The Necessity of Measurement and Empowerment of Social Capital in Improving the Eroded Urban Fabrics (Case Study: Sarshoor Neighborhood of Mashhad)

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Received: 16 May 2013  Accepted: 22 December 2013

Extended abstract
1. Introduction
With the advent of several difficulties in urban space, the policy makers of urban development are inclined to rethink in the urban ruling paradigm using both a classic economy and a bottom-up approach toward environmental and humanistic attitudes. Accordingly, one of the great teachings of the 20th century is that the main issue in the management of human societies is not only limited to their method and level of understanding, but the way forces and influential institutions are influenced to improve the social environment is also of high importance.

2. Theoretical Framework
One of the significant issues in dealing with the eroded urban fabrics is making use of the abilities, initiatives, and partnership of local people in improving the spatial organization and upgrading the environment. Hence, the social capital is here considered as to be an element having a political invisible but vital component guaranteeing the effectiveness of different interventions. In the last decade, we faced with the advent of the Asset-Based approach as opposed to the Needs-based approach. The reasons behind the prevalence of this approach are the growing process of decentralization in the last decades, dissatisfaction with the direct interference of the government, limited budget provisions for poor communities, and the increasing reliance of civil society on self-help. But what factor developed the Asset-Based approach in urban policy making? Finding a clear and accurate answer to this question requires a deep and critical survey of policies applied during the last decades. Concepts such as social capital, connection capital, and hybrid social capital (which monitors social capital in macro levels and groups’ cooperation in the entire society) reflect the significance of Asset- Based approach in policymaking. The purpose of the present study is to express the necessity of evaluation and empowerment of social capital which is considered as one of the important elements in urban planning and the empowerment of eroded urban fabrics.

3. Methodology
The purpose of the present study is practical and the method used is descriptive-analytical. Data were collected using two methods; namely, attributive (library) and survey (field) in Sarshoor neighborhood of Mashhad. Accordingly, statistical software were used to analyze the data.

4. Discussion & Conclusion
According to the research findings, only 9.3% of participants chose “quite a bit” to express their willingness to participate in team works. Furthermore, the distribution of answers on the desire for cooperation with the local council was as follows: 39.2% of the participants chose “extremely”, 48.5% chose “quite a bit” and 5.5% chose “moderately”. These findings reflect the tendency and mental context of the residents in collaborating with the local council. Therefore, the existence of an institution and channel for cooperation and the establishment of local foundations can provide the context for the activation of social capital and collaboration. With regard to communication and social networks, familiarity with associations and informal networks, and participation in religious groups, 36.7% of participants chose “quite a bit” due to geographical vicinity to the Holy Shrine and the mental context of the neighborhood. Moreover, 51.8% of the people of the neighborhood chose “a little” to show their willingness to borrow from their neighbors. Furthermore, 59% of them were “moderately” willing to go to their neighbors’ parties. Hence, the

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findings of this study reflect the absence of associative relations, low level of cooperation and poor social solidarity, as well as insignificant institutional reliance in macro and middle levels (urban management) while reliance has been merely remained acceptable in personal and interpersonal domains. Therefore, it can be said that the status of social capital in Sarshoor neighborhood is not quite often desirable and favorable except for some exceptional cases that are related to the traditional aspects and primitive social capital. Thus, in order to improve the neighborhood, the first issue that must be done is to help the local people and project beneficiaries put their trust in those who are in charge of improving the spatial organization of the neighborhood.

**Key Words:** Asset-based approach, Eroded urban fabric, Need-based approach, Sarshoor neighborhood, Social capital.

**References**


**How to cite this article:**


URL: http://jgus.um.ac.ir/index.php/gud/article/view/21821

**ISSN:** 2322-2832