well as cultural, social, semantic, physical and functional characteristics, and the landmarks in it are effective in providing a lasting mental image of the street.

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HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Sekhavatdoust, N., & Alborzi, F. (2020). A Semiotic Approach to the Elements of the Historical Axis of Sepah Street in Qazvin and Reading of its Spatial Identity from a Phenomenological Perspective. *Armanshahr Architecture & Urban Development Journal*. 13(30), 87-104.

DOI: 10.22034/AAUD.2020.105023.1348

URL: http://www.armanshahrjournal.com/article_108580.html

