

Sense of place in the neighborhood, in locations of urban revitalization

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Abstract

Every neighborhood has its particular sense of place, resulting from its physical structure and its sociological make-up. When new housing developments are built in or adjacent to old neighborhoods, a different sense of place will exist in the new development and in the adjacent old environment, with mutual effects between the two. This study has used ethnographic analysis of interviews with women living in six different new developments and in adjacent buildings in the old neighborhoods, to identify the behavioral and affective variables that make up the local sense of place. A methodology has subsequently been developed to determine the sense of place in any residential environment, based on ethnographic analysis of the descriptions of the residential environment by its residents, while focusing on the evaluation of a number of predetermined behavioral and affective variables that together define the sense of place. Comparison of the sense of place between different residential environments could enable the identification of the effects of various social factors and the physical environment on the sense of place, the conclusions of which could be of use in the planning of new housing developments, particularly if located in old neighborhoods.

Introduction

Apparently, every neighborhood has its particular atmosphere or sense of place. Whenever we think about the neighborhood in which we grew up, we will recall its unique human atmosphere and physical appearance, and even its smells. We know however that neighborhoods aren't necessarily homogeneous, neither in population nor in their buildings. One may have upper-middle class residents living in one area and lower class, poor residents in another area. One may find high-rise condominiums and small private houses in the same neighborhood. Would the sense of place be the same in each of these living environments? And what specific factors would affect the local sense of place. The problem becomes even more complicated in neighborhoods that have changed because of urban revitalization programs by which significant parts of neighborhoods have been transformed. Changes in physical appearance and design are bound to cause changes in populations and human behavior. How will these changes affect the sense of place? And above all, could the sense of place in such locations of urban revitalization projects be improved by applying proper guidelines in planning and design?

This paper will describe the characteristic of sense of place in housing developments, and how it could be used to differentiate between them, to relate between physical

planning and its sociological impact, and to assist in optimizing the planning and design of future housing developments in locations of urban revitalization.

Neighborhoods and sociological diversity

In every city, sociological structures differ between neighborhoods as well as within them. Davies and Herbert (1993) studied the social characteristics that underlie the differentiation of urban neighborhoods. They claimed that classic ideas of neighborhood differentiation based on social structures defined from census variables alone should be extended to include experiential characteristics such as behavioral, cognitive and affective traits. Townshend and Davies (1999) also confirmed the separate existence of communities of different behavioral and conceptual identity domains within a relatively homogenous, census determined sociological areal content domain. Townshend (2002) performed a social area analysis based on a census report of the entire city of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, the city being divided into small enumeration areas. These areas were then grouped into similar social area types, according to the results of the social area analysis. To study the experiential community structures, a questionnaire containing questions on behavioral, cognitive and affective aspects was distributed to a sample

population throughout the city. Only four of the variables showed significant differences between social area types, namely (a) political participation, (b) evaluation, appraisal, empathy and belonging, (c) safety and security and (d) status symbolism of place.

The residential environment

Using the term residential environment enables us to distinguish between the physical boundaries of the neighborhood as defined by the local authority for the purpose of urban organization (Hallman, 1984), and the boundaries of more limited areas as subjectively perceived by their residents. Churchman and Rosenfeld (1978) state that the term residential environment refers to the dimensions and boundaries that are significant to the residents themselves and to the social relations and activities they want to conduct there. Rapoport (1980–1981, 1997) claims that since the definition of space is partially based upon physical and social images, the variables of the definition are not only the area and its dimensions but also the degree of overlap between social and physical space. Billig and Churchman (2003) have found that physical boundaries affect the attitudes and behavior of residents.

In this paper, the term residential environment stands for the physical and social space referred to in the subjective feeling and in the behavior of its residents. This includes any population group or physical environment referred to by residents, whether in favorable or unfavorable terms.

Sense of place of the residential environment

Jackson (1994, pp. 157–158) describes the current use of sense of place as describing the atmosphere to a place, the quality of its environment and possibly its attraction by causing a certain indefinable sense of well being that makes people wanting to return to that place. Knopf (1996, p. 247) emphasizes the need to put any account of physical characteristics within the context of aspects such as activities and intentions in order to move to a better account of character of the place. Isaacs (2000) has explored the application of sense of place to perception and quality of places and urban design.

Jiven and Larkham (2003) present a critical historical and theoretical overview of the concept of “sense of place,” particularly as applied to urban areas. The use of sense of place in urban contexts predominates in the contemporary professional literature. They argue that it is the people – individuals and society – that integrate the features of topography, natural conditions, symbolic meanings and the built form through their value systems, to form a sense of place. They also propose that designers need to develop more theoretically informed conceptions of sense of place, extensively informed by the views of the people directly involved.

Rose (1995) has observed that the sense of place can be felt with such intensity that it becomes a central aspect in the construction of individual identities. Orititz et al. (2004) conclude that the perception of urban transformation and the sense of place, as well as the use of public space, are largely conditioned by age and gender and by socio-cultural background. They regard construction of a sense of place as a complex process subject to multiple variables – individual daily experiences framed within a social, political and economic context – which are capable of strengthening or weakening this construction.

This paper proposes to use “sense of place” to describe the particular atmosphere prevailing in a given residential environment. In residential environments the sense of place is established mainly by the residents themselves and is formed at the inter-subjective level, connecting between the behavior of the individual and that of the other residents. The sense of place of the residential environment will thus be affected by perceptions of its physical characteristics, by the feeling and behavior of its residents, and by the interactions between them.

We assumed the following: (a) The sense of place is a multivariate characterization of a particular residential environment, formed by the subjective feelings and patterns of behavior of its residents and resulting from relations between groups of residents, from relations within each group of residents, and from their attitude towards the physical aspects of the residential environment. (b) Many social and physical factors will influence the sense of place of the residential environment. (c) Each residential environment will be characterized by its own unique sense of place.

The study area

In the city of Ramat Gan, Israel, a number of new housing developments have been built in old neighborhoods that were completed in 1994. The city council’s initiative was designed to attract middle to upper-middle class residents to neglected neighborhoods inhabited by residents of low socio-economic class.¹ Unutilized plots of land were identified within the city, in troubled or distressed areas. Buildings in an unacceptable state of deterioration and old industrial buildings constituting a threat to the environment were demolished. Modern prestigious housing developments were built on these sites. This study has been performed on six such developments, located within or adjacent to old residential neighborhoods. Older buildings located along the streets adjacent to the new developments that were assumed to be affected by the housing development and the resultant changes in the area, were also included in the study. A common aspect of all new buildings was their standing out in the environment because of their height, their modern design, their white color, and their carefully tended gardens and surrounding vegetation. In contrast

to that, the old buildings belonging to neglected neighborhoods appeared neglected and had very little vegetation in their gardens. The old buildings varied in shape and appearance, depending on when they were built. Some of the old buildings had completely changed after having been refurbished and enlarged, thereby causing variations in appearance and in real estate value of these buildings.

Most public services were located in the old neighborhoods and not adjacent to the new housing development. An exception was the Yahalom housing development that contained an elementary school and some shops intended mainly for the new residents. As a result of building the Leshem housing development, the existing social center and swimming pool were refurbished and since then have served both the new and long time residents. The Yahalom, Odem and Leshem projects were actually located in different corners of one and the same large neighborhood and their long time residents therefore used the same local public services. Behind both the Sapir and the Leshem developments, lanes with trees were built that were being used by long time residents and by dog owners among the new residents. The Bareket development was different, in that it had a swimming pool built in its middle, while there wasn't any pool available in the area for the long time residents. Similarly, the Yahalom development had a public garden in its middle, for use by the new residents only. Figures 1, 2 and 3 depict the layout of the Sapir,

Yahalom and Leshem housing developments, respectively.

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the sociological characteristics of the sample population and the physical layout of the new housing developments and adjacent old buildings, respectively. From these tables one may distinguish the common as well as the distinctive characteristics of the various population groups and of the various residential environments. One can see that in general, the sociological characteristics of the new population were nearly always different from those of the long time population in the adjacent buildings. Differences observed included age distribution, country of origin and level of education. These differences in turn affect differences in norms of behavior and life style, and in people's expectations of their neighborhood and their neighbors. At the same time, in every housing development and its surroundings a distinct encounter evolved of a specific blend of new and long time populations.

Ethnographic descriptions as a research tool

According to Geertz (1973), any ethnographic description is an interpretation; the subject of interpretation being the "social discourse." Through his or her ethnographic notes the anthropologist records the social discourse, thereby rendering it from a transient event at

Table 1. Sociological characteristics of the sample population

Housing development	Population	Predominant age groups	Countries of origin	Education, years
Sapir	New	Up to 40 (68%)	Heterogeneous	13–15 years (27%) 16+ years (41%)
	Long time	41–60 (39%) 61 + (28%)	Asia, Africa (94%)	Up to 12 years (56%)
Yahalom	New	41–60 (60%)	Heterogeneous	13–15 years (59%) 16+ years (41%)
	Long time	20–30 (20%) 61 + (40%)	Asia, Africa (90%)	Up to 12 years (50%)
Odem	New	Mixed	Asia, Africa (65%)	Up to 12 years (50%) 16+ years (20%)
	Long time	41–60 (55%) 61 + (20%)	Heterogeneous	Up to 8 years (30%) 9–12 years (50%)
Leshem	New	Up to 30 (20%) 31–40 (40%)	Asia, Africa (65%)	Up to 12 years (80%)
	Long time	Up to 30 (25%) 41–60 (45%)	Heterogeneous	Up to 12 years (60%) 13+ years (40%)
Tarshish	New	31–40 (57%) 41–60 (24%)	Heterogeneous	13–15 years (57%) 16+ years (33%)
	Long time	Mixed	Asia, Africa (80%)	Up to 12 years (55%) 16 + years (25%)
Bareket	New	31–40 (50%) 41–60 (40%)	Europe, America (75%)	13–15 years (30%) 16+ years (55%)
	Long time	Mixed	Heterogeneous	Up to 12 years (52%) 16+ years (11%)

Table 2. Physical layout of housing developments and adjacent old buildings

Housing development	New or old buildings	Height of buildings*	Number of housing units	Layout of buildings	Separating walls and fences
Sapir	New	Medium	94	Along the street	Low fence around each building
	Old	Low	49	Along the street	Low fence around each building
Yahalom	New	High	192	In a star shaped enclosure	Wall around new housing development
	Old	Low	36	Along the street	Low fence around each building
Odem	New	High	183	In a semi enclosed horseshoe shape	Fence around new housing development
	Old	Low to medium	63	Along the street	Low fence around each building
Leshem	New	High	143	Along the street	Low fence around each building
	Old	Medium to high	119	Along the street	Low fence around each building
Tarshish	New	Medium	188	In a semi enclosed horseshoe shape	Fence around new housing development
	Old	Low to medium	92	Along the street	Low fence around each building
Bareket	New	High	98	In a square shaped enclosure	Fence around new housing development
	Old	Low to medium	143	Along the street	Low fence around each building

*Low = 1–3 stories; medium = 4–6 stories; high = 7 stories or more.

a specific moment into a lasting story that can be looked at again and again. In Geertz's opinion, the main objective of interpretational anthropology is not to receive answers to questions but to display the answers given by others, documenting the person's words so that they may be consulted again from time to time.

The uniqueness of anthropological research is that topics the investigator had not necessarily thought of before beginning the study are able to surface in the ethnographic description. These topics may be significant from the point of view of the people participating in the research, and may help the investigator to better understand them.

Research methodology

The study combined an anthropological approach with a person–environment approach that emphasizes the importance of including physical, social, cultural and individual variables in the study. This enabled a broad and in depth understanding of the environments studied from the point of view of the women who live there, focusing on socio-physical, behavioral and attitudinal aspects.² This methodology enabled those interviewed to describe the changes in socio-physical environment resulting from the housing development, from their subjective point of view.

The results included an ethnographic description based on 240 individual interviews of women,³ 120 of

them living in the new buildings of the six housing developments and 120 living in the adjacent older buildings. The purpose was to explore the different aspects of the changes occurring in the area, as seen by the new residents who were the cause of change and by the original population on whom this change was imposed. The study therefore included only housing developments that border on old buildings in the neighborhood, where the arrangement of the buildings enabled the new and the original residents to see each other.

In the 240 open ended interviews performed, the women were first of all asked to answer a general question: "Please describe your residential environment." Secondary guiding questions were: "What do you regard as being part of your residential (i.e. living) environment?" "What social connections exist between the various residents?" "Where do you feel belonging to?" Another question was: "To what extent do you use the public services in the area?" Besides these questions, the women were asked about demographic characteristics of the people being interviewed. At the end of the interview, most women were surprised to admit that they had never devoted much thought about their residential environment. Duration of the interviews varied between 1 and 3 h. The answers were recorded word for word by the interviewer, without any further guidelines.

The method of analysis was qualitative. From the ethnographic descriptions eight variables were selected, which we assumed would enable definition of the sense of place. In every interview, we assessed the extent to

which the person interviewed had addressed each of the selected variables and whether the description was in a positive or a negative sense, whether contacts do or do not exist, whether a certain service is being used or not, etc. The data were subsequently coded according to population groups for each housing development and its immediate surrounding.

Results

Variables for evaluating the sense of place of a residential environment

From an initial study of the ethnographic descriptions of two housing developments (Sapir and Yahalom) we had identified the variables that in our opinion should describe the sense of place of the residential environment. We combined as many topics coming up in the ethnographic descriptions as possible into a common variable, to limit the number of variables required to describe the particular sense of place in any residential environment. Following is the list of variables that have been selected:

A. Variables of Behavior:

Differences in norms and life style between population groups

Characteristics of relations among the same population group⁴

Characteristics of relations with the other population group(s)

Use of public space and of public services

B. Variables of Personal Feeling i.e. Affective Variables:
Satisfaction with or aversion to the physical environment.

Feeling of belonging to the physical environment

Feeling of belonging to a community

Feeling of security in public space.

Ethnographic study

All 240 ethnographic descriptions of the six housing developments were analyzed and classified according to the eight selected variables, and ranked for each variable according to the subdivisions shown in Tables 3 and 4. For the purpose of illustration, we present here a small sample of opinions expressed in the ethnographic descriptions and how they have been interpreted.

In the Sapir housing development: A new resident described the differences between “new” and “long time” residents: “*Our population is a usual one, 20% intellectuals judging from their appearance. When you cross the street, what do you see...delinquents, very simple people.*” Long time residents mentioned the differences between themselves and the new residents as follows: “*They shouldn’t be looking down on us and shouldn’t forget we have been living here for a long time...they are snobs, nothing is good enough for them.*” We see the type of relations with the other population by their negative attitude towards the “others,” creating tension between them.

Differences in life style, as described by a new resident: “*You find here a behavior you are not used to see in*

Table 3. Variables of behavior: summary of opinions expressed

Population sample size	Sapir		Yahalom		Odem		Leshem		Tarshish		Bareket	
	New N=20	Long time N=20	New N=20	Long time N=20	New N=20	Long time N=20	New N=20	Long time N=20	New N=20	Long time N=20	New N=20	Long time N=20
Differences in norms and life styles between population groups												
Differences exist	19	12	13	12	5	5	0	1	14	16	20	12
No difference	0	0	1	0	5	3	18	19	0	1	0	5
Not mentioned	1	8	6	8	10	12	2	0	6	3	0	3
Relations among the same population group												
Good relations	0	6	7	9	2	3	5	14	1	2	1	5
No relations	16	7	1	5	4	5	7	1	12	13	1	4
Some relations	3	2	9	0	12	9	8	5	7	5	18	9
Not mentioned	1	5	3	6	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	2
Relations with the other population group(s)												
Good relations	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
No relations	0	3	15	15	14	16	13	12	20	19	19	12
Some relations	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	1
Negative relations	16	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Not mentioned	3	3	4	4	5	3	0	1	0	0	0	4
Use of public space and of public services												
Use if available	0	13	5	17	5	1	4	9	1	10	1	3
No use	16	0	4	0	5	3	4	6	4	2	19	6
Some use	4	6	6	1	6	13	12	3	14	8	0	10
Not mentioned	0	1	5	2	9	3	0	2	1	0	0	1

Table 4. Variables of personal feeling: summary of feelings expressed

Population sample size	Sapir		Yahalom		Odem		Leshem		Tarshish		Bareket	
	New	Old time	New	Old time	New	Old time	New	Old time	New	Old time	New	Old time
	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20
Satisfaction with or aversion to physical environment												
Satisfaction	5	8	16	7	18	9	7	15	9	18	15	16
No satisfaction	15	7	0	10	0	4	3	0	5	1	3	1
Some satisfaction	0	0	2	1	0	3	9	2	5	0	1	0
Not mentioned	0	5	2	2	2	4	1	3	1	1	1	3
Feeling of belonging to the physical environment												
Neighborhood	2	4	0	18	1	2	1	1	01	100	10	133
Street	0	3	0	0	0	7	17	16	14	0	17	0
Housing development	0	3	18	0	11	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Building	3	3	0	0	3	2	0	0	4	8	1	1
None of these	13	6	1	0	4	6	2	2	0	1	1	1
Not mentioned	2	1	1	2	1	3	0	1				
Feeling of belonging to a community												
Yes	0	6	11	14	3	2	3	2	0	0	11	5
No	15	11	7	3	11	16	16	17	20	16	6	13
Not mentioned	5	3	2	3	6	2	1	1	0	4	3	2
Feeling of security in public space												
Yes	0	0	16	17	12	5	2	9	8	6	14	11
No	8	5	0	0	2	2	9	0	0	1	0	0
Not mentioned	12	15	4	3	6	13	9	11	12	13	6	9

reasonable places. I am shocked the way they are dressed, drug addicts with their arms full of needle marks, family quarrels being fought outside.” The atmosphere was affected by pronounced differences between population groups with regard to norms and life styles that may cause feelings of aversion to the other population.

Differences were also found in attitudes towards the disadvantaged, as described by women living in the old buildings: “We have a lone person... not 100% well in his mind...every morning neighbors ask him whether he needs anything...a neighbor brings him some soup”... or: “a family with a difficult mental condition...the father and one girl are hospitalized in the psychiatric ward...we are like a family to them.” Long time residents were tolerant towards disadvantaged neighbors and helped them.

The feeling of belonging of the long time population was not necessarily towards the entire neighborhood: “In some parts of the neighborhood I have no reason to be there, like the more distant streets. I feel I belong only to my own street, actually only to the old side of the street.” The feeling of belonging of those interviewed was limited to a certain section of the street where they lived, and included the old buildings only.

Differences between “the new” and “the old” physical environment were emphasized by a long time resident: “The street looks funny, a 50 year old building with graffiti on it saying “welcome to hell” and next to it a gorgeous new building...I open the window and see all that green of theirs... They look (out of the window) and see all that rubbish.” Also new residents said: “On our side they have put nice new lamp posts and paved a new

sidewalk. On the other side they haven’t done anything ...it’s not nice, why draw such a line between people?” They expressed feelings of enjoying the new well looked-after buildings, while expressing feelings of aversion to the old neglected buildings.

The new population avoided using the local schools and public services, as described by women from the new buildings: “Residents of the new buildings don’t send their children to the neighborhood schools and kindergartens...I don’t want my children to learn together with that population. I also won’t send them to the community center.” By not using the neighborhood’s public services, new residents also diminished the chances of meeting each other, as described by a resident of the new buildings: “Between the new residents there aren’t many contacts. You find some relations among people living in your building, but I have no idea who is living in the new building next to us. Everyone sends his children to a different school, because they don’t want to send them to the neighborhood school.” Avoiding the use of local educational and public facilities resulted from their desire to avoid meeting or having any relations with the other population group. This however, also limited their opportunities of meeting with people of their own population group.

In the Yahalom housing development: “People in the new buildings are white collar workers, they don’t start their cars before seven in the morning, they go to the office. I see the people of the old neighborhood, they are all of low class, aged, many lone people sitting on their balcony or hanging around the place.” We see the

differences in life style between the two population groups, and little regard for the long time population by the new population.

Long time residents compared themselves with the new population: *"We are simpler, common people. I can start a conversation with any stranger, but they won't start a conversation. For instance, if somebody knocks on the door and asks for a glass of water, I'd be glad to help him. I will even offer him something to eat. They might give him a glass of water but would be suspicious, they wouldn't like it."* Or: *"I'm not afraid to walk alone outside at night because I know all the neighbors and they know me."* We see a tolerance for the disadvantaged and strangers, and a feeling of security in public space.

Social and family ties among the long time population described by women in the old buildings: *"The people here are very community minded... everybody knows everything about everybody, it's a nuisance because there is no privacy, but on the other hand it's good because you are not alone."* *"The whole neighborhood is more like a home... we help each other and care about each other... there are strong ties between the families within an extended family. The whole neighborhood is like a family, when anything happens to anybody, everybody comes and helps, you are not alone. You won't find this in the new buildings, there everyone is on his own."* The sense of place in the old neighborhood was one of good relations between neighbors, the feeling of a community and family ties among the same population.

To women from the new housing development privacy was very important *"Everyone here lives on his own, there is no desire to mix with each other, people don't bother each other. I like this very much... there is a lot of privacy here, nobody will enter your home without first phoning you."* There was a strong emphasis on the importance of privacy among the new population. Their emphasis on privacy did not prevent social relations among residents of the new housing development: *"People don't meet every day except for jogging together in the park. The layout of the development is like a closed neighborhood, and that causes people to know each other, relatively speaking."* Good relations existed among the same population in the housing development.

The location of buildings and their physical design strongly affected the residents' perception of the residential environment, as described by a resident from the new housing development: *"The wall that separates us from the nearby neighborhood gives us a feeling of security...the wall creates a sort of feeling of belonging, with something in common between the residents of the housing development. Schools of high standard with a lot of parent involvement add to the feeling of communality. My children have friends in all the buildings so they can go and see each other on their own, or play together in the public garden."* Good relations existed among the same population. The wall added to a feeling of belonging to the similar buildings, and provided a feeling of security in public space. There was also a sense of satisfaction with the physical environment.

Summary of the findings

Six new housing developments built in six old existing neighborhoods have been studied. Findings of the ethnographic analysis have been summarized in Tables 3–6. We regard the results noted in Tables 3–6 for each variable as components of the sense of place. Our aim was to show rational relationships between the various components and their combined effect on the special sense of place in every residential environment investigated. Combining the sociological characteristics in Table 1 and the physical characteristics in Table 2 with the components of the sense of place in Tables 3–6 should enable us to do so. A different and unique sense of place, expressed by different behavioral and affective components was found to exist in each of the developments and their adjacent old buildings. Following are some further elaborations of the findings:

Differences between population groups: Where large differences existed in socio-economic characteristics, large differences were also found in norms of behavior and life style. Also, if there was no clear physical separation between the new and the old buildings,⁵ the sense of place indicated a negative attitude to each other between the new and the long time populations, with no feeling of belonging to the community and the residential environment, and dissatisfaction with the residential environment (Sapir). However, if a clear physical separation did exist between the new and the old buildings, there was little contact with the other population, but there was a sense of belonging to the community, separate for each population group, a sense of belonging to the new housing development by the new residents, and a sense of belonging to the neighborhood by the long time residents (Yahalom). However, if there were no large socio-economic differences between the two population groups and no physical separation between the new and the old buildings, there was generally a lack of contacts with the other population and no feeling of belonging to a community. In one case however, there was a sense of belonging to the street by both population groups and a sense of satisfaction with the residential environment (Leshem).

Relations among the same population group: Generally, long time residents reported good and fairly frequent relations among their population group based on long standing neighbor relations and mutual help than among new residents. This may have been so because the long time residents were mostly of Asian or African origin, what affected their norms of behavior and relations among neighbors. Another reason might have been their lower socio-economic status. New residents rather tended to have contacts with some of their neighbors on an individual basis, or contacts limited to meeting in common public areas. Interestingly enough, no lack of contacts was reported in new housing developments that were arranged in an enclosed shape with a common public area in its middle (Yahalom, Bareket), as opposed to housing developments that were built along

Table 5. Variables of behavior: comparison of results

	Differences in norms and life style between population groups	Relations among the same population group	Relations with the other population group(s)	Use of public space and of public services
Sapir	Pronounced differences in norms of behavior and life style between new and long time residents	Very little contacts between new residents. Contacts between Long time residents mainly based on family ties and mutual help	Tension and conflicts between new and long time residents	New residents avoid using public space and services if possible. Long time residents use public space & services
Yahalom	Pronounced differences in norms of behavior and life style between new and long time residents	Good relations, consideration, joint leisure activities among new residents. Good relations based on friendship, family ties, mutual help among long time residents	Decent relations between "them" and "us," between new and long time residents	New residents use own public space and services. Long time residents use public space and services in the old neighborhood
Odem	No significant differences in norms of behavior and life style between new and long time residents, with some exceptions	Social ties exist, but are not widespread, among both populations, based on individual friendship and relations between neighbors	Almost no contacts between new and long time residents	Most new residents and long time residents use available public services to a limited extent only
Leshem	No differences in norms of behavior and life style between new and long time residents	Some new residents have friends and individual good neighbor relations. Good, long standing neighbor relations among most long time residents	Generally no contacts between new and long time residents	Most new residents use existing public services only occasionally. Only part of long time residents use existing public services
Tarshish	Pronounced differences in norms of behavior and life style between new and long time residents	Generally no social relations among new residents nor among long time residents	Almost no contacts between new and long time residents	Most new residents use existing public services only occasionally. Most long time residents use existing public services
Bareket	Pronounced differences in norms of behavior and life style between new and long time residents	New residents mainly meet in the swimming pool and public space. Long time residents have ties with personal friends and long time neighbors	Little or no contacts between new and long time residents. Some long time residents envy the new residents' private swimming pool.	Most new residents do not use existing public services. Only part of long time residents use existing public services

Table 6. Variables of personal feeling: comparison of results

	Satisfaction with or aversion to the physical environment	Feeling of belonging to the physical environment	Feeling of belonging to a community	Feeling of security in public space
Sapir	Lack of satisfaction, mainly by new residents, but also by long time residents	New residents do not feel belonging to residential environment. Long time residents feel belonging to the old buildings in their street only	No feeling of belonging to a community by either new or long time residents	New residents lack a feeling of security. Long time residents: have a fair feeling of security
Yahalom	High degree of satisfaction, both by new and by long time residents	New residents feel belonging to the new housing development. Long time residents: feel belonging to the old neighborhood	Feeling of belonging to a community both by new and by long time residents	Feeling of security both by new and by long time residents
Odem	High degree of satisfaction by new residents and by most long time residents	Most new residents feel belonging to the new housing development. Part of the long time residents feel belonging to the neighborhood, others don't at all.	Most new as well as most long time residents have no sense of belonging to a community	Most new residents have a feeling of security. Some long time residents have a feeling of security Others did not mention the issue
Leshem	Satisfaction or some satisfaction among most new residents. Satisfaction by long time residents	Both new residents and long time residents mainly feel belonging to their street.	Most new as well as most long time residents have no sense of belonging to a community	Some new residents have a feeling of security. Some long time residents lack a feeling of security. All others did not mention the issue.
Tarshish	Some of the new residents are satisfied and others are less so. Satisfaction by long time residents	Most new residents feel belonging to the new housing development. Half the long time residents feel belonging to the neighborhood. All others have no sense of belonging	Most new as well as most long time residents have no sense of belonging to a community	Some new and some long time residents have a feeling of security. Most did not mention the issue
Bareket	High degree of satisfaction, both by new and by long time residents	New residents feel belonging to the new housing development. Long time residents feel belonging to the neighborhood	Most new residents feel belonging to a community. Most long time residents have no sense of belonging to a community	Most new and most long time residents have a feeling of security

the street or arranged in a horseshoe shape. Another variable that might have affected relations among the same population group was age and level of education. The more heterogeneous the population group was in terms of age and level of education⁶ the less frequent relations were among the population group (Tarshish, long time residents), some residents had good but limited relations and others had none at all (Bareket, long time residents). We assume that this reflected differences between older residents and younger ones. It seems indeed that different age groups had different kinds of relations within the population group. Residents of the 31–40 age group had hardly any relations with their neighbors at all (Sapir, Leshem and Tarshish new residents).

Use of public services: In general, long time residents made more use of nearby available public services than

new residents. This may be attributed to the age and socio-economic status of these residents. Long time residents were generally older and did not possess private cars, what made them more dependent on locally available facilities. The possibility to buy on credit in the stores and to pay reduced fees in the social center encouraged these people to use the local facilities. The local public services also served as a meeting place for long time residents and strengthened their feeling of belonging to the neighborhood and to the community. New residents avoided using the existing public services in the old neighborhood. Some of them because of the limited choice of products available (Odem, Leshem, Bareket), others because of the poor esthetics of the buildings and services provided, and some because of their dislike of meeting the other population (Sapir, Bareket). Where new public facilities had been built as

part of the housing development, new residents did use them but not exclusively. Possible explanations are relatively high prices, preferring to shop near their place of work or buying in quantities in the big chain stores. Nevertheless, the fact that these facilities enabled them to buy locally added to their satisfaction with the residential environment (Yahalom). Where old public facilities had been refurbished and upgraded (Odem), this did attract new residents to use the services, and might also have added to their satisfaction with the residential environment. The upgrading might however have reduced their use by long time residents because of increased prices which they could not afford to pay and may have decreased their satisfaction with the residential environment.

Satisfaction with the physical environment: In most cases, there was a high degree of satisfaction with the physical environment, both among new and among long time residents. For new residents, all new housing developments built were of high quality, and were a source of pride to the residents. For long time residents, often their residential environment had also improved as a result of the new housing developments, whenever they had been built either on the site of some environment-polluting industry, or on neglected open areas that had previously harbored delinquent activities. Where differences in socio-economic status were large, new residents were dissatisfied whenever there was no clear physical separation between the new and the old buildings (Sapir). Feelings of dissatisfaction were mainly because they could see and hear the other population. New residents were also concerned about a negative stigma that living in that neighborhood would infer on them. Long time residents were dissatisfied with the physical environment, because of the large visible differences in esthetics (Yahalom) or in standard of living between the new housing development and the old neighborhood (Bareket).

Feeling of belonging to the neighborhood and security: As mentioned, the way the new housing developments had been arranged profoundly affected the feeling of belonging. An enclosed or semi-enclosed arrangement of the buildings caused a feeling of belonging of the residents to the new housing development (Yahalom, Odem, Tarshish, Bareket). Such arrangements also added to the feeling of security of the new residents, as opposed to the lack of security sensed by residents in the new housing developments that were built along the street (Sapir, Leshem). Long time residents had expressed feelings of belonging to the neighborhood and to the street in which they lived. In most cases they also sensed a feeling of security in their residential environment. Many of those interviewed had however, not mentioned the issue of security at all, particularly among long time residents. This may have been because new residents felt more intimidated in the old neighborhood than long time residents who had always been living there.

Discussion

This study presents a new approach in determining the sense of place, using ethnographic descriptions and analyzing them qualitatively. Qualitative analysis attaches importance to the significance of issues in the eyes of those interviewed. Qualitative analysis enables the researcher to learn what the persons on whom the study is based thought. The parameters for assessing the sense of place were therefore an outcome of the subjective descriptions by those interviewed when asked to describe their residential environment, without any intervention by the researcher. This is very different from quantitative methods, in which the researcher determines the parameters and asks the persons interviewed to rank their answers in one way or another. By the qualitative method, we noted which issues had been spontaneously mentioned by those interviewed and which hadn't, and we could also see the attitude of those interviewed towards those issues, whether positive or negative. We thus obtained an indication of what these people thought and how they felt about their residential environment. We also obtained explanations as to why they felt that way. By reading the ethnographic descriptions, the researcher could actually feel the sense of place even if he had never been there, which would be almost impossible when relying on quantitative analyses only.

By applying this methodology in six different residential environments we believe to have demonstrated its advantages, though it may be somewhat complicated to apply in recording the ethnographic descriptions and analyzing them. This methodology should in any case be more effective than quantitative methods when trying to analyze the local sense of place in a relatively small residential environment, or when comparing such local environments. The larger the environment being studied and the more types of different population groups and types of buildings in the area being studied, the more complicated the results of the ethnographic analysis will become, up to the point when a quantitative methodology may become more advantageous. We were surprised to find quite some similarity between the variables selected by us to determine the sense of place and the variables found to be significant by Townshend (2002) in his quantitative study of experiential community structures.

From the examples shown in this study we can see that the sense of place in each of the residential environments was formed by a unique combination of all behavioral and affective components. It may therefore be enough for one component to be different in two environments, to result in a difference in sense of place between the two environments. In practice more than one component will generally be different, and a very large variety of senses of place are therefore possible. Thus, a neighborhood containing a variety of population groups or a variety of types of buildings in different

areas will also have different senses of place in different areas.

Out of the six new housing developments studied, three (Yahalom, Odem, Leshem) were located in different places in the same old neighborhood. In every one of them we found a different sense of place, proving that different senses of place could be found in one and the same neighborhood. Even if we would only study the adjacent old environments of these three housing developments we would find more differences than communality between them in spite of the similarity between them. We notice differences in age distribution, country of origin and level of education, similarity in the arrangement of buildings and fences and differences in height of the buildings. We also see differences within population groups in the use of public services, in the degree of satisfaction with the residential environment and in sense of belonging to the environment and to the community. We do however notice similarity in relations with the other population groups and in the sense of security. We have therefore identified differences in sense of place, even within the old neighborhood. At least several of these differences in the neighborhood had most probably already existed before the new housing developments were built.

We can see that every one of the new housing developments built in the same neighborhood had its unique sense of place, different from that in other new housing developments, as well as from that in the adjacent old environment. Every area in the old neighborhood had a sense of place that was different from other areas in the neighborhood. On the other hand, the sense of place in every area did affect and was affected by, its adjacent areas.

Building the new housing developments did also affect the old environment,⁷ but in different ways in different places. When new developments were built in neglected open areas (Yahalom, Leshem) or in place of environment polluting industries (Tarshish, Bareket), the long time population was apparently very satisfied with the improvement of their residential environment. However, when a new housing development was located in the middle of an old neighborhood, creating "a barrier" inside the neighborhood, it had a negative effect on the social fabric of the old neighborhood (Sapir, Odem) and decreased the sense of satisfaction among long time residents. Where new housing development had triggered a process of spontaneous gentrification in the adjacent old buildings (Tarshish, Bareket), this in turn improved the sense of place in the old neighborhood. Other significant factors identified were differences between new and long time populations, and differences in the height of buildings and their arrangement in the old neighborhood. All these were found to affect and change the sense of place of the neighborhood in cases of urban revitalization.

Thus, building new housing developments in old neighborhoods may have many implications, and it should therefore be advisable to take these into

consideration in the early stages of planning and design. In addition to changes in demography, in physical appearance of the neighborhood and economic aspects, building such developments could change the behavior of the residents and their feeling towards the residential environment. Proper planning and design could improve these and create a favorable sense of place to the new as well as to the long time residents. Such planning and design should consider the existing sense of place before beginning the development, and should integrate the new buildings in such a way as to improve the sense of place rather than worsen it. By doing so, new housing developments could improve the sense of place experienced by the long time population and the image of the neighborhood in their own eyes and in the eyes of other people.

Conclusions

It is being proposed to use "sense of place" as a multivariate characterization of a residential environment that expresses the subjective feelings and patterns of behavior of its residents resulting from relations between groups of residents, relations within each group of residents and their attitude to the physical aspects of the residential environment.

A methodology has been developed to determine the sense of place qualitatively, based on ethnographic analysis of the descriptions of the residential environment by its residents, and focused on evaluating a number of predetermined variables that together define the sense of place of the residential environment. This methodology should be particularly effective when assessing the local sense of place in relatively small residential environments.

Comparison of the sense of place between different residential environments could enable identification of the effects of various social factors and the physical environment on the sense of place, the conclusions of which could be used in planning new housing developments, particularly if located in old neighborhoods.

Additional studies will be required to further refine the identification of the sense of place as a methodology for evaluating and comparing residential environments, and to anticipate the effects of social and physical planning on the resulting sense of place.

Notes

1. In Israel, about 70% of the dwellings are in multi-family buildings, with the apartments owned by the residents in a condominium-type arrangement.
2. The subject of the relations between the different population groups is discussed in Billig and Churchman (2003A).



Figure 1. Sappir: New Buildings to the left, opposite old to the right.



Figure 2. Yahalom: old buildings in foreground, some refurbished, new buildings in background.



Figure 3. Yahalom: new buildings encircling their own public garden.



Figure 4. Odem: old buildings as seen from above in the new buildings.



Figure 5. Leshem: new buildings to the left, opposite old buildings to the right.



Figure 6. Tarshish: new buildings to the left, opposite old buildings to the right, some refurbished.



Figure 7. Baret: new buildings around their own swimming pool.



Figure 8. Baret: nearby old buildings.

3. The research was based on interviewing women only, because they tend to be more often present in and involved with the neighborhood.
4. e.g. mutual consideration, mutual help, privacy, good relations, no contacts, conflicts.
5. See Billig and Churchman (2003).
6. It was difficult to isolate between the two in this study.
7. See Billig and Churchman (2003B).

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