

**CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND URBAN
IDENTITY: A CASE STUDY OF YAZD CITY,
IRAN**

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CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND URBAN IDENTITY:
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by

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I would like to dedicate this Doctoral Thesis to my beloved Motherland, Iran

and also

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love made this research a reality.

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LANDSKAP BUDAYA DAN IDENTITI BANDAR: SATU KAJIAN KES BANDAR YAZD, IRAN

ABSTRAK

Mercu tanda tempatan kini semakin berkurangan disebabkan penularan budaya barat dalam landskap budaya bandar terutamanya dalam masyarakat bandar yang sedang membangun. Proses ini mendorong kepada pembentukan landskap bandar yang homogen dan yang tidak boleh dibezakan. Jika situasi ini berkekalan, ia boleh mendorong kepada pembentukan bandar yang agak ganjil/asing dan tidak bermakna pada masa depan, yang tidak mampu menjelaskan kepada penghuni mereka tentang sejarah asal dan identiti budaya. Justeru, kajian ini menegaskan tentang pentingnya pemuliharaan dan pengekalan mercu tanda tempatan dalam landskap budaya sesebuah bandar, terutamanya bandar bersejarah, sebagai modal budaya daripada setiap bangsa, dan faktor dan sifat yang menjadikan bandar-bandar tersebut berbeza di antara satu sama lain. Kajian ini diolah berdasarkan strategi kajian kes sebagai suatu strategi kualitatif dalam sains sosial. Data yang terkumpul adalah berdasarkan temu bual, pemerhatian dan kajian dokumen. Dalam kajian ini, seramai 35 orang responden (18 lelaki dan 17 perempuan) terlibat dalam temubual. Responden dipilih berdasarkan pensampelan bertujuan dan mengikut kepada soalan penyelidikan. Berdasarkan dapatan penyelidikan ini, terdapat perbezaan yang bermakna di antara landskap budaya bersejarah dan tekstur baru bandar Yazd, yang terhasil daripada penggunaan pola dan ideologi yang berbeza dalam pembentukan dan pembangunan setiap tekstur. Keadaan iklim juga merupakan faktor utama dalam pembentukan tekstur bandar bersejarah, tetapi tidak dalam pembentukan tekstur baru bandar

Justeru, adalah tidak mungkin untuk menerima ruang koheren di antara dua tekstur yang berbeza ini di bandar Yazd. Dapatan juga mencadangkan bahawa tekstur bandar bersejarah membentuk identiti bandar Yazd, sementara tekstur baru Yazd bukan sahaja tidak menyumbang terhadap pembentukan identiti bandar, malahan ia juga merupakan satu ancaman terhadap identiti bandar Yazd pada masa depan. Tambahan pula, kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa selain ciri-ciri bahan (fizikal), ciri-ciri kerohanian juga mempunyai peranan yang bermakna dalam pembentukan imej bandar di dalam minda penghuninya. Di samping itu, penentuan dan faktor pelemah atau pemusnah identiti bandar Yazd dikenal pasti dalam kajian ini. Tekstur sejarah dan struktur khususnya (Masjid Jame Yazd, Kompleks Amir Chaqmaq dan Taman Dolat Abad), iklim gurun, agama yang dianuti penduduknya, keselamatan dan keadaan yang tenang dikenal pasti sebagai faktor penentu sementara kurangnya ruang hijau, kurangnya keprihatinan pihak berkuasa terhadap kebersihan bandar dan penggunaan perabot bandar dianggap sebagai faktor pelemah atau pemusnah.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND URBAN IDENTITY: A CASE STUDY OF YAZD CITY, IRAN

ABSTRACT

Today, local landmarks are declining as a result of the diffusion of Western Culture in the cultural landscape of cities especially in developing urban societies. Hence, this process leads to the shaping of homogenous and non-distinguishable urban landscapes. Accordingly, if this situation persists, this would lead to the shaping of alien and meaningless cities in the future which will not be able to respond to their residents with regard to their original historical and cultural identity. Hence, this study emphasizes the importance of preserving and reviving local landmarks in the cultural landscape of cities, particularly historical cities, as cultural capital of each nation, and the factors and features that make cities distinguishable from each other. This study is designed based on case study strategy as a qualitative strategy in social sciences. The data collected is based on, interview, observation and documentary studies. In this study, 35 respondents (18 men and 17 women) participated in the interviews. The respondents were chosen based on purposive sampling and in coordination with the research questions. Based on the findings of this research, there are meaningful differences between the cultural landscape of the historical and new urban textures of Yazd which are the results of using different patterns and ideologies in the formation and development of each texture. Climatic conditions were also a key factor in the formation of the historical urban texture of the city, but

not in the formation of the new urban texture. Hence, it is not possible to perceive the spatial coherence between these two different textures of the city of Yazd. The findings also suggest that, the historical texture of the city forms Yazd's urban identity while the new texture of Yazd not only does not contribute to the formation of the urban identity of the city, but is also a threat to Yazd's urban identity in the future. In addition, the study reveal that, not only material (physical) characteristics of the city, but also spiritual characteristics have meaningful roles in the formation of the image of the city in the citizens' minds. In addition, the determination and attenuator factors of urban identity of Yazd were identified in this study. The historical texture and its specific structures (Yazd Jame Mosque, Amir Chaqmaq Complex and Dolat Abad Garden), desert climate, religiousness of the people, safety and calmness were identified as determination factors while shortage of green spaces, lack of attention to the city's cleanliness by urban authorities and application of inappropriate urban furniture were recognized as attenuator factors.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Different fields of urban studies have made various definitions of the city in respect to their fields. For example, urban demographers in their definitions emphasize population size of cities, politicians emphasize legal geographical boundaries and economists define the city as a place which is suitable for non-extractive economic activities and also commerce (Smith, 1980). Moreover, urban anthropologists such as Lewis Mumford and Kevin Lynch have designated the cultural role and significance for cities. Mumford (1970) considered the city as man's greatest work of art which is created for collective living and he also regards the city as a symbol of collective meanings. Furthermore, Lynch (1960) places emphasis on urban inhabitants and their culture, demands and ideas. He believes that symbols and collective memories are manifested in the cities. In addition, according to urban anthropologists' views, cities are cultural settings which reflect the cultural values and features of an urban community.

In the historical sense, cities are the result of the agricultural revolution and man's sedentary life. The agricultural revolution changed human lifestyles and accelerated the industrial revolution. The alterations in human life, as a result of the agricultural revolution increased social complexity and resulted in the gathering of people in larger settlements. In addition, the agricultural revolution caused many cultural changes which were unparalleled in its speed and extent (Gutkind, 1974; Weeks, 2008; Ehrlich, 2000). The cultural and economical changes brought on by the industrial revolution resulted in rapid changes in the way people lived and worked. It

involved changes in the pattern of spending money, growth of towns, transport improvement, widespread use of electronic and satellite communication technology, and also development of multinational relations and contributions in all economic, political, cultural dimensions of urban societies. Indeed, the industrial revolution implicates all development at the same time (Ross, 2008; Weinstein, 2005).

Today, economic development as a result of industry and technology growth has resulted in universal cultural shifts in human societies such as increasing of secular values and a leaning towards spiritual affairs at the individual level (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). In addition, today globalization as a multidimensional phenomenon and also as visible consequences of industrialization, modernization and capitalism forces is leading up to cultural homogenization of which McDonaldization and Westernization are considered as evidence of this cultural process (Hopper, 2007). According to Barker (2012) “the cultural homogenization thesis proposes that the globalization of consumer capitalism involves a loss of cultural diversity. It stresses the growth of ‘sameness’ and a presumed loss of cultural autonomy. This is cast as a form of cultural imperialism” (p. 161). Hence, the cultural homogenization process under cultural globalization is leading to the disappearance of identity’s determinant factors of urban communities, particularly in third world societies. Indeed, cultural globalization is leading to the changing of local cultures and identities around the world through the removal of cultural boundaries and an increase in cultural exchanges (Nijman, 1999). In other words, the process of globalization is concerned with “question of culture, identity and meaning in representations of the world as a single place” (King, 1995, pp. 219-20).

The cultural changes in the world is linked to the growth of international travel and cultural interactions, increase in universal communication and information

flow, and also the forming of a world market because they are contributing to dissolving boundaries and combining of cultural elements of different societies around the world (Robins, 1997). Thus, with respect to these points, cultural globalization or in other words, cultural homogenization, is recognized as a serious threat to local cultures and identities with the widespread use of the English Language and also the formation of similar places such as shopping malls, coffee shops, fast foods restaurants, and hotels that represent the non-local culture hegemony or ‘Western Culture’ on developing societies (Erikson, 2007). Thus, today developing countries are facing a type of conflict between their local cultures and a global culture which is diffusing through the penetration of Western powers in these nations.

The process of modernization and the cultural globalization that followed is leading to the declining of cultural heritage of the cities and also their cultural landscapes. According to Lozny (2008), cultural landscapes are embracing symbolical places that enfold many different meanings and they also include less tangible aspects of places like memories and sense of belonging, all of which are relevant to the history of a human society. Plachter and Rossler (1995) also argue that “a cultural landscape is a complex phenomenon with a tangible and an intangible identity. The intangible component arises from ideas and interactions which have an impact on the perceptions and shaping of a landscape, such as sacred beliefs closely linked to the landscape and the way it has been perceived over time” (p. 15). Hence, with respect to the definitions mentioned, culture is the main term which gives symbolic meanings to the urban landscapes, and diversity of the cultures and cultural histories causes dissimilarities and differences in landscapes both physically and mentally (Palang & Fry, 2003). Therefore, the cultural landscapes of cities can have

the principle role in forming distinct urban identities, but cultural globalization process treats urban identity in the contemporary age by cultural homogenization.

Urban identity is shaped through a closely associated culture and built environment and it also arises from non-verbal communication of people in physical environment which are manifest in symbolic forms. In addition, distinctive urban identities represent distinct cultural and collective identities of residents of the cities which ultimately lead to the creation of different cultural landscapes (Fernando, 2007). Furthermore, urban identity is not separable from the physical and spatial quality of the urban space because the quality of the city is in direct connection with a sense of attachment to the city (Aly, 2011). In addition, Al Khalifa (2013) regards cultural identity as a precondition for shaping urban identity. In another aspect, urban identity enables people to recognize and distinguish the places from each other and also make sense of belonging to the city in which the people live (Lynch, 1981). Norberg-Schulz (1980) has made a significant connection between urban identity and the spirit of the place or *genius loci*. He believes that the built urban environment is not only a flow of phenomena but a fact with structure and meanings.

In the past, cities were spaces with their own aesthetical and cultural values where vernacular architecture and urbanism were tangible manifestations of their local values. In other words, the buildings including residential buildings, sacred places, and public spaces expressed cultural identity, social values, symbolic meanings and the others socio-cultural aspects of a human society. Furthermore, the physical structures responded to human demands and needs and also formed relations between people. These physical, functional, symbolical structures (architecturally) had an important role in facilitating social communication and also giving physical

form to memories and hopes of the cities' local people (Glassie, 2000; Terzoglou, 2012).

Today, cities are manifesting the diffusion of a global culture which will lead to the decaying of local cultural symbols in urban spaces and instead promote universal cultural symbols and signs such as vertical buildings with glass facades, broad streets and highways, huge shopping malls for promoting the culture of consumerism, fast food restaurants, and coffee shops. Actually, urban identities of the cities are declining as a result of the dominance of a universal culture with its specific cultural symbols and values. In respect to these points, Jacobs and Appleyard (2011) believed that cities are going to be places without meaning for their citizens. The cities are changing to alien spaces for their inhabitants and this has caused people to prefer their own private world rather than participate in their society.

According to Relph (1976), "a deep human need exists for association with significant places. If we choose to ignore that need, and to allow the forces of placelessness to continue unchallenged, then the future can only hold an environment in which places simply do not matter. If, on the other hand, we choose to respond to that need and to transcend placelessness, then the potential exists for the development of an environment in which places are for man, reflecting and enhancing the variety of human experience" (p. 147).

Furthermore, placelessness is linked to the cultural homogenization which is followed by homogenization of place as a process that causes decrease in cultural differences (Mooney & Evans, 2007). In this regard, Lynch (1960; 1981) emphasized landmarks (urban symbols and signs) and sense of place (identity) as the principle

factors for shaping place attachment among residents of cities. He believes that, sense of place depends on the imageability feature (visual quality of urban spaces which creates a strong image of the city in the minds of citizens) and also cultural values of an urban society. In his opinion, meaningful and perceptible places are good supportive conditions upon which personal and collective memories, feelings and also cultural values lean on. Thus, cultural globalization is not only a threat to urban identity in the contemporary age but also has negative effects on sense of place attachment as well as collective memories, both of which are important parameters for social cooperation and social coherence in urban communities.

Briefly, cities have embraced cultural values of a human community because they are created through the continued efforts of humans in a period of time. Thus, cities can be considered as tangible aspects of cultural capital of the societies which of course are not limited only to tangible cultural heritage but all the things made by humans such as sculptures, paintings, artworks and so on (Throsby, 2001). Long ago, the cultural landscape of cities represented their inhabitants' local cultural features whereas today they reveal a global determined culture which has its principle roots in Western Societies. This process is a significant reason for the decline in local cultures (as cultural capital of societies) and urban identity of developing societies. Thus, according to Martell (2010), "the extent of globalization of culture and the significant implications this has for identity in some part of the world should not be underestimated" (p. 81). It can be even truer of historical cities because they are implying history of a human society and their values, beliefs, norms and customs over a long time.

Accordingly, cities are facing the risk of losing their identity under the cultural globalization process, the result of will be meaningless cities in the future.

Thus, preserving and promoting urban identity is one of the principle factors for achieving sustainable development and also making connections between old and new generations (Mehdizadeh, 2005). Therefore, this study is focusing on recognizing and identifying urban identity and its factors in the city of Yazd as an ancient city in the plateau of Iran.

The city of Yazd was selected as the research area of the thesis because the historical texture of Yazd, which embraces Iran's history of civilization, is under the risk of being destroyed for the sake of urban renovation. In addition, a new urban texture has formed and is growing beside the historical texture under the urban development process and in accordance with global patterns of development. These processes are leading to the disappearance of distinguishable factors in the city and eventually shaping a city similar to the other cities in Iran or around the world. In other words, globalization and homogenization processes are leading to homogeneous built environments without local meanings and senses in one of the oldest cities of Iran which is one of the most important references in the recognition of the Persian Civilization. Therefore, the city of Yazd is important not only for its inhabitants but also for Iran because many of the Persian Civilization bases originated from there. Thus, in this research the cultural landscapes of both the historical and new urban textures of the city will be analysed in order to understand the influence of globalization on the image of the city of Yazd and also Yazd's urban identity with emphasis on Yazd's urban landmarks.

Urban anthropology is an interdisciplinary field in cultural anthropology and this research is carried out to contribute in a small way to the development of the field of urban anthropology in terms of cultural landscapes and urban identity. Today, cities are facing many problems and discovering functional solutions for

them requires continued cooperation and interaction between urban anthropology and other related sciences such as urban history, urban management, urban planning, urban design and environmental studies. Also, it should be stated that lack of development of urban anthropology science during the last few decades is a problem for researchers in obtaining information and references. Therefore, creating interaction between urban anthropology and other related sciences is a good way for promoting this field of anthropology. Thus, researchers in different scientific-research fields can help each other towards creating better cities in accordance with multidimensional needs and demands of both the present and future generations.

1.2 Yazd' New Urban Texture as Result of Urban Growth

The city of Yazd, like the other cities in Iran, has experienced two different forms of urban growth, namely, organic and inorganic growth. The result of organic growth is the historical texture of the city whose growth depended on the climatic and geographical features of the desert area and also its economic and socio-cultural features. But the new texture is the consequence of inorganic growth of the city during recent decades, whose growth process did not match with the local features of the city as a desert and dry city (Nazarian, 1995; Taghvaie & Saraie, 2006). Actually, the new texture of Yazd is the result of physical and inorganic growth of city in and around of the historical texture which is still developing (Pourahmad & Shamaei, 2001). In addition, inorganic and horizontal growth of the city is the consequence of the process of pervasive and hasty modernization and also expansion of capitalist relations in Iran (Taghvaie & Saraie, 2006).

According to Shamaei (2001) the most important factors in physical growth of the city of Yazd are population growth, the incorrect policies in supply of land,

weakness in control of housing and also unsuitable distribution and localization of the cultural, educational, commercial and administrative centres. In addition, as reported by Saraie (2007) the governmental development model (pattern) of the city is an important reason for the horizontal growth of the city of Yazd in recent years. The model is shaped based on land transfer by the government which did not coordinate with the demand rate for land. Thus, the consequences of the model are many abandoned lands and also creation of land speculation. Furthermore, conforming to Shamaei (2003), spatial development of the city has been intensified by population movement from the historical texture to the new texture. On this basis, in recent times, the population of the city of Yazd has doubled every ten years.

Therefore, the new texture of Yazd is the result of hasty urban growth and development and the above-mentioned factors, have contributed to this rushed process. Furthermore, the study of the cultural landscape of the new texture of Yazd can uncover the effects of hurried urban growth, particularly in association with urban identity formation. According to Leader-Elliot (2012), there are many common elements between cultural landscape and sense of place and also cultural landscape and places. They include both tangible and intangible cultural elements, so both of them have multiple layers of meaning. It should be added that intangible culture can be manifested on tangible or material culture and urban spaces are suitable arenas for manifesting it.

1.3 Why the City of Yazd?

As mentioned, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared the city of Yazd as one of the oldest cities in the world (Yelda, 2012) since the history of the city goes back to the Sasanian Era and even further back (Yazd Road and Urban Development Organization, 2007). The historical texture of Yazd has embraced many valuable historical structures which represent preeminent values of Yazd's local community and also the history of the Iranian civilization. Thus, cultural prestige and cultural capital of city of Yazd is remarkable at both local and national levels. But today, the cultural prestige of the city of Yazd is under the influence of a global dominant culture, that is, Western Culture which is trying to create homogeneous cities without distinguishable symbols, particularly in developing countries.

The process of cultural homogenization is leading to the declining of urban identities in developing societies and specifically in the city of Yazd. Furthermore, in recent years, the historical texture has been facing the risk of destruction on the pretext of renovation. In addition, a new urban texture has formed and is growing alongside the historical texture under the influence of urban development process but in accordance with non-local patterns of development. Hence, these can be considered as a serious threat to the urban identity of Yazd in the future. Accordingly, this study has been organized for identifying the determinant factors of urban identity of Yazd with emphasizes on local people's ideas. The result of this research can help different organizations such as Yazd Road and Urban Development Organization, Municipality of Yazd and also Yazd Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization in promoting the city of Yazd and preserving the factors which play role in the urban identity of Yazd. In addition, the study of cultural

landscape's features of both the historical and new textures, based on urban semiotics approach, can help in the identification of booster and minatory elements (signs and symbols) of Yazd's urban identity.

1.4 Problem Statement

According to Mumford (1970), the city is an aesthetic symbol of collective unity and is a place in which significant actions occur and human culture gets improved. Indeed, cities have embraced cultural values of a human community because they are created by continued efforts of humans over a period of time. Hence, cities can be considered as tangible aspects of cultural capital of the societies, which of course are not only limited to tangible cultural heritage but all the things made by humans such as sculptures, paintings, artworks and so on (Throsby, 2001). Thus, cities are considered as cultural landscapes which embrace symbolic places that enfold many different meanings and which also include less tangible aspects of places like memories and sense of belonging, all of which are of concern to the history of a human society (Lozny, 2008). Hence, it can be said that culture and the city are very closely related to each other and that the city provides a suitable environment for manifesting and expressing the cultural identities of societies which is a prerequisite for the subsequent shaping of distinct urban identities.

Cities which manifest features of societies are shifting more towards the expression of a universal cultural elements rather than local cultural elements in the contemporary age. Hence, the number of local urban landmarks is declining through the dominance of global urban landmarks that are diffusing non-local cultural values

which are conforming to the goals of capitalist societies than local policies of urban communities. Hence, cities are developing and growing based on similar patterns and paradigms that are in coordination with a universal culture known as western culture. Thus, it can be predicted that if this situation persists, it will lead to the shaping of alien and meaningless cities in future. Therefore, in the future cities will not able to respond to their residents with regard to their original historical and cultural identity because they are shaped and developed based on foreign patterns and paradigms. Accordingly, it bodes ill for future generations because they will be facing cultural perplexity and alienation if the negative effects of inattention to local features and values of societies in the process of urban development, particularly in developing societies are underestimated.

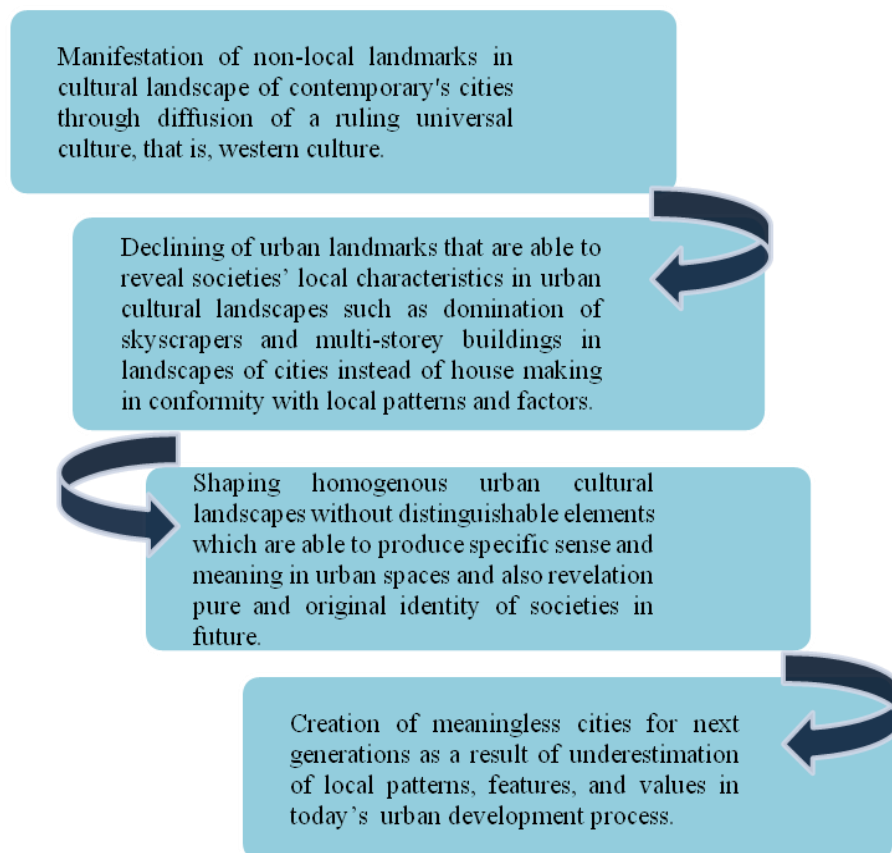


Figure 1.1 Non- local Landmarks and Meaningless Cities

This study will attempt to provide awareness and warnings about the universal process that is not only removing local features of urban landscapes but will also subsequently threaten urban identities. Furthermore, the study stresses the significance of preserving and reviving local cultural infrastructure for achieving local sustainable urban development. It is because urban development is not only about physical growth of cities but is about making good urban settlements so that they do not cause difficulties for both today's generation and the next. Hence, it appears that the local sustainable urban development approach can be a practicable policy for decreasing the effects of cultural globalization in today's urban settlements particularly in terms of cultural landscape and urban identity, two elements that are the focus of this study. In addition, this study aims to highlight the sensitive position of historical cities in a situation where global symbols are sweeping away local symbols and signs from the cultural landscape of cities.

This study focuses on the cultural landscape and urban identity in one of the historical cities of Iran, that is, Yazd which according to Kalantari and Hatami Nejad (2006) was declared as one of the historical cities in the world by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1972. The historical cities like Yazd can be considered as cultural heritage and capital that reveal the history of the formation and evolution of a human civilization and also make persistent connections between different generations. Therefore, the study of the cultural landscape of historical cities such as Yazd can help to identify the factors that are damaging their historical and cultural position and also the factors and characteristics that play a role in distinguishing these cities. Accordingly, this study is also aimed at identifying specific characteristics, and determinant and attenuators factors of Yazd's urban identity. It is because it will result in useful conclusions that

can be applied firstly, for the preservation and revival of the historical and cultural position of Yazd and secondly, for protecting its urban identity against the diffusion of universal culture that is removing local urban landmarks and replacing them with global symbols and signs in the cultural landscape of cities.

1.5 Research Questions

In this qualitative study, to indicate the research path and to make the aims of the study clear and also in order to prevent aberration in data collection and analysis, study questions and aims were formulated as follow:

- i) How does the cultural landscape of Yazd's historical and new urban textures influence its urban identity?
- ii) What are the characteristics of the city of Yazd from the perspective of Yazd's city residents?
- iii) What are the determinant and attenuator factors of urban identity of Yazd from the perspective of Yazd's city residents?

1.6 Research Objectives

- i) To compare the cultural landscape of both the historical and new urban textures of the city of Yazd for identifying their roles in the urban identity of Yazd.
- ii) To recognize the characteristics of the city of Yazd from the perspective of Yazd city's residents.

iii) To identify determinant and attenuator factors of urban identity of Yazd from the perspective of Yazd city's residents.

1.7 Research Scope and Limitations

This study has focused on cultural landscape features of the historical and new urban textures of the city of Yazd for recognizing distinctive elements that play a role in distinguishing the city of Yazd from other cities. Additionally, the study has attempted to identify factors that are damaging the cultural landscapes of both urban textures, historical and new textures, and also Yazd's urban identity. Hence, the cultural landscape of both textures was compared based on the urban semiotic approach, in particular Kevin Lynch's theory for perception of cultural changes through urban landmarks. Furthermore, this study was conducted to identify determinant and attenuator factors of Yazd's urban identity by analysing citizens' opinions. It is because the results of the study can help to preserve the determinant factors and also help in the removal of attenuator factors from the cultural landscape of the historical and new urban textures for the revival of Yazd's urban identity and ensuring that the original identity of Yazd was passed down to the next generations. It also can be useful for decreasing the influence of the cultural globalization process that is gradually removing local urban landmarks and replacing them with global urban landmarks. In addition, the results of the study can be applied to achieve sustainable urban development.

It should be mentioned here as research limitations that, as the city of Yazd is a vast city and the study of the entire city requires abundant facilities (such as a trained research group, financial convenience and sufficient time) hence several sites were

selected as samples for achieving the research objectives of this study. In addition, the variables that were considered in the data collection process based on interviews only included age, gender, and duration of residence in the city of Yazd. It is because the interviewees were chosen based on accidental sampling among pedestrians, students and shopkeepers hence it was not expected that the interviewees desired to give more information about themselves. In addition, this study did not require additional information for achieving the research objectives. Indeed, obtaining more information about the interviewees did not impact the conclusions of the thesis in regards to its research objectives. However, for the purpose of conforming to the research ethic, names of respondents and developers that were involved in this study have to be kept anonymous as no permission was granted from respondents and also developers.

This study has leaned on the theory of Kevin Lynch as the pioneering theory in the sphere of urban semiotics but it should be stated here as another limitation of this study, that with regard to the extent of Lynch's theory, only the factor of 'landmark' is considered in this thesis. It is because, urban landmarks are considered as tangible objects of cultures that impress upon urban cultural landscapes and also reveal cultural features of urban communities implicitly. In addition, urban landmarks play a significant role in creating identity and also collective and personal memories that are an important factor for shaping social cohesion (social capital). Furthermore, it contributes to a decrease in urban crimes, an increase in the sense of safety and peacefulness, place attachment feelings and ultimately increase feelings of responsibility in citizens for participating in preserving and promoting their city (please refer to the conceptual model of the theoretical framework in chapter two).

1.8 Research Significance

This research is important because it exposes the cultural changes that are happening in one of the historical cities of Iran- through the decoding urban landmarks in two different urban textures of the city and based on semiotic compression. These changes are the result of the diffusion of elements of a commanding universal culture and also the underestimation of local factors in the urban development process of Yazd. Hence, the results of the investigations in the cultural landscape of Yazd can be applied for moderating the influence of foreign culture on the cultural landscape of Yazd. Additionally, the results of the thesis can be utilized by different organizations such as the Yazd Road and Urban Development Organization, Municipality of Yazd and also Yazd Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization towards revival and restoration of Yazd's urban identity. Hence, if urban authorities underestimate the urban identity problem of Yazd, it will lead to the shaping of meaningless and alien urban spaces in the city of Yazd in the future. In addition, it will be a threat for the cultural and historical identity of this old city.

The preservation and regeneration of Yazd's urban identity is important because urban identity is closely related to the cultural and historical identity of the city. Hence, when the identity of a city is threatened due to the underestimation of local factors in the development process of the city, it can be also a warning for the cultural and historical identity of the city. Therefore, it is important to identify the predominant and determinant factors of Yazd's urban identity for formulating strategies towards preserving Yazd's triple identity, that is, the cultural, historical and urban identity of the city. Additionally, the identification of attenuator factors of the cultural landscape and urban identity of Yazd can lead to modification and rectification of these factors to improve cultural landscape of the city and its identity.

It should be mentioned here that the city of Yazd is one of the important cities of Iran, both culturally and historically and thus, the preservation of Yazd's identity is important at both local and national levels because many of the Persian Civilizations originated from there.

1.9 Research Contributions

This study is conducted to promote the development of urban anthropology with emphasis on cultural landscapes and urban identity. Nowadays, there is a need for continued interactions between urban anthropology and other urban related sciences such as urban environment, urban management, and urban design, in order to create better cities in accordance with multidimensional needs of the citizens in present and future. Although the results of this study are the outcome of a case study in Iran the results are usable for drafting urban policies towards reinforcing urban identity in other urban societies especially in developing countries.

Cultural landscape and urban identity are sensitive cultural- urban matters because they are in close relationship with the other layers of identity. Hence, it can be said that underestimation of negative effects of deterioration of local elements and features in the cultural landscape of cities and also urban identity will lead to the declining of cultural, historical, collective and even personal identity. Hence, it can be said that researchers and urban authorities should give more attention to preservation and resuscitation of local features and elements of cultural landscapes of cities; otherwise future cities will not be able to respond to their residents about their original historical and cultural identity due to inattention to local factors in the

process of urban development Accordingly, it bodes ill for next generations because they will be facing cultural perplexity and alienation.

1.10 Thesis Organization

This thesis is the result of investigation and inquiry on cultural landscape and urban identity in one of the historical cities of Iran, Yazd which will be presented as follows. Chapter One of the thesis offers an overview of the research as well as the research objectives and questions that guide the study. Chapter Two reviews previous works on urban semiotics as one of the novel fields in urban anthropology especially on related spheres to the main theme of the thesis consisting of symbolic aspects of the cities, cultural heritage, and cultural globalization. This chapter also includes an explanation of the theoretical framework of the thesis with a conceptual model. Chapter Three presents the research methodology and discusses the methods of data collection and also the method of data analysis comprehensively. Chapter Four describes and illustrates the observed landmarks in the cultural landscape of the historical texture of the city. This chapter is divided into six sections based on the sites studied in the historical texture. Chapter Five describes and illustrates the features of visual elements in the cultural landscape of the new texture of the city. In addition, the chapter discusses the role and position of landmarks of the new texture in the determination of Yazd's urban identity. The chapter is categorized into four sections based on the areas investigated in the new urban texture of the city.

Chapter six presents a semiotic comparison of the urban landmarks of the historical and new urban textures of the city of Yazd which is summarized in a table at the end of the chapter. Chapter Seven describes the characteristics of the city of

Yazd that are extracted from the citizens' perspective. This chapter is categorized into nine sections based on the characteristics of the city of Yazd as ascribed by the citizens. Chapter Eight presents the determinant and attenuator factors of Yazd's urban identity that are elicited from citizens' perspective. This chapter includes two principal sections which are the determinant factors of urban identity of Yazd and the attenuator factors of urban identity of Yazd. Each section consists of sub-sections. Chapter Nine presents the findings of the thesis with recommendations for further work and efforts towards preservation and modification of Yazd's urban identity in future.

1.11 Conclusion

Different fields of urban studies have their own definitions of the city and hence this thesis that focuses on the urban anthropology field considers cities as cultural settings which reflect the cultural values and features of urban communities. Hence, this study investigates the cultural landscape and urban identity of one of the historical cities in Iran, that is, Yazd through urban landmarks, known as tangible aspects of the culture of urban societies. The problem statement of this thesis is based on an epidemic problem that most of the cities, especially developing urban societies such as Yazd are facing, that is, development of global symbols and signs in the urban landscape of the cities that lead to the shaping of homogenous cities similar through declining local urban landmarks. It is because manifestation of local elements in urban spaces is the basis of realization of distinctive cultural landscapes and its subsequent shaping of distinguishable urban identities. Therefore, recognition of the features of cultural landscapes of the historical and new urban textures of the

city of Yazd and also the determinant and attenuator factors of urban identity of Yazd have determined the study's objectives.

This study is important because the results of the thesis can be applied by local organizations of Yazd such as Yazd Road and Urban Development Organization, Municipality of Yazd and also Yazd Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization and also the other urban societies especially developing countries for drafting policies towards reinforcing and revival of urban identity and also modifying global elements in cultural landscapes. In addition, this research can help to preserve and revive the local cultural landscape of Yazd and its subsequent durability of cultural and historical identity of the city that is necessary for preventing cultural rupture among future generations. It is because physical objects of cities serve as a cultural source that provide information to the citizens and if the diffusion of global urban landmarks in today's urban spaces are underestimated, this will cause future generations to have difficulties in accessing their original and pure cultural sources. Hence, they will be faced with cultural perplexity and alienation due to the negligence of today's generation to preserve the tangible culture of society that is able to manifest intangible features and values too.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The process of cultural homogenization is changing the cultural landscape of the cities around the world. In other words, cultural globalization and its different aspects are leading to the creation of cities without specific features. For example, today one can see glassy skyscrapers and great shopping malls with the same architecture in different cities of the world. In addition, this process is changing the lifestyle of citizens and leading them toward a kind of material life (culture of consumerism) which is more observable and perceptible in developing countries. Furthermore, these days, people are seeking identity in non-local cultures and other societies which is the result of globalization of communication and technology.

The degradation of urban identity is reflected in the decline of cultural identity because culture is manifest in urban spaces and indeed urban identity is the result of the reflection of culture in the cities. Thus, manifestation of unfamiliar cultures in urban spaces indicates that the local culture is under risk. Accordingly, cultural identity as one of the perquisites of urban identity is a key area considered by many researchers in the field of social sciences and other related fields, some of which will be mentioned here and in four sections, namely, urban anthropology and urban semiotics, urban identity and urban landmarks, urban identity and cultural heritage, urban identity and cultural globalization. Indeed, all designed sections are related (directly or indirectly) to urban identity and urban semiotics approach which has been adopted in the current research.

2.2 Urban Anthropology and Urban Semiotics

Low (1996) has reviewed the anthropological literatures on urban studies, which were published since 1989 in a comprehensive article. In her article, she put the anthropological studies on cities into a larger context of urban studies. She believes that anthropologists had little participation and influence on urban studies, so their voices were rarely heard in the urban studies and urban policy discourses. Low (1996) reviewed studies outlined by Castells (1989), Jameson (1984), Sieber (1991), Cooper (1994), Ruble (1992), Boyer (1994), Zukin (1995), Rutheiser (1996), Bright and Bakewell (1995).

According to Low's review (1996), Castells put forward the theory of 'informational city'. Low explains informational city as where people try to preserve their cultural identity through landmarks and differentiate their places to maintain meaning and organize their communities. In addition, Low pointed out that Jameson's study (1984) showed that new capitalism follows a unique cultural reasoning which is reshaping the forms and function of the city. Boyer (1994) calls the theory as the city of illusion, Zukin (1995) names it as the city of cultural consumption, and also Rutheiser (1996) calls it as the nonplace urban realm. Furthermore, Sieber's study (1991) revealed the manner in which the revival of the waterfront was utilized by post-industrial port cities to create tourist attractions with housing complexes and shopping malls that reflected the middle-class. However, the makeover of the Toronto waterfront is attributed to Cooper (1994) who used spatial ideologies in its design.

According to reviews by Low (1996), Ruble also "critiqued the reshaping of the image of a provincial Russian city in the post socialist transition. In each of these,

revitalization schemes, histories and monuments of public memory are manipulated to create a seamless presentation of the city's revalorized cultural heritage" (Low, 1996, p. 396). Based on Low's reviews, Levy started some research about Bhaktapur which is regarded as an archaic city where symbols serve as a good solution for cultural communication among many people. He could provide analysis of how symbolic forms such as sacrifice, festival calendars, and the pantheon of divinities work to arrange a very large and complex city. Low (1996) argued that there are many studies of cities in far eastern countries that consider preserving the tradition within that urban context although these traditions do not contribute directly to theory of the cities. The target of these studies is investigating dimensions of urban life that is normally ignored by the other researches. According to Low (1996), Robertson's study of people moving into a small Japanese city and Bostor's study of a Shitamachi neighbourhood in Tokyo both reflect the struggle of the people to maintain a balance between traditional values and the pressures of social change.

Low (1996) in her reviews on urban anthropological literature considered anthropologists' approaches to concepts of space, time, knowledge and aesthetics as new fields in anthropology research. According to Low's report, some analysis was performed on the cultural meaning of urban spaces using the anthropological approach. Low's (1996) work on the Spanish American Plaza focused on the historical emergence of spatial power relations while others were more concerned with factors like privacy, neighborhood and schooling to reflect their understanding of urban social interaction. Research on the design and place attachment to urban space is also a factor that has impacted this ongoing work. In addition, Low expressed the views of Rotenberg (1993) as anthropological literature in her reviews. Rotenberg stated that urban identity is shaped by residents' urban experience, place