

BAU Journal - Health and Wellbeing

Volume 1 Issue 3 *Urban Health & Wellbeing*
Building Collaborative Intelligence for Better
Lives in Cities
ISSN: 2617-1635

Article 17

October 2018

PRINCIPLES OF URBAN QUALITY OF LIFE

WALAA NOUR Associate Professor of Architecture and Urban Design, Department of Architecture Faculty of Engineering,
Tanta University, Egypt, w_nour@aucegypt.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.bau.edu.lb/hwbjournal>



Part of the Architecture Commons, Business Commons, Life Sciences Commons, and the Medicine and Health Sciences Commons

Recommended Citation

NOUR, WALAA Associate Professor of Architecture and Urban Design, Department of Architecture Faculty of Engineering, (2018) "PRINCIPLES OF URBAN QUALITY OF LIFE," *BAU Journal - Health and Wellbeing*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 3 , Article 17.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.bau.edu.lb/hwbjournal/vol1/iss3/17>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ BAU. It has been accepted for inclusion in BAU Journal - Health and Wellbeing by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ BAU. For more information, please contact ibtihal@bau.edu.lb.

PRINCIPLES OF URBAN QUALITY OF LIFE

Abstract

Quality of life is a notion that has been discussed by philosophers, social scientists, economists conceded with the question of how society should best allocate resources it has been widely used in a wide range of contexts , including the fields of international development, health care, political science, built environment, education, reaction and leisure time social belonging. The purpose of this paper is to answer the question of how can urban planning contributes to improving individual quality of life, introduce the notion of urban quality of life that refers to the urban planning features that could enhance the individual quality of life, which could be useful for planners and designers. Overviews of cities and their effect on people, presented in handbooks in the area of environment behavior studies, often start by listing the positive and negative traits of cities mainly in relation to density and opportunities on one hand, and crowdedness, pollution and alienation on the other. Individual studies on single aspects of urban form and their impact on cognition, affection and behavior and attitudes are also very plentiful, with several journals dedicated to this theme, and a fast-growing international portfolio of cases and examples. Urban form is the setting where a more complex sharing of responsibilities needs to occur because, as we will show, shaping, controlling and being able to access the urban realm is significant for our well-being. Morphological structures and control relationships that are capable of better integrating social processes, material form and spatial organization can be found in the literature and require further investigation and development in the context of contemporary urban design and sustainable living challenges. Cities are many things to everyone; for the purpose of this chapter, we see them as first and foremost sources of behavioral and experiential opportunities, which other environments cannot offer. As such, we look at urban form as shaped by urban design at three main scales: metropolitan, neighborhood and pedestrian. We then search for studies that relate domains of QoL to each of these scales, including a focus on objective and subjective indicators.

Keywords

Quality, urban planning, principles, cities, urban metabolism.

PRINCIPLES OF URBAN QUALITY OF LIFE

WALAA NOUR¹

¹ Associate Professor of Architecture and Urban Design, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Tanta University, Egypt

ABSTRACT: *Quality of life is a notion that has been discussed by philosophers, social scientists, economists conceded with the question of how society should best allocate resources it has been widely used in a wide range of contexts , including the fields of international development, health care, political science, built environment, education, reaction and leisure time social belonging.*

The purpose of this paper is to answer the question of how can urban planning contributes to improving individual quality of life, introduce the notion of urban quality of life that refers to the urban planning features that could enhance the individual quality of life, which could be useful for planners and designers.

Overviews of cities and their effect on people, presented in handbooks in the area of environment behavior studies, often start by listing the positive and negative traits of cities mainly in relation to density and opportunities on one hand, and crowdedness, pollution and alienation on the other. Individual studies on single aspects of urban form and their impact on cognition, affection and behavior and attitudes are also very plentiful, with several journals dedicated to this theme, and a fast-growing international portfolio of cases and examples. Urban form is the setting where a more complex sharing of responsibilities needs to occur because, as we will show, shaping, controlling and being able to access the urban realm is significant for our well-being. Morphological structures and control relationships that are capable of better integrating social processes, material form and spatial organization can be found in the literature and require further investigation and development in the context of contemporary urban design and sustainable living challenges.

Cities are many things to everyone; for the purpose of this chapter, we see them as first and foremost sources of behavioral and experiential opportunities, which other environments cannot offer. As such, we look at urban form as shaped by urban design at three main scales: metropolitan, neighborhood and pedestrian. We then search for studies that relate domains of QoL to each of these scales, including a focus on objective and subjective indicators.

KEYWORDS: *Quality, urban planning, principles, cities, urban metabolism.*

1. INTRODUCTION

From an overview on recent trends in urbanization, we will introduce the notion of control as a key to read the following text and in particular we will:

- A. Contextualize the concept of control in relation to the fields of both quality of life (QoL) and urban form. In fact, the literature in both domains shows that there is a mutually reciprocal relationship between aspects of quality of life and urban spatial structure.
- B. Review established and recent research on the relationships between QoL and urban form, structured around metropolitan, neighborhood and pedestrian scales, which illustrates the centrality of control in shaping our cities and allowing quality of life to be fulfilled within them.
- C. Propose a conceptual framework for socio-spatial urban design, which is sensitive to the relative importance of predictive/structural and loose/flexible urban elements in the production and management of urban space, and their critical role in affording their users a sense of control.
- D. Suggest the need for a reconceptualization of city form away from an assemblage of material and spatial elements towards a more integrated sense of a city as a mutually defining socio-spatial system.

2. QUALITY OF LIFE

Research on QoL started in the 1970s, in conjunction with the establishment of the journal Social Indicators Review. Its area of investigation spans many disciplines, although its core sector of work is health. Because of the wide-ranging scope of investigation in QoL, there is little agreement on its definitions and approaches. Many have identified factors, domains, frameworks, and concepts to clarify and organize its meaning. The World Health Organization recognizes that the study of QoL is at (financial status, employment) and multidimensional. Developmental psychologist Ryff sees satisfaction with life not as contentment with the achievement of a status.. The spatial organization of our urban habitat must be conducive to supporting and sustaining us through these journeys. Greenbie offers perhaps one of the earliest attempts to develop an understanding of spatial structure that is integrated with such fundamental human functioning. Citing World Value Surveys and Gallup World Polls amongst others, which set out to measure QoL from thousands " many components personal, social, economic, environmental " which they then correlate, Montgomery (2013) suggests how economic status, which for years was deemed the driving element for life satisfaction, is not dominant and that indeed the most prosperous countries and cities in the world do not score higher in these surveys. Rather, education, employment, location and social ties seem to do in turn, positively affect our perception of health, being linked to the feeling of leading a positive and meaningful life.

Quality of life is a concept which in recent years has generated a great deal of interest, but it is not only a notion of the twentieth century. Quality of life has been the focus of many studies but a consensus as to how it should be defined has not been reached; it is a complex, multidimensional construct that requires multiple approaches from different theoretical perspectives. There have been many attempts to define what constitutes quality of life in the different disciplines. Quality of life is our ability to enjoy all that life has to offer. For instance, the ability to walk, talk, see and feel all contributes to our overall quality of life. A quality life is a life full of meaning and purpose.



Fig. 1 Quality of life

2.1 Quality Of Life Domains

Several analyses of the literature have identified domains that contribute to the overall perception of QoL. From a review of almost 10,000 abstracts and 2,500 papers, identified 8 domains, each assessed through 3 indicators, objective or subjective, for the study of QoL. Subjective views of QoL are linked to cultural and contextual differences, and tend to be related to a smaller scale of investigation. Objective indexes are useful at a mesoscale, and a combination of both is used at higher scales, such as national or international surveys. Acknowledging that international comparisons are difficult, these surveys take into account contexts by weighting them, thus revealing important cross-cultural commonly shared values. Pacione suggested that liveability is a description of this sense of comfort, and represents the interaction between people and place, involving social, economic, environmental and health-related factors. The form and character of most places in the city modulate our interaction with others, and with the environment as a whole, triggering emotional, cognitive, effective, and behavioral processes, on a personal and group level.

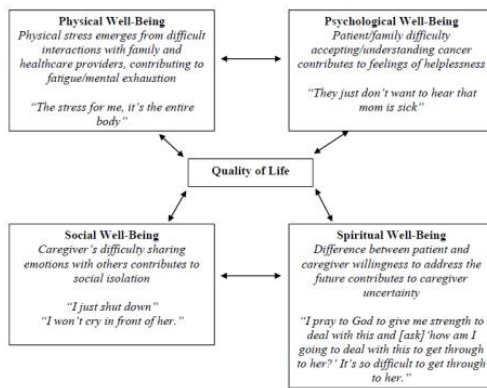


Fig. 2 Quality of life Domains

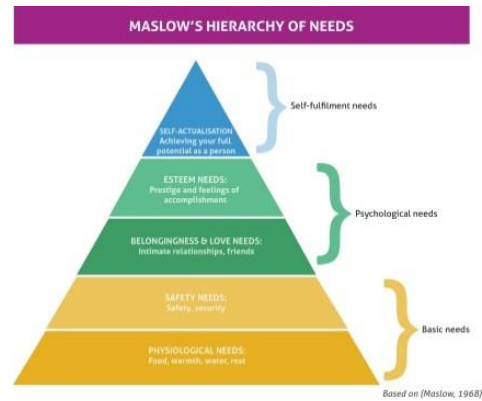


Fig. 3 Maslow's Hierarchy of needs

3. URBAN DESIGN AND CITY FORM

Urban design as a distinct academic and professional area emerged in the late 1940s and 1950s from the cultural cradle of the late Modern Movement in architecture, through the convergence of themes that, though entirely internal to the Modern Movement of the times and initially proposed to expand and reform it, contained the seeds of a radical departure from it. By the early 1960s, themes including "historical built heritage as an environmental (not just monumental) asset, social engagement within the area of urban design a radical opposition to the principles; for example, around the role of design and the designer in society, the origin of place identity". The parallel growth of cognate disciplines, such as ethology, psychology, environmental psychology and urban anthropology, legitimized the development of urban design into a more complex area, which found much of its inspiration and ideas in the desire to understand the relationship between people and space. The urban design, that is those thinkers who shaped the foundations of the discipline as we know and practice it today, were determined to understand critically place and the human experience within it as a pre-requisite for design, conscious of the impact that design ideologies were having on quality of life across the globe. Urban design today which studies and shapes the form of cities as complex, organized systems of people, spaces and connection. It works in the past, present and future; it deals with individuals, groups and society as a whole. This definition contains the notion that places do change in time, within or without the restraints of planning, suggesting that urban evolution is a founding principle of our discipline. Urban design deals with structures and values in order to offer rich, coherent experience. It determines our interface with the external world, modulating our interaction with others, our access to choice, and our bonds with space. Moreover, urban design deals with the delivery of urban form, at different scales. In a metastudy of urban form, Clifton suggested that this is the focus of many different disciplines, which use different scales of investigation, have a different focus of interest and use different methods. We follow on from their classification of scales, and focus our review on the (sub-)metropolitan, neighborhood and pedestrian scales.

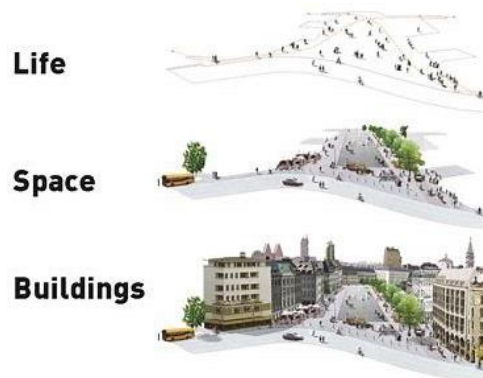


Fig. 4 City form

3.1 Urbanized Future

Urbanism is a very old term; it has accompanied the development of our cities for centuries, through the skilled and at times grand and intentional, to the ad hoc and piecemeal intervention of development, growth and refinement. Significantly different targeted, widespread, professional and coordinated approaches to urban planning emerged to address a severe public health crisis only when industrialization hit cities in Europe and North America in the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries. A new profession was born here that effectively divorced scales of intervention by separating architecture from planning and thus created a gap in the layout and design of our cities. This became evident at a large scale after WWII and has had a significant impact ever since on how we experience them. Thereafter, the concomitant effects of both World Wars and the aging of the stock built.

3.2 Urban quality of life definition

Urban quality of life is not a simple term that has a clear or agreed definition but is a complex concept which might be defined by various disciplines. The term urban quality of life is not used to describe some physical features but to describe all the relationship, the dynamics, and the reticular relationship that exist between those physical features. Thus, the definition of urban quality of life is network and complex rather than linear and very elementary.

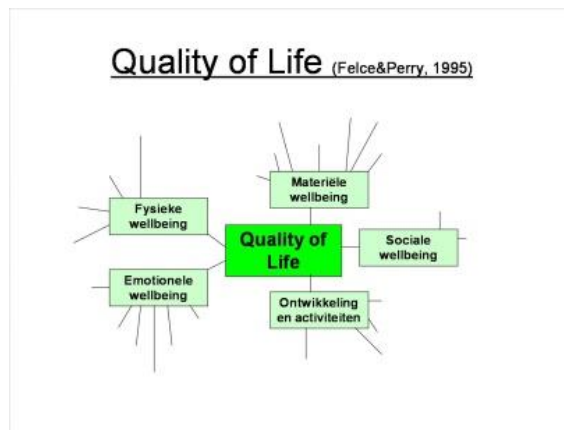


Fig. 5 Urban quality of life

4. Principles of Urban Quality Of Life

4.1 The Metropolitan Scale

Intuitively, quality of life seems easier to relate to the more human scales of urban experience whereas understanding which components of the wider city scale are influential is perhaps more obscure. Nevertheless, we view cities as places with characteristics that enable us to distinguish one from another and form images of them in our mind. This allows us to grow attached to them, organizing them as referents, for directions, for narratives, and to move through them. However, although the effect on QoL, at this scale, is harder to grasp, our experience of them is nevertheless important in the basic lifestyle they allow us to have, not least because it is at this scale that the arrangement of communication networks, land-uses, the distribution of services and access to them can either help or hinder our movement, and generate positive or negative experiences.

4.1.1 Material Well-being

Bettencourt and West have calculated the increase in urban productivity, urban benefits and negative externalities that accompany city growth, suggesting that these increase faster than population growth, whilst the urban infrastructure required to accommodate such growth is much slow. From an evolutionary perspective, this might suggest that cities can social and physical through restless innovation, and the continuous production of creative solutions, geared towards efficiency. The issue of efficiency, in both environmental and cultural terms, is crucial to conceptualize and develop the fundamental strategic role of urban design. The fact that their scale

has a rather consistent dimension seems to suggest that, even today, amongst all changes, urban design should acknowledge such consistencies and respect them in new development.

4.1.2 Emotional and personal development

The morphological work above, which confirms the historic and geographic persistence of coherent urban areas bounded by movement channels up to modern planning, suggests the development of a rather spontaneous but balanced character within each of these areas, proportional to their size (which is remarkably rather regular, in time and space). This was consistent until large-scale professional planning started to predetermine the character of whole areas from the outset, limiting the spontaneous development of the city. Interestingly, research mentioned above has also shown that the organization of the main city elements, and the dynamics within them, are remarkably consistent and predictable, even across socio-cultural processes of diversification, migration and overall change. As such, they are robust and lasting. The degree of organization that such elements allow their users changes substantially, according to both the societal context (including policy and planning) and the physical form of places. form, place and understanding, and therefore control, is key, making explicit that much of the contemporary mainstream in urban design tends towards the delivery of mostly professionalized urban structure thus limiting, and even obstructing, the more socially oriented levels of control (place and understanding). These levels of control have a significant part to play in our capability for emotional and personal development because this is where relationships between individuals and groups most actively interact with material and spatial settings. The degree of organization afforded in space is fundamental to how we inhabit and experience it. An overview of articles from *Landscape and Urban Planning* over 16 years has identified a number of consistent human needs in urban settings, valid across cultural differences and political contexts. Urban residents worldwide express a desire for contact with nature and each other, attractive environments, places in which to recreate and play, privacy, a more active role in the design of their community, and a sense of community identity. Having a degree of control at a metropolitan scale is a societal need expressed through meanings. Castells defines urban meanings as an expression, they are infused in the city. Nevertheless, people change, and with them their values; the city also changes but on different timescales, and yet needs to maintain congruence between meanings and form, to allow coherence and a sense of place to develop. It is enough to think of recent social change in developed societies, how substantial it has been within a relatively short timescale; from the early 1960s, more women started working, marriage occurred later in life, changing family size, and reducing the number of households with children; life expectancy generally grew, and so did disposable income, with a surge in the number of wealthy in retirement. Whilst these changes are primarily societal, economic and cultural, they require physical adaptability to allow our environments to be supportive, conducive, representative and enabling for our emotional and personal development. Montgomery gives an interesting example: the typical image that has been depicted in the media for years, that of the American family living in the suburbs, has recently been substituted by more urban lifestyles (i.e. Friends, Fraser, Sex and the City). These Mental libraries of stories contribute to changing our perception of what is desirable, helping us explore life according to different urban rules and pace. The form of cities helps us develop and understand ideals and models, and with them become part of systems of practices. The congruence between form and these systems, some of which are unspoken, is key to our functioning as social beings. It relieves us from stress and gives us confidence to use the city and its parts; Lewicka suggests that the urban scale can participate in place attachment and deserves more attention by future research. Urban form needs to be able to assimilate meanings over time; it is dangerous and costly to expect urban form to help us substitute them every time society demands new ones. The notion of control demands a more negotiative relationship between us and space, a creative, smaller-scale combination of context and subject in which spatial arrangements interpret, absorb and help develop social and cultural rules.

4.1.3 Interpersonal Relationships

Cities increase economic activity and productivity, but people flock to them as much for human interaction as for that. This is a double-edged sword. We crave interaction, which we enjoy when it is accompanied by our controlled ability to retreat from it. Moser calls urban behavior paradoxical, in that individuals must cooperate socially to maintain their anonymity. Urbanity must function as a guide to manage social interaction. Despite their higher efficiency, big cities have

been associated with a cultural bias that has long been studied in America. Recent investigations show that big cities tend to score lower than small towns on three scales: poor neighborhood quality, associated with housing conditions; home and neighborhood satisfaction with fair neighborhood characteristics; and the neighborhood quality rating of older long-term residents satisfied with their neighborhood, and young short-term residents not so satisfied with it. In all these instances, small towns scored better than large cities but a variation in the cities studied seems to suggest that those included were also those with a more generally uniform form of neighborhoods, even across varying incomes, whilst other cities where the polycentric nature of form was more evident did not feature. A significant obstacle to beneficial interpersonal relationships in cities is criminality, one of the greatest sources of stress in urbanites. Fear of crime limits our ability to go out (mobility) and interact with others (sociability), two key domains of quality of life. It is also one of the main reasons why people leave the city (sometimes referred to as suburban flight). Research shows that instances of crime and fear of crime are different, the latter in fact not being the consequence of real risk, as summarized by Moser. Concentration of crime is often higher in city centers, which being denser in activities tend to attract greater densities of people; this can be explained on the basis of, amongst others, the principle of deindividuation, which suggests that when the concentration of strangers is greatest, it is impossible to identify the odd-one-out. The feeling of insecurity that is associated with fear of crime is linked to the feeling of loss of sense of control and territoriality. Incivilities and aggressive behaviors are heightened by physical form, with the sense of civic responsibility, the probability of intervening when witnessing distress, and simple people-people interactions (i.e. looking at a stranger in the eyes whilst walking) being reduced with an increase in density and the number of people around. The concept of helpfulness has also been shown to be linked to city size. In general, it is higher in smaller towns than cities, with 300,000 being the threshold above which there is no significant distinction, and is affected by weather and noise levels (increases in both above certain limits reduce it). Helpfulness can also increase in complex settings at least for women, not for men and decrease with the number of people potentially there to help, explained as the overload approach, similar to the deindividuation principle introduced by Rydin and Zimbardo. Urban forms that allow for the performance of urban life through the establishment and maintenance of unspoken behavioral rules have crucial implications for the nature of change and adaptability within urban realms: an important concept in the delivery of urban social sustainability. Change and adaptability in this context, and their relationship to resilient sustainable living, can be captured through the conceptual lens of Forgiveness. Here, the action of forgiveness underpins a conciliatory human-environment relationship uniquely able to articulate how environment can Forgive human interventions and humans can Forgiven constraints that environment may impose. The concept of forgiveness maintains that we will tolerate large amounts of discomfort if we have what is most important to us. This is established within psychology but not in our relationship with environment. The environment is an actor of forgiveness, part of a process of exchange and thus significant as a means to explore connections that enable and constrain forgiveness. Such connections become visible in human-environment relationships in how people develop perceptions of relationships among themselves, society at large, and the wider natural world. Consistent with this are ideas related to the struggle for recognition, which facilitates forgiveness by connecting past experience with the present through "socially interactive need to experience themselves as belonging, Recognized as a focus of concern, a valued contributor, or a responsible agent, as central to achieving self-esteem (Honneth 1995). From this perspective, the attention of urban design is beginning to shift from purely form towards patterns and the interpersonal relationships that define them, supported in particular by recent debates criticizing the concept of neighborhood as a physical entity associated with that of community. Whilst these still perceive neighborhoods as important, they interpret them as fluid and variable, changing around individuals, their interests and pursuits. Such fluidity does not negate the contribution of space to shaping social interactions and collective behaviors; on the contrary, the latter seems to self-organize around prominent spatial features, for example concentrations of shops and services. The importance of this in the development of environmental competence was discussed earlier, highlighting the significant role played by understanding the environment in terms of proxemic sets. The concept of proxemic sets is resonant in the work of Spivak who considered the environment to consist of a finite range of 13 characteristic settings, or archetypal places. Like proxemic sets, which are primarily concerned with context defined in terms of the human-

environment experience, archetypal places go beyond physical features and are defined in terms of the human behavior that occurs in them.

4.1.4 Physical Well-Being

With research on the links between physical activity and chronic health developed since the 1970s, we have gained knowledge about the relationship between the sociopsychological characteristics of individuals and exercise, urban density and exercise, and service distribution at the community scale and exercise. More recent integrated approaches to both monitoring and planning are providing important information on how to achieve healthy cities. This is crucial given that, currently, the most widespread cause of preventable death is heart disease, and this is associated, amongst other things, with weight. Research has shown that weight is linked to inactivity, and inactivity to physical environments; the role of urban design is therefore becoming increasingly important. Speck reports a bleak trajectory in the increase in obesity in the US, from 10% of its population in the 1970s to more than 30% today, with a further third of the population being overweight. He then warns of predictions by the Center for Disease Control that one third of all children born after 2000 will get diabetes, making this the first generation in America predicted to live shorter lives than their parents. Physical activity has been found to have positive effects on the control and reduction of obesity, and the studies of physical environments in relation to their capacity to encourage such activity are growing in number and sophistication. This issue will be dealt with in more detail in the Neighborhood and Pedestrian Scale sections.

If green open spaces, and particularly those with a naturalistic emphasis, are good for urban inhabitants QoL, one of the main challenges in urban design is how sufficient amounts of green open space can be accommodated as cities become ever denser and more compact. One consequence might be to reduce the availability of land in urban centers for large tracts of green space, generating instead a need to look to smaller types of public open space for respite and escape. Central to this developing concept is the re-establishment of the street as the urban focus, which provides a web of connections offering people a range of choices and experiences as they move about. Streets, and their capacity to connect a diversity of outdoor rooms, may therefore have potential as components of a reconceptualized urban park in the regenerated and rejuvenated compact city. The idea of a network of small, restorative open spaces in an urban center has been explored before in the context of urban planning, notably in a proposal by the American landscape architect Zion in 1963, who suggested that New York citizens would be better served by thousands of very small parks rather than a few larger ones. In the form he envisaged, but one of his pocket parks.

4.2 The Neighborhood Scale

Neighborhoods are social clusters where interactions among members of the cluster are more likely to take place, and in a stronger way, than those involving externals. As such, neighborhoods may occur in space or even develop entirely in the virtual world. The dynamics involving both the Space of flows and the Space of places in the network society of our times have been explored by Castells who maintains the importance of the local form and function of places, where creative economies are increasingly reliant on human face-to-face interaction to generate innovation, attract choice-makers and thrive. The social and physical (spatial) dimensions of the neighborhood have undergone cyclical waves of attention and neglect in the history of urban planning on one hand and urban sociology or anthropology on the other since the beginning of the 20th century.

From an urban planning perspective, space has gained momentum in the past generation of scholarship, with urban renaissance and place-making guiding the agenda for a sustainable future in the age of urbanization, starting from the Urban Task Force to the wealth of planning and design guidance published internationally. The development of the discipline has emphasized the fixed spatial relationship between location of services and gravitation of local social practices, taken as a whole, on the grounds of a notional distance of 400 meters (or 5 minutes walk) from a center. This notion of neighborhood needs review, to take into account the complexity of sociality in the information age, and local communities expanding their role in relation to services, by becoming producers and not only consumers of services in a way that involves entrepreneurship and innovation primarily in the local space. New forms of inhabiting, from co-housing to LAT (Living Apart and Together), and working, with the expansion of house-working and multiple-working, coupled with the crisis of publicly subsidized welfare systems, are emphasizing the benefits of adaptability and resilience through local control, as opposed to centralized planning-and-delivery, as an effective response to emergent societal needs.

4.2.1 Material Well-Being

Speck suggests that home investment is about as local an investment as you can get. We use investment (both economic and emotional) as a signifier of interest, commitment and sense of control over our immediate space, as a starting point to discuss form and quality of life at a neighborhood scale, in describing the modern Muslim city, identified the relationship between ownership, use and control of space as central to the nature and quality of space. For him, every space in a city is definable in terms of the relationships between the parties who own, control and use it, and divided into five types - trusteeship, possessive, permissive, dispersed, unified, each affecting the dynamics in the development, maintenance and transformation of the built environment. When a space is owned, controlled and used by one single party (Unified form of submission), maintenance is generally good, change is gradual and piecemeal, corresponding to the users needs, and the overall environment is socially responsive at the most basic level of society. At the other extreme, the space is owned by a party (the state or the local authority), controlled by another (the housing authority) and used by a third (the inhabitants), in a Dispersed form of submission; here, direct control over the environment is removed from its direct user, and maintenance is more likely downgraded, with limited emotional investment allowed. Together, and with all the variations in between, these relationships explain the complexity and variety of urban environments, also linking their form to management, use and maintenance.

In general, an earlier generation of modeling tools for optimizing the use of energy resources throughout the production and consumption of houses is now complemented by efforts to analyze the environmental performance of neighborhoods, in a more holistic understanding of zero-carbon futures; these are being used to assess and plan, in contexts both to retrofit and to plan anew.

4.2.2 Emotional and Personal Development

Aspects of the social implications of neighborhood upkeep and the modifications and adaptations that people routinely make to their surroundings is highlighted in work on the potential of the back alley as a community landscape. Martin discusses the way different configurations of boundary treatment affect social potential in American residential developments. When boundaries are configured to achieve a balance of what Martin describes, the back alleys can be transformed from being merely functional conduits into settings rich in social potential, capable of encouraging and sustaining neighborly behavior in residents. Hidden-ness and revealing-ness reflect that people, depending on mood and circumstance, sometimes wish to preserve privacy whilst at other times choose to be more openly available for contact with neighbors. Martin links the development of community spirit in residential settings with the extent to which the built environment allows individuals to control when they wish to hide or reveal themselves as they move about their daily lives. Boundaries of different heights and degrees of transparency, gate orientation, location of outbuildings and bin storage, places for such control, allowing inhabitants to position themselves according to how sociable or otherwise they feel. There is a question of balance: infrastructures that facilitate too much hidden-ness may obstruct the sort of spontaneous social encounters from which good neighborly relationships often develop, whilst those that are too revealing can lead people to feel themselves oppressively overlooked. The ability to control privacy and sociability is therefore a factor that may contribute to levels of neighborhood satisfaction. Neighborhood satisfaction has been studied by many, with a focus on perceptive and evaluative aspects; personal, social and psychological factors have been found to play a significant part in satisfaction, with physical attributes generally considered through ratings rather than measurement lagging behind in research. Overall, residential satisfaction is confirmed as a complex matter, with perception and evaluation interrelated with physical characteristics.

Physical, social and cultural factors have been listed as playing a part in neighborhood and residential satisfaction. Amongst the social ones, the fear of crime, the number of traffic accidents occurring, the sense of neighboring felt, and the access to services have been studied. On the other hand, research has found that these can be lessened through the use of good design and maintenance; for example, lighting and well-maintained greenery can help lower the fear of crime. Personal factors that have been found to affect such satisfaction are, amongst others, the past experiences that we associate with a place; our adaptive behavior to and within such a place, that is our tendency to grow fond of what we have, or the conditions we are given.

4.2.3 Interpersonal Relationships

Public life is recognized as being key in modern life as it is within it that people learn how to deal with complexity, understanding and using unwritten rules and codes of practice. Diversity is crucial as it offers accidental and unlimited scenarios for life. Research reviewed in this area relates our likelihood to establish and engage in social relationships, feel a sense of community and use local facilities to well-being and focuses on the physical features in which such events take place. Density and spatial configuration in relation to movement, access and distribution of services are two of these features frequently cited. There has been much work on the study of the relationships between density and social sustainability. Different cultures have different tolerances to density and adopt different coping behaviors, while environments of different structure and density afford different social relationships to form. The effects of density can be moderated through design by working on the gap between actual and perceived density, with specific physical features contributing to considerably lowering the latter, but contextual knowledge and solutions are required.

4.2.4 Physical Well-Being

Availability of choices to walk is an important part of human self-determination and is significant for physical well-being. The correlation between physical inactivity and chronic health problems has been studied since the 1970s, initially with a psychological and social focus on individuals undertaking recreational activities. Only in the 2000s has the focus started to include an integrated study of environmental correlates to physical activity. Physical activity, like diet, operates at the individual scale. Physical inactivity is associated with a number of undesirable health outcomes, including coronary heart disease, circulatory diseases, diabetes, and hypertension. Future approaches to city organization and communication infrastructure conducive to human quality of life should not only facilitate travel by walking, but also actively encourage it.

4.3 The Pedestrian Scale

Human quality of life, at least in relation to what we experience in routine daily life, rests heavily on what happens at the pedestrian scale. This is evident throughout wide-ranging contributions to the literature, from Jacobs in the 1960s through to Gehl and his contemporaries in the present day. In his *Cities for People*, Gehl provides comprehensive accounts of the ways in which city spaces at the pedestrian scale are intrinsically interwoven with human functioning and social processes at the level of the individual and the collective. In addition to spatial organization at this scale, there is the strong message that to access beneficial experiences in urban settings, people must have a measure of control over what they choose to do and where they do it. Perhaps, therefore, more so than at the metropolitan and neighborhood scales, provision of open space that is conducive to quality of life does not rely entirely on the outcomes of professional design interventions. It seems that, at some very difficult point to identify at pedestrian scales, a transition is needed whereby the kind of prescriptive design, as conventionally understood in the mainstream of current practice, needs to gradually give way to enable patterns of user occupation, control and adaptation to become more prominent in how the urban environment is shaped.



Fig. 6 The pedestrians scale

4.3.1 Material Well-being

In terms of urban design decision-making, material dimensions related to quality of life are intimately tied to our capacity to become aware of spaces that we can own, control and experience

responsibility for, and those where these apply to others in society. The literature shows that this can be interpreted in terms of spatial attributes that allow us to become aware of the extent of spatial containment, where boundaries between adjacent spaces exist, and the extent to which these can be controlled in order that we can define and protect items important to our material well being.

4.3.2 Interpersonal Well-being

Active edges in urban settings are almost ubiquitously acknowledged in the literature for the crucial role they play in encouraging and supporting social vitality and interpersonal relationships in urban areas. Consequently, they are often acknowledged as integrations of social as well as physical and spatial realms (Habraken 1998). If the socio-spatial nature of these marginal zones is to be accepted, then two key challenges become explicit. The first is that delivery of these socio-spatial margins by design can only be expected to go so far because professional design disciplines, as they are currently configured, cannot adequately account for the breadth and ambiguity of human behavioral and social functioning in spaces in entirely prescriptive ways (Cuthbert 2007). Second, and related to this, is that these edge environments, active or otherwise, currently fall between disciplinary interests. Despite several decades of recognition of their importance to the social well-being of cities, there remains no environmental planning or design discipline with a specific focus on edge design, management and socio-spatial nature.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Urban designs greatest contribution to quality of life spans across scales, from the city-wide to the pedestrian and detailed one, through the distribution of basic services, the design of streets and blocks, and their combination, in terms of walkability, intended as a complex term, inclusive of spatial convenience (permeability), environmental quality (safety, appearance, interest, environmental comfort), and overall legibility. Moreover, the modulation of density and complexity (of activities) encourages exposure to diversity, the practice of social norms, the establishment of social networks, and engagement in civic activities .

Urban design should be intended as a process that, especially at neighborhood and pedestrian scales, enables self-organization and modification through new forms of local space control. People-space relationships are, indeed, reciprocal. We need a substantial shift in how we see ourselves as part of the world, the city, and the neighborhood, in our personal, social and civic lives. Contextual pressures, from the environment, the climate and its resources, to the scale and pace of urbanization, require a change in how we make our choices. We might only just be seeing the end of a century in which choice was based on accumulation, individuality, and substitution, and we might just be at the dawn of a time of awareness of legacy and durability, and the convenience and affordability that they can offer. This requires learning how to move from compartmentalizing our activities and environments to blending them for efficiency, so that both efforts and effects contribute to more than their individual worth. Urban life is here to stay and indeed to grow at an unprecedented pace, so we need to understand that the synergies it can offer hold a large stake in our well-being. As the philosopher Berleant eloquently observed; What we need now is to reconceptualize our world in a way that comes to terms with this, for what we do in the environment.

REFERENCES

- Adrian Jones. (2002). A Guide to Doing Quality of Life Studies, University of Birmingham
- Audit Commission (2005) - Public Sector National Report. Local Quality of Life Indicators –Supporting Local Communities to Become Sustainable: A Guide to Local Monitoring to Complement the Indicators in the UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy. Audit Commission
- Churchman, A., & Ginosar, O. (1999). A theoretical basis for the post-occupancy evaluation of neighborhoods. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 19(3), 267-276.
- Bettencourt, L., & West, G. (2010). A unified theory of urban living. *Nature*, 467(7318), 912913.
- Churchman, A., & Ginosar, O. (1999). A theoretical basis for the post-occupancy evaluation of neighborhoods. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 19(3), 267-276.
- <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/quality-of-life>
- Robert W. Marans, Quality of urban life & environmental sustainability studies: Future linkage opportunities , *Habitat International*, Volume 45, Part 1, 2015.
- Robert W. Marans, Quality of urban life & environmental sustainability studies: Future linkage opportunities , *Habitat International*, Volume 45, Part 1, 2015.