

## Analysis of the Cultural-Environmental Foundation Role of Cultural Centers in the Development of Tehran (Case of Study: Cultural Centers of Tehran City)

Niloofar Soodmand<sup>1</sup>; Khadije Zolghadr<sup>2</sup>; Alieh ShekarBeigi<sup>3</sup>

1. *Ph.D. Student of Sociology, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran*
2. *Assistant Professor of Sociology, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran*
3. *Assistant Professor of Sociology, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran*

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**Abstract:** The present research has been carried out with the aim of the cultural-environmental role of cultural centers in sustainable development in the city of Tehran. This research, in terms of its goal type, is developmental and strategic, and in terms of data collection method, it is considered exploratory. The method used in this research is based on foundational data theory. The purposive sampling method and the participation of 15 officials from cultural centers and deputy planners of cultural centers in Tehran city, as well as experts in the field of sustainable development, have been employed. Approximately 987 codes were identified after coding, and among them, the main concept became apparent. The emerging paradigm, in the aspect of causal conditions, includes green human resources, green infrastructure, green performance assessment, and green economy. In the dimension of action-interaction (creating a platform to attract elites, establishing a content committee and think tank, professionalizing and empowering human resources, expanding associations and civil institutions, strengthening and promoting green cultural behaviors in line with indigenous values, cultural planning with a sustainable development approach, long-term goal setting, aligning cultural center organizational goals with audience needs, equipping cultural center infrastructure for sustainable development, optimal energy consumption and waste management, entrepreneurship and marketing in the production of green products) and in the aspect of consequences (citizenry formation with a sustainable development approach, enhancing environmental adaptability, changing the intellectual paradigm of cultural managers, utilizing internal cultural center architecture in organizing events and training courses, optimal resource utilization with a green economy approach, creating a shared workspace, entrepreneurship in the production of indigenous products with a green economy approach, complementing organizational cultural activities, enhancing the scientific and professional level and motivation of employees, strengthening social relationships based on sustainable development, building trust among employees and audiences, enhancing the participation of young and cultural elites, enhancing the commitment and responsibility of officials, employees, and audiences, and increasing social belonging and commitment). These have been formed around the core paradigm of "Participatory Green Cultural Center and the Enhancement of Citizen Culture," based on Strauss and Corbin's paradigm model.

**Keywords:** Sustainable development, cultural centers, green human resources, green economy, citizen culture.

### Introduction

The initial reports produced by the United Nations on global development did not include any significant sections on non-economic aspects. Until the late 20th century, development was largely seen as an economic process, and economic indicators were the defining metrics of development. However, gradually, the economic-centric approach to development gave way to a broader perspective that emphasized political, social, cultural, and environmental factors (Fazeli, 1998, P22). The theory of modernization reduced all development challenges to increasing investment rates, creating new outlooks, and envisioning a world that would bring about different lifestyles. This view reduced all planning tools to cost-benefit analysis in monetary terms. Development, when defined solely through quantifiable indicators, failed to address inequality adequately and concealed the hidden and unforeseen negative consequences of development efforts. Industrial facilities and development projects, apart from generating employment, prosperity, and happiness, also resulted in environmental consequences,

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<sup>1</sup> Email: niloofar\_soodmand@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup> Email: kzolghadr@hotmail.com (Corresponding Author)

<sup>3</sup> Email: ashekarbeugister@gmail.com

demographic shifts, increased crime rates, violence, a sense of discrimination, weakening of local economies, and the expansion of poverty among those exposed to development initiatives. This, in turn, led to negative perceptions of development actions where economic cost-benefit analysis was the sole criterion for decision-making (Fazeli, 2009, P29), cited in the Iranian Sociological Association, 1384; Talebian et al., 2007; Fazeli et al., 2007; Seidlitz et al., 1999). It should be noted that sustainable development is more like a flexible framework where various forms of knowledge can contribute to its realization, depending on their subject matter. One of the achievements of sustainable development is moving beyond a purely economic perspective. Thus, other disciplines have a role to play in analyzing development and providing tools to examine its prerequisites and consequences. Social development, in its more tangible dimensions, primarily focuses on improving the overall quality of life through the creation of favorable and optimal conditions in areas such as poverty alleviation, nutrition, health, housing, employment, education, and how leisure time is spent; and cultural development is a process through which changes occur in the perception, cognition, values, attitudes, and appropriate actions of individuals in society concerning development. Social and cultural development are interrelated and mutually reinforcing aspects of a phenomenon, and both necessarily lead to the creation of increasing social differentiation (Azkia, 2007, P47). Achieving cultural development is a prerequisite for social development. Therefore, it is evident that social and cultural development encompasses a broader domain than economic development.

Furthermore, research indicates that today, environmental protection, ensuring sustainability, and comprehensiveness in development are the most significant challenges facing the global community. The need to consider environmental considerations and requirements, often framed as environmental constraints, is by no means a novel concept in urban planning, design, and management. The increased emphasis over the past few decades is a response to human concerns about the continued degradation of the urban-environment relationship. To improve this situation and create a desirable environment for urban dwellers, attention to environmental management in urban areas is essential. Furthermore, integrating environmental considerations into development programs, planning, activities, and actions in cities is an effective step in enhancing the quality of people's lives. Culture is the inner essence of people's interactions with each other and gives meaning and spirit to these interactions. Culture is more than just a structure; it reflects patterns and states that people have learned and accepted from others, whether right or wrong, and internalized it, making it the standard for their behaviors and actions. When culture, with such a capacity for mutual relationships, moves toward desirable cultural values in development and engages people regularly in the transformative development, the face and content of human relations shift towards development and evolution (Emamjomeh, 2017, 173-174).

Over the past two decades, public spaces in Iran's cities have directly served as spaces for the manifestation of power relations and interactions among various social forces, while everyday actions in the city scene have contributed to the creation of a common mentality of social rules. For example, many leisure spaces were affected or disrupted in the early years of the revolution, and the function of many of these centers and spaces changed. Moving away from the early years of the revolution and fading of the emotional-ideological space of that period, as well as the emergence of technocrats and the dominance of the discourse of development in the policymaking and management scene in the seventies, led to the growth of public space development in Tehran and then other cities. This issue led to the emergence of public spaces such as cultural centers and cultural houses as common areas. In the modern era, in the light of the power of the media and the expansion of communication networks, despite the diverse manipulations of the news and the increase and diversity of access to information, the distance and gap between nations has shortened. Entering a new era will not be possible without relying on principles of sustainability and awareness, not only in words but also in practice. The issue of laying the groundwork for the movement of women and men, young and old, and even children has led governments, international organizations, and intergovernmental institutions to take on extensive responsibilities. However, what has made this field exceptionally attractive is the existence of cultural centers such as cultural houses, which, in the form of non-formal education, arising from the needs of the new era in this transformed space, with their blending with the goals of modern challenges, have created extensive capacities for the sustainability of the mission. Given that cities and urban spaces are

the centers of modern life, one cannot be indifferent to the fate of their development. In addition to the element of development sustainability, taking a multidimensional view can promote the quality of life and social justice. Today, managing the cultural organization of the Tehran municipality and cultural houses require sociological research on the cultural-societal and environmental role of cultural houses as spaces for reproducing the necessary cultural values of society and achieving sustainable development in these spaces. This is essential because, in many cases, the way these spaces are used is incompatible with the intentions of policymakers and cultural planners. Therefore, the following questions are addressed in this article, based on fundamental studies: How can the cultural-environmental role of cultural centers in Tehran be identified and analyzed with a sustainable development approach? What are the causal conditions affecting the cultural-environmental role of cultural centers in sustainable development, and what components and dimensions do they possess? What is the core phenomenon of the cultural-environmental role of cultural centers in sustainable development, and what features and dimensions does it have? What are the stable background conditions affecting the cultural-environmental role of cultural centers, and what qualities does it possess? What are the intervening organizational conditions that are effective in sustainable development? What are the strategies (actions and reactions) or essential activities for promoting sustainable development in terms of the cultural-environmental role of cultural centers, and what dimensions do they have? What are the consequences of implementing activities/strategies for sustainable development based on the cultural-environmental role of cultural centers?

### **Conceptual Framework**

In the foundational data theory approach, the conceptual framework includes a set of related concepts that focus on the major study concepts and connects them in a coherent and meaningful system (Patton, 2001, cited in Baqeri et al., 2022, 4). However, in the qualitative approach, it is recommended that theories and perspectives are not imposed on the field of study, and the opportunity for emergence from the data is not denied. Therefore, the reluctance of the qualitative approach to impose theory and existing concepts in research is rooted in a paradigmatic element (Eman, 2009, P172).

Taking into account the mentioned cases, the proposed perspectives on sustainable development are reviewed in terms of theoretical sensitivity:

**Theory of Original Utility:** According to the definition of the Brundtland Commission, sustainable development should not endanger the possibility of meeting the needs of future generations while ensuring the needs of the present generation. This definition explicitly recalls the idea of original utility, recommending the maximization of benefits for the greatest number of people for the longest possible time. The concept of original utility and utilitarianism was first introduced in the fields of ethics and political philosophy in England. Based on this idea, the most valuable criterion for an action is the maximum benefit and utility that can be obtained from that action for the greatest number of people in society. Therefore, an individual or society must select actions and tools that contribute more to achieving their goals and the efficiency of their benefit by evaluating their goals and possible means to achieve them (Safaei, 2022, P9).

**Social Evolution Theory:** Darwin, influenced by Hegel, the German philosopher who considered history a unified whole and necessarily evolving, believed that the path of biological evolution is necessarily toward evolution. Because nature always preserves superior and more adaptable beings. Thus, the combination of Darwin's theory of species and Hegel's view of history led to the development of the concept of social evolution. In this perspective, known as social Darwinism or social evolutionism, society is perceived as a biological organism, and the stages and biological laws governing the growth and evolution of a living organism are explained according to Darwin's theory (Safaei, 2022, P80). Karl Marx also integrated the Hegelian historical concept and the Darwinian concept of evolution into the concept of development from an economic point of view, laying the groundwork for the emergence of modernization theory in economic development.

From the perspective of the history of civilization, development, in the comprehensive sense of it, is a form of mental creativity and the ability to empower human beings to realize and overcome the obstacles to the flourishing of hidden talents in a source of surplus. So that the products of these talents are preserved as much as possible and passed on to future generations, which is their history and legacy. Therefore, this process ensures the needs of the present generation and the transfer of surplus resources to future generations, continuing the path of the evolution of a civilization. Although the idea of sustainability has challenged and questioned the idea of innovation in development, some foundations of the concept of development in the modernization school, such as the idea of social evolution, have been preserved. Over-exploitation of resources, which is considered a negative acquired characteristic for society, reduces the ability of future generations to adapt to the living environment and prevents them from continuing the path of evolution (Safaei, 2022, P120).

The concept of sustainable development emphasizes that ecological considerations can and should be used in economic activities. These considerations include creating a rational layer in which the claim of development for the promotion of the comprehensive quality of life aspects is challenged (Radcliffe, 1994, P9-34).

#### **General Characteristics for Achieving Sustainability Include**

- **Economic Sustainability:** Economic income is a prerequisite for the success of any development initiative. Income generation should be in a way that supports the cost of living, investment for ensuring economic growth, expenditure for maintenance and repairs of facilities, the adoption of new technologies, and actions for innovation and competitiveness in the market.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Human activities have consequences for the environment. Environmental sustainability means that in the long term, the intensity of environmental damage caused by human activities does not prevent continued growth, especially the danger to human life. Environmental sustainability is closely related to human sustainability. On the other hand, the lack of environmental sustainability disrupts economic sustainability.
- **Human Sustainability:** Having a suitable human workforce for implementing policies, programs, and plans and achieving long-term planned goals is human sustainability. Ensuring that there is a long-term human workforce capable of understanding the technical changes resulting from development activities and using the opportunities created for development goals is an indicator of human sustainability. This assurance is possible under several conditions: first, financial provision; second, training individuals according to future needs; and third, creating a clear and reliable social, cultural, and political image of a suitable future.
- **Social Sustainability:** The quality of societies that oversee intra-society relationships and the relationship between nature and society is called social sustainability. Social sustainability is guaranteed when changes resulting from development actions do not disrupt social security, destroy healthy social relationships, create social harms, increase class disparities, have adverse effects resulting from economic disorder in undesirable directions, and discriminate against marginalized and vulnerable groups. Development actions often create economic benefits for specific groups. These are individuals who already had advantages. Neglecting these issues exacerbates class disparities. Inflation resulting from increased demand for goods and services, increased crime potential, increased traffic, and transportation, among other things, threatens social sustainability.
- **Participation Sustainability:** One of the conditions for the sustainability of development is the extensive participation of the people affected by a development action, and the sustainability of this participation in the long term. Carrying out development activities can involve significant public and economic force. This participation is ensured under the condition that the benefits of the action are more convincing than the losses it may cause for the people.

**Structuration Theory:** Giddens argues that within the framework of structuration theory, alongside an emphasis on social functions, there exists a theory regarding the relationship between agency and structure. Thus, agency and structure cannot be perceived as separate entities; they are two sides of the same coin. Any social action necessitates structure, and every structure necessitates social action (Ritzer,

2012, P576). He believes that human interactions in different spaces have different meanings because each of these spaces is used in different ways and carries a wide range of activities with different meanings. The importance of the relationship between space and social relations is such that special attention must be paid to the spatial distribution of social activities and the positional characteristics of all social actions. Urban spaces, as public spaces, are publicly owned and accessible to the general public, where collective or individual functions take place. Urban spaces are considered physical structures for social interactions. Humans have always met their need for social relationships by creating spaces in the city. These spaces are socially active and provide the opportunity for face-to-face human interaction within urban society and organized physical structures. Space, place, and location are the sources and origins of social power. Power relations are different in every space. As Foucault points out, the entire history of places that has been recorded in writing is the history of the powers, activities, and tactics of the residents of that place (Zhelentis, 2020, P295). Giddens specifies that "structure exists solely through the activities of human agents and within the framework of activities" (Giddens, 1989, P256). Giddens believes that structure is both constraining and enabling of action. On the one hand, structure and agency represent a form of duality, and neither can exist without the other. Time and space are essential variables in Giddens' theory. Both depend on the presence of other individuals in time and space. The initial condition is face-to-face interaction, mutual interaction in which others are present at the same time and in the same space. Nevertheless, social systems extend in time and space to the extent that others may not be present in time and space. Such temporal and spatial distancing has become more possible than ever due to the emergence of new forms of communication and transportation in the modern world (Ritzer, J. (2012), P580).

**Agency-Culture Theory:** In Archer's theory, there is also a dimension of conflict and order. Components of the cultural system may be contradictory or complementary. This helps to determine whether human agents have systematic or conflicting relationships with each other. These relationships also determine whether cultural relationships are stable or changing (Ritzer, 2012, P581). Margaret Archer (1988), focusing on the link between agency and culture, has taken agency-structure discourse in a different direction. Archer examines the ways in which the cultural system influences social-cultural action. However, she also focuses on social relationships among agents and their modes of response and influence on the cultural system. She argues that her favorite subject is the link between culture and agency, believing that the cultural system precisely returns to the two-way relationship between this system and human agency (i.e., the effects of the cultural system on us and our effects on the cultural system). She believes that agents have the ability to strengthen or resist the influence of the cultural system (Jafari, Z. 2008. P47). Archer articulates her preferred position as follows: "Culture is the product of human agency, but at the same time, every form of social interaction takes place within the cultural framework" (Archer, 1988, P77-78).

From the above theories, it can be concluded that cultural centers, as spaces where social interactions and relationships within them take on different meanings in relation to the space and architecture, can be used by various segments of society. If they can adapt themselves to the environmental and external conditions, meaning align themselves with the environment and fulfill their needs, regulate mutual relationships between their different parts, and create, maintain, and renew individual incentives and constructive cultural patterns, they have taken a significant step towards sustainable development. Strengthening cultural centers and the importance of their activities, in addition to creating conscious social behaviors, provides the grounds for social power in society. In the end, social actions in line with the structure (socio-cultural conditions), agency (human), and culture, and the extent to which individuals use cultural and social capital can pave the way for sustainable development in society.

## **Research Background**

### **Internal Background**

Tahereh Nasra and Maryam Emadi, 1400, in an article titled "Investigating the Role of Social-Cultural Sustainability Indicators in the Development of Public Spaces in Cities (Case Study: Khaldehbarin Park and Bagh-e-Arm Street)," have discussed the concept of components and criteria influencing landscape architecture design and cultural spaces and their relationship with humans. This article aims to clarify



the qualitative components of social-cultural sustainability in urban public spaces and, for example, has examined two public spaces in Shiraz city (Khaldehbarin Park and Bagh-e-Arm Street). The research method of this article is qualitative, focusing on understanding the factors contributing to sustainable urban development and the qualitative components of social-cultural sustainability and Iranian-Islamic architectural criteria. The research findings indicate that the design of urban public spaces, with an emphasis on social-cultural sustainability and attention to Iranian-Islamic architectural components, leads to the creation of a vibrant and dynamic space. It influences people's mindset, creating gatherings and collective memories for achieving peace and mental tranquility. Moreover, besides quantitative values, it takes steps towards satisfying qualitative needs and, with proper design, provides better spatial separation, a sense of tranquility, and dynamism simultaneously.

Farideh Hajimohammad Hossein and Fatemeh Azizabadifarhaneh, 1393, in an article titled "The Role of Cultural and Artistic Activities of Tehran Municipality's Cultural, Artistic Organization (Cultural Centers) in Citizen Culture Development (Case Study: Residents of Tehran's District 15)," state:

Since citizenship is one of the key concepts in understanding and describing the status and situation of modern humans, it demands an appropriate response to the needs of this position through a chain of cultural-educational activities. How these activities can influence the development of citizen culture, with what mechanisms, is the main subject of this article. The main goal of the research is to understand the impact of the cultural and artistic activities of Tehran Municipality's Cultural and Artistic Organization on citizen culture development (House of Culture and Cultural Centers). The research method is descriptive-analytical, and the information is collected through a survey and questionnaires. The research findings indicate that the sub-hypotheses, the impact of educational, advertising, and recreational activities on the development of citizens' physical health by 61.2%, mental health by 43%, the development of ethics and citizen behavior, and respect for others among citizens by 54.6%, the sense of friendship among citizens by 50.7%, the development of individual security by citizens by 39.2% is at a zero level, the development of citizens' social participation by 51.4% is moderate to high, and the last sub-hypothesis, the significant impact of educational, advertising, and recreational activities of Tehran Municipality's Cultural and Artistic Organization on the development of citizens' social, cultural culture by 42.5%, is at a moderate to high level, and the main hypothesis (The educational, advertising, and recreational activities of Tehran Municipality's Cultural and Artistic Organization have a significant impact on citizen culture development) is also confirmed to a high degree (30%).

Masoumeh Jahantalu, Maryam and colleagues, 1400, in an article titled "Investigating Comprehensive Sociocultural Factors Affecting Sustainable Urban Development in the South Pars Region with an Emphasis on Environmental Hazards" state:

Sustainability is generally a pervasive and even central phenomenon in sociology, and among them, cities have special importance due to their population growth and expansion trends. Moreover, the increasing population and activity in these residential centers, which inherently lead to density and accumulation, have caused environmental, social, and even environmental damage for the benefit of citizens. Now, if the city is industrial and relies on petrochemical foundations, the problem becomes more acute. The results showed that individual variables play a moderating role in the relationship between the dimensions of sustainable development and environmental behaviors. Also, the relationship between the dimensions of sustainable development, namely media education, social trust, social participation, and environmental behaviors, with a confidence coefficient of 0.95, is positively and significantly related.

### **Foreign Background**

Prince Anthony Afri and colleagues (2021), in an article titled "Sustainability Guidelines for Achieving Smart Sustainable Cities in Developing Countries: A Case Study of Ghana," present a conceptual framework for addressing urban challenges in implementing the concept of smart sustainable cities in developing countries. This study introduces the use of six dimensions in urban space (life, people, mobility, economy, governance, and environment) for conceptualizing urban structure. Urban development should preferably be geared towards predicting economic and social transformations - an easy way to meet the needs of citizens, enhance social cohesion, and maximize resources. However, rapid and unplanned growth hinders sustainable development. Therefore, to circumvent urban challenges and maximize its benefits, the concept of a smart city has been proposed.

Yan-Yan and Cheng-Sing-Wong and colleagues (2018), in an article titled "Efficiency of Urban Sustainable Development towards a Balance between Nature and Human Well-being: Argumentation, Measurement, and Evaluation," believe that urban development necessitates fulfilling the needs of the present generation without harming the needs of future generations. Sustainable development not only advocates for the sustainability of natural resources and the environment but also emphasizes sustainable human well-being and residents' happiness. This article demonstrates an evaluation framework for urban sustainable development based on the reality of limited natural resources and human well-being needs and assesses the performance of urban sustainable development in Chinese cities as a case study. By analyzing data, the results indicate various characteristics and differences in urban development. The methods and indicator systems used in this study can be employed to demonstrate temporal and spatial differences in the inputs of urban development, human well-being, and environmental protection.

Pavitra Mishra (2017), in an article titled "Green Human Resource Management: A Framework for Sustainable Organization Progress in Emerging Economies," examines the status and challenges of green human resource management practices in India as a region that has received relatively less research attention. Additionally, it proposes a theoretical framework to bridge the identified gaps and suggests building a sustainable organization. The findings of this study highlight the status of green human resource practices such as environmental education, green hiring, performance assessment, employee participation, and compensation for damages. Data analysis demonstrates that top management support and cross-functional learning among departments are crucial for facilitating green behaviors among employees. This study suggests an interdisciplinary framework for creating comprehensive sustainable organizations by integrating lessons from green human resource management, green supply chain management, competitive advantage strategies, and corporate social responsibility of green companies. It emphasizes existing gaps in the system and provides insights into creating comprehensive sustainable organizations for managers and policymakers.

### **Research Methodology**

The present study, in terms of its objective, is developmental and strategic, while in terms of data collection method, it is considered exploratory. The exploratory research aims to design and develop a model that reflects more aspects of sustainable development. Qualitative data consists of information collected without relying on predefined tools such as questionnaires and is gathered using unstructured tools such as observations and interviews.

### **Participants**

The majority of the data in this study were collected through interviews. Interviews were conducted with officials and policymakers of cultural centers in Tehran, with a total of 15 interviews conducted. Cluster sampling was used to select both culturally rich (Khavaran Cultural Center (Region 15), Eshraq Cultural Center (Region 4), Ferdows Cultural Center (Region 5)) and culturally less privileged (Mehr Cultural Center (Region 19), Danesh Cultural Center (Region 21)) cultural centers. Interviews were also conducted with some participants who had been interviewed before to eliminate differences and discrepancies and complete the interviews. Additionally, interviews with city officials, researchers from the Cultural and Artistic Research Organization's websites, and some audio recordings were utilized.

### **Research Validity and Reliability**

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, all interviews were recorded. Gradual validation (credibility and reliability) of the data was achieved through the "research audit" process in qualitative research. These mechanisms are injected into each stage of the research to create valid research findings by identifying and correcting errors before they interfere with the pattern and before they distort the analysis, in a sense, self-correction. In different stages of qualitative research, attempts were made to inject validity or credibility into the research. Therefore, in the content analysis stage, expert opinions in sustainable development were used to ensure the quality of the content analysis conducted, and its credibility was confirmed by experts. In addition, in sensitive areas during interviews, "reflective summaries" were used. In reflective summaries, a verbal explanation of what the core of the discussion is, which is the main issue, was provided to control misunderstandings. Since the participants considered

this as an active listening, they found it pleasant. In this research, "intra-subject agreement" method was used to calculate the reliability of the interviews. For reliability calculation using intra-subject agreement method, two coders (evaluators) were requested to participate as research collaborators (coders) in the research, who had a good command of content analysis. Then, the researcher, along with this research collaborator, coded three interviews, and the intra-subject agreement percentage, which is used as an indicator of the reliability of the analysis, was 0.87. Considering that this reliability rate is also higher than 60 percent, the reliability of the codings was confirmed.

### Data Collection

After several hours to complete an interview, a written summary of it was prepared, which was very effective in open coding. Through semi-structured interviews and reliance on the theoretical data foundation research strategy, "key themes" were extracted, and after presenting them to the literature in space and place, they were transformed into a paradigmatic model based on Strauss and Corbin's pattern (Corbin. Strauss. 2017).

### Sampling

The target population was the managers and planners of cultural centers in Tehran, and "theoretical sampling" (Corbin. Strauss. 2017, P163) was used to collect data from managers and planners of cultural centers in Tehran to discover the relationship between concepts.

### Data Collection and Analysis

Data analysis began after the first day of data collection. Data collection guides the analysis, and the analysis leads to concepts. Questions generated concepts, and questions led to the collection of more data. This cyclical process continued until the research reached a point of "saturation." Ultimately, the conditions, backgrounds, strategies, and consequences were identified as central and core in coding, and a paradigmatic model called the cultural-environmental role of cultural centers in sustainable development was presented.

### Research Findings

The researcher begins the process of analysis by reopening the coding and categorizes the data based on major informational categories. In open coding, we created specific information categories about the phenomenon under study through data segmentation. Within each category, several properties or subcategories were identified, and to demonstrate the dimensions of these properties (or in other words, to determine the maximum potential of their relationships), data collection was performed. According to Strauss and Corbin's perspective (1998), some concepts can be categorized within a more abstract concept that possesses a higher level of abstraction. Therefore, data evolve in their own evolutionary tables to reach unique concepts. In other words, firstly, key data points were counted, and a specific code was assigned to each point. Then, by comparing the codes, several codes that referred to a common aspect of the phenomenon were given the title of a concept. Subsequently, several concepts form a category, and several categories are found in the form of a theory.

In this section, by conducting 15 interviews with managers of cultural centers in Tehran, planners of the Cultural and Artistic Organization of Tehran Municipality, as well as experts in the field of sustainable development, approximately 987 codes were identified. These codes were categorized into 40 concepts, and the themes and paradigms of these concepts are presented in the table below:

*Table (1): Main categories and their paradigmatic role*

Categories	A paradigmatic role
Green Infrastructure of Cultural Centers	Causal Conditions
Empowering Cultural Center Employees	Causal Conditions
Green Economy	Causal Conditions
Green Performance Evaluation	Causal Conditions
Adapting the organizational goals of cultural centers in line with audience needs.	Strategies
Equipping cultural center infrastructures based on optimal resource consumption	Strategies



Encouraging and Green Incentives for Empowering and Motivating Employees and Audiences	Strategies
Expanding Associations and Civil Institutions	Strategies
Entrepreneurship and Marketing in Green Product Production	consequences
Changing the Managerial Paradigm in the Cultural Field	consequences
Cultivating Cultural Citizenship	consequences
Utilizing the Interior Architecture of Cultural Centers for Events, Training Courses, and Think Tanks	consequences
Enhancing Commitment and Responsibility among Officials, Employees, and the Audience	consequences
Synergy of cultural activities in organizations	consequences

Continuing with each of these concepts and then addressing the core concept, the following explanations are provided.

### **Causal Conditions**

#### **Green Infrastructure of Cultural Centers**

The distinctive architecture of cultural centers in the metropolis of Tehran plays a significant role in sustainable development, serving as a safe environment for social, cultural, and environmental activities. The architectural style and spatial nature of these cultural centers have a profound influence on the audience, making them committed and responsible towards their surroundings, community, and fellow individuals.

Reza, 49, the respected manager of one of Tehran's cultural centers with prior management experience at Khavaran Cultural Center, remarks, "At the inception of Khavaran Cultural Center, the children who initially came to this magnificent building in the lower part of the city posed potential harm to the environmental facilities. However, gradually, they became fond of the environment and, through cultural interactions, activities, direct and indirect education, they began to consider the facilities as their own and made efforts to preserve them. In addition to educated and dedicated staff, the unique architecture of Khavaran Cultural Center in the southernmost part of Tehran, despite cultural deficiencies in the neighborhood, managed to have an impact on its audience to the extent that these children engaged in activities at the Cultural Center even in their adulthood."

Competent and efficient human resources are one of the positive aspects of a cultural center and can enhance cultural activities. However, Shahram, 48, one of the cultural center managers, explains, "The Cultural Organization is facing a severe shortage of staff due to inflation. Instead of improving services, it is downsizing the workforce. There are approximately 36,000 official and contractual employees, which is more than enough. However, this leads to increased costs, reduced services, and unemployment within the organization."

#### **Empowering Cultural Center Employees**

Organizational commitment is an ongoing process that conveys individuals' participation in organizational decisions, their attention to the organization, and the success and well-being of the organization. To create an empowerment process in cultural centers, it is necessary to have organizational backgrounds such as a supportive and participatory culture, as well as the formation of a necessary work team. On the other hand, individual backgrounds such as skills and experience in the chosen field and profession in the cultural organization will be one of the principles of empowerment. These skills and experiences cannot provide the grounds for empowerment until responsibility capacity is developed.

Mehdi, 40, one of the senior managers of cultural activities in Tehran Municipality, based on his experience, says, "Individuals in various positions within the organization are easily transferred to cultural centers without evaluating their skills in the field of activity. Employees in cultural centers should be selected based on merit, not arbitrarily. We are dealing with human resources whose capabilities are not up to date with current knowledge and require training and empowerment courses. Neglecting meritocracy and being outdated leads to indifference towards their responsibilities."

Additionally, communication skills such as speaking and listening skills, the ability and physiological capacity to engage in participatory activities, and negotiation skills, especially with opponents, along

with having motivation for activities, are important individual aspects for organizational work. Other factors, such as limited or threatened job security, limited opportunities for advancement and promotion, limited decision-making responsibilities, and inconsistency between personal and organizational values, all contribute to employee stress alongside heavy workloads and unrealistic scheduling. It is necessary for employees to strengthen their own morale in relation to this and for the organization to work towards reducing and managing employee stress.

Ali, 37, points out that, "Holding events to promote participation and familiarize employees and the audience, and directing them in the field of sustainable development, such as helping with energy conservation, can be beneficial. Sometimes, employees have good ideas that can be used, such as energy-efficient ideas, which, in addition to motivating employees, encourage other employees to share their ideas and enhance their creativity. In administrative systems where activities are always directive, it removes the possibility of creativity from employees and the audience, and employees do not have the opportunity for growth."

In the field of mutual cultural relations among members of society, the identification of development prospects requires attention to the communicator as the sender of communication, the responsiveness as the recipient of communication, and culture as the content of communication. Most participants believed that in mutual communication, besides what individuals contribute to society, their goals and attitudes toward cultural and social concepts are also important. These different attitudes impart a special quality to mutual communication, whether continuous (cooperation, trust, harmony, and cohesion) or intermittent (indifference, disrespect, devaluation, social conflicts). This is despite the fact that employees hold different beliefs from what they exhibit outside the work environment.

### **Green Economy**

The top priority of the green economy is investing in and accessing sustainable natural systems, infrastructure, knowledge, and education for the well-being of everyone. It also creates opportunities for a green lifestyle, businesses, and green jobs. Ultimately, it seeks rapid and equitable changes and pays the price for itself. No one is left out of these changes, and even vulnerable individuals can be leaders of these changes and innovation in social support and skill-building.

Mehran, 42, who has previous management experience at Khavaran Cultural Center, Bahman Cultural Center, and Tehran Book Garden, points out that: "The Cultural Organization is financially poor and relies on the municipality. Therefore, it must consider revenue generation."

Gholamhossein, 46, states: "Cultural centers need entrepreneurship to operate independently to cover their expenses. Now, if spaces can be created for startups and support them, activities in the field of sustainable development and the promotion of citizenship culture can be carried out. It has been a while since this space has been created in Khavaran Cultural Center, but this should be done gradually and consistently, without rushing, in other centers and cultural centers."

### **Green Performance Evaluation**

Performance evaluation is conducted periodically with the aim of discovering an individual's potential and capacity and planning to improve the organization. In this process, the individual's executive performance in assigned tasks and responsibilities is examined. Additionally, in this process, senior managers of the organization evaluate the behavior of their subordinates to identify the strengths and weaknesses of employees based on feedback.

Mehdi, 44, says: "One of the challenges for cultural centers and cultural-artistic organizations is the multi-source policy-making. Since policy-making in cultural centers is not a single-source, and there is no coordination, the system itself lacks a clear policy-making approach. Top-down policymaking from multiple sources makes it impossible for cultural centers to utilize the environment proportionate to their capacity."

Participants believed that if grounds for attracting elites and motivated individuals are provided, and their expertise and creativity are utilized, better feedback can undoubtedly be obtained from cultural or environmental activities. The impact of activities in society, along with the participation of young and specialized audiences, will be twice as much with bottom-up policymaking. Even employee evaluations

and identifying their strengths and weaknesses will be carried out in a friendly and encouraging manner to improve their performance and motivation.

## **Strategies**

### **Adapting the organizational goals of cultural centers in line with audience needs.**

Facilities, and infrastructure should be planned and designed to meet the needs of the audience.

Fardaad, 50, as one of the planning and creative managers, believes that: "In cultural centers, we have put in 90% effort, but we haven't achieved the desired results. We have accomplished the organization's goals but have overlooked the needs of the people and citizens."

Participants believe that we have achieved most of the organization's goals but have overlooked the needs of the people and citizens. This is somewhat related to the financial resources and the occasional nature of the organization's policies, in both cases hindering the assessment of audience needs.

### **Equipping cultural center infrastructures based on optimal resource consumption**

To achieve environmental goals and sustainable development and due to the architectural style and cultural-educational nature of cultural centers and their impact on the audience, attention to equipping cultural centers with state-of-the-art tools and technology can play a significant role in sustainable development.

Hossein, 40, a manager at the cultural department of the Tehran Municipality, believes: "First and foremost, managers must feel the necessity of energy, paper, and other resources' optimal consumption and commit to it. Based on commitment and responsibility, cultural centers can be equipped with solar panels, intelligent water and electricity systems, drip irrigation systems, smart heating and cooling systems, and more. This can provide indirect education for employees and the audience."

### **Encouraging and Green Incentives for Empowering and Motivating Employees and Audiences**

In the context of promoting optimal resource use, employees can have a significant impact on indirectly educating the audience. However, this requires training first and then creating motivation for enhancing commitment and responsibility.

Mr. Bahari, 43, the Knowledge Management Director at the Tehran Municipality's Cultural and Artistic Organization, says regarding motivation: "Cultural and artistic organizations need to create motivation for employees to improve their performance. Some employees are sensitive to recycling and use fewer disposable items and non-renewable materials. However, this is not enough and requires raising the motivational levels among employees. There is no difference between employees who care about the environment and those who are indifferent, which makes it challenging to encourage employees to use energy efficiently."

Participants believe that to encourage employees and audiences, their ideas for promoting resource consumption can be utilized. This can not only create motivation but also enhance commitment and responsibility in the community towards sustainable development and citizenship culture promotion.

### **Expanding Associations and Civil Institutions**

NGOs, associations, or grassroots organizations are non-profit groups that operate independently of the government, engaging in voluntary activities. These organizations are formed for various purposes, with humanitarian and environmental objectives being two examples that many grassroots organizations pursue.

Gholam-Hossein, aged 46, says: "Just as a good economic enterprise doesn't necessarily make a good producer and a good cultural entity, municipal authorities and public institutions often aren't as effective as they should be. Municipalities spend a lot, but the results are not always efficient. Many people work as staff in cultural organizations, and if we allocate their salaries to NGOs, artists, and so on, they can work more cost-effectively."

Most participants believe that municipal authorities have excessively intervened in cultural matters. Why interfere when grassroots organizations and even the private sector can perform better?

Mehdi, aged 44, states: "The only thing municipalities should do is facilitate work, which means helping activities."



*Figure (1): The paradigm model of research in axial coding (Green participatory culture and promotion of citizenship culture)*

## Consequences

### **Entrepreneurship and Marketing in Green Product Production**

The goal of green production is to create products using only materials and processes with minimal environmental impact. Additionally, green production aims to conserve the energy used in production and ensure maximum safety for employees and society. Innovative technologies offer opportunities for cleaner production and more efficient resource use. The adoption of production technologies by managers and the provision of facilities by them can contribute to this goal.

Gholamreza, aged 47, a manager with experience in cultural centers, says: "Cultural centers need entrepreneurship to cover their expenses. Start-ups and support for them in the field of green production can be a significant step for the future. In Khavaran Cultural Center, a space has been allocated for start-ups, and if this initiative succeeds, it can be expanded to other regions and cultural centers."

### **Changing the Managerial Paradigm in the Cultural Field**

Culture is a social heritage that distinguishes humans from other animals. These distinguishing aspects, which are unique to humans, can be based on four characteristics: thinking and learning ability, speech, technology, and social nature (group life). Cultural centers play a vital role in elevating society's cultural level, in line with their educational nature and branding. Given the aforementioned points, a minimal intervention in culture in line with audience needs facilitates achieving sustainable development in society.

Gholam-Hossein, aged 46, with a background in cultural management at the Tehran Municipality, says: "The era of 'should' and 'shouldn't' in culture has passed. Today's generation pays minimal attention to these 'should' and 'shouldn't' rules. Culture can only be injected into society through indirect education and discourse tailored to the audience's needs, utilizing technology. Therefore, we should have minimal intervention in the cultural field. We need to provide education and awareness to today's generation and empower them with the ability to choose. Only in this way can we achieve sustainability in the cultural field."

Participants believe that if we fulfill our responsibilities correctly in the management field and use constructive opinions and ideas from our audience, it will build trust in the organization, enhance participation culture, create a sense of belonging and responsibility, and result in employees carrying out their duties more satisfactorily. In this way, bottom-up management fosters creativity, trust-building, and the advancement of the participation culture, leading to a more robust organization that can play a more significant role in building a healthy society.

### **Cultivating Cultural Citizenship**

Citizenship activity and commitment encompass a set of fundamental values, attitudes, and common laws that encompass a sense of belonging, commitment, and respect. It not only refers to collective life learning but also includes the acquisition of values, attitudes, skills, and loyalty to civic duties. Through these activities, a cultural citizen is formed.

Maryam, aged 41, an environmental activist states: "Civic culture establishes the norms of society and forms the basis of communication among citizens. A city brimming with culturally rich citizens exudes security and tranquility, with citizen participation in every activity being noticeable—a constructive participation that reduces the costs of city management."

Participants believed that civic culture is not something achieved in a day, a month, or even a year. Civic culture is created over a period of time and through social interactions among city residents; interactions between citizens, existing customs, cultural advertising, and information dissemination, cultural infrastructure, and the feedback residents receive.

### **Utilizing the Interior Architecture of Cultural Centers for Events, Training Courses, and Think Tanks**

Cultural centers, thanks to their cultural nature and suitable interior facilities, provide the necessary space for hosting think tanks, gatherings, environmental and cultural activities. Furthermore, the trust of the audience in the cultural center's brand can create the necessary grounds for cultivating cultural citizens.



Reza, aged 49, says that people trust the cultural center's brand. If we empower our staff and design our activities according to the audience's needs, this trust will undoubtedly grow stronger, and we can use it to enhance participation among employees and the audience.

Ferdad, aged 50, a cultural center official, believes that people receive their needs through the virtual space. Therefore, we must offer something more advanced and engaging in the virtual space so that the audience can experience their needs directly in the cultural center. Achieving this requires equipping the cultural center, empowering employees, and harnessing their ideas. It's worth noting that the cultural center's space and architecture are flexible enough to adapt to various situations and events, tailored to the specific event's environment.

### **Enhancing Commitment and Responsibility among Officials, Employees, and the Audience**

Participants agreed that if activities are carried out from the bottom up, considering the community's needs and are conducted by informed individuals and employees, it not only boosts creativity in cultural activities among employees and the audience but also motivates them. They can identify social issues and offer plans for their improvement or reduction in tandem with the community, fostering cultural citizenship.

Gholamali, aged 72, experienced in sustainable development and a senior manager, says: "The prerequisite for commitment and responsibility is building trust, and the most important step in building trust is involving stakeholders and using their experiences."

### **Synergy of cultural activities in organizations**

What is certain from the participants' perspective is that cultural activities in various institutions and organizations are carried out in parallel, leading to disappointment and distrust among the audience towards cultural activities. Even in most cases, employees become disheartened about conducting cultural activities and do not perform their duties enthusiastically.

Hossein, aged 44, a cultural center manager states: "Local halls, the Cultural-Social Department of the Municipality, Yassi Mosque, and others all engage in activities, but separately, and this diminishes the quality of cultural work. The complementarity of organizations and cultural centers can elevate cultural activities and make them more effective in society."

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The paradigm model of sustainable development, considering the cultural and environmental role of cultural centers in Tehran's metropolis and the necessity of recognizing the capacities and limitations of these centers in sustainable development, holds significant importance. The central concept emerging from the Participatory Green Cultural Center and the enhancement of civic culture signifies the most cohesive element linking the paradigm's components. According to Darwin's theory of social evolution, development is a process through which hidden talents and potential abilities of an entity or organism flourish until they naturally reach their full maturity. This allegory allows us to outline the development's purpose and its subsequent program. Today's society is experiencing new environmental conditions due to technological factors. Therefore, adapting social and cultural activities in line with the audience's needs and shifting the managerial paradigm can attract a maximum number of underutilized young individuals by virtue of their interest in activities related to sustainable development. Factors like meritocracy, single-source policy, and bottom-up policymaking can boost creativity and innovation while fostering motivation among employees and the audience.

Long-term goal-setting, instead of short-term, conditional planning alongside an inventory of the audience's consumption basket, placing young people in activities corresponding to sustainable development, identifying assets, capabilities, and experiential learning can build trust among employees and the audience, committing them to the principles of sustainable development and civic culture. This aligns with the theory of utility maximization, which asserts that the most valuable action is one that yields the maximum benefit for the greatest number of individuals in society.

Adapting cultural center infrastructures according to the principles of sustainable development and identifying environmental cultural deficiencies can create grounds for motivation. More importantly,

aligning the organizational goals of cultural centers with the needs of the audience and employees creates a cultural system as a planning tool, fostering mutual communication and reflecting the activities. Utilizing cultural center spaces to support startups, particularly with a focus on sustainable development and green economics, can not only promote culture in the area of resource and energy optimization but also contribute to the production of green products, entrepreneurial opportunities, and marketing in line with promoting a green economy. Most importantly, it can make cultural centers economically self-sufficient. It is suggested that, to establish green economics and access the necessary equipment for empowerment, entrepreneurship, and marketing, specialists and community-based organizations in this field be involved, with a focus on local goods and facilities. Interpersonal relationships in various social groups, institutions, and active organizations, in the course of social role-playing and their application in public structures such as metropolises, villages, etc., require cultural patterns, methods, and customs. Without culture, no communication platform can function effectively. Culture, with such capacity, in mutual relationships, can engage individuals in the development of their respective sectors. Just as "Archer" argues within the context of the link between agency and culture, that individuals have the capacity to strengthen the cultural system or resist it. Archer articulates her preferred position as follows:

"Culture is the product of human agency, but it also happens within the context of cultural relations." In conclusion, considering the aforementioned factors, especially empowering human resources (employees and audience), leveraging experts according to contemporary societal needs, inter-organizational collaboration among governmental, private, and community-based cultural organizations, motivational factors such as rewards and compensation, and more, can be a significant step in shaping a participatory cultural center with the maximum participation of stakeholders in various target groups, thus promoting trust, participation, commitment, and responsibility as elements of civic culture in society. This can provide the grounds for sustainable development in the community. The phenomenon-centered paradigm model, following Strauss and Corbin's approach, is as follows:

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