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Proposed Physical-Environmental Factors Influencing Personal and Social Security in Residential Areas

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Abstract

Rise in the level of urban crimes in the 60s demanded physical and cultural solutions to the problem of security. This study seeks to define the components of security and study the influence of physical environmental design factors on crime prevention in Chizar Neighborhood, Tehran, Iran. The methodology is based on content analysis techniques. The findings suggest that, in order to improve the subjective aspect of security, the objective aspect of security should be improved in terms of social factors (sense of ownership), functional factors (spatial structure), landscaping (preventing from pollution), and physical factors (size and form, appropriate building density).

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Keywords: Security; urban neighborhoods; physicality; function

1. Introduction

Security or safety is a complicated notion that can be provided in urban environments only by taking specific measures. Maslow and Lang believe that, after physiological needs like food, shelter, and health, the next important human need is safety. If it does not fulfill, it can hinder humans from progress toward more elevated needs (Maslow, 1996) (Lang, 2009).

In recent decades, many theoreticians, as well as practitioners, have focused on the quality of urban spaces and their building components. Kevin Lynch investigated the mutual relationship between urban spaces and the quality

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of the life of citizens. Most prominent among theoreticians who have explored the social components of the quality of urban spaces are Jan Gehl, William White, and Susan and Henry Lennard (Jan Gehl, 2008).

This affair led urban planners and designers such as Jane Jacobs, C. Ray Jeffery, and Oscar Newman to develop solutions to improve the quality of urban spaces. Therefore, their efforts were devoted to the question of security as well as the influence of environmental designs in creating spaces with this quality (Jacobs, 2007; Newman, 2008). Jane Jacobs emphasizes the role of urban public spaces in creating social interactions (Jacobs, 2007). According to William White, people's behavior is unpredictable in urban spaces and what is most attractive to them is the presence of other individuals in the spaces. Other scholars have shown that people need open public spaces for a higher quality of life even if such spaces do not enjoy high quality (Delianur Nasution, 2012). The emphasis on spatial perception and environmental and behavioral influences since the Industrial Revolution has been investigated by scholars such as Madanipour, Mandegari, Pakzad, and Bahreini. Security in urban and residential spaces, according to Mendegari, is formed along objective and subjective dimensions (Mandegari and Dehghan, 2010). The crisis of security and quality is currently one of the major challenges facing urban planners and users (Golkar 1379).

The present study aims at exploring the objective and subjective components of urban security and social solutions to this crucial issue.

2. Definition of security

Larousse Dictionary defines security as following: trust; psychological peace; a thought based on which risks, fears, horrors, and losses lose their meaning (Sampf, 1973: 211). Moein Dictionary of Persian Language defines security as becoming secure and having no sense of fear (Moein, 1999: 354). Several characterizations of security are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characterizations of security and its relevant principles.

	Field of Study	Principles
Security	Psychology	Conception of security as lying on the second level of human needs directly following physical needs (based on Maslow's hierarchy).
	Social Sciences	Binary definition of security as being subjective/objective and personal/social; Creating a sense of security through environmental factors.
	Urban Planning and Architecture	People's rights and obligations in terms of each other and the surrounding environment; observing the standards of city life.

Sources: Dehghan , (2010); Mandegari , (2010)

Thus, security has always been recognized as a basic human need that can be socially defined in two dimensions: the subjective dimension and the objective dimension. The objective dimension addresses physical and social issues and the objective dimension addresses the sense of security that can be created with the environment. When put together, these factors make the security of individuals in urban environments (Mandegari and Dehghan, 2010).

3. Security and needs

In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, security follows physiological needs as the second important level of needs. Also, Jon Lang, in his model of human needs, puts security on the second level of importance in a hierarchy consisting of physiological needs, security, dependence, self-esteem, self-actualization, and aesthetics.

4. Different levels of security

Security can be viewed at different levels of the society, ranging from the individual, from family and society to the nation. Sense of personal security will increase if social security increases and national security, in turn, determines the degree of personal and social security (Khabir, 1999: 10).

Personal security refers to the fact that an individual may claim his or her rights through legal proceedings in the case of being threatened or oppressed. Social security refers to a public relief from threats or illegal acts of an

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