

**Explaining the Strategies of Urban Renaissance Approach with Emphasis on Public Participation  
(Case Study: Hashemi Nejad Area, Mashhad)**

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**Extended Abstract**

**1. Introduction**

An overview of failures in urban regeneration projects across Iranian cities such as Tehran (see Akbarpour Sareskanroud, Pourahmad, & Omranzadeh, 2011), Isfahan (see Khademalosseini & Arefipour, 2012), Mashhad (see Khakpour & Mehrvarz, 2013), and other metropolitans and residential regions resulted from the contrasting and defensive outlook of users highlights the failure to fulfill public participation policies regarding the empowerment of inefficient urban textures. The purpose of the present study is to explain the strategies on urban renaissance approach with an emphasis on public participation and the continuity of urban renaissance in the area of the study with focus on preserving the authenticity and the possibility of retaining the residents. Subsequently, this study seeks to provide answers to the following key questions: 1) What are the opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses of the renaissance approach in the study area? 2) What are the possible

strategies in line with the realization of the renaissance approach in the study area?

Hashemi Nejad area is selected as the case study in this research, which is identified as a prioritized spot for the development of central districts in Mashhad. Moreover, due to the high values of lands at the vicinity of Imam Reza Holy Shrine, a large number of residents in this district have moved to other locations throughout the city in order to rebuild their properties and offer them to pilgrims. This, in turn, has led to the abandonment of the area and occurrence of social anomalies, rendering the whole physical condition of the area unfavorable (Rahnama et al., 2009).

**2. Review of Literature**

Among the conventional renewal theories, urban renaissance has offered a novel form of urban modernization and the context for people's participation through an emphasis on a set of notions such as participation of the public and local government and reducing the social gap (Pourahmad, Habibi, & Keshavarz, 2010). Macleod and Johnstone (2012) believe that the attractiveness of

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urban renaissance is in privatization of spaces in civilized places of society. Huston, Rahimzad and Parsa (2015) also emphasized on partnership as the best form of participation and believe that the success of regeneration depends on an effective partnership between stakeholders.

### 3. Method

The present inquiry is an applied study conducted using the descriptive-analytical approach. SWOT and quantitative strategic planning matrix (QSPM) models were used to analyze the data. The population of the study included 15 experts and 345 citizens selected using Cochran's formula through random sampling. First, the criteria on urban renaissance were extracted by exploring the theoretical foundations and examining comparative instances. Next, the indices of urban renaissance approach in the region under study were presented by conducting surveys with the experts. Then, the final score was calculated by editing the matrix on internal and external factors so as to prioritize participatory renaissance strategies within Hashemi Nejad District.

### 4. Results and Discussion

To examine the status of indices within the renaissance approach in Hashemi Nejad District, Mashhad, these indices were assessed by a number of experts and specialists in the area of projects and executive actions in the investigated region. Given the mean and variance values calculated for each index, 41 indices were selected. In this regard, indices including identity orientation from the social criterion, regeneration diversity from the administrative criterion, partnership from the economic criterion, attractiveness and readability from the spatial-physical criterion, active protection from the performance criterion, and ultimately the urban center interaction index from the accessibility criterion achieved the highest scores relative to each six aforementioned criteria.

Next, the strengths and weaknesses of the neighborhood along with opportunities and threats in the form of various systems were examined in accordance with status evaluation and recognition. Based on the assessments, both the presence of desirable social interactions and reduction in the level of services obtained the highest scores among strengths and weaknesses, respectively. Furthermore, the possibility of increase in partnership and egression of original residents also obtained the highest scores among opportunities and threats, respectively. The internal factor evaluation (IFE) matrix final score was 2.305, demonstrating the weak status of renaissance indices relative to internal factors, while the external factor evaluation (EFE) matrix final score of 2.509 showed a favorable status in renaissance indices related to external factors. Thus, the position of Hashemi Nejad District in the context of urban renaissance falls within the range of conservative strategies.

### 5. Conclusion

Ultimately, in addition to editing the efficient strategies using the SWOT matrix and estimating the attractiveness coefficient through conducting surveys with experts, it was attempted to prioritize the strategies in the form of quantitative strategy planning matrix (QSPM). Accordingly, the strategies from the first to the fourth priorities include the development of public arenas (with an attractiveness score of 5.862), creating a link between local centers and the residential areas inside and outside the district (with an attractiveness score of 5.587), increased monitoring of urban management on urban land use (with an attractiveness score of 5.586), and improving the flexibility of upper programs (with an attractiveness score of 5.094). Subsequently, given the significance of the realization of the investigated strategies, the following recommendations are presented:

- Employing the urban renaissance approach as a strategy for developing and rebuilding

- distressed areas in urban districts according to economic, social-cultural, administrative and physical effects, and consequences.
- Encouraging people and taking their participation into account when deciding on the execution of physical regeneration programs, particularly in the old parts of districts.
  - Creating a link between local centers and residential area of the district in immediate and comprehensive areas through the approach related to increasing the social dignity of residents and enhancing the sense of belonging to the location, granting subsidies and economic and physical incentives.
  - Balanced and fair distribution of services per capita which does not involve freezing specific uses for a certain plate, but entails specifying fluid uses for large-scale lands through land multi-functionality approach.
  - Explaining and implementing an effective partnership system between several beneficiary groups focusing on design, execution, supervision and operation activities as an important factor in managing conflicts of interest.

**Keywords:** Urban renaissance, Public participation, Internal and external factors, Hashemi Nejad District in Mashhad

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