

The Model of “Fundamental Values and Factors of Landscape” Proposed for Education and Practice of Landscape Architecture

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Abstract

The methods and applied models for education practice and study in design-oriented courses faces new issues at the outset of 21st century. Here, education and practice of Landscape architecture crosses many disciplines and new challenges such as climate changes, tsunami of new Lifestyles and fabrics as visual information in particular. While the impacts of natural and built elements and factors with their environmental diversity beside the cultural dimensions are very important in planning and design process. In both of global and local scales, the lack of special setting and independent identity related to native paradigms and values, human activities as a treasure of cultural-ecological values is an important problem in education of landscape architecture. This paper, firstly addresses the potential contribution of both “Environmental tacit knowledge” of landscaping and cultural values in Iran. Besides, a short overview on coping with the components of landscape to help alleviating part of those issues. The second and major scope is introducing the “model of Fundamental Values and Factors of Landscape” (model of FVFL) for education and research of landscape architecture and practice. The key questions are:

- *What are the challenges and appropriate approach for the education of landscape architecture?*
- *How can various aspects of knowledge and arts influence the way we educate design, construct and manage landscape and develop urban and rural landscapes?*

In an effort to answer the questions, the paper concentrates on introducing research’ findings and case studies through author’s field studies and teaching landscape design courses in Shahid Beheshti University (SBU) since 2003. The recommendations are based on an approach to education and practice of Ecological Landscape Design at SBU as first MLA program in Iran. Finally, in order to cover these delicate discussions, the article presents main concepts and FVFL Model as a method of design education related to environment, cultural paradigms, behavior setting and of today characteristics of developing rural areas, urban settlements and cities.

Keywords: *Design education, Model of Fundamental, Values and Factors of Landscape, Environmental Tacit Knowledge, Ecological Landscape Design.*

1. Introduction

Based on history of human civilization and world heritage, the art and knowledge of gardening and landscape of man [1] had deep impacts on the quality of space and living in settlements. In recent decades, researches have indicated the great potential, diversity and indeed the important role of landscape architecture on the quality of human life, both in developed and developing countries.

Considering the facts above, the current evolutionary process of natural and cultural contexts and ecological aspects [2] in particular is significant. So, landscape architectural services is of great importance in Iran, given its natural and geographical condition, specially the Environmental Tacit Knowledge (ETK) [3], Ecologist Landscape Design (ELD) [4], vernacular landscape architecture and its capacities in this culture and in country’s developing process. Taking into account the deficiency of academic & professional history of modern landscape architecture, the necessity of recognizing landscape’s nature and basics, theory and processes of planning and design in landscape architecture field in particular becomes even more apparent. Of course, comparing the implicit meaning of the word landscape in its Persian/Iranian counterpart i.e. “Manzar”, and finally analysing the implications of these terms with finding a pattern as “conceptual framework” which are influenced by their cultural and circumstantial contexts has been requested. Furthermore, for understanding and rethinking of meaning and interpretation of landscape, basic references about landscape has been reviewed: “Meining’s ten versions of the same scene of landscape” [5] and the components of landscape and its theoretical knowledge, as Swaffield [6] mentioned before on need for definitions of landscape and related issues. Therefore, considering the current situation, this paper presents author’s findings and the selective reader a series of definitions, a conceptual-strategic model titled FVFL and approaches regarding landscape architecture.



2. Research Methods

Besides investigation related to significance of nature and defining the meanings and concept of landscape and *architecture of landscape* in traditional teachings, gardening and landscaping, much of the initial minor definitions of landscape, and its interpretations were also reviewed. Additionally, some historical-philosophical theories and landscape architecture activities, viewpoint and models are observed and understood during long term research.

3. Significance of nature, Human-Environment Relationship and Architecture of Landscape

In many beliefs, cultural values worldwide and in ancient civilizations influenced by monotheism in particular, Nature and unity is considered an important principle. Nasr [7] argues, man and nature are inseparable creatures influenced by supernatural aspects throughout their existence and intended for apotheosis which "lies at the heart of traditional teachings". In this case, environment, natural elements, special order and sense of unity which prevails in Persian garden is greatly influenced by environmental conditions as well as alterations in Persians and Iranian-Islamic culture and civilization.

In addition, G.S. Jellicoe argue that "All design therefore derives from impressions of the past, conscious or subconscious, and in the modern collective landscape, from historic gardens and parks and silhouettes which are created for totally different social reasons [1]. Laurie declared "Clearly, these considerations are no recent preoccupation of man and society; land becomes landscape when it is described or seen in terms of its physiographic and environmental characteristics. Thus, landscape is a reflection of dynamic, natural, and social systems" [8]. It seems study of landscape as the phenomenon; from phenomenology to recognition, concept to a source in design thinking for education or in practice must be conduct related to human activities, behavior and relationship to nature/environment. But, what framework could define in theoretical and conceptual framework of landscape architecture in progress and different contexts?

Considering the above-mentioned and tries to identify variable elements and some intrinsic values which in specified time affected on human-environment relationship based on Gutkind stages[8], components and a kind of system were introduced before as "*Neo-naturalistic Systems Model*" [4]. Therefore, in such leading system, architecture of landscape and nature alterations are performed based on human cognitive values and existing technologies to help and preserve natural environment and rethinking of:

- **Ecological approaches and Evolution of Human-environment Relationship**

Studies explore that landscape design and architecture evolves over the time in response to environmental-ecological potentials, processes and elements during the late modernism style with rethinking to philosophical fundamentals. In one hand, Naess's "Deep ecology" [9] emerged as way and of developing a new balance and harmony between Man-Nature and all of natural components. In other hand, according to studies in line with Leopold [10], McHarg [11] and other environmentalists' point of views, most of landscape architectural activities were influenced by land issues, organizing the natural environment. Then reinforcing land art, behaviour setting, modern ecological values [2], quantitative and qualitative development of urban/rural open spaces affected by post modernism flow and Green thinking. Although, McHarg has no satisfactions for the environment during modern architecture dominate [12].

- **Late Ideas and New theories in Landscape Architecture**

According to Swaffield [6] and in concluding from a nice review of the half-century's selected texts on landscape architecture highlights a few basic points about this field and the landscape and naturalism that could be current definitions: "meaning and significance in landscape architecture are determined within fields of potential relationships, which include, but are not limited to, concept of nature and culture". In this context, one of the most effective factor is special approach of specialist and "ecology-oriented landscape architecture" experts in particular.

4. The Context for "Fundamental Values and Factors of Landscape Model"

Reviewing studies and researches related to mainstream of landscape architecture like "Constituent Components of Urban Design Quality Model" [13], "Current Landscape Architectural Design Foundation Model" by Motloch [5], "four major perspectives for Usage of the word landscape" by Makhzoumi & Pungetti [2] and etc., has the potential to enhance better understanding of landscape characteristics and fundamental. Also, like beside Thompson's Model [14] that is consisting of triangular Social, Environmental, and Aesthetic values are acceptable and as a very important in idea of FVFL Model.

However, the term ETK and related values as a basic context for FVFL Model has deep roots in authors experience and living in Iranian culture and environment, too. But, the idea and the beginning focus on components and fundamentals of landscape goes back to reading the books of “landscape architecture” [15] and “Relating architecture to landscape” [16] raising the questions on characteristics of landscape. Lesson learnt and more study and research reinforced the idea of three major components of landscape based on human-environment (natural and human-made). The proposed model for more simple definitions of landscape concept then introducing landscape architecture responsibilities base on tripartite environmental structure titled: Natural, human made, and activities and behaviors. Here, Lesson learned from thoughtful book of Thompson [14], “Ecology, Community and Delight” and his idea which expressing the general concept of the theory from the viewpoint of landscape architecture is important (Figure 1: Left).

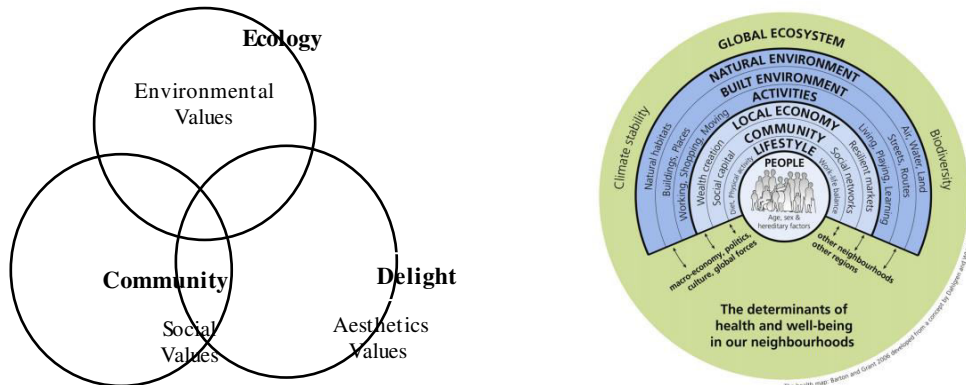


Figure 1 (Left): Thomson' Model of overlapping value fields in landscape architecture (2005). (Right): The health map - a model of public health (Thompson, 2013).

Therefore, this paper presents the FVFL Model consisting of three aspects of the mentioned fundamentals of landscape, with emphasis on quality in the landscape architecture components. Such emphasis is related to human activities and behavioural factors as a separate section between natural and human-made factors. In presenting this model, the focus is recognition of the innate human needs in interacting with the living contexts, and is on the important role of the natural environment and factors in relation to the human-made factors and attention to the human activities and behavioral factors, and for better understanding of this field and concept in Iran in particular (Figure 2).

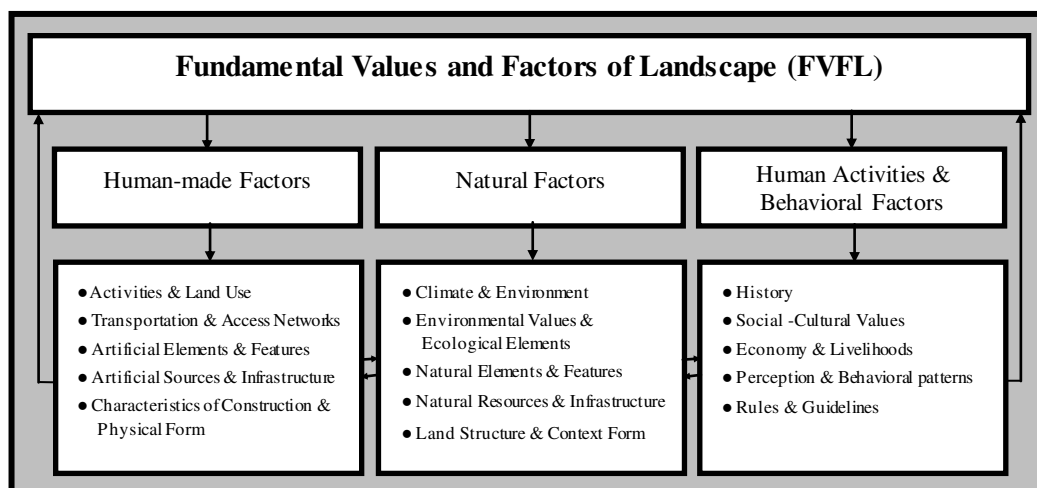


Figure 1: Fundamental Values and Factors of Landscape: FVFL Model (Taghvaei, 2003; 2012)



5. Conclusion

According to long-term study/researches on landscape architecture and conducting related MLA theses (e.g., Taghvaei and colleagues [17, 18]) and Ph.D. dissertation in particular, author tried to present and validate the contexts and basics of proposed FVFL Model and its components. The concepts and characteristics of the model has been reviewed and upgraded than before since 2003. One interesting point is the results of new research/article by Thompson [19] which has emphasized on the tripartite structure to understand links between physical activity and the planning and design of outdoor spaces (Fig. 1: Right). Overall, in order to cover these delicate discussions, FVFL Model presents main concepts as a framework for research and design education in landscape architecture and more related to understanding environment, cultural paradigms, behaviour setting and of today issues. It also strives to identify, organize and manage features of untouched nature and vital aspects of natural elements in living environments and necessary spaces for human survival; While there are many questions and problems in this area that can be obtained by contemplating the views of the thinkers and specialists of the areas of ecology, urban and landscape planning and design in the beginning of 21th century.

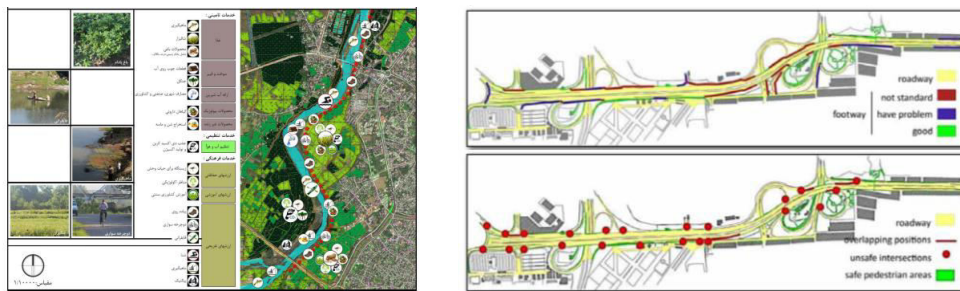


Figure 3: Two examples of MLA Theses based on FVFL Model [17, 18]

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