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Original Research Article

Pathology of Revitalizing Deteriorated Urban Fabrics in Iran from the Perspective of Balanced Renovation theory

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, the deterioration of urban decay has become a significant problem in the country. On the one hand, the expansion of urban decay, and on the other hand, the uneven process of renovating these fabrics has led to the emergence of new problems for the cities of the country. The analysis of the renovation damage reveals that the imbalance and inconsistency in various social, physical, economic dimensions, and other similar factors have caused disruption or disconnection with networks and urban development flows, resulting in decay in vulnerable and susceptible areas." Therefore, it can be said that deteriorated urban fabrics or lagged urban areas are the result of unfair urbanization and imbalanced urban development. For this reason, so far, there has not been a balance between the processes of renovation with the process of deterioration. The four main obstacles to Balanced Renovation are ambiguity of the fundamental and foundational concepts of renovation (lack of knowledge and lack of theoretical foundations), existence of conflicts in the governance system of renewal management, and lack of a strategic-executive plan for renewal, lack of active participation (actors) of target communities in renewal, especially people in policymaking, planning, and implementation of projects (distrust in promises, programs, and renewal management), and instability in managerial approaches, inability to coordinate departments, and weakness of responsible parties in coordinating departments and responsible organizations (lack of transparency in processes). With this process, it can be concluded that the persistence of deteriorated fabrics leads to the "decay", "decline", or "collapse" of the remaining Fabrics. In other words, the decay or collapse of tissue in such a situation means that these tissues have reached a point of irreversible redevelopment. Therefore, there is a need to open a path for rational, scientific, and intelligent intervention in the deteriorated urban fabrics of the country, which, based on the three fundamental insights and wisdom of "justice-based" redevelopment, "community-based" redevelopment, and "neighborhood-Oriented" redevelopment, will rejuvenate the deteriorated fabrics in a balanced manner. Given the fundamental insights and basic principles, Balanced Renovation, which aims to intervene rationally, scientifically, and intelligently in the deteriorated urban fabrics of the country, requires a systematic formulation. These principles can encompass all the objectives, plans, actions, and performances of revitalizing deteriorated urban decay within that framework for implementation and evaluation. The management system for revitalizing deteriorated urban fabrics primarily requires comprehensive perspectives, intellectual and practical balance, and rationality combined with intelligence in addressing the issue of urban decay in the country and promoting the revitalization of these areas. In this way, the goal of the balanced revitalization of deteriorated areas is realized and urban development is also balanced.

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Introduction

Deterioration is an important issue in urban life and a major concern for planners, policymakers, and managers in government, public, and private sectors. Deterioration, whether at the individual residential unit level or a specific area of urban space, creates vulnerability for cities and their residents in the face of disasters and emergencies, as well as limited access to services and new infrastructure. Therefore, urban deterioration and Urban deteriorated areas are fundamental topics in contemporary urban discussions. Consequently, considering the extensive volume and the quantitative and qualitative conditions of deteriorated areas, their redevelopment has typically been prioritized in major cities of the country. The following is a general overview of the problem identification of urban deteriorated areas and the damage assessment of their redevelopment in Iran, using the approach of " Balanced Renovation theory for deteriorated urban areas." Each of these sections briefly addresses different aspects of these topics.

The Problem of Deteriorated Urban Fabrics

Deteriorated urban areas have become a severe problem in the country in recent decades. Inadequate renovation measures have not only failed to solve the problem of these fabrics but have also become the cause of new issues in them. In addition, even the reforms within the fabric, within the framework of urban development plans and existing mechanisms to create balance in deteriorated areas, have not been responsive and have not achieved the desired outcome. By neglecting the unbalanced renovation from the fundamental goals of development and reducing these goals to their lowest level, the renovation of these fabrics has witnessed a qualitative decline in the results of actions day by day. This has led to a decrease in the quality of life and dissatisfaction of residents with deteriorated urban fabrics. These fabrics, with the accumulation of their issues, have become one of the major challenges of Iranian cities, making the complexity of dealing with and intervening in them more difficult. For this reason, the need for greater attention to any renovating action in them has multiplied. The negligence of its problem identification is considered one of the most important issues affecting the renovation of deteriorated urban fabrics.

The Main Causes of the Emergence, Formation, and Persistence of Deterioration of Urban Decay

With regard to the available evidence and indications and the studies conducted (Andalib, 2014A), the initial grounds and facilitating factors for the formation of urban decay can be attributed to factors such as the function of the urban poverty production cycle, macroeconomic imbalance, unplanned population movements, emotional growth accelerations, geographical concentration of profit-making ventures, density of activities, and the like (Wacquant, 1993). The combination of these factors has led to various forms of urban decay.

The main causes of the current situation and the expansion of unstable urban areas in the country from a legal perspective are mentioned in the National Strategic Document for the Revitalization, Rehabilitation, Renovation, and Empowerment of Decayed and Inefficient Urban Fabrics in 2014 in three groups of related factors. (Collection of Laws and Regulations for Sustainable Urban Regeneration, 2015; 19).

The reasons for the formation and persistence of decay can also be understood with network and flow analysis, in the sense that urban decay generally occurs when it separates from networks (economic, social, cultural, etc.), breaks connections (with other neighborhoods, decision-making centers, etc.), and weakens flows (economic, social, cultural, etc.). In any case, decaying urban fabric shares common aspects with each other due to decay in general, but due to the factors influencing their decay, they have different characteristics; these differences have identified decaying fabrics in different types.

The Definition and Concept of Deterioration in Deteriorated Areas

The survival and evolution of different species of living organisms depend on their "adaptation" to different and changing conditions. In other words, species in nature persist if they can adapt to new and variable conditions.

Urban Fabrics, as a species of living organisms, require permanent adaptation to changing and new conditions. This adaptation has become more complex in changing social, economic, environmental, and other conditions.

If these fabrics cannot adapt to changing and new conditions, they gradually experience

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"deterioration," "lag[1]," and "gradual decay," leading to the verge of "collapse."

The most important event faced by these Fabrics is the lag caused by their inability to adapt to changing and new conditions, indicating a lack of social and urban justice. For this reason, the manifestation of this situation is evident and observable in urban areas. In addition, changing this situation can be considered one of the most important challenges of urban development programs and plans. Thus, lagged urban areas are the result of inadequacies in development management structures, both at the national and local levels. In this case, the concept of lag or obsolescence refers to the lack of understanding of the changing conditions and the alignment of the urban area with them, leading to the disruption of order, coordination, and balance in various dimensions of urban development.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the continuity of the lag of deteriorated Fabrics from other urban areas leads to the "decay" or "collapse" of the lagged urban areas. In other words, the decay or collapse of Fabrics in such a situation means that these urban Fabrics reach a point of irreversibility in the process of renewal. Thus, preserving or remaining the fabrics implies the impossibility of its return to the renewal cycle[2].

In this case, the loss of "residential prestige" can be considered as one of the signs of deteriorated urban areas.

The Extent and Intensity of Fabric Degradation (Size of Lag)

Additionally, to identify the extent, size of lag, and intensity of fabric degradation and deteriorated elements in an urban area, one can use the "average city level" indicators. Therefore, it is necessary to determine the average city level in the desired factors to be able to depict a clearer and relatively accurate image of the extent and intensity of tissue degradation by measuring the distance from the relevant indicator to the average city level in the deteriorated urban area. In this way, the intensity of fabric degradation or the size of the lag is determined by the "distance from the relevant indicator" in the urban area "from the average city level."

Summary of the Problem of Deteriorated Areas

In the summary of the problem of deteriorated urban areas (Andalib, 2017; 111-115), it becomes clear that the imbalance and inconsistency in various social, physical, and economic dimensions, and similar factors have led to disruption or disconnection with urban networks and development flows, and have resulted in deterioration in vulnerable and susceptible areas. Therefore, it can be concluded that urban deteriorated areas or lagged urban areas are the product of unfair urbanization and unbalanced urban development (Conway, 2000). By summarizing the above and considering what has been mentioned in the definition and concept of erosion and deterioration, the deteriorated fabric can be defined as follows:"The deteriorated fabric refers to parts of urban areas where the consequences of deterioration have led to a decrease in the physical and functional quality, and they are located in a lower position than the average, conventional, and 'average level of the city'.

• Renovation of the deteriorated urban fabric in Iran

One of the most important objectives of urban development management is to improve the efficiency of cities. Deteriorated urban fabrics can hinder the optimal efficiency of cities. For this reason, the following necessities are considered to address the current situation and promote the renovation of the deteriorated urban fabric in Iran (Mansouri, 2013):

- Prevention of exacerbation of deterioration and continuous increase in its physical and non-physical dimensions,
- Mitigation of concerns arising from potential risks and damages, especially earthquakes,
- Necessity for the executive management of the country and urban management to address the serious problem of deteriorated urban fabric,
- Achievement of social justice in the country and elimination of deprivation while preserving the dignity of residents in these areas,
- Establishment of balance, coordination, unity, and coherence in urban spaces
- Utilization of urban development capacities (material and non-material resources) to fulfill the role of a metropolis,
- Enhancing the identity[3] and beautification of the city,
- Improving the quality of life for residents of the fabric.

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Pathology of Renovation Approaches in Iran

Pathology of renovation, through the increasing trend of tissue degradation (the accelerating trend of the elevator) on the one hand, and the slow and sometimes rapid (staircase trend) renovation on the other hand, indicates undesirable and unsuccessful renovation in Iran. Therefore, the fundamental question is why, despite all available capacities, the issue of deteriorating urban fabrics in Iran has not been addressed and remained unresolved. What is the problem?

Fundamental Questions of Unrealized Renovation

In response to the problem of unrealized renovation, despite efforts and actions taken, it seems that there are inherent reasons for the inability to solve the current problem, which requires scientific analysis, explanation, and understanding. A subject that seems both easy and challenging, but requires attention to the following important questions (Andalib, 2014B, 111-115):

- Are deteriorated urban fabrics really a problem?
- If yes, whose problem is it? (the problem of managers, experts and researchers, rulers, city dwellers, or residents of dilapidated structures)
- Can the problem be perceived the same by all groups and audiences?
- If deteriorated urban fabrics are a problem, what kind of problem is it?
- Is the problem of the future or the past?
- Has the physical space of the problem disappeared or have the historical values been destroyed?
- Is this problem structural or functional? Structural in the sense that do we want to renovate while the economic, social, and cultural structures of our country are generating dilapidated structures? (In this case, no matter how much renovation is done, it is still behind in relation to the volume of deteriorated fabric produced).
- Do the residents of deteriorated fabrics also believe in the existence of such a problem and see it as a problem for themselves fundamentally?
- Is their priority to renovate their homes or to find a job and work for daily livelihood?

= Or is their main problem something else? In other words, what is their mental problem?

Isn't this the reason why they have not entered the field of renovation for many years and do not. In this way, it can be concluded that perhaps the problem of deteriorated fabrics is not in our minds, or if it exists, it is not a consensual issue, because, unlike problems for which some actions have been taken, no effective and decisive action has been taken in this direction. In addition to what has been mentioned, it is possible to refer to other dimensions in explaining the obstacles and problems of revitalizing deteriorated urban fabrics. The most important ones are the definition of the subject matter and lack of knowledge, empirical abandonment, complex and extensive dimensions of the subject, wide scale, lack of legal and regulatory support, lack of sustainable financial resources, technical and technological capacity, and perhaps most importantly, the subject of management, planning, and implementation.

The Results of Pathology and the Reasons for the Failure of Renovation in Iran

Based on the explanation of the obstacles and problems of renovating deteriorated urban fabrics, it seems that people's resistance to government renovation policies (unilateral intervention) is considered one of the main reasons for the failure of renovation and, consequently, the achievement of expected goals and the rights and demands of residents of deteriorated areas. Additionally, the adoption of conventional approaches in various fields has led to the lack of dynamism and acceptance of innovative renovation patterns, resulting in its stagnation. As a result, four main barriers against renovation which have been caused by delayed and hesitant actions, can be listed as follows:

First Barrier: Ambiguity in understanding the fundamental and foundational concepts of urban renewal (lack of knowledge and theoretical foundations),

Second Barrier: Existence of conflicts in the governance system of urban renewal management and lack of strategic-executive planning for renewal,

Third Barrier: Lack of active participation by stakeholders, especially the public, in policymaking, planning, and implementation of projects (distrust in promises, plans, and management of renewal),

Fourth Barrier: Instability of management approaches, inability to coordinate departments,

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and weakness of responsible parties in coordinating departments and responsible agencies (lack of process transparency).

Thus, it is observed that "balance and equilibrium are necessary for the stability of a system." Disruption of the balance between the indicators of "average city balance" in deteriorated structures, due to network disruptions or interruptions, has intensified the imbalance phenomenon and consequently disrupted the sustainable order of these structures (Andalib, 2017, 197). Based on the aforementioned, two fundamental points are highlighted in the pathology of urban renewal in deteriorated structures (Mansouri & Khani, 2008, 14):

The origin of the problems with the fabrics s is outside their boundaries.

Reforms within the framework of current urban development plans, including comprehensive and detailed plans, and existing mechanisms, are not feasible.

As a result, action is taken to address these two issues through separate paths:

Upper-level actions to attract the attention of the comprehensive plan towards adopting general policies that lead to the elimination of poverty and deprivation in dilapidated areas.

Technical measures to reform the spatial organization of the tissue with a new approach to urban issues.

The Necessity of Developing a Balanced Conceptual, Theoretical, and Scientific Framework for Balanced Renovation

Considering what has been previously mentioned regarding the concept of deteriorated urban decay, the following definitions can serve as the basis for developing a conceptual, theoretical, and scientific framework for Balanced Renovation: "Deterioration means the lag of the urban area in terms of networks and urban development flows." "Renewal means the Rejuvenation (Sepanlou, 2009) of the urban area in terms of networks and urban development flows."

In other words Deterioration refers to "the process of imbalanced reproduction of constituent elements and components of social, cultural, economic, physical networks, etc. in static conditions." Also, Renovation means "the process of balanced reproduction of constituent elements and components of social, cultural, economic, physical networks, etc. in dynamic and variable conditions." In this case, renovation can be understood as the process of compensating for the lag of urban areas in terms of networks and development flows and adapting them to changing and new conditions. A gradual, continuous, regular, coordinated, and balanced process that is progressive. In such conditions, the life of a city or a part of it becomes a system that, through strengthening or creating flows in social, cultural, economic, and physical networks… leads to relative productivity and efficiency proportional to the capacities and resources. Based on the definitions provided above, it can be concluded that renovation is an activity that should be ongoing over time, both in terms of theoretical knowledge and practical application. Renovation does not belong to a specific period where it can be done overnight and create a transformation. Therefore, renovation is a dynamic, gradual, permanent, and evolutionary concept. For this reason, it is necessary to pay attention to this fundamental concept in any ideation pattern for implementation in the renovation of deteriorated urban fabrics.

The clarification of a coherent conceptual framework in the subject of renovating deteriorated urban fabrics, while generating knowledge, and ensuring the continuity of renovation work based on logical principles, requires comprehensive, comprehensive, integrated, and balanced reading regarding the overall goals and expected results of Balanced Renovation. This requires defining the fundamental subjects of renovation in a complementary system[4] as follows:

- Ideals and objectives,
- Theories and approaches,
- Methods and techniques,
- Infrastructure and conFabrics,
- Experiences and achievements.

As long as the complementary system of renovation subjects interacts with each other in a coordinated manner, their orientation will be a cohesive and interconnected, integrated and balanced set in the path of positive renovation goals (Fig. 1). If, on one hand, due to the occurrence of various abnormalities, the mentioned fundamental topics are disrupted and initial gaps appear among them, in this situation, the balance has been lost in the renovation, but it has not yet passed the stage of relative balance and the possibility of restoring balance exists

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by taking necessary actions on the structure (Fig. 2). On the other hand, if, in the absence of appropriate attention and deliberation, renovation gradually faces more problems and reaches the stage of fundamental gaps between the main influential factors on balanced renovation and its fundamental topics, in that case, restoring balance to the urban fabric becomes very difficult and requires more precise and serious measures. In this situation, the system of Balanced Renovation may undergo antagonism instead of synergy and deviate from the predicted goals (Fig. 3).

Therefore, maintaining a balance between the behavior, approach, and structure of each of the fundamental subjects on one hand, and their interaction with each other in this system, will be determinant; a subject that the theory of balanced revitalization of deteriorated urban fabrics seeks (Andalib, 2017). Therefore, the following key elements can be identified to achieve the goals and expected functions of the balanced revitalization of deteriorated urban neighborhoods and emphasize them:

• Fundamental insights and basic components of Balanced Renovation

Based on the findings of studies and research conducted on the fundamental subjects of revitalization, the following three insights and components can be considered in all deteriorated urban areas, regardless of their specific conditions. In fact, relying on these three components, balanced revitalization of deteriorated urban fabrics organizes the deteriorated areas and evaluates the study, analysis, and proposals within this framework:

"Justice-based" renovation, the spirit and soul of the city

"Community-based" renovation, meaning the empowerment of life

"Neighborhood-centered" renovation, the body and mind

• Principles of Balanced Renovation of Deteriorated urban fabrics

Based on fundamental insights and basic principles, Balanced Renovation, which aims to intervene rationally, scientifically, and intelligently in the deteriorated urban fabrics of the country, requires the formulation of principles. Based on these principles, all goal-setting, planning, actions, and performance of renovating deteriorated urban fabrics can be put into practice and evaluated.



Fig. 1. The main Subject of balanced Renovation. Source: Author.

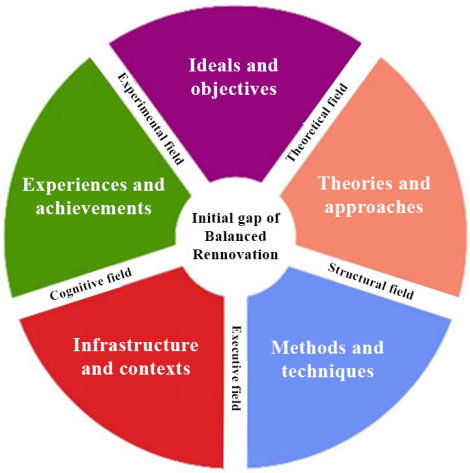


Fig. 2. Creating disruption between the main subjects of the balanced Renovation system. Source: Author.

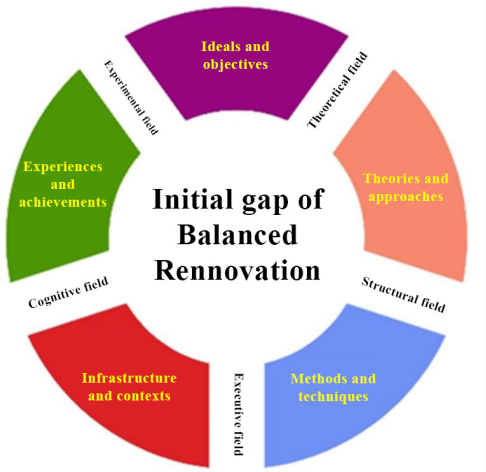


Fig. 3. Creating a serious gap between the main subjects of the balanced renovation system. Source: Author.

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- **Comprehensive perspective**

The system of Balanced Renovation is integrated, meaning that there is a unity in which the internal elements are interconnected and related structurally, and cannot be separated from each other. Thus, the indicators of renovation must grow in various dimensions, including physical, social, cultural, economic, functional, environmental, legal, and managerial aspects. In other words, if progress is made in one dimension and not in another, this renovation will not be comprehensive and therefore not Balanced.

- **Balance**[5]

Balance is a measure of social equity and justice, a space for urban development. Balance is measured based on weight and the ratio of weights. Therefore, in addition to being comprehensive, redevelopment should also be balanced. In other words, different dimensions of redevelopment should grow together. If balance is not maintained in redevelopment, the backward parts will hinder the progress of other parts, and those that are ahead generally do not bring the backward parts forward.

- **Intelligence**

Balanced Renovation with comprehensive perspective and equitable distribution ensures the sustainability and continuity of the system. Therefore, the principle of intelligence in renovation means using intelligent tools, models, methods, and processes to control, manage, and develop all fundamental aspects and influential factors of urban renovation. In this way, it anticipates continuous adaptability through flexibility in its procedures and has a realistic approach to changes.

Conclusion

In recent decades, urban decay has become a serious problem in the country. On the one hand, the deterioration of urban structures, and on the other hand, the slow process of revitalizing these structures has led to the emergence of new problems for the country's cities. The overall result of the revitalization efforts has not been able to balance the process of decay. In other words, the overall outcome of using exacerbating factors has taken precedence over balancing and has not been able to achieve significant success. therefore, there is a need to find a rational, scientific, and intelligent approach to intervene in the deteriorating urban structures of the country. The principles of balanced revitalization of urban decayed structures are a step towards assisting theoretical knowledge of the subject. The goal of these principles is to develop a framework for evaluating all objectives, planning, actions, and performances of revitalizing urban decayed fabrics. The management system for renovating deteriorated urban fabrics is primarily in need of a comprehensive approach, intellectual and practical Symmetry, and rationality combined with intelligence to overcome the problem of deteriorated urban fabrics in the country and promote the revitalization of these fabrics. In this case, achieving the balanced revitalization of deteriorated fabrics and balanced urban development will also be realized."

Endnotes

1. aken from "Lessons from Mashhad: an experience in revitalizing dilapidated urban areas" by Abolfath Sepanlou, Kondor Publications, 1388 (2009), "What is dilapidation? Dilapidation is the lag of a place through time." Page 31.
2. Like an airplane, which the state of stall or technically known as "stall" means the loss of controllability by the pilot and its inevitable descent.
3. Collective identity is actually the collective effort of humans to sustain and differentiate material and spiritual life, based on family and kinship criteria and abstract concepts such as common religion, ethnicity, national identity, individual identity, religious identity, and political views. The identity-building components in the city include natural, artificial, and human components.
4. Arrangement, order and system, rule and regularity, which lead to the enhancement of the power of movement in the intended path and the ability to predict the future.
5. The Balance refers to that part of equilibrium that is perceived by the senses, such as weights, numbers, and scales.

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