



Cultural Regeneration of Urban Spaces with the Aim of Improving Neighborhood Identity

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Abstract Lack of attention for specific geographical and cultural features and local values in urban development processes has made cities appear monotonous and neighborhoods have lost their position and identity as a places that are symbol of the city culture. In this regard, there is a need to rethink the measures taken related to regeneration in worn-out textures in order to use the facilities and potentials and to enhance the sense of belonging and consequently the identity of neighborhoods. This research in the field of cultural regeneration in order to improve neighborhood identity, seeks to analyze the factors affecting the improvement of neighborhood identity based on cultural regeneration indices. Also, based on the case study method, the Armenian neighborhood was selected as the case study because it has a rich historical identity but is now losing its neighborhood identity. Based on field visits, initial interviews and a conceptual model, a purposeful questionnaire was prepared. SPSS software was used for data analysis and to find the relations between variables. Questionnaires, using the statistical technique of this research, try to identify the strategies of this approach by studying and identifying the positive and successful aspects of cultural regeneration and assessing the environmental and cultural-social aspects of urban neighborhoods in order to improve neighborhood identity. Finally, by emphasizing these criteria, the Armenian neighborhood of the 7th district in Tehran, which is an old neighborhood with a rich identity, has been analyzed. The results show that according to the three main criteria of cultural regeneration and the six main criteria of neighborhood identity and the strong relationship between these criteria, we can help to improve the identity of the Armenian neighborhood and thereby create a sense of belonging for the citizens.

Keywords Cultural Regeneration, Neighborhood Identity, Armenian Neighborhood

Introduction

Capacity building and social capital are two key concepts in the new approach to urban planning and management. A society's depletion of social capital will lead to the inefficiency of many of its policies and proposals. Local institutions and NGOs are key elements of this approach, but first of all there is a need for platforms and backgrounds on which to base the urban management and planning system. On the one hand, the realization of social justice and an equal opportunity to enjoy an environment conducive to life and citizenship activities in line with the grand goals of the country's vision document, the realization of which is the responsibility of city administrators, and on the other hand, natural hazards such as earthquakes, accelerate the process of renovating worn-out textures [1]. To this end, it is important to examine the extent to which these schemes are implemented to revise and refine the process of renovating worn-out textures to accelerate the renovation process [2-3]. Culture and cultural representations have always been regarded as an integral part of city relations, and each city has its own culture and cultural distinctions. The pathology of the old textures of the cities shows that the cause of deterioration is not confined to their physical structure. Rather, the main problem



with improvement is that such textures are losing their social, economic and psychological identity, which has destroyed civil life and the presence of people in such textures; Therefore, it is necessary to reflect on the social, cultural and identity dimensions of the old urban texture in any restorative action and establish a proper relationship between these dimensions and the physical spatial dimensions of the city in order to achieve the ultimate goal of enhancing the quality of contemporary urban life to achieve an appropriate urban space for people's social interaction [4]. In regenerating culture, the basis of cultural development activities and projects consistent with the historical texture on the one hand and the restoration and preservation of urban heritage on the other are emphasized [5].

The main issue of this research is how to use social and cultural components in regeneration and renovation of neighborhoods for identification and improvement of neighborhood identity and specifically Armenian neighborhood. Referring to historical neighborhoods and considering the few studies investigating cultural regeneration in order to improve neighborhood identity in historical neighborhoods of Iranian cities, this study sought to understand the role of cultural factors in improving neighborhood identity based on a holistic view, such that it analyzes individual and space in the interaction of physical and mental criteria. Providing this comprehensive view of the factors affecting neighborhood identity while deeply introducing cultural regeneration in Iranian cities can be a good basis for formulating policies and strategies for organizing and improving the quality of urban neighborhoods.

While most of the central and historical textures of the country's cities have enormous cultural and social strategic capacities, the lack of a coherent plan for culture-based regeneration and a reluctance to apply this approach has caused old and heritage textures of most cities to collapse both in concept (in terms of cultural identities) and in the body, and with the migration of the original inhabitants and their replacement by the lower classes of immigrants on the one hand, and the lack of plan and indifference of the regular institutions on the other, not only regeneration does not occur, but also the tangible and intangible cultures of such textures have undergone a transformation in the process of individual constructions, or are often forgotten due to highway construction and texture fragmentation. The worn-out texture of the Armenian neighborhood, its historically and culturally valuable buildings and monuments, including mosques, mausoleums, baths, historical homes, and historical bazaar as the city's historical heritage and identity, undergo the same gradual transformation, and if a solution is not proposed for it, the historical identity, the flourishing local economy, and the local arts will become part of the past.

As discussed in theoretical foundations, in the culture-based approach to regeneration, culture is recognized as one of the major assets of the city. Culture is used as a tool to serve the city's economic and physical regeneration, and it is actively used in urban policymaking. In general, urban culture-based regeneration, a modern, integrated approach, places cultural activities and events as the facilitator and driving force of urban regeneration, and cultural events are very popular among people. Generally, during a culture-based regeneration, a series of buildings are usually redesigned and reused for public and office use; new uses are made of urban spaces, and new events and activities are suggested that could bring popularity for the locations in the future [1-3]

Neighborhood Identity: Sarokhani in the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences identifies the term identity as: The individual's attempt to realize its uniqueness. The personality traits of a city, like human personality traits, have two dimensions, namely objective or physical, and mental or spiritual, which can be separated through the three natural, artificial and human environments (Sarokhani, 1370). Each of these components, if they have distinctive and prominent traits, play an indicative and identifying role (Behzadfar, 1387). Reinforcing the identity of a place means reinforcing concepts such as sense of belonging and identifying with the environment, motivation, sense of place, sense of security and readability (Mir Moqtadaie and Taleb, 1385). A neighborhood's identity is defined as the feeling of belonging to a residential neighborhood (Fath, 2004). Qasemi considers the identity of a neighborhood to be the locational belonging of the residents, the collective memory of the residents' minds and the sense of belonging to the neighborhood in the memory of individuals (Qasemi, 1383). Kufard considers an index of human interactions, historical memory, behaviors and norms, culture, art and taste as the most important constituents of urban neighborhood identity (Kufard, 1392). In a study conducted in 2013, Dowlat-



Abad et al considered neighborhood identity indicators as either physical elements or the appearance of the neighborhood and functional elements with the content of the neighborhood.

Table 1: Neighborhood Identity indexes

index	Neighborhood Identity of dimensions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - encourage to live in district - protect and develop of Neighborhood - hygiene Neighborhood 	Feel belong to dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of supervision of neighborhood indicator people at the neighborhood level - The context of criminal behavior in the neighborhood - Recognize and interact with residents 	Feel of safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engagement of residents and business community in the worn-out neighborhood - Citizens' use and participation of cultural, religious and educational spaces at the neighborhood level - Strong communication in the neighborhood 	Relationship sociality

Research Method

To study the concept of cultural regeneration in order to improve neighborhood identity in this study, the Armenian neighborhood of the 7th district in Tehran was selected as the case study. The reason for choosing this area in the study of the concept of cultural regeneration and neighborhood identity is based on the logic that historical neighborhoods of cities have high identities, and due to contemporary urbanization the value and identity of neighborhoods and the sense of belonging of the residents have diminished. On this basis, it can be said that historical neighborhoods of cities can retrieve their identities based on indicators of cultural regeneration. To validate the conceptual model of the research in the case study sample, field visits and initial interviews with citizens have been conducted. The results of field surveys show that all the indicators and sub-indicators of the study have the capability to be analyzed in the study area. To achieve a comprehensive analysis of the components and characteristics developed in the conceptual model, a combination of survey research and content analysis has been used. To assess the data collected from the questionnaires a regression test was used. To assess the factors affecting cultural regeneration and neighborhood identity, the Pearson correlation test was used. For the classification of each indicator and the average rank of the indicators from the citizens' point of view, the Friedman test was used.

Research Findings

The results from the table below show that the correlation coefficient (R) between the variables is 0.640 indicating that there is a strong correlation between the set of independent variables and the dependent variable of the research. On the other hand, the value of the adjusted coefficient (R Square) is 0.64 which shows that 64.2% of the total changes in the cultural regeneration index are related to the four physical, cultural and social variables mentioned in this equation.

Investigation of Neighborhood Identity Indices in Armenian Neighborhood

Based on the Model Summary table, the correlation coefficient (R) between the variables is 0.644, indicating that there is a strong correlation between the set of independent variables and the dependent variable of the research, and that the adjusted coefficient (R Square) is 0.414%, which indicates that 41.4% of the total changes of the neighborhood identity index are related to the six physical, functional, individual, economic, social and cultural variables mentioned in this equation.

Investigating the Relationship between Cultural Regeneration Components and Neighborhood Identity Components: Pearson correlation coefficient is used to measure the relationship between the components of quality of cultural regeneration and neighborhood identity. Correlation Coefficient is a statistical tool for



determining the type and degree of relationship of one quantitative variable to another. The correlation coefficient indicates the intensity of the relationship as well as the type of relationship (direct or inverse). This coefficient is between 1 and -1 and is zero if there is no relationship between the two variables.

Table 2: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.640	0.409	0.397	0.942

Table 3: coefficient of relationship between Cultural Regeneration and Armenian neighborhood Identity

Culture	Social	Economic	Individual	Functional	Physical	Cultural Regeneration indexes of Improving Neighborhood Identity
0.312	0.281	0.324	0.222	0.615	1	Physical Index
0.315	0.356	1	0.224	0.324	0.453	Social Index
0.421	1	0.367	0.743	0.521	0.343	Economic Index
1	0.416	0.320	0.454	0.609	0.319	Cultural Index

According to Table 3, it is observed that there is a high relationship between the components of cultural regeneration and neighborhood identity. Therefore, cultural-social regeneration in the neighborhood can be achieved by changing any of these indicators.

Friedman-two-way analysis of variance (for nonparametric data) was used to measure the ratings of individuals and to rate each of the indices of neighborhood identity and social cultural regeneration. This test is used when the measurement scale is at least at the sequential measurement level. The Friedman test is used to rank and compare the average rating of different groups (Habibpour, Safari, 1391). The results showed a significant difference between the components. The results of the table indicate the priority of the component of environmental quality, social identity, and artificial elements in the neighborhood.

Table 4: Mean of indexes

Chi-square	65.567	Neighborhood	Chi-square	76.231	Cultural
Asymp. sig	0.000	Identity indexes	Asymp. sig	0.000	Regeneration indexes
16.78		recreation and education of opportunity	17.12		Life style
16.12		Know of location	17.12		Physical identity
15.31		Participation in group	16.48		facilities
15.02		Social-economic status	16.21		culture
14.56		hygiene Neighborhood	14.32		engagement
13.91		sacramental	13.91		Creativity
13.18		NGO	13.12		Relationship citizen
13.11		Trade union	12.08		Approachability Neighborhood

Conclusions

The sum of the analyses in this study indicates the incorporation of cultural regeneration factors in influencing the neighborhood identity of historical neighborhoods. Also, this impact, in the general context of the city, is in proportion to the cultural characteristics, social identity and environmental quality. Based on the results of this study, the effect of each of these factors and the rate of impact can be different. Adaptation of the conceptual model derived from world literature and experiences in combination with the nature of the historical neighborhoods studied in Tehran and empirical application of this model illustrate the efficiency of the model in evaluating the role of cultural regeneration indicators in improving neighborhood identity. Based on the



methodology of this study, further analyses can help to strengthen the model results. It should be noted that depending on the nature and shape of urban neighborhoods, this model may undergo minor changes. The results of the analysis show that the improvement of environmental quality and improvement of social identity is the primary and fundamental factor in improving cultural regeneration based on neighborhood identity. The results of model analysis showed that physical identity has a high priority in improving neighborhood identity. This index is analyzed in two natural and artificial dimensions. The access analysis shows that the traffic situation of the route needs to be improved and the routes are designed solely in accordance with the priority of the driver, which requires the design of pedestrian and bicycle paths to enhance the neighborhood identity. The cultural index has been analyzed in three dimensions of governing values, practices and cultural roots that indicate the importance of these dimensions in neighborhood regeneration. The extent of social factors has been studied in the form of field surveys, questionnaires and interviews with people, which indicate a high sense of belonging to the neighborhood. Security is also at an appropriate level. There are social institutions and hangouts between different age groups, but there is a need to improve social factors and social hangouts. According to field surveys and questionnaires, cultural factors and contexts are present in the area, but the platform for the presence of people and the quality of these spaces is inadequate, which requires the improvement of the status of such sites in order to enhance the cultural index and event viability.

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