



## REVIEW: URBAN RENEWAL OF HISTORICAL CITY CENTERS IN IRAQ

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### ABOUT ARTICLE

**Key words:** Urban renewal, cultural heritage, environmental sustainability, cities.

**Received:** 05.12.2024

**Accepted:** 10.12.2024

**Published:** 15.12.2024

**Abstract:** Urban renewal is a complex process that requires a delicate balance between preserving the cultural heritage and historical identity of cities, meeting contemporary residents' needs, and developing infrastructure. Thus, urban renewal refers to reviving and revitalizing historical centers without compromising their historical identity, as they represent a national economic wealth if exploited for tourism. The study seeks to demonstrate urban renewal in Iraq (which means a multi-faceted process coming from the context of a long history and a present full of challenges. After decades of wars and conflicts, Iraqi cities seek to rebuild themselves and raise them to a level that keeps pace with future aspirations), while clarifying the components and methods of urban renewal, challenges, and treatments in Iraqi society.

### INTRODUCTION

Most Iraqi city centers suffer from neglect, deterioration, and deterioration of the urban fabric due to environmental pressures, the increasing demographic reality, and the urgent need to improve the two types of life. These challenges necessitate the search for mechanisms and methods to enhance urban renewal through comprehensive planning and effective implementation. In this context, the importance of clarifying the components of urban renewal emerges, the most important of which are:

1- Comprehensive planning: i.e., comprehensiveness in guidance in terms of planning (such as housing, spatial formation, infrastructure services, social and architectural services) by preparing timetables and a budget for each renewal project.

2- Community participation: It is not just an essential process in urban renewal, but a fundamental one. It provides individuals with the opportunity to actively participate in decisions that shape the development of their cities. This level of involvement is not just beneficial, but necessary, to ensure the creation of more just and sustainable cities. It's a process that makes everyone feel like they have a stake in the future of their urban environment.

3- Preserving the cultural heritage: This is not just a task, but a responsibility that we all share. It's about upgrading, restoring, and maintaining heritage buildings to preserve the cultural identity of our cities. It's about protecting these centers from destruction and vandalism, recognizing their valuable cultural and economic value. It's a duty that we must uphold to ensure that our cities retain their unique character and charm.

4- Sustainable economic development is not just about encouraging investment and providing an attractive environment. It's about creating a future where our cities thrive in various sectors, supporting small and medium enterprises, and ensuring their necessary financing. It's an effective tool for the success of urban renewal plans and sustainability. The future of our cities is bright, and we can achieve it through innovative solutions and careful planning.

1- Preservation: This is one of the essential renewal methods, the importance of which is related to preserving heritage and extending the life of the urban heritage, i.e. reviving the heart and soul of the urban entity and protecting it from damage and extinction, restoring damaged parts and returning them to their original state as much as possible, and trying to re-employ them for new uses that are compatible with the present without compromising their historical value, and it includes preserving the social and economic structure in addition to the urban structure.

2- Rehabilitation: It is restoring and modernizing old buildings and historical centers in cities while preserving their distinctive character and cultural heritage and preparing them to suit modern environmental and economic standards and requirements to restore stability and urban balance to those areas. It may include replacing lost historical features (replacing an exact copy or a new design compatible with the era and historical place). Rehabilitation may also be comprehensive or partial in raising social and economic centers.

3- Redevelopment: This approach is represented by the process of removal and demolition, as it represents the demolition of dilapidated and completely worn areas, then rebuilding them and organizing their urban, functional, and population structure by establishing long-term policies that reflect positive land use and support sustainable development. The main goal of redevelopment is to adapt to changes to meet the changing needs of the population, improve the infrastructure of the areas, and stimulate the economy by attracting investments and providing new job opportunities for the population, in addition to environmental sustainability by reusing old buildings instead of new ones, which reduces the consumption of resources. The challenges facing the urban renewal process in Iraq are represented by several challenges due in their details to historical, social, economic, and political factors, making completing the urban renewal process a challenging task that requires careful planning and innovative solutions. The widespread destruction resulting from the wars and conflicts that most Iraqi cities have been exposed to is one of the most prominent challenges, which requires a complete reconstruction of the infrastructure and buildings, in addition to administrative corruption and the waste of resources allocated to renewal projects, which results in weak attraction of investments

supporting the renewal process, and the absence of a comprehensive vision in urban plans or failure to adhere to the available plans, which leads to the random growth of cities and a move away from upgrading these areas. In addition, the lack of financial resources due to the Iraqi economy's dependence on oil revenues makes the renewal process vulnerable to fluctuations in oil prices, in addition to the fact that private investments cannot provide the necessary funding for renewal projects. Conclusion: It can be said that the urban renewal process in Iraq is a long-term process, requiring joint efforts from the competent authorities, the government, the international community, and the private sector, for comprehensive planning and effective implementation to face the significant challenges that hinder and determine the effectiveness of the success of the urban renewal process. However, it is possible to achieve. Through concerted efforts and adopting innovative solutions, community participation, investment in infrastructure, and heritage preservation, tangible progress can be achieved in this field by completing a comprehensive urban transformation and creating a modern, sustainable urban environment that preserves its cultural heritage and provides a high-quality living environment for its residents with benefits for society as a whole.

#### **REFERENCE**

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