



Civil society, social authority and consciousness: the subject for urban regeneration

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ABSTRACT

Today, cities in the world are facing a range of related economic, social and environmental issues and problems. The reason of axial study on the subject of urban regeneration policy by urban researchers and planners in the world is that this program will be unifying and integrating all economic, cultural, social, environmental and physical aspects in urban structure. Urban public spaces and civil society are the mirror of social power, intelligence and development of their people as much as they can make strong social cohesion, health and welfare of the citizens. These spaces bring about human activities' integrity, solidarity of spatial organization of city and social capital production. The main questions of this study are: What is the relationship between civil authority, consciousness and urban regeneration? What factors influence on lack of public authority in the urban regeneration? The results of this study show that process of urban regeneration would be effective stimulus if the city has been built and operated basis on the human reason, consciousness and authority in public realms as civil society. In this case, the city can also be effective to restore and strengthen its neighborhoods. One of the main characteristics of Iranian urban spaces is existence of unfair approach which has caused to descend access of all people to the facilities and equipment of life and activity.

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1. Introduction

The history of mankind is full of adventures and improvements which are the bases to shaping the civilization and development (Durant, W.A., 1993). Obviously, one of the most important built environment by human being is the city. City, in this writing, means a physical, economic, social, political, environmental (or geographical) phenomenon. Today, cities in the world are facing a range of related economic, social and environmental issues and problems. Their pollution and poverty are much more than the least climate change makes clear their unsustainability and vulnerability and they lead the quality of life to the lowest level. Given that today one of the main decision to improve wellbeing is known as urban regeneration.

As we know, the urban regeneration is the story of interaction and sometimes of conflict between economic and cultural preferences; that means the people are one of main band or abutment. Therefore, this matter has occurred to change patterns and points of view which dominated on political-economic systems and social transformations (Shalchi et al., 2016). Despite the nature and extent of urban problems, they are very well documented and there has been a considerable learning process in the development of different urban regeneration programs (Ribeiro, 2008). This research has discussed the relationship between civil society, social authority, consciousness and the subject of urban regeneration.

In other word, there is clear connection between quality of urban regeneration and civil society, public authority and consciousness. It seems that the lack of second parts cause to accomplish poor urban regeneration's programs. It should be mentioned that I have however followed many aspects and facts of the subject, but the main questions of this study are: Is there relationship between social authority, consciousness and good urban regeneration? What factors are influencing on lack of public authority in the urban regeneration?

2. Material and Methods

2.1. Literature Review

Undoubtedly, the change and transformation, with a little conceptual difference, are of main requirements of human life, the continuation and acceleration of development and with different leaves traces of itself in time and space (Fanni, 2014). Some historians like Will and Ariel Durant (2010, II) believe that the city, as the main phenomenon of mankind's life and enlightenment, has been the important place for the human changes historically. It seems that one essential part of these transformations has been belonged to the human social power and authority. As, the Montréal Charter Rights Responsibilities Reports (2005 & 2011: 8) shows us, A.1: "The city is both a territory and a living space in which values of human dignity, tolerance, peace, inclusion and equality must be promoted among all citizens". Or in A. 5, says: "Citizen Involvement in municipal affairs serves to build confidence in democratic institutions, reinforce a sense of belonging to the city and promote active citizenship". The city is a live active phenomenon which offer varied public possibilities to share the people in its spaces. Citizen who have deep understanding of their rights and duties, able to make active and happy urban public spaces. Meanwhile, speaking about just cities especially in Asia, with more economic/social inequalities, is so hard and the rise of them have been improbable for many decades. This is because of low level of urbanization, exception of democratic institutions and finally authority's transferring of government to local levels was rare. However Mike Douglass (2015) believe that as urbanization and

political reforms have proceeded into the 21st century, we are now witnessing cities becoming main places of governance that are invigorated by the rise of civil society. Meanwhile, many Asian cities and their mayors are naming themselves "progressive" in their challenges to Neoliberal thoughts aimed at corporatizing government (Meyerson, H. 2015). But one of the important necessity for progressive city in just and sustainability is improvement of social/rational abilities in civic spheres . Loren King (2009) considers a facet of justice – the importance of reasonable claims on other citizens – against some problems of inequality in U.S. urban settings and he begins with a particularly distressing way in which inequality can be a moral problem: a historical example of unequal voice implicated with unambiguously bad reasons for imposing burdens on others. Accordingly, this study, first has conceptualized the urban regeneration and then, it continued basis on observations and interviews in some neighborhoods of Tehran.

3. Results and Discussion

I think, the social philosophy was neglected about cities in the developing world. While philosophy and the city come together throughout many human/environmental issues and they able to make much close connect with each other. So, I refer to the right to the city is also a public/collective right that goes to a specific place; Lefebvre calls it "the right to urban life." (Sugranyes & Mathivet, 2010 in: Fanni, 2015). The right to the city is a collective right and is related to a specific location. The basic components of the right to the city are: 1. citizen participation in the planning process 2. Design and planning of urban management to ensure citizens' access to guidance 3. Balanced and egalitarian public access to land for housing and business activity and health and education, public transportation, leisure and healthy living for low-income citizens 4. Ensuring access to adequate housing and informal settlements 5. Guarantee citizens access to common use of public spaces, especially for social affairs in the city (Ibid: 165-66). When we speak around the right to the city indeed we recognize the value and credibility for social consciousness and rationality (Fanni, 2015). This credibility extend to the extent that it also includes urban

regeneration processes. On the other words, any kind of regeneration process will be successful in its goals that it would processed on the base of rational and moral human needs and not base on the needs that have been prepared by trade companies and governments.

3.1. Social authority and Local Politics

Indeed, our subject has been grown in a main field that well known as Local Policies; policies which have been made and decided for cities and citizens by national/regional politicians. We are concerning with justice in the city can cite, a litany of well-studied problems evidenced by this example: dramatically unequal life chances along sharp divisions of class and religion; fundamentalists or extremists attitude and practice by both private citizens and commercial organizations; complicit government agencies at local, regional and national levels; well-intentioned legislative and judicial interventions that ignore or misunderstand the sources of injustice in and around cities; privileged interests leading to shortsighted urban renewal efforts with limited benefits, least of all to the worst off in the city region (R. To: King, L. 2009). One of the best writings about this matter has been shown by Fainstein, who is drawing on John Rawls, Amartya Sen, and Martha Nussbaum, the just city is committed to residents having roughly equal means and opportunities to live meaningful lives (Fanstein 2001: 85 in: King, 2009). Moreover, Fanstein (2001) believe that city or every human society have need three mechanisms to implication and reach social justice which are competitiveness, Cohesion, and Governance. Therefore, I have found and realized that our discussion have direct relationship with a complicated political/ideological system that control every things not only urban public spaces but also, even private life of people. The urban regeneration is one of urban political process which has been influenced by that system while it must making up and processing by citizens. This situation has been demolished or delayed most ways of interfering and participation of people in the city.

3.2. Urban Regeneration

The term "Urban regeneration" evolved after the Second World War in Europe and Britain, mainly due to post-war decline of industries.

Since then, government policies have been focusing on urban regeneration to achieve better society (McDonald, 2009). Urban regeneration arises as a strategic policy that integrates urban planning with the resolution of socioeconomic and environmental issues (Bardauskait, 2011). However, Robert has said, "Urban regeneration" is a process that creates new urban spaces while retaining the original teeth spatial characteristics (physical activity) leads. Urban renewal is to see a comprehensive and integrated set of actions that lead to solving urban problems, so as to improve Standing in the economic, physical, social and environmental context in which to create change (Robert, 2000). Urban renaissance is obviously a holistic integrated approach that contains three main goals economy, equality of environment; this process is while maintaining economic competitiveness, reduce inequality, protect and preserve the environment, which means that a new generation of partnerships are acting for development of innovative policies by the private sector and non-governmental organizations. Since the city has a main role in social sustainability, urban regeneration can play a key role in achieving sustainability at several levels (Colantonio et al., 2011). Michael Mason (2007) with a different view noted that whether tasked with developing policy responses to complex social problems or restructuring service-delivery in order to meet demanding targets, these partnerships are one response to a widely recognized need for greater coordination in public administration. Civil society's current engagement in providing and fostering sustainability practices and services illustrates that civil society's role has expanded beyond advocacy, and that some civil society organizations aim to address the challenge of inclusivity via sustainability innovations. The roles of civil society and the ways in which it interacts with other actors are diverse (Frantzeskaki et al., 2018). One of the requirements of civil society and then fair cities is improvement of intellectual-cultural background and providing the infrastructure necessary to promote intelligence and rationality in society. In that case, the cities will be able to have alive happy public equitable spaces for all their citizens (Fanni, 2015). I think the diagram 1 clearly show us all aspects of main subject and its parts in this paper (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Diagram 1: Conceptual framework of subject

The cities are going to be creative and vary creativities take place in them; but in order to having such specifics, they also require spaces for their realization and formation the civil society. During resent process, public spaces are the best places for realize new ideas and innovations. These have always been where people start. On the other hand, the city may become a crucible critical place of thoughtful ideas. Urban geography study these special places as the points of start changes. What citizens need or seek them at the time. These changes may calling "regeneration". Given that this changes require deep attitude to humanity and happiness. Meanwhile it needs critical thinking and debate that improve social awareness and then civil enlighten.

4. Conclusion

The main questions are: What is the relationship between civil authority, consciousness and urban regeneration? What factors influence on lack of public authority in the urban regeneration?

Urban regeneration is basically a process that need social capitals and consciousness. This process require a strong public participation in the all social political affairs that it is much important in the civil society's structure. I found out our cities especially Tehran are suffering lack of bases of civil society and then they have many rooted acute problems that are related to the lack of public reason/consciousness and inequities. Also they are not good places for living because of their

people have suffered characteristics that most of them don't know even they have:

- They don't know any things about their natural and civil rights as well others rights.
- They have not benefited good educational/learning system from elementary level to up; then they are not able to distinguish between good and bad; between right and wrong and any changes at whole.
- They have not benefited open sociocultural political space to think and judge freely about life, environment, government, freedom, natural rights and so on;
- So, they are not able to think and innovate their situation of life and work's space like city. Therefore they don't participate in urban regeneration process at all.
- After that, they have suffered urban mismanagement and misgovernment. The people indeed are not citizens legally or even the citizen's act has not been legislated and cared by political system.

The results of my studies and observations in Tehran and Montreal show that process of urban regeneration would be effective stimulus if the city has been built and operated basis on the human reason, consciousness and authority in public realms as civil society. In this case, the city can also be effective to restore and strengthen its neighborhoods. One of the main characteristics of Iranian urban spaces is existence of unfair approach which has caused to descend access of all people to the facilities and equipment of life and activity. Therefore, we need to concentrate on ways which may

improve the place of living and activity. Firstly, we have to emphasis on people themselves. They have strong potential powers to stablish a complete civil society; so, they should to know there is a strong relation between their awareness, consciousness and social authority for good changes in their cities. Only through enhance self-confidence and awareness of people can be experience enlightening and then good urban regeneration. The urban renaissance needs the public emphasis on inquiry and reason which they have been neglected by our citizens. In my opinion, just, health city has rooted indivisibly and fundamentally, in the social authority and consciousness. This relationship not only means equal access to the basic necessities of life and activity, but also consolidates human being as a citizen. On the other word, you should not only benefit the interests and resources of the city but also you have to be able to participate and share in the civic responsibilities, regardless cultural differences such as race, gender, religion and language. This specific should be seen and sensed in all aspects and dimensions of urban public spaces and civil society. Only then we can say that these spaces based on the power and authority of citizens are formed and they have developmental and capital effects.

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