

The Necessity and the General Principles of Intervention in the Deteriorated Urban Areas

(case study:Tehran-Iran)

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The deteriorated urban areas are the problems that cannot be ignored in the contemporary cities. These textures confront various problems and not paying attention to these fabrics will result in the lost of live in them. These problems can be mentioned in brief as follows: inconsistency with urban structure, high population density, decreased physical/social/economic and environmental quality, etc.

The problems of the deteriorated areas are mostly multi-aspect. Therefore solving these problems needs various programs and measures each of which focuses on a particular aspect. According to experiences, the one-aspect approach to urban fabric is not much useful. Therefore interfering in these textures should be made in all physical, social and economic aspects.

What is of the most importance in the preparation of the projects for these areas, is the deep, extended, and multidimensional studies before starting the planning phase.

On the other hand, the topic that has been considered as a principle in these projects is the people's participation.

Key words: Deteriorated urban areas, Urban fabric, Intervention, Quality of life, Participation

Introduction

The deteriorated urban areas, either downtown or in the suburbs, are the problems that cannot be ignored in the contemporary cities. Urban fabrics lose their quality in the course of time, and the circuit of life in them confronts a lot of troubles. Not paying attention to these fabrics will result in the suburban expansion which follows huge costs. Therefore, to avoid the undesirable and irreparable consequences of this pervasive issue, appropriate intervention in the deteriorated urban areas seems essential.

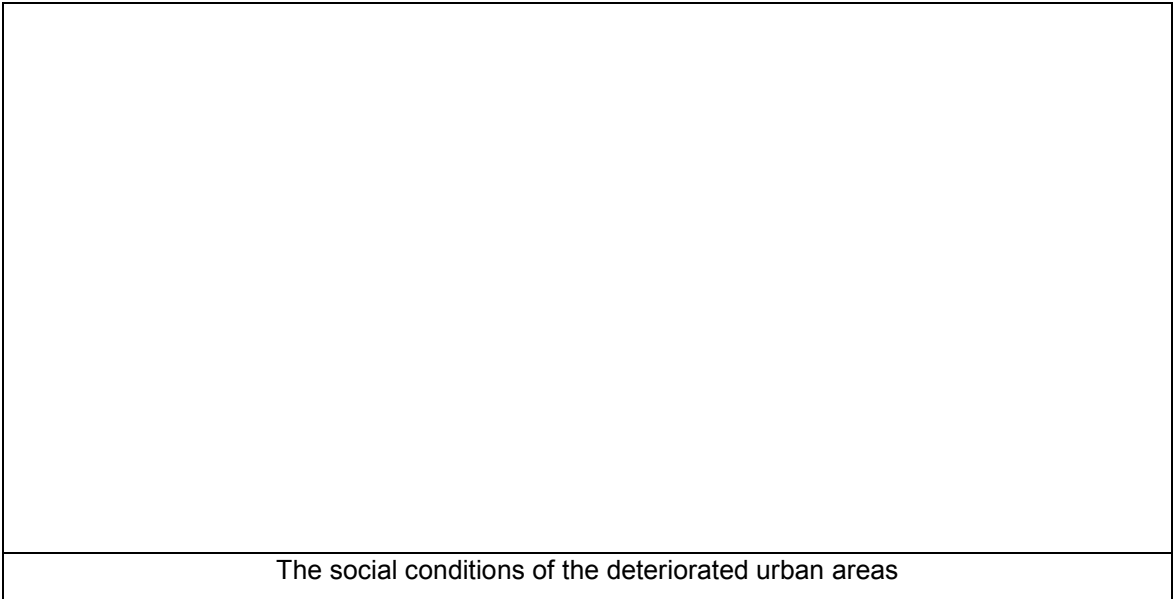
The city of Tehran has expanded at top speed. This irregular and unplanned expansion has created immigrant-receptive fabrics in the suburbs. On the other hand, most of the old fabrics in downtown have gradually lost their economic-social lives and their functions. The proper physical conditions being lost, the prior residents move out to other regions and new ones, with lower economic-social traits, will replace. These newcomers are not able to renovate the fabric, because of their low income and also not being attached to the region.

Hence, the deteriorated areas in Tehran need special plans for the fundamental changes to take place.

The Concept of Deterioration and Deteriorated urban areas

The concept of urban deterioration can be considered as a decline in the social, economic and physical fabric of the city. If the life of a region in a city declines in any ways, it will be lead to its deterioration. This affects its physical fabric and also the economic and social activities in it. The physical, social and economic deterioration, in a reciprocal relation, intensify one another and therefore result in the decline of the urban life. Urban deterioration generally, is known as: old, unstable buildings, narrow passages, with low-income residents having social problems.

Yet in most of the specialized references, deterioration has a much deeper meaning. It includes areas in the legal boundaries of the cities where lack of control over social, economic, and cultural conditions, not only make them susceptible to the natural disasters but also gives them an improper economic, environmental and social quality. Due to underprivileged residents of these areas, there is not the possibility of



The social conditions of the deteriorated urban areas

self-renovation of the fabrics and moreover the private investors have no motivation do invest in these areas. (Tehran Renovation Organization, 2006)

With incorporating the specialized and general meaning of the deterioration, it can be concluded that when the physical, social and economic fabrics in cities become dysfunctional, they would be in the way of deterioration.

Deteriorated areas in Tehran have different features as follow:

Population



consequences

- Insecurity for the residents especially women and children
- Maze-like, unsafe passages and insecure indefensible places

Economic

- The cheap prices of the land in comparison to the other parts of the city
- Poor underprivileged residents
- High unemployment rate
- The residents' inability to renovate their houses
- Lack of motivation for the investors to invest in these areas

Physical -Functional

- The instability of the buildings against earthquake due to old age and using inefficient materials
- Narrow passages and therefore inaccessibility for cars
- Density of the fabric which causes narrow passages and makes it difficult for emergency access
- Lack of interrelation in the passages
- Not separating the passage for pedestrians and vehicles
- Improper landuses in residential areas (workshops, troublesome industries, etc.)
- Not meeting today's needs
- Lack of urban services
- Lack of entertaining, cultural and sport facilities

– Abandoned and inactive business units



The physical conditions of the deteriorated urban areas

1- Economic:

- Economic slump and low level of income
- Dissonant investment in the city

2- Population and social:

- Irregular population dispersal
- Change in the mode of life from in comparison to the past
- Lack of dependency of the residents to the neighborhood
- Weak participation of the residents for the purpose of **renovation**

3- Physical

- The low quality of construction
- The old age of the buildings
- Lack of services and infrastructures
- Lack of suitable accessibility to the inside of the fabrics

4- Managerial

- Lack of a coordinated, united and efficient urban management
- Lack of a comprehensive planning for the renovation of the urban fabrics
- Lack of attention to the deteriorated fabrics from the urban managers

The Necessity of Intervention In The deteriorated urban areas

Deteriorated urban areas depending on their kinds and degree of deterioration are facing different issues resulting to their deficiencies. Taking the above mentioned points into consideration, to intervene with the deteriorated urban areas can be considered as a development, with the goal of improving the quality of life in the urban fabrics.

Renovating the urban fabrics can provide the possibility of implementing the new methods of urbanism as it should be. On the other hand, instead of huge investments in the suburb and therefore irregular expansion of cities, the investment will be made inside the city. Also the inner development of cities will result in the proportionate distribution of the urban services and infrastructures and eventually their equitable development. (Shamaee and Poorahmad 2005, p.24)

The important point is that the deterioration in a region does not mean its deficiency in all areas; these fabrics, despite their being deteriorated, meet residents' loads of daily needs. Therefore, investing with the purpose of their preservation and reinforcement and in some cases making amendments in them to meet the daily needs of the residents, can save enormous economic, social, and cultural costs. And as a result, instead of urban expansion in the suburbs, these investments can revive the life in these deteriorated regions.

The Principles of Intervention In The deteriorated urban areas

Deteriorated urban areas deal with some problems due to their nature. Hence their problems are multidimensional and emerge in special forms. For this reason, to solve their problems, different projects, each focusing on a specific area, have to be proposed. Considering other country's experiences and also the modern trends in urbanism, it can be pointed out that a mono-dimensional approach to the urban fabrics cannot be totally successful. A comprehensive intervene in the deteriorated urban areas happens when along with the physical intervention, economic and social aspects are also considered.

Essentially the aim of urban fabric intervene is to find solutions for problems in citizens' lives. Basically in urban physical programming, without considering citizens' economic, social, and cultural status, fundamental changes cannot take place. The combination of physical, economic, social and environmental programs, can provide a stable urban development. (Shamaee and Poorahmad 2005. p 60)

Nowadays it is recommended that to propose comprehensive, multidimensional urban programs, all features and features of a given fabric be considered.

Therefore, now intervene in the deteriorated urban areas from, different aspects:

1. Intervention in the deteriorated urban areas from a physical -functional aspect

The first point which should be taken into consideration when intervening in the deteriorated urban areas is its physical aspect. These fabrics face a variety of problems from the physical aspect. The most important one is their instability and the insecurity for the residents. These building, because of different reason such as: their old age, not using the standard materials or not observing the needed standards, do not have the needed stability. The inappropriate accessibility of these fabrics and also their inscrutability in addition to endangering the aiding operation in cases of emergency can cause traffic jams and the inability of the residents to use their cars.

Other problems are: lack of urban facilities and amenities, lack of needed services and also an ugly image of city.

Any interventions in the urban fabrics should aim the improvement of living conditions. They should consider the following points:

- Changing the living conditions (freeing more service spaces, increasing the services, housing, etc)
- Modifying and reinforcing the accessibilities
- Increasing the of open spaces to facilitate the first aid operations
- New construction with the purpose of reinforcement
- Preserving the unity of the fabric
- Preserving and amending the unity with the rest of the city
- Eliminating the inappropriate neighboring
- Eliminating the environmental pollutants

Taking these factors into consideration can make the intervention have outstanding results in eliminating the deterioration, developing the fabric and increasing the quality of life.

2. Intervention in the deteriorated urban areas from a social aspect

A point that needs to be considered is that intervention in the urban fabric is utterly social and related to the culture of the society. It is as true to say that the form a city takes is the reflection of its culture. Therefore, the methods and the suitable options to intervene can decrease the danger of social mutation resulting from transferring the population and instead of being economically benefiting, it becomes socially benefiting.

In operations resulting in the movement of a group of people, there are not only walls and structure of the city collapsing, but the cultural-social organization of a fabric falls apart. To reconstruct the new social organization is difficult to the same extent that building new walls is easy. The social rupture resulting from these measures can practically result in behavioral, psychological professional and identity anomies. (Honarvar 2001. p 23)

Compulsory contacts and mandatory evictions (except in cases involving high risk) not only will not help the situation but also adds to the social consequences and social anomies. Hence, dealing with this issue must be in accord with gradual modifying policies with on the one hand emphasizes the human rights and on the other facilitates their resettling.

A point which must be considered in the intervention of the deteriorated urban areas is the people's participation. No intervention in the living fabric of the city can be can take place without the residents' participation. Participation in its real meaning is the active involvement of a citizen in his/her urban life in all social, economic, political aspects.

Participation means the multilateral collaboration between governmental, private and public sectors.

The interventions in which social aspects have been considered, a structure is formed through which those members of the general public with low income can cooperate in the projects and with establishing nongovernmental organizations and enabling the residents, the ground is prepared for the their participation. The social consequences of such interventions are as follow:

- Increasing the residency status in the fabric

- Developing mutual trust between the residents and the trustees
 - Providing the life security (the right to live and possess)
 - Residents' participation in decision making and decision making process
 - Creating live and active centers in the fabric to increase the social interaction
 - Decreasing the rate of unemployment, crime and delinquencies
 - Formation of the nongovernmental organizations to support the development process
 - Paying special attention to susceptible groups such women and children
 - Nurturing the capability in accordance with abilities, skills and knowledge
- (Sabz Andish Payesh Consulting Engineers 2003. pp 9-10)

3. Intervention in the deteriorated urban areas from an economical aspect

The reciprocal dependency between urban physical modifications and economical evolutions at different local, regional and even international levels is one of the main topics that have nowadays caught the attention of many researchers and theoreticians. An obvious fact is that cities are not basically built upon a set of constructs, streets, public parks, and so on, but mainly by the fact that their physical structures have economical origins, and that they have played a major role in the history of countries development. (Ardeshir, 2004, p.68).

The link between the city's physical characteristics and the economical conditions, at times, helped reaching some economic goals with the help of a good physical planning, or, reversely, assisted in the settlement of physical dilemmas, by use of proper economical planning. This relation allows any intervention at city fabric level to influence economic development. Reciprocally, these economical evolutions will have an impact on city structure and infrastructures, causing cyclic changes between the two. We shall provide, as set forth, a brief outline of some of the main economic repercussions of the involvements in the city structure:

Changes in land price

These changes are one of the most noticeable economic reflections of interventions within the cities physical fabric. Generally, conscious and planned modifications on fabric are followed by an increase in land prices and this act results in the betterment of accessibility, improves the quality of the environment and enhances urban servitudes.

Changes in transportation price

Another one of the economical impacts of an involvement in the city structure is the change occurring in the prices of transportation. The introduction of new paths and runs, the displacement of some activity centers, a change in the behavioral model of interurban travel and so on... can generate an increase or a decrease in transportation costs.

Changes in relative advantages of some city areas

The relative advantage of some city areas on others can also be considered as one of the impacts of economy on city structure. Such a relative advantage belongs to places that that relatively improve the performance of some city's economical activities. By getting involved in the fabric of the city, city planners can shift this relative advantage to different areas and, therefore, move activities economic performances or attractions to better locations.

Changes in the concentration of city activities

In principle, city activities have the tendency to concentrate. This property is the cause of the increase in population agglomeration around the towns' main centers of activity and this fact, itself, generates other incurred costs such as taxes and public duties, maintenance and repair, costs related to labor wage, cost incurred by pollution and many others. (Ardeshir, 2004, p.70-71)

The involvement in deteriorated urban deteriorated areas can prepare the field for a contribution of investors and those fabrics and, as a result, revive city activities. Such investments may reduce population and activity's agglomeration in city centers. Furthermore, creating economical opportunities in those fabrics will generate added value for the concerned areas.

Intervention in Tehran's deteriorated areas

Considering the points highlighted earlier and the relative knowledge that we have of Tehran's deteriorated urban areas, we will proceed in an analysis of the renovation process launched in Tehran. As a forerunner of this initiative, 'Teheran Renovation Organization' has lead multiple projects in the scope of renewal of these fabrics. Most of these projects have similar purposes and strategies but due to the characteristics and various challenges, they differ in policies and procedures. More generally and strategically, these projects can be explained as follows:

General Purpose	Detailed purpose	Strategy
<p style="text-align: center;">Improve the living condition in city's historical fabrics</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Improving the physical and environmental qualities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Redefining the role and place of the neighborhood in the whole town - Improving city infrastructures and ways within the fabric - Securing the fabrics from unexpected accidents and acts of God such as quakes, fire, flood - Developing and reinforcing public spaces, green spaces, and insuring poll taxes -Reorganizing building standards in the fabric, and review existing regulations
	<p style="text-align: center;">Reorganizing the image of city</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating clarity in historical fabrics - Fortifying existing signs, edges et nodes within the fabric - Reinforcing the role of predominant elements within the fabric - Establishing the relation between the fabric and its neighboring fabrics as a single live and active unit - Making use of traditional architecture model when designing a new construct
	<p style="text-align: center;">Creating an economic thrive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determining the economical role of the fabric in the city's economy - Making use of the fabric's economical potentials to interact with other city areas - Implementing an economic system which corresponds to the fabric's potentials - Preparing the fabric for private investment - Creating diverse job opportunities
	<p style="text-align: center;">Improving the social and cultural life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restoring fabric identity and preserving past acquisitions -Creating and fortifying activities corresponding to cultural values - Encouraging residents contribution in the renewal process - Tracking spots for new public spaces nearby fabric's religious and cultural centers - Using the potentials of spaces such as mosques to increase social interactions and residents contribution - Considering residents' needs when designing and renewing the fabric - Reducing migration and preparing the fabric for the return of

General Purpose	Detailed purpose	Strategy
		original residents - Implementing social-cultural programs - Establishing security for residents
	Improving the environmental quality	- Improving city's infrastructures - Evacuating industrial and domestic sewers in a correct manner - Suppressing activities that are harmful for the environment - Preserving and expand the vegetation already existing in the fabric - Limiting excessive circulation within the area - Connecting the fabric to the transportation network (suburb and bus stations)

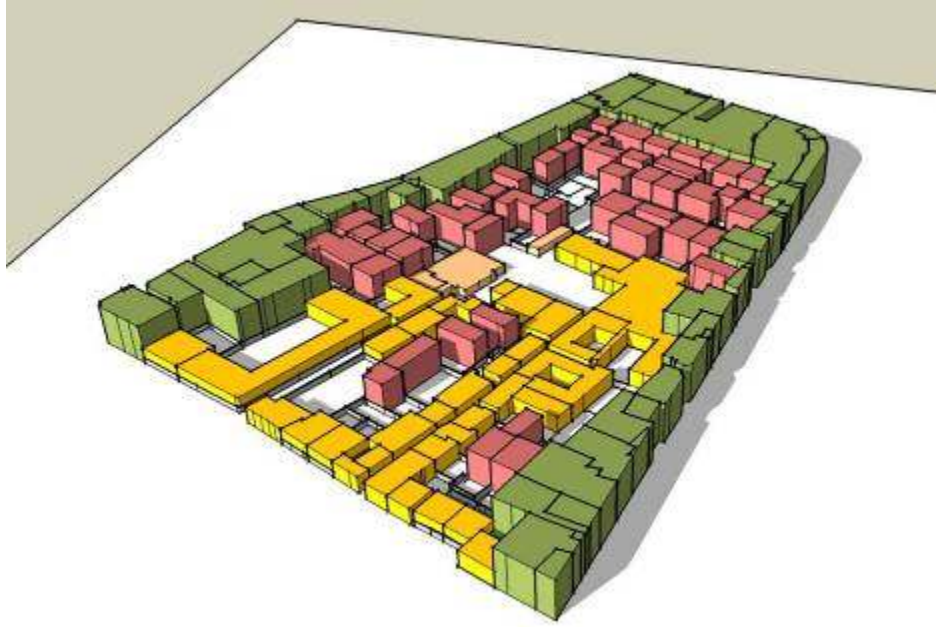
What is of the most importance in the preparation of these projects, is the deep, extended, and multidimensional studies performed in this regard before starting the planning phase. Such a study requires numerous field studies, surveys, and focus group discussions (F.G.D), as well as library studies. On the other hand, the topic that has been considered as a principle in this project is the people's participation. For this purpose, potentials that can be found within quarters such as religious places (mosques, Islamic holy shrines, etc), trade unions, ethnical associations, and so on, have been included.



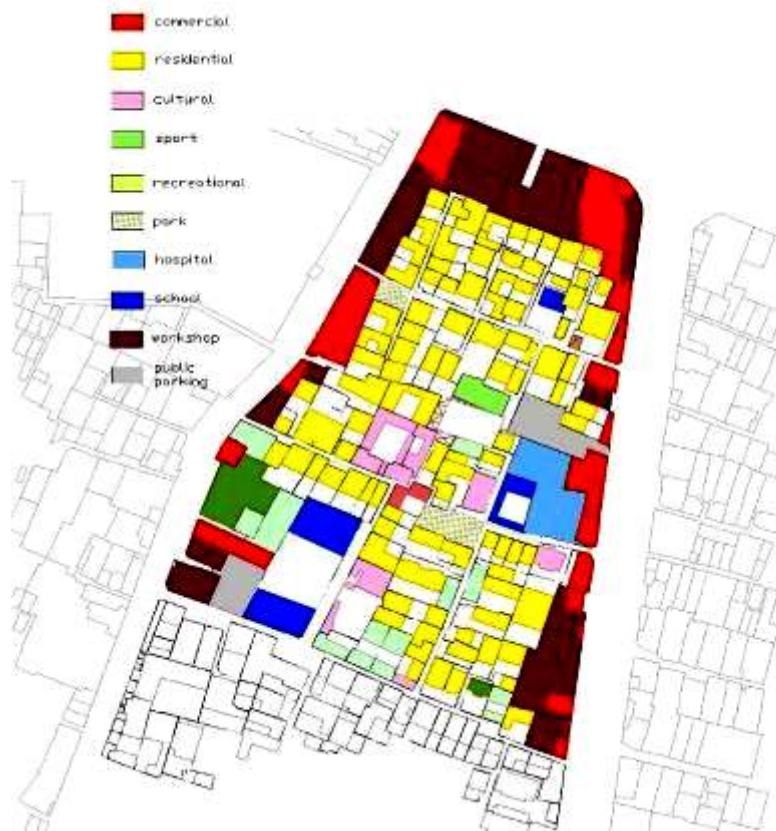
Mosques – An important element in the neighborhoods



Rehabilitation of a commercial axis in a deteriorated district



The proposed plan of a deteriorated neighborhood



The proposed concept of a deteriorated neighborhood

Conclusion

Considering the multidimensional character of the problems faced by the cities' deteriorated urban areas, an exhaustive and complete intervention in those areas is an intervention in which the entire physical and economical aspects have been taken into account. Planning a physical structure without considering to the fabrics' social and economical structures cannot result to a complete success. Therefore, as long as these criteria are taken into account, the renewal process will accelerate and its result will be more appealing. Such an intervention could dramatically reduce the deterioration of the areas and improve the living conditions for the residents, while opening doors for development in those areas. Also, from the fact that deteriorated urban areas possess characteristics varying from one to another, multiple approaches should be adopted for every single case, and each require a good knowledge of existing conditions and different feasibility studies. It is, hence, of outmost importance to capitalize on residents' participation in this type of planning and project implementation.

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