Urban livability: the concept, principles, aspects and parameters

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

If in the times of the past, not too far ago, cities were such rare and uncommon phenomena, nowadays they have been turned into the main place of work and life of the major part of human beings of the world. This is to the extent that more than half of the nearly 7 billion people of the world are now living in the cities. This increase of population in cities has brought about numerous problems and challenges including crowd, traffic, problems of air pollution and environment, inequality in access to urban services and facilities, deficiency in infrastructures, corrosion and weariness in the neighborhoods and many other problems and issues. That is exactly what has happened in many cities with the issues and are unable to meet a major part of the demands of their citizens. Therefore, paying attention to the quality of life, conditions, facilities, needs and demands of the citizens is a vital issue. Considering numerous problems that most of the cities throughout the world are faced today, a variety of approaches such as the sustainability, the quality of life, intelligent development, urban village, new urbanism and livability have been proposed in order to upgrade and improve the quality of life in these cities. The concept and the approach discussed in the present paper is urban livability as one of the most recent and most comprehensive concept among the approaches. Nowadays, in most developed countries and in a more limited degree, in the developing countries, the concept of urban livability has been developed and received attention as a guiding principle within the framework of the discourse of sustainability in urban policies and planning. Using some of the most recent and most credential scientific references in this field, while introducing livability as the dominant approach in urban planning of the contemporary world, the present paper tries to investigate the theoretical origin, the influential views as well as the theoretical-experimental literature and its aspects and parameters. This research tries to help achieve a better perception

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and insight of the concept and introduce the new classification in the aspects and parameters being studied.

Methodology
The present research is fundamental-theoretical in the point of objective. Considering the area of the research about the written literature about the topic of livability, the study has a library-documentary nature and all data and the raw materials of the analysis have been gathered in this way. Then, they have been analyzed and concluded in content analysis method. The tools of gathering data for this study are note-taking of the texts, documentation, adjusting and interpreting the tables and so on.

Results and Discussion
The findings of the present research indicate that taking the current condition of most cities of the world into consideration, there is a general agreement concerning the importance and necessity of recognition, analysis and clarification of urban livability in different aspects. However, no consensus has yet been formed regarding the definition, the principles, the parameters and the indices. The most significant reason for this lack of a consensus can be found in direct dependence of this concept on time and place conditions and most important of all on the social, economic and managerial ground of the target community that has been led to differences in this field. Considering the definitions and parameters of livability, there are some aspects on which this research is emphasized. The urban economic aspect is including the financial partnership of the citizens, prosperity of investment, enough and appropriate income of the citizens, variety of job opportunities and the price of land and housing. The aspect of urban services and infrastructure is including status and quality of housing, condition and quality of educational facilities, condition and quality of health and treatment facilities, condition of the facilities of recreation and free time, quality and condition of transportation, access to different infrastructures such as water, electricity, gas, shops and the services of daily needs such as internet and so on. The social aspect is including the parameters such as safety, identity and the sense of belonging to the place, manner and the rate of people interaction. The aspect of urban management is including reliance to the decision of city council and the municipality, cooperation in the decisions made by the city council and the municipality, beautiful passageways and streets in the neighborhood and corrosion of the texture of the neighborhood. The historical aspect, or in other words, the historical perspective is including some parameters such as a beautiful historical building in the neighborhood, municipality and the organization of cultural heritage preservation of the neighborhood, existence of the special historical signs and symbols in the neighborhood. Finally, the environmental aspect is including pollution and cleanliness of the neighborhood, quality, attraction and liveliness of public spaces. With this perspective in the mind, the features that find meaning within the parameters and variables under discussion in this paper and can be realized in a livable location are including suitable and on foot access to different infrastructures and facilities of everyday life needed in everyday life, clean air, suitable and various housing, employment, green space, recreation and parks, restaurants, shops and shopping centers, doctor office and health centers, educational centers and schools, livable and attractive public spaces, various options of transportation and many other similar cases.

Conclusion
It can be concluded that people and space are the two ends of the boundary of livability. Livability emphasizes on man’s experience of the space and looks at these experiences within the limit of space and time. Therefore, sole reliance on the data gained of space or people will lead to misdirection and will cause it to fall far from the objective of the concept of livability.

Keywords: livability, quality of life, smart growth, sustainability, urban village.
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