

Sociological Explanation of Parks Function (Case Study of Isfahan City)

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Extended Abstracts

1- Introduction

Today the protected areas including national parks are recognized as among the most beneficial forms of multi-aspect and stable productivity. Green spaces are appropriate places for the citizens to spend their leisure time. The main objective in designing of green space is to attain its social and mental effects in making human closer to the nature as far as possible. Nowadays, sociologists, psychologists and physicians believe that in addition to important implications for public and environmental health, green space plays positive role in the health and well-being of community as well. The fundamental objective of the present research is to develop an experimental model which can determine the parks function and provide a scientific base to

identify the factors that affect the urban parks function. The functional objectives are also included in the identification and definition of the constituents of the parks function, the comparison of the parks efficiency between males and females and, also, paving the way for the planners and creating opportunities for scientific researches in the field of parks function. This study seeks to explore the relationships between the independent variables such as type of park, and the background variables as gender, education and marital status and, finally, it will be involved in the relationships of "parks facilities", "security" and "social solidarity" with parks function in an analytical model. Data were collected via interview with citizens through the survey method using the researcher-made questionnaire technique.

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2- Theoretical Bases

According to Parsons, a function is “a complex of activities directed towards meeting a need or needs of the system”, so it can be said that the parks are

considered as need of city and are used by the city centers to meet their particular needs such as moral mental, social and cultural ones.

Viewing park not solely as a physical phenomenon rather as a living phenomenon which gives life to a community, it appears that Morton's theory would clearly explain its function; park, on the one hand, is an integral part of a city and essentially has functions for it and, on the other hand, the obvious function of a park is to provide an appropriate place to enjoy leisure time with a sense of peace and recreation. And in such a space the individuals interact with each other and these interactions and communication occur more frequently in parks. But, park has latent functions as well, i.e. it can be an atmosphere of crimes and social pathology which are not taken into account as the clear and obvious objective in creating a park.

3- Discussion

On the basis of theories concerning function, three factors of facilities, security, and solidarity socio-cultural indicator, moral and mental indicator, educational indicator as the determinant of the parks efficiency were studied and examined as dependent variable in the model of structural equation and the background variables including gender, type of park, occupation, education and marital status as independent variables associated with the parks function and the results showed that among the background variables the marital status, type of park and occupation had significant relationship with parks efficiency. The married persons have found the parks more efficient as compared to the single ones and this indicates that the married persons make use of such space in normal and effective

way. Regarding the parks efficiency, the mean value obtained for the employed persons was higher than that for the unemployed ones indicating that the employed persons are in more need to park as a result of their occupation and the level of pressures have to be tolerated.

4- Conclusion

The results show that a high degree of parks efficiency is determined by the existing facilities and the efficiency of the latter. Security as a social variable is of almost the similar potential and, thereby, insecurity in parks as well as creating such sense in visitors will lead to the parks efficiency decrease. The above results confirm the theories about the mental and social factors. But, among the indicators determining the latent variable of parks efficiency, the social and cultural factor is of higher importance than others and this proves the importance of the cultural and social dimensions of a society in determining the level of parks efficiency.

5- Suggestions

By considering the results obtained from the survey, the parks designers and officials are, on the one hand, to pay attention to the level of efficiency as well as the factors affecting the parks efficiency because when such factors are neglected, the parks will have no effective efficiency, and, on the other hand, to make people susceptible and to create common sense about maintenance and special care since they are the social human beings who finally make use of these urban spaces.

Key words: Function, social solidarity, social security, park and Isfahan.

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