



The impact of cultural center on filling the Leisure time

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Abstract. One of the functions of leisure time is the redefine of identity in a cultural field that is made by the people in society during the time. People also make their culture and social spaces in society. Since the leisure time and the way of spending it create distinction, identity and dignity, it can be said that different classes of people by choosing different styles can accomplish it well. The way of spending leisure time, on its own, leads to the formation of subcultures in the city which is affected by the social classes and is considered as the distinguishing factors of the social classes. This study is an attempt to answer the following question: By establishing culture centers in different parts of the city, can we have a suitable place for filling the leisure time of the citizens?

Keywords: leisure time, cultural centers, culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

Culture can be found in people's thoughts, activities and daily entertainments (Freud, 2000). Leisure time spending space is one of the most important urban performance fields. This performance includes a set of activities a person willingly does to relax, for recreation, and development of information, personal education and free participation during his daily free time, when he is free from his personal, family, and social commitments (Azani *et al.*, 2012). The best places to spend leisure time are local or urban cultural centers which need more people's familiarization with these places. To get familiarized with this urban space, we need to know about the terminology of this place:

Terminology of culture and cultural center in the authentic Persian terminology dictionary

Culture

- Decorum and politeness, education, science, knowledge, wisdom,
- "There is no culture in this world/ that is not didactic (we can learn something useful from all cultures)" Farrokhi,
- A collection of customs, folk arts, sciences, a book which includes the vocabularies of one or more languages, and their descriptions.
- Culture of world Conquer, Culture of dominance, Water subterranean (Moein, 1996:25).

Cultural center

- High Society of authors, writers and scientists
- Academy
- school (Amid, 1984:50)

2. CULTURE

Today, the so-called culture of a society is the set of "ideas, ideals and beliefs" of a society. Accordingly, this definition clarifies the role of culture in a social system, since every community has a "system of thought"

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(wisdom and resourceful) and "supply system of material needs ". Diversity of the concepts and breadth of meaning of the term "culture" has become wide enough that it can no more be solely limited to the concept and meaning of knowledge and courtesy, as today in the proposed definitions of culture, no attention is paid to its literal meaning and instead , its epistemological and psychological dimensions are considered.

The first comprehensive definition of culture was introduced by Taylor in 1871 in his book entitled "Primitive Culture", which reads as follow:

"Culture or civilization is a complex set, including education, beliefs, arts, crafts, morals, laws, customs and finally, the habits, behaviors, and the rules which a person learns as a member of his society and takes responsibilities and tasks against that society "(Ashouri, 1975). Otto Kleinberg, as a definition for culture, writes as follow:" From the viewpoint of public, culture stands for an excellent artistic and intellectual position, and the development of science, art, literature, and philosophy represents the genius of a nation; however based on the viewpoints of sociologists and people, in addition to the all above-mentioned points, culture includes all the things that a person acquires as a member of a society, we can see the manifestations of the culture in eating, drinking, clothing, housing, relationships with family, community, and society, value system of society, practices, perceptions of good and evil, hope and attitudes toward other communities"(Inghart, 1994) .Michael Gilson, anthropology scientist, defines culture as" The set of unknown rules and the things that are taken as natural affairs and in fact, are related to nonscientific issues ." Bruce Cohen, who mostly considered the spiritual dimension of culture, proposed a very short and concise definition of culture, emphasizing on its capability of being acquired: "Culture is a set of acquired behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular society" (Cohen, 1999).Prominent sociologist and contemporary English figure, Anthony Giddens, defined culture as follow:"Culture constitutes the values of the members of a specific group, the norms that they follow and the material goods they produce" (Giddens, 1997).

Culture refers to all intellectual and material works of a society "(Sadeghipour, 1996). Quoted from "Gay Roche", Mahmoud Rouholamini proposed a relatively good definition, although he ignored the material dimension of culture:" Culture is an interrelated set of more or less explicit thoughts, emotions, and actions that is accepted by the majority of people, and in order to form a specific and clear group, they need to observe their Continuity in a symbolic and objective way "(Rouholamini, 1986) .The planning committee of the section of culture and art, has explained the concept of culture in the first five-year plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the following way," culture is the whole intertwined beliefs, values, ideals, science and arts, customs and practices of the society and specifies the construction and development of the quality of life" (Ahmadi Bita).

Each region of a country can have different cultures with the rest of the country. Culture transfers to the next generation through training, while genetic transfers through inheritance. Culture is the man's common way of life, thought and action (the free encyclopedia of Wikipedia). Accordingly, the culture which dominates a society, as a dynamic and effective phenomenon should be directed, controlled, and managed in a good way. Due to the complexity of the issue of culture, different definitions have been proposed for culture, some of which are stated below:

Culture is the way of life of the members of a society;" A set of acquired behavioral and mental phenomena in every society, which gives a characteristic to that society, guiding it. That's why the society tries to regenerate itself through the mechanisms of transmission from generation to generation" (Fakouhi, 2011). Below is a prepared diagram (1), which states a set of definitions that are each other's complementary.

According to the definitions proposed for culture, definition of interest in the present study is the one proposed by Rapaport. He mentioned specific group lifestyle in his classification that can be cited as a component influencing culture. Hence, this component of interest is under the influence of factors such as family, education and people, since lifestyle plays an important role not only in the study of social stratification and a way to determine social class but also in forming social modernity that can find meaning only in the context of cultural changes of the modern era and the growth of consumer culture and leisure time (Bourdieu, 1984; Lashavry, 1994; Giddens, 1997; Federston, 1987). In this sense, lifestyle (leisure time and consumption) is a way to define the values, attitudes, behaviors or identities of individuals whose importance for the social analysis is increasing day by day (Chavoshyan Tabrizi, 2002; and Fazeli, 2003). Table 2 shows

several different definitions from the viewpoints of a number of experts, following a general conclusion from their definitions.

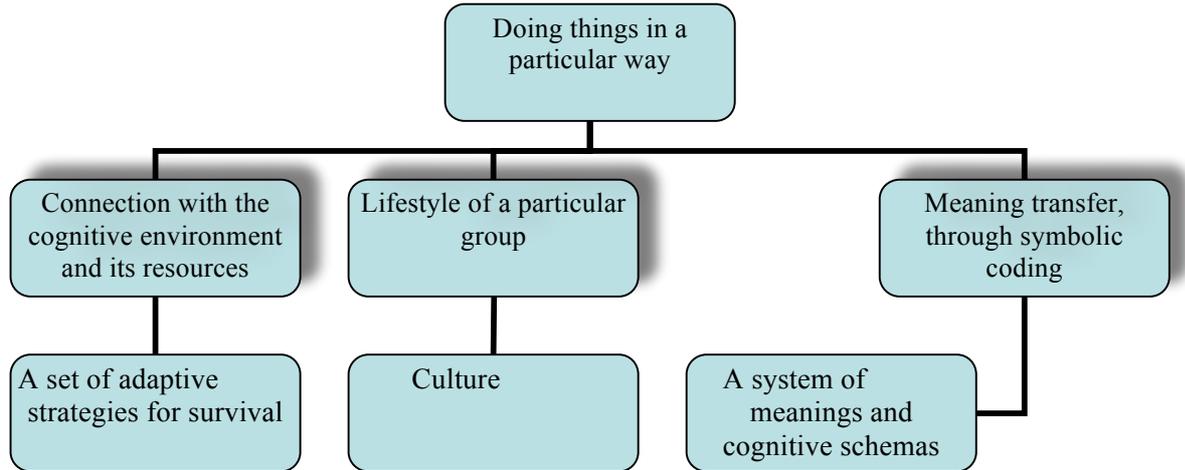


Diagram 1. Amos Rapoport's classification of culture.

Table 1.

Life style and the different perspectives regarding this issue	
Max Weber	- Choice of lifestyle - The representative index of groups of dignity and the reason of the integrity of these group - Having different lifestyles, in different social classes (Fazeli, 2003:28)
Torstein Villain	- Upper class and their lifestyle (Kozler, 2001:369).
Joffre Dumazedier	- Expresses the relationship between the people's income and the way they spend their leisure time (Dumazedier,2002:148).
Frankfurt School	- The presence of cultural industry and capitalism - Cultural industry as a mean for homogenizing the cultures, and more importantly, cultural transformation of the societies. - Criticism of the modern era (the relationship between the changes in lifestyle and the way of spending leisure time). (Ayokuse, 2006:64).
Anthony Giddens	- Life style has no place in traditional culture, since the selection is done from the available possibilities. - Lifestyle consists of functions which take place live. (Giddens, 2003:120)
Pierre Bourdieu	- Expression of the direct relationship between social and cultural capital and the lifestyle of people in a society.(Bourdieu, 171:2005).

As it can be derived from the definitions, there is a tight relationship between lifestyle and the people's income, which has shown itself in different periods of time. However the literature of sociology shows two different themes and understanding from the concept of lifestyle. In the first formulation which goes back to 1920s, lifestyle was the representative of wealth and social status of people, and it was often used as an index for determining social classes. In the second formulation, lifestyle is not assumed in social stratification studies and as a way to determine social classes but is counted as a modern social form that can find meaning only in the context of cultural changes of the modern era and the growth of consumer culture. In this sense, lifestyle is a way to define the values, attitudes, behaviors or identities of individuals whose importance for the social analysis is increasing day by day. It is clear that the viewpoint of Bourdieu is a combination of those above- mentioned meanings. On the other hand, his emphasis is on the influence of lifestyle in social stratification of individuals and also attention to the values, attitudes, behaviors and practices of social activists. Bourdieu considers the both social and cultural factors (Pour mousa, 2011). Bourdieu believes that economical processes govern the operation of leisure time, that is to say, in such market competition activities; there are the principles of supply and demand, and the tendencies toward monopoly. There are limitations to access the goods and valuable services of leisure time and therefore, the people's power of choice depends on the "capital/wealth" they have. This wealth is not only material, but also cultural (e.g. education, cultural awareness and art), and is also symbolic (social –cultural group, 2005).

3. LEISURE TIME

Leisure time means different for different people and people's understanding of this concept is diverse. This shows the complexity of this concept. Some, for instance, consider the time rest for them after they have

done their work, their tasks or their everyday responsibilities as leisure time. Some others consider leisure time, the time when they are allowed and they have the opportunity to do whatever they like according to their own will. Some others also may view leisure time as an activity, like the participation in sport activities and so on. (Ansari, 2003).

Joffre Dumazedier, French sociologist, defined leisure time as follow:

"Leisure time is a set of personal employments that are largely used for personal satisfaction, relaxing, recreation or to develop information or non-profit education, community involvement and volunteerism, after the release from the job, family and community requirements" (Dumazedier,1973). However, Leisure time comes with the withdrawal of everyday normal activities such as work and career, and instead engaging in enjoyable and fun activities. As a brief definition, leisure time can be considered as a time separated from the time dedicated to the main activities; that is to say, the time and free time that a person has, free from social and economic main activities. Leisure time can also constitute a productive activity but it doesn't contain the social responsibilities that are associated with the other social roles of the person (Marshall, 1998). Heinz Gunther believed that leisure time is a multi-dimensional issue. He dealt with these factors in this manner: At first, the relationship between work and leisure time, and then the classification of leisure time according to the social status and age, and the way of using leisure time and finally the place of economic, social and local aspects of leisure activities in the area of policy makings. Fatemeh Kebari, sociologist and researcher in social issues, considered leisure time as the moments in which the person, free from work and responsibility, manages that based on his own personal desires, and its programming is different for everyone and depends on spiritual needs, age and financial strength of an individual. She states that the moments of leisure time today are of such importance that it is even called as the mirror of the society's culture. It means that the way people in a society spend their leisure time is largely the representative of the cultural aspects and the extent of development of that society. Therefore, if the life and work plan of young people be contradicted with their plans for their leisure times, or if their recreation and leisure activities be contradicted with the cultural norms, the leisure time will change into a social problem. Max Kaplan, American sociologist, considered leisure time as a pleasant memory, a kind of freedom from social responsibility, a kind of mental perception of freedom, and a kind of cultural and natural activity of a game-type (Modern media festival for students,2011). According to the expressed definition of leisure time, it can be concluded that the experts agree on its multi-dimensional nature and emphasize on its importance on the characterizing the people in the society. Hans Günther Oster emphasized on the economic aspect of leisure time, and Kebari referred to the financial ability of people in spending their leisure time. Henceforth, emphasizing on an economic dimension, it can be concluded that Iranian families take their steps in spending their leisure time according to their financial abilities, and use their moments optimally, taking advantage of every moment of their leisure time. However, it is remarkable that financial constraints in cities have challenged the people's lifestyles and show a direction to revise urban plans, which on its own, increases the differences in Iranian cities' urban plans. Henceforth, to balance the cities, government must revise the capitation allocating to all cities equally, and plan based on the economic and cultural needs and conditions of people in the society. Rojak offered two theoretical concepts which represent a useful construct for theoretical and experimental studies in the overlapping areas of leisure, culture and lifestyle. In the first chapter of his book under the heading of "Leisure and Culture", Rojak considered the concept of culture as a functional concept. Being inspired by the works and anthropological theory of Gelfman, Lyotard, and others, paid attention to the procedural continuity of culture, through which people learn to behave and act appropriately, based on their social roles and behavioral rules that have developed based on these roles. Gelfman and Lyotard's works are largely related to the behavioral patterns in workplaces, therefore the functional rules they determined are related to specific jobs.

Therefore, these rules can be considered as structural forces that are used by those who are in power within the organization, in a broader level, to keep boundaries and class distinctions (Veal, 2002). As it can be understood by the definitions, Mac Don emphasized on the cultural component and its numerous aspects and stressed on paying attention to this component in urban planning. What Rojak and Mac Don have in common, is talking about behavioral codes and social roles that affect the way people of society spend their leisure times, and shows them a specific way or direction. Therefore Iranian cities each have their own specific cultures based on which people take their steps. Hence, people of the society expect that several urban components including cultural center be considered in city planning.

4. THE MAIN ACTIVITIES OF CULTURAL CENTERS

The main activities of cultural centers are divided into two parts, the first part of it, is in the domain of public activities, and a field including different training- cultural- artistic courses, achieving professional skills, playing children and adult plays, music, showing movie, holding cultural and art festivals , establishing volunteer centers, holding conferences, the performance of occasion programs, such as religious, scientific and cultural programs, Special summer programs, art and cultural exhibitions, etc.

In the second part, the activities of cultural centers include trans-regional actions which meet the needs of citizens considering the legal issues, holding citizenship workshops, conferences, roundtables and specialized professional events and competitions, publication, holding legal consultations, review and criticism on labor and business constitutions, conferences on consumer and producer rights, and etc.

5. CULTURE AND SPENDING THE LEISURE TIME

According to the classification presented by UNESCO and many experts in the field of culture, spending leisure time is assumed as an example of cultural activities, although not all of the forms of spending free time are considered in a same row as leisure time (Mohseni, 2007). Due to the existence of the small and particular cultures and specific groups for maintaining personal characteristics, people share a series of some common behavioral characteristics. One of the main factors engaged in any kind of cultural activity is the leisure time. In other words, it is because of the existence of leisure time that cultural activity is possible. The concept of leisure time is associated with cultural activity (Iranian cultural behavior, 2003). Leisure time is an opportunity that can provide a fertile ground for the growth and development of spiritual and cultural life. Leisure time has the closest link with spiritual and cultural life of the people. It also has a close relationship with spiritual and cultural life of the society; since during leisure time one can do whatever he likes, restores and expresses his final characteristic. Therefore, one's capabilities often manifest in the domain of leisure time (Jalilvand, 2010). The way of using leisure time and the view of each society towards this issue, show the culture and beliefs of the people in that society well. What entertainments and recreations do people in a country choose for their leisure time, is a very important issue, through which we can recognize the community spirit and some of their behavioral habits. The extent, the people of a society care about their leisure times, shows their kind of spirit (Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, 2010). Leisure time is a mirror of the culture, thoughts and moods of a society, reflecting the values and attitudes of the people in that society. The way and the quality of spending leisure time, reveals the features of a society and a culture. The leisure time is the driving engine of the human's modern culture and civilization. (Farasatkah, 2012) .Leisure time, from the perspective of scientists and sociologists are so important that they believe the existence and authenticity of a society's culture are constructed on the basis of the opportunities and leisure time of the people living in that society. Francis Doge stated that: "Tell me how you spend your leisure time, so that I tell you who you are and how you train your children!"(administrators' site). Leisure time is closely connected to the people's characters and their spiritual and cultural lives, since on one hand, it is under the influence of culture, and on the other hand influences the culture. Leisure time is of such importance that it is mentioned as the mirror of society. Therefore, the way of spending leisure time in a society is to the high extent the representative of the cultural characteristics of the people living in that society. Considering the way of spending leisure time, the factors of age, social and economic class, religious affiliation and gender, lead to the creation of boundaries and differences between the different groups, among which, age and gender have important effect on the way of spending leisure time (Rafiyat Jah, 2010).

Mac Don (2005) in the article of cultural differences and its reflection in the reduction of leisure time effectiveness, believes that due to the increasing number of migration and it's consequent cultural divergence, urban and social planners , facing the problems of multiculturalism and variety of social needs in a comprehensive and large scale programs for the community have been confused. In the leisure time – related planning, multiculturalism, religious differences and multiplicity of moral norms in different communities make the creation of an effective and comprehensive program difficult. Considering the ethnic and racial sensitivities that mostly appear in ethical norms and religious beliefs, leisure time culture programs, compared to other sections, face more problems. The main areas of conflict and lack of effectiveness in the leisure time programs are as the result of below factors:

- Religious differences, especially regarding the relationships between people and religious beliefs;
- Cultural differences, which especially emerge in the discussion of social norms;
- Differences in the manner and extent of socialization, under the effect of class divisions (wealth and social status);
- Differences in the manner and extent of socialization as the result of historical background;
- Differences in the manner and extent of socialization as the result of ethnic and racial differences (Mac Don, 2005) (Mousa pour, 2011).

6. CONCLUSION

Use of the spaces for spending leisure time is related to the culture of the citizens. In fact, on one hand, culture and cultural values demand special places to spend leisure time and on the other hand, different cultures have different ways to spend their leisure time and leisure spaces are affected by them.

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