

# Obstacles of Iranian Inner-Cities Gentrification (Case Study: Navvab Project, Tehran, Iran)

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**ABSTRACT:** One of the results of urban renovation is population displacement. If these renovations lead to live prosperous social classes, it is called gentrification. In this regard one of the urban renovation strategies is gentrification that is equal in "the acceptability of texture in public opinion" and is known as a synonym of "improving the quality of living environment for residents and citizens". In Iran despite interventions that take place in inner-cities these interventions are not the examples of gentrification; accordingly, it must be understood that what factors influence these interventions and whether renovation of Iranian inner-cities can be occurred in the framework of gentrification? This article tries to review the Navvab Project, by using a descriptive – analytical approach and documentary – library survey. Therefore, while reviewing mentioned project, gentrification obstacles of this project and its generalizations to Iranian inner-cities, hypotheses in three levels, Macroscopic, Mesoscopic and Microscopic scales, have been explained and strategies for preparation of this process provided.

**Keywords:** Urban Renovation, Gentrification, Inner-City, Navvab Project, Tehran, Iran

## INTRODUCTION

What is entitled gentrification in urbanism discussions, whether in Iran or in other countries, is a process during which a minority occasionally with a relatively high-income level replaces current residents of the texture who are not in good financial state. In fact, gentrification is a process occurring in certain inner-city areas whereby old, substandard housing is bought, modernized and occupied by middle class and wealthy families. Gentrification is probably triggered by the survival of once elegant, but rundown housing and by location advantages such as ready access to city centre employment and services. It is also probably helped by the availability of improvement grants (Seifoddini, 2006; Bounds, 2004).

This process in addition to improving the texture, preventing evacuation and proneness to crime, appropriate servicing, providing facilities, strengthening infrastructure, preserve and promote the identity and values of traditional architecture and

urbanism, reducing the per-capita cost of living in cities with increasing density, endogenous development and improving the quality of urban image and landscape (Khajeh Deloee, 1997; Hamnett, 1984), as well as causing social-economic prosperity for new residents, textures and cities. In addition, it accompanies with great added value for national and local government through increasing property taxes (Carpenter & Lees, 1995). So, these governments welcomed and supported gentrification and provided necessary bed for attracting capital and traction and attention of the privileged classes. However, this question comes to mind whether this process can also be seen in Iran? In other words, is it possible to regenerate Iranian inner-cities by use of gentrification?

Navvab Project, which was part of widening Navvab Street -Sarsabil neighborhood- Region 10 of Tehran, took place in 1991 and caused departure of its original inhabitants and accommodating middle and upper classes. However, because of the up-down approach and for achieving the economic

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goals of former Tehran urban management, and lack of active participation of citizens, it is not an example of gentrification. In generalization of the reasons of the gentrification failure of the above-mentioned project, three hypotheses in three levels can be expressed in the following:

Underdevelopment, poverty and weakness of democracy in Iran that is the real consequences of economic, social, and political structures of the country from the past until now (Macro level). Urban management approach and arbitrary interpretation of the urban interventions' theories that lead to achieving maximum economic profit rather than public interest (Middle level).

Lack of bright image of the future of inner-cities in the minds of residents caused to fail acceptability for living in them (Micro level).

In fact, at the macro level, structural processes of society are discussed. Micro-level digs inside the features from the perspective of the quantity dimensions and constitutive components. Middle level links these two levels and includes relationships, institutions, organizations and geographical locations, which connect community structure to micro and empirical facts (Antonio & Piran, 1979). Ivar Berg has named these three levels as macroscopic, mesoscopic and microscopic scales (Berg, 1979).

### Literature Review

The 80s is the beginning of extensive urban renovation. With the change of production from fordism to post-fordism, the change in job structures is happened. The importance of service economy increased and led to an increase in the importance of administrative, technical and professional jobs. Changes in the economy, led to social polarization in income and job. Integrated community turned into smaller communities. A new middle class was formed: Professional people were mostly singles or young couples without children. Their living environment reflects their choice of lifestyle that includes their priority for the urban historic neighborhood that is near their work, cultural facilities and commercial and administrative centers. Changing in lifestyle and cultural preferences is reflected to some extent, in buying and rebuilding old houses especially inside of the

city. Changes in communications technology and formation of informational society have changed the spatial structure of the cities. With transferring commercial, administrative and productive services to the downtown, industrial centers were moved to the sidelines (Beauregard, 1986; Ley, 1996; Smith, 1986).

Gentrification originates in the word Gentry that comes from old French gentries which means aristocracy (Hornby, 2006). A sociologist called Ruth Glass in 1964 for the first time used this term to describe the process of replacement of the affluent people with low-income people and workers living in neighborhoods (Glass, 1959; Glass, 1964). Center of prevention and fight against the diseases of America has interpreted the gentrification as the "increasing the value of urban neighborhoods" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). Fig. 1 shows the neighborhoods in which gentrification have taken place.

Generally, gentrification is a replacement process of the middle class with the working class, increase of property values, Change of physical environment and the emergence of new style of urban life. This process is expanding in many big cities of the West and even in rural areas (Thrift, 1987; Ghose, 2004). The evident sample of gentrification has been mentioned in Sharon Zukin's book, "loft Living" (Zukin, 1988). She described the transformation of Manhattan in New York where the Bohemian artists converted warehouse space in a garment factory when deindustrialization turned into domestic spaces (Savage & Warde, 1993). The result is the relationship between capital accumulation and aesthetic taste or lifestyle and the process that the role of social spaces in urban areas changes over time. The gentrification process is not only utter economic activities; its function of social filter creates homogenization and social category of resident identity in community. This is the result of people's desire to live in these areas and is based on a bottom-up process.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Descriptive research includes surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds. The major purpose of it is description of the



Fig. 1: Neighborhoods that gentrification has taken place in them.

(Source: Wikipedia, 2013)

state of affairs as it exists at present. In social sciences and business research, the term "ex-post facto research" is often used instead of descriptive research studies. The main characteristic of this method is that the researchers have no control over the variables; they can only report what has happened or what is happening. Most ex-post facto research projects are used for descriptive studies in which the researchers seek to measure such items as, for example, frequency of shopping, preferences of people, or similar data. In analytical research, on the other hand, the researcher has to use facts or information and analyze them to make a critical evaluation of the material (Gauch, 2003; Kumar, 2005; Trochim, 2001). The description is used for frequencies, averages and other statistical calculations. Often the best approach, prior to writing descriptive research, is to conduct a survey investigation. Qualitative research often has the aim of description and researchers may follow-up with examinations of why the observations exist and what the implications of the findings are (Dawson, 2002; Kothari, 2008).

### Urban Renovation and Gentrification

Providing a comprehensive definition of urban renovation to show the complexity of the issues involved, is not easy. Urban literature, often without any definition, use terms such as Regeneration, Urban Revitalization, Gentrification, Neighborhood Renewal, Rehabilitation and Renovation. In this issue, "urban renovation" generally means the process used to change the urban environment.

Urban renovation is often referred to as the process through which the urban environment is changed. According to Francois Laisant and Gulgonen from the Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies and Research in Paris, the city is an open phenomenon which means that the city is always in a process of continuous change. Urban form in a specific period can be viewed as a temporary condition between past and future. Hence the various interpretation of the city is obtained, which sees it as a living organism (Francois & Gulgonen, 1997).

Urban experts all agreed that the goal of urban renovation is changing urban environment and creating new life through re-adjustment of existing spaces, to meet present and future needs of residents. They believe that the main goal of urban renovation is applying the fundamental principles that lead to revitalization of some or all urban structural parts which nowadays are not in accordance with the functions defined for them (Miller, 1959).

Existing literature about the effects of urban renovation is divided into two categories. The first category considers these effects as positive due to the replacement of the middle class with the poor and low class. This literature mainly refers to gentrification. The second category regards these effects as negative because of social impacts. The first group seeks to encourage economic growth within urban areas and encourage more affluent people to settle in renovated deteriorated areas by improving the physical environment (Rezai, 2009). For them, it stands to reason that the benefits of economic growth from

the renovated areas will gradually do well to the less privileged classes who are the traditional inhabitants of the deteriorated areas. On the other hand, the second group will reason that opportunities and resources should be directly available to less privileged and disadvantaged groups. Anyway, the strategies used in the reconstruction and restructuring within the cities, generally in Western cities, are similar. But practical aspects can vary in case of facing the real social, political, economic and historical issues.

For creating a new and attractive image of the inner-city, it is necessary to encourage the middle to high social groups to move to the renovated areas and settle there. A very well-known process of urban revival in Western cities is called "gentrification" that changes the physical and social nature of the neighborhood (Seyedian, 2008; Shaker Ardekani, 2008). The purpose in this process is promoting economic activities and social structure by replacing the upper social and economic classes with former inhabitants of the restructured area of central part of the city. Gentrification requires a fundamental change in the image of the slums by creating, protecting and promoting an attractive residential image. There are different approaches to the importance, mechanism, and reasons of gentrification. As an ideology, gentrification is considered the potential for social and economic promotion of the city. Gentrification requires the movement of capital and population. The return of capital depends on maintaining the attractiveness of areas for progressive and high-class people.

### Process and Approaches to Gentrification

Neighborhood evolutionary process in which affluent, usually young, households, move into and upgrade distressed neighborhoods, with many of the neighborhood's original residents being displaced. It is also common for discussions of gentrification to add a racial dimension to gentrification that follows a well-defined pattern (Bostic & Martin, 2003; Vandergrift, 2006).

With these descriptions and explanations, gentrification has three conditions:

Displacement of original residents;

Increasing the physical quality of neighborhoods, particularly in housing;

Changing the identity of the neighborhood.

Gentrification is also defined with coordination and synchronization with four processes:

Re-settlement and social focus. Replacement of a group of residents with a group of higher rank class;

Transformation in the physical environment (buildings), which indicates some aesthetic dimensions and emergence of new services;

Community and gathering of some people with a common culture and lifestyle or at least with common preferences in consumption related to their social class.

A re-suggestion of the economic value of the property that is a business opportunity for construction industry, and often it is

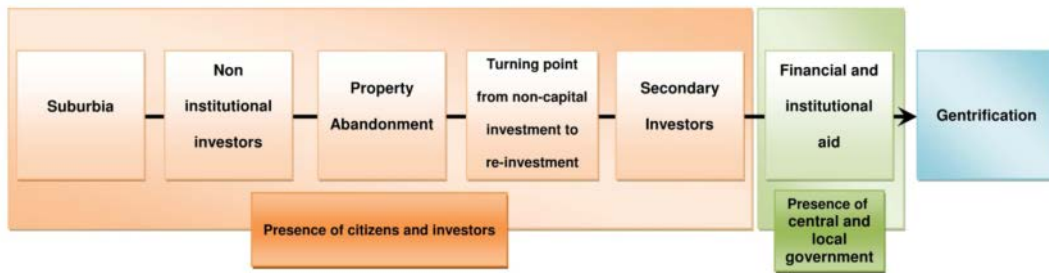


Fig.2: Process of gentrification and the role of central and local governments, citizens and investors

considered a consequence of private property of the domestic property (Warde, 1991).

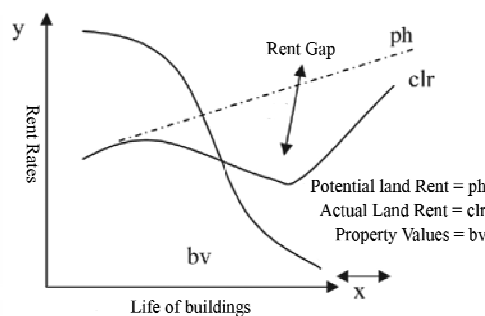
On the other hand, this process can be based on the following steps and Fig. 2 depicts the role of central and local governments, citizens and investors:

- Suburbia;
- Non institutional investors;
- Property Abandonment;
- Turning point from non-capital investment to re-investment;
- Secondary Investors
- Financial and institutional aid;
- Gentrification (Rahnema, 1996; Rahnema, 1993).

This process is described in different ways. Explanations include why, how, and where gentrification takes place and identifying the main factors. Approaches to gentrification are still controversial and fall into two categories: Marxist structuralism approach to leadership Smith (Smith, 1989), which explains gentrification by the rental gap concept that represents the difference between the rental value of the current land use and the potential rental value of land (Fig. 3). From Smith's perspective, this process begins with the falling value of land in urban areas. This occurs when a large investment in the construction sector leads its capital to more efficient housing, such as urban planning outside of urban centers. Focus on housing investment in the countryside and negligence of urban

centers leads to decrease of the value of housing in inner city. This in turn causes a gap in rent and leads to investment in these urban areas (Uzun, 2003; Abedin Dorkoosh, 2006).

In the humanistic approach based on Lee (Ley, 1996), cultural preference and demographic characteristics of gentrification are emphasized. Specialization of labor, changes in the structure of family gender and place of work and specific set of downtown-life meaning, are the driving forces of this process. Gentrifiers are known as a subgroup of the middle-class. They are generally working in a variety of arts and applied arts, media, teaching, social services and other public and nonprofit sectors. According to Lee, the gentrification has two phases. Firstly, the leaders also called risk taking groups select inner-city areas due to cultural values, lifestyle and the value of a historic district. The second group which is called the risk aversion group select inner city due to the investment opportunities. At the end of the second stage, the pioneers are replaced by anti-risk groups. Rent gap theory examines the process of gentrification in supply and demand. On the other hand, humanistic approach, considers the aspects of demand of this process. These two basic approaches can also be examined together. At primary stages of the gentrification process, risk taking group causes the rental gap unintentionally. With increasing gap in rent, the anti-risk groups visit the mentioned area. Therefore, these two approaches can be complementary theories to explain the



The maximum rent gap between present and future

Fig. 3: Smith's rent gap theory in explanation of gentrification process  
(Source: Bourassa, 1993)

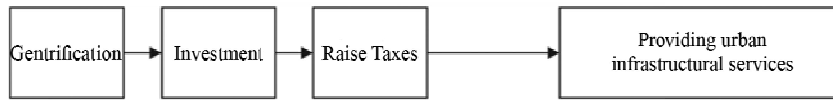


Fig. 4: The reason of local governments' agreement with gentrification  
(Source: Taghvaei & Gholami, 2008)

process of gentrification (Uzun, 2003).

A group believes that the reasons for this phenomenon are not clear, but it is more complex to name a specific factor. However, local governments typically promote the development of gentrification because investment in neighborhoods equals collecting taxes. As property value increases, the tax rate goes up (Fig. 4). These taxes are used for provision and providing basic urban services such as road maintenance, police and fire stations.

Most of the new professionals who moved into the suburbs tend to be located in downtown (Curl, 2002). Professionals and artists are currently looking for large and cheap spaces for their jobs (Zukin, 1988). Furthermore, women pay attention to the downtown due to better access to job opportunities and proximity to public transportation systems. In addition, because many suburbia retirees do not need their large house in suburbs and are more interested in cultural places inside of the city, select these neighborhoods for the rest of their lives.

### Samples and Examples of Gentrification Philadelphia, Darien Street (USA)

Gentrification amid Urban Decline: Strategies for America's Older Cities, by Michael Lang, reports the process and impact (social, economic, cultural) of gentrification (Lang, 1982). In its early days, this area of Darien Street housed by only Italian families, however, after the Second World War (1939–1945), when the municipal government spoke of building a cross-town

highway, the families moved out. Most of the houses date from 1885 (built for the artisans and craftsmen who worked and lived in the area), but when the Italian-Americans moved out, the community's low-rent houses went to poor African-American families. Moreover, by the early 1970s, blighted Darien Street was at its lowest point as a community, because the houses held little property value, many were abandoned, having broken heaters and collapsed roofs (Ibid, 1982).

The gentrification began in 1977; the first house rehabilitated was a corner property a school teacher re-modeled and occupied. The next years featured (mostly) white middle-class men moving into the abandoned houses; the first displacement of original Darien Street residents occurred in 1979. Two years later, five of seven families had been economically evicted with inflated housing prices; the two remaining families were renters, expecting eventual displacement. In five years, from 1977 to 1982, the gentrification of Darien Street reduced the original population from seven black households and one white household to two black households and eleven white households. The average rent increased 488 per cent — from \$85 to \$500 a month; by 1981, a house bought for \$5,000 was sold for \$35,000. Of the five black households displaced, three found better houses within two blocks of their original residence, one family left Pennsylvania, and one family moved into a public housing apartment building five blocks from Darien Street (Ibid, 1982). The benefits of the Darien Street gentrification included increased property tax revenues and



Fig. 5: two views of Darien Street  
(Source: Google Maps, 2013)



Fig. 6: two views of Jahangir neighborhood  
(Source: Uzin, 2003)

better-quality housing. The principal detriment was residential displacement via higher priced housing (Fig. 5).

### **Jahangir Neighborhood (Turkey)**

Jahangir is located near the Taksim Beyoğlu central business district (C.B.D). Gentrification in Jahangir was a very slow process and in connection with the market. When contractors felt that demand and rents increased because of entrance of artists to this neighborhood (because of access to urban centers and beautiful scenery) this process was accelerated. Therefore, spatial alterations at this stage achieved investment dimension (Fig. 6) (Uzin, 2003).

Gentrification process was realized in response to the growing attraction of the area by independent groups. Residents attracted to this area at first were people with a high cultural level. In the following small-scale investors for market conditions came into the area. Increasing prices and cost of living in this area led to an attraction for higher-income groups and repulsion for current residents (Uzun, 2010).

Therefore according to the above and the following reasons, gentrification can be considered as an appropriate process for inner-city renovation:

General trend of gentrification is from bottom to top, based on the participation of citizens and investors and if not in the entire process, at least in the first wave takes place without state intervention (Fig. 2)

Considering Samples and examples of the gentrification show that this process satisfies physical needs of the citizens and improves their quality of life and also can bring economic – social prosperity for the residents.

Services and added value resulting from this process, directly benefits the participants and in the next level, urban management and local government also indirectly profit from it.

### **Navvab Project (Tehran)**

Navvab Project can be considered the largest renovation project in Tehran. Widening of Navvab Street backs to the 1960s. In the master plan of Tehran, whose studies began in 1966, and the construction of a North – South Highway in West of Tehran from Evin to Azadi Street was predicted. The continuing of this street that is now called "Chamran" was predicted from Azadi Street and Azerbaijan Street to Imam Khomeini Street by widening 12-meter Navvab Street. Fig. 7 shows the location of Navvab in Tehran.

Based on Master plan of Tehran Navvab Street widening plan was prepared from 12 meters to 45 meters, with a widening of the two sides in 1970. However, continuing Chamran Highway (Parkway) to the south side of Azadi Street and Jomhuri Street did not take any action for twenty years from 1971 to 1991. This project once again was proposed in 1991 (Kamrava, 2007). Before the renovation, Navvab Street was a North – South Street in central Tehran and had a critical and important role for connecting different areas of Tehran during the 70 years ago. Buildings of this area were often one or two-storey and 50 to 60 years old. The area included several well-known and strong identity neighborhoods that had social, cultural and ethnicity ties and relationships and its inhabitants had a sense of belonging (Rezaii, 2009).

Old neighborhoods of Region 10 of Tehran Municipality in which Navvab Street is located have a social context adhering to the religious criteria, with a very high population density of about 300 to 500 persons per hectare and less urban and transportation services. History of construction of these neighborhoods backs to the 1920s and are in contrast with to the most marginalized neighborhoods which have a social homogeneity of rural migrants from Azerbaijan with strong



Fig. 7: Location of Navvab Street in Tehran<sup>1</sup>

religious beliefs.

Restarting the Navvab Project began with the new mayor of Tehran (Karbashi) in 1971 and coincided with a severe need to rebuild the ruins of the war and falling oil prices. The biggest problem in this project was financial requirements. The project after Ecbatana project was the largest residential complex in Iran.

Series of Navvab Project objectives were as follows:

- Necessity of opening the North – South Highway and connecting northern Network of southern Tehran;
- Necessity of maintaining access to the highway;
- Reducing air and noise pollution caused by cars on the highway and its solutions;
- Economic justification for widening 50-meter Highway instead of Navvab Street;

Renovation of deteriorated texture of the project areas and providing appropriate and affordable housing (Shaker Ardekani, 2011).

The area of project was 60 hectares, 30 hectares of which was the highway. Total construction along 6 kilometers was 1,113,000 square meters, 475 thousand square meters of which were residential, including 6,630 units, which means 42.5 percent of the entire area. About 102 thousand square meters of business (9%), 102 thousand square meters of administrative (9%), 4 thousand square meters of cultural and 125 thousand square meters of garage and storage services (11%) were predicted.

By negotiation between the central bank and the mayor bonds issue were proposed. Based on the justification study, supply of 176 million dollars bonds with 19% interest and a four-year period was offered. For these bonds, 204 million dollars interest were paid after four years, and the project would gradually begin and within four years end. National Bank was introduced as the agent bank to pay 176 million dollars to the municipality

of Tehran and after four years receives 380 million dollars and gave to bonds buyers. For possession of buildings located on project agreement, encouraging, punishment and removing of services such as water, electricity, gas, access to the street were used.

It is true that the project was 100 meters wide and 6 kilometers long, however, it influenced the social context. In 1971, its population was over 308 thousand people with gross density of 300 persons per hectare (net residential density of 660 persons per hectares). One of the project managers says: "in February 1996, after the preparing executive plans and starting the project, we just convinced the urban management that the integration plan of the project with the surrounding texture should be prepared. According to this we researched and planned for a texture of approximately 1,150 hectares area, which means twenty times the direct project area and tried to connect the spatial structure of two sides of Navvab together and to create public spaces in a dense texture. Unfortunately, lack of management continuity stopped the project. Land prices in these texture, which has always been the most sedentary urban areas, had increased by about 285 percent" (Memar Magazine, 1998).

From beginning 1997, the preparations for pre-sale of residential units with a base price of 789 dollars per square meter on the first floor of the building, on Azerbaijan Street was started. It seemed that by selling bonds and pre-selling residential units, construction of over one million and one hundred thousand square meters and 45-meter highway would be achieved in due course (Andalib, 2007).

Sudden changes in political condition and questioning the Municipality and the mayor, the project, like many other development projects was drawn into recession; in a way that Tehran municipality was forced to pay the original sum of money and the interest of 176 million dollars of loans and

bonds instead of the predicted 380 million dollars, as well as 563 million dollars payment and transferring the pre-sale units with delay. Trial and imprisoning the mayor was a fatal blow to the project so that all previous pre-buyers of apartments had become the sellers while there were no buyers. This delay is so much that after 15 years project has not been completed yet.

It should be noted that the aim of the project was not the renovation and improvement of deteriorated urban texture of Navvab. In fact, Navvab Project was considered as a construction of one part of the highway network of the master plan of Tehran that should be replaced by a ten-meter street in the densest residential texture of this city (about 600 to 700 people per hectare) and the continuation of Chamran Highway, which had been stopped in Tohid Square. Improvement of residential context was a by-product of this project (Kamrava, 2007).

In Navvab Project, the created residential units are not compatible with older ones and completely contrast them. Characteristics of the new units can be outlined as follows:  
 High-rise apartments Instead of 1 and 2 storey old houses;  
 Defenseless and insecure spaces;  
 Lack of green spaces for residents;  
 Air and noise pollution due to highway proximity;  
 The large number of residential units in each block;  
 Lack of efficient management of apartments;  
 Noncompliance of new units with cultural, social, and

economic features of the original inhabitants.

As a consequence of these issues, the original inhabitants of the texture did not return to the created units and moved to other parts of the city or even the suburbs. Instead of them, low-income immigrants and families with different social and cultural characteristics settled in those buildings. This project had many negative consequences in physical, economic and especially social issues. Social issues arising from Navvab Project include:

- Lack of resettlement of old residents in new housing and migration to suburb areas due to poverty and low income;
  - Purchasing part of new housing by people who are likely to have moral problems and are basically outlaws;
  - No sense of belonging of new residents to their living environment and lack of their attention to public spaces;
  - Defenseless spaces that are places for social issues;
  - Negative attitude of the residents of the adjacent neighborhoods as well as the entire Tehran toward Navvab area;
  - Short-stay residents because of many problems, especially due to noise pollution from adjacent highway and lack of green spaces (mean residence period was 3 years).
- Other negative consequences of Navvab Project include:
- The disappearance of the service and commercial centers and non-replacement;
  - The blockage of some alleys;
  - Disconnection of the east of Navvab from the west of it;

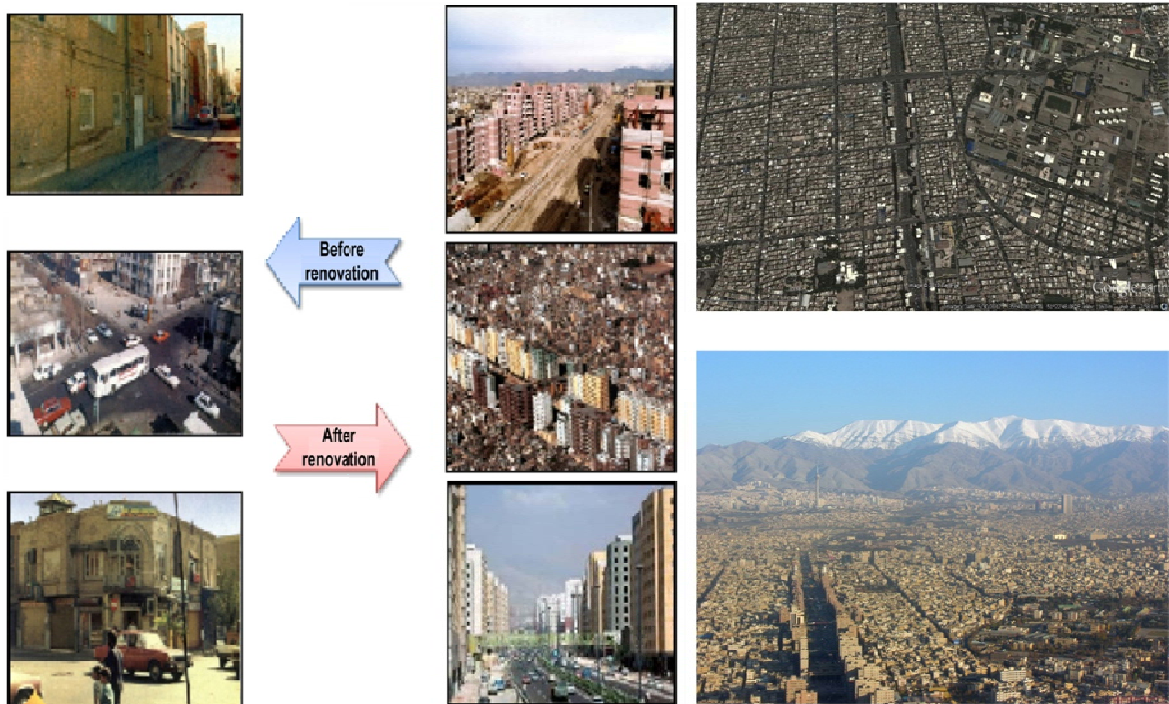


Fig. 8: The status of Navvab before and after the renovation



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Polarization of age structure of the population: very young families and very old families.

Navvab Project in professional and even non-professional circles is discussed as an unsuccessful urban project. This project, like many urban renovation projects, had population displacement and its relevant problems. The important point is that in Navvab renovation, although large-scale population displacement occurred, it cannot be considered as gentrification. As mentioned in gentrification definition, this process has three essential conditions:

Displacement of original residents;

Increasing the physical quality of neighborhoods, particularly in housing;

Changing the identity of the neighborhood.

In Navvab Project, however, no quality improvement happened and new residents were not from higher social – economic levels. The following figure shows the status of Navvab before and after the renovation.

### Preparation of Gentrification Process for Iranian Inner-cities Renovation

In western countries or generally in countries which citizens' taxes form government incomes more gentrification can be seen. Although gentrification, like any human action has defects, but since it has important values and benefits for new residents (gentrifiers) and government, it is being supported. Providing necessary infrastructure for the textures, repairing and updating old infrastructure, facilitating private-sector investment, or even lending investors who want to invest in textures which possess historical - physical values are examples of government assistance to support this process.

However, in Iran, which majority of the country income comes from oil sale, unlike other countries that government should be accountable for its citizen's taxes government of Iran is not accountable for satisfying the needs of its people (Banisadr, 1977).

Based on the first hypothesis that is underdevelopment, poverty and weakness of democracy in Iran, while the majority of the country income comes from oil sale (Fig. 9) the state does not require citizens to participate and acts independently of them. Because of the underdevelopment of the country, most attention of the state is focused on macro-economy (industry, mining, agriculture) industrialization, producing more products and self-sufficiency (Sarraf, 1998). This has been caused that social, cultural and civic issues of citizens, in the state's view becomes pale. On the other hand, because of the weakness of democratic structures, role of people in the city has passive mode and is strongly influenced by the state activity and they believe dealing with urban affairs is the state's obligation. The same thing is mirrored in local governments that are responsible for municipal affairs.

In the case study of Navvab Project, "mayor's power and authority without having a control and monitoring system (in democratic urban planning the majority share belongs to citizens) resulted in an absolute power" (Rafipour, 1997, 256). One of the main reasons for not fully implementing Navvab Project, however, is a change in the national and local government and urban management (presidential elections and change of Hashemi Rafsanjani to Mohammad Khatami and trial of Karbaschi, former mayor of Tehran). For confirmation of this statement it can be expressed that for multiple responsibilities and roles of the former mayor Tehran (Karbaschi), distribution of duties was reduced therefore he became a star that everything revolved around him. Nevertheless, everything was destroyed by the loss of his power and the project could not fulfill its basic objectives.

The second hypothesis of this paper hints to arbitrary interpretation of urban management theories as one of the obstacles to achieving gentrification. Actually, this issue always has been considered as a fundamental dialectic between pragmatists and ideologues and both claim somehow the other group does not understand the behavior and norms governing

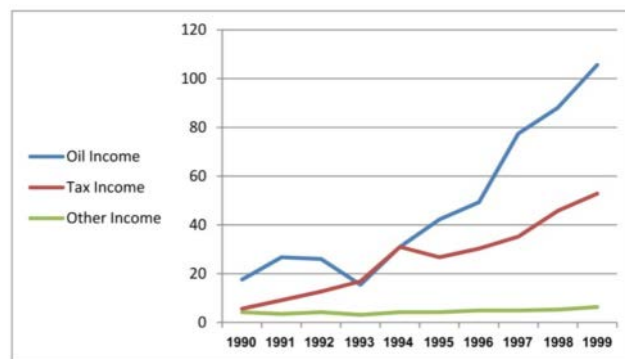


Fig. 9: Government revenues from 1990 to 1999 (billion dollars)

(Source: Office of Economic Research, 2009)

the planning. Great thinkers, however, have focused to examine the gaps between these two groups. Alexander (Alexander, 1986) refers that for each theory there is a market and it is important to use it in optimum (Allmendinger & Twedder-jones, 1997). However, the programs executives claim that academic theories do not guarantee practical or effective work. Allmendinger believes this gap is caused by power in urban planning and considers the discourse of urban planning in the position of theorizing and executing from power. In this regard Hay discusses the effective factors in formation of theory and explains that power is in the top of their formation (Hay, 1995). However, the role of this factor (power) seems effective in urban planning.

This factor is very evident in Navvab Project. Urban management was willing to implement the project. Therefore, regardless of its various aspects, especially involvement of citizens, it (urban management) was trying to finish the project during its chairmanship. Consequently, it renovated deteriorated Navvab area by using different financial sources such as bonds and power of municipality (discussed in detail in the previous sections). Among these it tried [with emphasis on the short-term renovation process] to remove effective factors that prolonged this process. As an example the role of people can be mentioned. Financial studies of Navvab Project show that urban management earned remarkable profit from the project. Important point for this project is that urban management used its power within the framework of municipality laws in order to achieve maximum profit and not to achieve renovation, public interest, participation of different groups and gentrification.

With scrutinizing of the third hypothesis and with accurate re-looking and thorough re-thinking of gentrification, the biggest obstacle to this process in Iran seems to be lack of acceptability to live in old textures and lack of a bright future about them in minds of people and even officials. If the definition of the gentrification can bring down to "acceptance emergence for residency in the texture among public citizens", lack of appropriate conditions as well as theoretical and practical framework in dealing with the texture difficulties, is the main obstacle, despite holding conferences, seminars, writing books and numerous articles.

When inner-city of a city is acceptable and habitable, it demonstrates urban social-economic prosperity. Otherwise favorable conditions for making habitable, improvement and renovation must be provided. Unfortunately, in Iran, if never, but in most cases, looking at inner-cities is just from mere physical point of view and restoration, identification, improvement, renovation and reconstruction of these urban areas are viewed from this perspective. However, for acceptability of textures, improving quality of life and its social-economic prosperity should be more scrutinized. Low-level urban services (access, traffic, educational, health and cultural services, sporting, entertainment, green space), inappropriate housing standards in terms of strength, safety and comfort as well as the incongruity criteria of the economic, social and cultural structure such

as adverse living conditions, poverty, unemployment and inadequate employment (Majedi, 2010, a) have caused the dignity of the texture be considered inferior and unsuitable to live. Factors enumerated above, along with numerous other factors, have provided causes to turn the texture to place for lower-class groups, indigent immigrants, and poor citizens, job-seekers from other countries and a context of crime.

In Navvab neighborhoods due to lower land prices in the 1970s and 80s and lower growth than other areas of Tehran, Azeri-speaking immigrants arrived and settled in this neighborhood. Significant point in living of this group of people in the project area from their arrival until 1991 (the start of the project) is that physical, social and economic changes are very light.

On the one hand, this is due to the fact that residents perceived no bright future for their living environment and did not detect any value addition in investment, development and boosting their neighborhood. Therefore, they made use of their assets in other economic sectors or in their origins (villages and towns of Azerbaijan province). On the other hand, non-interference of local governance and urban management of Tehran in the decades before the Navvab Project caused more loss of investment and declining acceptability for living in that area. As mentioned in the second hypothesis, the local government, in its urban interventions seeks to increase its maximum profit and therefore, investment procedure in the inner-city of Tehran has not been constant and dynamic, but it has been temporary, selective and arbitrary and mostly takes place in neighborhoods that bring more economic benefits.

Common to all these hypotheses is investment flight, due to the lack of economic justification for investment activities within the Navvab neighborhood and out of the city's economic life cycle. Therefore, the root of not achieving gentrification can be perceived to be in relations between central government (state)<sup>2</sup>, local government (urban management) and people.

Hence national government dependence on oil revenue, hinder the active participation of citizens in the executive program and obviously aspirations and monitoring of citizens reduction in the implementation of projects. On the other hand, local government that finances its budget independent of the state for obtaining financial resources for its projects needs to implement those programs that bring maximum profits. Therefore, to legitimize its programs, it chooses -either selectively or fully, or partly- theories that help it to accomplish this (more profit).

In Navvab area lower land prices led to increased demand for housing poor people. This also resulted in presence of different cultures and ethnicities. In this regard weak economy of residents and the lower-quality buildings reduced the people's participation in the renovation of the area and also increased environmental pollution. All these things are signs of the physical – social exhaustion of the texture that in long term resulted in physical instability and loss of neighborhood services. With involvement of local government and urban management of Tehran, land prices and construction increased.

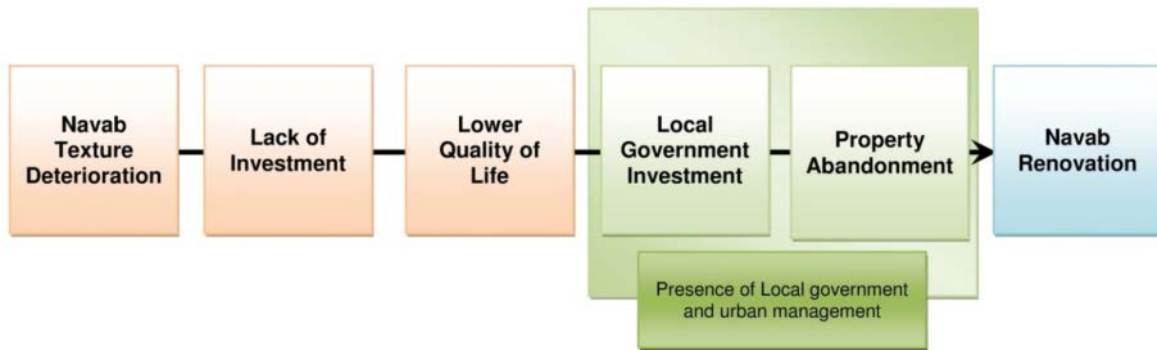


Fig.10: The renovation process of Navvab area

Meanwhile indigenous inhabitants moved to other areas of Tehran because they perceived no bright future for the project. Although this process is somewhat similar to the gentrification in the West but because of the direct participation of local government in all steps, it cannot be regarded as a case of gentrification. Fig. 10 shows the renovation process of Navvab area.

In the renovation of Nevab, because of financial pressures on former urban management, mayor of Tehran (Karbashi) changed and the project was left unfinished. In the next step, physical, social and economic tensions between the primary

and secondary residents of Navvab increased and in long term, land price decreased due to lower demand. Fig.11 shows the gentrification obstacles of Navvab Project.

Gentrification of inner-cities of Iran requires a series of goals and strategies for promoting social acceptance of these urban areas; goals and strategies that should be properly selected and cover micro and macro scale and in each phase become smaller to account for most of the texture problems if not all of them. For this purpose, according to what was formerly expressed in the content and examination of mentioned hypotheses, goals in three levels, macroscopic, mesoscopic and microscopic,

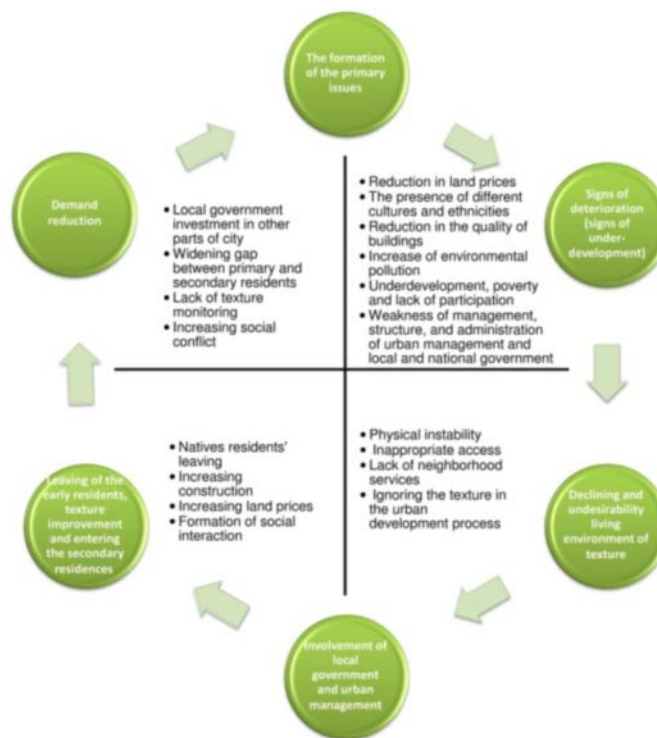


Fig. 11: Gentrification obstacles of Navvab Project

Table 1: Preparation of gentrification process for Iranian inner-cities renovation in three levels macroscopic, mesoscopic and microscopic<sup>3</sup>

Macro Goal	Strategy	Micro Goal		
		Macroscopic	Mesoscopic	Microscopic
Urban Renovation	Gentrification	Creating conditions for institutions to participate in the urban Investment	Identifying, organizing and leading investors Communication between investors and residents	Public participation*
		Facilitating communication between the policymaking system of the country urbanism and fiscal and monetary institutions	Conducting and granting long-term and low-interest loan to investment applicants	Public participation
		Law Reform in Urbanism and facilitating communication with other competent Urbanism organizations	Reducing parallel administrative work and increasing public interest in urban investment	Public participation
		Preparing long-term planning document for cities with an emphasis on public participation	Upper view to long-term planning document in urban medium term planning document Creating conditions to encourage people to participate The change in approach of local government and urban management to inner-cities from mere physical looking to economic, social, cultural, etc. issues	Public participation
		Emphasis on decentralization and the balance of the capital transfer	Urban management attention to the decentralization and avoiding of capital accumulation in a particular area (attention of urban planners and urban management to unused capacities of inner-cities)	Public participation
		Reforming of the economic – political structure of the country for presence of different economy classes of society	Leading new middle class** and urban creative class*** by urban management to invest in inner-cities	Public participation
		Reform of system and redefinition of the city in Urbanism structure	monitoring and controlling the performance of the urban management by public institutions or consulting companies	Public participation
		Non-direct intervention of the central government in the urban executive programs	Compliance with the state macro policies by local government and entrusting to them and participation of institutions and consulting companies in urban executable programs	Public participation

are outlined for achieving urban renovation in the framework of gentrification strategy, and which are expressed in the following table (Table 1).

Due to the reasons enumerated above and for the fact that the issues of inner-cities are certainly evident to all those involved and responsible and administrators of reform and renovation in the country, but so far any effective action to solve or at least lessen it has not been taken, it can be realized that the urbanism system of the country needs a basic change in planning approach in national, regional and urban scales, urban design and urban management in order to improve the dysfunctional conditions of the textures. This requires a determination and serious decision to change the policymaking system of the country urbanism and even modifying urbanism system relationships to other organizations of the country (parliament, the Interior ministry, municipalities, city councils) and most important of all with citizens (Majedi, 2010, b; Aeni, 2009). In this regard, obligating organizations related to urban management to review the experiences of other countries and cities in dealing with their inner-cities and its compatibility

with the urban textures and determining optimal strategies (Kalantari Khlylabad & Aqasafary, 2009; Andalib, 2010) can be helpful.

## CONCLUSION

Urban areas are parts of the national and cultural legacy of a country that not only in terms of aesthetic, are a continuation of collective memories, but also due to being the residence of millions of people, are valuable. However, these textures for economic, social and managerial reasons contain negative characteristics such as image and landscape chaos, lack of proper access, lack of urban facilities and equipment, disturbances in social and economic structure and physical deterioration that leads to evacuation of large populations of these areas. In fact, the main limitation of inner-cities is getting out of cycle and economic life of city. In simple terms, the loss of economic and financial justification causes capital flight and lack of investment from these areas. Therefore, solving problems facing inner-cities require comprehensive efforts in physical, economic, social, cultural, urban service, health and

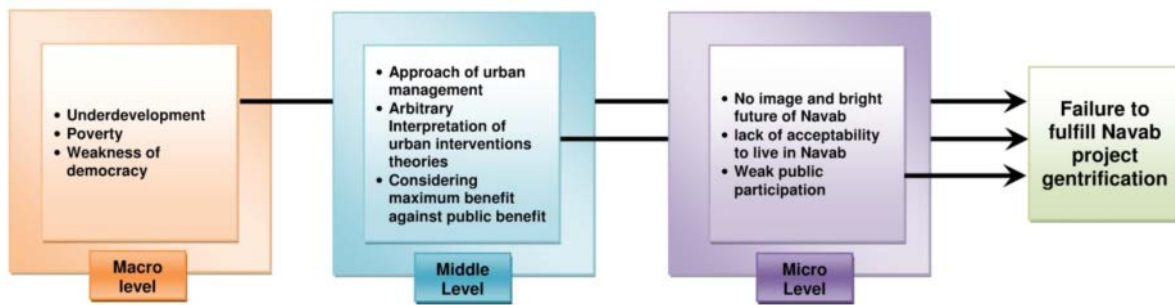


Fig. 12: Failure to fulfill Navvab Project gentrification in three levels

environmental issues. Gentrification has been proposed as one of the strategies for renovation of inner-cities and can be helpful in leaving the preconceived problem of these textures. It defines a bottom-up approach and is a replacement process of the middle class with the working class, increase of property values, change of physical environment, and improving the quality of living environment for residents and citizens.

On the other hand, the findings of the research show that this approach for renovation of these textures can be achieved. In other words, it can be said that according to the analysis, solving problems facing inner-cities requires comprehensive efforts in physical, economic, social, cultural, urban service, health and environmental issues hence dignity residency of these areas. Clearly, it will not take place without involvement and participation of citizens who are the most important and basic groups facing the deteriorated urban areas. Therefore,

cooperation and coordination of all governmental organizations, semi-government, private sector investors, and ultimately the purposeful participation of citizens can be solutions to this crisis. For this reason, the most important solution and procedure to gentrifying textures that have lost their integrity and dignity are including the role of people in the renovation process of urban textures.

With reviewing Navvab Project and examining its issues and problems, it can be concluded that the biggest obstacle to achieving gentrification is profound presence of urban management from the start of the project and its contrast with the pale and passive presence of residents and citizens.

Obstacles of Navvab Project gentrification were at three levels, macro, middle and micro. In general in macro-level as a result of lack of economic, social, political, and weakness of democratic structures, the role of people in the city was



Fig. 13: Conceptual model of urban renovation and improving the quality of life of the inner-cities

passive and extremely influenced by the activities of the central government. In other words, the structure of the state and urbanism system, have the authoritative and up-down trend. This reduced the role of citizen participation. In middle level or mesoscopic, urban management on compliance with the urbanism structure of the country had an authoritative and technocratic approach for the project. Since the municipality sought to maximize its profit in this project, to legitimize it applied selectively the theories that would accomplish this goal. Outcome of macro-level and middle-level shows itself in micro-level. This means that the authoritative structure of the urbanism of the country, technocratic approach and merely economic perspective of urban management to Navvab Project, caused participation of citizens and residents pushed into the margin. On one hand, since the local people did not imagine a bright future for this project they did not cooperate with the city officials in the project and on the other hand because of lack of acceptability to live in Navvab, they moved. These continuous and contiguous reasons can be shown in the following figure (Fig. 12).

Considering the above points and for preventing further loss of quality and life standards in the texture, preventing the spread of deterioration of the texture, enhancing quality of life and acceptability to live in it, improving the status of the residents from the economic and social aspects such as employment opportunities and income and physical conditions of safety housing and their enjoyment from the urban infrastructure and basic services, changes in urbanism system of the country, content, method of preparing and implementing urban development plans and creating participation of citizens and especially residents of the texture, as an essential solution and a new approach in preparing and implementing urban development plans are required (Fig. 13).

In addition to what mentioned above, designing an executive mechanism of cooperation of all governmental organizations, semi-public, private, NGOs (Non Governmental Organization) and the public is very important because the best and most comprehensive programs without executive mechanism will not be practical. Another important point that must be emphasized is designing control and monitoring system because without monitoring systems the best plans will not be accomplished.

## ENDNOTES

1. These photos have been extracted from Google Maps. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Navvab+Hwy/@35.6712803,51.3852693,14z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x3f8e004a6f8e7f59:0xcb8103f5683ef22,01.02.2013>
  2. Under the law, in Iran municipality's income is independent from central government (Mansoor, 2012).
  - 3.\* In this table, the purpose of public participation is a general expression of this concept and includes economic, social, political, etc. issues.
- \*\* A class that to some extent is free from social-economic preoccupations and request more attention, care and housing in

valuable inner-cities (Bounds, 2004).

\*\*\* The Creative Class includes creative professionals who work in a wide range of knowledge-intensive industries such as high-tech sectors, financial services, the legal and healthcare professions, and business management. The distinguishing characteristic of the Creative Class is that its members engage in work whose function is to create meaningful new forms (Florida, 2005, p 34)

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