



An approach for Designing interactive experience to revitalize the harmony between
people and places

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Design and Visual Communication Department
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor
Jordan University of Science and Technology

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January 2017

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Accepted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Bachelor

At

Jordan University of Science and Technology

Jordan University of Science and Technology

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Acknowledgements:

In September 1995 I was born. Also in September 2013, I went to Jordan University of Science and Technology to study design and visual communication. With a great passion for my dreams, this was the beginning of my way, I have experienced some ups and downs in the past four years. At the end this project is the essence of that years.

Starting with endless thanks for my Inspirational supervisor Deaa Bataineh who gave me the golden support to do this project and all Academic years, motivate to greatness, it was more than academic support.

I am thankful for my fantastic friends who always encourage and support me, especially in moments of anxiety and depression. It is so hard to find good friends these days... I got lucky with mine. Most importantly, none of this could have happened without my family; my parents and brothers supporting me spiritually, emotionally and financially.

Abstract

The distortion of the relationship between people and places and among people themselves due to massive use of internet and social media, has recently become a real social problem that severely impacts the traditional interactivity between humans and their natural surroundings.

This thesis highlights the positive impacts of design interactive experience on the relationship between people and places, and its ability to revitalize this relationship, while evaluating the use of music as an additional efficient helping tool.

Introduction:

Place can define the unique characteristics of both tangible and intangible, of a Location. This means that it does not only include the visual characteristics and the features of a location, but also the associations and feelings that we have when we see or hear about a particular place. These intangible components may be evoked by Photographs, symbols, stories, and songs or music.

When we talk about places and people we found phrases such as place attachment or sense of place refer to the complex relationship between humans and their surrounding environment. This relationship involves both the influence of the natural environment on humans as well as the changes that human activities have imposed on the surrounding environment. It is sometimes said that places have a way of claiming people. This means that not only are we getting used to a place but also that we are developing a strong relationship with that place and that it is becoming a part of who we are—our identity.

Humanity by using internet and social media has found new way to define the place, since these tools put us in virtual places and break all the borders and Distances.

But all of these abilities that technology gave its users were actually on the account of direct interacting with true places, when nothing separate interactive parts.

It seem to be that people have begun to ignore the surrounding environment they live in. People by want to be with each other, but also elsewhere — connected to all the Different places they want to be-- People always insist to achieve their goals they sometimes customize their lives. They have begun to focus more on sharing than experiencing.

When visiting a place, for example people many times take photos for this place and share them on social media before enjoying it.

Actually documenting people's trip is getting by modern cameras device more and cheaper, so in contrary of the past people nowadays takes a lot of snapshots.

Now how could this impact on our relationship with places around us? And how they impact on our Health and physical activity?

This argument in fact does not advocate for not using technology. Technology is important in today's world because it serves a variety of functions in many important aspects of modern society, like education, communication, business and scientific progress. This argument simply focuses on the negative impact of internet and social media on individuals relationships with places and with each other and represent the central question about the ability of the social interactive experimental design to help to return balance for the relationship between people and places and about whether music has positive role for achieving this goal.

Methodology:

In order to clarify the complex relationship between humans and their surrounding environment especially that affected by technology and internet and also to realize the revitalize effectiveness role of Social interactive Experiment towards this relationship in general and using music as one of its tool in particular, four common methods were used, these are online research, interviews, observations.

For online research a collection of observations and a statistics process were done from secondary sources such as press Bulletins and news reports, and social networking sites. All these Studies and researches helped to obtain big amount of information that contributed for achieving a deeper awareness about this issue.

The research also includes interviews with proper groups of people with specific range of ages (19 - 30) years. These interviews were having indirect questions in order to get objective answers, these questions accompanied with related simple videos games.

Observation is a key method of data collection technique for UX researches, with this research, one can understand how people naturally interact with places and the problem they face. The Complete Participant type of Observation was in this thesis, this means a fully embedded researcher, almost like a spy. Here the observer fully engages with the participants and partakes in their activities.

The observation was applied in many places, one applied at the University of Science and Technology to a group of students. Their relationship and interaction with

the place through break times were considered. A group of restaurant customers were also observed which represent another kind of places. Finally, the surveys were built to measure how people identify this issue, these surveys were having direct and indirect questions in order to get objective answers, these questions accompanied with related simple videos.

Problem Definition:

By many studies were conducted to examine the Distortion in relationship between people and places when technology and social networks contributes to a generalized loss of the actual sense of place. Unfortunately, we have become a nation of strangers without anchorage in a place and disconnected from community. This makes negative impact on our health and physical activities, sometimes causes a new psychological illnesses.

Research target:

This research was targeted to all different age users of internet and social media on Jordan. By collecting a set of responses using the survey of the research was shared by many user social networking sites, (93.6%) of responses to the survey the age was ranged between 18 and 24 years.

Hypothesis:

Places have to be redefined constantly by introducing them through new interactive social experiences, along with music in order to revitalize relationship between places and people.

Null hypothesis:

There is no need to redefine places constantly by introducing them through new interactive social experiences, along with music in order to revitalize relationship between places and people.

Survey Instrument:

The survey was designed by using Google drive, and it is made up of 13 Questions. Most of the questions aimed to identify Modern mania for movement and change contributes to an unsettled state of mind that manifests itself in a generalized loss of the actual sense of place and strong links between music and senses of place and identities. The surveys were shared via personal email, tweets, retweets, Facebook share, and Facebook private messages.

Sample of Survey Questionnaire:

See test instrument in Appendix (A)

Results:

A total responses of 47 responders were gathered through the surveys; although the number of responders were relatively small the survey's results were very useful and the responses were as follows:

-Gender:

Male (80,9%)

Female (19,1%)

-Age group:

18-24 (93,6%)

24-30 (4,3%)

30-35 (2,1%)

35+

-For the question 1 the responses were as follows:

Enclosed space (48, 6%)

Open space

-For the question 2 the responses were as follows:

On your own (27, 9%)

You're not alone (72,1%)

-For the question 3 the responses were as follows:

Always (14%)

Often (32, 6%)

Sometimes (48, 6%)

Scarcely (4, 2%)

-For the question 4 the responses were as follows:

More than 80% (3.3%)

50% - 80% (50%)

20% -50% (20%)

Less than 20% (26,7%)

-For the question 5 the responses were as follows:

Few (33.3%)

Medium (51.1%)

A lot (15.6%)

-For the question 6 the responses were as follows:

Always (15.2%)

Often (23.9%)

Sometimes (37%)

Scarcely (23.9%)

-For the question 7 the responses were as follows:

A few (21.7%)

Medium (47.8%)

A lot (30.4%)

-For the question 8 the responses were as follows:

Yes (57.4%)

No (10.6%)

Maybe not strange (31.9%)

-For the question 9 the responses were as follows:

Tangible elements (landscapes and buildings and objects) (15.2%)

Intangible elements (memories, narratives, rituals and values and

Sensory perceptions) (4.3%)

Both together (76.6%)

-For the question 10 the responses were as follows:

(76.1%)

(23.9%)

-For the question 11 the responses were as follows:

A memory from home alone movie

Royal palace

Classic Restaurant

Antiquity and antique palaces

USA Christmas

Open space covered with snow

The YouTube (interesting answer)

-For the question 12 the responses were as follows:

A few more (10, 6%)

Moderately (23, 4%)

It is in large (63, 8%)

Not at all (2, 1%)

-For the question 13 the responses were as follows:

A few more (17%)

Moderately (34%)

It is in large (40, 4%)

Not at all (8, 5%)

Hypothesis Conclusion:

In accordance to the results and researches, the null hypothesis is rejected.

The answers confirm that modern technological social means have affected the actual sense of place including place attachment, place meaning and people experience and make meaning of their experiences in and with place.

It also confirmed strong links between music and senses of place and its identities. It indicate that music may have the ability to conjure up powerful images of places, feelings of deep attachment to place .where 76.1% can remember the color when the moment to listen to sound which indicates to indirect link between music and places. While 63, 8% of responses says directly that music can increase interaction with surroundings. In general and bases on the above result music should be used along with interactive social experiment to revitalize the relationship between people and actual places.

Discussion:

Humanistic geography:

Is a branch of the social sciences that deals with the study of people and their communities, cultures, economies and interaction with the environment by noticing their relations with and across space and place.¹

What is a place and what is a space?

In the humanistic geography, space and place are important concepts. Both concepts have different meanings ². Space is something abstract, without any substantial meaning connected to human's experiences. Hence place refers to how people are aware of, attracted to a certain piece of space.

A place can be seen as space that has acquire a meaning. The underlying theory for this way of thinking is the phenomenology, which tries to find the essential features of experiences in the direct and indirect experiences. 'Space' can be described as a location which has no social connections for a human being, 'Place' is in contrary more than just a location and can be described as a location created by human experiences.

¹ Blij, Harm Jan, De (2008). *Geography: realms, regions, and concepts*. Hoboken, NJ:

² John Wiley. ISBN 978-0-470-12905-0. Seamon, D., & Sowers, J. (2008) *Place, and Placelessness*, Edward Relph. Key texts in Human Geography. London: Sage. P43-51

Third place:

The third places are simply places where we spend time when we are not home and not workin.³ Examples of third places would be environments such as cafes, clubs or parks....

Let's look at some basic characteristic of third places, Third Places represent a personal experience; Third places are personal, but not necessarily an individual. It's the third place experience that is personalized, and that requires a variety of options, Third Places fulfill an individual need; Sometimes that need is social interaction. Sometimes that need is creative. At other times, it may revolve around personal well-being. It may be a need to perform or just a need to unwind.

Sense of Place:

Sense of place describes our relationship with places, expressed in different dimensions of human life: emotions, biographies, imagination, stories and personal experiences.

In environmental psychology, sense of place includes place attachment and place meaning. Place attachment reflects a bond between people and places, and place meaning reflects symbolic meanings people ascribe to places. In short, "sense of place is the lens through which people experience and make meaning of their experiences in and with place"⁴, Sense of place varies among people, in history, and over one's lifetime.

Human relationship and technology

No one can deny the benefits we have gained from modern technological social means but their impact on our social, mental, physical and environmental health can be devastating if we don't keep ourselves in check. Actually this happened as a result of overuse and misuse of these magic means and this thesis deals with such consequences that related to certain aspect of social life. One of the victims that appears to be severely affected Face-to-face interaction as natural social aspect is one victim of this issue that seems to be severely affected. Not only in quantity but in quality.

People are not having these intimate conversations and personal interactions with each other anymore. People, instead, have turned to the Internet to take away some of the nervousness that some may find in trying to start a relationship with another person. Social media is a driving force behind these changes.

³ Oldenburg, Ray. *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community*. New York: Marlowe, 1999. Print.

⁴ Adams, J.D. (2013). Theorizing a sense of place in transnational community. *Children, youth and environments*, 23(3), 43-65

Can virtual sense of place replace actual sense of place?

Whether virtual or actual, what drives strong community and a sustainable nexus is sense of place, in fact virtual to a certain limit has imposed itself on the account of actual but the question here can virtual do the same job as actual?

Modern mania for movement and change contributes to an unsettled state of mind that manifests itself in a generalized loss of the actual sense of place. Facilitated by technology, people constantly on the move inside this rushed pace of life. We have become a nation of strangers without anchorage in a place and disconnected from community. In the expressive words of Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, we have built a vast network of nameless or numbered viaducts and bridges that become "anonymous passages for anonymous people to go to unknown places." ⁵

In fact, our electronic networks have now contributed to this destruction of place to such a point that it no longer matters where we are inserted into what has been so aptly called the lonely—and now so virtual—crowd.⁵ In our networked society, one can work, live, and communicate anywhere. A public place like an airport or city park is “no longer a communal space but a place of social collection: people come together but do not speak to each other. Each is tethered to a mobile device and to the people and places to which that device serves as a portal.”⁶

⁵ Richard Weaver, *Visions of Order: The Cultural Crisis of Our Time* (Wilmington, Del.: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1995), p. 37.

⁶ Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), p. 155.

No Sense of Place, Joshua Markowitz's breakthrough book 7, explores how electronic media displace our notions of what it means to be present, thus causing dislocations in our social behavior. The essential message of the book is that electronic media are dissolving the historic connection between physical place and social place.

Music:

Music and Place:

The relationship between music and place has a long history. This relation can be discussed through four perspectives: music and community, music and subculture, music and Scenes, music and memory.

There are strong links between music and senses of place and identities, both of people and places. That music has the ability to conjure up powerful images of places, feelings of deep attachment to place.⁸

Musical genres (like places) can be considered in terms of concepts of authenticity, they can be conceptualized the ongoing mixing of different musical cultural traditions in place

Music as languages

English is now a common language around the world, but for thousands of centuries, people from different areas of the world have made contact without sharing much or any common language. In the early stages of human life, music was probably used more for communication than for pleasure: drums, horns and bells, even the human voice; pitched to carry many miles. Some researchers believe that early forms of human language developed from communication through music, and certainly music continues to fulfil many functions in different cultures today. ⁹

We can take a look at nature for one example of how music is used as a form of communication; birds are an excellent example of one of the many living creatures who can communicate by making meaningful, but musical sounds. Birds can "talk" with one another in sophisticated ways even though they do not have the kind of tongue or teeth you need to form words. All of these capabilities enjoyed by music calls into question their ability to bring back the actual sense of place.

- 7 Meyrowitz, Joshua. *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior*. New York: Oxford UP, 1985. Print.
- 8 [Http://norient.com/author/andybennett/](http://norient.com/author/andybennett/). "Music and Place." *Norient*. N.p., 10 Apr. 2016. Web. 14 Jan. 2017
- 9 Brown S. (2006). How does music work? Towards a pragmatics of musical communication, in *Music and Manipulation: On the Social Used and Social Control of Music*, eds Brown S., Volgsten U., editors. (New York, NY: Berghahn Books;), 1–27

Summary:

The problem and the need for to revitalize the harmony between people and places By strengthening actual sense of place and experience that is personalized, and that requires a variety of options Sometimes that need to social interaction.

Facilitated by technology, people constantly on the move inside this rushed pace of life. Unfortunately we have become a nation of strangers without anchorage in a place and disconnected from community.

Music is a core human experience and generative processes reflect cognitive capabilities 1. Music is often functional because it is something that can promote human well-being by facilitating human contact, human meaning, and human imagination of possibilities, tying it to our social instincts.

An approach for this thesis has shed some light on the need to revitalize the relation between people and surroundings. The main conclusion is that design interactive experiences to links between music and senses of place and identities, can reconnect people with actual surroundings.

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