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Evaluation of urban defenseless spaces Using Safety audit (Case Study: Tehran Harandi neighborhood)

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

Some urban spaces, due to their structural and social features, create situations in which criminals are encouraged to commit crimes. Although in these spaces, the rate of crimes may be low, these spaces induce the sense of defenseless to citizens and give rise to the sense of unsafety and fear among people. As a result, the use of such spaces decrease gradually and their emptiness results in the situations that are proper for committing crimes. This fact is more probable in central and worn areas due to the dominant physical and social conditions in these areas. These areas are known as “defenseless spaces”, which are prone to crimes more than other urban spaces. Factors such as the emptiness of the environment, chaos, and weariness lead to the creation of such unsafe spaces. On the other word, these are spaces that do not have any positive effects on the surrounding environment as well as the people who use them. Urban defenseless spaces are areas that according to their physical properties, they are more suitable spaces for committing crimes relative to other urban areas. These spaces often do not belong to any body and even if they have proprietress, they are abandoned. Urban defenseless spaces are so important in urban studies due to their numerous effects on the urban lives especially their effect on the creation of fear and unsafety. So, performing systematic research in this field develops new insights. Harandi neighborhood in the central area of Tehran faces with different types of physical and social problems. So, these problems are effective in creating defenseless spaces in this neighborhood. In order to investigate defenseless spaces in Harandi neighborhood, the safety audit model was used.

Methodology

This work is considered as practical studies in terms of the aim and in terms of the methodology, it is descriptive-analytical. For data gathering, library and field-based methods were used. In the library-based section, along with becoming familiar with the principles and the

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literature of the study, the indexes related to the safety audit model were also extracted (LIGHTING, SIGNAGE, SIGHTLINES, ISOLATION - EYE DISTANCE, ISOLATION - EAR DISTANCE, MOVEMENT PREDICTORS, OVERALL DESIGN, MAINTENANCE, FACTORS THAT MAKE THE PLACE MORE HUMAN). In the field-based section of the current study, the safety audit indexes were used in two methods including questionnaire-based (asking from people) and observation (as the supplementary method). The statistical society was the residents of Harandi neighborhood (24000 persons). For determining the volume of the sample from residents of the neighborhood, Cochran formula was used and the obtained volume was 378 persons which were randomly selected. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is equal to 0.896 for the designed questionnaire which is indicative of the high reliability of questionnaire's questions and the internal correlation of questions for evaluating the study variables. For analyzing data and testing assumptions, T-test and multivariable regression tests were used in the SPSS 21 software.

Results and Discussion

Results of the current study in the questionnaire section indicated that all safety audit indexes, except for SIGHTLINES and OVERALL DESIGN, have an average less than 3, so there are in the improper situation. On the other hand, the total situation of the neighborhood is inappropriate in terms of the safety audit model (Mean = 2.38). Among the studied indexes, EYE DISTANCE, ISOLATION, MOVEMENT PREDICTORS, and LIGHTING have the most effect on the creation of defenseless spaces in the neighborhood. The most important results in the direct observation section indicated that the situation of the neighborhood in the safety audit indexes is improper. The existence of much uncrowded spaces during the day in the neighborhood, the crowd of the population in the northern areas (the continuation of the Tehran bazaar), the uncrowdedness of the neighborhood during the night, the abandoned spaces in the neighborhood, public spaces that are occupied by addicted people, are factors confirming that Harandi neighborhood is improper.

Conclusion

Urban spaces directly or indirectly play a vital and undeniable role in preventing or committing crimes. The direct role is preparing suitable situations for committing crimes easily, relative to other spaces, and the direct role is that some spaces, due to their appearance, encourage criminals to commit crimes (for examples, the existence of accumulated wastes). Therefore, it is necessary to recognize urban spaces which facilitate crimes in the urban neighborhoods. In this regard, old neighborhoods of cities, due to their physical structure, have many defenseless spaces. Results of investigating indexes in forms of the questionnaire and direct observation showed that Harandi neighborhood is improper in terms of the studied safety audit index.

Key words : Spaces defenseless; Safety Audit; Harandi neighborhood