Original Research Article

Revitalization of What?
Rereading the Concept of Restoration based on a New Approach to Space

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ABSTRACT

Despite 60 years of urban planning education in Iranian universities and 55 years of centralized government planning for cities based on comprehensive urban plans, which brings uniformity to all, there is a lack of satisfaction among almost two-thirds of the population in cities. Traces of reducing the city to a building layout and seeking a solution about their arrangement are evident in the first approved master design of the city, created by "Victor Gruen" in 1969. Restoration efforts in the "damaged parts" of Iranian cities started a few decades after Western modernists dominated the cities. Redefining restoration was done in imitation of the West, whose own cities were damaged by modernist urbanization. Contrary to the systemic and holistic view, originality in the modernist worldview is an element. This process is more precise and original if it can lead to a smaller element, which is ultimately the atom. According to this perspective, only things that are tangible and observable can be quantified as real. Based on this perspective, different degrees of restoration of objects, buildings, textures, and the city have been defined. "Objectivity" and "thingness" are the themes of restoration in all degrees of this classification. The Cultural Heritage Organization of Iran developed restoration guidelines for identifying, defending, and interfering in valuable urban textures. The common features of all guidelines are the importance of the architectural form and the emphasis on the city as a real and external object. The perceptual layer of the city, which is derived from the observer's interpretation when facing the city, cannot be replaced by the evolution and expansion of layers of knowledge about the city or even the dimensions of intervention in the city. As a result, improving fundamental data and adding more layers contributing to city knowledge cannot make up for mistakes made concerning city knowledge. Therefore, how can restoration preserve the place's existence and dynamism if it is based on an architectural form-centered approach and depends on the architectural form's proportions, shape, and historical functions while ignoring values, and semantic textures?

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Statement of the Problem

With the advent of industrial urbanization and the following changes caused by the Second World War, a new architectural form of literature called Modernization and Modernization in Cities was put out. The reason for such advancements was not the same across the world. Due to the numerous destructions caused by the Second World War, the idea of urban renewal was put forth in Western civilization to hasten the revival of cities. However, Iran was forced along this route in the first Pahlavi era, when it adopted the modernist slogan and followed the lead of the Western nations. The first Pahlavi period's modernization was accompanied by the city's historical texture being extensively destroyed. The creation of the first comprehensive urban plan during the second Pahlavi era gave modernization and city modernization a legal and intellectual voice. Many people moved to cities from rural areas in search of work and a better life. Alongside the fast growth of cities came the quick rise of urban pollution, lifestyle changes, social difficulties in metropolitan areas, marginalization, and, in the end, a decline in life satisfaction. Numerous studies, both domestic and international, have been carried out to examine how satisfied people are with their urban lives following modernization. The findings show that after 60 years of urban planning instruction in Iranian universities and 55 years of centralized government planning for cities based on comprehensive urban plans, which brought them uniformity, there is a lack of satisfaction among almost two-thirds of the population in cities. In response to the need to restore the quality of life in contemporary cities, various discourses have been formed, among which restoration specialists' discourse is important. Their approach is to preserve cultural heritage and contribute to the continuity of identity in the changing future. The conventional prescription of restoration specialists to treat the problems of cities started dealing with historical textures, marginalization, run-down areas, and infraform. The modernization movement began with the development program of the center of Paris by Haussmann in the 1850s, which was also known as 'Bulldozer urbanism'. In Iran, extensive physical interventions have been made in the textures of the cities, following Haussmann's urbanism. However, in carrying out such interventions, no attention has been paid to the real necessity or cultural, social, or economic characteristics of the contexts. This separation of the urban organization and the gap between the center and its neighborhoods has been a key factor in urban decay and contributed to the creation of broken textures, which today are known as worn-out, and there has been much emphasis on their damaged forms. The restoration of such textures as an unavoidable necessity has been the subject of interventions in many cities. The important point is that the city, as a living and dynamic being, needs to be continuously evaluated and modified in the process of its transformation. That is why urban restoration—a lasting and permanent knowledge to guide the transformations of the city and correct its shortcomings—needs to receive much attention. This attitude towards the city and the discipline of its permanent revival is the logical necessity of city development planning and management. Such a reading of the city requires a comprehensive investigation and action for its revitalization, regardless of the physical approach. Despite using new approaches to the city, the classic solutions of urban restoration, as it appears from the university syllabus and the description of the conventional services of its implementation plans, have focused on the architectural form. Since the city, as it is known, is a system of activities and relationships between people and the architectural form, one cannot expect an effective change in the whole city by addressing one of the issues.

Architectural Form-Based Process

The originality of the architectural form is not limited to restoration literature; rather, knowledge related to the city is reflected in the Persian name. The word "Shahrsazi" has been equivalent to urbanism since the establishment of this field in 1984. This term is made of the suffix "Sakhtan, or in English construction", which implies a subjective and outdoor meaning. It considers the city as a category that can be built outdoors and by an independent subject. While the modern and scientific definition of the city recognizes it as a phenomenon that must be nurtured for transformation, like the human soul, The change of the city, like the change of man and society, is not possible except by the will of the citizens. Therefore, instead of urban construction, which is equivalent to urban development, urbanism has been used, which refers to the occupation and dealing with the city and not its construction. Based on this idea and the rush of modernist urban development in the form of a comprehensive plan, the architectural form-centered approach was approved by law. In the first approved master plan of Tehran, which was prepared by "Victor

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of the country approved 21/4/1988 by the Islamic Council has defined the maximum height that protects buildings and the skyline. These two confirm the importance of the architectural form for the Cultural Heritage Organization. The general approaches of protection and revitalization of historical-cultural areas mentioned in the single document of historical-cultural textures (approved by the High Council of Urban Planning and Architecture of Iran, 2016) focus on historical areas and shape features, and include any historical-cultural property from the textures that can be defined and intervened based on these two characteristics. Therefore, the evaluation of the approach of restoration practitioners in education, management, and profession indicates that the originality of historical property is tied to restoration. In this approach, the components play the main role, and their juxtaposition is not seen to create a new concept such as whole or gestalt. In the modernist worldview, contrary to the systemic and holistic view, what has originality is a component, and this process is more precise and original if it can lead to a smaller component, which is ultimately the atom. In this view, only what is real can be measured through concrete and objective observation. Therefore, modernists believe that the whole is a creation of the mind and a kind of fantasy that has no precedent in the real world. Therefore, they cannot recognize a system called the city, which is composed of an infinite number of parts, and its existence is sought in its parts. The atomistic approach cannot recognize the whole and considers it as something made up by the mind. While humans' understanding of nature and history is based on the general perception that is not valid in the modern atomistic view. The phenomena faced by man are combinations of different elements that produce their unique and special nature and character (Mansouri, 2020, 18–29). Among other things, the neighborhood has no real meaning in physics, and it is at most a service area that has its audience. However, as a space that forms a part of the character and identity of the residents has no validity. Therefore, it is logical that the general aspect of composite phenomena remains unknown to modernists or modernists just focus on the functions of the phenomena, which is considered equivalent to a scientific point of view at a specific time. The master plan document, which was prepared based on a modernist reading of the city, was used as a checklist and a single and inclusive copy in all the cities across the world for planning. In this document, no attention has been paid to the differences between the cities, their problems, and programs and the originality of the city material in the planning process. The answers of the comprehensive plan to the questions of city restoration, including how to act in the historical textures and neighborhoods of the cities have been limited to architectural bodies (Mansouri, 2015). According to the comprehensive plan and the approved law of the city, there is no such thing called a historical neighborhood rather there are old buildings that need protection. The street, the place of use, the center of the neighborhood, and the spatial system are those immaterial things that can only be admired. Since they are not quantitative, they can not be intervened. Therefore, the answer of the modernists to the historical center of the city is the answer to a question about several individual buildings that are placed near each other and do not create a single nature except functional mutual effects. These components can be multiplied and active in a set with a single function, independent of the identity of context and meaning-giving components. Therefore, the revival of the center based on the modernist method of the comprehensive plan or the rules of cultural heritage is equal to saving its kernels. Even the life and activity of the center, which is the source of life in the metropolis and the remainder of all active and daily flows of urban life, can be replaced in this view with wise changes in the sense of greater economic circulation. In the ontological reading, the city is the birth of human social nature, and in the epistemological reading, it is the birth of the material and group life factors of humans. The first cell of urban life is its center, which is the carrier of human will. As the nucleus of the city's creation, the center is constantly active during the city's growth. It is an element that, in the eyes of the citizens, is equivalent to the existence of the city. Although it gradually will offer new services and functions, it continues to exist until it acts as a symbol and a place for the emergence of human will and social nature. The indicator of this ability is the survival of the main social life of the city in its center, which is the most important place in the city (Mansouri, 2020, 154). Discovering the nature of the place as an objective-subjective phenomenon is also another reason for the dissemination of innovations and the promotion of new sciences, which come from the modernist form-centered clause.

The Necessity of Understanding the Space in Revitalization

In the current area, the revolution in our understanding

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Gruen" in 1969, traces of the reduction of the city as a whole to the layout of buildings and finding solutions for their location are evident. Gruen, who was one of the authors of modernism in urban planning, got a unique opportunity in Tehran to put his ideas to the test in Iran by removing the holistic wisdom of the Islamic-Iranian city, which was a product of the civilization of Iran and Islam. The collapse of Tehran's spatial organization, including its historical and active center and the orderly neighborhoods throughout history, was the result of the change in the view of the city from "an orderly whole of historical life in harmony with the environment" to "a collection of buildings and streets with designated uses". Naturally, the first thing that was damaged in the change of view of the city planners was the "system" governing the components of the city, then its "face".

A few decades after the domination of Iranian cities by Western modernists, efforts to restore the "damaged parts" of the cities started. The concept of restoration was redefined in imitation of the West, whose own cities were also damaged by modernist urbanization. For this purpose, guidelines for the restoration of objects, buildings, textures, and the city were established. In all restoration types, "objectivity" and "thingness" are the concerns of restoration. Iran's initial attitudes toward restoration and old textures were formed in 1971 during the first assembly on the preservation of historical cities and buildings. At this gathering, the issue of protecting and restoring these forms was brought up as a useful tool for the nation's development (Farrokh Zonozi, 2001). In the years 1968–1972 of the fourth and then the fifth construction plans, the issue of renovating the old and damaged neighborhoods was raised, but no specific action was taken. After the Islamic Revolution, in 1984, the Ministry of Interior issued instructions for the preparation of "psychological plans" through a circular to governorates across the country. This action can be considered the first serious intervention in the old texture of the city. These plans highlighted that the main problems with urban textures were the lack of vehicular and mainly physical access (Ablaghi, 2001, 114). What is certain is that the process and pattern of revitalizing urban textures have a partial, one-sided, and governmental view, and in this process, the highest priority is given to the improvement of the architectural form. The result of this action has been a decline in socio-economic development and a decrease in the life satisfaction of its residents (Yazdi, 2010; Naraghi, 2019). The Cultural Heritage Organization of Iran, which is in charge of the restoration types, based on the same definitions, compiled rules for the definition, protection, and intervention (Amendment Law of the Constitution of the Cultural Heritage Organization of the Country, 2017) of restorable but valuable urban textures. However, the focus of all the rules was on the architectural form. "The changeability of the urban space is in the essence of the old city, which has been able to maintain its vital existence due to the acceptance of various interactions that have occurred in its physical space, so how will it be able to be under absolute protection and stop or change the shape of its physical space from now on?"The principle of protection and preservation for the historical city that is still alive and has survived despite the inadequacies related to the daily lives of the citizens seems alien and cannot be unconditionally accepted" (Falamaki, 2005, 5). The architectural form-oriented protection of heritage is defined and implemented by relying on the dimensions, shape, and physical functions of the city, regardless of the values and cultural or spiritual contexts that have been legible in its past and present society. Concerning the physical perspective of conservation and restoration, Seyed Mohammad Beheshti (former head of the Cultural Heritage Organization and member of the Supreme Council of Cultural Heritage and Tourism) had a conversation with the magazine "Revival of Historical Buildings and Textures" about the restoration from a "Cultural Heritage Organization's Physical Perspective". He emphasized that "the ultimate purpose and goal of restoration will be protection, meaning that with the intention of protecting the building, we are infusing a new life into the old architectural form rather than reviving the current life in space" (Beheshti, 2017, 11). In a similar vein, the main focus of university education has been on the two categories: restoration of objects and bodies. Restoration means restoring the existing architectural form of a place to its original state, which is done by removing additional elements or collecting and recombining architectural form-associated elements without introducing new materials (Mirza Kuchak Khoshnevis, 2020). On the other hand, repairing the damage to large environments such as villages and cities is in its infancy. This is why the cultural heritage organization pays attention to the protection of the historical textures of the cities. The height regulations are set for the buildings adjacent to the monuments registered in the list of national monuments. Paragraph 21 of Article 3 of the Constitution of the Organization of Cultural Heritage

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of space has given rise to significant advancements in space-related sciences and arts. The concepts of architecture, city, and space have changed with the advent of the phenomena of place as a "whole" that is drawn from the observer's understanding of the actual and objective environment. In addition to the objective aspect, when a man makes an architectural form, he attempts to fulfill a need and establish a behavioral and cultural pattern. The architectural form can be used as a tool to convey a significant aspect of spatial cognition. One way to represent human development in a city setting is through restoration. Restoration can be one of the basics that includes the semantic and physical dimensions of the space required for its revival. In this process, if we choose small parts of restoration, we can deal with the material dimension of buildings, objects, or the environment; In the reading of each, the culture and its meaning will be an effective tool in restoration (Mohammad Moradi, Mojabi & Amirkabirian, 1991). The restoration process employing a conservation approach, emphasizes the importance of the concept of space and should be based on the objective-subjective components of the work to preserve the identity of the place. According to Nejadabrahimi and his colleagues, conservation is a social and cultural matter that deals with the values in society. All intervention strategies should be aimed at safeguarding a work's historical, social, and cultural value components if it has the most distinctive social and cultural elements (Nejad Ebrahimi, Pourjafar, Ansari & Hanachi, 2014). In the conventional reading, space is an external element including form and a physical form. It also reflects the reality of a recollection with the addition of the event. According to this approach, the architectural form, the event, and the space are all genuine elements that have taken place in a certain place or time (Mansouri, 2021). The quality that describes their objectivity and thingness is their reality. The cognitive reading of objectivity is central to the modern reading of space. It is an interpretation that emerges at the same time and in connection with the perception of the reality of the space in the eyes of the observer. In this approach, space is a dual objective-subjective category that is incompatible with postmodernist interpretations which creates a tangible connection between the architectural form of space and its semantic symbols. It is also incompatible with modernist views, which see space as an architectural form and an external entity. Although the space is objective, the "place-oriented" perspective reads it via the observer's thinking and interpretation, making it subjective. Put differently, space is a way of understanding the world. The most significant events in our immediate environment are instances of this kind of reading from space. The city, the pinnacle of human creation, with its boundless intricacies, produces the most conspicuous spatial manifestation as well as the most significant place and community-oriented landscape. Alleys, neighborhoods, homelands, and land are the next most well-known categories of places and landscapes. In Persian, land is formed by adding the prefix "sar," which denotes the earth's first constituent, superior element, identity-giving organ, the essence of life, origin of life, reason, holiness component, and driving force concerning the architectural form of space. The Persian speakers perceive the 'Sar zamin' to present a range of features with a certain originality and superiority for some reasons and use them for different areas ranging from an ethnic region in the motherland to a descriptive domain such as the freedmen's land or the homeland in Iran. When addressing the city, taking into consideration its place and landscape based on the aforementioned interpretation has two unique implications: first, it highlights the city's multifaceted nature, emphasizing that it should not be reduced to the sum of its parts. Secondly, in restoring the spirit's revival of the city and its entirety, the numerous layers that comprise the spirit and the observer's interpretation should be taken into consideration. The first need has been mostly satisfied in the process of planning methodologies evolving and intervening in the city's growth and restoration. From the comprehensive city plans that claimed to know the layers that make up the city to the structural or strategic plans that became popular after that, each added new layers to the city. They also contributed to creative methods for developing planning to the previous plans. However, all have this feature in common: they still pay attention to the city as a real and external thing. The perceptual layer of the city, which is derived from the observer's interpretation when facing the city, cannot be replaced by the evolution and expansion of layers of knowledge about the city or even the dimensions of intervention in the city. As a result, improving fundamental data and adding more layers contributing to city knowledge cannot make up for mistakes made concerning city knowledge. The restoration of the city to revive and restore the spirit and vitality of the city becomes important from this point of view. A review of the international charters for the protection and restoration of historical buildings and sites (2006) shows that in the initial approach to restoration, the

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focus has been on physical dimensions and gradually directed to other objective and real layers of the city.

Conclusion

What is today referred to as re-creation, while substantively and methodologically different from restoration, is presented in a different context. Today, in its interaction process, recreation takes into account the historical (reality of time), contextual (the reality of community), geographical (the reality of arena), cultural (the reality of event), symbolic (the reality of sign), and dimensions. In this process, what has changed is the number of layers that contribute to the manifestation of reality. Reality is something that exists outdoors and independently of the observer, and its existence is not conditioned by the mindset of the observer. While the reading of the space as a new place and landscape reveals a new layer of the city's existence, in the traditional reading, even in the period of pluralism of postmodernism, the existence order of the city appears only at the level of reality and objectivity, which is synonymous with thingness and objectivity. By interpreting the objective and real face of the city, the new reading reaches a new level of the phenomenon, which elevates its existence from a being without a soul to a being with a soul. In this reading, the spirit of the city is the interpretation and understanding of the observer in facing its reality. The fact that the place and landscape are considered universal is not because of the increase in real and objective layers, but because of their spiritual nature, the meaning of objectivity via the interpretation of the mind, and the granting of a unique nature over time, which causes the formation of the phenomenon's identity. Self-made and personalized methods of drawing or defining the concept of the city and justifying them by examples of the city, from physical components to contractual limits, are seen more than anything else in the process of restoration interventions. It is clear that due to the ambiguity of the topic, its scientific definition, and the internal and external logic used to evaluate propositions, we cannot expect clear results.

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