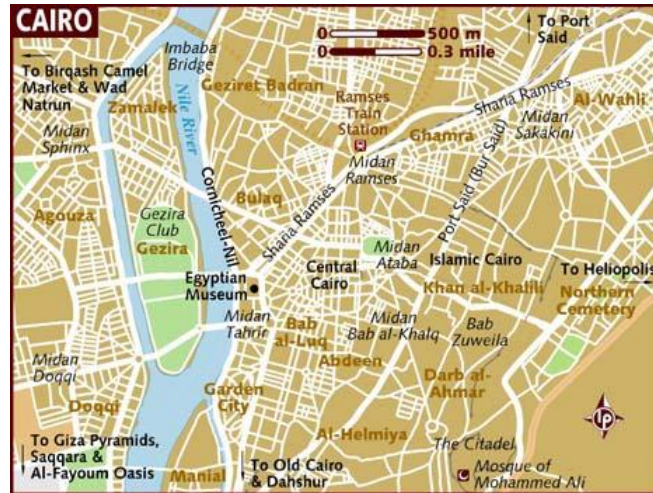


Resident's Quality of life at Cairo, Egypt in Urban Neighbourhoods

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Abstract



Research in quality of life indicates that there are many factors in the neighbourhood that contribute to resident's quality of life through neighbourhood satisfaction. Examples of these factors are environment, safety, public facilities and housing satisfaction. Many studies have shown that satisfaction with neighbourhood features affect resident's quality of life. Residential neighbourhood satisfaction is an important indicator of housing neighbourhood quality which affects individual's quality of life.

This paper presents a study of social, economic and physical features of urban neighbourhoods that contribute to overall satisfaction of the neighbourhood which in turn affects positively the overall feelings toward life. Data for the study come from primary source collected through a personal interview technique. A sample of 80 households was randomly selected using systematic sampling procedure from households living in middle income residential neighbourhoods in Cairo, Egypt for example the results of case study of Ezzbet Al Nasr where the physical interventions can be achieved in the short term and can result in qualitative improvement of living conditions. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics generated frequencies and percentages of respondent characteristics and mean scores of satisfaction.

The findings of the study indicate the residents were generally satisfied with overall quality of life. However, the satisfaction level was low for public transport, political activities and cost of living from physical, social and economic aspects respectively.

The objective: is to analyse whether neighbourhood context or environment in Cairo influences dimensions of social ties among neighbours or social characteristics of communities. Also to gain a better understanding of the actual context of Egypt specially Cairo.

Key Words: neighbourhood quality, quality of life, residential satisfaction.

1- Introduction

Quality of life is the individual's overall satisfaction with life¹. Many studies have shown that satisfaction with neighbourhood features affects resident's quality of life (life satisfaction). An involvement of communities in urban neighbourhoods is an essential ingredient of sustainable housing which affects their quality of life². According to a national household survey findings in Egypt has shown that residential neighbourhood satisfaction is an important indicator of housing quality and condition which affects individual's quality of life. It determines the way they respond to their residential neighbourhood and environment.

Satisfaction with social, economic and physical features of the neighbourhood tends to contribute to the overall satisfaction of the neighbourhood (neighbourhood satisfaction), which in turn affects positively the overall feeling towards life (life satisfaction). The empirical evidence which support neighbourhood quality or neighbourhood satisfaction can be broken down into 17 components of three categories³:

Physical Features:

Satisfaction with homes and yards.

Satisfaction with landscape in the neighbourhood.

Satisfaction with street lighting in the neighbourhood.

Satisfaction with the vicinity of the neighbourhood facilities.

Satisfaction with crowding and noise level in the neighbourhood.

Satisfaction with quality of environment in the neighbourhood.

Social Features:

Satisfaction with integration with neighbours.

Satisfaction with outdoor play space.

Satisfaction with people living in the neighbourhood.

¹ Schumaker, 1990,

² Choguill, 2007, P.31, 143-149.

³ Sirgy and Cornwell, 2002, P.59, 79-114.

Satisfaction with connections with people in the community.

Satisfaction with crime in the neighbourhood.

Satisfaction with race relations in the community.

Satisfaction with sense of privacy at home.

Economic Features:

Satisfaction with home value in the neighbourhood.

Satisfaction with cost of living in the community.

Satisfaction with socio-economic status of the neighbourhood.

Satisfaction with the neighbourhood improvement.

According to⁴, satisfaction with neighbourhood physical features as indicated above contributes significantly to one's satisfaction about the housing and neighbourhood. Similarly, according to them, satisfaction with neighbourhood social features and economic features significantly affect life satisfaction through one's overall feelings of these neighbourhood features.

Research in quality of life indicates that there are many factors in the neighbourhood that contribute to resident's quality of life through neighbourhood satisfaction. Examples of these factors are environment, safety, public facilities and housing satisfaction⁵. Studies by (Campbell et al., 1976) and (Sirgy et al., 2000) indicate that neighbourhood satisfaction is a significant predictor of life satisfaction. As stated above, satisfaction effects of the neighbourhood physical, social and economic features play a very important role in neighbourhood satisfaction which determines life satisfaction. First of all, satisfaction with housing, street lighting and noise level in the neighbourhood are among the main neighbourhood physical features affecting neighbourhood quality⁶ (Miller et al., 1990) and (Bones et al., 1991). Secondly, satisfaction with integration with neighbours is produced in New Cairo by land use mix (including both indices of proximity and accessibility), street connectivity, infrastructure for walking/cycling, neighbourhood aesthetics, traffic and crime safety, and neighbourhood satisfaction, people living in the neighbourhood and race relations are among the main social features affecting the neighbourhood quality (Ahlbrandt and Cunningham, 1979) (Campbell et al., 1976) and (Miller et al., 1990). Finally, satisfaction with home value, cost of living in the community and socio-economic status of the neighbourhood are the main economic features affecting the neighbourhood quality⁷ and (Lu, 2000). Thus, it can be hypothesized that neighbourhood features, such as physical, social and economic features affect life satisfaction as indicated in Figure 1.

⁴ Sirgy and Cornwell, 2002, P.59, 79-114.

⁵ Lee and Guest, 2000, P.24, 287-303.

⁶ Dahmann, 1993, 20, 31-45.

⁷ Galster, 1997,

2- Data analysis

Data for the study come from primary source collected from a personal interview technique. Using this technique, set questions were asked by the interviewer to collect information from the respondents. Structured questions were used in preparing the questionnaire for the survey. To avoid bias resulting from questionnaire design, the questions were constructed in such a way that they were direct, simple and familiar to the respondents. Nevertheless, some explanations by the interviewers were expected to clarify certain points so that certain level of consistency could be achieved at the interview.

The questionnaire is divided into five sections as follows:

- Household information
- House ownership information
- Level of satisfaction with physical aspects of life
- Level of satisfaction with social aspects of life
- Level of satisfaction with economic aspects of life

The level of satisfaction of housing is measured in a five-point liker scale ranging from 1 for very unsatisfied 2 for unsatisfied 3 for neutral 4 for satisfied and 5 for very satisfied. Using the mean values of the scale, 3 is considered to be the midpoint. Thus, any value above 3 is considered somewhat satisfied but of lower level. Similarly with any value below 3, it is considered to unsatisfied but of lower level.

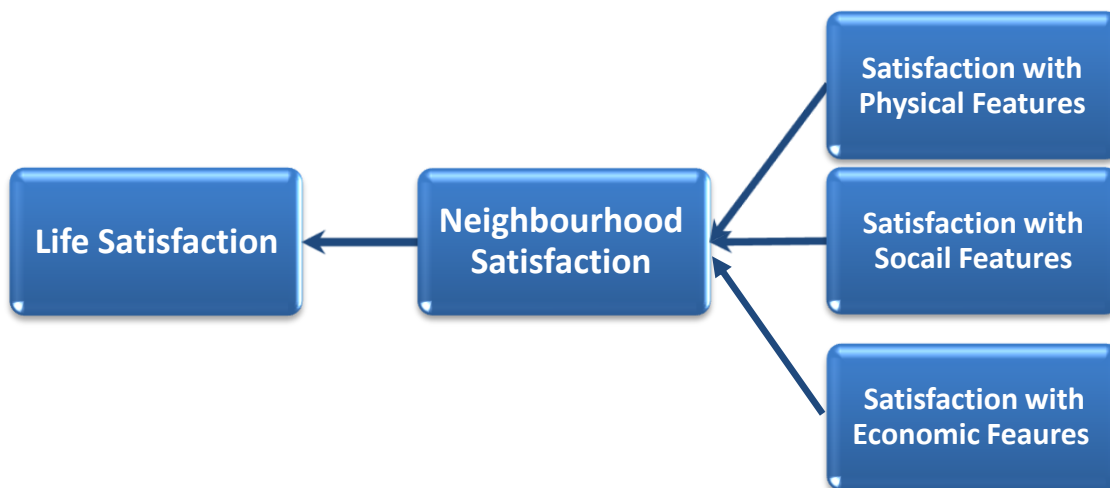


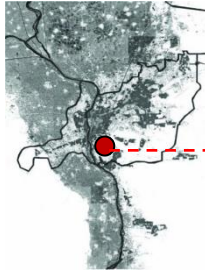
Figure 1 Neighbourhood features affect life satisfaction (by Author)

Field surveys were conducted. A sample of 80 households was randomly selected using systematic sampling procedure from households living in urban neighbourhoods in New Cairo, Egypt. Cairo is the capital of Egypt and the most developed city in the country with a population of 33 million and urbanization rate of 85%. Data were analyzed using descriptive

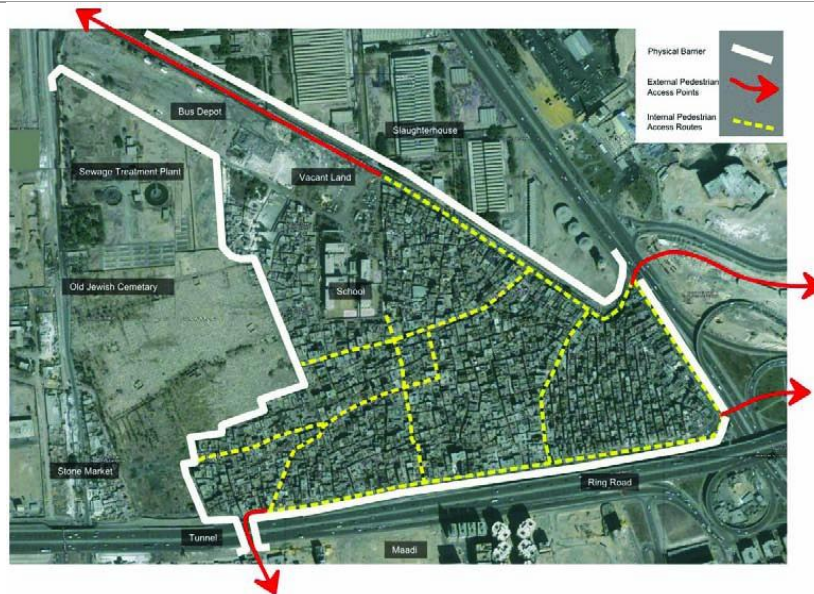
statistics. Descriptive statistics generated frequencies and percentages of respondent characteristics and mean scores of satisfaction.

2-1 The Ezzbet El Nasr case study

Table 1: Analysis The Ezzbet El Nasr case study (by Author)

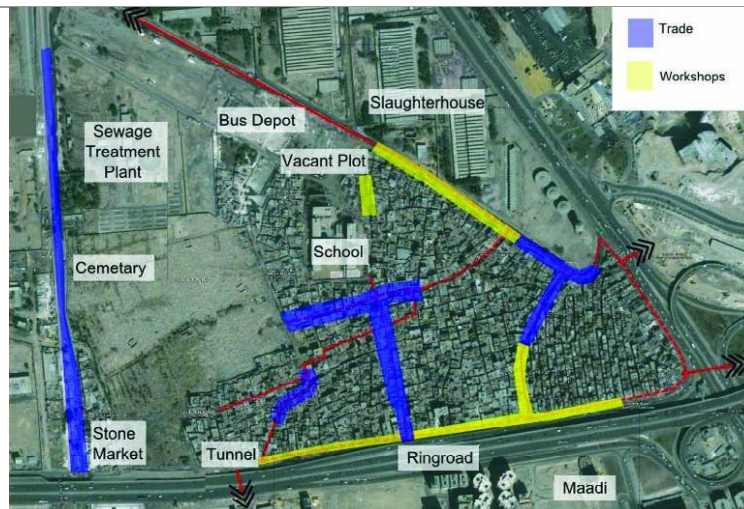
Context	 Ezzbet Al Nasr is an infromal settlment situated in the basateen district, in the south zone of cairo governorate. Located 4km east of the Nile river and 8km south of cairo’s historic centre, the site was planned as an industrial area in Cairo’s outskirts.  Located in proximity to the south-eastern ring road, Ezzbet El Nasr covers roughly 55 hectares of state-owned land, of which informal urban fabric covers 30 hectares
Fieldwork methodology	Conceptualising Process Preparatory Study: Berlin Literature review: 1. Urbanisation process in Cairo 2. Informality 3. Upgrading 4. Methodology 5. GTZ document: • Classification study manual • Classification study report Field Work: Cairo Site visit: Ezbhet El Nasr Stakeholder meeting (GTZ, district chief and LPC) Identifying main issues and dividing groups into units Formulating questions Collecting data: (3 Days) Processing Data: • Synthesising input from GTZ • Identifying crosscutting issues • Prioritising issues SWOT analysis & Inter-linkages Identifying intervention: Proposal • Stakeholder meeting (GTZ, NGO, local leaders) • Interviewing community • Observation of area Steps: 1. Interrelating main topics 2. Identifying mechanisms 3. Stakeholder analysis Final Report: Berlin Editing & finalising report Inter-related

Accessibility



Ezzbet el nasr is characterized by a high level of **internal accessibility** for pedestrian, and medium level accessibility of vehicular traffic. While street width permit vehicle access to most areas, accessibility is impeded by the generally poor condition of streets.

Economic integration



The trade sector is almost inwardly focused, providing limited goods and services to local households.

The light manufacturing sector displays characteristics

strakly different to the trade sector.

Provision of waste and sanitation services		One of the most salient challenges facing the settlement is the provision of reliable sanitation services, specifically solid waste removal and sewerage infrastructure.
Pedestrian access		In addition to improving access within the community, the following intervention aims to integrate the settlement into surrounding areas.

2-1-1 Household Characteristics

A large percentage of the household's heads were relatively young and the ages varies between 30-40 (45%) also 80% of them were married. Their average income levels were mostly between 400-600 USD per month.

In terms of housing tenancy, the residents were generally house owners with 75% of them owned their houses, while 25% of them rented their houses. The houses in the study area were recently built within less than 15 years of age (45%).

2-1-2 Satisfaction with Overall Quality of Life

Generally, the residents were satisfied with their overall quality of life as 55 % of them showed their satisfaction and only 45 % expressed a feeling of dissatisfaction. This satisfaction could be concluded by examining 3 main aspects of neighbourhood features which are physical, social and economic as follows:

2-1-2-1 Satisfaction with Physical Aspect of Life

In this section, satisfaction with physical features is discussed according to resident's satisfaction. The residents have expressed their satisfaction with the neighbourhood physical feature, such as dwelling units, housing area, environment, education and health facilities, public and recreational facilities and public transport. They have expressed their satisfaction more with the dwelling units, housing area and educational and health facilities (mean scores of 3.56-3.65) than their neighbourhood environment, public and recreational facilities (mean scores of 3.35-3.46). on the other hand, the mean score for public transport is 2.84 which indicate their dissatisfaction with the service (Figure 2).

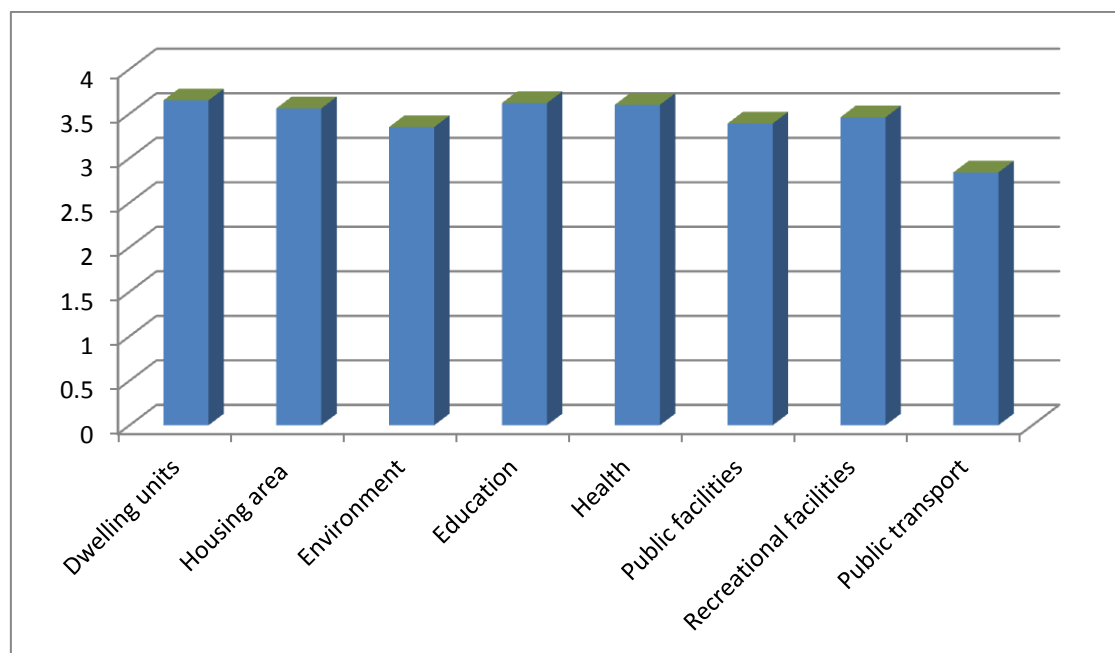


Figure 2 Satisfaction with Physical Aspect of Life (by Author)

2-1-2-2 Satisfaction with Social Aspect of Life

The residents have expressed their satisfaction with the neighbourhood social features, such as interaction with neighbours, social interaction, ethnic relation, public safety, religious facilities and political activities. They have expressed their satisfaction more with social interaction with a mean score of 3.56 than their interaction with neighbours, ethnic relation, public safety and religious facilities (mean scores of 3.14- 3.46). On the other hand, the mean score for political activities is 2.93 which indicate their dissatisfaction with the political interference in the community (Figure 3).

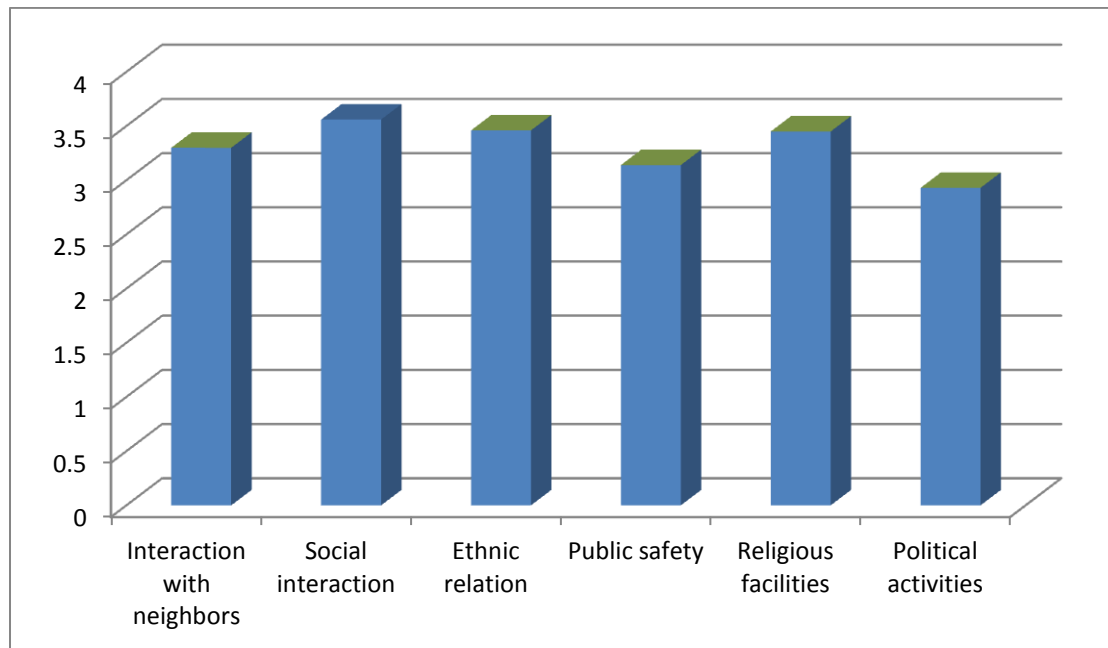


Figure 3 Satisfaction with Social Aspect of life (by Author)

2-1-2-3 Satisfaction with Economic Aspect of Life

The residents have expressed their satisfaction with the neighbourhood economic features, such as employment, income work place, cost of living and home value. They have expressed their satisfaction more with employment with a mean score of 3.60, than their income, work place and neighbourhood home value (mean scores of 3.32-3.39). On the other hand, the mean score for cost of living in the neighbourhood is 2.71 which indicate their dissatisfaction with the rising cost of living in their neighbourhoods (Figure 4).

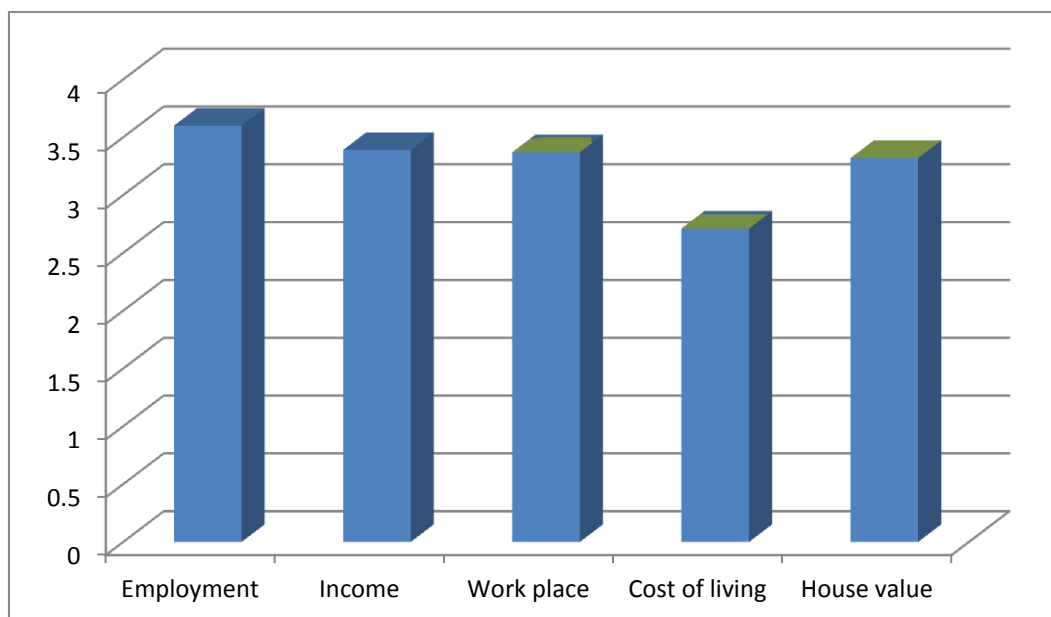


Figure 4 Satisfaction with Economic Aspect of life (by Author)

2-2 Relationship between Household Characteristics and Life Satisfaction

the household background and characteristics Of the respondents have a great influence on the life satisfaction. Using Pearson Chi-Square analysis, we found that there is a significant relationship between life satisfaction measured in terms of physical, social, economic aspects and the households's characteristic, such as ethnic background, age, education and income. However, the educational level of the respondents has no influence on their life sat from the social aspect. Therefore, the quality of life is affected by the social aspect of life satisfaction, as expressed by the respondents regardless the educational background.

3- CONCLUSION

In general, the residents in urban neighbourhoods of New Cairo are generally satisfied with physical, social and economic aspect of life. However, there are variable levels of satisfaction for some features. The residents are particularly dissatisfied with public transportation services, political activities and cost of living in their neighbourhoods. Besides that, they are also concerned about their safety which would affect their quality of life.

The policy implications of the findings of the study indicate that the development of new urban neighbourhoods in developing countries, like Egypt, needs to address the above problems, such as public infrastructure and transportation, cost of living and negative influence of political activities in order to achieve liveable environment and good quality of life. The cost of living is generally influenced by regional and national factors. However, the development of new urban neighbourhoods should not burden the residents with high living costs and the lack of good infrastructure and community facilities. Therefore, sustainable neighbourhood development policies should take into account residents own assessment of their local condition.

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