

Urban Feng-Shui and its Impact on the Spatial Structures of Places and Psychological Well-being of People

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Abstract

This research examines ‘urban Feng Shui’ and its impact on people’s mental health. Feng Shui is an ancient knowledge system of the Chinese whose goal has been to create harmony between people, the environment, the buildings and the cities. Today, many are trying to understand the relationship between Man and his environment, and in recent years, many architects and urban planners have also been trying to connect with this several-thousand-years-old theory, that many East Asian countries have followed.

This research employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative research. Through a survey of literature, it first examined the existing theories about Feng Shui. Then, it analyzed its manifestations through case studies. In the process, urban feng shui is introduced along with the theoretical basis of Feng Shui.

It is concluded that according to the principles and methods of this theory, the teaching and practice of urban Feng Shui can influence the mental health of people.

Keywords: Feng Shui, Citizenship Rights, Mental Health, Spatial Structure

Introduction

In recent years, urban Feng Shui has become known to the Western world, and now a large number of people in across the world benefit from this Chinese philosophy that deals with creating harmonic relationship between people and places. As Emmons (1992) point out, four Feng Shui styles are often used. The key to harnessing the meaningfulness of this knowledge is to explore its implications particularly in terms of people’s mental health, which it claims to influence through the organization of spatial structures.

The place where one lives may be a small rented room, an apartment, a large villa or a large yard. However, it is important to make the best use of what one has. Needless to say, as much as possible, one’s place to sleep, sit, study and work inside a house should be set-up in a way it contributes to functionality, ambience and quality of life of the person. The same could be said about all places such as a place of shopping, treatment, gym, education, etc. Needless

to say, that all places should be available to one outside one's home as conveniently as possible and as meaningful as possible (Tam, Tso & Lam, 1999).

There is no doubt that the relationship between Man and the environment is very important in architecture and urban planning. The environment is considered the context for human growth, and for this reason, it requires capabilities. However, most people are indifferent to their living environment and are unaware of the effects that this environment has on them (Bruun, 2003).

In general, it can be said that human nature requires special environments for specific activities and purposes. The legends of every culture offer people the opportunities to find out the reality of Nature and pave the way to achieve their best. Ancient knowledge and culture are invaluable in this sense. Cultural artifacts are an unconscious reflection of the thoughts and concepts of the world order, which embody the values and truths of cultures and societies. In fact, they make people always imitate the realities of Nature. This imitation of the world of the heavens and Nature makes Man build his world in the harmony with the universe and Nature. This is what Feng Shui as a philosophy articulates.

Natural habitats of the earth have inspired mankind since the beginning of human civilization (Meliana *et al*, 2021; Ren & Woudstra, 2021). However, as Winstan Churchill once said, "Man creates the environment and then the environment affects Man". According to this, the effects of the environment on people are undeniable. If urban planners create cities, and cities create the living environments of the communities, then it is undeniable that those environments affect the communities. The ideas and ideologies embedded in those environments as well as the meanings penetrate them through various levels of existence and perceptions. Therefore, architecture and urban planning, as an artificial environment have a role to play through the channel of meaning understood by the community (Madeddu & Zhang, 2017; Coggins *et al*, 2018). Nevertheless, there exists a profound negligence of the values, attitudes and beliefs people have and how those could be meaningfully employed to create more wholesome environments. This paper takes the position that Feng Shui is one such belief among the common people, and that there is value in ascertaining how meaningful or not these ideas, philosophies and knowledge systems in the modern world.

In fact, according to 'Feng Shui' the website, today, urban Feng Shui is available to everyone and can be employed to transform places to become great places with spatial structures, characteristics and qualities that can contribute to both physical and psychological well-being.

In this context, this paper examines the conceptual and theoretical ideas underlining the practice of Feng Shui and ascertains its potential impact on spatial structures and psychological well-being of the people, as advocated by its proponents.

Its objectives are as follows.

1. To explain the basic concepts of Feng Shui
2. To ascertain the ways in which it can facilitate urban planning and architecture
3. To ascertain the way in which it influences psychological well-being through spatial structures.

Review of Literature

Ping Xu (2021) integrates feng shui research and consultant experiences with teaching design to enhance healthy living. Feng Shui is an ancient Chinese systematic model used to harmonize people with their surroundings and can be used as a guide to create a healthy lifestyle. According to Xu (2021) houses located in areas prone to natural hazards can lead to injury, illness, and death. Inadequate ventilation can promote indoor pollutants, radon, bacteria, and viruses. Improper spatial design can cause physical and mental illness. This interdisciplinary approach to healthy living helps students improve living conditions and develop design skills. Finally, it enhances students' fundamental worldview of systems thinking.

Razmara, Asadpour & Taghipour (2021) point out that the studies conducted on the relationship between landscape and health show that the natural attraction of people to Nature

and presence in these spaces causes mental peace and improvement of mental and physical health. Therefore, the perspective therapy approach can be useful in treatment. Healing landscapes reduce stress and improve mental health. Therefore, applying healing design parameters in open urban landscapes strengthens the quality and livability of the urban space and increases the desire to use nature optimally. Razmara, Asadpour & Taghipour (2021) have examined urban parks and Iranian gardens using a therapeutic perspective approach, emphasizing the difference between these two cases. They have investigated the parameters affecting the quality of landscape therapy in two urban landscapes with different spatial structures (Iranian garden and urban park) in Iran. The qualitative factors of landscape healing have been collected and classified into emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and social effects. They point out that the cognitive parameters in the Iranian garden and the behavioral and social parameters in the urban park have influenced the therapeutic quality of these landscapes.

Moreover, Razmara, Asadpour & Taghipour (2021) have noted that geometric design patterns, visual communication, use of water and vegetation increase connection with Nature. In addition, psychological safety through lighting at night and transparency of the space is found to be effective in promoting the improvement of the environment. In terms of social and behavioral parameters, the quality of public spaces, suitable furniture, readability, and various activities are valuable in the quality of treatment ().

At the same time, Bordbari (2017) shows that Feng Shui, the ancient art of the East, is suitable for promoting health, happiness, energy and enthusiasm through the correct arrangement of objects and decor. He argues that if feng shui is used properly, it helps to balance the flow of energy in the environment and allows us to create houses with maximum energy, health, and harmony. Feng Shui leads us to the careful use of light, color, materials, and placement of furniture. It removes negative energy and provides inner peace, health, and blessing in the home environment. Proper design and modification of home decoration in a way that positive energies can flow more easily can have a great impact on creating a good and successful life for the residents of the house. This requires the attention of interior designers to the art of arranging the environment to create a better balance and harmony between the energies that surround us.

Bordbari (2017) has also applied the principles and rules of feng shui in the interior design of residential houses and separately, and has concluded that the important components of residential houses should be examined in spaces such as entrance spaces, living room, kitchen, home office, bedrooms, children's room, bathroom and toilet.

Mirzadeh & Ebrahimi Asl (2015), discuss Feng Shui and its effect on environmental psychology; In a detailed description, they show how an environment, by observing the science of Feng Shui and the beliefs of this science, can provide the peace of the environment by the conditions of human peace (Mirzadeh & Ebrahimi Asl, 2015).

Moreover, Kasegar Mohammadi & Tofiq Bakht (2014), demonstrate the capabilities of the science and art of Feng Shui to improve the space. They examine the life of humanity and provide an answer from the source of the relationship between feng shui and human actions (Kasegar Mohammadi & Tofiq Bakht, 2014).

Mirza *et al.* (2014) have researched the epidemic factor in today's century in terms of mental and physical diseases and a comparative method between apartment houses and villas (height and ground), the relationship of these two lifestyles with the depression of their users has been studied. They point out how important it is in terms of examining depression in two types of apartments and villa life (height and ground) (Mirza *et al.*, 2014).

Torkashvan & Torkashvan (2014) demonstrate how to reduce or increase the sense of life expectancy, satisfaction, vitality and health of the human soul by addressing issues that are often neglected over time causing depression among the residents. These involve issues such as ignoring the opinions and tastes of the audience in design, disregarding the differences of social strata in the way housing is used, and not paying attention to context and context-oriented architecture. Further, ignoring the role of tradition, not matching the designed space with the different needs of families also contribute. Failure to pay attention to the internal relations of the plan, the incomplete functioning of the spatial functions, the residents' lack of agreement

on how to use the common areas, and many other cases, intervened through Feng Shui principles. It further examines apartment architecture and its relationship with diseases such as depression (Torkashvan & Torkashvan, 2014).

Bagheri & Charkhchian (2013) have discussed the computational dimension of Feng Shui science and its relationship with people and their lives. They have investigated and analyzed the relationship between the computational dimension of this science and the comfort of the environment and people, and how these calculations will affect the individual and his life (Bagheri & Charkhchian, 2013).

On the other hand, Mahdavi and Gholamali (2012) show that every person's house should be a manifestation of comfort, peace, and joy. It is argued that all the objects have fluid energy, and proper design and modification of home decoration can release positive energies more easily and can have a great impact on creating a good and successful life for the residents of the house. As Mahdavi & Gholamali (2012) point out, this requires the attention of interior designers to the art of arranging the environment to create a better balance and harmony between the energies that surround us.

These ideas, which are rooted in the Chinese view of the universe are referred to as Feng Shui. Feng Shui is an ancient oriental art for placing every device in its correct place, both at home and at work. Its main premise is that when a person and his environment are in harmony, the result is a good life and success. Thus, the goal of Feng Shui is to achieve the same success.

The origin of feng shui is in Asia, which is why its rules are not foreign and unfamiliar to the Iranians. and many of its methods have existed in Iranian culture since ancient times and were part of their ancient beliefs.

Research Methods

This paper employs a qualitative approach. First, it conducts a survey of literature sourced from the world wide web and those published and available at libraries. The intention is to unravel the theoretical ideas that produce this practice as claimed by its proponents.

Findings

Basic principles and concepts of Feng Shui

According to its proponents, Feng Shui is a method of doing thing that could harness and store energy in any place without stopping it. This energy is identified as 'chi', and it is believed that it is the vital force of the universe (Mak & Ng, 2005).

Chi Energy

As said, proponents of the Chinese philosophy, Feng Shui, Chi is the vital force of the universe, and is manifested in all objects around. It is claimed to be created in various forms. For example, the slow flow of water is believed to produce a large amount of Chi force (Chao *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, after spending a short time next to a fountain, pool, river, or lake, one may feel refreshed. According to this philosophy, a strong wind or a storm, like a turbulent and roaring stream of water, causes the dispersion of Chi, and when the Chi is dispersed, luck and fortune also go aside with it. Hannas & Rinawaty (2019) say that everything that is done carefully and perfectly is Chi it is. As they argue, a master musician when performing a piece of music or a professional athlete when competing and showing his excellence is a generator of Chi energy.

Chi as a Product of Nature

According to this philosophy, beautiful natural environments, such as a majestic mountain peak or a lush green plain, produce and strengthen chi. An anonymous follower of feng shui in the 17th century AD describes the location of Chi as follows. Another world; Soft hills, clear waters, gentle breeze, beautiful sunshine, and a sky that has a new light in it. Peace

in chaos and excitement in peace. In his presence, eyes are open, and beside him, the heart is full of joy. Chi soars and reaps its impact. The light shines in between; magic flows everywhere. Chi may experience stagnation and stagnation. Accordingly, a pool with cloudy and polluted water produces Chi, which is a negative form of energy and causes luck to go away. In articulating this, Song, Kim & Song (2019) argue that our goal in building is to strengthen and create as much as possible the positive force of Chi to increase the vitality of the space and the vitality of the residents.

Yin and Yang

Another interpretation of Feng Shui is quite well known, as the Yin and Yang principle. Chi is considered to consist of these two forces: yin, and yang, which, it is argued, are two mutual forces of existence. The existence of each depends on the existence of the other. Front and back are a good example to understand the relationship between yin and yang. If there is no front, naturally we will not have a back. The yin-yang symbol is a circle containing two shapes, one of which is white with a black dot (yang), and the other is black with a white dot (yin). The moles are a reminder that wherever there is yin, there is a little bit of yang and vice versa. As Wang, Hong & Abdul-Rahman (2018) point out, the Yin-Yang symbol represents the cosmos in Taoism: another Chinese philosophy.



Fig. 1: Yin & Yang Symbol
Jaeger, 2012

Yin and Yang are complementary rather than opposite. Yin is black, passive, and feminine. Yang is white, active, and masculine. Together, they make a harmonious composition. In ancient China, there is never a clear definition of yin and yang. As Madeddu *et al.*, (2021) say, instead, according to an ancient Eastern tradition, an attempt has been made everywhere to present a list of their mutual attributes to understand the nature of Yin and Yang. Below are examples of these descriptions:

The last description is often mentioned in Feng Shui. If an area has several hills, it is considered yang, and if the land is completely flat, it is considered yin. Since we are always looking for balance in Feng Shui, we usually balance smooth areas with thoughtful placement of stones, statues, or monuments. Sloping and curved roofs in many buildings in China are considered a Feng Shui cure for flat yin lands (Wang, Hong & Abdul-Rahman, 2018).

The Five Elements

In most Far Eastern philosophies, the influence of the five elements, the earth, wood, fire, metal and water are present. According to Feng Shui, these determine the course of natural phenomena. These elements are not only real and pure but are sometimes considered as a symbol of power for their symbolic qualities. Like yin and yang, the five elements are also associated with seasons and times of day. Indeed, they refine the rules of yin and yang (Tam, Tso & Lam, 1999).

The theory of five elements is one of the basic ideas of Feng Shui. Each of the five elements represents a specific state of chi energy. These states are related to the constellations and at the same time, the position of the earth about the sun during the day and year. It is

believed that parallel to the movement of the sun, the southern part of the house absorbs fire energy at noon. The closer the sun gets to the West; the more concentrated the earth's energy is in the Southwest of the house. At sunset, metal energy reaches the western part of the house (Chang & Lii, 2010).

Feng Shui is founded on the principle that these five elements or energy in pure form are also present in one's house and apartment. For example, there are paper and leafy plants and large wood energy. As Song, Kim & Song, (2019) point out, oven, fireplace, red color, or lighting are symbols of fire energy. Porcelain, ceramic and plaster are forms of the energy of the soil element. Iron, silver, and precious metals are symbols of metal energy. Basin, toilet, bathroom, shower, swimming pool, and aquarium are forms of water energy too.

Yin and Yang in Buildings

As was said before, energy of buildings is related to their external architecture. It is claimed that tall and narrow buildings such as skyscrapers have more yin energy. On the contrary, low, round, octagonal, or cube buildings and structures have more yang energy. If one lives on the top floor of a tall building, the power of the sky will create energy there that tends to be more yang. On the lower floors and the ground floor, the power of the earth rules, and therefore, there is more yin there (Zhong & Ceranic, 2008; Madeddu & Zhang, 2017; Song, Kim & Song, 2019).

The Art of Designing Buildings and Structures

According to Feng Shui, each building has a certain energy depending on the design and the elements used in it. One can find points in every building that need to be modified to harness such energy. It says that various defects in the building cause serious impacts on the mood, feelings, and health of the residents.

In this sense, Feng Shui is similar to Oriental medicine in many ways, except that the recommendations made in Feng Shui apply to spaces instead of people. In fact, there is a similarity between feng shui, shiatsu, acupuncture, and Reiki. In shiatsu, by pressing different points of the body, the energy is believed to flow between organs and organs are claimed to improve. In acupuncture, the same thing is done with the help of needles or medicinal plants, and in Reiki, the energy giver uses his hands to balance the person receiving the energy. In feng shui, by balancing the energy in the living environment, the people who work and live there stay healthy and enjoy more blessings in life. Madeddu & Zhang (2021) point out that today, Feng Shui is used in various areas of work and life. From the design of residential buildings to their interior decoration, green space design, and the design of stores and companies that are discussed in commercial feng shui. Following table outlines the five elements as related to shapes, colors, and materials.

However, according to Feng Shui, there are places near where one should never live. The following list summarizes the places that are supposed to be dangerous. In case of proximity to each of them, it is necessary to make proper protection for the building.

- Cemeteries
- Places that have strong yin energy
- Prison, police station, hospital, and government buildings that have many visitors
- Slaughterhouses or laboratories where animals are used as laboratory samples
- When the land used for the building was previously used for military training or was a hazardous waste dump or a battlefield. In these cases, a lot of tree planting should be done inside the ground and around the building
- Proximity to the airport or barracks (at least one kilometer away)
- Near a waste or sewage disposal site
- Proximity to strong power transmission lines (at least 150 meters away)
- Proximity to the main center of mobile phone transmitter and radio TV (at least 1 km distance)
- Near or in the neighborhood of medical diagnostic laboratories (Zhang, 2018).

Table 1: The five elements as related to shapes, colors, and materials.

Source: Hannas & Rinawaty, 2019

The element	Shape	Color	Materials	Concept	Season	Direction	Taste	Smell
Wood	Vertical-Narrow-Rectangular	Green	Wood-Willow tree-Rattan-Bamboo	Life-Growth-Life force Mobility	Spring	East	Sour	Stale
Fire	Pointed-Star-Triangle-Pyramid-Diamond shape	Red	-----	Excitement-Heat Stimulation-Impact	Summer	South	Bitter	burn
Soil	Connected-Short-Flat-Wide-Four-Horizontal	yellow	Gypsum-Porcelain-Clay-Ceramic-Brick-Natural fibers-Soft stones	Convenience-Security Stability and Stability Caution	Early autumn	Center	Sweet	Fragrant
Metal	Round-Domed-Bow-Oval	white	Stainless steel-Bronze-Copper-Iron-Gold—Silver-Hard stones	Richness-Firmness Power of Leadership Organization	Late autumn	West	Spicy	Rotten
Water	Irregular-Crooked-Disturbed-Unformed-Wavy	Black	Glass	Deep strength-Flexibility-Relaxation	Winter	North	Salty	Stench

The Impact of Environmental Factors

Feng Shui is also particular about the environmental factors as much as the shapes, colours and directions. They involve sound, smell, wind, electromagnetic waves, doors and windows. Some of them could be described as follows.

Sound

People are always exposed to all kinds of audible or inaudible sounds. Positive sounds like the sound of birds and running water have calming and healing effects on the body. Calm and pleasant music helps to make important decisions in life. In Feng Shui, there is certain music to create a calm atmosphere in the work and life environment. As Ren & Woudstra (2021) say, often, there are various devices in living places that have abnormal sounds and have become normal for people, but they hurt their nerves and life. For example, according to Feng Shui, loud music and loud noises have negative effects on the liver and kidneys.

Smell

Feng Shui claims that the smell of plants and natural perfumes has the property of awakening and energizing. However, bad smells such as the smell of sewage, car smoke, sulfur, and rotten food are harmful to health. Coggins *et al.* (2018) point out that when one deals with inappropriate smells, breathing becomes shallow and this causes a decrease in oxygen and vital energy of the body.

Wind

Calm wind and breeze are said to be very good because it brings fresh air, oxygen, and energy into the environment. Strong, very cold, or very hot winds are harmful to the body. Ren

& Woudstra (2021) support this theory when they say that in places where a constant wind current blows, a wind deflector is used to neutralize this effect.

Electromagnetic Waves

As it is commonly known, electro-magnetic waves are harmful for human health: both physical and mental. The most important type of these waves is the radiation caused by the passage of high-voltage electric currents. Various surveys have shown that those who live within fifty meters of high-voltage power lines are highly exposed to various diseases such as leukemia, amnesia, and various physical and mental disorders. As Ren & Woudstra (2021) and Coggins *et al.* (2018) show the effect of the high-pressure electric field extends up to a distance of about one hundred meters.

Interior Decorations on Ceilings

In architecture, different types of roof design give a special appearance to the buildings. It is argued that simpler the roof, the better. Feng Shui recommends to avoid building sloping facades inside the roof of the building, especially if they end at the entrance door. Like anything else, the simplicity of the roof makes it more beautiful, it is claimed. Indirect lights are considered good lighting and can be used to decorate ceilings. Meliana *et al.* (2021) recommend that if plastering is done on the ceiling, to use meaningful designs without sharp angles and to avoid crowding the ceiling

Windows

According to Feng Shui, the size and dimensions of the window should be proportional to the wall on which it is located and the dimensions of the building. Placing many large windows, it is claimed, in every room, especially in tropical areas, increases the Yang energy in the building and creates states such as restlessness and anger in people. It is recommended that the ratio of the total area of the windows of each room to its entrance door should not be more than 3. Each room should have at least one windowless wall. In this regard, Tam, Tso & Lam (1999) say that windows with a semicircular arch above them are supposed to be excellent.

Doors

The entrance door is one of the most important elements of Feng Shui. Entering Chi through the entrance door is considered extremely important. Accordingly, entrance doors should not open outwards. When a door is opened to the outside, it is claimed, it interferes with the entry of energy. Zhang (2018) shows that another important issue regarding doors is their arrangement and that the doors of the opposite rooms should not be exactly opposite each other.

Feng Shui, Urban Planning and Design

Feng Shui goes beyond the recommendations of places to avoid living in, appropriate shapes and colours or the positions and proportions of doors and windows. In fact, it deals with the larger context too.

It has been claimed that the influence of feng shui on Chinese landscapes and cities is so profound that "land use can hardly be understood apart from it". In ancient China, the main task of urban planning has been to choose the right location for a city, and this task, has been often accomplished with the help of Feng Shui. Indeed, it has long been considered a 'determining factor'. It has been unimaginable if the location of a city did not respect Feng Shui. If this were not the case, the prosperity of the state, the rule of the emperor, and the welfare of its citizens were believed to be at great risk (Baratta & Magli, 2021; Kazantsev, Marus & Movchan, 2021).

In fact, the more important the city, the more effort is expended to ensure its "harmonious location and arrangement." According to Wei (2022), this was certainly true of the ancient capitals of Beijing, Nanjing, Luoyang, Xi'an, Kaifeng, and Hangzhou. Beyond

location decisions, Mak (1998) suggests that "most large cities in China meet the criteria of the ideal Feng Shui model" (Mak, 1998; Wei, 2022).

Urban Feng Shui and land-use are closely connected as the layout and design of buildings and public spaces affect the flow of energy in the urban environment. Madeddu & Zhang (2017) argue that the principles of urban Feng Shui can be used to inform land-use decisions and improve the functionality and energy flow of different land-use types within the city.

For example, it is claimed that the principles of urban Feng Shui can be used to guide the design of public spaces, such as parks and plazas, and to create a more harmonious and inviting environment. In this connection, Hannas & Rinawaty (2019) point out that by considering the direction of energy flow and using natural elements like water and greenery, public spaces can become more welcoming and beneficial for the people who use them.

Moreover, it is claimed that the principles of urban Feng Shui can be used to inform the land-use of buildings and neighborhoods. For instance, the orientation, location, and design of buildings is said to affect the flow of energy and impact the health and well-being of individuals and communities living in those buildings. According to Madeddu *et al.* (2021), by taking into account the principles of urban Feng Shui, buildings and neighborhoods can be designed to support the health and well-being of residents, including considerations like lighting, air quality, and access to green space.

In addition, the principles of urban Feng Shui can be applied to inform transportation and infrastructure decisions in the city. For example, Zhang & Liu (2021) say that urban planners can use urban Feng Shui principles to guide the placement of roads and highways to ensure that energy flows smoothly through the city and to reduce energy blockages that could lead to traffic congestion

In short, urban Feng Shui is claimed to be able to provide a framework for making more thoughtful and holistic land-use decisions that consider the needs of urban inhabitants and enhance the energy flow in the urban environment. Ren & Woudstra (2021) support this idea when he says that urban planners and designers can use these principles to create more livable, inviting, and harmonious urban spaces that are both functional and supportive of human well-beings.

Feng Shui and Civil Rights

It may be surprising that Feng Shui deals also with issues of human rights: women in particular. Citizenship rights are a set of rights and obligations that a citizen has due to living in a country. Urban law is a set of laws, rules, and regulations that regulate the mutual relations between citizens and city administrations in local and urban matters and explain the rights and duties of councils, municipalities, and other urban institutions; Therefore, today, citizens' awareness of acquired rights and planners' and architects' awareness of citizens' rights are among the factors influencing the urban architecture planning process (Zhang & Liu, 2021; Wesley-Smith, 1994). Contemporary theories about urban rights have led to a new framework based on the concept of right to the city about urban life.

If in general form, within the framework of the general concept of the right to the city, the following statement can be presented from the set of these rights about the imagined rights of citizenship to rights, architecture, and urban planning:

1. the right to assign;
2. the right to participate;
3. the right of centrality;
4. right of residence;
5. right to habitat;
6. The right to individualism in socialization.

Yeoh & Hui (1995) and Matthews (2019) argue that in terms of urban feng shui, paying attention to the cultural, ethical, economic, social, and other aspects of urban development

based on citizenship rights makes scientific models to be designed and implemented, and as a result, the citizenship rights mentioned above can be respected.

Urban Feng Shui and Women's Rights: Enhancing Women's Empowerment in Cities

As it is now known, urban Feng Shui is a concept that relates to creating a harmonious environment within the cities and buildings. It is a branch of traditional Feng Shui that has adapted itself to the modern city environment, with all its challenges and opportunities. The ultimate goal of urban Feng Shui is to create a healthy, balanced, and prosperous living space where people can thrive and flourish.

In this connection, one of the key aspects of urban Feng Shui is the empowerment of women. Women's empowerment is a critical issue for urban sustainability and development. Women make up half of the world's population and are the backbone of the cities. From raising families and communities to starting businesses and leading social movements, women play a vital role in the urban ecosystem. However, despite their immense contributions, women continue to face numerous challenges, ranging from gender-based violence to unequal access to education, health care, and economic opportunities.

Urban Feng Shui, it is claimed, can play a crucial role in enhancing women's empowerment in cities. By promoting a harmonious and supportive living environment, urban Feng Shui is believed to be able to help break down the societal and cultural barriers that limit women's potential. Wei (2022) articulates some of the ways in which uUrban Feng Shui can be used to empower women in cities as follows.

1. Creating Safe and Secure Communities

One of the primary concerns of women in cities is their safety and security. Urban Feng Shui is claimed to be able to help create safe and secure communities by identifying and addressing the underlying environmental factors that contribute to crime, violence, and insecurity. For example, by designing buildings and streets that are well-lit, easily accessible, and well-connected, urban Feng Shui can enhance the sense of safety and security in urban neighborhoods. Similarly, by promoting the planting of trees and creating green spaces, urban Feng Shui can also reduce the risk of crime and violence in communities.

2. Enhancing Health and Well-being

Women's health and well-being are crucial components of their empowerment. Urban Feng Shui can help enhance women's health and well-being by promoting a healthy living environment. For example, by creating a clean, pollution-free living space, Urban Feng Shui is claimed to be able to help reduce the risk of respiratory diseases and other health conditions that affect women disproportionately. Similarly, by promoting the use of natural light and ventilation, urban Feng Shui is claimed to be able to improve the quality of indoor air and reduce the risk of indoor pollutants.

3. Promoting Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment is essential for women's long-term prosperity and financial security. Urban Feng Shui can help promote economic empowerment by creating a conducive environment for women-owned businesses. For example, by identifying and promoting business districts that are easily accessible and well-connected, Urban Feng Shui can help women entrepreneurs overcome the logistical challenges of starting and sustaining a business. Madeddu & Zhang (2021) thus argue, similarly, by creating affordable housing and transportation options, urban Feng Shui can help women save money and invest in their businesses and careers.

The Theory of the Right to the City

'Right to the city' is a concept that was first proposed by 'Henri Lefebvre' in a book with the same title. From his point of view, the right to the city is a kind of request and demand for improved access to urban life. Before being an individual right, this right is a general concept that requires changes that require a collective power to reshape urban processes. The concept of the right to the city requires and depends on the freedom and reconstruction of the city and every human being in it, concepts that have been ignored in the present era (Harvey, 2015).

Rouhi & Bayz (2021) says that one of the basic prerequisites for the formation of self-awareness and action is "beyond individual freedom in access to urban facilities". In other words, the right to the city is a universal right and participation in the way of changing the city (Rouhi & Bayz, 2021). In addition to the generality of the right to the city, this right is a superior source for realizing other rights in the city. Purcell (year) says that the right to the city and the urban policies of the city dwellers by stating that the theory of the right to the city Lefeure is more radical and much broader than the popular concept, by presenting a new reading of the right to the city. As the urban policies of city dwellers, he sees the right to the city as a solution for citizens' resistance against the structures imposed and shaping the city and a policy to achieve urban spaces. However, as Harvey (2015) argues, the right to the city exists for all people, whether they are official citizens or strangers and unofficial. In this context, Lefebvre recognizes two components in the city right.

1. 'The right to the appropriate use of city spaces': today, in our cities, based on the needs of urban social life, The right to use urban spaces for playing, working, and similar things for a decent life is not provided as it should be.
2. 'Participation right': based on this right, city residents should be involved in different levels of decision-making related to urban spaces.

Marcuse (2014) points out that the right to use the city, in the public dimension creates a sense of belonging. Belonging is a feeling that is formed in daily activities and the use of places and is strengthened following the continued use of the space.

In addition to bringing a sense of belonging to citizens, daily activities also cause the formation of meaning and spatial identity. For example, the street as a geographical place designed by urban planners and designers becomes a space and gets an identity from the people who engage in social activities there. The social space is also like this; this means that space cannot exist by itself.

Space represents social reality. In Lefebvre's view, the historical concepts of space are analyzed based on three axes, which in simpler terms are:

- a) space understood or drawn
- b) space sensed or felt
- c) lived space.

Bio-social spaces are created through these three dimensions that have 'dialectical' relationships. It is unwise to create urban spaces without understanding and awareness of the dialectical relationship between the understood, felt, lived spaces and the flow of space production in the city and how to reproduce it. The process of action and effort to achieve the right to the city will not be as it should be; It is not realized. In each of the mentioned spaces, according to the opportunity for the formation of action and the possibility of turning the city into an arena of action, how to act for rights is different.

As Sultana (2020) points out, the three dimensions of spatial routine, spatial representations, and representation spaces, play a role in the production of space by creating platforms for understanding and receiving various biological matters in the city.

1. **Spatial routine:** Spatial routines are defined as a type of spatiality that includes the production and reproduction and spatial positions and arrangements of different functions. The spatial routine of a society produces the space of that society and presents the space.

Spatial routines are shown as the process of producing the material form of social spatiality, both as a mediator and as an output of human activity, behavior, and experience. The spatial routine determines the material dimension of social activity and interaction. Daily interaction and communication networks that appear in the production process are examples of these spatial routines.

2. **Spatial representations:** Space representations define a conceptualized or sensible space. The space of scientists, planners, and city planners is placed in this space. This sensible space is also tied to the relations of production and especially to the order or design that those relations impose. Such an order is applied through the control of knowledge, symbols, and codes on the means of decoding the spatial routine and as a result the production of spatial knowledge (Bloom, 2019).

Representation spaces, while being distinct from the other two spaces, include them. Representation spaces crystallize complex symbolisms that create code and no code. They are linked to the secret or underground part of social life. The space of representation has a kind of mysticism, unconscious incomprehension, and incomprehensible matter. This space is the space of residents and users. Lived space is, in fact, a space that is experienced independently of the idea of urban planning, and sometimes it is the place of resistance against reasonable space.

In other words, it can be said that the lived space is a place to say no and push back the repressive and ordering forces to the space based on the lived experience and the knowledge that comes from living in such a space. It is a platform for self-management followed by an opportunity to claim rights. It includes users from the public to scientists and planners. In other words, the restraining power of reasonable space as well as the platform for the formation and achievement of urban rights emerges in representational spaces.

Representation spaces are directly lived spaces. Their language is not a special language or symbolic expression. Rather, their language is the simple and casual language of the people. After that, Lefebvre describes what can be an ideal method of social order. Understanding the social reality of a space is like discovering its hidden possibilities. This utopia is possible and he believes that he can see it and called it an urban revolution. This urban revolution is a panel of achievable urban society and corresponds to the periods of the history and future of the society.

Its condition is "citizen's right": the development of society can only be imagined in urban life, that is through the realization of urban society. Therefore, Lefebvre's inherent utopia simultaneously includes not only everyday life, property, and state production, but also forms of power. Because this is the right of citizenship, of course, it means the effective participation of some residents and citizens. Residents should be included in urban planning decisions and plans. The urban self-management system was an innovative concept at that time, which is the basis of this right to realize the future of urban society.

He presented three important conceptual formulas for thinking about the contradiction in the production and allocation of space, which include: isotopic spaces, heterotopic spaces, and ideal spaces. In simple words, isotopic spaces are defined by their isotopes, which form the same space. They can be imagined as spaces similar to the logic of capital, having similar functions and structures and from the perspective of reproducing the capital system (Marcuse, 2014; Bloom, 2019).

Citizenship Rights and urban development

Citizenship is considered to be an instrument that;

1. It indicates a conscious and reasoned acceptance of membership in the group based on rational justifications.
2. It shows the ability to be accepted and counted in the ranks of others.
3. It unravels about the existence of mutual mediation between the individual and others in a society and
4. It reveals about the existence of mutual obligations between the individual and the society. This obligation can be classified into two important aspects: first; Maintaining, strengthening, applying, and guarding the value principles and formalized norms of the society by the citizen (public rights) and others; Taking refuge and the possibility of growing and developing the citizen by the society (private rights). In a general classification, citizenship rights include political rights, cultural rights, civil rights, judicial rights, and social and economic rights (McCann, 2002; Moosa-Mitha, 2005).

These days, Hong Kong is the center of the Feng Shui industry. Nowhere in the world is Feng Shui more tightly integrated into all aspects of social, religious, and commercial life than in Hong Kong. Hong Kong is the unofficial heart of the Feng Shui practice. With cities now home to over 10,000 Feng Shui masters, one can feel the power of Feng Shui everywhere. In Hong Kong, Feng Shui has dominated construction and related decisions for centuries.

These effects are present at micro and macro levels. For example, in 1964, the government was supposed to build a water reservoir in the Shung Kwai Chong area. Residents objected because the construction would interrupt the green dragon veins that protected the area. As a result of these objections, officials and engineers visited this area and finally found another location for the proposed service tank. It was said that this new location did not interfere with the Feng Shui of the villagers and thus the matter was settled (Emmons, 1992).

When the new railway line between Hong Kong and the main city of Guangzhou was built in 2011, Each of the 17 residents whose Feng Shui was adversely affected was given half a million dollars to pay for a consultant to perform "purification rituals" (Harvey, 2015).

Urban Feng Shui, Quality of Life and Mental Health

It is undeniable that improving the level of positive energy in the environment can improve the quality of life of citizens. The more positive energies in the environment and the less negative energies in it, people can better deal with the ups and downs of their lives, including the relationships, jobs, and even the finances. In this way, people are one step closer to success.

However, finding the quality of the energies of different bodies requires learning the teachings in which, based on thousands of years of experience in the world, it is determined what things can lead to an increase in the level of positive energies in the environment and what things can increase the level of negative energies in the environment (Chang & Lii, 2010; Jin & Juan, 2021).

Conclusions

This paper demonstrated that Urban Feng Shui, as claimed, appear to have enormous potential for enhancing quality of life in cities, spatial structures and also women's empowerment in cities. By promoting a harmonious, supportive, and balanced living environment, urban Feng Shui is claimed to be able to overcome the societal and cultural barriers that limit women's potential. They may involve creating safe and secure communities to enhancing women's health and well-being and promoting economic empowerment.

Urban Feng Shui, it is claimed can be a powerful tool for advancing women's rights and equality in cities. It is the practice of connecting the energy flow of an urban environment with its inhabitants' health and well-being. Land-use, on the other hand, refers to the way people

use and manage land for different purposes, such as for residential, commercial, or industrial use.

The relationship between land-use and women's psychological well-being is especially important because women often bear the brunt of urban challenges, such as unsafe neighborhoods and limited access to green spaces. By using principles of urban Feng Shui, land-use decisions can be made to create spaces that promote women's psychological well-being.

One critical aspect of urban Feng Shui is the use of natural elements such as water, greenery, and sunlight to promote energy flow. For instance, incorporating a small park or green space within a neighborhood can serve as an essential factor in reducing people's stress levels. Green spaces have been found to reduce depression, anxiety, and stress levels, providing a calming effect. Applying the principles of urban Feng Shui to land-use decisions can help create neighborhoods that are designed to foster psychological well-being. City planners can create safe spaces with parks, gardens, and other public spaces that offer a healthy environment for women to de-stress, relax, and recharge.

Pedestrian-friendly streets, accessible transportation systems, and community centers promote social cohesion and create safe public spaces, reducing the isolation and loneliness that often contribute to poor mental health. Incorporating urban Feng Shui in land-use policies can also help improve the design of homes and apartments. Public buildings that are designed according to the principles of urban Feng Shui, with good air quality, optimal lighting conditions, and ample access to outdoor spaces, can support psychological well-being by creating a healthy living environment. For instance, it is scientifically proven that natural light coming through windows facing the south facilitates the absorption of vitamin D, which is essential for reducing depressive symptoms. Feng Shui does the same thing although it does not refer to Vitamin D.

In conclusion, this paper explored urban Feng Shui on the assumption that it can be used to promote land-use decisions that support and improve women's mental health. This has been amply demonstrated here. Using the principles of Urban Feng Shui, policymakers and urban planners can create neighborhoods and living spaces that help people, women in particular, reduce stress, increase walkability, prioritize safety, and promote social engagement. By prioritizing urban Feng Shui in land-use policies, cities can become more livable, inclusive, and healthier for all residents, especially women. Urban feng shui and urban planning are related in that they both aim to create harmonious and functional environments for people to live in.

Urban planning is concerned with the physical layout of cities, including the placement of buildings, roads, and public spaces. Feng shui, on the other hand, is a traditional Chinese practice that focuses on the flow of energy or "qi" in a space. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in incorporating Feng Shui principles into urban planning. This involves considering factors such as the orientation of buildings, the placement of water features and green spaces, and the use of colors and materials that promote positive energy flow. By incorporating Feng Shui principles into urban planning, it is believed that cities can become more livable and sustainable. This can lead to benefits such as improved health and well-being for residents, increased economic prosperity, and a stronger sense of community.

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