Original Research Article

Identifying Culture-led Regeneration Strategies in Historical Districts of Iranian
Cities: The Case of Feizabad Neighborhood of Kermanshah

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Abstract

Problem statement: Recent global experiences have shown that culture-led regeneration has played a crucial role in the urban life quality, particularly in historical-cultural areas. Given the rich cultural background of Iran, the experiences of the recent decade in this country are indicative of a growing tendency toward this approach. A holistic analysis of the literature could easily indicate that there is no clear procedure to identify and develop culture-led regeneration strategies, and the majority of studies have only addressed the achievements of the previous experiences.

Research objective: The main achievement of the study is introducing a comprehensive process which identifies and prioritizes culture-led regeneration strategies based on the nature of each district.

Research method: Based on a case study of the historical district of Feizabad in the city of Kermanshah with its remarkable cultural assets as well as the recent cultural projects conducted in this district, the present study seeks to combine quantitative and qualitative techniques and develop strategies appropriate to the district under study by using content analysis, interpretative-historical analysis, and space syntax analysis.

In the process of identifying strategies, first, a conceptual model of practical strategies and policies of culture-led regeneration is devised based on global literature. Next, the process goes through four steps to identify appropriate strategies for culture-led regeneration in Kermanshah as well as other historical cities in Iran. These steps include analysis of cultural assets, identification of cultural projects in the area and evaluation of the residents' image of these projects, prioritization of the strategies derived from the conceptual model using the opinions of both experts and residents and finding the appropriate places which adapt to the strategies.

Conclusion: Based on our findings, the high-priority strategies in Feizabad Neighborhood include the role of local actors, improvement of the quality of the urban environment, reuse of valuable or abandoned buildings, and mixed-use development.

Keywords: *Culture-led regeneration, Historical district, Culture-led regeneration strategies, Kermanshah.*

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Introduction

The culture-led regeneration approach, which emerged as a response to de-industrialization and globalization trends in the literature of urban regeneration, has succeeded in offering efficient patterns of intervention in urban policy-making (Landry, 2006). In fact, in comparison to standard urban development approaches, this cultural approach has had more intelligent progress toward creating urban identity, engagement of local communities, and attraction of resources and talents (Blessi, Tremblay, Sandri & Pilati, 2012, 398). A survey of the cultural-historical nature of Iranian cities demonstrates that this approach has great potential for the development of contemporary Iranian cities but has been widely neglected by Iranian scholars. Since the mid-1990s, when Iranian Urban Construction and Improvement Co. was founded, urban managers began to pay attention to historical fabrics and a large number of related projects were initiated in different cities. A glance at these preliminary efforts indicates that, in spite of their relative compatibility with the historical identity of Iranian cities, the main emphasis on culture-led regeneration can be observed in the 2010s. This is particularly true given the fact that regeneration policies came high on the agenda in the 11th government and Iranian Urban Construction and Improvement Co. was renamed to Regeneration Co. A look at Iranian experiences in culture-led regeneration shows that no comprehensive evaluation has been performed concerning the success of the projects and there is no clear-cut process in their documents as to the selection of the most appropriate culture-led strategies which would fit the force of development in historical districts. The global literature, on the other hand, mainly focuses on the significance or identification of responsive strategies and policies through the experiences of British cities. The literature does not provide sufficient guidance as to how efficient strategies that motivate urban development should be identified.

Therefore, our research question is as following:
How could we identify and classify appropriate and efficient strategies of culture-led regeneration in historical-cultural districts? The main aim of the study is to provide a new method and a comprehensive process for obtaining the most appropriate culture-led strategies. On this basis, one of the peripheral goals is to provide a comprehensive model of culture-led regeneration strategies. Another aim is to apply the findings of this model to the context of the historical-cultural district of the city of Kermanshah in western Iran which has a rich cultural background .

Literature Review

Culture-led regeneration as a stimulus of social and economic development has been widely discussed in recent decades (Evans, 2005; García, 2005; McCarthy, 2006; Vickery, 2007; Rahbarianyazd & Doratli, 2017). In the 1970s, as a result of globalization and increasing poverty as well as discrimination (Mollenkopf & Castells, 1991, 3), urban policies led to major changes in economic and intellectual systems of the world cities. A shift occurred from mere focus on economic growth toward reconstruction of communities and local identity (Lazarevi´ca, Koruˇznjakb & Devetaković, 2016, 3-4). In such an atmosphere, cultural policies assumed a major role as a stimulus in urban management and economy (Bayliss, 2004, 498; Griffith, 1995, 253). During the 1990s, therefore, the cultural aspect of urban regeneration began to flourish in the arena of urban policy-making, and particular attention was paid to large-scale investment in flagship cultural buildings such as museums, art galleries, concert halls, etc. (García, 2004, 315).
A review of the literature on culture-led regeneration shows that the majority of the conducted urban projects have focused on the basic concepts and definitions of this approach (Bassett, 1993; Evans & Shaw, 2004; Binns, 2005). One of the major proponents of culture-led regeneration is Graeme

Evans. In a study titled "The contribution of culture to regeneration in the UK: A review of evidence", he recognizes three patterns for the role of culture in regeneration, namely, culture-led regeneration, cultural regeneration, and culture and regeneration (Evans & Shaw, 2004, 5). Another group of studies have described previous experiences in this field and subsequently suggested strategies (Bailey, Miles & Stark, 2007; Austin, 2012; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2014). Some studies (Middleton & Freestone, 2008, Ferilli, Sacco, Blessi & Forbici, 2016) criticize this approach and maintain that culture-led regeneration projects have been unsuccessful in achieving their aims such as short-term benefits (Evans & Shaw, 2004) ignoring engagement of local people and their identity (Keating & de Frantz, 2004). However, the success of culture-led regeneration can be associated with the degree to which it is related to local identities (Bailey et al., 2007; 48-49, Sacco & Blessi, 2009, 1131). Moreover, the majority of culture-led regeneration strategies put too much emphasis on signature architecture and attraction of external investors (Austin, 2012, 2), which only leads to standard repetition of certain projects (Hamnett & Shoval, 2003,10; Mikulić & Petrić, 2014, 380). In fact, these cultural strategies have intensified spatial divisions as well as social separation and do not contribute to local culture (Pastak & Kahrik, 2016, 966). Concerning these criticisms, one should note that these strategies must be evaluated in the context of the conditions in which they are implemented (Park, 2014, 41) because, according to Evans (2005, 966), culture-led regeneration must be based on interaction with the local community in order to improve ownership of cultural projects and increase local advantages.

Research into culture-led regeneration conducted so far in Iran is mainly in the form of academic dissertations thatonly translate western findings without offering any straightforward methodology for implementation of this approach in the Iranian context. An important study is "Culture-led regeneration: A reflection upon cultural fundaments and the act of regeneration" (Lotfi, 2011) which is a fundamental attempt at beginning a research trend in this field in Iran. In Ranjbar and Afsari Bajestani (2017) study titled "A cultural evaluation of the contemporary experiences of urban space regeneration in historic cities of Iran", they address the significance and compatibility of this approach in historical Iranian cities and evaluate major experiences in Iranian cities including Isfahan, Shiraz, Bushehr, and Gorgan. In another study by Safdari, Pourjafar, and Ranjbar (2014), titled " Culture led regeneration, grounds of promoting cultural interactions" they consider the relationship between cultural symbols and cultural interactions of the people through the creation of an urban network in the historical context of Mashhad.

Theoretical Framework

In the literature, urban development scholars have referred to a variety of culture-led regeneration models and strategies using different terms. According to Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris (2007, 354-355), three groups of cultural strategy can be recognized: entrepreneurial strategies which seek out economic growth through tourism, improvement of city image, and acceleration of private sector investment; creative class strategies which aim to bring about economic growth through the improvement of quality of life; and progressive strategies which are intended to increase engagement in an artistic reproduction of local culture in order to boost social identity and revive deprived districts.

Binns (2005, 3-4) introduces three types of cultural intervention approach in cities: cultural production, in which local industries are a stimulus of the local economy and some of the important factors of which include the establishment of creative clusters, development of creative infrastructure, diversity of land use, and effective cooperation with the private sector; cultural consumption which refers to the revival of forgotten centers by means of the creative class and through reduction of manufacturing industries and development of a trans-industrial

economy which are stimuli of space reproduction; and community participation which entails intervention and commitment on the part of actors from different social and economic areas (Tomiuc, 2016, 152-153).

Griffiths (1995, 254-255) proposes three models of cultural strategies: promoting civic identity, according to which cultural projects should be accompanied with other measures as components of a strategy to revive the identity and create a comprehensive and democratic public realm; cultural industries model, which focuses on cultural-commercial industries such as audiovisual industry, publication industry, and fashion design; and city boosterism which mainly emphasizes on consumption art as a tool for attracting tourists (cultural tourists and participants in business or scientific conferences).

Other scholars have also referred to more tangible strategies and policies, which are listed in Table 1. As can be observed in previous experiences of culture-led regeneration (including urban spaces, cultural capitals project, regeneration of coasts and waterfronts, public art, and cultural centers) the most widely considered strategies include new function for abandoned buildings, cultural uses and facilities, planning local public events and activities (intangible heritage), and mixed-use development. We can see these strategies in Newcastle and Gateshead in England, Temple Bar in Dublin, Lille in northern France, Golden Horn in Istanbul, Federation Square in Melbourne, and Georges Pompidou Cultural Center in France as famous examples of culture-led regeneration.

However, based on the various practical policies and strategies of culture-led regeneration, Fig. 1 attempts to integrate all of them into 17 general categories, as discussed in the literature. This model is essentially based on Afsari Bajestani (2016) that categorizes culture-led regeneration approaches into three main domains, i.e. competitive-led, creativity-led, and community-led domains. The second layer contains culture-led regeneration strategies and the third layer contains the most important practical policies in culture-led regeneration. What is important to note is that the strategies are not separate entities and any project that aims to be successful should integrate all of them (Vickery, 2007, 24).

Research Method

Cities with historical potential are more suitable cases for evaluating and applying this model. Despite its great cultural and historical potential, the historical district of Kermanshah suffers from economic, social, and physical inefficiency which threatens not only the lives of its residents but also that of the entire city because Kermanshah strongly depends on the functionality of this district. Therefore, appropriate culture-led strategies can initiate development in this district. Due to the large area of this district, we selected Feizabad Neighborhood as a representative sample of the district due to its rich historical background (Fig. 2). Analysis of upstream urban development documents demonstrates that the project of "The improvement of Feziabad Neighborhood" was begun in 1996 with the aim of urban regeneration in this area, but it turned out to be unsuccessful and deteriorated the situation due to prolonged and incomplete interventions (Kalhornia, 2001). This area, therefore, can be considered as the most challenging part of the historical district of Kermanshah.

As mentioned above, the most important challenge in the literature on culture-led regeneration is the lack of a clear-cut process to discover the appropriate strategies for a district. Fig. 1 summarizes the strategies mentioned in the literature. To select the appropriate strategies for a district, we need a new methodology. In this methodology, the cultural nature of the case study, the attitude of the residents toward cultural interventions and the viewpoints of experts who are familiar with the district should be considered simultaneously. The first step is to identify the cultural assets of the area and analyze their historical evolution with the aim of obtaining

Table 1. Culture-led regeneration strategies and policies. Source: authors.

Strategy	Practical policies	Source
Urban marketing and branding	- Creating an image for the city through cultural assets	Scott, 2000 ; Park, 2014; Yiwei, 2009-2010
Improving the quality of the urban environment	- Redevelopment based on immobile properties (particularly industrial areas and buildings), city centers, and waterfront districts	Evans & Shaw, 2004
	- Development of public spaces accessible to different social groups	Lee, 2012
New function for abandoned buildings	- Revival of previously industrial buildings for cultural purposes - Revival of unused buildings such as galleries, museums, theater halls, and workspaces for creative economies	Evans & Shaw, 2004; Park, 2014
Planning of consumption and recreational activities	- Building stores and shopping malls - Building public parks and spaces, cafes, and restaurants	Smith, 2006; Sargent, 2006; Park, 2014
Mixed-use development	- Creation of multi-purpose spaces	Evans & Shaw, 2004; Montgomery, 1995
Development of night-life economy	- Planning and management of artistic and entertainment activities related to cafes, cinemas, theaters, music, as well as transportation methods	Evans & Shaw, 2004; Wansborough & Mageean, 2010; Montgomery,1995
Thematisation	- Creating a cultural theme - Creating sculpture paths - Creating theme parks and making themes for the identity of the city	Smith,2006; Montgomery,1995 Gunay & Dokmeci, 2012
Planning local public events and activities (intangible heritage)	- Identity-related cultural activities - Various social events related to the culture and religion of local communities - Street festivals and folklore music	Cudny, 2014; Montgomery, 1995
Focusing on the potential of valuable historical elements (tangible heritage)	- Reuse of preserved historical buildings	Jones & Evans,2008
Planning cultural anchors and signature buildings	- Large urban projects with creative designs such as museums and exhibitions	Vickery, 2007; Yiwei, 2009-2010
Creative structure engineering	- Bridges and archways	Vickery, 2007; Park,2014
Increasing cultural uses and facilities	- Art and handicraft fairs, street festivals and events, theater, visual arts, movie and music tourism, museums, and libraries	Yiwei, 2009-2010; Wansborough & Mageean, 2010; Skot-Hansen et al, 2013
Planning large-scale international events	- Large events such as international exhibitions, Olympics, conferences and summits, sports activities, festivals, and cultural capitals events	Santos, 2014; Papanikolaou, 2012
The role of local actors in urban regeneration	- Close cooperation among a range of actors from public sector, private sector, and voluntary groups	Paiola, 2008
Enhancing creative industries and cultural products	- Development of advertisement industry, handicrafts, software and computer industry, movie industry, graphic and design, publication, and theater	Northall & Bradford, 2007
Promotion of creative cultural clusters	- Allocation of workshop spaces to artistic groups	Yiwei, 2009-2010
Development of public art	- Building flagship elements and statues - Public art designs	Evans & Shaw, 2004; Vickery, 2007; Park, 2014

a comprehensive understanding of these assets. The interpretative-historical method which uses historical sources is an attempt toward this aim. Historical sources are undoubtedly various and can be subject to a separate study, but we shall suffice to historical maps as one of the main historical instruments for our purpose. In the second step, any background information about the cultural projects in the available area should be reviewed.

Evaluation of the attitudes of the residents who live in proximity to this area can definitely reveal the effect of these projects on people's everyday lives. This step provides preliminary guidelines concerning appropriate types of intervention. Projects are described using document analysis, field observation, and interview with experts. The image of the residents is best explored using questionnaires. The results of these two steps help to reconcile the
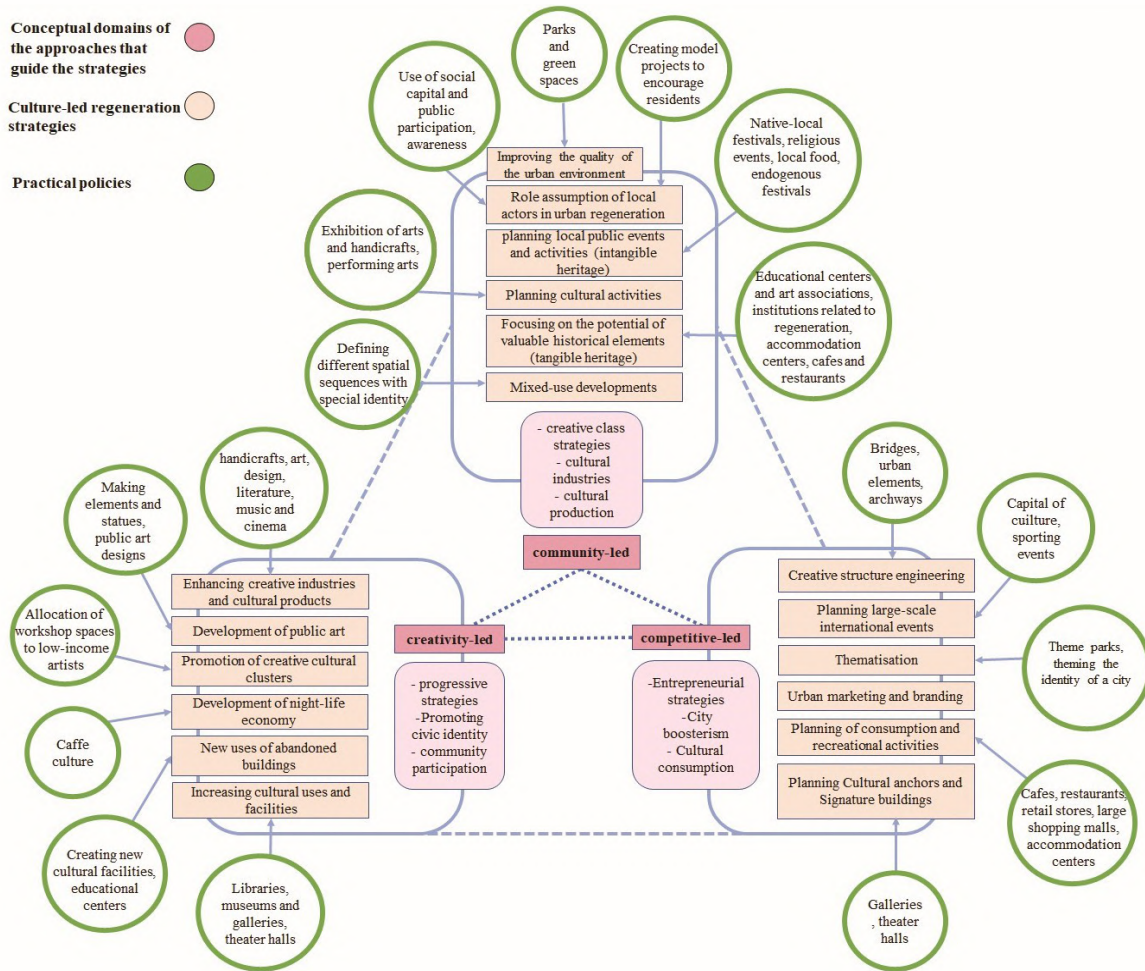
Fig. 1. The conceptual model of culture-led regeneration strategies. Source: authors.

conceptual model with the existing reality in the third step. In the third step, the appropriate strategies for the district are worked out by comparing and contrasting the opinions of residents and experts. This step results in more detailed and prioritized strategies. Techniques used in this step include Delphi and interview with the residents. The final step is the placement of strategies capable of placement; that is, those which can be turned into local, thematic projects in the existing context. From among the existing techniques for this step, space syntax is the most efficient one. Finding spaces with the highest integration in a fabric can trigger future development. Due to their higher connectivity with the entire fabric, more integrated spaces provide

more access for the residents and play a greater role in everyday life. Fig. 3 depicts the process of this research method.

In our case study, historical analysis in the first step is based on secondary historical sources. The second step is to identify culture-led projects by studying upstream urban development documents. We could identify five projects in the form of two culture-led interventions. In this step, projects are selected of a culture-led nature and were implemented a considerable time ago (Table 2). We analyzed the residents' image of the five projects concerning the effect of these projects on their quality of life. Using the Cochrane sampling method, we selected and interviewed 334 individuals from among the

Fig. 2. Location of the area of the study. Source: authors

longstanding residents. The five questions asked in this step addressed the effect of the five projects on the quality of life of residents in Feizabad Neighborhood. The questionnaires used a Likert scale and were analyzed descriptively.

In the third step, the strategies were prioritized using the Delphi technique and a survey of the opinions of the residents. The expert panel consisted of 30 architects and urban development experts familiar with the neighborhood and had been involved in different projects conducted in the historical district of Kermanshah. They were selected from among Faculty staff of the Razi University of Kermanshah as well as employees of the Cultural Heritage Organization of Kermanshah, Kermanshah municipality, General Bureau of Roads and Urban Development, and Construction and Improvement Office of Kermanshah. The effect of the strategies mentioned in Fig. 1 on the quality of life as well as on the revival of the historical fabric was asked on

a Likert scale. Also, we asked the 334 residents this question. Prioritization of the strategies was done based on the analysis of the data in SPSS. The last step was the placement of the selected strategies. After space syntax analysis, we spotted high-priority places for the process of culture-led regeneration.

Discussion and Analysis
• Interpretative-historical Analysis of Cultural Assets

Historical sources indicate that the basic core of the city of Kermanshah including Feizabad district was formed in Safavid era. The close connection of this area with the government citadel, congregation mosque, and Sabzeh-meydan resulted in the formation of the bazaar in Feizabad district. The most important element of the neighborhood in that period is Feizabad Mosque (Fig. 4).

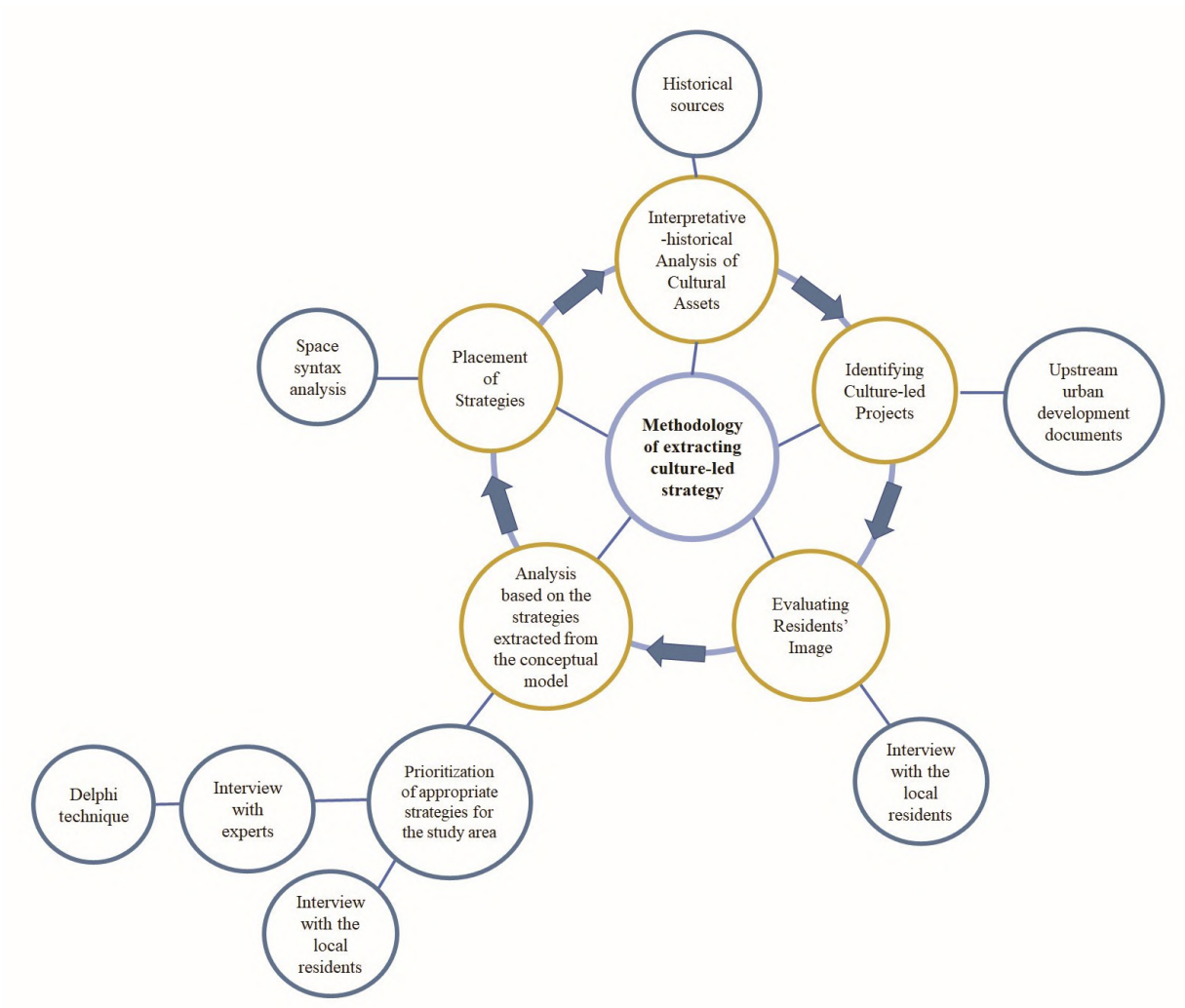In the Qajar period, various buildings such as Nezam Public Bath and Feizabad Tekyeh were constructed,

Fig. 3. Research methodology. Source: authors.

Table 2. Conducted culture-led projects in the area of the study. Source: authors, based on high-rank documents.

Name	Intervention type	Responsible Institution	Year of Implementation
Restoration and roofing of Tarikeh-bazaar	Improvement of public spaces in historical districts	Kermanshah Organization of Housing and Urban Development	2001
Renovation and improvement of Jalilian House	Renovation of single buildings in historical districts	Kermanshah Organization of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts	2015
Renovation and improvement of Randehkesh House	Renovation of single buildings in historical districts	Kermanshah Organization of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts	2015
Neshat Wrestling Club	Improvement of public spaces in historical districts	Kermanshah Organization of Housing and Urban Development and Kermanshah Organization of Physical Education	2001
University of Culture and Art, Imam Reza Library	Improvement of public spaces in historical districts	Kermanshah Organization of Islamic Culture, Astan-e Qods-e Razavi	2004

Fig. 4. Map of the city in the Safavid period. Source: Source: adapted by the authors from Boroomand Sorkhabi, 2009, 168.

Public baths   Square
School   Government Citadel
Mosque

Fig. 5. Map of the major urban elements in the Qajar period (1850). Source: adapted by the authors from Boroomand Sorkhabi, 2009, 171.

and the bazaar was renovated (Boroomand Sorkhabi, 2009, 167-169); (Fig. 5). In this period, Tarikeh Bazaar as the bazaar of the neighborhood

has been shaped near the mosque. In this image, the location of Feizabad Neighborhood is shown along with other cultural assets of the historical district of Kermanshah. The mosque and the public bath are among the important public buildings in Feizabad Neighborhood in this period. In Qajar period, Kermanshah (as other Iranian cities) experienced a flourishing in the public spaces of its neighborhoods. In the Pahlavi period, cultural and tourist spaces were developed and three movie theaters (Iran Cinema, Homa Cinema, and Barbod Cinema) were built. Two of them (Homa and Iran) were located in Feizabad (Organization Plan of the Central Fabric of Kermanshah, 2003). After some time, Homa Cinema was put on fire and never reconstructed. Several years later, another movie theater called Iran Cinema was built in its proximity. After the Islamic Revolution, this theater was converted to a gold market called Iran Gold Market (Fig. 6).

Based on the old maps, it can be seen that valuable elements such as Biglarbeigi Tekyeh, the mosques (Jalili, Nezam, & Mo'tamed), Nezam Public Bath, and a number of historic buildings have been preserved over time (Fig. 7).

In later periods, the district transformed into a new structure that did not fit the needs of the residents (Boroomand Sorkhabi, 2009, 174). In spite of the high density of valuable historic buildings in this district, these monuments that do not fulfill today's needs have remained useless and abandoned.

Over recent years, a tendency has emerged toward reusing these historic buildings. An example is Jalilian House in Feizabad which is now an Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults and helps children to become familiar with the traditional life in Kermanshah. Another example is Randehkesh House in this neighborhood, which has turned into the Artists' House. Biglarbeigi Tekyeh now accommodates Kermanshah Museum of Script and Writing and Zagros Museum of Paleolithic Age (the first Paleolithic museum of the Middle East and among the specialized museums of the world).

Characteristic uses of the study area with an emphasis on cultural assets

- Iran Cinema
- Public Baths
- Tekyehs and mosques
- Sabzeh-meydan
- Tarikeh Bazaar
- Valuable monuments

Fig. 6. Location of the area within the historical district and its cultural assets. Source: authors.

- Flagship elements of the historical fabric
- Bazaar
- Current cultural assets

Fig. 7. Comparison of the area and elements of the historical district in 1919 and its current situation. Source: adapted by the authors from Boroomand Sorkhabi, 2009, 187.

• Identifying Culture-led Projects and Evaluating Residents' Image

Interventions in this area date back to 1996 by Maskansazan Co. The policies governing these interventions were aimed at reviving the values of the fabric, providing facilities, and responding to citizens' needs in their everyday life.

Analysis of upstream urban development documents about Feizabad such as The Renovation and Improvement of Plan of Feizabad Neighborhood, Comprehensive Revision Plan of the City, and Organization Plan of the Central District of Kermanshah shows that some cultural projects have been implemented in this area. This can help us to evaluate the residents' image about the effect of these projects on their everyday life. The projects are of two culture-led intervention types and include five projects: restoration and roofing of Tarikeh Bazaar (improvement of public spaces in historical districts), reuse of Jalilian House as the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, and reuse of Randehkesh House as the Artists' House (renovation of single buildings in historical districts), Neshat Wrestling Club, University of Culture and Art, and Imam Reza

Library (improvement of public spaces in historical districts); (Table 2).

As mentioned in the research method section, the attitude of the residents toward the effect of these culture-led projects was evaluated through a Likert-scale questionnaire and qualitative analysis as well as descriptive statistic indexes concerning each project.

From among the evaluated projects, Jalilian House had a medium-to-high effect on the quality of life in the neighborhood. This may be explained by the new use of this house as an Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults. Also, the University of Culture and Art and Imam Reza Library had a medium-to-high effect on the residents' view. The reason of the stronger effect of these two projects may be a lack of such

uses in the proximity of the neighborhood as well as the fact that they are closely associated with the life of a wide range of residents. In contrast, the other three projects had a medium-to-low effect. The new function of Randehkesh House as the Artists' House is dedicated to a special social group. Similarly, the wrestling club has been allocated to athletes and public people are not associated with it. Tarikeh Bazaar, which is the old bazaar of the neighborhood, has lost its popularity due to the development of commercial spaces in the surrounding streets. Another reason for the deteriorating status of this project is the widespread destruction of the fabric of the neighborhood since the mid-1990s and subsequent decrease in the number of people from surrounding neighborhoods who visit this bazaar in Feizabad (Fig. 8).

Fig. 8. Evaluating the residents' attitudes toward the effect of these culture-led projects. Source: authors.

• Prioritization of Strategies Based on Experts and Residents Opinions

In order to prioritize the strategies extracted from the conceptual model (the second layer in Fig. 1), a Likert-based questionnaire was developed for evaluation of the effect of each strategy on the quality of life and revival of the historical fabric. Median and mean values were used to measure consensus among the subjects. According to the experts, urban marketing and branding were not useful strategies in the area of the study and, according to the residents' opinions, the night-life economy and creative structures were not effective in their neighborhood. Kendall coefficient was used to rank the strategies, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure the reliability of responses. The obtained value of Cronbach's alpha was 0.83, which is indicative of the reliability of responses. The prioritization results of culture-led regeneration strategies in Feizabad are indicative of remarkable similarity among residents and expert opinions except in several items including thematisation, improving the quality of the urban environment, and planning local public events and activities (Fig. 9).

As a result, the most effective strategies of culture-led regeneration in the study area include the role of local actors, improving the quality of the urban environment, reuse of valuable and abandoned buildings (tangible heritage), and mixed-use development based on the community-led domain. These four strategies are of the highest priority in the process of regeneration; that is, any intervention plan in the historical district of Kermanshah could be successful if implemented through the lens of these four community-led strategies. Lack of attention to these four strategies this historical district can be easily understood from the lack of a coherent plan for raising public awareness and organizing their participation, extremely low per capita green space, many inactive historical elements in the district (despite the existence of 21 nationally registered monuments), a merely economic perspective imposed by the surrounding commercial uses, and ignoring other social, cultural, and historical aspects. The second priority belongs to three other strategies, i.e. planning local public activities and events, thematisation, and planning of consumption and recreational activities. The third, and lowest, priority belongs to the strategies of designing flagship buildings, planning large-scale international events from the competitive-led domain. Also strategies such as increasing cultural uses and facilities, planning cultural industries and products, enhancing public art, and promoting creative cultural clusters from the creativity-led domain have the lowest priority.

The results of our prioritization show that, in the context of our study, community-led strategies of culture-led regeneration are of the highest priority. This can provide useful and effective guidelines on the policies of urban development in this area. A view of the current trend in the projects in the historical district of Kermanshah is indicative of a lack of sufficient attention to these strategies in urban management so that part of the failure of many urban projects could be attributed to the inability to find appropriate strategies.

• Placement of Strategies

From the four high-priority strategies, three are place-based strategies: improving the quality of the urban environment, reuse of valuable buildings, and mixed-use development. Valuable buildings are identified through the criteria of institutions responsible for cultural heritage. The degree of connectivity of these monuments with the main structure of the neighborhood is a major factor of how they will flourish in the future. Concerning the strategies of improving the quality of the urban environment and mixed-use development, the location of appropriate places for their implementation is of great importance. This can be done using different methods, but space syntax is very helpful in beginning the process if we only consider the formal nature of the fabric as its most basic component. Space syntax, which is based on the natural movement due to how spaces are connected, can help us find spaces with highest integration and trigger development in the fabric by converting strategies to actions. Analysis of integration is the basic step in finding the appropriate location for the project and paths with the highest integration. Thus, field observations and physical-functional analysis
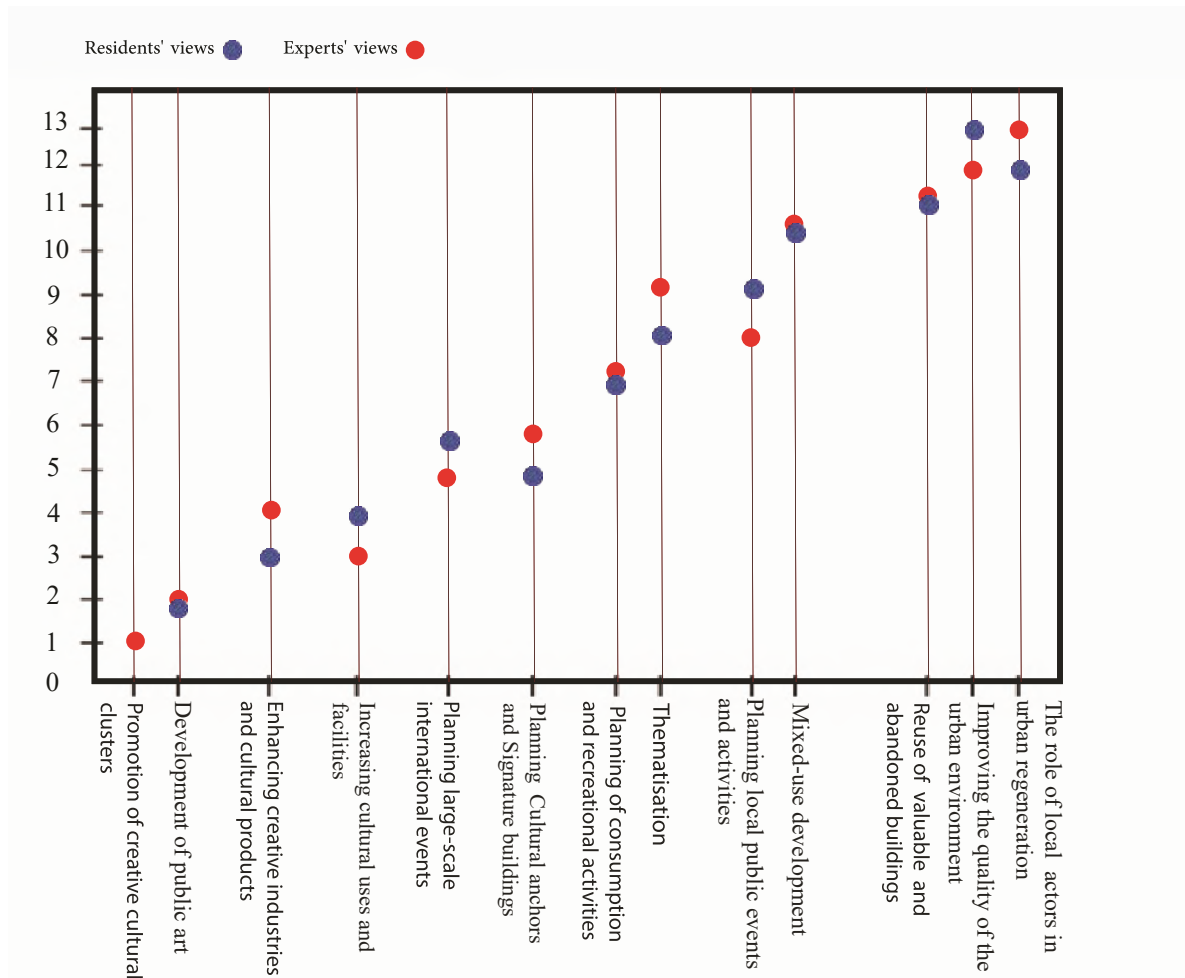
Fig. 9. Comparison of the views of residents and experts about culture-led regeneration strategies. Source: authors.

of selected paths can contribute to determining the places for implementation of strategies. This can be enriched with social-economic analyses.

Analysis of the integration of Feizabad Neighborhood was conducted in Depth Map (Fig. 10). According to our analysis, integration is highest in the main axes of the district (Haji-morad Path and the 12-meter North-South axis). Due to the interventions, however, the majority of valuable buildings in the district are adjacent to vacant lands or ruins and the interventions have deteriorated the landscape instead of renovating the area. Also, the facilities provided on these axes, except for Jalilian House which is now an Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, are not of acceptable quality to improve the fabric. By

changing the use of valuable buildings including the three historical houses in the highly integrated area (Zardoee House, Sani'i House, and Mosharraf Public Bath), the function of the fabric could be enhanced. The 12-meter North-South axis, too, is capable of mixed-use development, and various urban spaces such as parks or multi-purpose spaces can be established in vacant lands in this area.

Conclusion

Due to their great cultural and historical potential, Iranian cities provide a suitable context for the implementation of culture-led regeneration approaches. Looking at the current the literature shows that the process of choosing appropriate strategies for a certain context has not been studied
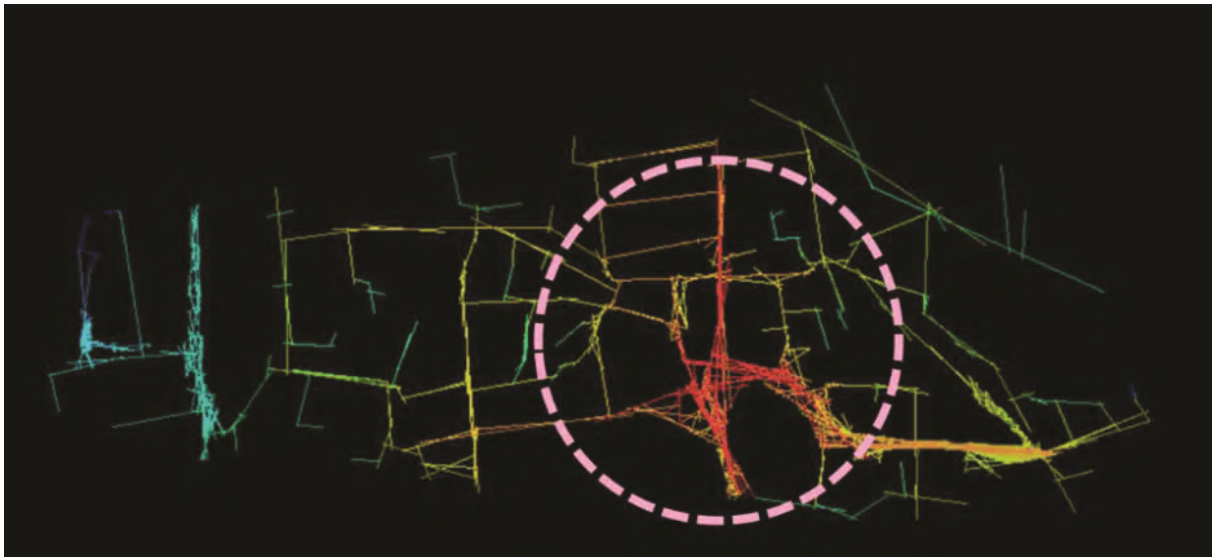
Fig. 10. The integration map of the district. Source: authors.

well. This study investigated the historical city of Kermanshah as a representative example of Iranian cities to propose a new methodology for finding appropriate culture-led regeneration strategies.

The methodology is based on the interaction between interpretative-historical analysis, evaluation of residents' image of previous regeneration measures, and prioritization of strategies according on the opinions of residents and experts (urban development experts, professionals, social activists, and academic figures). Also, the preliminary model of culture-led regeneration strategies provides the ground for decision-making concerning intervention in historical districts.

Historical analysis of the district under study indicated that historical buildings are the main cultural capital of the neighborhood and their preservation as well as restoration can significantly increase the quality of life in the future. This finding along with the analysis of the residents' experience of previous cultural projects shows that selection of an appropriate function for historical buildings is an essential principle for effective revival of these buildings. The adaptation of the new function to peopls' everyday life is a key principle to be successful. Jalilian House provides clear evidence to support this finding. Analysis of the five projects in this study demonstrates that mere physical reconstruction is not sufficient; rather, reuse of a historical building should be planned in a way that it could play a role in people's lives. Needless to say, increased community participation in the process of renovation is the most effective measure.

Our findings show that the four highest priority strategies in Feizabad district are the role of local actors, improving the quality of the urban environment, reuse of valuable (tangible heritage) and abandoned buildings, and mixed-use development. It should be noted that the opinions of residents and experts are very similar. This is indicative of the fact that implementation of projects in this area would be more fruitful if the residents had been invited to participate.

The strategies are inherently community-led and place-based; that is, the city is not yet prepared for creativity-led and competitive-led strategies. The amount of destructions in Feizabad district justify this idea. This means that such fabrics are at the first steps of regeneration.

The dominant view of current urban development institutions in the historical district of Kermanshah is in relative contrast to the above strategies. Studies of this kind can help provide clear guidelines for urban management to adopt positive intervention measures in historical fabrics.

The next step for future research in this line is to

convert these four strategies to policies and action plans in the historical district of Kermanshah which could channel the actions of responsible institutions as well as citizens.

The process of this research could be replicated in other cities of Iran to contribute to more efficient decision-making regarding the regeneration of historical urban fabrics and the improvement of citizens' quality of life.

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