

Rethinking the Power of place in the Age of Virtual Social Media

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Abstract

In the past years, the use of cyberspace has increased day by day to the point that today, people create personality, gain experience and create memories in these spaces. This has created an emerging phenomenon of virtual space. This should be accepted that nowadays, cyberspace has become a virtual reality. A reality which has created cyberspace accessible as a new experience and opportunity. By using documentary and library methods and with an analytical look, this article seeks to describe the power of place in the form of a sense of place in the virtual age by examining different theoretical perspectives on space and cyberspace. The present article, while does not consider the advent of the digital age and the increasing expansion of cyberspace users as a threat to the sense of place, by using the content analysis method, analyzes the effect of cyberspace on identity and sense of place and provides a codified framework for the power of place in the virtual age. The results show that in the present age, virtual media has a direct effect on the sense of place. And despite the similarities between the components of sense of place in real places and virtual spaces, there are also differences; including indirect but powerful interactions and experiences, removal of temporal / spatial constraints, immersion instead of physical presence, and free and limitless communication in virtual media.

Keywords: Place; Space, Identity; Sense of place; Real; Virtual

1. Introduction

The 21st century has brought with itself a change in the concept of speed and distance, communication and limitations. The proliferation of motor vehicles, air travel and the Internet, the growth of virtual technologies, and all of these innovations have made us move faster and faster in the contemporary world than in any previous generation. In the process, the model of contemporary human life in particular has become more cosmopolitan. Perhaps until about 200 to 100 years ago, most people lived in one place all their lives and had no experience of new habitats, not even visual or auditory experience. As a result, they became increasingly connected to their place of residence and "felt" about it. However, this feeling and connection was not always positive and could have varied from belonging to a place to hating it. This sense, as an important factor in forming human-environment communication bases, provides the basis for improving the quality of the environment. Man's need for emotional, cognitive and behavioral interaction with the place where he lives or in other words "sense of belonging to the place" is one of the most important aspects of the relationship between man and place that should be considered by architects and urban planners. Although our sense of place in today's world may be less intense than it was 200 years ago (Ralph, 2007), it is still essential in the interaction between human and the environment and the quality of this relationship. So it is not a matter of

increasing or decreasing this feeling, it is a matter of changing it. A rapid and dramatic change has undoubtedly occurred under the influence of the technological revolution. This change is not necessarily bad or good. Hence, the goal of this study is to redefine the valuable concept of "sense of place" and "social identity" in the contemporary virtualized world.

The main question of this research is that in the current situation where social media has played a significant role in people's lifestyles and many activities of an objective space are presented virtually and mentally, how is the sense of place defined? Another question is how is social identity defined in these spaces? In this regard, it is not enough to just study the dimensions of the sense of place, but the process of creating a sense of belonging to a place as a multidimensional concept that combines different aspects of people's connection with place, must be accompanied by various factors such as temporal context and a change in people's lifestyle. To provide researchers with a new theoretical framework for promoting sense of place in the globalized and largely virtualized world. Therefore, by reviewing the existing theoretical foundations and frameworks and examining different perspectives and relying on inductive analysis, this research expresses the theoretical framework of the sense of virtual space.

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2. Research Background

Any theoretical research needs a proper database of information obtained from previous researches. This research has also benefited from many studies, including Ralph's (2007) study, which argues that the sense of place and virtual reality are both inextricably linked to cultural-technological turmoil, and emphasizes that our experiences of real places are changing. Buntin (2009) also seeks to answer the question of whether the virtual sense of place can replace the real sense of place? And he answers this question from two perspectives. At first viewpoint, the answer to the question is yes, and by reviewing the entertainment of the younger generation in cyberspace, he states that the possibility of replacing the real sense of place with a virtual sense of place is very high, and this should not be feared. In the second view, the answer to this question is no, and the argument is that the important factors of face-to-face communication and the concept of community and active participation do not allow this alternative. The results of this study show that the sense of place is an intrinsic value, even if inactive, even in an online and virtual space. Maria Giorgio (2010) also addresses the important issue of changing the concept of place in the contemporary world. In the field of globalization studies, for example, space has been challenged as a category that limits phenomena that can no longer be established in a physical place - including interpersonal relationships and social networks which can be named. Abdel-Aziz et al. (2015) conclude that advances in ICT have led to a reduction in activities in the public space because information is easily accessible from the Internet using at home. Dameria et al. (2018) explain how social media provides an indirect experience based on the interaction of people and place and the feeling of familiarity with an unknown or strange place and increases the sense of place. David Seamon (2021) argues that although the sense of place is related to the sensory, perceptual, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of human experience, the sense of place alone cannot be fully described or understood by these empirical dimensions. Sharghi et al. (2019) argue that although cyberspace has the potential to become a place, but the sense of place will not be fully experienced. The research of No Nejad et al. (2016) shows that due to the use of cyberspace, their understanding of the meaning of place increases with their presence in urban space. Therefore, the results of previous research show that the subject of virtual places is widely recognized, and so on, this study tries to analyze the factors that create a sense of place and social identity in the virtual context.

3. Research Methods

In this article, the method of "documentary analysis" is used, which is based on purposeful and systematic study of sources and its focus is descriptive and interpretive search. But it can also be used to perform explanatory analysis and answer "why" questions and provide a kind of interpretive explanation, not positivist (Fasaei, Erfan Manesh 2015). In this way, one can go beyond mere

description and analyze and interpret. In the first stage of this method, it is necessary to clearly ask the question and the purpose of the research, which were stated in the introduction. In the second step, resources are determined and evaluated. In the third step, data collection is done the "content analysis" method. In the fourth step, targeted resource sampling is done based on keywords and theoretical framework. The fifth step is to review the data and draw conclusions from the existing principles with a critical and analytical view, which ultimately leads to the presentation of a theoretical framework of the sense of place in cyberspace.

4. Theoretical Foundations of Research

4.1. The concept of space and place

Phenomenologists consider place as a part of space has been given meaning, it is considered as a place for events and happenings for the purpose of life (Shahcheraghi and Bandar Abad, 2015, P. 260). Schultz also considers the phenomenon of place as an objective manifestation of life and believes that place is a felt and a perceived space that combines with memory (Partovi, 2013, P. 73).

Place is a space that puts a person in an internal relationship with himself and provides a better understanding of the environment and himself (Tolou Del et al., 2020). On the other hand, in terms of architecture, place is a space that establishes a relationship with the human mind and in fact becomes a part of the human mind (Naghizadeh, 2007). Heidegger (1971) believes that space takes its existence from place and this is the place that gives existence to space. On the other hand, it is said that a place is a part of space that is created by the interaction of people with the environment and is expressed and understood by emotions (Falahat, 2006). Therefore, it can be said that place is the result of space and special physical factors and other elements which creates or reminds the events, experiences, collective or individual memories that are received and understood by various kinds of senses.

4.2. Place identity

The identity of a place is created through people's experiences and perceptions. Jacobsen and Widding (1983) expressed that this identity has two components: being the same (continuity) and being distinctive (being unique). When we talk about place identity, in this case, identity includes both components. The terms used to describe the unique features of this place are called the personalities of the place, which is widely accepted by researchers (Maher Mafoz, 2019, p. 66). There are several standards set by people to evaluate places, the main standard is how to meet their needs from the place. This factor or standard is known as location dependence. People also compare options as an evaluation method (Stockols, Schumacher, 1981). The identity of a place is formed mainly through the feelings that people have, in this case the identity of the place may be created through the presence in the place, or sometimes reading about the place also plays a role in the perception that people may

have. While some researchers argue for a link between place attachment and place identity, others deny it. According to some researchers, these two terms cannot be used instead of each other (Williams et al., 1992). In some cases, place identity is considered the same as place attachment (Stedman, 2002; Jorgensen et al., 2001; Moon et al., 2004). Another view expresses the priority of attachment over the formation of place identity. More interaction between people and place leads to more emotional connection with place because it creates a place identity (Hernandez et al., 2007). There are two ways to relate identity to place, which are place identity and place identification (Maher Mafoz, 2019, p. 68). A place attachment can be created through the value of the activities that are obtained through that place. Place

identity can also be created by repeatedly referring to a specific location due to place attachment (ibid.). the heritage site can affect a sense of identity and belonging (Smith, 2006). Undoubtedly, there are historical, contemporary, natural and cultural features in the landscape that have a special meaning that helps to create a sense of place. Sense of place is one of the important factors in the formation of urban identity. In addition, to create an identity, a sense of place is one of the indicators of the quality of cities with historical values. Therefore, social identity in a place is directly related to two important indicators of place identity and place identification. To achieve it, the most important measures are introduced in Table 1.

Table 1
Components and indicators of place power in increasing social identity

Component	Indicator	Measure
Social identity	place identity	The degree of personal identity in individuals The degree of feeling of belonging to a community The degree of adherence to environmental values and policies Dependence on location Frequent visits to a place The degree of heritage of the place
Social identity	Location identification	Awareness of the historical and contemporary features of the place Awareness of the natural features of the place Awareness of the cultural features of the place

4.3. Sense of place

Despite numerous theories about the relationship between space and man, the concept of sense of place is the most common theory used to explain place's existence (Damria et al., 2018). Sense of place refers to the distinctive, unique and special quality of a place or space which is noticed by people. This phenomenon, which is several thousand years old in human life, is both a psychological and a physical concept. The ancients believed that certain places act as energy reservoirs, and attributed this sense of energy to Gods, spirits, or other indescribable and unimaginable presences (Seamon, 2021). The ancient Greeks and Romans spoke of nature (innate talent), a guardian spirit that accompanied every human being from birth. They also related essence to specific places. This essence of the place - in the true sense of the word, the soul or energy of the guardian of the place - achieves and protects the unique unity and continuity of that place (Walter 1988, p. 15).

The sense of attachment to place initially attracted the interest of anthropologists and sociologists to study the relationship between man and sacred sites. During the developments of modern urban planning in the 1950s and 1960s, due to the consequences of globalization and forced relocation of people, the importance of paying attention to people's living space increased (Rahimi et al., 2020). The idea of attachment to place is based on the connection between man and the physical environment. This link has been called by different names in the existing literature.

Ralph (1976) Call it place versus displacement, Tuan (1974) called it Topophilia, Norberg Schulz (1980) called it guardian spirit, Proshansky (1983) called it place identity, Shamaï (1991), Steele (1981), Green (1999).

called it the place character, Altman and Lou (1992), and Williams and Roggenbuck (1989), and Brown et al. (2003) called it a sense of attachment. Thus, the concept of the sense of place leads to the person's connection with the place in such a way that man considers himself a part of the place and, imagines a role for the place in his mind based on his experiences of signs, meanings and functions. This role is unique and different for him (Rahimi et al., 2020) and as a result, the place becomes important and respectable for him. Therefore, the feeling of place is formed through being involved, facing, being known and reminded people involved with that place (Seamon, 2021).

Seamon (2021) considers the sense of place to include three conflicting conceptual traditions: First, phenomenological researches that examines the empirical aspects of the sense of place. From the point of view of phenomenologists, the sense of place means being associated with place through the understanding of symbols and daily activities. This feeling can arise in one place for a person and expand over time. Second, empirical-analytical research considers the sense of place through measurable criteria and relates the extent of the place involvement of independent variables such as social status, home ownership, and community relations. And third, social constructivist research, which examines how man relates to the sense of place in the social and cultural

construction of reality (Seamon, 2021). The present study considers all three mentioned traditions in the study of the subject. The scientific view of the phenomenon of the sense of place in different fields such as phenomenology, Table 2

anthropology, environmental psychology, architecture, sociology, geography and urban planning has led to various definitions for this concept. The following table summarizes the existing definitions

Definitions of Sense of Place

Tuan 1977	Sense of place is a term that refers to cognitions and emotional feelings associated with a particular geographical location. The sense of place in its simplest form is defined using the equation "place = space + meaning".
Steele 1981	Location Spirit: A combination of attributes that give a location a special character. Sense of place: the experience of all things that people have given to places.
Lawrence Durrell 1981	He described the character of place as "an invisible constant in a place."
Rapaport 1990	The feeling that arises in a person after perceiving and judging the environment is called sense of place.
J. B. Jackson 1990	Certain areas have an attraction that makes us feel indefinable and makes us want to go back there many times. This is the character of the place.
Altman & Low 1992	The word "attachment" refers to the impression and the word "place" refers to the behavioral setting to which people are emotionally and culturally dependent.
Jackson 1994	Sense of place: It is a feeling that a person creates within himself as a result of an event or tradition and is maintained by the sense of retrieving and re-reading events.
Stefanovic ¹ 1998	Sense of place is not just a simple way to explain how a person perceives or receives a place. Rather, it is a multi-dimensional value concept and is related to the symbolic and emotional identification of a person towards a place.
Gifford 2002	Attachment to place emphasizes the way in which people personally construct the meaning of place for themselves.
Jiven and Peter 2003	Sense of place means a person's experience and understanding of a particular place and what is perceived as the nature of place for a human being. Sense of place emerges from individual and social perceptions, habits and experience.
Carmona 2006	Sense of place means the experience of the trans-physical properties of place, which is attainable through the five senses and creates a sense of belonging to the spirit of place.
Semon and Sowers 2008	Sense of place depends on the feelings and perceptions of people who have experienced the place. It is also about the need to identify with the personal environment and the need to be in a place with an identity for individuals.
Ansari et al. 2013	Sense of place means people's mental perception of the environment and their more or less conscious feelings of the environment, which puts a person in an internal relationship with the environment; In such a way that the understanding and feelings of the individual are linked and integrated with the semantic context of the environment.
Ram et al. 2016	In environmental psychology, the emotional connection between oneself and the place is known as spatial attachment.
Dameria et al. 2018	Sense of place is a concept that explains the relationship between man and place.
David Seamon 2021	Sense of place is closely related to the character of the place (the spirit of the place) and can be defined as a specific personality, atmosphere and energy expressing a specific or local environment.

In general, what is clear from the definitions of sense of place is the sense of place over time and according to people's perception, the extent of their presence and participation in the place is different. In other words, the sense of place has different levels and intensities, suitable for each person and individually.

4.3.1. Components of the sense of place

In the following, factors influencing the formation of place identity and sense of place are examined. In order to use these elements in designing places and creating a strong sense of place among people and places and bringing them far above the sense of place and ultimately creating a strong place identity with humans themselves over time. For example, David Seamon (2018) suggested that the experience of place is understood through the

relationships between three components: the environmental group, the local people, the shared presence. The environmental group refers to the material and environmental quality of the place. Although the environmental group of each particular place is unique, it is an essential factor in creating the essence and sensation of place. Seamon writes that there is a common presence both in the core group of the environment and in individuals and places; it is the faint element that he defines as the final component, and these three "together" make a special place both in terms of physical and human characteristics. The relative "aggregation" of beings in space maintains the "common presence" of the environment, which appears as a reasonable and common quality by the beings that are part of that space (Seamon 2018, p. 88). The components considered by other theorists are given in Table 3.

Table 3
Components of sense of place

Counter Model, 1977	Formal factor (objective), functional factor (behavioral) and semantic factor (mental)
Steel model, 1981	Cognitive-perceptual factors and physical factors
Gastafone model, 2001	Environmental (objective), others (behavioral) and individual (mental)
Salosen, 2002	Sense of place arises from the interaction of the three elements of individual position, perspective, and entanglement, each of them alone is not sufficient to create sense of place.
Hashas, 2004	Objective nature (derived from physical characteristics) or subjective (derived from people's thinking and feeling about the physical environment)
Jorgensen and Steadman, 2006	Place identity, dependence and attachment to the place
Ralph, 2008	Physical structure, activity, meaning
Scannell and Gifford, 2010	The three dimensions of person, process and place are the main factors that affect human interaction with place.
Behzadfar, 2013	Volume - space and body - shape (objective), activity and function (behavioral) and mental image - meaning (mental)
Sadeghi, 2014	Functional-Active (Behavioral), Formal-Physical (Cognitive) and Perceptual-Emotional (Emotional)
Summarizing the opinions of previous researchers	Objective (physical and tangible factors) - Mental (non-physical and emotional factors) - Behavioral (active and visible factors)

4.3.2. Cyberspace and virtual place

Place is not just a specific point on earth, but it's a situation in which human values and mental images are formed in its context (Sharghi et al., 2019). Cyberspace, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is a conceivable space in the human mind that communicates based on electronic data. This complex dynamic space is developing and expanding rapidly. The communication platform in this space consists of two parts: communication technologies (both old and new, such as telephone, fax, satellites, cable TV, optical cables, etc.) and information technology (computers, mobile software, etc.). Cyberspace is a part of human social life in which interactions are formed through interconnected information networks with a completely technological infrastructure (ibid.).

At present, cyberspace with the coordination of other existing technologies and various communication tools has provided a coherent communication structure, so new concepts and combined spaces are emerging in this field. One of these concepts is virtual space and the possibility of upgrading cyberspace to it. The prevalence of cyberspace, their freedom to use this space at any time and in any way, with any title and in any form has been welcomed by people from these spaces. This emotional pleasure and perception in the virtual space that gives the person identity and feeling, creates a level of sense of belonging to the place in the person. On the other hand, doing activities and living in cyberspace, makes that space meaningful for the person and provides a platform for creating memories. In fact, sharing virtual and real space is a pattern that is formed, affected and stored in the user's mind, which means, memory is created (Barati and Shokri, 2011, p. 93). According to phenomenologists, cyberspace is becoming a virtual place over time. Virtual locations are diverse and accessible. Virtual locations are

diverse and accessible. It is possible to connect person to person in any corner of the world. This connection meets the need for mass communication and news.

Users facing virtual places, begin to form mental schemas and use them to remember and recall. In their repeated experiences, they modify these schemas and complete the organized mental pattern according to their satisfied needs (Barati and Shokri, 2011, p. 97). So far, the sense of real and virtual space has similarities, but the problem is that users have virtual locations, bodies, and even virtual personalities that they create and define themselves. Another is that virtual sites do not have a reader or viewer - they do have participants (Seaman, 2013, 147). Thus, the mentioned features affect the sense of location of these spaces, which will be discussed below.

4.3.3. Dimensions and levels of sense of place

The three dimensions of person, process and place are the main factors that affect human interaction with place (Skanel and Gifford, 2010). Person dimension is the first dimension of this category, the meaning of person is individuals or a group of people. Factors affecting attachment to a place vary from person to person or group. Individually, the connection may be due to certain memories that occurred in a particular place. The second dimension is the process and refers to the psychological connections that connect people to place. The Psychological effect is influenced by three main factors: influence, cognition and behavior. Affection can be positive or negative; cognition is through interactive events and memories that shape personal knowledge of a place, and behavior refers to perceptions and actions that people may take, such as reconstructing of lost places. The third dimension that is the most important is the place dimension. What does affect people in a place? And what physical characteristics connect the person to

the place. This dimension can occur on one of two levels, social and physical. Social attachment is related to social reasons that connect a person with a space (Maher Mafoz, 2019, p. 69 and 70).

The sense of place also has different levels (table 4 and 5) : Gasso's classification of the sense of place with three parts: superficial, ordinary and very deep familiarity

with place has been one of the first steps in leveling the sense of place (Gasso, 1972, p. 89). According to the concept of sense of place in different perspectives, different levels of formation of sense of place can be stated from disregard for place, which is equivalent to not perceiving the environment, to commitment to place, which is associated with feeling and mental perception.

Table 4
Different levels of sense of place formation(Falahat, 2006)

row	level	Description of the level of sense of place
1	Ignorance of place (without feeling and lack of perception)	Can be used to measure the sense of place.
2	Presence in place (material and objective feeling)	It pays attention to the active role of the individual in society, which is due to the commitment to the place, and is understood from the real behaviors of individuals.
3	Awareness of establishment (material feeling and perception)	In this case, the person may know that he is located in a distinct place, but no emotion connects him to the place and he does not know that he is part of that place.
4	Belonging to a place (mixed feeling and behavioral action)	In this case, the symbols of the place and what happens to the place are respected and important to the individual.
5	Attachment to place (mixed feeling and behavioral action)	At this level, the individual has a complex emotional connection with the place and emphasizes on the uniqueness of the place and its difference from other places.
6	Unification with place (transcendental feeling and mental perception)	In this case, the person recognizes the goals of the place, adapts to them and follows them, and the person develops love, passion and self-sacrifice for the place.
7	Commitment to a place(transcendental feeling and mental perception)	This level is the highest level of sense of place and the person has the deepest commitment to the place and shows self-sacrifice in different situations.

Table 5
Different levels of sense of place based on different perspectives; (Sharghi, 2019)

Gussow(1976)	Shamai(1991)	Hummoni(1992)	Cross(2001)
Superficial acquaintance with the place	indifference to place	Placelessness	Absolute Placelessness
Typical familiarity of place	Awareness of being in one place	Alienation with place	Relative displacement
Very deep acquaintance with the place	Belonging to place	Relative location	Alienation with place
–	Attachment to place	Having unconscious root	Having incoherent root
–	Integration with place goals	Having ideological root	Having coherent root
–	Presence in place	–	–
–	Sacrifice for the place	–	–

In other words, a person can be indifferent to his personal page in a virtual place, distinguish that place from other virtual places and recognize its visual and auditory symbols. He can feel united with the virtual place and its symbols are valuable to him. He can even establish an emotional connection with the virtual place and find meaning there for it, and at a higher level he becomes attached to that place to the extent that he becomes one with it and follows its goals. Although it is impossible to be physically present in cyberspace, indirect presence in this space can also lead to engagement with space to the extent that life in the objective world is severely affected.

4.3.4. The impact of virtual media on the sense of place

On the other hand, in the seventh level of the Shamai category, people do not see themselves as committed to cyberspace to the extent that they sacrifice for it. Although the appearance of establishing social relations has changed, but what has remained constant is man and his needs and ideals (Omidbakhsh and Heshmati, 2008). People's ideals, which are, the beliefs and characteristics that people are willing to die for and are in the depths of human existence that cannot be virtual, may be expressed in a virtual place but they themselves are not virtual (Sharghi et al., 2019).

The truth is that cyberspace has reshaped the use of physical space and real-time. At the same time, our ability as a community to communicate, engage, entertain, even work have increased by ICT innovations over the past decade (Artopoulos, et al., 2019). Shaygan (2005) believes that these new developments cause us to move from reality to the virtual, that is, to reach a state in which time and place are compressed to create a real and immediate time (Shaygan, 2005, p. 332). In this way, what exists is temporal unity, but there is no spatial unity, and thus the multiplicity of local times disappears. Perhaps it can be said that the salient feature of such a flow is the mastery of time and space constraints. These spaces, due to their shapelessness as a result of their immaterial nature, which is the essence of software, allow the establishment of any kind of function, and in this regard, they do not dominate any action in space, because space will be more influenced by electronic writing. Every day can be rewritten metaphorically. According to Puglisi, in such cases, space becomes merely a "kind of situation" (Prestinzenza Puglisi, 2007, p. 75). New possibilities have been very effective in social interaction, networking and collaboration, at least in the theory, formation and functioning of new societies (Hampton et al., 2010). Social media allows you to share news, information and different opinions through multimedia facilities, and this can be one of the reasons that has led to an increase in the number of social network users in urban areas (Dameria et al., 2018).

Researches show that in 2017 in Southeast Asia, the number of active mobile social media users increased by 34% per month, and this trend continues to grow. These media have influenced everything, including the experience of presence and even travel (Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier, 2009).

Under the influence of communication and information technologies on the space, synchronization is possible without the proximity of space. Therefore, the dominant form of space no longer refers to places, but depends on the space of flows.

What happened in the 80's and 90's is the recombination of the space of places with the space of currents in the production of a new space different from the past, that has caused important changes in the internal structure of the city and the nature of its communications. The production of cyberspace has made unrivaled progress from 2000 to 2020, while the new produced spaces have been much more pervasive and inviting than in the 1980s and 1990s. McLuhan argues that any communication media not only affects people or ideas, but also transforms parts of its cultural environment. Our electronic media and vast senses move across the globe in a matter of seconds and then bring the results back, collapse time and space, and create a global village where everything; Regardless of being distant and strange, seems kind of familiar and immediate now. McLuhan's argument is that by changing the environment which is created by media, their communications, perceptions and ways of thinking will be altered, and although electronic technologies are based on precise logic, they still engage our senses and emotions

(Ralph, 2007). On the other hand, the sense of place that occurs through electronic media is an acknowledgment of the importance of "geographical diversity" and a liberation from modernist uniformity. The electronic age creates a profound paradox for designing place - electronic communications increase attention to diversity and differentiation, but at the same time undermine the factors that have always played a role in creating distinctive places. When a person communicates with a place and receives a sensory experience, the person is able to receive the meaning of the place, so the experience is accessible without direct interaction. Nowadays, social media can act as a way to "go" to a place and provide a kind of imaginary access based on the viewers' perception of the place (Soroso, 2014). Therefore, in these spaces, to create a sense of place, it is no longer necessary to experience directly through the physical feeling of a place and can be made based on the reflective and individual considerations of another person. Therefore, the component of experience in the subject of sense of place needs to be reconsidered because the common model believes that physical experience can only be achieved through direct interaction with a place. Now, people can live in one place but do most of their social activities in another. They can be physically "here" while the environment they interact with is "there" or brought here via a digital page. Thus, social media has the potential to create an experience factor (in the activity component) without the need for direct interaction. Also, these virtual spaces make it possible to produce family factors (in the meaning component) without being in a place for a long time, and help to interpret (which produces the meaning component) without direct interaction with the place (Damria et al., 2018). Therefore, social media helps appropriately to create the sense from place components. Creating a place in the postmodern era is difficult and does not easily reach originality. In the past, it was believed that the city expresses itself in its physical form, and to improve it, the analysis of the city form can provide enough information about the adoption of appropriate intervention procedures, but the city of the twenty-first century is nothing but information. And many things in it have been computerized. The city has lost its place and tends to be anywhere and nowhere. Evolution, complexity, information, the suddenness are its keywords, and this means a new language and new words for this city (Boyer, 2011). Just log in to your Instagram profile and easily experience walking in the streets of Las Vegas in the most remote areas of Iran. Someone walks down the street with his mobile phone filming and sharing it with millions of people. Now you are with him on this walk, a virtual experience through a virtual space but from a completely objective space. And real; now, if one day you are really on that street, will you experience it for the first time?

In the virtual world, there is more freedom of choice. These spaces are not captivated by pre-determined heritage and local traditions, there is no planning bureaucracy, no need for sustainability, no budget and no need for profit. Theoretically, the identity of virtual places

depends only on the desire and imagination of their designers, although in practice this is not entirely this way because if imaginary places are supposed to be understood, should have similarities to real places. For example, the invisible cities of Italo Calvino (1974) describe impossible settings, but nevertheless speaks of the shapes and landscapes of cities in the same forms with which we are all more or less familiar (Ralph, 2007). In the digital virtual world, one is immersed both in a sense and in imagination. This indicates two issues. First,

electronic media create a different space for thinking and understanding. The second is the concern that the digital world may have such a colorful presence in all areas that it is possible to be indistinguishable from reality. The boundary between the virtual and the real world is now blurred, and virtual space designers have a duty to be aware of the consequences (ibid.). Table 6 shows the most important components and indicators of power of place in social media (cyberspace).

Table 6
Components and indicators of power of place in social media (cyberspace)

Component	Indicator	measure
Technical	ICT infrastructure and facilities	The level of access to ICT facilities The cost of using cyberspace The pervasiveness of cyberspace The speed of communication in cyberspace Permanent access to cyberspace
Mental	Cognitive perception in cyberspace	The degree to which cyberspace is connected to each other The amount of ownership in cyberspace Extent of space and time in cyberspace The degree of virtual acceptance versus being real The extent of being global versus being local The degree of originality of cyberspace The amount of visual and geographical diversity in cyberspace Rate of presence (immersion) in cyberspace

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The changing and challenging conditions of the new age have had a significant impact on the economy, society, and the natural and building environment. In the meantime, communication spaces and communication models have changed in many cases and this has affected all aspects of life, employment, leisure, social interactions, services and shopping, all and all were accompanied by major changes. Hence, in the redefinition of the city of the 21st century, the words distance and place as well as identity and sense of place have been redefined. There is something special about reproducing the dual city's identity that is unique to our time. What the media does every day is to establish the city's identity as a two-way place between real and virtual.

Therefore, it must be admitted that today cyberspace has become a virtual reality. A fact that has created accessible cyberspace as a new experience and opportunity. Although there are many definitions of place and space, some of these definitions sometimes overlap and contradict each other. But in most cases, when we talk about "places", we mean "real" and constructed places. A place has history, memory and sense of community (Kukkakorpi & Pantti, 2020). Space also means the digital environment and its ability to narrate events and provide different types of agencies. Therefore, the sense of place can be simulated by showing "real" places as digital spaces (Usher, 2019). Cyberspace with its features such as space acceleration, pervasiveness, permanent accessibility, transcendence, being global and multimedia

has an undeniable impact on the content of space and place (Nonejad et al., 2021). Now, according to the analysis of existing concepts and theories on the subject under discussion, it is possible to formulate a theoretical framework for research. A review of the theoretical foundations shows that several experts have confirmed the effective role of cyberspace on sense of place; therefore, considering the emphasis on the comprehensiveness of the sense of place approach and the extent of its goals, it seems that the combination of views and arguable indicators of each provides a more comprehensive theoretical framework.

According to Castells' theories, the emphasis on the continuity of the space of places, or in other words, real spaces, while the omnipresence of the space of currents, is inevitable. In fact, cyberspace, as an achievement of the information age, has induced a pattern of disconnection in the material foundations of economics, society and culture. According to Kanter, since individual and collective values affect how people perceive and people's perception also affects the values, attitudes, and especially individual and social behavior of people in the place, as a result, understanding the meaning of place also changes. Therefore, placing a person in two real and virtual spaces with different social and physical characteristics can significantly affect his perception of place. According to Castells' theoretical framework, the defining components of cyberspace can be considered as the space of flows, infrastructures and connections and virtual social interactions. In contrast, the defining components of real

space include the space of places, natural and artificial environment and face-to-face social interactions. Gifford believes that based on the existing meanings in human mind and also the existing meanings of place, based on three individual, physical and cultural factors, one can understand the various dimensions of the meanings of place.

What should be especially noted here is that the location refers to the actual quality, while the space refers to the digital environment in which the user is immersed. Immersion is understood as strengthening the "deep connection" between the user and the virtual environment (MCRoberts, 2018). Presence means "being there" in the virtual environment as well as being responsive to the environment (Kukkakorpi & Pantti, 2020) However, during the presence, users do not think about how much they are present or this place has been provided to be present in space and experience the events directly. Therefore, the main purpose of cyberspace is to experience space in the same way as real characters and to minimize obstacles and normalize it for the user so that the user experiences a real presence in cyberspace without wanting to think about it. This sense of presence is both subjective and objective: subjectivity refers to how users feel about being in a virtual environment, and objectivity involves how they behave similarly to real-life situations (Sirkonen et al., 2016). However, the level of interaction and realism applied in this virtual reality affects the user's perception and emotional interaction. Therefore, both the response of cyberspace to the user's movements and the social interaction that occurred during the experience can intensify the user's presence.

So social media helps to create a sense of place components well. Therefore, users need to redefine their virtual spaces in the new space and know exactly where they are located. This draws the user's attention to the spatial signs to understand the surroundings. The psychological characteristics of the characters, emotional conflict, aesthetic elements, etc. are among the factors that lead to the flow of immersion for a colorful presence and to evoke emotions and present a new experience. Focusing on emotional conflict affects the distinction between two levels of immersion: spatial immersion and emotional immersion (Zhang, Perkis, & Arendt, 2017). Spatial immersion refers to interaction with a physical environment, while emotional immersion is characterized by engagement with characters (Kukkakorpi & Pantti, 2020). It is argued that emotional immersion is more fully immersed than spatial immersion, which relies on perceptual characteristics and a sense of physical presence (Zhang, Perkis, & Arendt, 2017). However, this analytical classification of different levels of immersion is problematic because the spatial quality of the virtual environment - particular, the experience of being in one place - creates an emotional bond. Thus, during the use of cyberspace pages, emotional reactions are intensified; these include emotional reactions such as fear and anxiety, mental reactions (such as liking or not liking), and other forms of emotional conflict such as those evoked by the environment and empathy with the

characters. In the end, while comparing the sense of real and virtual place (Figure 1), the conceptual framework of the research is presented.

We can now give a comprehensive answer to the main research question of how the sense of place is defined in the age of cyberspace and the second question of how social identity is defined in these spaces. If we consider the place as a felt and perceived space that mixes with the memory, we can say that in the present age, cyberspace has also become a kind of virtual place or in other words, a virtual reality. A space that is real but presented virtually. So our experiences of real places are changing. Undoubtedly, the sense of place has also changed under the influence of cultural and technological changes. There is a sense of place even in an online and virtual space, albeit inactive. Social media provides an indirect experience based on the interaction of people and place and the feeling of familiarity with an unknown or strange place and increases the sense of place. Although the sense of place is related to the sensory, perceptual, emotional and cognitive dimensions of human experience, the sense of place alone cannot be fully described or understood by these empirical dimensions. Therefore, in these spaces, to create a sense of place, it is no longer necessary to experience directly through the physical feeling of a place and can be made based on the reflective and individual considerations of another person. Now, people can live in one place but do most of their social activities in another. Thus, social media has the potential to create the factor of experience (in the activity component) without the need for direct interaction. Also, these virtual spaces make it possible to produce family factors (in the meaning component) without being in a place for a long time, and help the interpretation (which produces the meaning component) without direct interaction with the place. Therefore, this article states that social media helps to create a sense of place components and promotes a sense of place in objective and virtual space. Two technical and mental components with infrastructure indicators and ICT facilities and cognitive perception in cyberspace and related metrics show the power of place in social media (cyberspace) and on the other hand, we have the social identity component with the place identity index and the identification of place and the criteria related to each of them, which shows the power of place in increasing social identity. The first group in the context of information and communication technology of the 21st century and the second group with the tools of creativity and urban design, in addition to explicit and implicit meaning, they lead to an increase in social identity, which can be measured by two physical and perceptual-cognitive components and related measures. The sense of cyberspace component is also defined by two indicators of objective nature and subjective nature in the context of social interactions in cyberspace. According to the description mentioned at the end, while presenting a comparison of sense of real and virtual places (Table 7), the conceptual framework of the research (Figure 1) is presented.

Table 7
Comparison between sense of place in real and virtual places

Sense of place	
Real place	Virtual place
It has been original from long time ago	It has been original recently (acceptance of virtual place concept)
The reality of the place	Virtuality of place
Direct experience	Indirect experiment but strong
Physical presence	Immersion in space instead of physical presence
Face-to-face and direct interactions with places	Indirect interactions whit place
Visual and geographical diversity	Authentication of visual/ geographical diversity
Spatial / temporal constraints are advantage	Elimination of spatial and temporal limitations is an advantage
Face-to-face communication (limitation is number of people who communicate)	Free and unlimited communication (infinite number of people in a group communication)

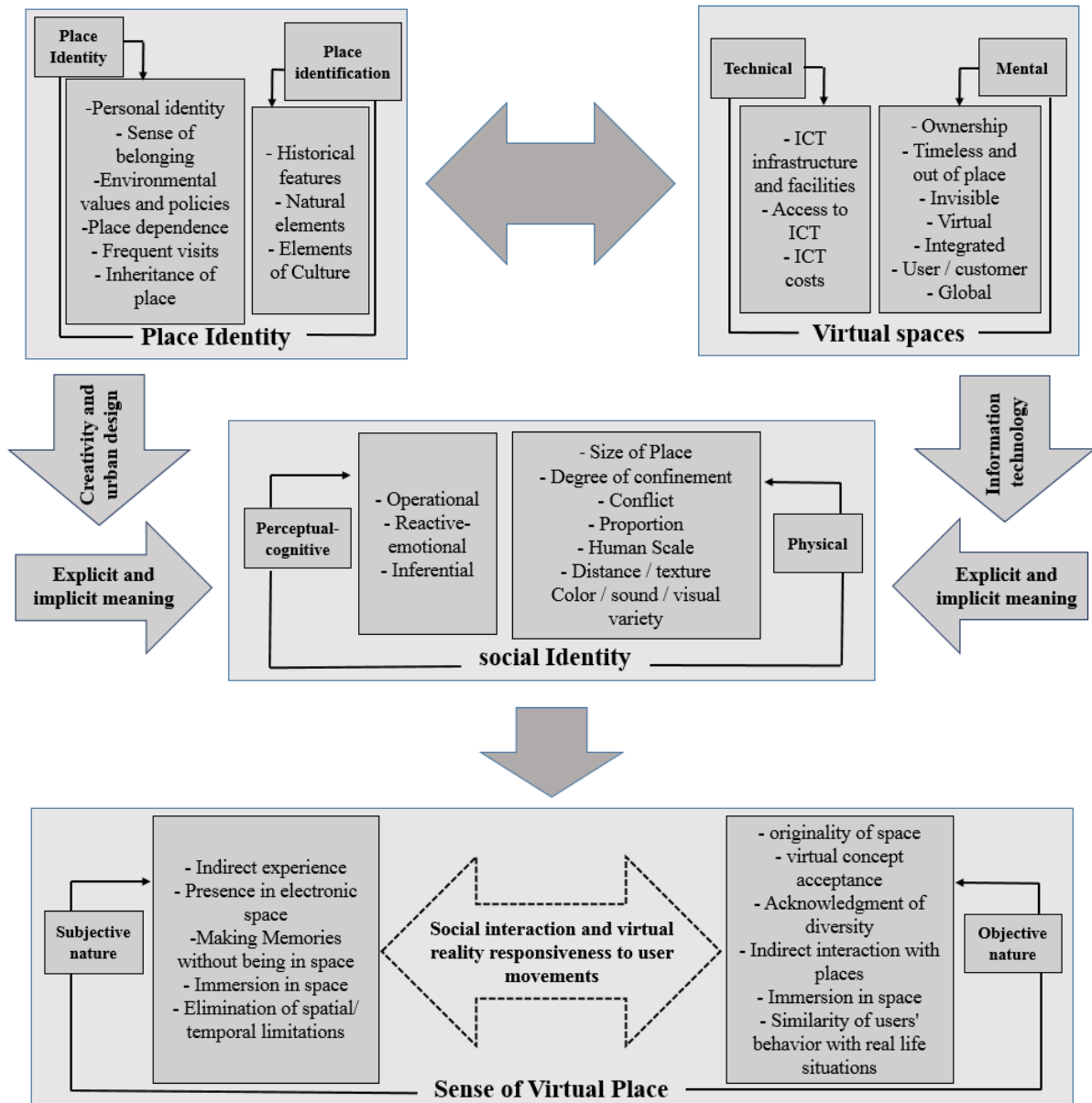


Figure 1: Conceptual diagram of research

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