

ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ФИЗИЧЕСКИХ ПРОСТРАНСТВ И ИХ РОЛЬ В УЛУЧШЕНИИ КАЧЕСТВА ГОРОДСКОЙ ЖИЗНИ

*Салман Изаднежад*¹

¹ Исламский университет Азад, Ахваз, Иран

АННОТАЦИЯ

Каждый город имеет множество взаимосвязанных атрибутов, одними из которых являются его физические пространства. Они находятся во взаимосвязи и оказывают влияние на социально-экономические аспекты развития города. Высокий уровень развития физических и пространственных характеристик может способствовать развитию социальных и экономических потоков в городской среде и поддерживать жизнеспособность города в целом. С другой стороны, физические пространства с архитектурой, несовместимой с социальными, культурными и экологическими условиями, могут усугубить существующие городские проблемы. Понятие качества жизни представляет собой составную переменную, зависящую от уровня развития общества, и его можно определить за счет разработки системы соответствующих показателей. Качество современной городской жизни относится к аспектам современного общества, которое в целом может быть функцией качества окружающей среды. Характеристики физического пространства городской среды вносят наибольший вклад в повышение или понижение уровня безопасности. На самом деле качество жизни – это продукт исторический культурных, социальных, экономических и политических структур, и его нельзя анализировать отдельно от этих сущностей. Социальное обеспечение является одним из важных критериев городской жизни, которое считается фундаментальной потребностью граждан, живущих в городах.

Ключевые слова: физические пространства, городское пространство, качество городской жизни.

INVESTIGATING PHYSICAL SPACES AND THEIR ROLE IN IMPROVING URBAN LIFE

*Salman Izadnejad*¹

¹ Azad Islamic University, Ahwaz, Iran

ABSTRACT

Every city has interconnected aspects, one of which is physical spaces that are influenced by social and economic aspects and influence the city's socioeconomic aspects. A city with suitable physical and spatial properties can help facilitate the social and economic flows of the city and aid the city's vitality in general. On the other hand, physical spaces with an architecture that is incompatible with social, cultural, and environmental conditions can deepen urban problems. The living quality concept is a compound variable dependent on society's development level, and it can be defined and executed by devising suitable indices. Concern about modern life quality is among the aspects of contemporary societies which can be a function of the quality of the surrounding. Physical space characteristics have the highest contribution to increasing or decreasing the sense of safety. In fact, quality of life is a historical product of cultural, social, economic, and political structures, and it cannot be analyzed separately from these entities. Social security is among the important criteria for urban life, which is thought of as a fundamental need for citizens living in desirable cities.

Keywords: physical spaces, urban space, urban life quality.

Introduction

The growth of urbanization and rapid growth of city spaces have created various crises in city life, such as environmental problems and the decline of city space quality. Since the 1960s, urban crises have expanded. After the onset and expansion of the crisis in various aspects of city life, such as the environment, social, space, economic etc., a sense of general awareness about urban problems and the decline of city environment quality emerged in the city and urban districts scale. The concern about modern life quality is among the characteristics of contemporary societies, which can be a function of the environmental quality. In fact, the quality of life

is the historical product of cultural, social, economic, and political structures, and it cannot be analyzed separately from these systems. City life is not only depending on the economic and social level of the citizens but also reflects the current state of a specific population or group of citizens and a reflection of the citizens and societies in the context of the city's society. In general, it can be said that the urban quality of life is a broad concept, and its status depends on the development state of the society. The urban space or public arena is a public space in the city that is public and free for all. Based on this concept, quality of life is a compound and multidimensional concept (Fig. 1). Improving the quality of life in a specific location or

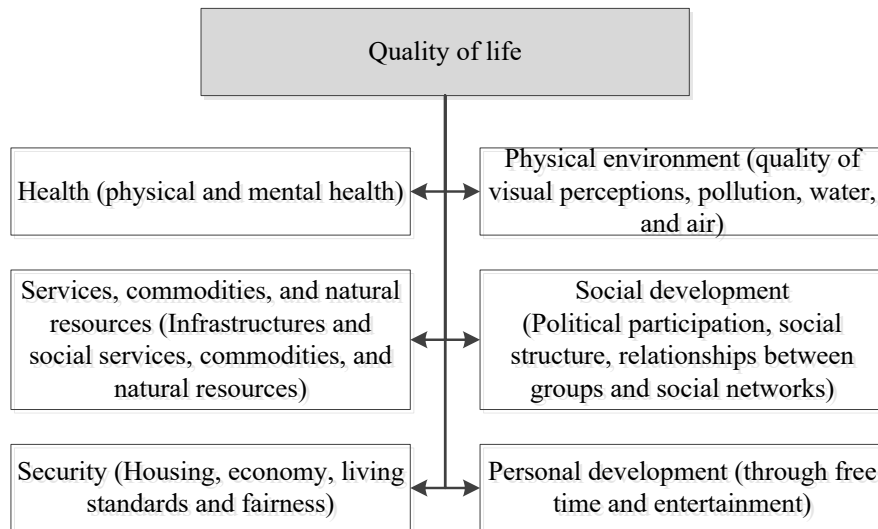


Figure 1 – Elements of quality of life

for specific people and groups has always been the focus of planners. In fact, improving the quality of life of any society is one of the most important objectives of the public policies in that society.

Problem statement

Among different urban spaces, open public spaces have special importance from the viewpoint of the citizens' collective beings. While closed public spaces are more regulated and have specific limitations with regards to time and size for receiving the citizens, it is the open public spaces that always have the highest potential and actual facilities for the presence of citizens. During the past few years, many studies have been done in different countries in the world (especially the United States) about devising indices for assessing the quality of the surroundings. In these studies, indices and numerical objectives have been used as tools for assessing the quality of life, quality of surroundings and level of progression towards a level of sustainability. In countries such as Canada, France, Netherlands, Norway and Great Britain, various indices and outlooks have been considered in policy-making and national goals for evaluating and elevating the quality of life on national and local scales [1].

Discussion and analysis

Urban spaces are arenas for social life and a medium for performing interactions and social communications. These arenas allow outside people in private and semi-private fields to share the space with others who they do not know and utilize that

area. These spaces can help with building and rebuilding social relations based on their public and social aspects and reinforce social relations. Urban spaces can be divided into two main groups open spaces and closed spaces [2]. Open spaces are spaces that are accessed by the public without the need for permission to get inside. Urban spaces are a type of open public spaces where social interaction between the citizens and with the environment occurs. Urban spaces allow unplanned interactions and partnering with other citizens. It should be noted that today, most city complexes are shapeless and anti-space. There are unusable, neglected and forgotten spaces in them which are called lost spaces. This includes neglected spaces sides of the highways, as well as open, shapeless, and endless spaces between high-rise and residential buildings. These spaces are practically not accounted for as public spaces, and they are lost urban spaces; however, discovering and reviving them can be opportunities for developing urban public spaces [3]. Therefore, city spaces are part of the open and public spaces of the city, which is the realization of the essence of the collective life, where the citizens are present. The urban space is a scene where the collective life story begins. It is a space that allows people to access it and be active in it. This space allows the breaking of some social boundaries for the occurrence of unplanned interactions so that the people can mix together in a new social environment. This space should be administered by a

public organization to administer it for public benefit and civil society and supply its needs. Therefore, the fundamental condition for considering public space as urban space is that social interaction and confrontation should occur in it. Therefore, the group of soft spaces and hard spaces which do not foster social interaction are not called urban spaces [4].

Urban quality of life concept

In general, it can be said that the “quality of the living environment” or “quality of urban life” was introduced with the aim of modifying and evolving the concept of development from solely quantitative and economic development. In fact, this concept is an answer to purely economic development on the national scale and purely spatial development on the city scale, which is a kind of attention to indices and criteria in the social, qualitative, and sustainable economies in the field of urban planning when working with physical space-functional indices. The concept of quality is the opposite of quantity [5]. Quantity is a physical, estimable concept, but the quality is an abstract concept. In general, quality and quantity are two sides of one coin, which are contradictory to each other, but one cannot be imagined without the other. The size, level and gender of phenomena or systems are measurable and expressed by numbers, which is defined as quantity [6]. In other words, the quantity of any criterion is

its outer and neutral appearance of it. But the quality and the “how” of a phenomenon have an emotional and intellectual influence on the human and express the main characteristics and skills of the matter. The word “quality of life” does not have a clear origin. A quality life is an attractive word in the general sense, but it does not have a generally accepted definition. Any expression about the quality of life depends on the person’s objective facts, external life, internal and mental percepts of the factors and the person himself. The quality of life is a complex, multidimensional and qualitative word about the conditions and status of the population on a specific geographic scale (city, area, district, zone, etc.) that depends on mental or qualitative indicators and objective or quantitative indicators. The quality of life is defined from various perspectives, and though little consensus exists about the quality-of-life definition, some of the most definitions are described as follows:

A. Quality of life is a broad concept that encompasses a good life with satisfaction and happiness. Generally, satisfied and happy life is combined with the concept of welfare or happiness, which includes life satisfaction and positive and negative emotions.

B. Sometimes, it is taken as a synonym with welfare. Others take it as an expression of welfare which is defined by the number of public commodities and their distribution.

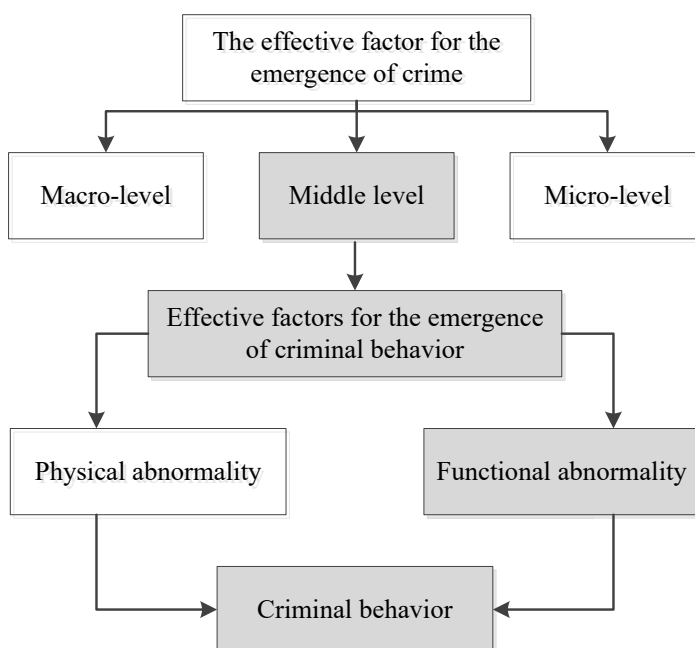


Figure 2 – Spatial abnormality in urban spaces

C. The quality of life is broadly connected with the concept of welfare. Welfare describes well-being, livelihood and eliminating poverty, and therefore it is closely connected with concepts such as social fairness.

D. Quality of life is a complex word in relation to the conditions and status of the population in an area. It encompasses mental aspects with indicators such as satisfaction, happiness, and security (mental indicators). It is sometimes also called social satisfaction. It includes environmental dimensions with indicators such as housing, access to services, and environmental security (objective indicators). It includes other aspects such as attention to social opportunities and hope for employment, wealth, and free time. Some take it as a synonym with welfare.

E. Quality of life is a general concept that covers all life aspects, such as material satisfaction, vital needs, as well as transient life aspects such as personal development, self-knowledge, and ecosystem health.

Even though the urban quality of life is not separate from the concept of quality life, and it is an example definition of quality of life in the scope of a city with related issues in a narrower sense, since the urban issues and problems are interconnected with almost all daily aspects and sciences of human life, and because of the dominance of urban life among

human societies, urban quality of life has become an important and significant topic.

Assessing the urban quality of life

The practical use of indicators for criticizing social conditions began around the 1830s. When social reformers in Europe, the United States and England used social statistics to improve public health conditions. In the 1960s, social indicators were being used by many governments around the world as a strong part of political development. However, quality of life indicators for assessing people's living conditions was first used in the Jacksonville project in Florida in 1985. The variety of indicators used in quality-of-life studies is limitless. This problem is obvious due to the multidimensionality of the urban quality of life concept. It is generally assumed that each indicator shows the magnitude and importance of a specific aspect of urban quality of life. This assumption is based on the hypothesis that the urban quality of life can be divided into a set of elements or dimensions, and if these components are correctly combined, a general score or value for urban quality of life can be obtained. Researchers use two groups of indicators to study the urban quality of life:

1. The group of objective indicators such as housing, social and economic characteristics, etc.
2. Group of abstract indicators such as satisfaction, excitement, motivation etc. But these two groups of indicators are complementary in the studies regarding

Table 1 – Applied elements of secure urban space

Component	Criterion	Indicator	Description
Size and form of the space	Size of the space	The scale of the space	Human scale
		Crowded feeling	Not crowded and not deserted
Visual comfort	Visual comfort	symbolic pollution	Readability and clarity of navigation
		visual pollution	Matching of facades in form, color, and material
	Environmental comfort	Light pollution	Brightness and suitable lighting
		Environmental pollution	Lack of garbage and dirtiness in the environment
Spatial organization	Spatial organization	Ownership and supervision	The boundary between public, private and semi-private spaces are clear
	Permeability	Access	Pedestrian and vehicle passages
Land use	Structural quality	Quality of buildings	Buildings are not in ruins
	Land use	Performance	The presence of relevant and night uses

the urban quality of life and should be used concurrently. We live in a multidimensional city environment, and it is essential to measure and evaluate the quality of life through multidimensional ways. Investigating and measuring the quality of life is divided into two objective and abstract perspectives. First, for measuring the quality of life, generally, the social indicators based on government health statistics which are based on the objective living environment conditions, are used. By placing too much emphasis on objective indicators, the abstract and mental indicators can be neglected [7].

Many studies have been conducted about the quality of life, which show the connection between these two groups of indicators. In addition, the objective quality of life indicators for evaluating personal welfare has high reliability but low performance, whereas the abstract indicators have low reliability but high performance [8].

In general, the way the problem and the study objective are approached is the main factor that determines the type of indicators and method of study. In a report entitled *Quality of Life*, the World Health Organization designed a set of measurement tools. In this collection, questionnaires are used, which are about personal mental perceptions for measuring the quality of life that are related to topics of health and empowerment in various fields. The goal is to reflect the culture and value system of the individuals. The quality of life in different regions with different cultures can be measured and compared. In a comprehensive study, the Population Crisis Committee measured the quality of life in one hundred big cities of the world and introduced several indicators as effective parameters for quality of life. These indicators include public health, general peace, transportation, clean air, public safety, food cost, living space, general housing loans and communications [9].

Conclusion

Urban quality of life is considered an easy life with access to basic needs in a city environment. In fact, this concept is introduced as the ability to live in a location, and it is the starting point of developing human societies and forming a correct understanding of people's needs. Assessing the quality of life presents a good tool to gain this understanding since studying the

quality of life creates a door between local authorities and the citizens for a construction interaction which leads to interpretation and discussion about effective and key topics with regards to people's lives. In fact, one of the main objectives of studying the quality of life in urban areas is understanding the needs and fair access of all groups and districts to city facilities and benefits. Quality of life is the historical product of cultural, social, economic, and political systems, and it cannot be characterized separately from the above structures. Therefore, the concept of quality of life is a compound variable, and its status depends on the development level of the societies; it can be defined by designing various indicators. Improving the quality of life in any society is one of the most important public policies of that society. During the past three decades, quality of life, as a replacement for material welfare, has become the most important social objective of different countries. Today, quality-of-life studies generally focus on the city environment and the urban living quality; therefore, investing in this topic has a high necessity and importance, which the planners have always emphasized. Based on the tendency of people around the world towards concentration in the cities, there is a strong reason to pay attention to the concept of quality of life, which has been under strong focus since the 1970s in developed, developing and industrializing countries. Despite this, concerns about the urban quality of life in cities have increased interest in findings and investigations that measure the quality of life in specific locations. On the other hand, there is a strong reason to justify the necessity of the quality-of-life concept for limited and rare resource allocation. Therefore, because of the fixed resources, urban managers should find the most optimized way to distribute them with the goal of satisfying people's needs and priorities. This issue can be realized by applying the results of relevant studies as the input to the decision and policy-making processes. Therefore, thinkers and city planners believe that the plans should be aligned with improving the quality of life. However, improving the performance of quality-of-life studies can help with evaluating location ranking policies for devising management and planning strategies in the city; while elevating the quality of

life of citizens and facilitating understanding and prioritizing societal issues for the managers and urban planners. Also, the findings on quality of life can be used for reconnaissance of previous political strategies and designing future planning policies. Based on the importance of revision and measurement of urban quality of life for steering, controlling, and developing the city in the future for supplying its essential needs, this topic is of great importance and relevance. On the other hand, physical city spaces and planning for rehabilitation, renovation and physical management of these spaces can lead to elevating the quality of life and wellbeing of the citizens.

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Сведения об авторах:

САЛМАН ИЗАДНЕДЖАД – факультет географии, кафедра городского планирования, Ахвазский филиал Исламского университета Азад, г. Ахваз, Иран

Authors' information

SALMAN IZADNEJAD – *Department of Geography, Major in urban planning, Ahwaz branch, Azad Islamic University, Ahwaz, Iran*