

International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

(An ISO 3297: 2007 Certified Organization)

Vol. 5, Issue 1, Januray 2016

Theory of Good City Form by Kevin Lynch- Review

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ABSTRACT:Kevin Lynch (1918-1984) studied with Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin and later obtained a Bachelor of City Planning degree from MIT. His contribution in this field is great. In his long career he have written many good books, out of these *A Theory of Good City Form* published by MIT Press,1981 is most important book. In this exercise we will review this book briefly.

KEY WORDS: Urban Design, Good City Form, Architecture, Five Dimensions Of Urban Design

I. INTRODUCTION

In this book initially he examine three existing normative theories, those which see the city as a model of the cosmos, as a machine, and as a living organism. These theories finally shown to be inadequate and unable to hold up under sustained analysis. The aim of these theories is simply to describe how settlements work rather than to evaluate how they ought to work. These theories are models of cities as ecological systems, as fields of force, as systems of linked decisions, or as areas of class conflict.

Lynch puts his own theory of good city form, which can produce good settlements, qualities that allow "development, within continuity, via openness and connection." He presented five dimensions of performance **vitality, sense, fit, access, and control**. He also presented two "meta-criteria" **efficiency and justice**. These two meta-criteria Efficiency and justice are operate on the all other five dimensions.

II. RELATED WORK

City performance can be measured solely by reference to the spatial form of the city. But, the quality of a place is due to the joint effect of the place and society which occupies it. This is very important for researchers who see social groups behaviour reflected in urban morphology. Then, the technology applied to unveil this, is the researcher's selection. Given the difficult task of constructing a limited set of performance dimensions for the spatial shape of cities, Kevin Lynch suggests the following five basic ones, all of them related to city's qualities:

III. PERFORMANCE DIMENSIONS & META CRITERIA

Vitality-

The degree to which the form of the settlement supports the vital functions, the biological requirements and capabilities of human being, how it protect the survival of the species. He mentioned three principals of it which are **sustenance, safety, consonance**.

- Sustenance- availability of all the elements to sustain the life. There should be an adequate supply of food, energy, water and air at the same time availability of proper disposal of wastes, i.e. the "throughput".
- Safety- it considers psychological safety, social safety and physical safety. There should be safety from physical elements like hazards, poisons, and diseases, also social and psychological safety like defence against violation attacks, the prevention of food and fire, the resistance to earthquake.

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- Consonance- the environment should consonance with the basic biological structure of human being. It should support natural rhythms, and should provide optimum sensory input.

Sense-

This is the joint between the form of the environment and the human processes of perception and cognition. It depends on the form of the space, quality and human activity. He said identity, structure, congruence, legibility, transparency are the characteristics of Sense.

- Identity- it is the extent to which person can recognice or recall a place as being distinct from other places, having unique character of its own.
- Structure- which at the scale of small place is the sense of how it parts fit together an in large settlement is the sense of orientation.
- Congruence- identification/ recognition of the place by form of city or building.
- Transparency- one can directly perceive the operations of the various technical functions, activities, and social & natural processes that are occurring within the settlement.
- Legibility- inhabitants of settlement are able to communicate accurately to each other via its symbolic physical feature.

Fit-

It is the match between place and whole patterns of behaviour . it is linked to characteristics of the human body and of physical system in general. Adaptability, manipulability, reversibility excess capacity, improving accessibility, separation of parts, modular and standardization, reduction of recycling costs are the characteristics of fit.

Access-

It is the extent to which goods, services, place and information are accessible with minimum time and efforts. (least path of resistance)

It is classified as access to other people, access to human activities, access to services, access to material resources, access to natural environment, access to information.

Control-

It refers to the pervasive phenomena of territorial occupation of space and time for discharging day to day activities. It depends upon ownership.

There are some spatial right like right of presence, right to be in place, right of use and action, rights of modification, right of disposition.

Following aspects are comes under Control

- Congruence- the extent to which the actual user or inhabitants of a space control it in proportion to the degree of their Permanente stake in it. User congruence allows for better fit and greater security, satisfaction and freedom as a consequence of it.
- Responsibility- is a balancing criteria and supposes that those who control a place should have motives, information and power to do it well.
- Certainty- the degree to which people understand the control system, can predict its scope, and feel secure with it.

Efficiency-

It is the balancing criteria; it relates the level of achievement in some performance to loss in some other.

There are certain interdimensional conflicts like i. a vital environment will often conflict with decentralized user control, ii. the ideal of a vital environment will often conflict with a well-fitted one, iii. Sense is frequently in opposition to adaptability of fit, iv. Present and future fit are contradictory to each other.

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Justice-

Justice is the way in which benefits and costs of any one kind are distributed between persons. It deals with all the performance dimensions like vitality, sense, fit, access and control.

IV. CONCLUSION

Good city form should be vital (sustainant, safe and consonant), it is sensible (identifiable, structured, congruent, transparent, legible, unfolding and significant), it is well fitted (manipulable, and resilient), it is accessible (diverse, equitable and locally manageable), and it is well controlled (congruent, certain, responsible and intermittently loose) and all of these are achieved with justice and internal efficiency.

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