



## Living in a Historical Neighborhood: Challenges, Opportunities and Threats, Case Study: Oudlajan Neighborhood in Tehran

Pirouz Hanachee<sup>1</sup> and Naimeh Rezaei<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor of Architecture, Department of Architecture, College of Fine Arts, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.

<sup>2</sup>Researcher of R&D Department, Organization of Urban Renovation of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

Received 31 December 2014;

Revised 10 March 2015;

Accepted 13 April 2015

**ABSTRACT:** Regarding Iranian old cities, neighborhood has been a real place to live, a space for social interaction as well as economic activities. The concept of neighborhood has always been accompanied with senses of well-being, security and identity. In parallel with urban developments and changing lifestyles, neighborhoods have also faced the significant changes. In Tehran as the capital, the changes are more pronounced and deep. The Oudlajan neighborhood – located in the historic core of the city- had been one of the most desirable neighborhoods to live until the 1960s. However, due to subsequent expansion of Tehran, formation of new neighborhoods, penetration of bazaar in this neighborhood and urban policies, Oudlajan has undergone fundamental changes. Regarding the process of population displacement and settlement of immigrants and low-income groups rather than the original inhabitants, the behavior and the modality of habitation in this neighborhood have undergone many changes. The purpose of this research is to detect the modality of habitation in this neighborhood as well as factors affecting it. Regarding the results of studies conducted on the neighborhood, it is clear that the modality of habitation and behaviors of the residents are affected by their mental image of their neighborhood. On the one hand, this image is dependent on individual characteristics of residents such as age, education level, ethnicity, culture, and socio-economic profile. On the other hand, this is influenced by external factors such as the physical characteristics of the environment, attitudes towards the neighborhoods and urban policies thereof.

**Keywords:** Neighborhood, Habitation, Sense of Place, Perception, Mental Image.

### INTRODUCTION

Neighborhoods can be considered as key elements in Iranian urbanism that have always had a key role in the spatial organization and social life. Neighborhoods can be approached in the following ways: external view that includes official boundaries and figures related to urban development as well as issues related to urban management. Internal view is based on the opinions of those who are living or commuting there regularly. Modality of habitation and the relationship between individuals and neighborhood come in many forms, depending on individual characteristics, social group, generation and life story. The behavior and habitation style of individuals are different from neighborhood

to neighborhood. On the contrary, individuals live differently in an identical neighborhood.

Until the late Qajar, Iranian neighborhoods have not only been places for living, but also they have been considered as communities functioning as urban management, socio-cultural and economic institutions as well as the skeletal parts of any given city. Regarding the old cities, neighborhoods have had their own identity and would satisfy all the needs of their residents. Furthermore, the residents felt some senses of well-being, security and attachment. The effects of urbanization in Europe after the Industrial Revolution affected Iran in the late Qajar and the trappings of modernity and urbanization emerged in the modern lifestyle and, thus, traditional neighborhoods underwent significant changes. As a result of population

---

\* Corresponding author email: nrezaee76@gmail.com



growth, the formation of new neighborhoods, lifestyle changes and the transformation of social relations in Tehran, the old neighborhoods underwent fundamental changes.

The study has focused on the Oudlajan neighborhood as one of the most historic neighborhoods of Tehran. Until the early Pahlavi, the function of this neighborhood, that was located near the bazaar and the Royal Palace, was mostly residential. However, this neighborhood has undergone some profound transformations in the physical, demographic, social, cultural and economic aspects in the recent decades. It seems that the occurrence of changes in the neighborhood have generated some new forms of habitation styles as well as new relationships among residents and the neighborhood itself. Furthermore, it appears that the habitation manner of residents has been greatly affected by their perception of place.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY**

### ***Neighborhood***

There has not been a clear and certain definition about the concept of neighborhood in various disciplines such as geography, urbanism, sociology and social sciences. Accordingly, experts have proposed some diverse definitions on this concept depending on their occupational domain and activities. A simple geographical definition about the concept of neighborhood announces that a neighborhood is a set of nearby houses constructed within a particular geographical area. Families living in a neighborhood feel at home when treading in the neighborhood. As such, when people enter into their neighborhood, they find themselves in a familiar and friendly environment like their own house (Shakooyi, 1988). Regarding the perspective of urban development, "neighborhood is a relatively large area of any given city that has similar and consistent characteristics" (Lynch, 1996). Furthermore, "these properties continuing throughout the neighborhood and finishing when the neighborhood ends, can be portrayed in some of the facets of neighborhood" (Lynch, 1996). From the perspective of urban sociology, neighborhoods are social units that have arisen partly by accident. Furthermore and in parallel with the passage of time, these neighborhoods have obtained stable and fixed formations and have succeeded to provide privacy for their residents. These neighborhoods include a set of individuals with similar cultural, social, religious, and economic characteristics that have established some solidarity and mutual social

relations with each other. These similarities lead to the formation of a sense of attachment among the residents to a particular group of people (Qasemi and Negini, 2010). Furthermore, neighborhoods provide an opportunity for their residents to regain their identity within a familiarized sphere (Sheikhi, 2003).

Nowadays, some researchers believe that the concept of neighborhood is in decline. Regarding changes in lifestyle as well as human movement and communication in cities, the neighborhood has no role in the daily lives of citizens (Ledrut, 1968). One of the common approaches delineates that the sense of belonging to a place is in contrast with "modernity". Proponents of this view classify the concept of neighborhood as one of the "past-oriented and dogmatic" phenomena (Allen, 2007). Some other researchers believe that the concept of neighborhood is still an important social resource for residents and living in a neighborhood is not in contrast to urban life that requires many movement and commutations (Authier et al., 2007).

Barbara Allen believes that neighborhood is a traditional framework for social life and asserts that neighborhood is an "investment" done by residents. This investment has a wide range and can be done in different ways: from a simple habitation with a sense of nostalgia to a strong sense of belonging to the neighborhood (Allen, 2007).

### ***Habitation***

This study has highlighted the issue of habitation in the neighborhood. Regarding the approach taken in this study, habitation not only refers to "dwelling", but it also refers to a set of behaviors and actions done by individuals in a given place. In other words, any communication established among residents and environments as well as other residents are included in the residential component (Gravari-Barbas, 2005; Lazzarotti, 2006; Stock, 2001, 2003). In the past decades, this idea has been adopted in many countries, especially France, and many diverse theories have been proposed about it<sup>1</sup>. In addition, this new form of habitation includes the manner in which individuals establish their connection with the environment (Stock, 2001). The style of habitation is a kind of investment (i.e. the behavior, actions, and relationships) that is established between an individual and place of habitation in a specific time (Allen, 2007).

### ***The Sense of Place***

The sense of place is the mental perception of individuals about their surrounding environment that puts the person in an internal relationship with the



environment. It converts an environment into a place embossed with specific intuitive properties for specific individuals (Falahat, 2006). The sense of place leads to a better understanding of symbols and everyday activities that in turn lead to more connection between an individual and the environment (Relph, 1976). Relph converts the sense of place into a concept beyond the physical characteristics and elements. The sense of attachment is a higher level of sense of place that leads to the union of an individual and place. This factor causes human beings

to consider themselves as part of a place and respect it.

### *The Perception of Place*

Some researchers<sup>2</sup> have identified some factors that contribute to the generation of perception and image of a place. Regarding these “Individual Filtering” factors (Méo, 2001; Salin, 2002), one can point to the following: culture, time, age, language, education, religion, and profession.

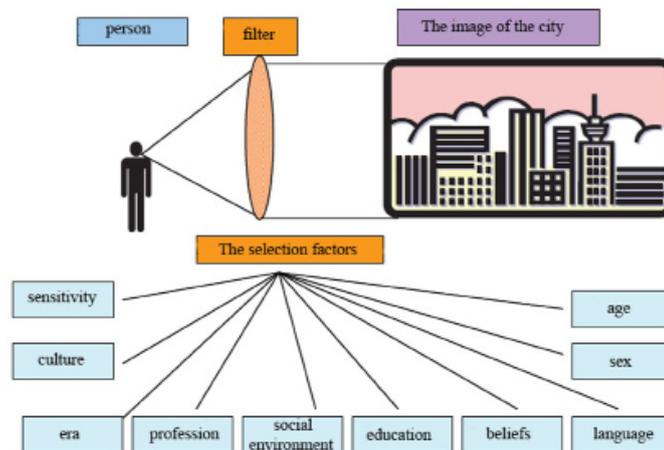


Fig.1. Individual Factors Influencing the Image of the Place (Salin, 2002)

### *Research Methodology*

With respect to the research objectives and hypotheses as well as theoretical framework of this research, documentation and survey research methods were used to recognize people, the manner of habitation and also their perception of the place. In addition, Grounded Theory was used to interpret and give meaning to collected data. Open-ended questionnaire and semi-guided interviews were also conducted to gather information about the residents and users of the neighborhood. Furthermore, the data were qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed and explained.

### **CASE STUDY: OUDLAJAN NEIGHBORHOOD**

#### *The Evolution of Oudlajan Neighborhood*

To clarify the factors affecting the manner of habitation in urban neighborhoods, the Oudlajan neighborhood has been studied. This neighborhood has been considered as one of the major five constituent neighborhoods of Tehran in the Safavid era. Until the early Pahlavi, the function of this neighborhood, that was located near the bazaar and the central government, was mostly residential and different social classes, especially the nobility, lived there. However, due to subsequent expansion of Tehran as well as formation of new neighborhoods in the 1960s, the process of population movement began in Oudlajan neighborhood. Original inhabitants of Oudlajan moved to new neighborhoods and dedicated their place to low-income classes particularly immigrants and workers. Bazaar, as a strong economic and political parameter, dominated the neighborhood. As a result, a significant



proportion of residential buildings converted to bazaar-related spaces such as business units, workshops and warehouses and the neighborhood largely lost its residential function. As such, the residential function

covers only 29% of this neighborhood (Bavand, 2010). Table 1 shows the demographic developments in the neighborhood.

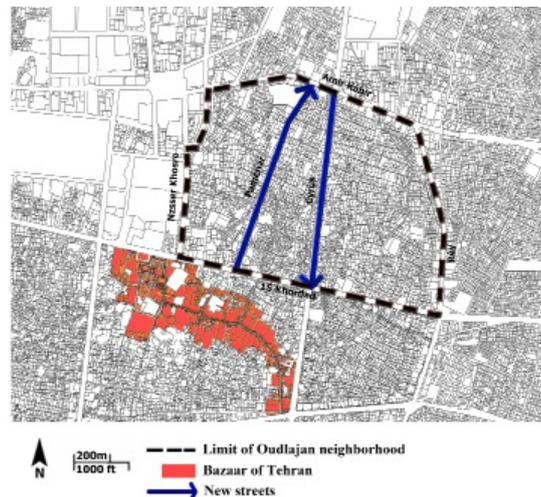
**Table 1. Demographic Changes in Oudlajan Neighborhood**

Year	1247	1262	1301	1311	1359	1375	1385
Population	136495	16490	33418	37000	41978	23828	21254

(Ettehadieh & Zamani Nia, 1998; National Census from 1996 to 2006)

Some physical interventions in the neighborhood, including construction of Syrus and Pamenar Streets in the first Pahlavi, which divided the neighborhood into three distinct sectors (Emamzadeh Yahya in the East, Pamenar in the Middle and Naser Khosrow in the West),

destroyed the physical and social coherence of this neighborhood. Widespread destruction in the 2000s in the neighborhood deteriorated the physical solidarity of the neighborhood as well as emergence of environmental and social problems. Thus, the deterioration of the neighborhood, which started from 1960s, was intensified.



**Fig. 2. The Division of the Neighborhood into Three Sectors ( Rezaei, 2014)**

***Classifying the Neighborhood as a National Heritage: Reactions and Consequences***

Since 1970s, several plans have been proposed to revitalize this neighborhood, but none of them has actually been implemented. Since the mid-2000s, due to emergence of severe social problems, including drug users and insecurity on the one hand, and severe deterioration of cultural heritage within the neighborhood on the other hand, Oudlajan attracted the attention of urban managers and proponents of cultural heritage. Accordingly, some initiatives were introduced to organize and protect this neighborhood. In March 2006, the neighborhood was classified as a national heritage on the

part of Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization. However, different groups, including the owners, opposed to and complained about this registration. The opposition of owners was due to this fact that the classification of the neighborhood was followed by some safety rules and restrictions for construction that were against their economic interests. Before that, the restriction could be applied only to the classified monuments and other buildings were exempt from this rule. However and regarding the condition after classification of Oudlajan as a national heritage, the construction in all parts of neighborhood was subjected to compliance with certain provisions, particularly the maximum height of 7.5 meters. Since the demolition of old buildings - mostly



one and two storey buildings, as well as construction of a two storey building was not economically viable, the classification of this neighborhood and implementation of these limitations led to widespread oppositions among the owners. Accordingly, many homeowners sold or rented out their houses to immigrant groups or manufacturing workshops and moved to another location. Others who did not have the ability to move to another neighborhood or a new house remained in their old houses and did not take action to repair and maintain them. Inadvertency of owners to preserve old buildings, the lodgment of immigrant groups- who did not have any sense of belonging to the neighborhood and could not afford to maintain the buildings and introduction of some inconsistent applications, especially industrial workshops, increased the deterioration of the buildings. In such circumstances, many residents believe that classification of the neighborhood has played the most important role in this deterioration.

Moreover and after classification, no attempt was initiated on the part of authorities and the public media to introduce this historic neighborhood to the wider society. Instead, the media published some news on deteriorations and destructions in the neighborhood as well as the increase in the number of drug users and insecurity.

### ***The Manner of Habitation in the Neighborhood***

To understand the state of residence in the neighborhood, this survey intended to answer the following three questions: Who lives in the neighborhood? Why they have chosen this neighborhood? How do they live in the neighborhood? Regarding such an approach, a questionnaire was prepared for residents and 112 subjects were selected according to Cochran formula<sup>3</sup>. This sample was selected in accordance with the number of residential units<sup>4</sup> in three Eastern, Middle and Western areas of the neighborhood. Accordingly, 80 residents of Eastern Oudlajan, 17 residents of Middle Oudlajan and 15 residents of Western Oudlajan were included in this research. Regarding the respondent residents, 45% were male and 55% were women from different age groups.

**Socio-Economic Profile of Residents:** Detection of socio-economic profile of residents can provide the response to the following questions: "Who lives in the neighborhood?" The survey showed that 79% of residents were immigrant groups whose headmen were not born in Tehran. Only 16% of household heads were employed in the public sector or were the business owner. Meanwhile, the others were workers, drivers, and salesmen in the shop or unemployed. Another factor that could indicate

economic status of households was the type of housing. Regarding the respondent households, 36% were tenant and 50% were owner. In addition, 13% of families lived with their parents without paying rent. This group included those who lacked economic conditions to live in a separate house and, after their marriage, remained with their parents along with their spouse and children. Finally, 1% of the interviewed families lived in appropriate houses. The results of the studies show that, in recent decades, the Oudlajan neighborhood has converted into a settlement for immigrants and low-income groups.

**The Residents' Motivations for Living in This Neighborhood:** It seems that the reasons for living in the neighborhood influence on the manner of habitation and the type of interaction among individuals and the neighborhood. According to the results of this research, lack of economic power to live in other neighborhoods and the closeness of this area to their workplace are among the most important reasons for choosing this neighborhood. Significant proportions of residents were those workers working in workshops units in the neighborhood or around it. Regarding the desire to continue living in the neighborhood, 54% of respondents replied that they did not intend to leave the neighborhood and go to another neighborhood. They often desired to stay due to economic reasons and closeness to their workplace. Others asserted that they have become accustomed to this neighborhood. However, their responses to other questions indicated that "habitude" did not necessarily mean having a sense of attachment. Conversely, the majority of these feelings meant indifference towards their living environment. Moreover, 46% of those interviewed stated that they tended to leave the neighborhood. They stated their reasons as lack of residential function of neighborhood, deterioration of buildings as well as tending to live in better neighborhoods and house. Another factor that seemed to affect the level of attachment to place and the manner of habitation in the neighborhood was the duration of residence in the neighborhood. According to the results, 46% of households have lived in the neighborhood for the past 20 years. These elderly people were physically and financially unable to move to another place. In addition, 32% of households have lived in the neighborhood for 10 to 20 years. Finally, 22% of the interviewed households have lived for less than 10 years in the neighborhood.

**The Modality of Habitation in the Neighborhood:** According to the theories and concepts that were reviewed in the first part of this paper - the definitions of the concept of neighborhood, the new meaning of habitation, which consists of all behaviors and relations in a place, and the factors that influence the perception



and the sense of place- four indicators were identified to study manner of habitation in Oudlajan neighborhood.

These are: neighborly relationships, religious activities, connection with neighborhood, and association with existing organizations and institutions in the neighborhood. The survey was conducted with the impression that, like other Iranian traditional neighborhoods, neighborly relations in the Oudlajan would be very powerful. Nevertheless, the results proved otherwise. Accordingly, only 26% of respondents acknowledged they were communicating with their neighbors. It should be noted that these individuals were those old neighbors who remained in the neighborhood, or those Afghan refugees who resided near each other. This latter group often felt lonely and isolated within the Iranian society and, thus, maintained good-neighborly relations among each other. On the other hand, 56% of the residents stated that their relationship was limited to greetings. After that, 18% of people responded that they did not have any relationship with their neighbors because they were not familiar with their neighbors and, thus, they failed to establish relations with them. Unfamiliarity with neighbors and short-term tenant living in houses were among the most important reasons for this lack of identification. In this situation, they did not have enough time to be familiar and communicate with their neighbors. Another reason, which could be extracted from the interviews with residents, was that older residents did not have positive views towards the newcomers and immigrants. This was also true in the case of different ethnicities because one could sometimes observe that one group or race did not have a good attitude towards another group or race and, thus, did not communicate with them.

Regarding the religious activities, it was also assumed that residents would have strong religious beliefs and practices resulting in many religious activities. However, the responses did not match what was expected. Only 18% of respondents went to mosque for daily prayers and participated in other religious ceremonies. Furthermore, 27% of respondents stated that they did not go to such places. Then, 55% of respondents asserted that they went to religious places only for three or four times a year in order to participate in important religious ceremonies such as Ashura and Tasooa. Therefore, it could be seen that religious habits and practices have largely faded in Oudlajan neighborhood. Accordingly, social relations have also weakened. Furthermore, mosques and religious places have always been considered as locations for worship, socialization and social interactions.

Regarding the recourse to and communication with existing institutions in the neighborhood, including

councils, 77% of respondents replied that they have not yet referred to such institutions. The existence of distrust towards these institutions and frustration of meeting their demands were among their reasons for denial to recourse to these institutions. In recent years, municipalities and other organizations have established numerous social and cultural centers in the Oudlajan neighborhood. However, the survey results indicated that 59% of residents did not go to these centers. As such, they pointed to several factors, including time shortage, poor neighborhood environment for commuting, aging and physical inability, lack of interest and unfamiliarity with the location and programs of these centers, as their most important motives not to establish a strong relationship with these centers. It can be seen that despite the lack of interest of residents towards these institutions, municipalities and other institutions have continued to build these kinds of centers. It appears that this lack of interest on the part of residents is due to this fact that residents think that cultural, social and sports centers are not the basic and vital needs of residents and that their needs and demands have not been considered when establishing such centers.

Studies show that in general, people do not have a great relationship with the neighborhood and its surrounding spaces. The problem is more acute among Afghan refugees, particularly women. Inappropriate environment, insecurity, lack of lighting, and motorcycle traffic on narrow streets of the neighborhood are considered among the most important factors that prevent many residents commute in the neighborhood. Since the majority of the inhabitants are immigrants, they have not a sense of belonging and collective or individual memory towards neighborhood and its spaces. Accordingly, they do not wish to communicate with them.

Factors Influencing the Desire to Live in the Neighborhood It seems that several factors have affected the willingness of residents to stay in the neighborhood. Accordingly, three hypotheses were postulated:

First hypothesis: Old and original residents are more prone to stay in the neighborhood.

Second hypothesis: Low-income, workers and immigrants are more willing to stay in the neighborhood.

Third hypothesis: Residents who are involved in social, cultural and religious activities are more willing to stay in the neighborhood.

Correlation tests were performed based on proposed hypotheses.

- **First Test: The Correlation between the “Duration of Residence in the Neighborhood” and “Willingness to Stay in the Neighborhood.”**

Based on the results of this test and regarding those



individuals who asserted that they were willing to go out of the neighborhood, 42% lived for more than twenty years, 26% lived between ten and twenty years, 26% lived between one and ten years, and finally 6% lived for less than a year in the neighborhood. It can be seen that a significant percentage of residents who have lived a long time in this neighborhood- in some cases since birth- would have to leave the neighborhood. Accordingly, there is no relationship between duration of residence in the neighborhood and willingness to stay in the neighborhood<sup>5</sup>.

• **Second Test: The Correlation between the “Socio-Economic Profile of Residents” and “Willingness to Stay in the Neighborhood.”**

Three factors were used in order to determine the socio-economic profile of residents: education level of household head, the job of household head and type of house. Accordingly, the socio-economic profile of residents was classified into high, medium and low categories. It was assumed that as the socio-economic status of residents decreased, they tended more to stay in the neighborhood and vice versa. The result showed that the hypothesis was true to a large extent. Low-income individuals and lower social classes, that were mostly immigrant groups and workers, were more willing to stay in the neighborhood. However, it should be noted that this “habitude” did not necessarily mean having a sense of belonging to the neighborhood.

• **Third Test: The Correlation between the “Socio-Cultural Capital” and “Willingness to Stay in the Neighborhood.”**

Several indicators were used in order to determine the socio-cultural capital. Accordingly, “socio-cultural capital includes: 1) Neighborly relations, 2) Religious activities and the level of recourse to religious places, and 3) the level of recourse to existing cultural centers in the neighborhood”. As can be seen, the interpretation uses in this research is greatly different from the general interpretation of the notion of culture because neighborhoods like Oudlajan, which often consists of low-income residents, immigrants, workers and illiterate individuals, one cannot expect to determine the cultural level via going to the cinema, theater, reading, and so on. The correlation test indicated that there was a weak relationship between two variables of “cultural-social capital” and “willingness to stay in the neighborhood”. People who have more social and cultural capital will probably have more social relations as well as cultural and religious activities and, thus, are more likely to stay in their neighborhood.

### ***The Perception of Residents from the Neighborhood***

It seems that the perception and image of residents of the neighborhood play an important role in the manner in which resident live as well as their relationship with the environment and other people. Accordingly, classical notions such as readability, memory and meaning association as well as identification of such factors as “changes in the neighborhood “and” problems of the neighborhood” were assessed in the eyes of the people in order to understand the mental image of the residents of this neighborhood. As such, it was believed that these two factors were the result of physical environment (such as readability) and individual perception (such as memory).

Based on the results of the survey, in terms of changes in the neighborhood in the eyes of the residents, the following items occupied the majority of responses (45%): increase in the number of immigrants, particularly Afghans, increase in the number of people living or commuting in the neighborhood, and increase in the number of drug users in the neighborhood. The construction of new buildings to replace old buildings, increased business activity and the loss of residential function of the neighborhoods were among the other changes witnessed by the residents of this neighborhood over the past years. A significant number of residents have also said that, from the beginning of residence in the neighborhood, no change (of course, positive) has been observed in the neighborhood. Since there has been no improvement in the neighborhood, they have thought that no change has happened.

Regarding the problems in the neighborhood, the following items have occupied the majority of responses: lack of neighborly services including vegetable market, health centers (36%), increased drug users and insecurity in the neighborhood (27%), problems related to narrow passages, lack of lighting and flooring (21%), environmental problems such as the accumulation of waste in the streets, accumulation of garbage and lack of trash can in the streets (10%). Other responses referred to such issues as the existence of immigrant groups and the loss of residential function of neighborhood. Some residents have pointed to such issues as “deterioration of houses, lack of building permits to build two storey buildings and inattention of municipality to these problems” as major problems of the neighborhood. For example, a 30-year-old man, who is born in the neighborhood, asserted that “since the neighborhood is known as a historical area, many problems have occurred because the municipality does not permit for any more construction”.

The results showed that the majority of residents did



not have a positive mental image of their neighborhood and living environment. This mental image is largely the result of problems in the neighborhood. Some external factors and outside attitudes towards the neighborhood have a growing role in shaping this negative mental image among its residents. Since 2006 and when the neighborhood was classified as an “old neighborhood” by Renovation Organization of Tehran, some negative psychological impacts have hit the residents. A number of residents asserted that since the neighborhood was known as the old neighborhood, the government and municipality have not paid enough attention to this neighborhood and they have neglected the neighborhood. Therefore, they expect the municipality and government to pay attention to Oudlajan neighborhood as well as other neighborhoods. In addition, there is news on the presence of multitudes of drug users and insecurity in Oudlajan, which have denigrated the neighborhood, and many people do not venture into this neighborhood. The above-mentioned reasons have contributed to emergence of negative mental image among the residents as well as loss of a sense of belonging and attachment to place among the residents.

In order to understand the opinion of residents on the historical context and old buildings of the neighborhood, they were asked about their desired house and neighborhood to live. Regarding this, 66% of respondents acknowledged that they would prefer a new and modern house and 34% said that they would prefer a new house embedded with a traditional style (with courtyard). None of those interviewed residents preferred the traditional and old house. Regarding the neighborhood as a whole, 43% of respondents asserted that they would prefer a traditional neighborhood embedded with new and renovated houses. On the other hand, 57% said that they would prefer a completely redesigned and renovated neighborhood. Furthermore, the last group asserted that they would prefer the old buildings to be replaced with new buildings. Accordingly, they thought that Oudlajan neighborhood would be similar to new neighborhoods of the city. It seems that this lack of interest in old buildings and spaces is largely due to problems in the neighborhood, inattention of authorities towards this neighborhood and outside view towards it.

### CONCLUSION

Regarding the multitudes of developments in Oudlajan neighborhood in recent decades, this neighborhood has largely lost its residential function because only 29% of its area is devoted to residential function. However,

this survey shows that the current residents of this neighborhood do not “live” in the neighborhood, in the real sense of the word. This research indicates that due to the changes in demographic structure and replacement of original inhabitants with immigrant groups, the manners of habitation as well as interaction among people and space have dramatically changed. The analysis indicates that even current few old residents are unwilling to continue living in this neighborhood and their presence in the neighborhood is driven by force and coercion. This suggests that long-term residence in the neighborhood does not create a sense of attachment among its inhabitants. Therefore, some other factors play a role in their willingness or unwillingness to live in any given neighborhood. Although the current residents of Oudlajan are living in this neighborhood, they do not actually dwell in this neighborhood and do not communicate and are not connected with the residents as well as the neighborhood. As such, these people do not have any sense of attachment to place and are forced to live there - largely due to financial inability to live elsewhere or vicinity of this neighborhood to their workplace. The results of different studies indicate that the manner of habitation, the type of behavior and communication among residents in the neighborhood are largely affected by their inherent mental image of that given neighborhood. Several factors play a role in shaping this mental image. In addition to individual factors such as age, education, job, culture, ethnicity and history of residence in the neighborhood, two other factors are involved in this phenomenon: the physical, environmental and social problems in the neighborhood- including the lack of basic services and facilities necessary for residents, physical deterioration of buildings, environmental pollution, and the presence of multitudes of drug users- and the views and attitudes shed from outside the neighborhood to the internal issues of it- including considering this neighborhood as an old and insecure neighborhood- as well as inattention of urban authorities toward Oudlajan. In addition, there is a general lack of interest in the neighborhood to old building and context located throughout it. Actually, the residents are highly willing to live in new and modern buildings and neighborhoods. It can be argued that this willingness is, on the one hand, due to current shortages and problems in the old buildings and, on the other hand, the type of perspective towards these buildings and structures. This means that residents are not aware of the historical and cultural values of these buildings and consider them as just signs of aging and the passage of time. Having had registered Oudlajan neighborhood as national heritage area, urban authorities have not presented adequate



information nor have raised the awareness of people on cultural and historical value of cultural heritage. Furthermore, no attempt was initiated on the part of authorities and the public media in order to introduce this historic neighborhood to the society. Meanwhile, since the economic interests of residents incur damage due to the classification of neighborhood and no real problem and shortage is removed, this act has not succeeded to revive the neighborhood and cannot strengthen the residence in Oudlajan. This fact is not limited to Oudlajan neighborhood. Our surveys in other neighborhood of Tehran and our observations in some Iranian cities show a lack of interest in old fabrics and buildings. The growing trend of destruction and renovation shows this fact. It seems that the first step to create interest in the historic neighborhood among citizens is to meet their needs and simultaneously, inform them about the values of these neighborhoods.

## ENDNOTES

1. French equivalent of habitation in this sense is the term “habiter”.

2. The following are a few: Lynch, K.(1960).The image of the city; Frémont,A. (1976). La région, espace vécu; Paulet, J.P. (2000).Géographie urbaine, and Méo, G.D. (2001).Géographie sociale et territoires.

3. Workers who are living in the neighborhood in the form of individual or group and make up 13% of the population in this neighborhood have not been considered the resident families.  $n = (N \times t^2 \times p \times q) \div (N \times d^2 + t^2 \times p \times q)$ ,  $N=2119$  (nombre des parcelles résidentielles),  $t=1.96$ ,  $d=0.05$   $p=0.13$ ,  $q=1-p=0.87$ .

4. Since the Eastern part of the neighborhood has been away from the market, its residential function has been more than the other two parts.

5. Regarding the analyses carried out by the SPSS Software, the correlation coefficient (Cramer's V) was 0.053 and the decision criterion (Approx. Sig.) was 0.973, respectively. Accordingly, there was no meaningful relationship between those variables (duration of residence and willingness to stay in the neighborhood).



## REFERENCES

- Allen, B. (2007). Le Quartier à L'articulation D'enjeux Spatiaux Temporels, in J.Y. Authier, M.H. Bacqué, F. Guerin-Pace, Le Quartier. Enjeux Scientifiques, *Actions Politiques et Pratiques Sociales* (139-162). Paris : La Découverte.
- Authier, J.Y., Bacqué, M.H. & Guérin-Pace, F. (2007). *Le Quartier. Enjeux Scientifiques, Actions Politiques et Pratiques Sociales*, La Découverte, coll. «Recherches», 293.
- Bavand Consulting Engineers (2010). *Urban Landscape Planning of Oudlajan Historic Neighborhood*. Tehran.
- Ettehadih, M., Zamani Nia, M. (1998). *Here is Tehran: a Collection of Articles about Tehran* (1853 to 1926). Tehran: The History of Iran Publications.
- Falahat, M. S. (2006). Sense of Place and the Factors Shaping it. *Fine Art Magazine (HONAR-HA-YE-ZIBA)*, (26), 57-66.
- Gravari-Barbas, M. (2005). *Habiter le Patrimoine: Enjeux, Approches, Vécu*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Lazarrotti, O. (2006). *Habiter: la Condition Géographique*. Paris: Belin.
- Ledrut, R. (1968). *Sociologie Urbaine*, Paris: Presse Universitaire de France.
- Lynch, K. (1996). *The Image of the City* (Manoochehr Mozayeni, Trans.), Tehran: Tehran University Press.
- Méo, G. D. (2001). *Géographie Sociale et Territoires*. Paris: Nathan.
- Qasemi, V., Negini, S. (2010). Examining the Impact of the Structure of Neighborhood on Social Identity Emphasizing on the Neighborhood Identity in Isfahan City. *Journal of Regional Studies and Research*, 2 (7), 113-136.
- Relph, E. (1976). *Place and Placelessness*, London: Pion edition, 156.
- Rezaei, N. (2014). *Revitalisation des Centres Historiques en Iran, le Cas du Quartier D'oudlajan à Téhéran*, (Thèse de Doctorat D'urbanisme, Université Paris1, Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris, France).
- Salin, E. (2002). *Les Centres Historiques du Caire et de Mexico: Représentations de L'espace, Mutations Urbaines et Protection du Patrimoine*. (Thèse de Doctorat de Géographie, Université de Paris-X Nanterre, France). Tiré de [http://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/59/79/08/PDF/ThA\\_se\\_Elodie\\_SALIN.pdf](http://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/59/79/08/PDF/ThA_se_Elodie_SALIN.pdf).
- Shakooyi, H. (1988). *Social Geography of Cities*. Tehran: SID Publications.
- Sheikhi, M. (2003). Neighborhood Structure in the Islamic Countries. *Journal of Social Sciences*. (22), 39-68.
- Statistical Center of Iran. National Census from 1996 to 2006.
- Stock, M. (2001). *Mobilités Géographiques et Pratiques des Lieux. Étude Théorico-Empirique à Travers Deux Lieux Touristiques Anciennement Constitués : Brighton & Hove (Royaume-Uni) et Garmisch-Partenkirchen (Allemagne)*. Thèse de Doctorat de Géographie, Université de Paris 7 - Denis Diderot, Paris, France.
- Stock, M. (2003). Pratiques des Lieux, Styles D'habiter, Régimes D'habiter. Pour une Analyse Triologique des Dimensions Spatiales des Sociétés Humaines. *Travaux de l'Institut de Géographie de Reims*, Vol 115-118, 213-229.