Abstract
A photograph intercepts place from its surrounding space. Place has such a significant role in photography that we often want to know where a photograph was taken. Drawing on human geography theories on the concept of ‘place’, this study aims to investigate photographers’ approaches to place. It also explores how conceptual intricacies of place are represented in photography. Based on various types of place experience, concluded from the literature of human geography and the phenomenology of place, five photographers are analyzed as case studies to explore the experience of place in photography. Although a few previous studies have investigated ‘place’ in photography, they have mainly focused on photography practice. This research adopts a new approach which emphasizes the type of the photographer’s encounter with place. It focuses on how place is experienced by the photographer as a human that is considered an indivisible part of place in phenomenological terms.

The findings of this study suggest that ‘place’ is a phenomenon that allows photographers to investigate the concepts of identity and attachment, cultural narratives and traditions, environmental challenges, as well as extremes of social realities. In fact, photographers’ approach to place is comparable to that of phenomenologists and anthropologists.

Keywords
Place, photography, identity, nostalgia, place experience. Anne Adams, Eugen Atget, Larry Sultan, Adrian Salinger, Thomas Struth

Introduction
In all photographs, we have the same act of cutting off a piece of space and time; and photographs deprive remove places from their original spatial surroundings. Therefore, place seems to be an inseparable part of the slice that a photo captures from the world. Photography ‘probably more than any other medium, evoke a sense of place, and frequently we want to know where a particular photograph was taken’. But what are place and space? What do we mean by place in photography? And how do photographers face and experience place?

Different scientific fields such as sociology, anthropology and geography have taken note of the concept of place for a long time. Many researchers have emphasized the complexity of the concept of place, e.g. 1 2 3 4. Therefore, it is worthwhile to unravel some of these complexities and investigate how place is experienced in photography. Through a comparative review of the place theories and drawing on case studies of five photographers this research is limited to the study of places using theories of human geography and the phenomenology of place and therefore other approaches to place in photography are beyond the scope of this research. Furthermore, all theories on placelessness and non-place are not included and the photographers adopting this approach are not investigated.

Space
Understanding the concept of place cannot be fully achieved without considering the difference between the terms place and space. Space - unlike place - is an open and abstract essence. ‘It is amorphous and intangible and not an entity that can be directly described and analyzed. In general, it seems that space provides the context for places but derives its meaning from particular places’. According to Cresswell, space is a more abstract concept than place. Space separates places from each other, and it is a meaningless realm.

Place
A place is a specific geographical position that secures its meaning from human values and interactions. It is a part of space that gains a distinguishing environmental characteristic because of its particular elements and factors. Thomas and Cross argue that place is not merely a geographical phenomenon, rather it is the integration of relationships and interactions. For a certain place can be defined as a tourist attraction centre, a religious site, or a wilderness site and each of these labels indicates the interaction between people and place which is associated with the place. Therefore, in defining a place, both geographical and social aspects are important, and it is organized based on the meaning that people attach to the place. Places receive meanings by events and occurrences, and their implications are combined with the goals, values 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10.

1 WEST BREIT, D.: Photography and place. Swimming and Not Swimming Germany after 1945. Routledge, 2015. In her book Photography and Place analyses how major historical discontinuities in 19th century Germany and places related to trauma, memory, and history influenced the visual field. These discontinuities are used to generate a new interpretation of postwar photography of ‘place’ in Germany. Moreover, a study of some renowned German photographers illustrates the notion of place as a bold encounter in their photography.

2 VAN GELDER, H. and H. WESTGEEST: Photography theory in historical perspective. John Wiley & Sons, 2011. According to Cresswell, space - unlike place - is an open and abstract essence. ‘It is amorphous and intangible and not an entity that can be directly described and analyzed. In general, it seems that space provides the context for places but derives its meaning from particular places’. According to Cresswell, space is a more abstract concept than place. Space separates places from each other, and it is a meaningless realm.

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4 Ibid

5 Ibid

6 Ibid

7 Ibid

8 Ibid

9 Ibid

10 Ibid

**Marzieh Mohammadmiri – Sayad Nabavi**

**Place in Photography: How photographers encounter place**

**Keywords**

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Placelessness

concept in his book entitled 'Placelessness' are attached. Human's existence is not tied to a specific location or a space to which people are attached. Human's existence is not tied to a specific location or a space to which people dwell in the city, and the city dwells in the city. "The city exists through my embodied arcade and the width of the square; my legs measure the length of the street, and so does the commitment to a place. 'Nostalgia is a kind of humans' sense of place. He pointed out that 'More than any other photographer, Atget makes explicit photography's ability to render all things nostalgic, so that the past seems to ache in us'. He showed Paris not as a city that is being modernized, but as an abandoned city. There are no symbols of modern Paris such as the Eiffel Tower and the Opera. In his photos and in the places of those symbols of modernity, he concentrated on the places that are on the verge of destruction.

Placelessness

In contrast to the phenomenon of place, Edward Relph has defined another concept in his book entitled 'Place and Placelessness' as 'placelessness'. He explores 'placelessness' geographically in an environment from an anthropologist geographic quality of the place, special events, and symbols are other influential factors on human's attachment to place. Ansel Adams was one of the pioneer masters of landscape photography as well as an environmentalist. "Wilderness had always been for Adams a mystique: a valid, intangible, non-materialistic experience." He preferred natural landscapes to cityscapes for photography all the time. Adams has described his very first visit to Yosemite Valley as extremely impressive. 'That first impression of the valley... was a culmination of experience so intense as to be almost painful'. He had a strong attachment to Yosemite Valley and shot for many years in this area. His photography experience helped him discover and record new natural areas. Eugene Atget-His art bridged two centuries and a half and his photos are eternal and iconic. Atget's photos are so powerful that it has helped him discover and record new natural areas in France, such as the Eiffel Tower and the Opera. Grundberg argues that some of Atget's photos are eternal and poetic and strongly reflective of his sense of nostalgia. He pointed out that "More than any other photographer, Atget makes explicit photography's ability to render all things nostalgic, so that the past seems to ache in us'. He showed Paris not as a city that is being modernized, but as an abandoned city. There are no symbols of modern Paris such as the Eiffel Tower and the Opera. In his photos and in the places of those symbols of modernity, he concentrated on the places that are on the verge of destruction.

Place experience and photographers

Peter Zegers has described Adams and Atget's attachment to place as being affected by factors such as length of residence, rituals and customs, the interaction of the individual with the other, and shared experiences. The relationship to the material environment and the physical quality of the place, special events, and symbols are other influential factors on human's attachment to place. Ansel Adams was one of the pioneer masters of landscape photography as well as an environmentalist. "Wilderness had always been for Adams a mystique: a valid, intangible, non-materialistic experience." He preferred natural landscapes to cityscapes for photography all the time. Adams has described his very first visit to Yosemite Valley as extremely impressive. 'That first impression of the valley... was a culmination of experience so intense as to be almost painful'. He had a strong attachment to Yosemite Valley and shot for many years in this area. His photography experience helped him discover and record new natural areas. Eugene Atget-His art bridged two centuries and a half and his photos are eternal and iconic. Atget's photos are so powerful that it has helped him discover and record new natural areas in France, such as the Eiffel Tower and the Opera. Grundberg argues that some of Atget's photos are eternal and poetic and strongly reflective of his sense of nostalgia. He pointed out that "More than any other photographer, Atget makes explicit photography's ability to render all things nostalgic, so that the past seems to ache in us'. He showed Paris not as a city that is being modernized, but as an abandoned city. There are no symbols of modern Paris such as the Eiffel Tower and the Opera. In his photos and in the places of those symbols of modernity, he concentrated on the places that are on the verge of destruction.

Larry Sultan and home

Home is the foundation and basis of human's identity and existence.Hence, the relationship between place and a person includes tension, the need to stay causes nostalgia, both of which are annoying. For example, in the Iranian post also expressed a desire to escape from a place and nostalgia for it at the same time. 'I wish humans could take their homes away with them wherever they liked the same as violets in soil boxes'. Nostalgia is a kind of human's encounter with a place. Nostalgia is yearning for aspects of one's past, a yearning that may include but is not limited to one's homeland. It is a desire to connect with a place and to leave causes nostalgia, both of which are annoying. For example, in the Iranian post also expressed a desire to escape from a place and nostalgia for it at the same time. 'I wish humans could take their homes away with them wherever they liked the same as violets in soil boxes'. Nostalgia is a kind of human's encounter with a place. Nostalgia is yearning for aspects of one's past, a yearning that may include but is not limited to one's homeland. It is a desire to connect with a place and to leave
Larry Sultan’s work, the concept of home explicit and implicitly has a significant role. His interest in the humans eternal endeavour to inhabit is visible in his projects. He depicts people who have left their homes and have immigrated to a strange land - ‘Homeland’. He indicates forming scenes in the houses of his former neighbourhood - ‘The valley’ - and on top of all, his childhood home - ‘Pictures from home’. His interest in the notion of home is more clearly observable in his project ‘pictures from home’ compared to his other works. ‘Pictures from home’ is a Project that lasted about 10 years during which Sultan took photos of his parents in the house where he was raised. Sultan wrote in a statement on the work in 1992: ‘These places represented a small and vanishing patch of paradise that existed just outside the boundaries of property and ownership’. He wanted to showcase the bitterness of immigration and enthusiasm for home through these photos. A place which provides him with a free realm and a haven away from the judgment of others.

Adrian Salinger and personal places

Other than public places that people experience, there are private places that are significant to people and represent their individuality. Some of these private places have been physically separated from the public world. Ralph[34] explains that the personal place may be, for example, part of the home belonging to a member of the family such as a room, corner or drawer used exclusively by the individual or by others who have his/her permission. However, particular places might bear some certain meaning to a person to the extent that they may be seen in their dreams[35]. The American photographer Adrian Salinger states: ‘our bedrooms tell stories about us; they become the box of our memories, wishes and self-awareness[36].’

The photo book of In my room by Adrian Salinger that was created in the 1970s visualizes teenagers in their bedrooms. The portraits of these people in their personal place show the significance of this place for an individual, especially at adolescence. The period when a person is passionately and seriously seeking independence and initiating their senses of individuality against others, including their family and society. The private place bears some personal meanings for an individual, and it is replete with items showing the taste, interests and mindset of the owner representing their identities. According to Salinger, she has not staged these photos: ‘I told them not to clean the room and not to prepare it in any way’[37]. Therefore, she has addressed the subject documentarily and has integrated place photography and portrait so that they complement each other in representing the person’s identity.

Williams[38] argues that Salinger has tried to capture the internal functions of this private place that resembles a home in their homes for the teenagers; in this way, she approaches the inner world of the person residing at this place. In the 1990s, a personal room played the main role in showing the identity of a person. Nowadays, although social networks have taken up a part of this role, the personal place is still people’s territory of privacy and solitude.

Thomas Struth, the identity of places, and people who have lost their homes and have immigrated to a strange land - ‘Homeland’. He has categorised different sizes in the identity of places. A character that distinguishes different areas throughout the world, we can find traces of place identity. ‘Struth recognises that some of the photographs are informed by certain motifs and elements related to a specific culture[39].’ For example, photos shot in Japan are a reminder of Japanese traditional gardens, whilst those shot in the pine forests of Bavaria draw on the formative significance of the motif of the forest – ‘Der Deutsche Wald – in German art and literature[40].’

Struth observed remarkable emotional and spiritual experiences in people who were visiting holy places. ‘Sacred experience’ is also a kind of emotional and spiritual experience that religious experience involves the ‘manifestation of something of a wholly different order, something that does not belong to our world’[41]. This sacred experience leads to holy places wherein contemporary societies three cosmic planes of earth, heaven, and hell is possible[42].

Europe in his experience of place within the city seeks the zones and streets which identity represents the identity of the whole city. Struth in ‘unconscious places’ focused on finding places of the city that are most clearly identifiable. He was searching for a unique identity or in other words, the spirit of the city in European citiescapes. He named tab of his photos that he believed depicted the spirit of the city in the most complete and comprehensive way ‘the headlines’. Even in Struth’s series, ‘New picture from paradise’ we come across angles in different places and different places throughout the world, we can find traces of place identity.


Lynch defines the identity of a place simply as that which provides its individuality or distinction from other places and serves as the basis for its recognition as a separable entity. The three basic elements of place identity are physical setting, activities, and meanings[43]. Another significant aspect of identity is less tangible than those three, yet serves to link them. It has been variously termed ‘atmosphere’, ‘sense of place’, ‘genius of place’ (genius loci), all terms refer to character[44].

31  Ibid
32  Ibid
33  Ibid
34  Ibid
36  Ibid
37  Ibid
38  Ibid
39  Ibid
40  Ibid
41  Ibid
42  Ibid
43  Ibid
44  Ibid
46  Ibid
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67  Ibid
the first time. He wanted to maintain the emotional distance he felt between himself and the place so that he could view the place objectively and from an outsider’s standpoint without the interference of his opinion or narrative.50

Conclusion
By studying the definitions of place, the role of place in photography and the function of photography in giving a meaning to a space, it can be concluded that photography is a place-making practice. That is to say, the photographer can actualize a place by photography practice. The frame of a photographer cuts a slice of space, and photography practice together with the subject of the photo makes that part of the environment meaningful and as a result, changes it to a place. Over the history of photography, different places have been experienced by photographers in different ways. These approaches are adaptable to various types of place experience extracted from human geography studies. These types of anthropological and phenomenological approaches to place existed in the mind of some photographers whether consciously or unconsciously. Ansel Adams’ experience of one of his main photography sites, i.e. Yosemite Valley corresponded to a strong attachment to place theory. Struth has consciously devoted several photography projects of his to examine the identity of places, or the important photography projects of Sultan are related to the notion of home. Rootedness and nostalgia can be easily discerned from Atget’s approach to Paris and his deep commitment to this city in his photography career. The role of personal places in the identity and maintenance of the individuality of humans is completely observable in Salinger’s famous photo book. All types of the photographer’s experience in his photographic case study have been briefly organised and ordered in a table that can be studied in the contents page.

The noteworthy point concluded from this study is that phenomenologists’ understanding of place is similar to photographers’ interaction and encounters with place. In other words, the photographic experience of place is very close to the phenomenological approach to it. Therefore, a photographer can possibly do phenomenology of place through photography practice.

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