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URBAN REGENERATION: A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY IN HISTORICAL SQUARES

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ABSTRACT

An influencing paradigm which presented as an integrated approach in social, cultural, environmental and economical dimensions is the concept of sustainable Urban Regeneration, which tries to resolve urban challenges, environmental crises and development problems for enhancing quality of life and creating balance between Growth, Preservation and Regeneration. However in recent years social sustainability has gained increased recognition as a fundamental component of sustainable development, beginning to receive political and institutional endorsement within the Urban Regeneration agenda. The first objective of this research is to clarify the Urban Regeneration definitions, Principles and concepts with emphasize on social dimension of Sustainability. It attempts to explore the various aspects of social sustainability including social equity, satisfaction of human needs, well being, quality of life, social interaction, cohesion and inclusion, sense of community and sense of place in urban Regeneration strategies. Later, it specifically concentrates on Sustainable Social Sustainability Strategies in historical Public Squares as one of the main pillars in urban social life. The results of research indicate that a strategic approach including fulfilling citizen's needs, providing social infrastructures, enhancing public participation, accelerating economic growth, Preservation the historical identity and green space management are the major contributing approaches in urban regeneration strategies to achieve social sustainability in historical Public Squares of cities.

Keywords: Sustainable Urban Regeneration, Social Sustainability, historical Public Square

INTRODUCTION

Historical Public Square is one of the main pillars in social life that has effects on economic, social, architectural and symbolic dimensions. They are where people gather and social life takes place since the ancient times. In the last few decades, many public squares have lost their function and role due to the changes in use of public spaces. Regarding this fact, Historical Public Squares have been involved in urban regeneration projects to preserve urban identity and sense of belonging among citizens. During the recent decade, the literature on sustainable urban regeneration has considerably increased. However, among the three stated pillars of sustainability (Environmental, Economical and Social pillars), social aspect of sustainability has been seriously considered after the year 2000 as an integral part of sustainability. This study is aimed for introducing comprehensive strategies of future and contemporary cities by drawing conclusions on "What are the urban regeneration strategic approaches for enhancing social sustainability in historical public squares of cities?" In order to answer this question, this article studies theoretical background related to sustainable urban regeneration, definitions, Evolution, frameworks, perspectives, dimensions, and finally

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investigating the concept of social sustainability in urban regeneration studies. The aim is to present a framework which can be considered for wider use of sustainable urban regeneration by urban designers, planners, and policy makers in future practice concerning social sustainability.

The Evolution of Urban Regeneration: The term "Urban regeneration" evolved after the Second World War in Europe. Over the last 50 years, the nature of regeneration policy has changed direction several times. These changes have been implemented to suppress the extent of urban problems and included comprehensive attempts to retrieve the decline in urban areas. As shown explicitly in Fig.1 there are different words used in each decades: urban reconstruction, urban revitalization, urban improvement, urban renewal, and more recently in UK urban renaissance and sustainable urban regeneration; this sequence of words can be looked at as a sort of summary of the evolution of the concept of urban regeneration and related policies. Peter Roberts (2000) provides a scheme of this evolution, using 7 key criteria to describe it, such as: strategy, key actors, spatial level, economic focus, social content, physical emphasis and environmental approach [1]. During the 1950s and 1960s, the predominant approach of Large-Scale urban Construction after World War has been driven based on modernists approaches. Later, from the middle of the 1960s to the late 1970s, public welfare was prompted despite the deprivation in inner city areas [2]. From the 1970s it has been realized that many urban problems are caused by structural economic change; therefore, economic development was required to assist the area restoration so area improvement was dominant policy of these years.

In the 1980s, regeneration policy became closely associated with neo-liberalism, thus private sector property-led regeneration was leading strategy, Couch [3] describes this evolution of urban regeneration as follows: "When we talk of urban regeneration we are talking of something more general than urban renewal, reuse, renovation and reinvestment in the physical structure of existing urban areas. We are talking about investment where it has declined, of increasing employment where it has declined, increasing consumer expenditure and increasing population; in essence we are talking about economic growth" [3]. Between early and middle of 1990s, local area-based partnerships were created providing with compensation for public funds. Cameron and Doling (1994) described the needed changes in urban regeneration policies as follows: "As evidenced by these objectives, City Challenge continues a concern with economic development and the creation of commercial opportunities, but unlike the approach in the 1980s there is a recognition that the benefits may not simply 'trickle- down' to deprived local residents unless there are specific programs to ensure that this happens, especially programs of education and training" [4]. The beginning of the 21st century has brought new holistic and integrated policy which, Roberts [1] defines as follows: "Comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and seeks to bring about a lasting environment in the economical, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subjected to change" [1].

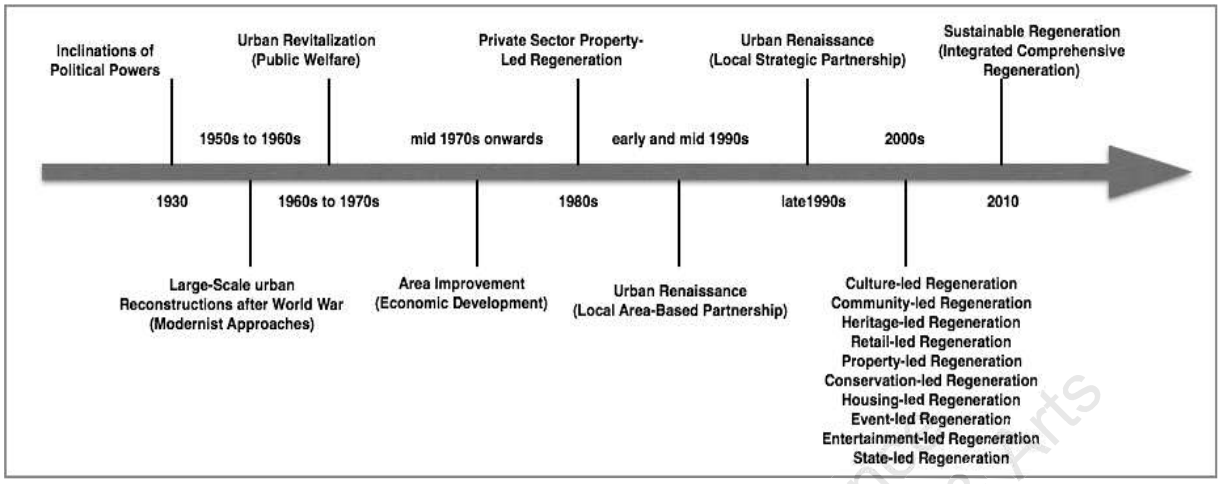


Fig 1. Evolution of urban regeneration Approaches and Policies [Author]

Sustainable Urban Regeneration: An influencing paradigm which presented as an integrated approach in social, cultural, environmental and economical dimensions is the concept of "sustainability" and "sustainable development", which tries to resolve urban challenges, environmental crises and development problems for enhancing quality of life and creating balance between Growth, Development and Preservation. After 1990s, "urban sustainability" and "sustainable urban development" appeared in academic literature. There are various studies, which argued that any effort for combination of "Urban Regeneration" and "Development" should include "Sustainability" as the fundamental principle for future urban policies [5]. In this sense, regeneration is increasingly influenced by concept of sustainability. However, sustainable regeneration scheme should therefore endeavor to lessen social exclusion and boost the economic reintegration of disadvantaged urban areas. In some cases, urban regeneration should also contribute to the conservation of structures of architectural merit and significant historical value.

Table 1. Chronological Review to Sustainable Urban Regeneration Definitions [Author]

Chronological Review to "Sustainable Urban Regeneration"(SUR) Definitions
Rogers in a report titled "Toward Urban Renaissance" argues that " From urban experiences in Barcelona and Amsterdam it can be learned that " Urban Renovation should be based on design, however for creating sustainability, this situation should be done based on economical and social dimensions of the city. It was also added that compact, multi-centered, multi-functional city with the ability for walking, biking and public transportation is considered as the most sustainable form of cities [6].
Key concepts in sustainable urban regeneration to achieve sustainable development are Social Improvement to fulfill citizens' needs, Environmental Preservation, Use of Natural resources, Employment opportunities and constant economic growth [7].
Urban Regeneration is an integrated and holistic approach, which included three purposes (3E)(Economy, Equity, Environment) with the aim of economic competitiveness, reducing

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inequality, Environment preservation and maintenance to develop policies for public and private organizations and other institutions [8].
Sustainable Urban Regeneration Approach presented a leading strategy of decision-making process, which is inclusive, competitive and environmentally sustainable [9].
Sustainable Urban Regeneration is a kind of redevelopment to create long-term influences and considered the social, economical and environmental aspects as well. This Long-term perspective encompasses all three pillars of sustainability in the very core of discussions [10].
Urban Regeneration can enhance sustainability and quality of life, if the principles of "Participation of People", Social Equity, Environment quality, revitalization and enhancing economic growth will be its results and achievements [11].
Urban Regeneration has been seen as a tool for sustainable development, and its application has been expressed on projects with long-term thoughts, targeted to the benefit of the citizens and the city, which are supported by principles of sustainability for regeneration of cities [12].

Urban Social Sustainability: Due to the extensive applications of social sustainability concept in urban disciplines, there is an increasing trend among researchers to view the concept from an urban design perspective and identify related aspects that contribute to this concept. In the notion of urban social sustainability, The chronological analysis indicates how traditional themes, such as equity, poverty reduction and livelihood, are increasingly been complemented or replaced by more intangible and less measurable concepts such as identity, sense of place and community stability and security. Reviewing existing definitions of social sustainability in related literature suggested that there are common characteristics: First Factor; Future Focus (or Long-term viability and promotion); it is indicated that social sustainability is primarily about valuing and protecting positive aspects of cultures [13] and promoting current conditions-encompassing individuals, communities and societies, and also ensuring the qualities for generations to come. It focuses on continuing ability of an urban setting where survivals of human beings in addition to community thriving conditions are guaranteed for generations for a long time. Second Factor; Satisfaction of needs (basic needs and access to resources); It relates to both human and society; Relevant to individuals, it follows Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and covers physiological (food, water, health and safety), social (relationships, confidence and mutual respect) and self-actualization (creativity and morality) levels [14]. On the other hand, it is about provided opportunities and available resources in society in community level. Third Factor; Socially cohesive and physically integrated urban unit; It is about relational aspects of society but also on individual and personal aspects. The significance of inter-relationships between social and physical worlds is highly elaborated in the current extensive social sustainability literature. In many existing definitions of social sustainability, physical setting is considered as being conductive to social cohabitation, socially integrated and promoting well-being and quality of life of the diverse group. Such communities are described as well balanced and well connected that can fulfill a wide range of those living or working there [15]. In table 2 different parameters of

social sustainability in relation to urban studies have been collected through academic references.

Table 2. General aspects in reviewing social sustainability in relation to urban context [Author]

General Aspects (Reviewing "Social Sustainability" in "Urban Literature")
Social Equity: Includes equity of access to key services (including health, education, transport, housing and recreation)
Satisfaction of Human needs: Relevant to individuals, it follows Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and covers physiological (food, water, health and safety), social (relationships, confidence and mutual respect) and self-actualization (creativity and morality) levels.
Quality of Life: It is the sum of factors that contribute to the social, environmental and economic well being of citizens. It covers aspects such as well being, happiness and satisfaction.
Social Interaction (Cohesion and Inclusion): It is about right and opportunities to participate in community and interact with other members of community. It encompasses cohabitation of culturally and socially diverse groups in societies where people involve in a wide variety of social activities and preventing social exclusion.
Pride, Sense of Place and culture (Identity): It is about people's precipitations of a certain place. It mainly relates to a positive sense of attachment, dependent and identity that people feel about the place they live
Sense of Community: It is about social interaction of people living in a given area, related with sense of community or place attachment
Future Focus: Social sustainability is primarily about valuing and protecting positive aspects of cultures

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Sustainable Urban Regeneration and Social Sustainability of historical Public Square

Throughout the sustainable perspectives, there has been a 'Social' dimension to the regeneration. In this context, the concepts of 'Community' and 'Social life' have become the central focus of the analysis. Urban Regeneration, together with social sustainability, has become a mainstream policy for the development of "sustainable communities". Reviewing related literature shows that, in sustainable urban regeneration Practice, the focus is not only limited to preserve the cultural heritage but also improving quality of citizens' life and fulfilling their satisfaction are the major purposes. In the following table, sustainable urban regeneration approaches in historical public squares with emphasize on social sustainability have been proposed. In table 3 general approaches of sustainable urban regeneration in historical public squares have

been introduced and some strategies have been proposed to enhance social sustainability.

Table 3. Sustainable Urban Regeneration Approaches in Historical Public Squares with emphasize on social sustainability [Author]

Sustainable Urban Regeneration Approaches in Historical Public Squares with emphasize on Social Sustainability	
Approaches	**Proposed Strategies**
Enhancing Public Participation	1. Improvement of the public understanding of historical public square's regeneration project 2. Creating sense of social responsibility among citizens through transparent decision-making for public squares' possible future urban identity 3. Monitoring the effectiveness of urban regeneration policies and implementation in historical public squares and assessing their effectiveness
Accelerating Economic Growth	4. Increasing job opportunities by regeneration of historical squares facades and adapt them with current social needs 5. Providing tourist attractions by regeneration of historical squares to improve local economy 6. Creating subway network for preventing migration from the historical core of the city
Fulfilling Citizens' Needs	7. Providing flexible and multi-functional design in the middle of square for public gathering 8. Providing sitting and walking areas, potential service areas, weather protection and appropriate paving 9. Providing accessibility (by Foot/Car) of historical square from different spots
Green Space Management	10. Utilizing aesthetic features in designing different natural elements of square 11. Designing green space in historical square's surrounding for passive and active social activities 12. Organizing various applications in terms of time, so that during the 24 hours, some spaces would be active in the historical square
Providing Public infrastructures	13. Using Urban billboard which illustrates the spatial transformation of historical square throughout the time 14. Limiting the entry of all vehicles in historical public square surrounding in the peak traffic hours 15. Decreasing compulsory uses like stations and offices in public square's surroundings
Preservation and Historical Identity	16. Regeneration the historical facades of the square in order to create a single and unified identity 17. Reviving some of the traditional functions of the historical square to preserve socio-cultural identity of the square 18. Organizing Workshops, Seminars, Public meetings, to increase the awareness of people about the historical value of square

Conclusion: This paper emphasized on the concept of sustainable Urban Regeneration and social sustainability in historical public squares. In this regard, urban regeneration

approaches were studied with the emphasize on enhancing social sustainability and research findings are listed as below:

- It is identified that the concept of "urban regeneration" and "sustainability" has became the major policies in recent decade, however, any effort for combination of "Urban Regeneration" and "Development" should include "Sustainability" as the fundamental principle for future urban policies.
- Chronological Reviewing of the Urban Regeneration policies over the last 50 years, clarifies that the nature of regeneration policy has changed direction several times. Finally, the beginning of the 21st century has brought new holistic and integrated policy, which is sustainable urban Regeneration.
- General aspects in reviewing social sustainability in relation to urban context can be categorized as Social Equity, Satisfaction of Human needs, Quality of Life, Social Interaction, Sense of Place, Sense of Community and Future Focus.
- A comparative analysis revealed that throughout the sustainable perspectives, there has been a 'Social' dimension to the regeneration. In this regard, general Sustainable Urban Regeneration approaches in Historical Public Squares with emphasize on Social Sustainability included: Enhancing Public Participation, Accelerating Economic Growth, Fulfilling Citizens' Needs, Green Space Management, Providing Public infrastructures and Preservation and Historical Identity which can be considered in future urban regeneration guidelines in historical public squares of cities.

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