

# Using Strategic Choice Approach in Urban Regeneration Planning (Case Study: Dolatkah Area in Tehran, Iran)

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**ABSTRACT:** In order to respond to the problem of urban decline, different approaches have been defined in such a way that urban regeneration approach became current in the 1980s (and more widely after 1995) as a replacement for urban renewal. Urban regeneration is the holistic process of reversing economic, social and physical decay in areas where it has reached a stage when market forces alone will not suffice. This article approaches aimed at using urban regeneration planning in Dolatkah case study situated in 19th Tehran municipality region using Analysis of Interconnected Decision Areas technique in order to respond its urban decline. Findings of this article show that the attitude of decision-makers to deal with urban decline is more physical than social and economic. Urban regeneration planning at the local level cannot answer all the problems of social, economic and physical urban decays and there is the necessity of planning system reform from top to down. The results of this article states that with a technical office establishment based on Tehran renovation organization support and with assuming of institutional planning implementation, community development asset-based approach is more adapted with Dolatkah conditions. Institution planning and its process in Dolatkah have been introduced in this article.

**Keywords:** *Urban regeneration, Strategic choice approach, Analysis of Interconnected Decision Areas (AIDA) technique.*

## INTRODUCTION

Urban decline appears in the concept of spatial concentration of environmental, physical, social and economic problems and in high levels of unemployment, poverty and environmental pollution. Poor residential areas, low level of urban infrastructure uses and poor adaptation of public services and housing, all shows such pathos. In this matter, most of the developed and some of the under developing countries have been faced with issues of urban decline and have been able to adopt certain approaches to the desired space in their cities. Urban regeneration approach is one of these things that in the last two decades of the twentieth century have been considering by planners and decision makers to drop out decline areas of cities.

Dolatkah neighborhood in south west region of Tehran Municipality as the case study in this paper experienced the phenomenon of urban decline and exhaustion in all its dimensions. This area was the settlement of brick kilns workers and identified as one of the informal settlements in 1980. Irregular residential parcels, brick kilns land uses, deal-end

accesses and inappropriate demographic composition are the most important specification of this area. If the status continues, this area suffers from severe physical, environment and also consequently social decline. Thus, this paper will identify and describe types of urban decline in that case study and based on urban regeneration approach, answer to these questions:

How can be revived to increase the quality of life in declined area with urban regeneration approach?

How is the interaction between new and declined area of Dolatkah regeneration planning in various aspects of social, economical and physical environment?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology is a way to find out the result of a given problem on a specific matter or problem that is also referred as research problem. In Methodology, researcher uses different criteria for solving/searching the given research problem. Different sources use different types of methods for solving the problem. If we think about the word "Methodology", it is the way of searching or solving the research problem. (Industrial Research Institute, 2010). According to Goddard & Melville

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(2004), answering unanswered questions or exploring which currently not exist is a research. The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of current English lays down the meaning of research as a careful investigation or inquiry especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge. Redmen & Mory (2009), define research as a systematized effort to gain new knowledge. In research Methodology, researcher always tries to search the given question systematically in our own way and find out all the answers till conclusion. If research does not work systematically on problem, there would be less possibility to find out the final result. For finding or exploring research questions, a researcher faces lot of problems that can be effectively resolved with using correct research methodology (Industrial Research Institute, 2010). There are different types of research methods so that scientific resources separate them into varied categories such as quantitative vs. qualitative and conceptual vs. empirical so that in this article we have used conceptual and quantitative methods together.

### **Urban Regeneration Approach**

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 (Shaker-Ardekani, 2014, 106). In recent years, many countries have sought to regenerate the relatively depressed parts of their urban areas through a wide range of policy initiatives. Regeneration intervention has typically involved a series of discretionary funding programmes, operating in parallel to, although often seeking to influence, the activities of 'mainstream' public service delivery. The type and scale of the intervention have varied significantly (Tyler et al., 2013, 169).

This term became current in the 1980s (and more widely in 1995) as a replacement for urban renewal, a term that had become associated with wholesale clearance and comprehensive redevelopment. Urban regeneration defines in 2003 as the holistic process of reversing economic, social and physical decay in areas where it has reached a stage when market forces alone will not suffice (Cowan, 2005, 425).

Historically, urban regeneration has largely been a partnership between central and local government. But, as regeneration policy has evolved a broader range of agents have been brought to the center of decision-making. Four broad interest groups now occupy the urban regeneration policy arena at the local level: public, private, voluntary and community and community sectors (Maggin, 2004, 14).

Urban regeneration has been defined as the process of

reversing economic, social and physical decay in our towns and cities where it has reached that stage when market forces alone will not suffice (Adair et al., 1999, 2031 & Nappi-Choulet, 2006, 1511). Also Roberts defined urban regeneration as Comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change (Roberts & Sykes, 2005, 17). This definition encompasses the essential features of urban regeneration that have been identified by Lich field, where she points to the need for better understanding of the process of decline and agreement.

Urban regeneration theory is principally concerned with the institutional and organized dynamics of the management of urban change. However, these institutional and organizational dimensions of the theory of urban regeneration also display a number of important characteristics and features which help to define the role, content and mode of operation of urban regeneration. Given that urban regeneration as a distinct activity is rooted in practice rather than theory, a high degree of similarity between the features of theory and practice is to be expected. Summarizing these features, urban regeneration can be seen as (Roberts & Sykes, 2005, 21-22):

An interventionist activity;

An activity which straddles the public, private and community sectors;

An activity which is likely to experience considerable changes in its institutional structures over time in response to changing economic, social, environmental and political circumstances;

A means of mobilizing collective effort and providing the basis for the negotiation of appropriated solutions;

A means of determining policies and actions designed to improve the condition of urban areas and developing the institutional structures necessary to support the preparation of specific proposals.

### **Community Development Asset-Based**

Community plays an important role in social life balance in cities as the main element of urban space (Moztarzadeh, 2013, 67). Asset base is the strengths of an area prior to a regeneration project. Asset-based development carried out usually by a community-based organization by making use of assets such a land or building (Cowan, 2005, 20). Asset-based community development is an alternative of need-based community development. While poor communities may feature lower educational achievement and technical skills compared with the more affluent segments of a population, they generally form stronger informal social support networks. This is the first major difference between a need-based and an asset-based approach to community development (UN-Habitat, 2008, 6). It means in a need-based approach to community development self-sufficiency results from a top-down process; by contrast, an asset-based approach is bottom-up and grassroots-based (Ostrom, 1997).

Asset-based approach focuses on a community's capacity rather than on its deficits. For instance, rather than focusing on missing small businesses, this approach would focus on existing small businesses and their success. Further, by focusing on its assets, the community as a whole will see its positive aspects (such as community gardens, a mentoring program, and the many skills of its residents) and can then work on developing these assets even more. This approach does not ignore the problems within a community, but focused first on its strengths and small triumphs in order to provide a positive perspective of the community rather than a discouraging one (Philips & Pittman, 2009, 40). Asset-based development may begin by helping individuals help them, but may need to ultimately address broader issues, especially power relations (Robinson & Green, 2011, 76).

### Strategic Choice Approach

The strategic choice approach is based on the principle that planning is a continuous process involving the evaluation of possibilities against desirability: any process of choice, state Friend and Jessop, will become a process of planning (or: strategic choice) if the selection of current action is made after a formulation and comparison of possible solutions over a wider field of decision relating to certain anticipated as well as current situations. This process will have to work in a cyclical manner so as to take account of past decisions and to allow decision makers to become familiar with the problems in question through successive round of definition, comparison. In this respect it is important to ensure that the uncertainties with which planning will always be confronted are not left out of consideration, but are taken instead as a starting-point for evaluation. The fact that the selection of action takes place within a wider field of choice implies that decisions concerning certain problems or phenomena will be influenced by decisions concerning other problems and phenomena. The Analysis of Interconnected Decision Areas (AIDA) technique can be used to make these interrelationships clear. AIDA is to a large extent a graphic technique which generates solutions in situations

where a great number of possible combinations of separated choices have to be taken into accounts (Dekker et al., 1978, 149).

One of the most important characteristic of AIDA is the fact that users are free to formulate the problem without constraint as to the consistency and coherence of the set of issue in their decision graph. It does not matter whether the decision areas representing the choices are defined broadly or narrowly, generally or specifically (Hickling, 1978, 459).

Decision making occupies a central position in the strategic choice approach. Planning is seen as the equivalent of decision making. Starting from this principle strategic choice tries, as far as possible. To systematize and making explicit the decisions that must be taken for the benefit of those groups affected by the planning problems.

Three levels of abstraction can be identified when using the strategic choice approach. These are shown in Fig. 1. The strategic choice approach is based on the assumption that problems and phenomena are interrelated both within and between these levels of abstraction.

At the highest level of abstraction, scenarios can be formed which give broad outlines of the way in which a region can develop. The starting points for the AIDA technique in this case are called Scenario elements. For each scenario elements two mutually exclusive options are distinguished concerning future development. The next step then involved specifying which options of the various scenario elements do not correspond. This is indicated by an option bar. At the intermediate level of abstraction policy areas are formulated which have a more detailed function that the scenario elements, because that should embrace concrete problems and phenomena concerning the area about which a decision has to be taken. The relationships between the options of both the scenario elements and the policy areas are specified by the use of options bars which are called horizontal relations in Fig. 1. And at the lowest level of abstraction, proposals are formulated which may be regarded as statements concerning with implementation (Dekker et al. 1978, 151).

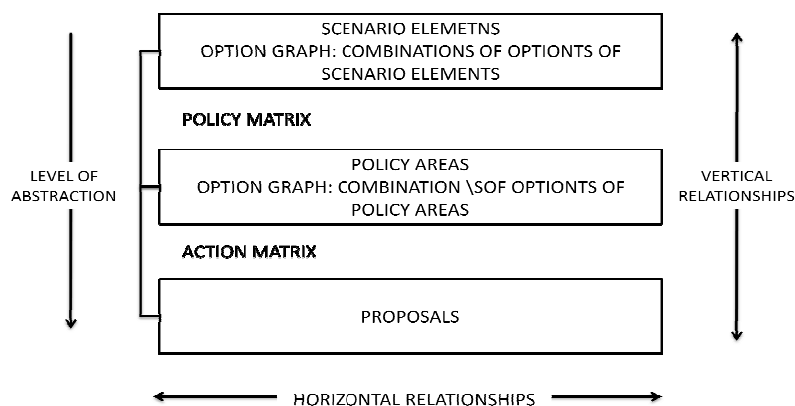


Fig.1: The procedure of the strategic choice approaches. Showing three levels of abstraction which can be identified

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Dolatkhhah Current Situation

Dolatkhhah is one of the neighborhoods in Tehran that was formed in the 1960s to settle down brick-kilns workers. Dolatkhhah is situated in 28.5 hectares of land and has a population of about 6265 people. This area has suffered from physical and economical urban decline. Age of more than 75 percent of buildings in the area are more than 25 years while 85 percent of the residential units haven't any parking lot and most of the alleys are dead end and have very poor access. Also The main inhabitants of this region have lower income levels (85%).

### Using Strategic Choice Approach in Urban Regeneration Planning of Dolatkhhah Planning Objectives

This essay used problem statements to determine the planning objectives. The following is the final problems statement

summary of Dolatkhhah neighborhood.

Table 2 shows planning objectives, considering problems statement.

### Decision Areas and Options Production

Here is the decision areas and its options based on objectives statement (Table 3):

Based on AIDA technique, at least two choices can be considered for each decision areas as yes or no. Such choices are dual-head power sources of barriers between each element. Therefore, incompatible elements are determined with option bars between them (Fig.2.)

### Scenario Elements Based on Compatible Choices

A scenario element can be seen as a problem or phenomenon concerning the area, formulated at the high level of abstraction, and

Table 1: Dolatkhhah problem Statement in current situation

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- Small Parts of residential units
- The low quality of housing construction
- Brick kiln land uses are incompatible with residential places
- Severely inadequate trenches and slopes for constructions
  - Urban decay in residential zone
- Social crime (addicts) in Dolatkhhah current situation
- Existing of defensible spaces in residential places
- Deficient levels of cultural, sporting, educational, commercial and administrative land uses
  - Heavy vehicle traffic in residential places
  - No parking lot for residential places
  - Non-compliance with access Hierarchy
  - Inadequate Services of public transportation
- Heavy air pollution causes by brick kilns activities
- Non-implementation of wastewater networks
  - Lack of public green spaces

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Table 2: Objectives statement production

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- Improved quality of living
- Supervision of residents on public realm
- Balanced between land uses in local scale
  - Public and private participation
    - Safety and comfort
  - Having a hierarchy of activity
- Ease of access with hierarchy planning
  - comfort

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Table 3: Decision areas and options production

Options	Decision areas
Using brick kilns sites for physical improvements Increasing of building density	Physical
Taking advantage of people's participation in new constructions	Social
Balance between resident and activity Defined activity spaces with local service scales	Activity
Widening the existing network of streets and create new networks	Transpiration
Use of public green spaces Land clearing and preparation for physical developments	Environmental

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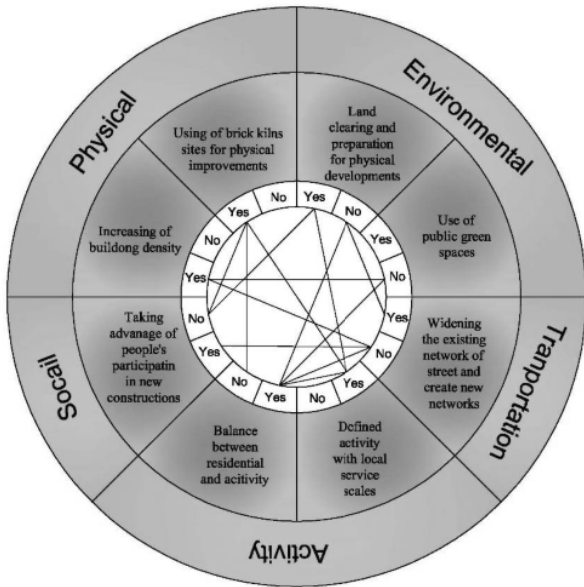


Fig. 2: Option graph of scenario elements showing option bars between the options of the various scenario elements

for which two mutually exclusive options stand open with regard to future development.

Achieved goals (objectives) matrix was used to assess and select superior scenario. So, based on scenarios options and with regard to objectives listed in Table 3, scenario 3 would be the most respondent with the objectives. This scenario is offered such as:

"Dolatkhah urban regeneration planning would be done based on using brick-kilns land use for physical development, increasing population density, taking advantages of people's participation in constructions, making balance between activity and residence, widening streets and developing green spaces".

### Policy Areas

Policy areas embrace the concrete problems and phenomena of the region about which a decision has to be taken as to the future development, and they occupy an intermediate position in the multi-level application. They can be evaluated against the scenarios which provide the broad framework within which decisions have to be taken, and also act as the starting point for the deductive elaboration of proposals to take account of the effects for the future development. As a result of the various rounds of formulating and options bars in Dolatkhah, nine policy areas were specified. These are shown in Table 5.

Table 4: Scenarios production

Decision scenario options	Using of brick kilns sites for physical improvements	Increasing of building density	Taking advantage of people's participation in new constructions	Balance between resident and activity	Defined activity spaces with local service scales	Widening the existing network of streets and create new networks	Use of public green spaces	Land clearing and preparation for physical developments
1	yes	no	yes	yes	No	yes	Yes	Yes
2	no	yes	yes	yes	No	yes	Yes	Yes
3	yes	yes	yes	yes	No	yes	Yes	No
4	no	yes	yes	no	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	no	no	yes	yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	no	no	yes	no	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	no	no	no	no	No	No	Yes	No
8	no	no	no	no	No	No	No	No

Table5: Policy areas

- Replacing brick kiln land uses with compatible activities
- Increasing the parcel sizes and total floor of residential buildings
  - Communication between open and public spaces
  - Using incentive policies for renovation and Aggregation
- Creating and strengthening the relationship with nature in micro and macro scales
  - Creating Continuity of pedestrian movement
- Appropriate balance between population and land use per capita
- Schedule preparation and implementation programs to breaking several long sections
  - Increased permeability between current and proposal networks
  - Improving the quality of human environment

## **Planning Process Proposed Mechanisms Related to Socio- Economic Conditions of Community Intervention and Policy Areas**

Institutional assumptions

At this stage, administrative procedures and socio-economic mechanisms have been introduced. Studies show institutional program is the best solution to prepare people to participate in socio-economic and physical developments. The followings are attempts to achieve such institutional programs in Dolatkah urban regeneration planning.

### **First Assumption Community Social Sapital**

Based on social and economic studies, it seems there is a cooperation between people in Dolatkah neighborhood but limiting factors such as lack of trust to municipality, possibility of migration, corruption and poverty play an important role here.

### **Local Participation**

A study on local participation at Dolatkah neighborhood shows social capital is more within groups than between groups, required to neighborhood development.

It seems because of large family tissue, sharing a language and ethnic background (Over 80 percent of current residents of the neighborhood are Azari - Kind of ethics in Iran), there is participation within groups in the area but for intergroups partnership, we should study and review different experiences.

### **Second Assumption**

World experiences and at least 30 years of planning in Iran indicate that the most appropriate frameworks to make socio-economic development process in deteriorated areas is a community-based development. Therefore, with the meaning of "community", an institutional planning can be done in Dolatkah.

Community-based development is a form of development that takes place within the community, emphasises that maximum participation of community members in its design and implementation, is ongoing, meets real needs, and is basically self-reliant. Considering above assumptions, Dolatkah has neighborhood social conditions.

### **Third Assumption**

There are four theories for Intervention as:

Community development needs – based approach;

Community development asset – based approach;

Community development power – based approach;

Community development approach;

Community development asset-based approach is more adapted with Dolatkah Conditions based on its studies and documents.

So, Dolatkah neighborhood main assets are as follows:

Commercial and public buildings;

Social capital due to social and cultural neighborhood;  
Micro and macro community wealth including money in circulation, bank accounts or wealth and visual products;  
Human capital in the traditional and semi-modern areas.  
Accordingly, using the community development need approach can be implemented in Dolatkah neighborhood.

## **Dolatkah Institution Planning First Stage: Planning**

This stage has three phases.

### **Phase One**

Enabling local groups for participation;

Forming focus groups and presenting problem statements named as Dolatkah Development Institute (Organization).

This test should actually be in its place and with social efficiency. Otherwise, the form will be established independently. Duties of this organization can be as following but all of them will be held in a participatory manner work groups:

Wholesale and retail design features including integration components, street widening, educational and health centers and cultural and recreational centers establishing;

Reviewing the economic stimulus plan in parcels and whole of the site, Creating mutual obligations for the project partners;

Confidence and trust of the mainstream of community development, Responsibility and determining the relationship between public participation and its relationship with the municipality;

Representation and developing a sense of neighborhood community with specific methods and popular participation and suggestions.

### **Phase Two**

In this phase, a fund to provide financial and resource allocation by "Dolatkah development organization" is formed that has specific features. The fund can form a virtual municipality credit, banking resources, public savings and also government helpings. The fund could be based on the policy proposal, where to spend each set. Obviously, the decisions can not all belong to real resources of organizations and individuals.

### **Phase Three**

In this phase, a technical office should be established based on Tehran renovation organization and the consulter proposals. Also, the 19th Tehran municipality region has the responsibility of this office and the main role of this office is supporting and monitoring the implementation of project.

## **Second Stage: Implementation**

This phase is planned based on people participation. Social benefits from the project could be more appropriate to their living environment. This issue through the creation of green space, better traffic, landscape and building streets, shopping centers and cultural and social centers will be done. Collection

Table 6: parcel specifications

Percent of total area	percent	Number of parcels	Parcel levels (m <sup>2</sup> )	Row
0.76	2.98	16	Less than 40	1
24.56	40.36	310	Between 41 to 75	2
6.30	6.64	51	Between 76 to 100	3
63.38	48.83	375	Between 101 to 200	4
5.01	20.08	16	More than 200	5

of these things creates the social benefits of Dolatkah.

The economic benefits are resulted from new buildings that will be constructed based on proposal plan. Generally, these originate from the initial investment but in practice, all the parcels and buildings should be supported by that office. Thus, Implementation of project is based on the current situation and proposal plan as the following. Table 6 shows the residential segregation system components in current situation.

Equal to 82 percent of total residential components in projects have been aggregate. An average level aggregation component is equal to 200 square meters. Besides, there is 130 non-aggregation parcels. Also based on economic analysis carried out, average 200 square meters for the aggregation parcels can have economic benefits. The performance will be shaped by the office support. Thus, based on the proposed project plans, decision takings by owners and investors will be occurred.

In fact, this is called action plan and at this way, all activities of public and private partnership should be held in supported office. This office can introduce investors and builders (including consultants and contractors) to owners. This office can also provide social guarantee for stakeholders (can form a special issue). one of the most important functions of this phase is defined how to provide funds and allocate resources development for Dolatkah case study. If these resources could be allocated by the municipality or government, it is ideal. The fund of this office, even in virtual mode, can play an effective role for participation. The office can negotiate with banks and on the other hand, it can monitor the resource allocation. Studies show that encouragement has an important factor for social and economic interest of stakeholders.

### Project Implementation in Brick-kilns

The operations should be done so that the performance of economic and social interests in new and old residents provided together in this area and commercial and cultural centers should be organized so that all parts of the neighborhood could benefit from it.

### CONCLUSION

Considering the relationship between social and economic conditions and also spatial inequality in decision making, intervention in depressed areas will focus on implementation. Thus whole of Dolatkah area will be targeted on acquisitions

and construction will be done via management of public and private sectors. This means planned community does not participate in any process of planning and participation created with social institutions and sense of trust, occurs in relative ignorance. Therefore, plan benefits, including economic benefits and upgrading quality of life also are not applied for current residents and beneficiaries of built spaces are mainly non-resident groups.

Deteriorated areas intervention are so massive that financial programs can be strongly reduced in the beginning. Thus, with the assumption of participation institutional implementation, priorities intervention will be emphasized in order to make the realization of strategies and policies possible. Schedule preparation and implementation programs to break several long sections in any time and place requirements are one of the policy areas having been suggested in this article.

Main properties in Iran urban planning system are based on democratic court conditions, centralized, top-down and authoritarian form the government intervention. These matters not only impact on the regeneration planning and strategies and goals productions but also control the renovation projects in deteriorated areas. Iran urban management instability on one hand and long-term urban regeneration programs on the other may make it difficult to implement the urban regeneration planning. Also decision-makers lack of commitment would influence on plan implementation. This article's findings show that an urban regeneration at the local level cannot answer all the social, economic and physical problems alone and also there is a need to reform the planning system from top to down. Common methods of deteriorated areas acquisition in current situation have two ways as buying properties directly from people or providing special facilities. The former simply exhausted the social and economic and consequently physical development and encourage expansion of informal settlements. On the other hand, although the latter has more satisfaction relatively but this approach will be also granted to inject liquidity, inflation and the inability to repay loans by residents and new-mediated process facilities. This article studies show that the definition of social institution in local communities, activating and strengthening local council related to implementation process and build trust among within group on one hand and, on the other hand, establishing a neighborhood development institution and create a fund to provide financial

allocation, will certainly increase implementation and at this way residents will participate in social and economical renovation values.

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