

# Regeneration of the Historical Collection of Tabriz Sahib Al-Amr Square with Approach of Revival of Historical and Cultural Identity

**Zahra Maghsoudnia**

MA student of urban planning, University of Tabriz  
shamsolzahra888@gmail.com

## **Abstract**

the identity of each place is measured depending on the historical characteristics and antiquity of that place, while some of these places have suffered from many problems over time, such as wear and tear, which has diminished the historical identity of the valuable space. The identity of a city is considered one of the assets of that city. To preserve or revive the identity, various measures are taken depending on the location and characteristics of the city, which include improvement, reconstruction and renovation. In the meantime, choosing the best solution is very important. In order to enhance the declining historical identity of ancient cities, the regeneration approach has been one of the successful approaches in this field, which, looking back, seeks to modernize and meet the needs of modern life.

Regeneration is a kind of interventionist view that thinks of creating a new identity appropriate to the living conditions of the people of the present age by looking at the past and without clearing the historical identities of different periods.

In the present study, the historical complex of Sahib al-Amr Square in Tabriz has been regenerated with the approach of reviving historical and cultural identity. Today, only the name and memory of this exquisite collection remains, changes and issues throughout history caused by war and natural disasters such as devastating earthquakes in Tabriz in the past, erosion and functional destruction of historic buildings, urban street construction, and lack of contradiction of new commercial complexes with the historical context of the complex have reduced its splendor. The purpose of this study is to analyze the interventions made in the historical complex of Sahib al-Amr Square and to provide solutions for the reconstruction of this historical and cultural complex, to recognize the spatial-physical interventions made in the historical square of Sahib al-Amr, to study and recognize the reconstruction capabilities in Sahib al-Amr Square. The present research is applied objectively and it is descriptive-analytical in terms of nature and method. Also, in the research process and survey studies section, documentary and library methods will be used to collect preliminary data. Secondary data will be used by field methods such as direct reference to the considered location, face-to-face interview and using the opinions of relevant experts and specialists, and if necessary, a questionnaire will be used to collect data and information. Hierarchical analysis process method will be used to analyze the data obtained from SWOT analytical technique. What is important and the basis of the present research is the regeneration of the historical complex of Sahib Al-Amr Square in order to add to the richness of the historical and cultural identity of the city.

**Keywords:** Regeneration, Square, Saheb-Al-Amr, Historical and Cultural Identity, Tabriz

18 - 20 September, 2020

**Introduction**

Urban squares are among the most important urban spaces that their improvement has an effective role in improving the quality of public spaces in the city. These spaces have long been the physical basis of people's social interactions. Citizens' desire to use these spaces has not diminished despite changes that occurred during the time and as a result of various factors. In other words, the prevalence of new communication phenomena such as the press, satellite and the Internet has not yet been able to replace public spaces such as urban squares as a place of social interaction and interaction.

Preserving the physical and social heritage of cities is a way to prevent the destruction of the history and identity of the city and its citizens. The speed of change in the last century and the construction of massive human projects in the middle of the twentieth century caused many problems within the cities, the compensation of which in the following decades robbed the time and cost from citizens and managers. All tried to regain lost identity by stipulating law and paying attention to valuable contexts, making policies to revitalize contexts and encouraging citizens to participate in space and creating a dynamic space.

Paying attention to worn and old tissues and eliminating their instability has become a serious and pivotal issue, as it has led the relevant organizations to regenerate these tissues and the need to intervene in these tissues in different periods of time. These valuable constructions, especially over time, with the risk of gradual erosion by becoming problematic tissues provides a suitable context for a variety of anomalies; Due to the importance of this valuable heritage, it is essential to provide appropriate solutions to revitalize them.

In other words, today's historical contexts are part of the context of the country's cities, reminiscent of the last century or two and even the first half of the present century, most of which, despite being historically and culturally valuable, have been worn out. However, the need to organize, preserve, respect and recreate values in such contexts has always been considered by architects, planners and urban designers. (Majedi, 2010)

The issue of urban regeneration, according to its nature and strategies, can be the only appropriate answer to the progress of urban planners in the contemporary period. Urban regeneration as the main approach to urban restoration in the contemporary era, as an interventionist approach by looking back and without clearing the historical identities of different periods, creates a new identity appropriate to the living conditions of modern people. (Hajipour, 2006, Pourahmad et al., 2010)

The English equivalent of the word regeneration is derived from the root of Regenerate, meaning to revive, to forgive, to revive, and to grow again. It is also used in urban studies to mean revitalization modernization and regenerate. In an ancient urban center, the physical elements may belong to 300 years ago, but the behaviors of this urban center do not belong to that period and have been revived. In other words, this urban center has been modernized and, by preserving its formal, organizational and morphological features, is a child of its time by changing its behavior and though like a single container in which another containing is poured. (Habibi, 2015)

Urban regeneration is a process that leads to the creation of new urban spaces by preserving the main features of space. Urban regeneration is a comprehensive and integrated vision and set of actions that lead to solving urban problems, so permanent improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental conditions create a tissue that has undergone change. The historical complex of Sahib Al-Amr Square in Tabriz, which is the largest government square in the history of Iran. The square, which is located along the current Daraei Street in Tabriz, has been the center of Iranian government for four centuries and the headquarters of kings such as

18 - 20 September, 2020

Jahanshah, Ozon Hassan, Shah Ismail, and Shah Tahmasb, according to studies conducted by researchers. The period of Safavid rule, especially the reign of Shah Tahmasb Safavid, coincides with the peak of glory of this complex, both in terms of the role and function of the square and in terms of diversity of uses and the continuation of the social, cultural and recreational status of the square. But today, only the name and memory of this exquisite complex remains and the changes that have occurred throughout history due to war and natural disasters such as devastating earthquakes in Tabriz in the past, erosion and physical destruction of historic buildings, urban street construction, non-contradiction of new commercial complexes of construction with the historical context of the complex has reduced its splendor. And now it is necessary to regenerate and revive this historical and cultural complex that is part of the identity and originality of the city of Tabriz.

### **Problem statement**

The historical tissues of our cities show the elegance and beauty as well as the creative spirit of the people, especially the identity that they have created over the years according to their traditions, culture and type of livelihood. Historical and cultural tissues of cities are valuable works of indigenous culture, architectural knowledge and urban planning and are considered as part of the social identity of each nation and country. The formation of historically valuable buildings indicates that urban development in the past was based on worldview and culture, while the design of new urban spaces indicates that the process of urban development causes the stagnation and anonymity of its valuable buildings that the design of new urban spaces indicates that the process of urban development caused stagnation and anonymity of valuable buildings of the past, while by recognizing their identity, location and interaction in urban spaces, it can be accompanied by the phenomenon of loss of identity in historically valuable spaces and lack of presence in the planning and design of new urban spaces and perpetuated historic buildings with identity.

The historical tissue of the city, with its physical and cultural value, has a high urban identity, therefore, the preservation of historical tissues is considered as an essential identity for the survival of cities. One of the main reasons for the identity crisis of today's cities can be the inefficiency of historical tissues. Over time, change will inevitably occur, but continuity with the change that makes possible the connection between the past and the present will itself balance that change. For many years, human beings have dedicated places in their place of residence to group activities. One of these places is the squares. Despite the existence of collective memories of public spaces such as squares and the establishment of social interactions and the importance of the square as an identifying element of cities throughout history, the disappearance of historic squares is an important challenge in today's cities.

Urban open spaces and urban squares are considered as one of the most important and effective places for citizens to interact with each other, which has a long history in the history of urban planning and can be effective in reducing social conflicts, creating a sense of belonging to the city. Therefore, urban open spaces in general and urban squares in particular are among the public places of the city that play a key role in promoting the social relations of citizens. Cultural-historical elements and events and recreational attractions of these squares are also an important factor in attracting people to these open spaces. There are spaces for observing the urban space, remembering memories, seeing and being seen, performing celebrations, buying and selling and holding political gatherings (Gharib, 1997). Today, some of the historical spaces of Iranian cities, under the influence of various interventions, have lost their proper place in the city structure and have declined during urban life. Tabriz is also one of the cities that suffer from

18 - 20 September, 2020

this problem and most of the elements of its valuable historical spaces and textures have lost their status in the structure of the city and the flow of people's lives and have become isolated and less prosperous complexes that have no connection with each other and have lost their semantic position of their history.

### **Research background**

Hashempour and Nejad Ebrahimi (2018) in their article entitled (Approach of contextualism in the regeneration of historical tissues) a case study; Sahib al-Amr Square in Tabriz has mentioned some cases in this regard. The present study pointed to the centrality of the contextualism approach in studying the situation of regenerating historical tissues and also formulating the goals of regenerating from the perspective of this approach, which ultimately leads to proposed solutions for maximum alignment with the environment and continuity of contextual values which will play a role in the evolution of the sustainability complex as a main loop. Hakimi and Nazari (2015) also conducted a study on the revitalization of Sahib al-Amr Square in Tabriz and studies the weaknesses, strengths, opportunities and threats in the matrix format of internal factors, external factors as well as the comparative matrix by analyzing the initial data obtained from the results of the questionnaire, using SWOT analysis technique and finally, they have concluded that despite its weaknesses and threats, the entire complex has the potential to become a historic cultural center by presenting aggressive, diversity, review and defense strategies to restore the historical-cultural identity and improve the spatial-physical quality of Sahib Al-Amr Square.

Nourian and Ariana (2012) in their article entitled (Analysis of how the law protects public participation in urban regeneration) case study of Imam Ali (Atiq) Square in Isfahan, stated that public participation is one of the most important principles and preconditions of success in urban regeneration. Establishing public participation in urban regeneration requires legal support and a legal framework must be considered that encompasses various economic, social, managerial and physical dimensions. What has been emphasized in regeneration programs is the use of people's participation capacities. However, many experiences gained from the design and implementation of urban regeneration projects in Iran show that not much success has been achieved in this field.

### **The main objective of the research**

Analyzing the interventions made in the historical complex of Sahib Al-Amr Square and presenting solutions for regenerating this historical and cultural complex

### **Sub-objectives of the research**

- 1- Recognition of spatial-physical interventions performed in Sahib Al-Amr historical square
- 2- Investigating and recognizing the capabilities of regeneration in Saheb Al-Amr Square
- 3- Providing solutions to improve the space and function of the building and reviving its historical and cultural identity

### **Research hypotheses**

- 1- Physical rupture and loss of the integrity of the historical complex of Sahib al-Amr has weakened the role and position of this complex in the physical structure of Tabriz.
- 2- New buildings and spaces added in recent decades do not have the necessary compliance with the historical originality of the Sahib al-Amr complex.

**18 - 20 September, 2020**

3- Regenerating the historical complex of Sahib Al-Amr Square will be effective in strengthening the identity and originality of the city and promoting the social interactions of the citizens.

**Research Methods**

The present study is applied objectively and descriptive-analytical in terms of nature and method. Documentary and library methods such as books related to the research topic, specialized journals and publications, and maps of the study area have been used to collect primary data. Secondary data using field methods such as direct reference to the desired location, face-to-face interviews with citizens, residents and businesses and users of the study area, as well as the opinions of relevant experts and specialists and a questionnaire has been used to collect data and information. Hierarchical analysis process method has been used to analyze the data obtained from SWOT analytical technique.

**Discussion and conclusion**

According to recognize the issues of urban regeneration and its importance and necessity in historical and ancient tissues especially in the historical complex of Sahib al-Amr Square in Tabriz, in this study, it is expected that the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization of East Azarbaijan Province, Tabriz Municipality and other relevant organizations to be cooperated with each other in attracting and supporting domestic and foreign investments, as well as supporting public, public and private participation, using the opinions and suggestions of citizens in the regeneration of Sahib al-Amr Square, forming an organization of experts, experts and specialists in the regeneration and revitalization of the historical complex of Sahib al-Amr Square and also the allocation of the necessary budget for the regeneration of Sahib al-Amr Square. In this way, we can overcome obstacles and problems and use the opportunities and strengths of Sahib Al-Amr Square and witness the regeneration and revival of the largest government square in the history of Iran.

**Text sources:**

Source article	Persian
An author	(Majedi, 2010), (Hajipour, 2006), (Habibi, 2015), (Gharib, 1997)
Two authors	(Hashempour and Nejad Ebrahimi, 2008), (Hakimi and Nazari, 2015), (Nourian and Ariana, 2012)
More than two authors	(Poorahmad et al., 2010)

**Sources and references:**

- 1- Bardi Anna Moradnejad, Rahim (2011), Introduction to Urban Squares, Mazandaran University Press, Mazandaran
- 2- Pakzad, Jahanshah (2006), Theoretical Foundations and Urban Design Process, Shahidi Publications
- 3- Poorahmad, Ahmad and Habibi, Kiomars and Keshavarz, Mahnaz (2010), The evolution of the concept of urban regeneration as a new approach in urban worn-out contexts, Iranian Islamic City Studies Quarterly, Vol. 1, pp. 73-92

18 - 20 September, 2020

4- Hajipour, Khalil (2006), An Introduction to the Evolution and Development of Urban Restoration Approaches, *Iranshahr Thought Quarterly*, Vols. 9 and 10, pp. 16-16

5- Hajipour, Khalil (2007), Introduction to the evolution and development of urban restoration approaches (period after the First World War to the beginning of the third millennium), *Iranshahr Thought Quarterly*, Second Year, pp. 9 and 10

6- Habibi, Seyed Mohsen (2015), The concept of urban regeneration in thought and action, *Haftshahr Quarterly*, pp. 52-51

7- Gharib, Fereydoun (1997), Urban Square Design, *Fine Arts Quarterly*, Vol. 2, pp. 14-9.

8- Carmona, Matthew and Heath, Tim and Eck, Theo and Tisdell, Steven (2009), *Public Places and Urban Spaces*, translated by Dr. Fariba Gharayi et al., Tehran University of Arts Press, Tehran.