

APPLICATION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN REVITALIZATION OF DILAPIDATED NEIGHBORHOODS THE CASE OF SABOONPAZ-KHANEH IN TEHRAN

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Abstract: In many cities around the world prosperous neighborhoods of yesterday become dilapidated inner city neighborhoods of today. This is due to a process of degradation which creates dissatisfactory living conditions. This in turn devaluates the property and changes the social structure and commences a cycle of physical dilapidation. For revitalization of such neighborhoods, different approaches have been recommended from total demolition and reconstruction to conservation and even social empowerment. This paper would review the dilapidation process in a centrally located neighborhood adjacent to Bazaar of Tehran and searches appropriate tackling strategy considering its characteristics which is a representative typology.

A detailed and in depth study is conducted in Saboonpaz-khaneh neighborhood in Tehran, to investigate the dilapidation process and find out appropriate approach to achieve a socio-physically sustainable development solution for revitalization of the neighborhood. This previously centrally located residential neighborhood close to the old Bazaar and central business district is now housing the lowest class of blue collar workers and also serves as storage space for bazaar as well as accommodating illegal small workshops of the informal economic sector.

The organic fabric, inadequacy of infrastructures, and other physical problems have caused continuous depopulation and change of land use. Continuation of this trend would create an inner city ghetto in which only the very poor and deprived population would be residing in. Despite these, a well conducted survey shows that the neighborhood is benefiting from high level of social capital; however the range of its different indices is different, the reasons of which are discussed in the paper. Here it seems that social capital could be used in order to stop the dilapidation process and to increase the property value, type of residents and land uses. Therefore a series of strategies based on the use of present social capital is suggested.

Keywords: Infrastructure, land use, reconstruction, social capital

I. INTRODUCTION

Social capital is a concept which explains the connections within and between social networks. Social capital is an asset which is gained through presence in a network of relations and provides mutual services and benefits to the individual and the group. It affects the productivity of individuals and groups and hence is considered as a capital. However, the analogy with capital is misleading to the extent that, unlike traditional forms of capital, social capital is not depleted by use, but in fact depleted by non-use.

Social capital is multi-dimensional with each dimension contributing to the meaning of social capital although each alone is not able to capture fully the concept in its entirety (Hean et al. 2003). Also Uslaner and Dekker (2001) sum this discussion up by identifying that it is clear that the components of social capital need to be treated as multi-dimensional rather than one-dimensional.

Attempts to more thoroughly conceptualize social capital have resulted in many authors identifying different types and characteristics, the most common being the distinction of structural and cognitive, and bonding and bridging.

Structural social capital facilitates mutually beneficial collective action through established roles and social networks supplemented by rules, procedures and precedents. Cognitive social capital, which includes shared norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs, predisposes people towards mutually beneficial collective action (Krishna and Uphoff 2002; Uphoff 1999).

Bonding is horizontal, among equals within a community whereas bridging is vertical between communities. Bonding and bridging are both types of trust. Bonding capital is localized and is found among people who live in the same or adjacent communities, and bridging capital, extends to individuals and organizations that are more removed. Bridging social capital is closely related to thin

trust, as opposed to the bonding social capital of thick trust (Anheier and Kendall 2002).

Measurement of social capital to contain its multi-dimensionality is a major issue in experimental research. Putnam has proposed a set of indices to measure various dimensions of social capital as listed below.

- community or organizational life
- engagement in public affairs
- community volunteerism
- informal sociability
- social trust

In the United Kingdom, the Office of National Statistics (ONS) has identified five major dimensions of social capital, these include:

- participation, social engagement, commitment
- control, self efficacy
- perception of community
- social interaction, social networks, social support
- trust, reciprocity, social cohesion

However, it must be noted that indices for measurement of various dimensions of social capital must be developed considering the particular case in question.

II. DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Social capital is not the only type of capitals which exists within a community. Other types of capital include human capital, financial capital and physical capital. In a development cycle, all types of capital play a role, however it seems that social capital is at highest level the start up period, along with limited human capital. In consolidation phase financial capital would also be attracted and this would lead to formation of formal capital, however social capital may be decreased. In maturity of the network all while social capital may still reduce, human, financial and physical capital all have grown. However as social capital disappears the network confronts a crisis and may dissolve.

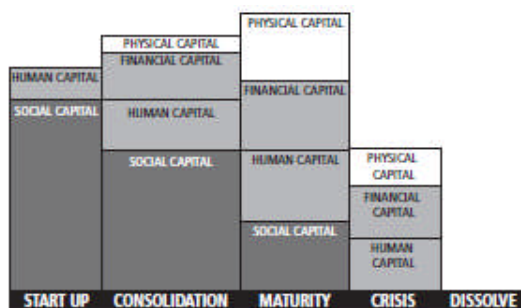


Fig 1 Types of capital available in various stages of development
(Frank, S., 2005)

When the system benefits from high social capital, but very limited physical capital, however at first glance the situation may be evaluated very poor, but there are high potentials for developing physical capital. This model explains the development processes and reveals new possible strategies for revitalization of dilapidated neighborhoods within the old urban fabrics. Here such a case is studied to find out about the practicality of the approach in more details.

Case study:

The Old Tehran was consisted of five neighborhoods including Bazaar, which was confined within the Safavid fortification. When the second fortification was built during the Naseri Period of Ghajar dynasty, new developments was creating new neighborhoods adjacent to the old neighborhoods, one of which was Saboonpaz-khaneh adjacent and south of Bazaar. This neighborhood was the residential precinct for low-class, blue-collar workers mainly in construction and small industry sector, and small businesses. The area is now surrounded by main streets and had dilapidated both physically and functionally from inside. Many social problems including crime, addiction and other misbehaviors are observed and this has ruined its reputation as a residential neighborhood for low-income workers.

The selected case to study the level of social capital and its application in renovation process is Saboonpaz-khaneh. This is a 34 hectare area, previously centrally located residential neighborhood close to the old Bazaar and central business district is now housing the lowest class of blue collar workers and also serves as storage space for bazaar as well as accommodating illegal small workshops of the informal economic sector.

According to the definitions by Tehran Municipality, there are three major indices for a dilapidated fabric; these include parcel size, route width and structural quality. Where over 50 percent of parcels are less than 200 m² in size, and /or 50 percent of routes are less than 8 meters wide and/or 50 percent of its structures are damaged are considered to be a dilapidated fabric. Here these indices are examined in the Saboonpaz-khaneh neighborhood.

The organic fabric, inadequacy of infrastructures, and other physical problems have caused continues depopulation and change of land use. Continuation of this trend would create an inner city ghetto in which only the very poor and deprived population would be residing in.

TABLE I
DISTRIBUTION OF PARCEL SIZE WITHIN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

	# of parcels	Mini-mum area	Maxi-mum area	Mea n area	Stan- dard Devia- tion
Residen- tial parcels	1522	35.7	1062	146	88
Total parcels	1842	28.5	56891	198	1401

Within this area there are almost 1850 parcels, with an average size of 200 m2. Almost 80 percent of these are residential parcels, which their average size is considerably less and is almost 150 m2. The maximum size for residential parcels is 1000m2 while there are non-residential parcels as large as 5.5 hectares. Considering the definitions of Tehran Municipality for dilapidated neighborhoods, Saboonpaz-khaneh without doubt is such a neighborhood.

TABLE II
STRUCTURAL QUALITY OF BUILDINGS WITHIN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

structural quality	# of parcels	% of parcels	Area of parcels	% of area
Newly built	94	5.16	19419	6.97
Acceptable	94	5.16	14328	5.14
slightly damaged	713	39.13	11633	41.75
aged Repair				
Fully damaged	918	50.38	127862	45.89
Demolishment				
Destroyed	3	0.16	698	0.25
Total	1822	100	278639	100

The total area of developed parcels is around 28 hectares of which only a total of 12 % are in an acceptable or newly built stage. The rest of the parcels are either slightly damaged and could be repaired and or fully damaged and needs demolishing and rebuilding. The proportion between the two is almost equal. The future trends of investment would determine whether the slightly damaged buildings would be repaired or would be left to become fully damaged and non repairable.

TABLE III
AGE OF STRUCTURES WITHIN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Age of structure	# of parcels	% of parcels	Area of parcels	% of area
Less than 10	108	5.93	20753	7.45
Between 10 -25	79	4.34	12607	4.52
Over 25	1635	89.74	245279	88.03
Total	1822	100	278639	100

A study into the age of the structures shows that only 7.5 percent of structures are built during the past 10 years, considering structures built during

past quarter century is 12 percent. This leaves 88 percent of structures with over 25 years of age, which shows the process of rebuilding the fabric has been slowed down considerably. This process shows some recovery during the past 10 years, which is a good sign. Still there is a long way to go for revitalization of over 90 percent damaged and dilapidated structures.

TABLE IV
ACCESS WIDTH WITHIN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Access width	Number	percent
<2	29	15.3
2-4	120	63.5
4-6	24	12.7
6-8	8	4.2
8-12	7	3.7
>12	1	1

Since usually the reconstruction is occurred along better accessed routes and on wider allies, access width is identified as a major index for reconstruction of historic districts. Table # shows that about 15 percent of allies are 2 meters or less, allowing only on foot access. Almost 64 percent have a width of 2-4 meters. These are not formally accessible by automobile; however in many cases cars find their way into the fabric and make it unsafe for pedestrians. Only 20 percent of the routes are over 4 meters wide and there is only one major route with over 12 meters wide. This shows the lack of appropriate access into the neighborhood, which is identified as one of the major reasons for lack of interest in reconstruction of dilapidated structures.

As seen according to the Tehran Municipality's criteria, Saboonpaz-khaneh is a dilapidated neighborhood in need of an action. Here in order to distinguish the type of action appropriate and plausible in this neighborhood a study is conducted in which the underlying hypothesis is rest on utilization of embedded social capital in this neighborhood for its revitalization.

Measurement of social capital

In this study the hypothesis was that social capital is affecting the participation rate in urban renewal and renovation plans and therefore an increase in social capital could facilitate the revitalization process. To examine this, the social capital and the willingness to participate in urban renovation process had to be assessed. For this purpose a structured questionnaire, was developed and a survey was conducted among 80 residents in the neighborhood.

The questions were structured around four main issues, social integration, trust within community, and trust to formal institutions and finally level of participation. These were considered as major dimensions of social capital relevant to this study. Under each heading there were several questions

proposed to the respondents. The cumulative response was used as an index for that dimension of social capital.

Social integration

- Do you share the same customs and ceremonies, racial and religious beliefs and education level with your neighborhoods?
- Are you similar with your neighbors in terms of income level?
- Are the neighbors honest with each other?

Social trust

In which relations do you participate?

- Lending money?
- Lending household items?
- Supporting their credit checks?
- Taking care of your neighbor's home?

Institutional Trust

How much each of these institutions tries for the wellbeing of the neighborhood?

- Neighborhood council
- Mosque council
- Charity foundations
- Neighborhood police force
- Neighborhood Besiege force
- Council for conflict resolution

Participation

In which activities do you participate?

- Meeting to resolve neighborhood problems
- Cooperation with neighbors for neighborhood clean up
- Group voluntary help to needy residents of the neighborhood
- Participation in neighborhood and city council election

III. FINDINGS

Findings for each index are reported in table #5. As shown in this table, the indices for social integration show comparatively good integration levels.

For example the question " Do you share the same customs and ceremonies, racial and religious beliefs and education level with your neighborhoods?" was responded positively by 62 percent of the respondents, while over half the respondents believed they have similar incomes to their neighbors. In terms of honesty, also over 50 percent believed in the honesty of their neighbors, while only less than 20 percent considered their neighbors dishonest. The results for social integration show an acceptable integrated neighborhood

Trust was measured both in terms of social trust, and institutional trust. Indices for "social trust" are almost neutrally answered, while only for taking care of neighbor's home, there was a 70 percent of lack of trust and responsibility. In terms of "institutional trust", while there were many missing values which show lack of certainty about or interest to the subject, the majority have responded low to the question of "how much these institutions efforts are important for the wellbeing of the neighborhood? Among these the best rated institution was "neighborhood council" with 30 percent of respondents believing in its efforts to have high impact on the neighborhood, while 70 percent rated its efforts as low in importance. Reliance and believe in importance of efforts of other institutions was much lower, among them "the council for conflict resolution" and "charity foundations" received the lowest ratings. However these institutions are important in the process of revitalization of a neighborhood in both legal organization and financial support of the neighborhood for positive change.

Finally the participation level is measured through four indices. The highest participation rate among residents was observed in "Participation in neighborhood and city council election"; this was positively answered by 46 percent of the respondents. The other indices include Group voluntary help to needy residents of the neighborhood", "Cooperation with neighbors for neighborhood cleanup", and "Meeting to resolve neighborhood problems" were only positively responded between 25 to 18 percent. These results shows that participation is very weak in this neighborhood, and is only at the formal level of voting and election time show up. However, where people are truly needed to make their voices heard, or do something for their neighborhood, they are not active. This is a major obstacle in revitalization and its relations to other factors must be studied.

TABLE V
MEASUREMENT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN SABOONPAZ-KHANEH NEIGHBORHOOD

<u>Social trust</u>	In which relations do you participate?	no	yes	Missing values
	Supporting their credit checks?	47.50	52.50	0
	Lending money?	48.75	51.25	0
	Lending household items?	48.75	51.25	0
	Taking care of your neighbor's home?	71.25	28.75	0
<u>Institutional trust</u>	How much each of these institutions efforts is important for the wellbeing of the neighborhood?	high	low	Missing values
	Neighborhood council	30.00	70.00	0
	Mosque council	18.75	80.00	1.25
	Charity foundations	11.25	77.50	11.25
	Neighborhood police force	17.50	78.75	3.75
	Neighborhood Besiege force	15.00	81.25	3.75
	Council for conflict resolution	1.25	76.25	22.50
<u>Social integration</u>		no	yes	Missing values
	Do you share the same customs and ceremonies, racial and religious beliefs and education level with your neighborhoods?	35.00	62.50	2.50
	Are you similar with your neighbors in terms of income level?	42.50	53.75	3.75
	Are the neighbors honest with each other?	18.75	52.50	28.75
<u>Participation</u>	In which activities do you participate?	no	yes	Missing values
	Participation in neighborhood and city council election	53.75	46.25	0
	Group voluntary help to needy residents of the neighborhood	71.25	28.75	0
	Cooperation with neighbors for neighborhood clean up	76.25	23.75	0
	Meeting to resolve neighborhood problems	80.00	20.00	0

TABLE VI
CORRELATION STUDY OF RATE OF PARTICIPATION WITH VARIOUS DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Dimensions	Indices	participation	
		Sig.	Value
Social trust	Supporting their credit checks?	0.028	0.259
	Lending money?	0.016	0.279
	Taking care of your neighbor's home?	0.012	0.227
	Lending household items?	0.011	0.287
Institutional trust	Charity foundations	0.088	0.284
	Neighborhood council	0.000	0.425
	Neighborhood police force	0.013	0.335
	Mosque council	0.085	0.272
Social integration	Are you similar with your neighbors in terms of income level?	0.025	0.324
	Are the neighbors honest with each other?	0.029	0.375

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While places and neighborhoods may suffer from poor physical capital and go through a dilapidation process, if they benefit from a high social capital, there are hopes for a new start up and cycle of development may begin to attract new human and financial capital and develop physical capital. Therefore in any dilapidated area of the city, we must examine the possible existence of social capital and if so benefit from it towards triggering a new cycle of development.

In this case, despite high "social integration" and "social trust", lack of "institutional trust" is a deficiency in the neighborhood. Also examining the relationship between various dimensions of social capital and "participation level" shows that there is highly significant correlation between participation level and "social integration" as well as "social trust" and "institutional trust". However, low ratings of institutional trust, would inhibit occurrence and observation of high participation level in neighborhood development plans and revitalization process. It seems that one prerequisite for successful revitalization, is working on "institutional trust" dimension of social capital, especially since this is highly significant in citizen participation in formal program for development and revitalization.

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