Neighborhoods’ Quality of Life Indicators

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Abstract
Today, the old structures of old neighborhoods are no longer responsive to the changes of the modern life, and as a result, historical contexts have undergone irrational and unjustified changes. The revitalization of historical textures is a sensitive and complex process that requires accurate recognition of the old texture and also, the whole system of the city and the regional system in order to achieve its organization and its successful revival. Needless to say that there should be enough attention to the economic, social and physical dimensions of these texture as well as their problems. Older neighborhoods require a controlled movement to continue their lives. Otherwise, their degradation and gradually removal will be quite inevitable. An unfortunate fate for all its values, a destiny that will be tied to the culture and traditions of the people of the city. This research seeks to achieve a rational balance between the preservation and restoration of the fundamental foundations of historical areas, which can help them improve the quality of life and the continuity of these neighborhoods, and ultimately lead to the preservation and restoration of the original skeleton of the city.

Key words: Revival of historical areas, quality improvement of life, life quality indicators, residents of historical areas

1-Introduction
In recent years, historical and ancient textures of the city have been abandoned and as a result, have been subject to numerous issues owing to neglect. The underlying values of these structures, including the historic buildings and their physical-spatial organization, which are in fact the memories of the past and the city’s people, are under the influence of the numerous problems. Over the last century, Iranian lifestyle has undergone fundamental changes and principal transformations to such an extent that today, there are few effects of the long and rich history of the past culture and civilization (Bouchani 2004). Different studies on cities in Iran imply that treatments toward these areas were mainly based on the preservation and restoration of precious monuments and there were no efficient and specific planning for the restoration and restoration of the socioeconomic and cultural life of these areas (Shakibamanesh et al., 2009).

Urban neighborhoods in Iran have experienced many changes throughout history, so today the shape and function of the old urban neighborhoods have completely changed and neighborhoods with a completely different structure and function have emerged or replaced (Shokouee, 1994). Old city neighborhoods in some cities, despite maintaining their physical
structure, have largely lost their social and economic functions, and the early inhabitants have
given their place to new inhabitants with different characteristics and have commercial and
administrative usages. This has made the neighborhoods that were once mature and have high
socioeconomic levels, today are either vacant or emigrant and low-income workers (Khaksari et al. 2009).

1.1- Promoting quality of life
There are different types of definition about life quality. Liu in 1974, described the quality of
life as "a new title for the concept of the old material and psychological well-being of people
in their environment". Moller and Schlemmer in 1983, defined quality of life as the welfare of
individuals and groups under social and economic conditions. Foo 2000, sees quality of life as
the overall satisfaction of life. Pacione in 2003, defined the quality of life as: The term
"quality of life" generally refers to the environment in which people live (pollution and
quality of housing), as well as to some of its characteristics and characteristics (eg, health and
education). Costanza et al. in 2007, defines quality of life as the level of human needs in
relation to the perceptions of individuals and groups of mental well-being. Quality of Life
WHO defined QOL as an individual’s perception of his/her position in life, in the context of
the culture and value systems in which they live, and in relation to their goals, expectations,
standards, and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept, affected in a complex way by the
person’s physical health, psychological state, and level of independence, social relationships,
and their relationship to salient features of their environment (The WHOQOL Group, 1995).
Many social science thinkers, as well as some architects and planners who seek to optimize
the environment, emphasize the need to pay attention to the required qualities.

1.2- Components of improving the quality of life in the neighborhood
It is almost impossible to find a set of common characteristics and criteria in order to index
the quality of urban life due to its multidisciplinary and multidimensional nature and it can be
said that all social and economic indicators of urban quality of life are value-based and there
is no such an indicator that can completely include all important and interrelated elements that
shape the quality of life in urban areas. These indicators include:

- Social and cultural components
- Economic component
- Physical components
- Communication and transportation components

Measurement of urban quality of life has been based on four basic indicators, each of which,
containing many variables to measure and accurately evaluate the quality of urban quality of
life (Kokabi et al., 2005).

2- Measures to promote the quality of life in the neighborhood
The clarity in understanding of the neighborhood and the easy perception and linking the elements and its components with other events and places can be considered as a neighborhood identity. Meaning in the neighborhood is directly related to its quality and spatial form, while it also has a strong dependence to culture. An identifiable neighborhood is a place that can be distinguished from other places and neighborhoods (Lynch, 1981). Neighborhood readability is among the criteria which is considered for identity and sustainability of neighborhoods. Neighborhoods and urban spaces can have an understandable structure. For example, the loss and confusion of people in the city and the neighborhoods, especially strangers, is a negative experience. To accomplish this, signs can be considered as important elements in neighborhood readability with the aim of navigating and guiding. These signs can be presented in the form of unique monuments, special landscapes, street shapes, high rise buildings and certain physical elements (Chapman, 2005).

2.1- Identity and vitality

One of the effective factors in creating vitality in the neighborhood is the availability of proper public spaces. These spaces, with their attractiveness and impact on the human mind, can provide the liveliness of the neighborhood. For example, the allocation of suitable space for pedestrians, economic activities, slow traffic, convenient amenities and amenities for buying (not only from an economic point of view, but also from recreational aspects), recreation areas such as cinema and theater, sports stadiums, museums, cultural centers, restaurant and libraries promote livelihood in the neighborhood (Lynch, 1981). A vital space is where in a wide range of daytime, different kinds of people come to the place voluntarily and spend their time there. In other words, it is in such a way that people come and stay. In order to provide a base for attracting people to the space and then keeping them, there must first be absorbing elements and agents, as well as people who stay, must not get in trouble there and be satisfied with the spaces. Therefore, it is possible to consider attractiveness and satisfaction as essential requirements for the vitality of a city space.

2.2- Dynamism and compatibility

With the continuity of human life and the vivacity of nature, urban neighborhoods also undergo a dynamic way of life. Neighborhoods are the intersection of interactions and social, economic, physical, and environmental factors. Examples of this continuity and the mentioned factors can be seen in the following:

- The continuity of inhabitants in neighborhoods from past to present,
- The change and continuity in types and patterns of activities,
- The dynamics of the location of neighborhoods in relation to the entire city center,
- The quantity, quality and value of buildings, residential and non-residential buildings
- Pattern and longevity of buildings,
- Pattern of distribution of open green spaces and passageway networks,
• Various indigenous and non-indigenous construction materials,
• Ownership pattern,
• Equipment and new urban activities in the context of new social and cultural needs,
• Landscape view of the area in terms of nature and neighborhood boundaries

Changes in each of the conditions, factors and characteristics mentioned above as social and economic pressures can gradually bring about the physical transformation of the neighborhood. These changes could be seen in the pattern of buildings and in their parts (for example, the replacement of new buildings between existing buildings, the construction of terraces and balconies), high-rise buildings, use alterations, erosion and destruction of trees and green spaces, the weariness of urban equipment and reducing their efficiency (libraries, clinics, educational spaces, etc.). While such changes sometimes appear as a threat, the evolution of the neighborhood continues in the form of these changes. For example, as job opportunities changes, immigration raises local equilibrium and new needs arise. Also, different strategies, policies and programs are emerging in response to new needs that are the result of inevitable changes in urban neighborhoods. The strengths and weaknesses of each of these programs can affect the program effectiveness. But what seems important is accepting the changes and adaptation of response policies and programs. For example, maintaining and renovating the tissues of neighborhoods, including public buildings, renovating and repairing structures, developing compatible building policies (for example, increasing the density of buildings) to meet new needs and to provide new spaces compatible with new needs.

2.3- Variety

Local residents' characteristics and their activities are considered as two determinants of quality of life. Both of these characteristics are diverse due to different social, cultural, economic and environmental conditions in different communities, cities and neighborhoods. These conditions have changed during years and new conditions are being replaced. Diversity can be considered in terms of the principles and criteria of efficiency, vitality and stability of neighborhoods. By complying with this principle, physical conditions and neighborhood spaces not only will be in agreement with new needs but they would be also comprehensive and responsive to diverse needs. For example, housing diversity with a wide range of economic, social and physical indicators is one of the most important factors in the sustainability of the neighborhood. Responsibility of residential units requires attention to changes in the following indicators, including:

• Changes in the demographic structure of residents (such as a diverse sub-base indicators which would change according to household size and age of residents),
• Changes in social and cultural conditions (such as living patterns in apartment, villa and traditional home and residents' aesthetic criteria)
• Changes in household economic conditions in various economic sectors (such as small housing)
• Change in the type of job opportunities
• Change in car per capita ownership
• And change in technological conditions (such as high-rise facilities, robust construction materials, diverse construction materials, and a variety of transportation systems) (Azizi, 2006).

2.4- Security

The term "security" in general, means getting rid of various hazards. Lack of security is one of the main indicators of the decline in the quality of life for a variety of reasons, including immigration, falling social status, poverty and so on. Factors that shape the quality of life are directly linked to the attraction of the population and the attractiveness of urban spaces, and on the other hand, the presence of people is somehow a guarantor of security in the neighborhood (Ahmadi, 2013).

2.5- Intuitive comfort

Nowadays, visual comfort is one of the most important components of human environments, especially in urban spaces. As the interior of human life (home) should be beautiful, the outer environment (city) should be beautiful and has good visual quality. Therefore, the importance of the survey about visual comfort and the role of environmental qualities are quite clear in improving the urban landscape. Different dimensions of visual comfort components and their impact on urban landscape, include elements such as brightness, color, environmental quality, body, building quality, accessibility, and so on (Dobaran et al, 2012). The components of visual comfort index include the following factors:

• Symbolic pollution (environmental information and legibility)
• Visual Contamination (visual disturbance)
• Color pollution (undesirable use of colors in urban spaces).
• Light pollution (darkness)

2.6- Access

Moving around in the neighborhood can have different dimensions in terms of its diverse goals. The main difference between movement and access on the scale of the neighborhood, as compared to larger units (such as city, region and country), is its direct connection and impact on family life. Access in the neighborhood is not just for commuting, but it can also be expected for a variety of functions. Accesses can be a space to enjoy the motion process. For example, city squares, as the manifestation of the city quality, in terms of the scale, and quality of its perimeter environments, embraces concepts and sense of space. Following this principle, many pedestrian routes in the cities of the world also have different functions in relation to social interactions, markets and recreation.

Principles can be considered in planning, designing and building neighborhood communication networks, which function beyond mere space, such as:
- Access: Easy access for all people to activities (inside and outside the neighborhood) with more emphasis on users without cars or people with reduced mobility ability.
- Easy access: Direct access to public transport, easy access to service centers, stations and other neighborhood facilities.
- Security: Reducing accidents, reducing street-crimes fears, monitoring buildings and crowd-less area of the cities (night security).
- Social space: Place for people’s visiting for increasing social interactions, improving quality of life, and strengthening the sense of community.
- Sports and recreation space: possibility of using pedestrians and cyclists with both walking and recreational purposes.
- Environment: Reducing transport pollution, reducing noise pollution and reducing energy consumption.
- Economic: reduce time and cost of transport,
- Sufficient parking space: Parking lots beside the streets, public and private parking lots.
- Balance: balance between different types of movement (pedestrians, bicycles, buses and personal vehicles for specific purposes) (Azizi, 2006).

Table 1: criteria and the main variables that make up the improvement of the quality of urban life,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Variables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social and cultural components</td>
<td>Neighborhood identity</td>
<td>• Special events</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Vivacity</td>
<td>• Ability to activate space at different times and for different groups in dynamic collective space</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Security in the neighborhood</td>
<td>• Eliminate insecure points</td>
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<td>• Lighting at night</td>
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<td>Economic component</td>
<td>Business activities</td>
<td>• Focus on creating activities such as shops, cafes, restaurants, etc. at the ground floor</td>
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<td>• Locating compatible uses</td>
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<td>Physical components</td>
<td>The presence of green spaces and recreational areas</td>
<td>• Considering the various and diverse activities needed to create local daily routines</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Readability</td>
<td>• Avoiding the use of artifact elements</td>
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<td>Visual Comfort</td>
<td>• Variety of materials and design used in building appearances</td>
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<td>transportation components</td>
<td>Access to neighborhood services and public transportation</td>
<td>• Orientation of buildings to the open air</td>
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<td>• Determine the boundaries of the private and public space</td>
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<td>• etc</td>
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<td>• Enhance accessibility and facilitate access to various spaces</td>
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<td>• Decreasing Traffic in Local Accesses</td>
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<td>• Etc</td>
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3- Conclusion

Historical textures are inevitable parts of the identity of the city and its citizens and as a symbol and the main field of social interaction and social identity of citizens, have a direct
relationship with leisure activities, which requires the attention to social Economic, psychological and aesthetic goals and values, within the framework of quality of life. Therefore, neglecting this will erode these environmental values.

In the revival of historic textures, one has to extract the literature, beliefs, principal and geography of each region in the critique of the architecture of that area, and it should be seen what kinds of needs to be addressed and planned, which ultimately reaches the main goal, satisfaction of the inhabitants.

In today's society, citizens need flexible environments for work and recreation and at the same time, new facilities to meet their everyday needs. This will increase the obligatory communications with the city and the social spaces, public services and leisure area during the week. It will increase service and green spaces, social relations and, ultimately, improves the quality of life. Therefore, by improving the quality of the living environment, we will ensure the survival and life of the historical textures, and otherwise, we will be witness their gradual death and disappearance.

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