

COMMUNITY BASED PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AS A RENOVATION POLICY

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Abstract: City of Tehran is suffering from vast dilapidated areas which involve both social as well as physical decline. This problem has been reflected in urban development policies that have been established by government authorities as well as the city counselors and private stakeholders. To confront with this problem, Tehran municipality has established a principal renovation organization. During the last decades various policies has been adapted and implemented by this organization. The paper would review and analyze these policies and the outcome of their implementations.

The policies vary from purely physical renovation of the dilapidated areas which does not requires the participation of the local resident in the planning and design process and have relied totally on central decision making and funding. On the hand, participatory planning process was promoted and new approaches have been adopted to benefit from the existing social capital and to build upon the strengths of the residents and their social networks to propose plans and to implement them.

Khazaneh is located in southern Tehran, and is the focus of an actual renovation project reported in this paper. Here a participatory planning approach is adapted and new local councils are established to seek residents' insights into the local plan and to inform them of the ideas of planners. This has provided a two-way planning system, which is encompassing both the goals of the central planning system as well as the aims of the local community.

Keywords: Tehran, Dilapidated neighborhoods, Renovation, Participation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Cities are live entities that are dynamic and active and are constantly renovating themselves cell by cell. Cities grow gradually, during which neighborhoods are shaped. As dynamic entities, their physical quality and social

status change over time. This dynamic organism usually self-repairs itself in both physical and social sense. However sometimes this natural process of shaping and reshaping is interrupted or malfunctioned. At such times/places, the natural growth processes are not adequate to maintain the quality of life and environment. This malfunction may be due to absolute poverty as in slum condition, or due to relative poverty and inequality which itself causes a vicious circle. In this situation usually deprived areas take shape and as a result, dilapidated neighborhoods become a reality of cities. To break this vicious circle it is required to intervene and repair the malfunction of these cities, to be able to do the self repair and eradicate the dilapidated neighborhoods. Usually any interventions to deal with rundown areas of cities in order to enhance quality of life are conducted from top-down, as it is usually conducted by authorities with little participation of residents. Any intervention without citizen participation has social, economical, cultural and political consequences that should be considered. One the most important negative responses is resistance of citizen to any improvement of the neighborhood as they do not trust authorities.

II. TECHNIQUES OF RENOVATIONS

In order to renovate dilapidated neighborhoods various methods can be adopted. Habibi and Maghsoudi (2005) recognize four types of interventions in the deprived neighborhoods.

- (1) Preservation and sanitary method: that enhances environmental qualities
- (2) Preservation and decorating method: that enhance and preserve the picturesque and architectural quality of the city, such as preserving visual corridors and old buildings and creating a viable structure for the neighborhoods
- (3) Rebuilding of cities: as it happens after any disasters. Man made or natural disasters. This method of renovation is aimed to reconstruct national pride.

TABLE 1
COMPARING PERCENTAGE AND PER CAPITA OF LAND USES IN DILAPIDATED NEIGHBORHOOD AND CITY OF TEHRAN

(Table 1 compares the services levels of these areas with average of these indicators in the city level. As can be considered housing areas is twice as it is the rest of the city which a sign of imbalance)

LAND USE	DILAPIDATED NEIGHBORHOODS		AVERAGE IN CITY OF TEHRAN		PROPOSED STANDARD FOR TEHRAN
	PERCENT	PER CAPITA	PERCENT	PER CAPITA	
RESIDENTIAL	29.04	18.76	23.54	22.77	20.93
GREEN AREAS	3.63	1.39	8.46	8.18	9.12
URBAN SERVICES	5.35	2.05	6.03	5.84	10.9
RETAILS AND OFFICES	5.30	2.03	3.47	3.36	1.94
TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE	1.79	.69	4.49	4.34	5.19
ROADS	27.32	10.45	18.73	18.11	24.81

(4) Renovation of dilapidated neighborhoods can be done with any of these methods.

III. DILAPIDATED NEIGHBORHOOD IN CITY OF TEHRAN

Tehran, the capital and largest city of Iran is located in southern slopes of Alborz Mountains and is stretched over 40 km to the south towards desert. Tehran is only 200 years old, and only during the past half century had a rapid population growth and physical expansion. The city had a very fast growth during both the second Pahlavi reign and especially the past quarter century after the Islamic Revolution. Rundown neighborhoods are the sad reality of city of Tehran.

Dilapidated or rundown neighborhoods are the most important problem of city of Tehran, as:

- 1) The area of the dilapidated neighborhood in Tehran is 3268 hectare which is 15% of the city area
- 2) About half of the housing units of the city are located in these neighborhoods
- 3) About 40% of Tehran's population is living in these neighborhoods. They are among the poorest people of the city.
- 4) Physical, functional, infrastructure, transportation services, environmental factors, social and economical condition are very poor in these areas.
- 5) Unhealthy living conditions and hazardous locations
- 6) Most of these areas are located in the southern part of the city

Some of the physical indicators of dilapidation of neighborhoods as defined by ministry of housing and urban planning in 1999 are; A- Poor quality of the structures of the buildings that cannot resist even low magnitude earthquake forces, B- inadequate permeability of neighborhoods specially inadequate

car access to such areas. C- Small grain in the morphology of these areas (less than 200 square meters).

In addition to the above criteria of recognizing dilapidated neighborhoods according to different definitions the common criteria for recognition of these types of neighborhoods are:

- 1) Lack of social, economic as well as physical quality
- 2) Lack of proper access, infrastructure and services in the neighborhoods
- 3) Vulnerability of structures to natural disasters due to old and unstable structures
- 4) Inability to renovate buildings due to poverty and lack of capital for investment
- 5) Out migration of residents and social instability due to replacement of new residents with weaker economical base
- 6) Legal problems due to inheritance laws and endowment regulations

Some of the problems that rose in Tehran due to the dilapidated areas are:

- 1) Economic and social inequality as a result of polarization in the city (Abbaszadegan, Rezazadeh 2006).
- 2) Domination of physical oriented urban planning that does not concern with social and economical conditions
- 3) Lack of accessibility due to narrow and inadequate roads which causes poor permeability of neighborhoods
- 4) Low value of properties in the deprived areas of the city, therefore the renovation of the private land and Lack of adequate and appropriate services
- 5) Low construction quality which causes buildings to rundown rapidly

IV. PRECEDENCE TO RENOVATION OF TEHRAN

However urban renovation was an issue in Tehran, after submission and approval of Tehran's master plan in 1969, the issue gained a new momentum. This plan proposed 2000 hectares of the lowest quality residential neighborhoods to be renovated within a 25 years period, in which 600,000 people would be replaced from their places of residence. Tehran's Renovation Corporation was established in 1972 and in 1977, the South Tehran Renovation and Reconstruction Corporation was established where extensive dilapidated areas of the city were located. In 1995 a new mission statement for the renovation corporation was developed according on which this corporation could promote development in these areas through financing. This financing is through banks and other financial institutes and could also be through shares as well as credits.

Since 2004 empowerment plans for dilapidated areas were proposed; this was conducted in three phases. After implementation of each phase the plans were evaluated and the scope of the work was revised. This revisions and changes were mainly away from the up-bottom type approach towards a stronger citizen participatory approach. Renovation Corporation of Tehran assigned the following goals for renovation of dilapidated neighborhoods:

- 1) Safety: increasing safety of building in confronting earth quakes.
- 2) Equity: to make equal opportunity for development of the city and not to have polarized city by revitalizing dilapidated neighborhoods and eradicate poverty, enhancing quality of life in the deprived areas and making equal opportunities for all

citizens of the city.

3) Revitalization: enhancing sense of citizenship and sense of belonging to territories and giving meaning to places through utilizing identity element and maximizing participation of residents in renovation process in the deprived areas

4) Capacity building: utilizing opportunities that have been offered for the renovation of dilapidated neighborhoods in order to increase the capacity of the city in accordance with its national, regional and international roles.

V. THE CONTEMPORARY RENOVATION PROCESS

The reconstruction of Tehran shows a passage from the authoritarian reconstruction towards participatory reconstruction. One of the major reconstruction projects of Tehran is related to Navaab neighborhood. This old and dilapidated neighborhood was located in southern parts of Tehran, which is now dissected with a north-south highway into two parts. The reconstruction of the adjacent neighborhood has been conducted without seeking any participation from the people.

These interventions were mainly technocratic, authoritarian and top-bottom. The residents of these three neighborhoods were mainly poor and vulnerable and in all cases they were displaced. Only in the last two cases, the Moft Abad and Khoob Bakht neighborhoods the displacement was into the nearest possible place to their previous neighborhood. Jabbari and Hasanzadeh (2008) have shown that these neighborhoods which are revitalized through a top-down and authoritarian approach have confronted many problems. These problems are summarized in table II.

TABLE II
THE EXPERIENCE OF RENOVATION IN THREE DIFFERENT NEIGHBORHOODS IN TEHRAN

Criteria	Salsabil	Moft Abad	Khoob Bakht
Intervention approach	Technocratic, authoritarian and top-down	Technocratic, authoritarian and top-down	Technocratic, authoritarian and top-down
Socio-economic group	Poor and vulnerable	Poor and vulnerable	Poor and vulnerable
Placelessness	much	Not known	Not known
Displacement	Compulsory (completed)	Compulsory in adjacent areas Voluntary in outlying areas (In progress)	Compulsory in adjacent and outlying areas (In progress)

VI. PARTICIPATION IN URBAN RENOVATION

Contrasting to the authoritarian approach is the participatory approach which is a bottom-up approach and seeks citizen participation. Participatory planning is an urban planning paradigm which emphasizes involving the entire community in the strategic and management processes of urban planning or community-level planning processes. In urban renovation process, participation is a new approach which could be applied in both planning and design process.

Cowan (2005) believes that participation is a process in which involved the public with the changes in the city, therefore its application would provide a key to development in all aspects of urban life. According to Oxford dictionary participation is people's mental and emotional involvement in social activities and encourages them to help each other in order to achieve group goals. Here the three main issues of importance in participation are involvement, assisting and undertaking responsibility.

Sherry Arnstein (1971) introduced this concept as a contrasting and alternative to authoritarian approach of planning. Smith (1973) argued that citizen participation is an essential element in making the planning process a learning system. This leads to a strengthening of the definition and role of communities in the urban system, and to an unexpected requirement of planners who would adopt a participatory planning process.

Shirvani (1985) identifies two types of approaches in the overall scheme; these are facilitator approach and political activist approach. According to Shirvani (1985), facilitator approach uses participatory methods for both problem definition and generation of design solution.

Sanoff (2000) defines facilitation as 'a means of bringing people together to determine what they wish to do and helping them find ways to work together in deciding how to do it'. Sherry Arnstein (1971) equates citizen participation with citizen empowerment which explains it through the participatory ladder. It starts from the lowest levels of involvement which are manipulation and therapy to middle range of involvement which includes informing, consulting and placation, and finally at the highest level of involvement are partnership, delegating power and finally citizen control.

As is seen in lower levels of the participation ladder, the act is only formal and there are not any true power handed into the citizens. However at the middle range there are not much to lose, so informing and consulting are practiced. However the highest levels involve handing in power to citizens. In

Tehran, there was an enthusiasm toward application of participatory planning in renovation process. However, this approach has not been very successful at first, since in this process providing financial resources and social support were difficult. During the first two years of its commencement only 400 residential units were renovated and residents were not participating in the process as was expected, which disappointed Members of Tehran City Council. However, for a successful participatory planning approach, the process must be turned into a process of increasing enthusiasm and passion for renovation. This includes:

- 1) Increasing level of services
- 2) Enhancing the quality of life
- 3) Improving the social status
- 4) Promoting sense of place attachment

Following this change of attitude and approach, leaving the authoritarian reconstruction and applying participatory approach, the Renovation Corporation of Tehran, had to change the scope of the work in three phases. Table III compares these three phases. There are considerable changes in favor of increasing citizenship power. One of these changes which were proposed in the third phase was establishment of Local Renovation Offices.

VII. LOCAL RENOVATION OFFICE

In 2008 Renovation Corporation of Tehran decided to launch local renovation offices in dilapidated neighborhoods. The main commission of these offices was to facilitate the residents' participation in the renovation process. The scopes of work of these offices are:

- 1) Facilitation: to recognize stakeholders and making regular meeting with residents
- 2) Publicizing and promotion: to enhance economic and social status
- 3) Institutionalizing: to promote organizing social as well as economical groups that advocate renovation and rehabilitation of the deprived neighborhoods.

Members of these offices are from local district boroughs, local counselors, local clergy, members of local stakeholders such as women's leaders, local retail representatives.

One of these offices has been established in Khazaneh neighborhood that is one of the dilapidated neighborhoods in southern Tehran. Author of this article was involved in activities of this office during 2008-2010. One of the challenges that this office was faced with was finding common ground to discuss problems, as different stakeholders preferred to raise their own issues. Therefore it was vital to have their confidence that all the issues will be dealt with according to the priorities of the neighborhood as it was put forward by the local council.

Phases and projects	Scope of work	Approaches and Actions
Phase I 2006-2007 Imam Ali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classifying social groups Assessment of safety and security issues Survey of social issues through questionnaire Identification of stakeholder groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum intervention Provision of 4 plot agglomeration plans without social survey Procurement of land and destruction of buildings to create open spaces Emphasize on appropriate physical design
Phase II 2007-2008 Saboonpaz-khaneh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studying population density and socio-economic diversity Interview with stakeholders and benefactors Considering development and effective regaling social institutes for implementation process Establishing Local Office was discussed, but not realized Presence in mosques to inform people and make use of their ideas Investigating social capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular intervention Participating in public meetings and listening to residents Discontinuing informing people and public participation process Reducing number of agglomerated parcels, usually limiting to two parcels Preserving the existing local structure and preventing high levels of intervention Leaving renovation of residential parcels to residents Proposing stimulating projects
Phase III 2008-2010 Khazaneh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiation between demographic and social studies Considering the quality of resident's leisure time Investigating residents' needs Investigating positive and negative social characteristics Emphasizing the role of civil institutions and neighborhood councils Assessing social capital and its role in renovation Recognizing of formal and informal networks of power in neighborhood Establishing Local Renovation Office for consultation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- establishment of the office 2- promoting participation of stakeholder groups 3- developing the local renovation committee 4- participatory planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimizing intervention Providing necessary public services Providing appropriate residential types Developing unified plans with consultants in adjacent areas Developing proposal in 3 types of maximum, minimum and regular intervention Emphasize on renovation promoting projects Establishing the neighborhood Renovation Office for informing, presenting and refining plan based on residents' needs Emphasizing structural reinforcement Providing awards for agglomeration of parcels Increasing FAR for larger agglomerated parcels Developing specific guidelines for the area

VIII. CONCLUSION

The renovation experience in city of Tehran shows that in any urban intervention in order to renovate the dilapidated neighborhoods, it is vital to have clear strategies that maximize citizen participation and preserve the spirit of place. Regarding the above strategy the following recommendations are advised:

- 1) In the planning strategy human cost and benefit should be considered as the main indicators of renovation policy
- 2) Residents should actively participate in planning their future, as they should be well informed and part of planning process
- 3) Residents' role in all the plans should be transparent
- 4) The authorities and local counselors should act transparent so that resident can trust their activities and plans
- 5) All sorts of participation techniques and proper

methods of communication should be employed in order to understand the local problems and issue and transferring ideas and plans in order to get adequate responses

- 6) Any sort of gentrification is not recommended
- 7) If replacement of residents is necessary, it should be clearly explained, as of how it affects different groups and stakeholders.
- 8) Different planning and design alternatives should be presented in order to provide various choices for residents
- 9) Various local capacity and innovation should be recognized
- 10) Non-governmental organizations should be mobilized for the renovation of deprived areas and they should participate in different stages of planning and design process
- 11) Encouraging policies should be considered in order to persuade residents to renovate their rundown houses and buildings

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