

Urban renewal with a cultural approach

Reyhane Aghamolaei
M.A in Urban Design, Shahid
Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran.

r.ghamolaei@ut.ac.ir

Abstract | Urban regeneration is a concept that has become remarkable in the postmodern era. Urban regeneration is a vast subject that contains information from different categories and makes connections between various fields of study. Evaluation of urban regeneration approaches such as economy, culture, housing, gentrification etc. has been the most popular research topics in this field in last decades. Many researchers have worked on this issue to illuminate its diverse aspects. Culture-led regeneration is one of the most prevalent approaches in modern societies. “Cultural Quarters” cover a wide range of actions and activities. It is known as one of the most important cases of the culture-based regeneration which is the subject of the analysis in this report. Many places with historic-cultural identity which have been neglected for years, can be considered as recipient of this type of regeneration. Since cultural sites are known as “places”, they would be analyzed through place components.

The main body of this research is about Culture-led regeneration with focus on “Cultural Quarters”. Three important criteria including activity, form and meaning have used to present the concept of “Cultural Quarters”. A matrix with two basic components is introduced to express the theoretical framework of this work. Urban design indexes and place criterions form the rows and the columns of this matrix respectively. This framework defines a “Cultural Quarter” model to help evaluate these places. A case study is applied to validate this framework. “MuseumsQuartier” (MQ) is one the first “Cultural Quarters” during these decades. “MuseumsQuartier” is a complex that provides different kinds of cultural activities via its facilities. Museums, theaters, temporary and permanent exhibitions and variant stores form the elements of this popular complex. “MuseumsQuartier” is known as one of the most famous “Cultural Quarters” around the world. The suggested theoretical framework has been applied to analyze the positive and negative aspects of this complex. The results can be used to express the influential points to be implemented in other “Cultural Quarters”.

Keywords | Urban Regeneration, Culture, Postmodernism, Cultural quarters, MuseumsQuartier Wien.

Introduction | After modernism movement, the related problems caused by this school of thought have been highlighted. The neglecting of cultural fabrics by modernism and its focus on one buildings have led to the more destruction of precious old fabrics. In this regard, the contemporary urban planning theories provide opportunities for raising guidelines and agendas for world heritage which the most famous include “The Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites” and “The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization” (UNESCO). This paper focuses on how cultural quarters could play important role in urban regeneration and how can be applied as valuable solution for regeneration in modern cities. Since, in the first step, the literature review has been done on this issue to define the framework and then “MuseumsQuartier” is introduced as one the most famous cultural quarter toward vitality and urban life.

Cultural led regeneration

The urban regeneration is considered as one of the basis for vast variety of urban renovation. Regeneration can be done through different parameters including economy, culture and housing which culture-based is one of the most effective parameters which will be presented in the next sections.

Culture-led regeneration has close relation with night life through improving entertainment aspect in city centers and a right combination of tourism and heritage, theaters, art centers, galleries and museums. Crafts including handcrafted art work by artists, pottery and glass industries through attracting great sources of tourism would lead to improve economy and industry. Entertainment, sports, heritage, festivals and carnivals

that have appeared increasingly in urban centers tend to reflect this popular culture(Diagram1).

Cultural quarters

Cultural quarters were proposed in the UK from 1987 by organisations such as the British American Arts Association (BAAA). Application of this concept was developed through research conducted by Boogarts (1990), Montgomery (1990) and Griffiths (1991). Case studies based on this approach are available for cities such as Sheffield Cultural Industries, Soho, Manchester Northern Quarter, Left Bank and Temple Bar in Dublin (Montgomery, 2009).

Montgomery presented this concept in accordance to urban growth, economic development and urban design. He has introduced his theory with three components of “Place theory” of Canter (Canter, 1977). He proposed mixed use, physical form and cultural meaning as three major factors of creating cultural quarters (Diagram 2). Mixture of different kind of activities, night economic and retail would lead to mixed used characteristic of spaces. Morphological quality, diversity of building types and public spaces are effective in physical form of places and finally sense of history, identity and design style are important for cultural meanings.

Since, cultural quarters have been utilized for many cases during this decade, analysis of their mechanism, implementation and development in existing and future conditions of such places seems necessary (Couch, 2011).

Activity

Successful places provide wide variety of primary and secondary land uses which include different uses, diversity of ownership, varied hour patterns for using and

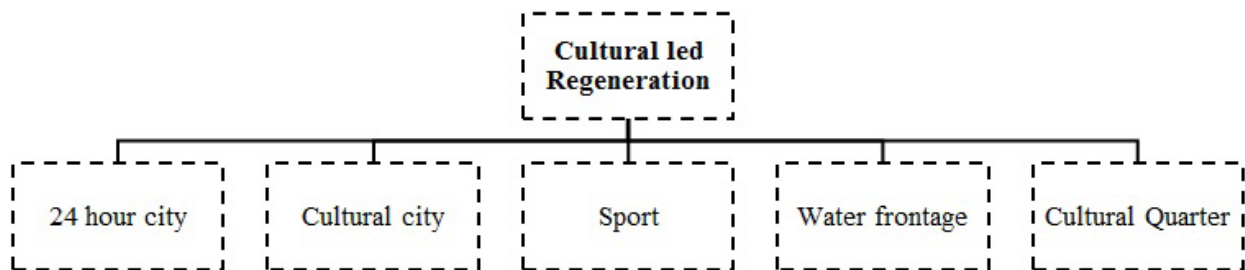


Diagram1. Different approaches toward cultural led regeneration. Source:Taloon 2013.

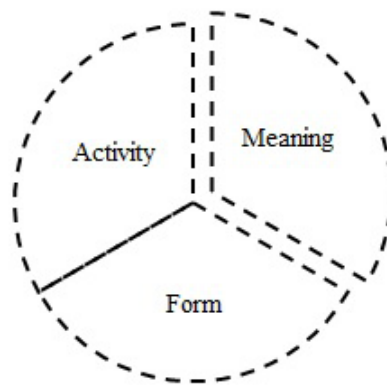


Diagram 2. Place Model of Canter. Source: Canter, 1977.

providing artistic activities in the form of cinemas, cafes, and shops with different range of quality and price (Jacobs, 1961).

One of the conditions to set up activities in cultural quarters is through cultural production and consumption. Production involves the construction of objects, furniture and providing services. Cultural production and consumption leads to economic growth based on the local community (Comedia, 1991).

Built environment

Designing built environment is one of the most important issues of architects and urban planners. Jane Jacobs argues that four conditions is necessary to create diverse urban environment,

- Mixes used of main uses
- Perceived density which is measured through scale, height, street width, interaction between buildings
- Permeability
- Mixed buildings by their age, price and other qualifications (Jacobs, 1961).

Jan Gehl for defining urban spaces focuses on 4 parameters which are mentioned below:

- Cohesion in the form or landscape
- Neutral atmosphere with equal right for all people
- Place for happening of historical and collective memory
- Place for different life style (Gehl, 1995)

Meaning

Cultural quarter as an urban place requires special meaning and identity to be considered as a part of their residents' life. People are always in a two-sided relation with their environment in which environment presents

its data and people will process it in their mind (Pakzad, 1389). If the perceived data is meaningful they will create an eligible image of that environment. Meaning issue plays significant role in cultural-historical environments since it will be stored and remembered via people memories (Wang, 2009). In non-historical environments, the presence of intermittent activities will create the special identity for the place to be identified the location and these activities together (O'Connorab, 2014).

Theoretical framework

After introduction and literature review on cultural quarters and effective parameters, our framework is defined to be the basis of our research. The Theoretical framework introduces the indicators of a successful cultural quarter based on the sustainable place model. This model is categorized in two groups of statistical and functional parameters. Table 1 depicts more detail about the conceptual framework (Table1).

Vienna museum

Vienna MusuemsQuartier is a well-known brand in Imperial Stables site for about 80000 m² especial space for cultural events. The initial size of the site is 200 *400 which is appropriate for 3.2 billion tourists every year. During the opening, MusuemsQuartier was recognized as the 8th great cultural complex around he world. Although, the significant part of these buildings are museums, spacious spaces are dedicated for holding exhibitions, offices and workshops. This complex with the innovative and creative activities is considered as a motivation and pioneer for development in the field of culture (Pic1 and 2).

Table 1. Parametrs of cultural quarters. The model is based on integration of Place model and urban design indicators. Source:Author.

Cultural Quarters indicators	Urban design parameters	Parameters of place model		
		Activity	Built form	Meaning
Cultural Quarters indicators	Statistical parameters	Different scales Media and art	Proper morphology in parcels Number and quality of public spaces Adaptability and diversity of existing buildings Richness for Sensing	Meeting place Identity History Perception Admirable design Legibility Attachment to the place
	Functional parameters	Diversity in first and secondary uses Number and diversity of events Night economy based on cultural events Cultural led development Small studios for cultural events Daily cultural uses Environmental art	Permeability in street landscape Permeability and access Active frontage for street Quality of public space Climate comfort Security and safety Viability Adaptability inclusiveness	Sense of place for all people







Pic1: Open spaces in MQ, The layout of buildings provides the proper public space. Source: <http://www.wien.info/en/sightseeing/museums-exhibitions/top/mq>



Pic2: panoramic view of MQ, The public space is for Meeting people and different groups. Source: <http://www.wien.info/en/sightseeing/museumsexhibitions/top/mq>.

Table 2 . Description of each of these parts of museums in more detail with emphasis on the role of each space (Source: <http://www.mqw.at/en>).

Main museums		
Museums	Description	Pictures
Leopold Museum	The Leopold Collection encompasses masterpieces of the Viennese Secessionist movement, Viennese modernism, and Austrian Expressionism and is one of the world's most important collections of modern art.	
Kunsthalle	Kunsthalle Wien is Vienna's exhibition space for international contemporary art and discourse.	
Mumok (Museum of modern Art Ludwig Foundation Vienna)	Mumok was founded in 1962 and is the largest museum in Central Europe for art since modernism.	
Architekturzentrum Wien	The Architekturzentrum Wien is a center for architecture and building culture. It is an exhibition platform, knowledge and research center, and information source for everyone interested in architecture and the art of building.	



Pic3: Placement of various museum locations. Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museumsquartier>

The MQ contains Baroque buildings as well as Modern architecture by the architects Laurids and Manfred Ortner. The renovation of the former court stables began in April 1998. Although there are other museums in Vienna, but the specific quality of this complex is to create the vitality and viability in modern lifestyle. A wide variety of free activities offered year-round in the outdoor areas, including dance performances, exhibition projects, and the seasonal programs. in MQ, visitors are surrounded by art and can choose to what extent they want to immerse themselves in it. The MuseumsQuartier provides

an environment for living and experiencing, enjoying the cultural offerings, relaxing and meeting with friends. Picture3 explains the building and their relation between them in the MQ.

There are 4 main museum in the MQ including Leopold Musuem, Kunsthalle, Mumok (Museum of modern Art Ludwig Foundation Vienna) and Architekturzentrum Wien which are shortly introduced in table 2.

Discussion



Pic 4: MQ analysis of furniture. Source: <http://www.mqw.at/en>.



MQ has adapted itself to the modern lifestyle with respect to old world, adds new to it. It has created a context to a diverse and viable lifestyle. Physical diversity is obvious in material, ornaments and form. For instance, Mumok has cubic form without any ornaments while there are different traditional buildings around it. In another word, each building with its special style shows the history of Austria. This complex is suitable for different kinds of people for example ZOOM is a children's museum offering lots of cool things waiting to be discovered. The open public space outside of the MQ is one of the most successful exterior design for furniture. This space is specifically designed for this space and consequently is appropriate for its requirements. The modern style of this furniture is complete in contrast with traditional style of buildings. Another feature of this special furniture is flexibility and movement of each element. Picture

3 depicts the furniture style of this public space.

Picture 4 introduces the furniture's features in the museum's public arena. The courtyard furniture created is an important element in the design of the courtyards and an important element in many events. It quickly made the Main MQ Courtyard one of Vienna's favorite spots in warm weather. Multiple configuration options make these architectural elements functional both in the summer and winter seasons.

In addition, the color of the furniture elements changed annually, redefining the appearance of the courtyards and open spaces in the MuseumsQuartier each year.

One of the most important feature of MQ is accessibility and permeability of this part of city which is promoted via public transportation. The possibility for connection and relation to different parts of the city has made it more viable and active (Pic 5 &6).



Pic5: Spatial layout of MQ- Accessibility to public transportation systems. Source: <http://www.mqw.at/en>.

In addition to its primary use as an art and creativity space, the MuseumsQuartier represents a living space for a variety of different purposes. About forty private apartments are integrated within the complex, and it also offers a comprehensive selection of services and recreational activities that invite visitors to make themselves at home. Alongside terrace cafés, bars, shops, and

relaxation zones, the MQ courtyard furniture creates a comfortable environment for spending free time or meeting with friends. In other words, one of the effective parameters in sustainability of cultural quarters is the ability to production and consuming the culture. Small studios are considered as special locations for cultural staff which is vital in economical process of this part.



Pic6: The relation between MQ and the environment which is in balance and harmony. Source: <http://www.mqw.at/en>.

Conclusion | This paper investigates the effective parameters in creating sustainable cultural spaces in modern cities toward urban regeneration based on national and international references. The goal of this research is to create cultural quarters through three aspects of meaning, form and activity. In this regard, a matrix is introduced to assess the quality of cultural quarters based on place model indicators and effective urban design parameters. According to table 1, it seems that indicators relate to activities are in functional aspect including mixed used spaces in addition to physical parameters. In this regard, it is necessary to focus on these parameters to heighten the quality of cultural quarters and evoke people to spend their time and money there. Focusing on the outer shell surface of building without considering activates and meanings would not attract different groups of people. Creating a place with social interactions attract more people in different time scales not just in special schedules which is usual for all other museums. In MQ, existence of different buildings

have provided cultural context for urban life. In other words, each of these buildings help the complex to be more active and prosperous based on their roles. The cultural economy which has been created through small shops and workshops is one the most important basis for vitalizing life in the complex. To put in summary, analysis shows that based on the theoretical framework, MQ is successful in all three aspects of form, activity and meaning. The high quality of museums with different range of provided activities (cultural-economical) has led to a special identity for whole complex. Since, MQ is one the most famous and successful samples in all over the world; its methods and principles can be applied in other historical cities around the world. However, the differences in contexts should be considered before applying them especially through making these principles native and proper for each context. The result of this research can be used as a pattern and framework for assessment the other cases, especially for cases in Iran toward cultural led regenerations.

Reference List

- Canter, D. (1977). *The psychology of place*. London: Architectural Press LTD.
- Comedia Ltd. (1991). *The Position of Culture, Appendix to the London World City Report*. London: Planning Advisory Committee.
- Couch, Ch., Sykes, O. & Borstinghaus W. (2011). Thirty years of urban regeneration in Britain. Germany and France: The importance of context and path dependency. *Progress in Planning*, 75: 1-52.
- Gehl, J. (1995). *Cities for People*. Washington :Island Press.
- Jacobs ,J.(2016) .*The death and life of great American cities*. Translated by Hamidreza Parsi and Arezoo Aflatooni. Tehran: University of Tehran.
- Montgomery, J. (2009). Cultural Quarters as Mechanisms for Urban Regeneration. Part 1: Conceptualizing Cultural Quarters. *Planning Practice and Research*, 18(4): 293-306.
- O'Connorab, J. & Xin, G. (2014). Creative industry clusters in Shanghai: a success, story? *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 20 (1): 1-20.
- Pakzad, J. (2011). *Urban design theories and process*. Theran: Shahidi.
- Tallon, A. (2013). *Urban Regeneration in UK*. United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Wang J. (2009). Art in capital: Shaping distinctiveness in a culture-led urban regeneration project in Red Town, Shanghai. *Cities*, (26): 318–330.