A Comparative Analysis of Security Level in Urban Parks from Viewpoint of Spatial Justice (Case Study: Mashhad, Iran)

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Extended abstract

Introduction

Urban expansion and development of modernism approaches involves more green spaces to improve living conditions of residents. Parks and greenbelts are the main factors forming social stability as one of the development indexes. When there is safety and peace in these places, one can effectively make use of such environments. Hence, because of the security in these spaces, we can see concerns about the recent events at this location, especially in metropolitan parks. Unbalance in the design quality, providing services and facilities make these places undesirable. According to the research on the security of the parks, the environments are able to influence the citizen's satisfaction. Therefore, in the present study we conducted a comparative analysis of security level in the urban parks from viewpoint of spatial justice. The study area is consisted of Mellat and Koohsangi Parks in the developed districts and Vahdat and Raja Parks in less developed districts of Mashhad.

Urban public spaces are thhe basic component to make a public city with social concept. Such spaces as places of calmness and comfort can be of significant importance for managers and city planners. In socio-cultural perspective, public spaces are the places for building and strengthening the outer relations, interactions, and confrontation of social change, where different groups with different desires are gathered together. In this respect, one of the most important conditions is that you need to have a public space and mutual social interaction and communication to the people in public spaces. The urban parks, as one of the most discussed spaces, play an active role in the health of the citizens. According to recent studies, the use of urban spaces such as parks has a direct relationship with a sense of security. Thus, one of the main missions of urban planners and managers in this area is to create securely spaces through research, and planning.

Methodology

This study is an applied descriptive-analytic research using library and field method for data collection. Using the experts' recommendations, 22 criteria were determined for assessing the level of security. In order to weigh the criteria, hierarchal model was used. For ranking the parks, we used Grey method and the primary data were obtained via the questionnaire. The number of questionnaires were set 384 using Cochran's Formula. For moree confidence, we completed 400 questionnaires.

Results and discussion

Spatial justice issues in recent years are to achieve sustainable development goals among

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experts, particularly planners and urban managers. Since urban public services such as parks construct the form and nature of the physical, social and spatial features of a city, injustice in distribution of these services put numerous challenges to urban management. Optimal use of these spaces takes place when a person feels secure in the place. Thus, the aim of this study is to compare the spatial equity approach with security in urban parks. The results of this research show that the security condition in the parks of developed districts is far better than those of the less developed districts, to such an extent that in terms of the security perspective, Mellat Park has the highest and Vahdat Park has the lowest security.

Conclusion

To enhance condition of the parks according to the indicators mentioned in the proposal, some options have to be considered in management:

A decrease in the security level of urban parks can be resulted from a lack of security applications near the park and down the street. Unfortunately, this is regarded in none of the parks we studied.

Many addicts, drug dealers, and homeless people are staying in Vahdat Park, especially in the eastern side of the park. Thus, the security of the Park is greatly reduced.

Something noteworthy about the Vahdat Park is blind spots in the park due to irregularities, improper placement of trees and buildings, benches and unsuitable places of facilities. So, a redesign is recommended. It should be noted that the nation's blind spots can be seen in the park, but due to the presence of CCTV cameras and traffic wardens, it would not make critical security problems in the park.

One of the reasons for low security of Raja Park is regional security issues. There are 6 districts as the areas most fertile for crime and the most insecure in Mashhad. As a result, most of the citizens avoid going to the parks. Researches in this area can improve the level of security that lead to proper solutions.

Keywords: park, security indexes, spatial justice, Mashhad City.

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