

Place Attachment at the Neighborhood Scale: A Systematic Review of Two Decades of Research in Iran*

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Received 05 July 2019;

Revised 08 February 2020;

Accepted 28 June 2020;

Available Online 21 June 2021

ABSTRACT

Neighborhood attachment is a psychological bond with some affective, perceptual, and behavioral dimensions that are associated with positive outcomes such as self-esteem, comfort, strengthening social capital, and residents' participation. The identification of factors affecting the neighborhood attachment is an essential step forward in sustainable neighborhood development. Using a systematic approach, this article sought to elaborate on the research articles done nationally from 2001 to 2019 on neighborhood attachment and to analyze their findings to explain this concept and the factors affecting it. Meanwhile, conflicting findings and research gaps were addressed and suggestions were made for future research so that a context is laid for expanding a local theory of Neighborhood Attachment. The results from the systematic review demonstrated that all researches have explained the "nature of neighborhood attachment" to emphasize the psychology of this relationship and its behavioral outcomes; however, they have failed to show deep psychological mechanisms in affective and perceptual dimensions. Researchers have tended to concentrate on the human and place dimensions of this bond when identifying the factors affecting it. The lack of place and neighborhood theory made it difficult to achieve a theoretically coherent conclusion. As for the human dimension, the effects of such variables as residence duration, gender, level of education, and housing ownership in different studies were identified to have contradicted each other. However, marital status and household income had a positive impact, and population mobility a negative effect on these bonds. As for the behavioral dimension of social participation, the most repetitive variables under study were significantly and positively related with the bonds, while the Psychological security and comfort demonstrated a significant and positive relationship with the bonds in the affective dimension.

Keywords: Place Attachment, Neighborhood, Sense of Belonging, Place Identity, Systematic Review.

* This article is taken from the doctoral dissertation of the first author entitled "Development of a place attachment theory at the neighborhood scale, a case study: selected neighborhoods of Tehran" supervised by the second author and the third author at the Faculty of Art and Architecture, Tarbiat Modares University.

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1. INTRODUCTION

When defining the nature of neighborhood, attachment to this urban unit emerges as a key component. A neighborhood tends to be recognized by its residents' sense of belonging to the place, their social interactions with each other, and collaboration with the relevant affairs (Beheshti, 2011, p. 21). Attention to psychological bonds between people and place has, since the 1960s, been the focus of numerous researches in various fields including environmental psychology, sociology, urban planning, philosophy, and human geography with such concepts as place attachment, sense of belonging, place identity, place dependence, community attachment, and sense of place employed; in the meantime, different theoretical frameworks have been used. Studies have demonstrated that attachment to the place of residence is more likely to be accompanied by higher satisfaction with life and social capital and greater willingness to continue living in the neighborhood (Lewicka, 2011; Rollero & De Piccoli, 2010).

This is while the consequences of uncontrolled urbanization and the dominance of engineering discourse on urban development across the nation over the decades have subjected the neighborhood to extreme structural and demographic transformations. Failure to signify the neighborhood scale and local communities when developing and executing urban development plans in the country (Ayazi, 2013, p. 24) and inattention to the psychological and emotional dimensions of people-neighborhood bonds have undermined the key role of neighborhood in social cohesion and trust. Widening researches on emotional people-neighborhood bonds in the form of various concepts in the country has signified the need for community-based planning. Since a systematic review of research literature on these bonds is lacking in the country, the present study aimed to research findings on the nature of neighborhood attachment and affecting factors. A systematic review of the findings helps

identify study gaps and insights for future research.

Accordingly, research on the emotional people-neighborhood bonds from 2001 to 2019 was collected and the results were analyzed and classified in response to two questions: "How the concept of place attachment at the neighborhood level framed and defined?" And "What variables and factors affect the emotional bonds between people and places in neighborhoods?"

2. THEORETICAL BASICS

Before describing and analyzing the findings from the people-neighborhood bonds in the country, it is necessary to understand the theoretical basics of such concepts as place attachment and neighborhood attachment.

2.1. Place Attachment

Simone Weil (1952), Tuan (1974), and Relph (1976) defined emotional place attachment as the most important and unknown need of the human soul (Livingston, Bailey, & Kearns, 2008, p. 10; Manzo & Dewine-wright, 2019, p. 49). Place attachment is defined in terms of different concepts, dimensions and components, while scholars have employed different themes to describe it (Zahnow & Tsai, 2019, p. 3). Place attachment is a complex, multifaceted, and interdisciplinary concept that is often referred to as the positive emotional and cognitive-perceptual bond between people and places (Manzo & Dewine-wright, 2019, p. 37) with individuals and groups giving it specific meanings when interacting with places. This bond is represented by proximity seeking, pro-social and pro-environmental behaviors, and community willingness to participate in collective actions (Lewicka, 2005, p. 385). The tripartite model of place attachment (Fig. 1) proposed by Scannell and Gifford (2010) is one of the main conceptual frameworks agreed upon by most researchers (Lewicka, 2011, p. 16; Plunkett, Phillips, & Kocaoglu, 2018, p. 473).

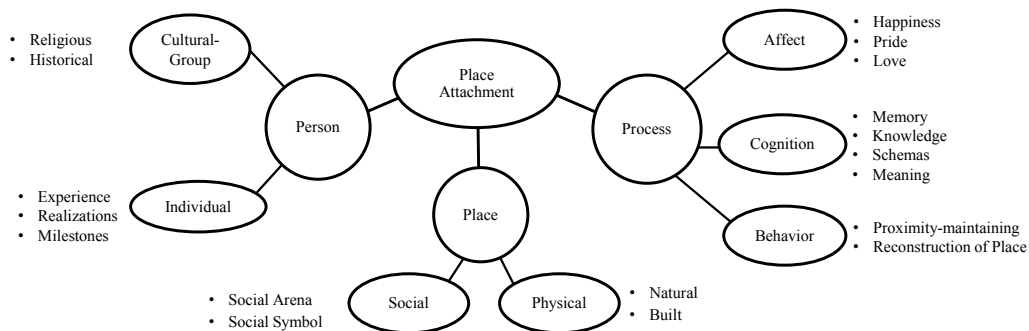


Fig. 1. The Tripartite Model of Place Attachment
(Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p. 2)

For Scannell and Gifford (2010), the framework organizes related place attachment concepts and can be used in theoretical explorations and in practical domains (Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p. 8).

2.2. Neighborhood Attachment

The neighborhood is the favorite place scale in place attachment research (Scannell & Gifford, 2013, p. 276;

Gastafson, 2014, p. 39; Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001, p. 274; Lewicka, 2011, p. 208). Neighborhood attachment is the individual's emotional relationship with the physical or social characteristics of the neighborhood. The formation of this bond is a major factor shaping the way residents interact with the environment, local community and neighbors (Comstock, Marshall, Soobader, Turbin, Buchenau, Dickinson, & Litt 2010, p. 435). To Griff (2009), neighborhood attachment consists of two distinct and potentially interrelated dimensions: attitudinal attachment and behavioral attachment. Attitudinal attachment includes two dimensions of evaluation and emotions. Evaluation refers to the extent to which a neighborhood or local community meets the needs and goals of its residents, while the emotional dimension refers to the individual's deep relationship with the neighborhood. Behavioral attachment is the individual's direct intervention in the local community seen through collective behaviors such as neighborhood problem-solving. Gustafson (2014) has explained this concept to use the term "place as a root" basing it on a long-term residence, strong social ties and local knowledge. Also, studies by Plunkett et al. (2018) have demonstrated that strong place attachment is an essential component to building the social capacity and capital needed for community development. Phillips (2015) also elaborated on neighborhood attachment as a major factor affecting the social capacity building in local communities. Taking into account the findings altogether, one would say that the development of local communities hinges on strengthening the psychological ties between people and the neighborhood.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The systematic review serves as an important method to developing knowledge development, identifying uncertain findings, determining gaps and subjects of future research. In this section, this research process method is introduced.

3.1. Systematic Review

A systematic review of research literature, unlike traditional narrative review procedures, is a method that investigates the literature on a specific subject in a

structured process while determining it in the form of five steps including framing the question, identifying related studies, assessing study quality, summarizing the evidence, interpreting, and analyzing the findings in response to the question (Khan, Kunz, Kleijnen, & Antes, 2003, p. 118), thereby providing an overview of the results of the existing research. Because the systematic review identifies uncertain findings in the literature and demonstrates the gaps while proposing suggestions for future research, it is an important method for expanding knowledge of a certain area (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006, p. 2). The meta-analysis method was not chosen in this study because of various data collection and analysis methods and the growing use of multivariate tests and the use of different criteria to measure place attachment in the national research literature. The meta-analysis method also discards qualitative study results and examines studies only with similar statistical methods (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001, p. 7); it also concerns the similar conceptual hypotheses (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006, p. 205), thus failing to analyze studies with multivariate statistical analyses for its high complexity and lack of effect size statistics (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001, p. 8). It should be noted that although this article does not compare the effect of variables on neighborhood attachment, the findings help researchers become familiar with more relevant variables when studying this phenomenon.

3.2. Research Process

In the first stage, the main questions to perform the systematic review were explained, and then the research identification process was determined by the protocols and inclusion criteria. When selecting the research literature, scientific-research articles based on empirical studies were focused attention. Database of Noor specialized journals, Jihad Daneshgahi Scientific Center of Tehran and Science Direct were chosen to identify related articles and for searching the terms "place attachment" and similar concepts including "place identity", "sense of place" and "sense of place /belonging". At this step, 140 articles were identified and then, experimental studies on a neighborhood scale, accounting for about 47.8% of the mentioned researches, were selected (Table 1).

Table 1: Frequency of Place Attachment Studies on Different Scales

Year of Publication	Theoretic	Type of Articles						Total
		Experimental Research						
		Village	City	Urban Space	Neighborhood	Residential Complex	Building	
2001-2006	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
2007-2011	7	1	4	-	6	-	-	18
2012-2016	15	3	10	14	40	6	10	98
2017-2019	5	1	4	2	7	2	2	23
Total	27	5	18	16	54	8	12	140

An investigation of fields of study and relevant concentrations indicated (Table 2) that Urban Planning with its various concentrations contributed most

and Social Welfare and Architecture least to these researches.

Table 2: Frequency of Neighborhood Attachment Researches by Academic Fields of Study and Concentrations

Fields of Study and Concentrations		No.
Geography, Urban and Regional Planning		14
Sociology		10
Social Welfare Planning		1
Architecture		5
Urbanization	Urban Planning	10
	Urban Design	14

An investigation of the demographic hierarchy of cities under study (Table 3) in the literature demonstrated that 70% of the metropolitan neighborhoods were up for study. Moreover, most of the research was done in Tehran followed by Isfahan and Hamedan (Table

3), with southern provinces not contributing to the mentioned studies. The university as the place of study, researchers' place of birth, and the ease of access to information appeared to have been the main factors in selecting cities to study.

Table 3: Frequency of Study Distribution in Cities Based on their Demographic Hierarchy

City Demographic Hierarchy	Cities	No. of Cities	No. of Researches
Metropolitan	Isfahan, Tabriz, Tehran, Shiraz, Qom and Mashhad	6	38
Large	Rasht, Kerman and Hamedan	3	5
Middle	Ilam, Bam, Jahrom, Khorramabad, Sanandaj, Fasa, Kashan, Gorgan, Gonbadkavous, and Yazd	10	10
Small	Beshrooyeh	1	1
Total		20	54

The quality of the systematic review and reliability of its results depend on the quality of the researches identified. Hence, in the final step of resource screening, study results quality was evaluated by determining four measures:

A. Studying "Target adult groups": This measure was considered for different perceptions and experiences of place attachment in different age groups of children and the elderly (Pretty, Bramston, & Chipuer, 2003, p. 283);

B. Proportionality of the applied methodology with the research question and objective;

C. Using a theoretical framework; and

D. Validity and reliability of research.

Then, 54 articles were scored separately in three stages by each of the authors of this article, and in the end, 21 articles that met all four criteria were selected for analysis. Most of the articles removed at this stage could not meet the required quality for lack of validation and reliability methods and the failure to consider the validity of the measurement tools. The neighborhoods (case studies) which were selected in 21 articles revealed that 11 studies opted for a case study without offering a definite reason while 10 more selected case studies for the following reasons: high housing stability, decline in people-neighborhood bonds (due to decay, natural disasters, etc.), having different morphology, and having a special pattern or a new trend of development.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the findings from selected studies in

response to the two main questions of this article, including the way the concept of neighborhood attachment is defined and the factors affecting the emotional people-neighborhood ties are examined and explained.

4.1. Research Literature Findings of the Concept of Place Attachment at the Neighborhood Scale

Researchers of different fields have employed different theoretical traditions to opt for people-neighborhood bonds in the form of different concepts. From among the final sources (Table 4), "place attachment" was only found in six articles being as the dependent variable or the main research phenomenon. Other articles used such concepts as neighborhood identity, place identity, sense of place, belonging, neighborhood belonging, and sense of place in the neighborhood.

Researchers also failed to consider the distinction between "identity of place" and "Place identity" when explaining theoretical frameworks. Ralph emphasizes the difference between the two concepts of "identity of something" and "identity with something". The identity of something refers to the permanence of the "sameness" of a thing, creating a difference between that thing and other things (Pakzad, 2008, p. 214). Place identity is, however, a sense created in the individual through his relationship with a special place. An individual's place identity can originate from a place with or without identity. It should be borne in mind that identity of place affects the quality of place identity, though it is a separate concept (Behzadfar, 2007, p. 67).

Table 4: Frequency of Concepts Used in People-neighborhood Links

Concepts Understudy	Fre.
Place Attachment / Neighborhood Attachment	6
Sense of Place Belonging/ Neighborhood Belonging	9
Place Identity / Neighborhood Identity	4
Sense of Place in the Neighborhood	2

The six studies focusing on "neighborhood attachment" and using theories of place attachment and its dimensions, introduced this phenomenon in the neighborhood level as a psychological process consisting of three cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, considering it to refer to residents' positive feelings about their place of residence and a positive link between residents and social and physical environment formed and developed over time.

Despite the ambiguities in research literature about the overlapping concepts, all research emphasized on the positive people-place ties at the neighborhood scale and the resulting positive outcomes of these links such as development of positive interactions and intimate relationships among residents (Bakhtiari, 2010, p. 73), increasing social trust (Mobaraki & Salahi, 2014, p. 278; Bakhtiari, 2010, p. 90), forming social capital (Arabi, Tavousi, & Mousavi, 2017, p. 23), strengthening social and psychological security (Azamzadeh & Jahangiri, 2014, p. 46), improving social cohesion and solidarity (Mobaraki & Salahi, 2014, p. 278; Amirkafi & Fathi, 2011, p. 10; Bastani & Nikzad, 2014, p. 202), increasing accountability and participation and promoting people's self-help in local affairs (Arabi, Tavousi, & Mousavi, 2017, p. 23; Mobaraki & Salahi, 2014, p. 281; Mohammadi, Hasaninejad, & Osanloo, 2014, p. 11; Jamshidiha Parvai, Piri, & Hajbagheri, 2014, p. 6; Bastani & Nikzad, 2014, p. 198; Amirkafi & Fathi, 2011, p. 6), increasing people's greater

tendency to invest in the neighborhood (Mohammadi, Hasaninejad, & Osanloo, 2014, p. 11; Bastani & Nikzad, 2014, p. 200), tendency to continue living and stability of residence (Rezvan & Fathi, 2012, p. 398; Azamzadeh & Jahangiri, 2014, p. 46; Bastani & Nikzad, 2014, p. 198; Kamalipour, Yeganeh, & Alalhesabi, 2012, p. 462), expanding volunteering activities (Mobaraki & Salahi, 2014, p. 283; Bastani & Nikzad, 2014, p. 201), reducing social anomalies (Mobaraki & Salahi, 2014, p. 276; Arabi, Tavousi, & Mousavi, 2017, p. 23), improving mental health (Mobaraki & Salahi, 2014, p. 276; Arabi, Tavousi, & Mousavi, 2017, p. 23), and increasing happiness and social vitality (Mobaraki & Salahi, 2014, p. 276).

Studies have also demonstrated that weak people-place bonds in the neighborhood can culminate in harmful effects on the neighborhood, reducing the sense of security and stability (Lak, 2016, p. 21), reducing neighborhood relations, and increasing the tendency to leave the neighborhood (Arabi, Tavousi, & Mousavi, 2017, p. 22; Lak, 2016, p. 28), developing the spirit of utilitarianism (Arabi, Tavousi, & Mousavi, 2017, p. 22), increasing social harms (Montazerolhodjah, Sharifnejad, & Dehghan, 2017, p. 46; Kamalipour, Yeganeh, & Alalhesabi, 2012, p. 460) and social disorganization and chaos (Arabi, Tavousi, & Mousavi, 2017, p. 22; Kamalipour, Yeganeh, & Alalhesabi, 2012, p. 460).

Table 5: Frequency of Neighborhood Attachment Studies Based on Research Strategies, Methods, and Tools

Research Strategy	Articles		Research Methodology	Data Collection Tools
	No.	%		
Quantitative	16	81	Survey	Inventory
Qualitative	4	14	Underlying Theory and Phenomenology	In-depth Interview, Observation, and Open Questionnaire
Combined	1	5	Simultaneous Composition	The Questionnaire, Observation, and In-Depth Interview

A review of research literature from a methodology perspective, as well as research strategies and data collection tools, demonstrated that research has usually been conducted within the framework of two quantitative or qualitative methodological approaches. Also, a review of selected studies suggested that quantitative approaches and survey methods (81%) have been used more with inventories being employed in the research literature.

4.2. Study Findings on Factors Affecting People-Neighborhood Ties

In this section, the variables and factors affecting the relationship between people and place in three dimensions of human, spatial, and process are explained.

4.2.1. People Dimension

The individual aspect of the people dimension has been the most repetitive variable in research literature

based on a quantitative approach. In this dimension, "duration of residence" followed by the variable "age" were studied more while "residence of relatives in the neighborhood" and "experience of movement and mobility" less than other variables. Variables of "Household income level" variables (Arabi, Tavousi, & Mousavi, 2017, p. 28; Jamshidiha Parvai, Piri, & Hajbagheri, 2014, p. 17; Bastani & Nikzad, 2014, p. 121) and "residence of relatives in the neighborhood" (Kamalipour, Yeganeh, & Alalhesabi, 2012, p. 446) were found to be significantly and positively related

with, and "experience of movement and mobility" negatively and significantly related with the bonds (Amirkafi & Fathi, 2011, p. 36). Although most studies confirmed the positive and significant relationship between the two variables of "age" and "duration of residence", the study by Jamshidiha et al. (2014) suggested that the variable of age did not have any significant effect on these links. Findings from the effect of variables of gender, marriage, housing ownership, and level of education were not consistent in different studies either (Table 6).

Table 6: The Relationship between Human Dimension Variables and People-Neighborhood Links in the 2001-2019 Research Literature

Variables	Type of Relationship (No. of Studies)
Age	Positively Significant (4) Neutral (1)
Duration of Residence	Positively Significant (7)
Marital Status	Positively Significant (2) Neutral (1)
Level of Household Income/Expenditure	Positively Significant (3)
Experience of Movement and Mobility	Negatively Significant (1)
Gender	Positively Significant (2) Neutral (1)
Residence of Relatives in the Neighborhood	Positively Significant (1)
Ownership	Positively Significant (1) / Neutral (1)
Level of Education	Positively Significant (1) / Negatively Significant (1) / Neutral (1)

Qualitative studies focused less on the effects of the human dimension, with only "duration of residence" and "continuity of residence" meaningless experience of movement at the individual level and "presence of a specific cultural identity" (Sharemi & Partovi, 2010, p. 36), "social identity", meaning common linguistic and religious characteristics (Zamani & Honarvar, 2018, p. 167) at the collective level, being identified as factors affecting these bonds.

4.2.2. Place Dimension

"Accessibility to amenities, local services and facilities" was the most frequently used variable in

the physical dimension of place, having a significant and positive relationship with these links (Table 7) (Majidi & Heidari, 2017, p. 18; Montazerolhodjah, Sharifnejad, & Dehghan, 2017, p. 49; Mobaraki & Salahi, 2014, p. 291; Amirkafi & Fathi, 2011, p. 36; Kamalipour, Yeganeh, & Alalhesabi, 2012, p. 466). Examining the effect of the variable of "place qualities", people's perception of such indicators as visual conflict and diversity, structural boundaries and territory, human scale, diverse and desirable perspectives, as well as identifiable entrance to the neighborhood (Montazerolhodjah, Sharifnejad, 2017, p. 47) were measured.

Table 7: The Relationship between Structural Variables of Place and People-Neighborhood Bonds in the Research Literature of in 2001-2019

Variables	Type of Relation (No. of Articles)
Availability of Facilities and Services	Positively Significant (5)
Presence of Open Spaces	Positively Significant (1)
Congestion	Negatively Significant (1)
Maintenance, Cleanliness, and Hygiene	Positively Significant (2)
Residence Type: High-Rise	Negatively Significant (2)
Environmental Comfort	Positively Significant (2)
Quality of Service and Neighborhood Productivity	Neutral (2)
Hierarchical System	Positively Significant (1)
Natural Elements	Positively Significant (1)
Place Qualities	Positively Significant (1)
Accessibility and Permeability	Positively Significant (2)
Readability	Positively Significant (1)
Beauty and Symbol	Positively Significant (1)
Identity	Positively Significant (1)

Concerning the social dimension of place, peoples' social relationship with the local community was examined in the form of such themes as social interactions (Vahida & Negini, 2012, p. 48; Montazerolhodjah, Sharifnejad, & Dehghan, 2017, p. 48), local relations network (Bastani & Nikzad, 2014, p. 123), local social links (Amirkafi & Fathi, 2011, p. 34), neighborhood socialization (Majidi & Heiydari, 2017, p. 18), time (Montazerolhodjah, Sharifnejad, & Dehghan, 2017, p. 47) and daily encounters (Kamalipour, Yeganeh, & Alalhesabi, 2012, p. 466), all of which confirmed a significant and positive relationship with neighborhood attachment (Table 8). "Time" was investigated from the view of laying the ground for holding various ceremonies in the neighborhood (Montazerolhodjah, Sharifnejad, & Dehghan, 2017, p. 48). The salient point in the literature review was the fact that the trans-local relations network of individuals didn't affect people-neighborhood links (Bastani & Nikzad, 2014, p. 123). Findings from qualitative studies suggested the effect of structural factors (subjective and objective factors) such as neighborhood enclosure, modern buildings with beautiful views, identity-generating elements

and history of the neighborhood, environmental and physical desirability, responsiveness to the needs as meaning access to services, free access to pattern, individual freedom, gender-sexual differences and activity diversity on people-neighborhood links (Sharemi & Partovi, 2010, p. 31; Rostamalizadeh & Nemati, 2015, p. 168). "Space-time consistency" was found to have a positive effect on people-neighborhood links for strengthening readability, protecting and continuing place meanings, individual and collective memories and traditions, "visual utility" meaning the existence of historical buildings, signs, quality of the public and building views, and bond with nature (Zamani & Honarvar, 2018, p. 169).

As for the social dimension of place, the intimacy in the local community, the presence of rich human relations, neighborhood and kinship relations, and collaboration were found to have a positive effect on these links. Also, "neighborhood prestige", which is directly related to the physical and social status of the neighborhood, was found to affect people-neighborhood bonds (Zamani & Honarvar, 2018, p. 168; Rostamalizadeh & Nemati, 2015, p. 167).

Table 8: Relationship between Social Variables of Place and People-neighborhood Bonds from 2001-2019

Variable	Type of Relation (No. of Articles)
Individual's Local Relations Network	Positively Significant (1)
Individual's Trans-Local Relations Network	Neutral (1)
Local Social Links	Positively Significant (1)
Social Interactions	Positively Significant (2)
Cultural Tensions	Positively Significant (1)
Daily Encounters	Positively Significant (1)
Lack of Participation	Negatively Significant (1)
Offenses	Negatively Significant (1)
Socialization	Positively Significant (1)
Social and Economic Welfare	Positively Significant (1)

4.2.3. Process Dimension

The most repetitive variables in form of various subjects such as collective spirit, readiness for voluntarily activity, teamwork, cooperation with neighborhood institutions, were found to have a significant and positive relationship with people-neighborhood links (Arabi, Tavousi, & Mousavi, 2017, p. 28; & Jahani, 2012, p. 29; Saraei, Oshnooi, & Roustaa, 2016; Mobaraki & Salahi, 2014, p. 282; Jamshidiha Parvai, Piri, & Hajbagheri, 2014, p. 23). As the findings

demonstrated, these links were associated with such emotions as mental security and peace (Amirkafi & Fathi, 2011, p. 34; Azamazadeh & Jahangiri, 2014, p. 52; Mohammadi, Hasaninejad, & Osanloo, 2014, p. 23), as well as commitment (Shamaei & Jahani, 2012, p. 30; Mobaraki & Salahi, 2014, p. 283). The issue of social trust was investigated at the "interpersonal", "generalized" and "institutional" levels, and only the relationship between interpersonal trust and these links was not confirmed (Bakhtiari, 2010, p. 88).

Table 9: Relationship between Process Dimension Variables and People-Neighborhood Links in 2001-2019 Literature Review

Variables	Type of Relations (No. of Articles)	
Emotional	Feeling of Mental Security and Peace	Positively Significant (3)
	Social Trust	Positively Significant (3)
	Interpersonal Social Trust	Neutral (1)
	Commitment	Positively Significant (3)
Cognitive	Knowledge of the Neighborhood	Positively Significant (2)

	Variables	Type of Relations (No. of Articles)
Behavioral	Informal Social Control	Positively Significant (1)
	Social Order	Positively Significant (1)
	Participation and Collective Spirit	Positively Significant (5)

The results from qualitative researches that focused less on psychological processes demonstrated that as for the cognitive dimension, "gaining good experiences and memories" leads to a sense of composure, satisfaction, strengthening the people-neighborhood link (Rostamalizadeh & Nemati, 2015, p. 167). Tendency to continue living in the neighborhood and participating in neighborhood affairs, as well as the behavioral outcomes of these links were recognized. Weak links also discouraged residents from local affairs (Lak, 2016, p. 26).

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Reviewing experimental research on neighborhood attachment from 2001-2019, this article sought to examine researchers' attitudes on this issue and to provide a regular overview of the factors affecting its formation. The identification of 140 articles on people-place bonds indicates the importance of place and growing attention of researchers to these psychological ties; this is while most common studies at the neighborhood scale confirm the significance of neighborhood-driven issues as well as emotional and psychological dimensions in urban planning and design.

An overview of a literature review from the perspective

of conceptual formulation of neighborhood attachment indicated that most researchers saw it as a kind of psychological link containing emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. As for the emotional dimension, residents' neighborhood attachment was related to the formation of a sense of security and peace of living in the neighborhood, social trust, and a sense of commitment to it. Concerning the cognitive dimension, this link helped residents recognize the spatial and social organization of the neighborhood. In the meantime, it was found that increased residence time helped develop residents' social interactions, their daily encounters, more presence in local public spaces, creating memories and neighborhood identity. A strong or weak link is represented in residents' behavioral patterns. All research done in the country have demonstrated that neighborhood attachment entails positive outcomes at the individual and collective levels, thereby creating a collective spirit and collaboration in neighborhood affairs (Figure 2). Therefore, it seems that strengthening the psychological links between people and neighborhoods and examining the effects of any urban development action on these links could serve as an important strategy to improving participation among residents, helping sustainable development of local communities.

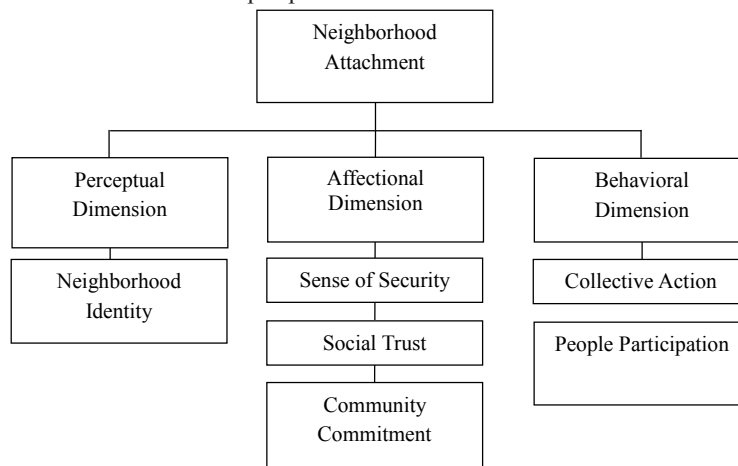


Fig. 2. Conceptual Dimensions of Neighborhood Attachment in the Literature Review

An overview of the concept "neighborhood attachment" in the literature review indicates the predominance of quantitative studies and concentration on measuring the strength of the link as well as the research gaps, requiring a detailed review process of it. Moreover, different types of neighborhood attachment as affected by different spatial characteristics of the neighborhood (morphology, formal and informal features) or its people dimensions (individual and collective characteristics

such as gender, age, plurality, and homogeneity) have not been studied in the literature as this can promise a new perspective for future studies.

Although "neighborhood" has been the most repetitive scale in the research, none of the studies has offered a clear definition of this spatial concept with the conceptual relationship between neighborhood and attachment as a psychological process has not been explained. Moreover, it is not clear whether or not the

researchers perceived the concept of the neighborhood as the residents did. Therefore, it is suggested to provide a place theory in general and neighborhood theory, in particular, to coherently explain this phenomenon in future studies.

As for the human dimension of people-neighborhood links, "time" in the form of two variables of "age" and "duration of residence", were found to be the factors affecting these bonds. The results showed that older people tended to have more attachment to the neighborhood. Also, as the duration of residence increased, the attachment to the neighborhood in the residents increased. However, the questions are:

What factors affect neighborhood attachment among new residents or residents who have witnessed fundamental changes? and

What physical or social characteristics can help establish this bond?

This issue is critical for policy-making to strengthen people-neighborhood ties as it will help regenerating dilapidated structures and neighborhoods witnessing high population changes.

Because the results did not account for the effects of such variables as gender, education level, housing ownership, and marital status, it is thus required to perform further studies to identify how they have affected these links. The complex relationship between gender and neighborhood attachment requires in-depth studies to identify different types of attachment in gender groups and to compare the behavioral and psychological outcomes from these bonds in these groups.

Research has demonstrated that better access to local services improves residents' attachment to

the neighborhood. Since universal theories have introduced neighborhood attachment as a different phenomenon for residents' satisfaction, the study of neighborhood attachment in neighborhoods with lower residents' satisfaction can help researchers better understand the nature of this tie. Relying on findings from measuring people-neighborhood relationships through participants' mental evaluation is not valid, because residents' positive evaluation of neighborhood structural factors can originate from their emotional connection with neighborhood residents, social place dimensions, or their good memories and experiences within that neighborhood. Therefore, it is suggested to identify measurable indicators for an objective, independent and impartial measurement of spatial qualities of the neighborhood. The use of self-report tools via asking people questions led to a Mono-Method bias in the research. Therefore, it is recommended to design new and combined tools (such as photo-based methods, etc.) and to employ a qualitative and mixed approach in research to remove redundant researches, and to provide new insights on place attachment theory. Research findings confirm the effects of social dimensions of neighborhoods in the form of variables such as local personal relationships network, peoples' social interactions and bonds, and their daily interactions on people-neighborhood ties. Thus, it is suggested to conduct studies to examine the effect of various social organizations and networks of various traditional and civil institutions on neighborhood attachment in different neighborhoods across the country.

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HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Khabiri, S., Pourjafar, M.R., & Izadi, M.S. (2021). Place Attachment at the Neighborhood Scale: A Systematic Review of Two Decades of Research in Iran. *Armanshahr Architecture & Urban Development Journal*. 14(34), 177-187.

DOI: 10.22034/AAUD.2020.192890.1927

URL: http://www.armanshahrjournal.com/article_131927.html



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