Research Paper

Neighborhood Definition: A Comparison between Residents' and Experts' Points of Views Case of Study of a Historical Neighborhood in Kermanshah, Iran

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Abstract
This study aims to extract parameters defining neighborhoods from the residents' points of view and compare them to those understood by experts. Experts' proposed parameters and factors were extracted from the literature review, and residents' parameters were obtained from conducting in-depth interviews analyzed by the Grounded theory method. Comparing experts' and residents' parameters shows weak, medium, and strong conformity between their parameters. Also, their factors, which are defining parameters, are different. Thus, parameters defining neighborhoods are not generalizable and cultural characteristics and local values of residents need to be considered in planning and policymaking for neighborhoods.

1. INTRODUCTION

Neighborhoods have been considered an urban planning unit since the Industrial Revolution and increasingly become more important as a suitable tool in urban developments (Jenks & Dempsey, 2007) and as a planning unit that offers the best lens to understand the anatomy of cities at a micro-level (Rohe, 2009). The influence of neighborhoods on various aspects of urban life is widely acknowledged by experts (Baffoe, 2019; Gibbons, 2003). Many experts tried to propose a standard definition for the neighborhood. During two past decades, some researchers have criticized the transferability of neighborhood definitions to all contexts (Berk, 2005; Wang & Aoki, 2019). They believed that neighborhood planning and policy-making should also consider contextual social and cultural aspects (Spilsbury et al., 2009; Wikström et al., 2010). Also,

some have gone further and have investigated the definition of the neighborhood based on residents' perspectives (Bottini, 2018; Colburn et al., 2020; Wang & Aoki, 2019).

Despite the changes in international approaches for recognizing a neighborhood, the definition of the neighborhood used in urban projects in Iran is a general understanding of international literature mostly proposed by western experts. It relies on the physical characteristics of neighborhoods, like population and size. However, Iran's historic neighborhoods have been gradually evolved by residents over a long period and have their own character. Although the definition that is the basis of neighborhood planning in Iran has already been criticized in research, no research has been done that compares residents' views of a neighborhood in Iran with experts' opinions.

Therefore, this research aims to investigate the

generalizability of widely accepted definitions of the neighborhood in the Iranian urban context. To achieve the purpose, the historical neighborhood of Sartapeh-Shotorgaloo in Kermanshah City is chosen as the case study. The main question of this research is: 'what are the probable differences between international experts' definitions of neighborhood and residents' one?' The following are three main steps of this study to answer this question:

a) Reviewing international literature on the concept of neighborhood and extracting parameters and factors from experts' points of view;

b) Interviewing with residents of the case study to extract parameters and factors of neighborhood definition from residents' points of view; and

c) Comparing the parameters obtained in the first two steps.

Figure 1 shows the research diagram.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As a basic planning unit, the neighborhood has always been of particular interest to planners and urban visionaries (Rohe, 2009). Therefore, numerous definitions have been presented for the neighborhood by experts. In this research, the literature about neighborhood definition has been reviewed and the three following main approaches were recognized.

2.1. One: Physical Approach

Some experts introduce physical parameters defining neighborhoods such as population, density, area, necessary infrastructures, and distance to public transport stations (Bambra, 2006; Talen, 2003). The emphasis of some of the experts on the physical parameters is because of their effort to define a neighborhood as a "self-sufficient and independent" area which is a "balanced combination of human functions and activities" that is built "around a certain center" with a certain distance (Duany et al., 2001; Perry, 1929) which in addition to "meeting the needs of residents" (Barton, 2013), it also "improves the quality of life" (Kotler, 2005; Williams & Howard, 1985).

2.2. Two: Social Approach

Although physical definitions were able to help urban planning, some researchers criticized generalizing these definitions for all contexts (Berk, 2005; Haney & Knowles, 1978; Wang & Aoki, 2019). It is suggested that perceptual, social, and cultural aspects should also be considered in neighborhood planning and policy-making (De Coster et al., 2006; Lewicka, 2005; Spilsbury et al., 2009; Wikström et al., 2010).

Some of these experts present the neighborhood as a social unit (Power, 2004; Turner & Fichter, 1972) that has no relation to physical boundaries and physical criteria (Davies & Herbert, 1993; Webber, 2016). They believe that a neighborhood is a response to "the most basic human need, which means that living in society" (Mumford, 1938) and it is formed regardless of any planning (Jacobs, 1961). Thus, a neighborhood can be known as a symbol of social and cultural dynamism (Thrift, 1983) and a tool for cultural continuity in order to improve memory and collective identity (Mumford, 1961). Some studies investigated the effects of social aspects on the form and spatial structure of neighborhoods (Bottini, 2018; Guite et al., 2006; Zhu, 2015). Also, some studies have examined the negative consequences of ignoring the social aspects of neighborhoods (Basta et al., 2010; Browning & Soller, 2014).
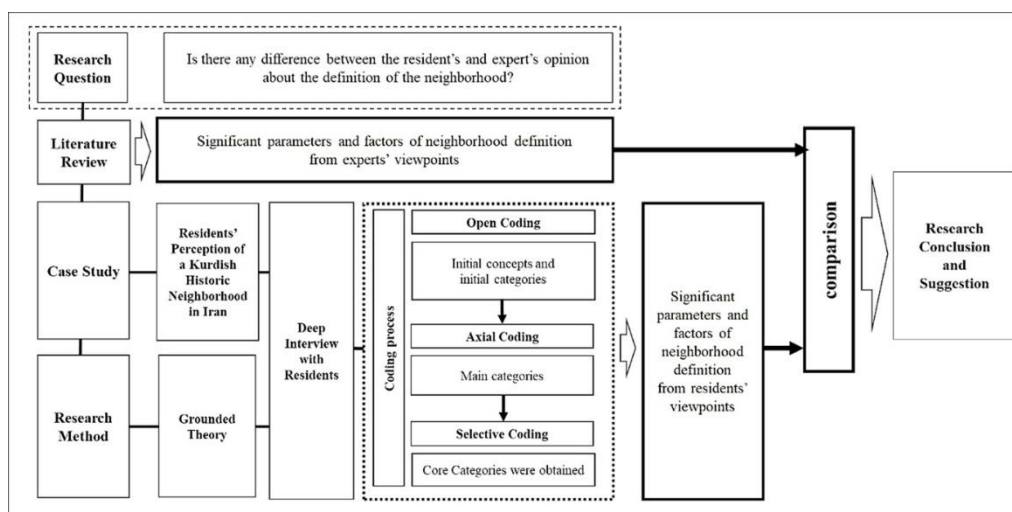

Fig 1. Research Diagram

2.3. Three: Physical and Social Approaches

The third group of experts defined a neighborhood as a social unit based on location and people's beliefs. For them, "neighborhoods are a mosaic of local communities which have clear boundaries and a high degree of identity" (Rapoport, 1977). In this approach, local stores for example are not only a physical-functional unit for meeting the basic needs of residents but also a place for neighborhood residents to meet and talk (Carmona et al., 2003; Galster, 2001). This group considers the neighborhood as a programmable ecological unit (Duany et al., 2003; Galster, 2001), where people interact with each other (Cowan & Rogers, 2005) by finding common intellectual and cultural commonalities with others (Berk, 2005; Witherick et al., 2001). In these settings, people make deep bonds and relationships (Barton, 2013) leading to the formation of a collective identity (Rapoport, 1977). The third group of experts believes that the residents of a neighborhood determine the territory of their neighborhood (Lynch, 1960) by determining the implicit and physical boundaries. Over time, residents feel a sense of belonging to the designated territory and the formed collective identity (Relph, 1976).

Some studies took a more flexible approach and investigated the definition of the neighborhood based on residents' perspectives (Bottini, 2018; Colburn et al., 2020; Coulton et al., 2011; Orford & Leigh, 2014; Wang et al., 2019; Wang & Aoki, 2019). Neighborhoods with different sizes (Berk, 2005; Campbell et al., 2009; De Marco & De Marco, 2010) and social classes have also been investigated (Berk, 2005; Hastings, 2007; Orford & Leigh, 2014; Semken et al., 2009). Researchers have elicited assessment of quantitative aspects such as size and geographic location of the neighborhood (Coulton et al., 2013; Forrest, 2009; Semken et al., 2009) as well as qualitative aspects such as type, lifestyles, and conceptualities (Campbell et al., 2009; Coulton et al., 2001; Roosa et al., 2009).

All in all, the neighborhood theoretical literature review shows that the concept is a "dynamic and ever-shifting concept" (Kallus & Law-Yone, 2000). It is a subset of a larger complex (Alexander et al., 1977; Pevsner, 1943) which has specific mechanisms for itself. Neighborhoods with a small-scale size can manage the chaos and organizational complexity of cities (Herbert, 1963; Keller, 1968). Furthermore, the neighborhood is a capable unit to create common relations and human community (Lebel et al., 2007). In this research, after reviewing various sources, we provide a relatively comprehensive classification of the factors that define the neighborhood parameters. Table 1 shows these parameters, each parameter's factors, and a list of experts who suggested them.

Table 1. Parameters and Factors of Neighborhood based on Experts' Definitions

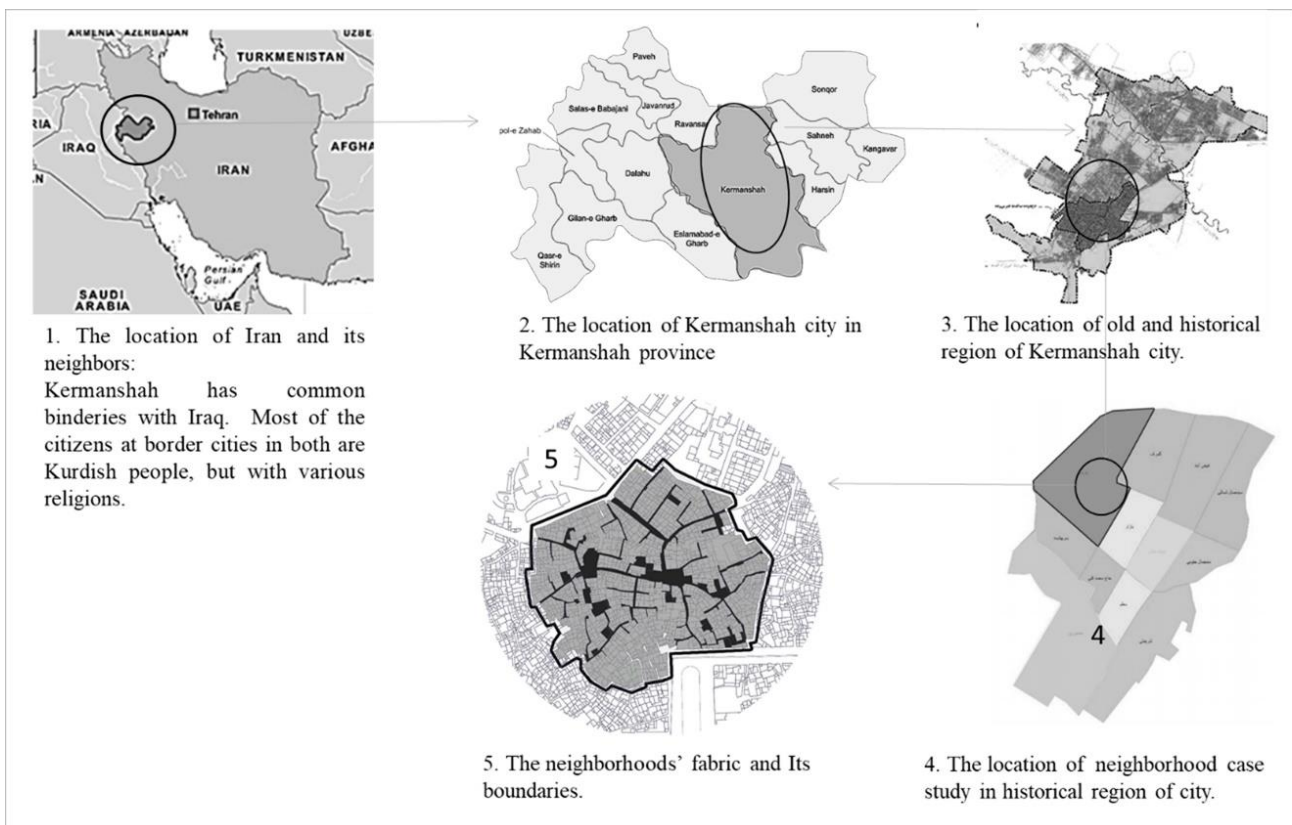| Parameter	Factors	References
Physical Properties	population, density, and area	Perry (1929), Kotler (1969), Coulton et al. (2001), Forrest & Kearns (2001), Martin (2003), Talen (2003), Mullan et al. (2004), Lee et al. (2008), Lawhon (2009)
Self-Sufficiency	easy access to services (elementary school, grocery, supermarket, public transportation, parks, and religious places), response to daily needs with walking, variety of land use, and cultural and entertainment centers	Perry (1929), Mumford (1938), Kotler (1969), Duany et al. (2003), Wheeler et al., (2005), Farr et al., (2008), Lee et al. (2008), Hur at al., (2010)
Form and Structure	specific center, specific boundaries, physical integrity, functional integrity, continuity and conjunction, edge, signs and nodes, roads and paths, access network, activity centers, and green and natural spaces	Mumford (1938), lynch (1960), Keller (1968), Kotler (1969), Thrift (1983), Tiesdell & Heath (1996), Alexander et al. (1997), Galster (2001), Carmona et al. (2003), Duany et al. (2003), Cowan (2005)
Sense of Place	cognitive and perceptual factors (satisfaction, identification and attachment to communities), cultural, social and personal factors, a physical symbol, sense of belonging to a group, a tendency to participation, strong social connection, socio-demographic, social, and physical predictors	Mumford (1938), Jacobs (1961), Relph (1976), Proshansky (1978), Thrift (1983), Schulz (1984), Davies & Herbert (1993), Power (2004), Smaldone et al. (2008), Morgan (2010), Scannell & Gifford (2010), Lewicka (2011), Seamon (2013), Brown et al. (2015), Beidler & Morrison (2016), Masterson et al. (2017), Malpas (2018)
Social Interactions	meeting, interaction and communication among neighbors, tendency to use and go to public places of neighborhood, and social solidarity	Keller (1968), Turner & Fichter (1972), Rappaport (1977), Thrift (1983), Schulz (1984), Small & Wirhrick (1990), Berk (2005), Cowan (2005)
Identity	territory of a specific group (culture, religion, job, and lifestyle), and distinctive features (specific activities and behaviors of residents, environmental or historical features)	Relph (1976), Rappaport (1977), Thrift (1983), Schulz (1984), Tiesdell & Heath (1996)

3. CASE STUDY

This research's case study, Sartapeh-Shotorgaloo, is one of the five historical neighborhoods of Kermanshah City, Iran. The City of Kermanshah is located in the west of Iran in the Kermanshah Province, near the border of Iran and Iraq (Figure 2). It is the largest Kurdish province in Iran, which has several subcultures with different ethnicities and religions such as Islam (Shia & Sunni), Zoroastrian, Yarsan, and Jewish. Before the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), the historic center of Kermanshah had retained its organically-grown pattern, but most of its parts were bombed and destroyed during the war. After the war, these neighborhoods were revitalized without considering their historic characteristics. This led to the destruction of their organic structure and, consequently, changed the demographics. Before the war, the people of each tribe lived in their own neighborhoods, and neighborhoods were divided according to the religion and language of the inhabitants.

Sartapeh-Shotorgaloo neighborhood, the case of study of this paper, is a part of a broader region called Chennai. The physical characteristic of this neighborhood has remained largely intact despite the devastation caused by the war and contemporary construction. However, its social context has undergone fundamental changes due to the immigration of most of the original Shia residents and the settlement of new Sunni residents. Since the formation of this neighborhood (approximately two hundred years ago), Shia people have lived here. Nevertheless, with the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war about 20 years ago, most of them migrated to other cities and never returned. In the last decade, new Sunni residents have settled in this neighborhood. Although Sunnis now make up most of this neighborhood's residents, none of them has a long, continuous history of living in the neighborhood.

To achieve the aim of this paper, comparing the residents' definition of the neighborhood and experts' one, remembering the situation of the neighborhood before the war is an important criterion for selecting the sample of research. Therefore, in this article, the sample has been chosen from Shia residents who have a long account of living in this neighborhood and thus remember the neighborhood's past. It should be mentioned that the difference between these two groups is not only in terms of religion but also in terms of language and culture. However, the lifestyles of both Shias, who are the long-lasting residents, and Sunnis, who are the newly-settled ones, are still influenced by their culture and religion and have not been strongly influenced by globalization. Figures 3 and 4 show the neighborhood and its residents' lifestyles.

1. The location of Iran and its neighbors:
Kermanshah has common binderies with Iraq. Most of the citizens at border cities in both are Kurdish people, but with various religions.

2. The location of Kermanshah city in Kermanshah province

3. The location of old and historical region of Kermanshah city.

5. The neighborhoods' fabric and Its boundaries.

4. The location of neighborhood case study in historical region of city.

Fig 2. The Case Study Location (Authors, based on Kermanshah Master Plan, 2008)

Fig 3. The physical structure of the neighborhood has remained intact and mostly includes organic fabric, one- or two-story buildings, a harmonic skyline, narrow streets, and basic urban infrastructure

Fig 4. Neighbor's communication: Residents have a great tendency to communicate with each at their door fronts or in alleys

4. RESEARCH METHOD

4.1. Approach

To seek an answer to the research question, in the first step, parameters defining neighborhoods from experts' points of view were extracted using content analysis and presented in the literature review section. In the next step, to find residents' perspectives about the neighborhood definition, the Grounded Theory method was used. Grounded Theory is a qualitative research method that helps researchers develop the theory behind a concern related to a population of the substantive area (Li et al., 2019). Grounded Theory is widely used to figure out questions such as: "What is going on here?" or "How do people understand and deal with circumstances around them?" (Becker, 1993).

4.2. Recruitment and Sampling

As mentioned above, two groups live in the neighborhood; long-lasting residents who are Shia who recently have become the minority in the

neighborhood and the newly-settled Sunni residents who nowadays shape the majority in the community. This research participant was selected from the Shia residents who had continuously lived in the area for over 25 past years.

Participants were selected from the long-lasting group using the snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling is a recruitment method that employs research into participants' social networks to access specific populations, not randomly (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Browne, 2005). Based on this method, participants were chosen in two main ways: a) according to primary observations and inferences in case studies circumference, and b) each participant suggested the next participant according to their understanding of the interview.

Due to the nature of qualitative research, the study sample size was not determined from the beginning. The sampling was continued until reaching the data saturation point. Data saturation in the Grounded Theory concept was coined from what is known as "theoretical saturation" (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). As described by Morse (2004), this concept refers to the phase of qualitative data analysis in which the researcher has continued sampling and analyzing data until no new data appear and all concepts of the theory are well developed.

To evaluate the validity of the Grounded Theory, two methods are usually used: a) validation by participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) and b) validation by experts (Lak, 2015). In this paper, both methods were used to check the validity. Participants were asked to evaluate the overall findings using the first method and comment on their accuracy. In the second method, four university faculty members familiar with the grounded theory and qualitative research method were asked to review the various stages of data collection, coding, and conceptualization and express their views.

In this research, data were saturated after 18 interviews. To check the validity of data saturation, four more residents were interviewed again. Then, 22 individuals were interviewed altogether, including 11 men and 11 women.

4.3. Data Collection

The average age of the 22 participants was 63 years with 55.5 years average length of living in the neighborhood. One of the limitations of the study was recruiting younger participants, as most youths out-migrated from the neighbourhood. Table 2 shows the respondents' characteristics. The interviews were conducted in different places such as streets, residents' front doors, and stores. Interviews and validation of findings were performed over five months, from November 2019 to April 2020.

Table 1. Participants Characteristics

Participant code	Gender	Age	Duration of residence	Job	Education level
1	Man	81	60	Retired Army	Middle school
2	Woman	60	42	housewife	Diploma
3	Man	52	42	Army	Diploma
4	Woman	54	48	hair stylist	Diploma
5	Man	60	53	Teacher	Bachelor
6	Woman	63	48	Grocer	Middle school
7	Man	58	49	Carpenter	Diploma
8	Woman	67	62	housewife	primary
9	Man	87	65	Greengrocer	illiterate
10	Man	85	35	Baker	primary
11	Woman	43	23	Teacher	Bachelor
12	Man	87	65	Tailor	Middle school
13	Woman	46	46	Tailor	Diploma
14	Woman	78	62	housewife	primary
15	Man	47	35	Mechanic	Diploma
16	Woman	67	55	retired teacher	Diploma
17	Woman	43	35	Carpet weaver	Diploma
18	Man	56	56	LED maker	Diploma
19	Woman	73	73	housewife	Diploma
20	Man	49	26	hair stylist	Middle school
21	Woman	72	35	housewife	illiterate
22	Man	78	37	Greengrocer	primary

The interviews lasted one hour to one-and-a-half hours. Participants tended to talk in detail about their neighbourhood and their associated memories about it. The interview questions revolve around two main topics:

a) Description of the neighborhood, and

b) The characteristics associated with the neighbourhood.

Based on the Grounded Theory method, the interview questions were designed in such a way as not to inspire any specific directions in the participant's answers (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In response to the first question, participants shared memories, characteristics, events, and neighborhood activities in the past and present. The purpose of this question was to obtain their images and the demands of their neighborhood. The second question was to redirect the conversation to focus on the research topic in the interview if they deviated from the subject or misunderstood the purpose of the discussion.

4.4. Data Analysis

With the permission of the participants, interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were encoded step by step based on the Grounded Theory method as Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggested. The first step was 'open coding'. In this step, the interview texts were read and scrutinized line-by-line. Then the sentences or paragraphs with similar meaningful sentences were extracted, categorized, and named as 'primitive statements'. After that, the primitive statements were extracted, categorized, and labeled. These labels were the output of open coding, which were named 'initial categories'. The second step was 'axial coding'. Using the same method, 'initial categories' were grouped and labeled in this step. The labels obtained from axial coding were named 'main categories'. After these two steps, to validate data analysis, the research findings were shared with the participants who were asked to evaluate the overall findings and comment on their accuracy.

4.4.1. Open Coding

This research used 'open coding' based on the Grounded Theory method. Open coding is when 'initial concepts' are extracted from the 'primitive statements' and then 'initial concepts' are categorized to obtain 'initial categories' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). First, the label 'a' was tagged on a primitive statement. Then, the classification and summarization of primitive statements were done and the initial concept of 'aa' was obtained. The initial concepts were then summarized and categorized, and the 'initial category A' was obtained. Examples of open coding are given in Table 3.

The initial concepts were continuously merged and eliminated. Then, 42 initial concepts and 15 initial categories were obtained from the open coding steps of the interviews. Initial categories include: 'identity factors', 'common values', 'social solidarity', 'attachment to place', 'classification and segregation of residents', 'sense of superiority', 'sense of ownership', 'separation and demarcation', 'natural and human-built green elements', 'activity centers', 'physical changes', 'vitality', 'event place', 'sociability', and 'basic services'. Table 4 shows the conversion of initial concepts into initial categories.

Table 3. Open Coding Example (Extracted from Interviews)

Primitive Statement	Initial Concept	Initial Category
a20. In our neighborhood, if a problem was raised, everyone would try to solve it. All the residents cooperate in holding a celebration or mourning ceremony. (No 4) a22. The neighbors had a high spirit of cooperation and men and women cooperate in doing things (No 5).	aa7. collaboration and cooperation (a20, a22)	A3. social solidarity (aa7, aa8)
a23. If a neighbor was in financial trouble, the other neighbors would help him/her (No 3). a25. In winter, neighbors buy oil and food for the poor ones (No 7). a28. The neighbors used to buy food for the poor ones (No 10).	aa8. a sense of responsibility for each other (a23, a25, a28)	
a33. The neighborhood was bombed during the war and some of its parts were destroyed. Subsequently, some of the neighbors migrated to other cities (No 3). a34. The neighbors were reciting poetry in the coffee house. At night, we used to gather around the fountain and drank tea (No 13). a35. The women used to go to the bathroom in groups. Women used to gather and communicate with each other at the yards (No 16).	aa11. common memories (a33, a34, a35)	A4. attachment to place (aa9, aa10, aa11, aa12)

Primitive Statement	Initial Concept	Initial Category
a61. The public bathroom of the neighborhood was buried underground. Previously the neighborhood did not have a pipeline, and the neighborhood's water was supplied from a spring (No 18). a62. The streets were narrow and dirty. Houses were big and had yards, but new constructions cause housing units to become smaller (No 20). a63. We had a mosque here, but now it has been turned into a park (No 2).	aa12. mention important neighborhood events (a61, a62, a63)	
a38. Strangers are very different. [Some of the old residents referred to the newer residents as strangers] (No 6). a39. Old residents are reluctant to welcome strangers (No 22). a40. Strangers have different languages and religions. They have changed the neighborhood culture (No 11).	aa13. themselves (strangers) (a38, a39, a40)	A5. classification and segregation of residents (aa13, aa14)
a41. Our culture is different from theirs (new residents), we are old residents, and we have nothing to do with the new ones (No 9). a42. We do not have cooperation or share a communal feeling with the new residents (No 12).	aa14. ourselves (a41, a42)	
a49. Since the old residents left the neighborhood, intimacy has diminished (No 17). a50. We are not comfortable with new residents. They have changed values (No 1). a52. I have no desire to be in the neighborhood since the new residents arrived (No 2).	aa18. dissatisfaction with social fabric change (a49, a50, a52)	A7. sense of ownership (aa18, aa19, aa20)
a55. I was born in this neighborhood, got married, and had a child here (No 4). a56. I have lived in this neighborhood for thirty years; I have been in this neighborhood since I was a child (No 8).	aa19. mention the length of residence (a55, a56)	

Table 4. Open Coding Analysis Process (Extracted from Interviews)

Category Connotation	Initial Category
religion, dress language,	identity factors
intimacy, kindness, trust	common values
collaboration and cooperation, a sense of responsibility to the other	social solidarity
accurate introduction of residents, knowledge of neighborhoods and spaces of the neighborhood, common memories, mentioning important events in the neighborhood	attachment to place
themselves (strangers), ourselves	classification and segregation of residents
mentioning famous people, mentioning the advantages of the neighborhood, mentioning the advantages of the residents of the neighborhood	sense of superiority
dissatisfaction with the change in the social context, mentioning the age of residence, the use of property pronouns	sense of ownership
edges, signs, paths	separation and demarcation
view of natural elements, green space, trees and shrubs, agricultural land	natural and human-built green elements
collective spaces, nodes, order and neighborhood center	activity centers
demolition and change of buildings, demolition and change of passages	physical changes
crowds, local games, nightlife	vitality
hangouts, semi-public spaces, public spaces	event place
conversation, face-to-face relationships	sociability
Stores, school, public bathroom, mosque, water pump, leisure spaces, meeting the residents' daily needs, variety and mixing of land use.	basic services

4.4.2. Axial Coding

In the process of 'axial coding,' researchers categorized and abstracted the 'initial categories' into the 'main categories' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For example, the main category of 'common cultural and value system' is derived from the three initial categories of 'identity factors', 'common values', and 'social solidarity'. According to the axial coding step, 15 'initial categories' were classified into 5 'main categories'. Table 5 shows the categorization and conversion of initial categories into main categories.

5. DISCUSSION

Five main categories were extracted based on data analysis, including 'common cultural and value system', 'sense of place', 'form and structure', 'social interactions', and 'self-sufficiency'. This research considers main categories as the five parameters of neighborhood definition based on residents' viewpoints. Figure 5 shows the repetition rate of each of the initial and main categories.

The Sartapeh-Shotorgaloo neighborhood parameters defined by the residents in order of importance are: 1) sense of place, 2) form and structure, 3) social interactions, 4) common cultural and value system, and 5) self-sufficiency. To answer the research question, the above parameters, which defined the historical neighborhood of Sartapeh-Shotorgaloo in Kermanshah City, are interpreted and compared with the parameters of the neighborhood definition from the viewpoints of experts (presented in Table 1) as followings:

Table 5. Main Categories Formed by Axial Coding (Extracted from Interviews)

Category Connotation	Main Category
identity factors, common values, social solidarity	common cultural and value system
sense of ownership, attachment to place, classification and segregation of residents, sense of superiority	sense of place
natural and human-built green elements, activity centers, physical changes, separation and demarcation	form and structure
sociability, vitality, event place	social interactions
basic services	self-sufficiency
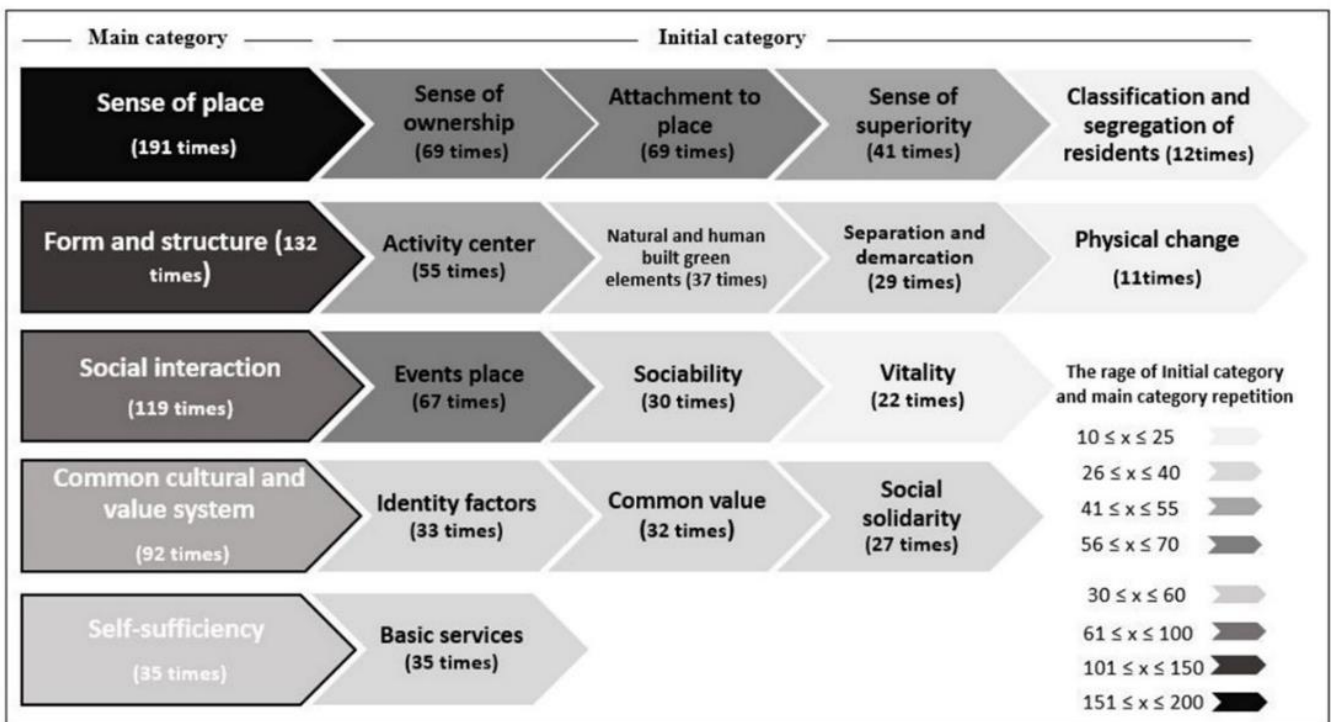
Fig 3. The Five Main Categories and their Initial Categories Repetition Rate (Extracted from Interviews)

5.1. Sense of Place

Although 'sense of place', with the highest repetition (191 times), was the most critical parameter in defining the neighborhood for residents, its factors differ from those presented by experts. While experts define the sense of place as a parameter emphasizing social connection and a sense of belonging to the community, long-lasting Shia residents of the case study strongly emphasize social segregation between themselves and new Sunni residents and a sense of bigotry and ownership of the neighborhood.

Shia residents who lived in the Sartapeh-Shotorgaloo neighborhood for a long time frequently referred to themselves as an independent group with a different identity and superiority over the new Sunni residents. Different religious beliefs were considered the main reason to define such identity and superiority. Participants praised their culture and condemned that of the new residents. In addition, they considered themselves the 'owner' of the neighborhood and were guarded about accepting new residents. Participants wanted to express that they knew their neighborhood exactly. They try to demonstrate it by making repeated references to their place of residence, mentioning details about the history of the neighborhood and their acquaintances in the neighborhood. They also expressed their sense of belonging to the neighborhood by sharing memories and their lack of intention to leave.

According to experts (see Table 1), factors such as length of habitation, sense of attachment, and sense of belonging define the sense of place parameter (Beidler & Morrison, 2016; Brown et al., 2015; Herbert, 1963; Lewicka, 2011; Malpas, 2018; Morgan, 2010; Relph, 1976; Schulz, 1984; Seamon, 2013; Thrift, 1983; Webber, 2016). However, feelings of superiority, the demarcation between oneself and another, and rejections of outsiders, derived from interview analysis, are different from those defining the sense of place and they are more related to a sense of bigotry. Although the sense of place has been repeatedly considered in urban studies, it does not involve the sense of prejudice and bigotry against the neighborhood studies and has been dealt with more in the sociological literature. Comparing the factors that define the sense of place by residents with the factors that experts have used to define the sense of place, shows that these two parameters do not wholly overlap. For this reason, in Figure 6, the 'sense of place' mentioned by residents is weakly correlated with the 'sense of place' mentioned by experts.

5.2. Form and Structure

All participants share a common mental image of the neighborhood. They pointed to key elements of the neighborhood, such as the historic public bath, the water pump, the center of the neighborhood, the alleys defining the neighborhood borders, and nodes such as the Local Park and coffee shop. Such elements reflect the neighborhood's 'form and structure', which is ranked as the second crucial defining parameter of the neighborhood by the residents (with 132 repetitions). Prominent scholars such as Mumford (1938), Thrift (1983), Alexander at al. (1997), and Duany et al. (2003) have referred to the importance of form and structure when defining a neighborhood. Therefore, in Figure 6, the parameter of 'form and structure' in the definition of residents and experts are connected with a strong correlation.

5.3. Social Interactions and Common Cultural and Value System

'Social interaction' (with 119 repetitions) is the third of the five parameters that define the neighborhood from the residents' point of view. Based on the participants' points of view, the neighbors should talk and meet in the neighborhood. They considered one of the strong aspects of their neighborhood to be intimate and friendly relations and the sense of responsibility they feel toward each other.

Participants believed that the condition for having social interactions and relations in their neighborhood is the existence of a 'common cultural and value system' among the residents. The parameter of the common cultural and value system (with 92 repetitions) is the fourth of the five parameters that define the neighborhood for the residents. The participants' statements show that the increasing cultural heterogeneity among the residents has reduced the desire to use and interact in the neighborhood's public spaces and has also led to a sense of dissatisfaction with public life in the neighborhood. They mentioned that the neighborhood should be where people with a common culture, religion, and language would live together. The arrival of new people with different cultures would reduce a sense of solidarity and cooperation among neighbors.

In the urban studies literature, some scholars have defined the concept of the neighborhood as a community in which individuals have strong social interactions and relationships (Carmona et al., 2003; Galster, 2001; Power, 2004; Turner & Fichter, 1972). Social and cultural commonalities between members of the community have also been referred to by Thrift (1983). In experts' definitions, the existence and formation of a common identity among neighbors (Mumford, 1961) were more emphasized than the existence of a common cultural system. Experts did

not suggest the formation of a common identity exclusively based on the existence of cultural similarities. However, what is interpreted from the interviews is that the formation of a common identity and solidarity among the inhabitants is conditional on a common cultural and value system. For this reason, in Figure 6, there is a moderate correlation between the parameters of the 'common cultural system and values' from the perspective of residents and the 'identity' parameter from the perspective of experts. Although 'social interactions' are considered as one of the parameters of neighborhood definition from the standpoint of both residents and experts, due to the mismatch of factors affecting interactions from the perspective of residents and experts, the two are interrelated with moderate correlation.

5.4. Self-Sufficiency

Residents identified their neighborhood with its centrally-located main street where shops are located. According to the residents, the existence of various uses, the availability of commercial stores, and the possibility of meeting the needs of the residents are among the positive aspects of their neighborhood. These factors raised from the residents' points of view are equivalent to the parameters and concepts of 'self-sufficiency' from experts' points of view, ranking fifth and last in the residents' viewpoints with 35 repetitions. However, some scholars give a more

significant role to self-sufficiency and independence when defining a neighborhood (Hur et al., 2010; Kotler, 2005; Lee et al., 2008; Ritchie, 2008; Williams & Howard, 1985). Due to the correlation of the self-sufficiency factors in the definition of residents with the factors expressed by experts, these two parameters are interpreted with high correlation in Figure 6.

Figure 6 shows the degree of conformity of parameters defining neighborhoods for the residents of the case study and experts. Based on Literature Review, six parameters are suggested by experts in defining a neighborhood (parameters listed on the right in Figure 6). However, the interview analysis shows that there are five main parameters in defining the neighborhood (parameters listed on the left in Figure 6). The most important mismatch of parameters is related to 'physical properties' such as neighborhood size, density, and population. Experts believe physical properties are essential aspects of a neighborhood, but not for the residents.

The highest correlation between the parameters for the two groups is between 'form and structure' and 'self-sufficiency'. In addition, there is a moderate correlation between the 'social interaction' parameter from the perspective of residents and experts. It should be noted that despite the common title, both groups recognized different identifying factors for this parameter. At the third level, there is a minor correlation between the 'sense of place' parameter from the residents' point of view and experts' point of view.
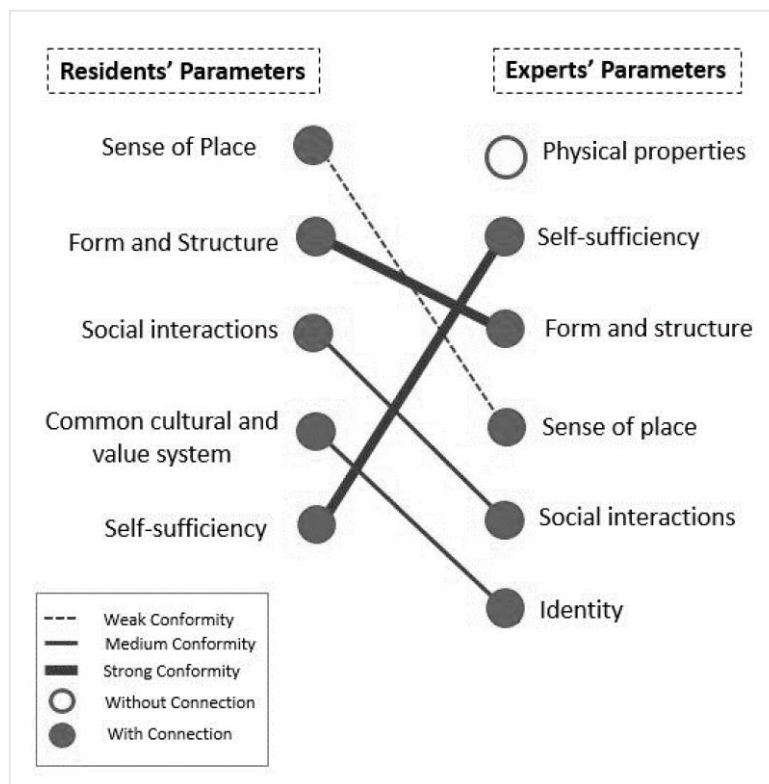
Fig 6. Comparison of Neighborhood Definition Parameters from the Perspectives of the Residents and Experts

6. CONCLUSION

This study indicates that residents of the historical neighborhood of Sartapeh-Shotorgaloo in Kermanshah City in Iran define their neighborhood differently than what international urban literature suggests is a neighborhood. Their definition differs in three ways: a) the parameters defining the neighborhood, b) the factors explaining each parameter, and c) the importance of parameters.

According to experts, six main parameters define a neighborhood: 'physical properties', 'self-sufficiency', 'form and structure', 'sense of place', 'social interactions', and 'identity'. However, according to the residents of the case study, five main parameters define the Sartapeh-Shotorgaloo neighborhood. These parameters in order of importance are 'sense of place', 'form and structure', 'social interactions', 'common cultural and value system', and 'self-sufficiency'.

The most important difference was in the 'physical properties' parameter with population, density, and area as its factors. Although it is an important parameter from the experts' point of view, the residents did not refer to it when describing their neighborhood. This confirms the results of Coulton et al. (2013) and Coulton et al. (2001) to some extent; because these two studies have also concluded that residents' perceptions of the physical characteristics of the neighborhood such as area and boundary are different from the views of urban planners.

The research results show that there is a difference between what is in the plans prepared by urban planners and what residents perceive. This study illustrated what experts refer to as defining physical characteristics of the neighborhood are of little importance to residents, and other parameters are considered significant to residents instead. Based on the results of this study, from the five parameters obtained from the residents' perception of the definition of the neighborhood, the 'sense of place' was identified as the most important and frequently-mentioned parameter. Although some of its defining factors such as place dependence, length of residence, and place attachment cause commonalities with the 'sense of place' parameter suggested by experts. Although studies such as Beidler & Morrison (2016) and Bottini (2018) have focused on the effect of social aspects on the sense of place, the results of the present article, in addition to those aspects, specifically reveal the impact of common religion on the sense of belonging. This is a topic that has not been mentioned in previous research.

The most crucial root of these differences is the sense of bigotry that long-lasting Shia residents of the case study of this research feel about their language, religious, and cultural differences with new Sunni residents. Consequently, the results of the research show that viewpoints of all residents, regardless of their cultural and social roots and length of residency, should be considered in neighborhood plans. Also, it should be noted that in some cases, putting different religious and cultural groups together without consideration of their differences may cause the formation and increase of a sense of bigotry. Therefore, it is suggested that in similar circumstances, increasing public awareness regarding embracing diversity be considered in urban and social plans.

Another difference is in the defining factors of the 'social interactions' parameter. Although both experts and residents have emphasized this parameter, the defining factors by the two groups do not completely overlap. From the residents' point of view, the existence of a 'common cultural and value system' is a necessary condition for the formation of 'social interactions' in the neighborhood, where there are cultural, religious, and linguistic differences between its old and new residents. These differences have caused the parameter of 'identity' suggested by experts to not fully conform to the parameter of 'common cultural and value system' perceived by residents. This study shows that the two parameters of 'form and structure' and 'self-sufficiency' and their defining factors are common in the two groups.

Even though some recent research has focused on the impact of religion, culture, diversity and residents' perceptions of neighborhoods (Bae & Montello, 2018; Colburn et al., 2020; Ellis et al., 2004; Rahnu et al., 2020), the findings of this research indicate that the current parameters and factors of neighborhood definition suggested by experts are not generalizable to all contexts, especially neighborhoods with long-standing residents who share a special cultural and value system. To reduce the risk of failure of social sustainability of neighborhood plans and residents' dissatisfaction, this research suggests considering all groups of residents' opinions in the process of decision-making for their neighborhood.

One of the limitations of the study was recruiting younger participants which were not possible due to the out-migration of younger people to other neighborhoods or larger cities. Therefore, it is suggested that future research focuses on historical neighborhoods with younger residents and investigates the effect of the age variable on the residents' definition of the neighborhood and the parameters that shape it.

To validate the present study, it is suggested that it be carried out in neighborhoods with similar

conditions in other parts of the world, especially in developing and underdeveloped countries. Those studies can compare their results with the results of this study and examine the causes of differences or similarities between the findings. For further validation, it is suggested that future research be conducted in neighborhoods with unique cultural and value systems in different parts of the world. Future research can study the relationship between the success rate of programs by evaluating the appropriateness of the parameters and factors considered by planners and designers in neighborhoods versus those perceived by residents.

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