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## The Impact of Culture-Based Regeneration on Worn-out Urban Textures (Case Study: Armenian Neighborhood)

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**Abstract** Paying attention to the old and worn out textures and removing their instability has become a serious issue, which has led the organizations concerned to organize and regenerate the said textures and has brought up the need to intervene in these textures in the course of different time periods. Urban restoration and renovation approaches have evolved in their evolution from reconstruction, revitalization, renovation and redevelopment to urban regeneration and development. In this way, they have experienced a shift from focusing purely on physical to emphasizing social, economic, cultural, and artistic aspects. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of cultural indices on the worn-out urban texture of the Armenian neighborhood of the 7<sup>th</sup> district in Tehran. This study, as one of the first researches in the field of cultural regeneration in order to improve the worn-out texture of the neighborhood, seeks to analyze the factors affecting the improvement of worn-out texture based on cultural regeneration indices. Based on the research method, the Armenian neighborhood of the 7<sup>th</sup> district in Tehran was selected as the study case to provide a realistic understanding of the factors affecting the improvement of cultural regeneration. Based on the existing theoretical foundations and backgrounds, the main indicators of cultural regeneration were presented in a model and a questionnaire was prepared with the approach of these indicators (physical, economic and social). The study involved 70 members of the Armenian neighborhood who expressed their views on the role of cultural regeneration in improving the worn-out texture of their neighborhood. One-sample t-test was used to evaluate the results. In the end, the results of this study showed that physical, social and economic indices have a direct and significant effect on the improvement of the worn-out texture of the Armenian neighborhood. The statistical technique of this research tries to identify the strategies of this approach by studying and recognizing the positive and successful aspects of cultural regeneration and examining the cultural and social aspects of urban neighborhoods in order to improve worn-out textures.

**Keywords** Cultural Regeneration, Base Culture, Worn-out Texture, Armenian Neighborhood

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### Introduction

Old neighborhoods are important not only for their texture and properties, but also for the identity, history and culture of each region (Nastaran, 1389). Recent decades of urban life developments have plagued the old textures with numerous problems in the managerial, economic, social, physical and other urban contexts, all of which have contributed to the erosion of these valuable and historical textures (Felamaki, 221, 1380). Although these textures have had logical and hierarchical functions in the past, they are deficient in structure and function today and cannot accommodate their residents (Habibi, 1385). In other words, the historical textures of most cities have lost their performance over time and during new developments, and they continue to decline, and today they are considered the biggest problem in cities. These textures are the vulnerable areas of the city in terms of environmental hazards and functional, physical, environmental and social failures and require accurate



identification and informed intervention in order to regulate them, and one of the effective approaches to solve their problems is the use of cultural regeneration with the participation of residents (Izadi and Jalali, 1: 1387).

Urban regeneration is an approach to endogenous urban development, and in fact is utilizing the existing and potentials assets in urban planning, trying to balance the quantitative and qualitative distribution of population, coordinating the foundations of social life, escaping urban poverty, and ultimately, the use of social participation and dynamism of the people (Ayini, 1388). The presence of culture as a factor that is rooted in history on the one hand, and is intertwined with human wants, desires and beliefs, forming a unique feature for every human community on the other, is an ever-present dimension (Mumford, 1385). The pathology of the old textures of cities shows that the cause of their 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 that has destroyed civil life and the presence of people in such textures, so it is imperative that any renovation action take into account the social, cultural and identity dimensions of old urban textures and establish an appropriate link between these dimensions and the physical spatial dimensions of the city so as to achieve the ultimate goal of enhancing the quality of contemporary urban life to produce a suitable urban space for social interaction between people (Habibi and Berenji, 1393).

Therefore, the main purpose of this research is how to use social and cultural components in regeneration and renovation of neighborhoods and specifically Armenian neighborhood. Therefore, this study seeks to understand the role of cultural factors in promoting and improving worn-out textures based on a holistic view that analyzes the individual and the space in the interaction of physical and mental criteria.

### **Theoretical Approaches and Review of Research Literature**

In the 1990s, urban restoration came to the fore with the idea of regeneration. An interventionist approach that while looking at the past in clearing the historical identities of different eras, is thinking of a new improvement that fits the living conditions of today's people (Hajipour, 1386). As such, a policy of regeneration was formed in Western countries and in the 1900s a new policy called "Urban Challenge" was formed, such that modernization measures were transferred to local governments with a purely physical tendency. Accordingly, local governments have been asked to submit proposals to the central government with the participation of the private sector, the public sector and volunteers to undertake regeneration projects in their area. The urban challenge policy directly focused on the issues of social groups in these cities (Kalantari, 1384).

Considering the societal-oriented approaches of the 1960s and early 1970s, by emphasizing the participation of these groups and providing them with technical and vocational training, in the year 1994 the government provided supplementary policies under the heading "Budget for Regeneration" to integrate the financial resources for such actions [1].

From the early to mid-1990s, local area-based companies were formed to compensate for damages of public funds. This policy has shown that successful implementation of regeneration projects requires the control of energy resources by local community initiatives and a bottom-up approach to building social capital and encouraging self-help society [2].

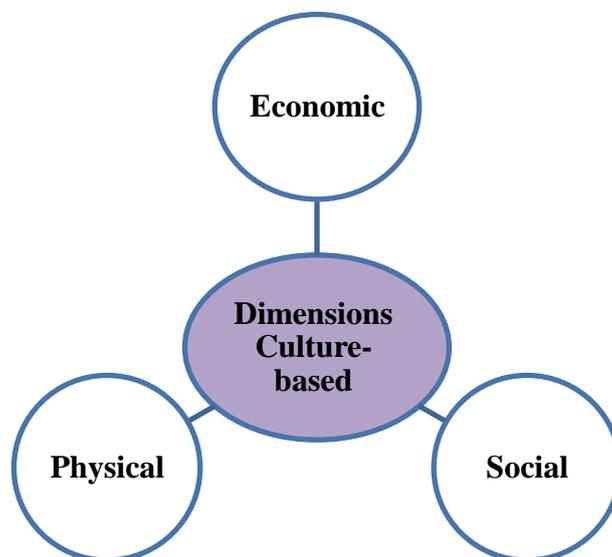
In recent years, cultural and qualitative regeneration policies have been evaluated as tools of contemporary planning and strategic planning approach in historical capitals. The main purpose of the re-creation process is to increase the quality of life of the local community and to ensure their participation in the process. To regenerate the quality of the circuit, we must target environmental variables and indicators and regenerate what was created. The central core of the city are prominent public and external spaces and places that, by modernizing their environmental quality, can symbolize the vitality of the city as a whole. The regeneration of the city's historical center as the home to millions of people and visitors alike, facilitates and enhances excellent human interactions, because old city centers can improve the local economy by creating physical components for entertainment and tourism activities [3]. Culture and cultural representations have always been regarded as an integral part of city relations, but where the re-introduction of culture as an agent of development is concerned, contemporary urban conditions should be mentioned [4].



Many themes underpin the improvement of urban research. Many institutions and organization focused on culture-based research and pointed to its impact on urban spaces (Farouki, 1391). The following table describes the different aspects of culture in urbanization.

**Table 1:** The Role of Culture in Different Dimensions of Recreation [5]

<b>Culture-Based Regeneration</b>			
<b>Environmental</b>	<b>Physical</b>	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Social</b>
<b>Sample effects</b>			
- Complete connection to the municipal sewage network - Establishing a public body to combat environmental pollution - Holding a citizen training course on waste separation and disposal of household waste - Optimal trash can layout for tracks that cannot be installed - Planting seedlings in defensible neighborhood homes and spaces	Preservation and preservation of old buildings and architectural styles that have a major impact on the identity of the neighborhood. - Development and landscaping of lands around gardens - Change the use of semi-demolished or dilapidated buildings to the required land uses - Market-oriented implementation of urban furniture with welcoming urban furniture - Identifying the right place to install the neighborhood identity element	- Increase of employment factor with domestic and foreign investments - Improving people's income levels Diversity of jobs and the use of local labor - Culture-based tourism development and its role in neighborhood prosperity -Building creative industries to improve people's livelihoods	Seasonal festivals Performing native ceremonies and rituals - Holding crafts festivals and handcrafting people - Creating voluntary activities and changing people's attitudes - Emphasize the role of NGOs and academics in the discourse-making process



*Figure 1: Dimensions of Cultural Recreation*

In the urban renewal and revitalization approach, cultural and artistic issues, economic revitalization and social vitality have been taken into account more than before, and affording authenticity to urban neighborhoods was seen as a key tool in the focus of public policy for revitalizing economic and physical life of neighborhoods and

declining urban textures. An understanding of the concept of culture and its incorporation into urban development has been undergoing a transformation for decades.

### Research Methodology

Based on a comprehensive look at the subject literature and global experiences, the following conceptual model can be presented in the analysis of cultural regeneration. An important point in formulating a conceptual model is a comprehensive look at the variables affecting cultural regeneration. To study the concept of cultural regeneration in order to improve neighborhood identity in this study the Armenian neighborhood of the 7<sup>th</sup> district in Tehran was selected as the case study. The reason for choosing this area in the study of the concept of cultural regeneration 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 residents have diminished. On this basis, it can be said that historical neighborhoods of cities can recover their identity based on indicators of cultural regeneration. To validate the conceptual model of the research in the case study, field visits and initial citizen interviews were conducted. A researcher-made questionnaire including social, physical, and economic indicators was used for the study. Citizens then commented on the impact of each of the social, economic and physical indicators and their impact on the regeneration of the texture of worn-out neighborhoods. 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. Face validity and expert opinion were used for validity, and Cronbach's alpha test was used to test for the reliability of the questionnaire. Data were analyzed using one-sample t-test to evaluate the effect of each culture index based on worn-out texture regeneration. The Friedman test was also used to rank each indicator and the average rank of the indicators from the citizens' point of view. SPSS software was used for data analysis.

**Table 2:** Single-sample t-test in order of priority of the influence of variables

95% Confidence interval		Average difference	sign	df	t	Variable
minimum	maximum					
0.4629	0.8003	0.6315	0.001	69	7.396	physical index
0.1769	0.4941	0.3355	0.001	69	4.180	social index
0.1175	0.4483	0.2828	0.05	69	3.379	economic index

### Research findings

In describing the table below, the single-sample t-test shows the effect of physical, social and economic indices on the regeneration of the worn-out textures of the Armenian neighborhood with 95% confidence interval is significant at 0.001 level. Also, considering the priority of each of the indicators in the Friedman test, it was shown that the physical index had the most impact and the social and economic indicators ranked second and third. Therefore, according to the results, it can be said that the researcher's assumption about the impact of culture-based indicators on the regeneration of the worn-out textures of the Armenian neighborhood is confirmed. In other words, social, economic and physical factors have a significant impact on the regeneration of the worn-out textures of the Armenian neighborhood.

### Conclusion

The sum of analyses in this study indicates the integration of cultural factors in influencing the worn-out texture of the Armenian neighborhood. Also, this impact is done in the public context of the city in accordance with 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 may be different. Adaptation of the conceptual model derived from world literature and experiences in combination with the nature of the studied neighborhoods in Tehran and empirical application of this model illustrates the efficiency of the model in assessing the role of cultural regeneration indices in improving worn-out textures. Based on the methodology of this study, the results of the analysis indicate that the improvement of environmental quality and the improvement of social identity are the primary and fundamental factors in improving cultural regeneration. In general, the results of the data analysis show:



The physical index can play a major role in improving cultural-social regeneration in the neighborhood. There is potential for artificial space and environment in the neighborhood, but it needs the improvement of the status and a plan for event viability to improve people's solidarity through cultural and social activities and celebrations, thereby improving the quality of life in the neighborhood with the existing potentials. 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. On the other hand, the social index is influential in several ways (interaction of public and private organizations, organizing cultural and social programs and conducting educational courses) in improving the worn-out texture of the Armenian neighborhood. The results showed that economic indicators such as: employment of citizens and support of economic projects and increase of people's purchasing power can have a significant impact on the regeneration of the worn-out textures of the Armenian neighborhood. This index needs the increase of tourism and entrepreneurship activities in the neighborhood, which is considered in the design, and ways and places should be considered in the design to improve this index in the neighborhood. Social factors have been studied in the form of field surveys, questionnaires and interviews with people indicating 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. The results presented, while expressing how different factors affect cultural regeneration in order to improve worn-out textures, provide the necessary background for the management of quality improvement of old neighborhoods.

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