

Sociological Analysis of Mehr Housing Massification Policy and its Role in Reducing Dissatisfaction with Mehr Housing Quality (Case Study: Mehr Housing in New Hashtgerd Phase and Lahijan, Province)

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Abstract: The present study aims to conduct a sociological analysis of the Mehr Housing massification policy and its role in reducing dissatisfaction with the quality of Maskan-e-Mehr (case study: Mehr Housing in New Hashtgerd Phase and Lahijan, Province). The research method was the Grounded Theory, and the studied population comprised all citizens and their families who live in Mehr Housing in Hashtgerd City and Lahijan City in Gilan Province. The sampling process was done based on the purposive or judgmental method and continued until reaching the theoretical saturation. In this study, 16 households and heads of families living in Mehr Housing were interviewed. The collected data were coded, conceptualized, and categorized. Axial and selective coding was then conducted, and subsequent samples were selected for interviews based on the core concepts and categories. Research results were divided into five classes (causal conditions, intervening conditions, context conditions, strategies, and consequences) based on the paradigm used in this study. Findings introduced quantitative-qualitative problems, poor location, security-economic problems, environmental-welfare issues, and institutional problems are the most crucial problems of Mehr Housing in the studied area. The mentioned issues are rooted in weak management of different stages of the Mehr Housing project. If the abovementioned problems are not solved, these social residences will face many more critical and complicated challenges.

Keywords: Housing, Low-Income Groups, Mehr Housing, Reducing Dissatisfaction with Housing Quality

Introduction

Housing is one of the most underlying and vital elements in social-economic development planning (Ziari et al., 2010). Housing does not just mean a house since it includes the whole residential environment and covers all services and facilities required for family well-being, employment projects, education, and health of individuals in addition to physical place (Pourmohammadi, 2020). Housing indeed has gradually converted from a one-dimensional concept to a multifaceted case. Housing is now considered under some titles, including “housing sustainability” and “sustainable housing.” Regarding the housing problems among low-income classes in Iran, house massification has received support from the government in recent years. This project was called “Maskan-e-Mehr” and was implemented all around Iran to balance the housing market. The purpose of this project was to reduce the price of housing for low-income classes. Road and Urbanization Organizations usually give land to people in small and medium-sized cities for Maskan-e-Mehr construction. These organizations delegate this task to cooperative companies. However, governmental lands with suitable areas are not available for mass construction in megacities, so different decisions are made in these cities (Bazm Azmoon et al., 2017). Hence, the Iranian government has supported housing cooperations or directly invested in this field based on Article 44 of the Constitution. Mehr Housing cooperative companies have subtracted the land price from the total price of apartments provided for low-income individuals.

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This action is done based on cooperation over participation. Lack of economic participation or restricted actions affects the housing supply process leading to work recession and lower cooperation between members. Moreover, the mentioned problems increase mistrust, indifference, isolation, and lack of movement, while increasing personal interest, dualism, and inequality harming the structure of cooperation (Ghanbari et al., 2019). Maskan-e-Mehr apartments were constructed and given to people a long time ago; hence, some studies have been conducted on these cases in terms of their quality. Housing quality is a substantial case that may eliminate the effect of the abovementioned policies making them fruitless. The concept of housing quality is indeed one of the approaches used to measure satisfaction with available residential quality, which is an influential but forgotten aspect of Maskan-e-Mehr (Maleki et al., 2015). The subject "satisfaction" has been considered in studies on the assessment of environmental quality in residential areas over recent years. Satisfaction with environmental quality was used as a model for improving the design of massive housing developments in the early 1960s. Moreover, many studies paid attention to the tendencies of residents in housing design by getting feedback from housing projects' residents (Abdul Mohit & Azim, 2012). However, the measurement of satisfaction with residence place is complicated depending on various factors (Gifford, 2002). On the other hand, residential satisfaction equals the satisfaction that a family member experiences in their current residential situation (Rakhshaninasab & Shiran, 2022).

Zangeneh et al. (2017) conducted a study on satisfaction with the residential quality of Mehr Housing in Hamedan and concluded that residents were dissatisfied with the quality of services, facilities, access, and closeness to urban centers and urban transportation. According to studies that Daroudi et al. (2014) and Hejazi (2015) conducted on housing to examine suitable housing indicators in Hashtgerd and Mahshahr, respectively, residents living in studied apartments had relative satisfaction with some indicators, such as urban accesses, uses, and service. Therefore, global experiences indicate that many houses do not create a sustainable community, but some spaces and amenities, including jobs, stores and services, transportation, and green spaces are required for houses. Hence, this study aims to assess Mehr Housing's capability for providing efficient housing and evaluate the quality of residence among low-income groups regarding sustainability indicators. For this purpose, Mehr housing in the new phase of Hashterd and Lahijan city in Gilan Province, Iran was chosen as a case study. This city was selected due to its problems, such as land and housing prices that prevent a large number of low-income individuals who cannot afford this price.

Research Background

This part of the study reviews the studies related to the concept of sociological analysis of the Mehr housing mass policy and its role in reducing dissatisfaction with Mehr housing quality of the case study (Mehr housing of new phase of Hashtgerd in Lahijan City, Gilan Province, Iran) in the world and Iranian studies. This study emphasizes specific approach and elements of each research considering their strengths and weaknesses. The most important studies about Mehr housing massification and its effect on the reduction in dissatisfaction with the quality of Mehr housing have been reviewed herein.

- Pirbabaei, Molaei, and Sedaghati (2020) carried out a study entitled "the comparison of, physical-spatial and social-economic Mehr houses from the perspective of residents (Case study: Sahand new city of Tabriz and Golbahar city of Mashhad)." The study of the samples with t-test showed similarity between samples despite the significant difference in data in social and environmental dimensions (with more mean in Golbahar-sample) and service and economic dimensions (with higher mean in the Sahand sample). Also, no significant difference was observed between computational averages of the t-test, components of "physical-spatial" and "socio-economic" structures. Despite the average to low computational score in both groups, in the Golbahar sample with a small difference, a higher score was estimated.
- Farrokhi and Sedigh (2020) conducted a study entitled "assessment of citizens' satisfaction with the quality of Mehr housing quality (Case Study: Mehr Housing in Nazar Abad)." Test results indicated that physical (-6.8), social (-2.9), and environmental (-5.3) dimensions were unstable compared to the economic dimension, which had a more positive grade (39.2).

According to this study, some factors led to the low quality of Mehr housing's residential environment for the residents: use it as dormitory residential complexes with improper location and long distance from city centers and employment places, poor urban infrastructures, and inconsistency with urban and architectural identity.

- Koozegar College and Salimi Sobhan (2020) carried out a study entitled "housing massification and satisfaction of residents of suburban areas Case: Parand and Pardis in Tehran Province." The results showed that in all dimensions and in both cities, residents' dissatisfaction with the Mehr housing project was evident. Cultural and environmental-physical scores equaled 2.30, 2.26, and 2.22, respectively, and the same values in the city of Pardis equaled 2.17, 2.27, and 2.50, respectively, which was lower than the average level of 3. In Parand city, more than 83% of residents wanted to migrate from mass housing in the next 5 years, and in Pardis city, this number was 79%. Also, more than 78% of the residents of Parand Housing and more than 75% of the residents of Pardis Housing preferred to live in the worn-out neighborhood inside the city of Tehran rather than living in Mehr Housing projects.
- Cho (2020) carried out a study entitled "residential satisfaction among low-income single-mother households: the case of residential welfare facilities in South Korea." Findings indicate that residential satisfaction was a multidimensional construct with dominant psychological characteristics. Significant predictors were also identified among physical and socio-spatial environmental characteristics, such as plan type, management and service, and personal space. A critical examination of the physical and socio-spatial quality of short-term subsidized public housing for low-income single-mother households in South Korea expands the current knowledge in this field to various sociodemographic and cultural contexts.
- Bredenoord (2016) conducted a study entitled "sustainable housing and building materials for low-income households." Access to affordable housing in the Global South is very limited for millions. Many households have chosen incremental self-construction. Transference of knowledge to (self) builders is a key issue, as is the role of assistance in self-help housing. It is argued in this paper that sustainable goals for low-cost housing and applications are accessible. Measures of the physical development of neighborhoods, such as urban density and connectivity are equally as important as measures concerning community development.

Theoretical Framework

House is beyond a simple structure; it is an institute created for a complicated set of goals. The main purpose of housing is to create an adaptive environment matched with lifestyle and socioeconomic and cultural characteristics (Pourdehimi, 2011). In other words, housing meets personal and economic needs but also should satisfy the qualitative, social-physical needs of the person. Hence, access of low-income groups to amenities and services empowers them and creates appropriate conditions for social-economic welfare to enhance educational, health, and so forth opportunities for human capital development (Peyman, 2007). In general, individuals who do not have a house are from low-income groups whose low literacy and education levels lead to low wages and income. In most cases, the social and economic incapacity of low-income families' heads results in generative poverty so that their children also experience poverty (Peyman, 2007).

The quality of physical dimensions is one of the important dimensions affecting housing sustainability. This issue is so much important that is considered one of the main factors for residents' satisfaction because it affects the quality of their lives (Kahraman, 2013) and their mental-physical health (Relph, 1976, Bonnefoy, 2007). These factors also affect the quality of life of elder and disabled people (Steinfeld & Danford, 1999), overweight children (Saelens et al., 2003), mortality in winter (Wilkinson et al., 2001), mental diseases, social harms, vandalism, depression, neural tensions, and suspicion (Baiden et al., 2011). Health, cooking and washing equipment, ventilation, number and size of rooms, location of rooms, type of restrooms, the game place for children, and having a balcony for light are important physical dimensions considered in residential apartments (Mustapha et al., 2016).

The 20th century is when many plans have been designed to organize those affairs that are achievable without structured intervention. Various definitions have been presented for planning. "Planning is a set of activities leading to decisions made about resource allocation to achieve future goals," Brikner

states. Setting goals in planning is the central and determinant core for planning-associated discussions because purposeless planning is meaningless, and this is the fundamental feature of each plan. On the other hand, he believes that allocation must be determined and defined since it is in line with the goal set by the plan (Glasson, 1974). However, the goal of the plan for the considered group must be clarified since a wide range of different characteristics exists among low-income groups. Hence, these characteristics must be divided into specific categories to achieve an effective solution. Hence, this accuracy must be increased. Each planning system tends to achieve this goal by providing a clear definition of "target group" to allocate planning resources more successfully. According to Mc Loughlin et al. (1973), some steps must be taken to ensure this idea:

- 1) Identify general goals
- 2) Determine and collect the required data
- 3) Analyze data based on general goals
- 4) Find a general definition for the target group
- 5) Evaluate models and predict a model based on the plan goal
- 6) Select a suitable executive model based on the plan target group's characteristics

Bricken reminds us following issues to persuade planners to be flexible and accept any change in the target group:

- 1) Planning is a continuous and ongoing process
- 2) Planning is periodic and must be flexible
- 3) Planning must be able to change its policies based on the general ideals of the system
- 4) Planning must revise its trajectory by taking feedback from the executive system
- 5) The plan can be goal-oriented if is based on the abovementioned conditions (quoted from Parhizkar, Amakchi, and Eftekhari, 2007).

In general, economic schools are divided into three categories. Some economic schools believe in the direct intervention of government in economic affairs and the economy confirms the plan that government makes its economic decisions. In these schools, the economy considers the market mechanism an incomplete process for resource allocation. Institutionalism and socialism are examples of this category. Another category includes those economic schools that are against the direct intervention of government emphasizing minimum governmental interference. Austrian School, neo-classic, neo-liberal, classic, and Keynesian are examples (Alavi & Arabi, 2013).

Methodology

This study was conducted using the qualitative method of Grounded Theory. This method allows the researcher to codify theories and statements based on real data instead of relying on available predetermined theories (Azkia et al., 2017: 250). Data were collected through bibliographic methods, direct observation, note-taking, data recording, and in-depth semi-structured interviews. The qualitative method was used to achieve more comprehensive knowledge about the studied subject.

The statistical population of this study comprised all citizens living in Hashtgerd City and Lahijan in Gilan Province. According to statistics published by the Population and Housing Census of Iran 2018, this rate equals 1.621.263. The initial criterion of this study included residents living in Hashtgerd city and Lahijan in Gilan Province. However, other indicators were considered based on the data and requirements. A wide range of individuals was interviewed to consider diversity in education level, job, previous residence place, number of family members, and monthly cost of the household. This study used purposive or judgmental sampling, the snowball method, and theoretical saturation to select the sample from the studied population. For this purpose, judgmental sampling was used to interview all social groups and residents living in Mehr Housing projects in two Hashtgerd and Lahijan cities. In the snowball method, interviewees are asked to introduce those individuals with similar situations and can provide more information through interviews. This process is continued until the received information is repetitive, which is called data saturation in qualitative studies. Data saturation occurs when additional data cannot compliment or determine a theoretical case. In data saturation, interviews

are the same and new concepts or categories are not found; in other words, the number of interviews is sufficient.

The unstructured open interview was used to collect data and information from scholars and experts. Because the researcher deals with research subjects due to their occupational nature, research can use open interviews through free and collaborative observation to collect data. In this case, available documents and evidence on the research subject were used. Moreover, field studies in New Hashtgerd city and Lahijan City in Gilan Province through two 2-month travels and attendance in Mehr Housing Summits of Sociology Association led to higher theoretical sensitivity of the researcher. In total, 16 households and family heads living in Mehr Housing were interviewed to collect data. In this case, each interview was transcribed and important points were recorded. Interview transcription took 1-2 hours on average. It was tried to transfer the same language and literature of interviewers to achieve more tangible examples. After interviews and data were transcribed, coding methods and strategies were used for categorization. The researcher coded each interview separately and highlighted the derived codes in the next interviews. The coding process was reciprocating (according to Strauss), and completed after upcoming interviews. The collected data were coded, conceptualized, and categorized then axial and selective coding was done. The next subjects were selected for interview based on the core concepts and categories. The paradigm model of nexus between categories was designed after reaching the theoretical saturation of concepts and categories.

Results

Table (1): Participants' profile

Row	Gender	Education	Job	Age group	Number of family members	The monthly cost of family	Residence place
1	Female	BA	Housewife	30-39	2 members	>1000000	New Hashtgerd Phase
2	Male	BA	Unemployed	18-29	4	>1000000	New Hashtgerd Phase
3	Female	Secondary school	Unemployed	30-39	>4	>1000000	New Hashtgerd Phase
4	Female	BA	Employed	30-39	3	>1000000	New Hashtgerd Phase
5	Male	Diploma	Employed	40-49	4	>1000000	New Hashtgerd Phase
6	Female	BA	Employed	30-39	4	751000-1000000	New Hashtgerd Phase
7	Male	Diploma	Retired	40-49	4	751000-1000000	New Hashtgerd Phase
8	Male	Secondary school	Retired	40-49	4	751000-1000000	New Hashtgerd Phase
9	Female	Secondary school	Housewife	40-49	>4	>1000000	Lahijan City
10	Male	Diploma	Employed	30-39	4	>1000000	Lahijan City
11	Female	BA	Employed	30-39	3	>1000000	Lahijan City
12	Female	BA	Unemployed	18-29	4	>1000000	Lahijan City
13	Female	BA	Employed	30-39	2	751000-1000000	Lahijan City
14	Female	Diploma	Housewife	30-39	3	>1000000	Lahijan City
15	Female	BA	Housewife	30-39	4	>1000000	Lahijan City
16	Female	Secondary school	Housewife	40-49	4	>1000000	Lahijan City

Concepts and Categories

Paradigm Pattern: Dissatisfaction with the quality of Mehr Housing

Figure 1 depicts the paradigm in which, dissatisfaction with the quality of Mehr housing is chosen as a phenomenon. According to interviews with research participants, residents living in Mehr Housing of New Hashtgerd Phase and Lahijan City were dissatisfied with the quality of Mehr Housing. According to a study conducted by Farrokhi and Sedigh (2020) on the assessment of citizens' satisfaction with the quality of Mehr housing quality (Case Study: Mehr Housing in Nazar Abad), average satisfaction was lower than the medium level. Hence, some factors led to the low quality of Mehr housing's residential environment for the residents: use it as dormitory residential complexes with improper location and long distance from city centers and employment places, poor urban infrastructures, and inconsistency with urban and architectural identity. In another study, Koozegar College and Salimi Sobhan (2020) carried out a study entitled "housing massification and satisfaction of residents of suburban areas Case: Parand and Pardis in Tehran Province." The results showed that in all dimensions and in both cities, residents' dissatisfaction with the Mehr housing project was evident. In Parand city, more than 83% of residents wanted to migrate from mass housing in the next 5 years, and in Pardis city, this number was 79%. Also, more than 78% of the residents of Parand Housing and more than 75% of the residents of Pardis Housing preferred to live in the worn-out neighborhood inside the city of Tehran rather than living in Mehr Housing projects. In addition, Ahmadi and Jalili (2020) concluded that generally, average satisfaction with Mehr Housing Project exists in Iran.

In terms of similarities and differences between residents living in the two studied areas, residents living in both areas have pointed to some factors, including lack of educational and cultural facilities, lack of health services, financial conditions, lack of recreational and sports facilities, poor transportation, and access amenities. However, residents of Mehr Housing in New Hashtgerd Phase mentioned other factors leading to dissatisfaction with the current situation lack of social security, lack of public services, cultural conditions, and neighborhood relationships while residents living in Mehr Housing of Lahijan highlighted other factors, including unemployment and physical status of the housing. In terms of adopting strategies, people living in both areas tried to deal with their problems by sociability and accepting conditions, leaving the town at the first available time, and immigrating to a place that is closer to urban facilities so they can commute more easily and use urban amenities. Residents living in Mehr Housing of New Hashtgerd Phase adopted residents' cooperation and participation strategy to provide security due to inappropriate social security in the town. This part of the study presents open and axial coding related to dissatisfaction with Mehr Housing within tables 2, 3, and 4 and the paradigm-phenomenon pattern of dissatisfaction with Mehr Housing Quality.

Table 2 reports the open coding process (converting raw data to concepts):

Table (2): Open coding: converting raw data to concepts

Row	Raw data	Concepts
1	Medium security exists but there is no police station for complaint	Lack of police station to provide security
2	Security level would be higher if there was a police station in this town	
3	When the door of the building is open somethings, such as the water pump, flower pots, etc. may be stolen	Theft
4	There is no cultural atmosphere, such as music, language, or painting classes in this town	Lack of music, language, painting classes, kindergarten, and park
	Cultural and educational environments do not exist for children, adolescents, and young people.	
5	No kindergarten exists for employed mothers	
6	Individuals who have children below 7 face a problem in finding a kindergarten for their children.	
7	Absence of even one park for children and lack of playground for football or gym	
8	Almost half of the residents living in these apartments are not satisfied with their jobs since they do not earn a high wage so several members of a family work	Unemployment
9	Some people drink alcoholic drinks in the villas around the Mehr Housing	Fear and horror

Row	Raw data	Concepts
	and make streets noisy, frightening, and unsafe	
10	People have medium economic situations and many have very bad financial positions	Poor economic situation
11	Most people are from low-income walks of society and cannot afford the living expenses so even they may face a challenge in meeting their basic needs	
12	Most families suffer from poverty and few of them have perfect financial positions	
13	The economic situation of people is at an average level so that 2-3 members of the family members have to work to meet their needs	
14	Most people living in these apartments have similar financial positions and few families have higher financial situations compared to others	
15	Complexes do not have guardianship and those who do have not a parking lot have to park their cars in open spaces so their cars have been stolen several times	Lack of security and guard services for the town
16	Those women who are heads of families may deal with some harassment by some residents of other apartments or face many financial issues	Harassment
17	No welfare amenities have been considered for handicapped people in Mehr Housing so they need family support	Lack of services and facilities for handicapped people
18	The road reaching the Mehr Housing is unsafe and rough without any restoration	Lack of a safe and suitable road
19	Transportation is highly poor so people living here must have a personal car or use a taxi, which is expensive for low-income people	Lack of public vehicles
20	There are few taxis in this neighborhood	
21	Weak materials have been used in these buildings so the noise of neighbors is annoying	Poor construction
22	Most buildings do not have a parking lot and the capacity is not sufficient for all cars so some neighbors occupy the space for their parking. This issue leads to struggles and conflicts between residents	Lack of parking
23	Some people leave their garbage in the street attracting stray dogs	Lack of urban health and hygiene
24	Social security is highly weak and no police stations exist here	Low social security
25	The hygiene level of this neighborhood is medium and some people are culturally poor, especially in terms of the apartment culture	Lack of culture for how to live in an apartment
26	The educational-cultural level is low and alcohol consumption, drug abuse, and smoking behaviors have made parents stressed and worried	Low educational culture
27	Cooperation between residents leads to fewer theft cases	Neighborhood relationships
28	Some residents clean the building together	Collective cleaning
29	They collaborate to paint and plant flowers on the landscape	Cooperation and collaboration between residents
30	There is low security in Mehr Housing so women cannot easily walk in the street at night and stray dogs intensify this insecurity	Social insecurity
31	Improper sewage situation and leak of urban sewage in alleys	Not collecting urban sewage
32	A suitable health center does not exist in Mehr Housing and a long distance from there to the first clinic, which is problematic	Lack of health center
33	No recreational and sports place exists	Lack of recreational and sports atmospheres
34	Residents who live in villas around the Mehr Housing place do not respect Islamic principles	Not following Islamic principles
35	Most people who live in Mehr Housing have immigrated from different countries and cities	Immigrant acceptance

Table 2 converted raw data to concepts. In this phase, participants pointed to the following concepts: lack of police station to provide security; theft; lack of music, language, painting classes, kindergarten, and park; unemployment; fear and horror; poor economic situation; lack of security and guard services for the town; harassment; lack of services and facilities for handicapped people; lack of a safe and suitable road; lack of public vehicles; poor construction; lack of parking; lack of urban health and hygiene; low social security; lack of culture for how to live in an apartment; low educational culture; neighborhood relationships; collective cleaning; cooperation and collaborations between residents; social insecurity; not collecting urban sewage; lack of health center; lack of recreational and sports atmospheres; not following Islamic principles; and immigrant acceptance.

Table 3 reports the process of open coding in the second phase (converting concepts to subcategories).

Table (3): Open coding of the second phase: converting concepts to subcategories

Concepts	Subcategories	Concepts	Subcategories
Lack of police station to provide security	Lack of social security	Lack of public vehicles	Poor transportation and accessibility services
Theft	Lack of social security	Lack of services and facilities for handicapped people	Lack of public amenities
Lack of music, language, painting classes, kindergarten, and park	Lack of educational and cultural services	Poor construction	Physical situation of housing
Unemployment	Unemployment	Lack of parking lot	Lack of general facilities
Fear and horror	Lack of social security	Lack of urban hygiene	Environmental conditions
Poor economic situation	Financial status	Low social security	Lack of social security
Lack of security and guard services for the town	Lack of social security	lack of culture for how to live in an apartment	Cultural conditions
Harassment	Lack of social security	Low educational culture	Cultural conditions
Lack of a safe and suitable road	Lack of public amenities	Neighborhood relationships	Neighborhood relationships
Collective cleaning	Neighborhood relationships	Cooperation and collaboration between residents	Cooperation and collaboration between residents
Social insecurity	Lack of social security	Not collecting urban sewage	Environmental conditions
Lack of health center	Lack of health facilities	Lack of recreational and sports atmospheres	Lack of recreational and sports atmospheres
Not following Islamic principles	Cultural conditions	Immigrant acceptance	Immigrant acceptance

Table 3 indicated the process of converting concepts to subcategories. In this phase, those concepts with more commonalities shaped a more general category. Table 4 presents the third phase of deriving core, repetitive, and base categories and determining category style for the paradigm or axial coding.

Table (4): Third phase: deriving core, repetitive, and base categories and determining category type for paradigm or axial coding

Core categories	Category type
Lack of social security	Causal
Lack of educational and cultural services	Causal
Unemployment	Context
Financial status	Intervening
Lack of public amenities	Causal
Sociability and accepting conditions	Strategy
Lack of health facilities	Causal

Cultural conditions	Intervening
Poor transportation and accessibility services	Causal
Physical situation of housing	Context
Neighborhood relationships	Context
Leaving the town at the first available time, and immigrating to a place that is closer to urban facilities	Strategy
Daily commutation of residents to use urban services	Strategy
Lack of recreational and sports services	Causal

Table 4 derived core, repetitive, and base categories and then determined the type of category for paradigm or axial coding. Causal conditions included lack of social security, lack of educational and cultural services, lack of public amenities, lack of health facilities, poor transportation, and accessibility services, and lack of recreational and sports services. Intervening conditions included cultural conditions and financial status. Context conditions included unemployment, neighborhood relationships, and the physical situation of housing. Strategies included sociability and acceptance conditions, leaving the town at the first available time, immigrating to a place that is closer to urban facilities, daily commutation of residents to use urban services, and cooperation between residents to provide security.

A paradigm pattern of the phenomenon of "dissatisfaction with the quality of Mehr housing" was designed based on the analysis of findings obtained from previous phases:

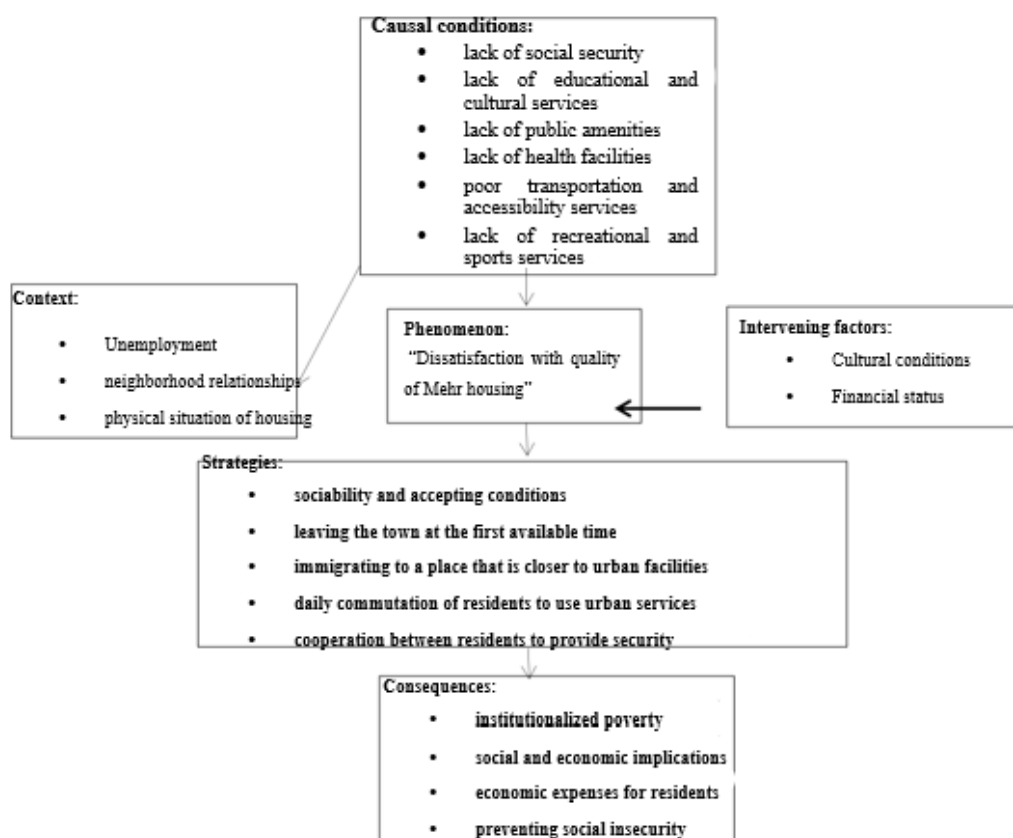


Figure (1): The second paradigm of the phenomenon "dissatisfaction with the quality of Mehr housing"

Causal conditions of dissatisfaction with the quality of Mehr Housing

1. Lack of social security

The advent of Mehr Housing towns has led to different urban issues, including higher marginalization, increase social crimes, more urban disorder, and lower social security. In this regard, residents point to **the lack of a police station**: "an average security exists but no police station exists for submitting complins," a 47 years old woman with BA degree states (participant 6). Interviewees also highlighted

the case of **theft**: “When the door of the building is open somethings, such as water pump, flower pots, etc. may be stolen” (6, 47 years old woman, BA). **Lack of guardianship in town** is another issue that reduced social security in the town: “complexes do not have guardianship and those who have not parking lot have to park their cars in open space so their cars have been stolen several times” (7, 57 years old man, diploma).

2. Lack of educational and cultural facilities

The lack of educational and cultural amenities and facilities in Mehr Housing towns in New Hashtgerd Phase and Lahijan in Gilan Province is another problem leading to the dissatisfaction of residents with the quality of Mehr Housing. Residents pointed out the lack of music, language, kindergarten, and park in the town. In this case, one of the residents explains “there is no cultural atmosphere, such as music, language, and painting classes for children in this town” (6, 52 years old woman, secondary school). Another resident evaluates the educational and cultural problems of the town in this way, “Absence of even one park for children and lack of playground for football pr gym” (6, 47 years old woman, BA).

3. Lack of public amenities

Public facilities regarding urban amenities, such as suitable and safe roads, facilities for all walks of society like disabled people and attention to public spaces, such as parking are other concepts mentioned by the residents. In this case, some residents point to a **lack of facilities for handicapped people**: “No welfare amenities have been considered for handicapped people in Mehr Housing so they need family support” (7, a 57 years old man, diploma). Some other residents have mentioned the **lack of a safe and suitable road** in road: “The road reaching the Mehr Housing is unsafe and rough without any restoration by officials and practitioners” (7, a 57 years old man, diploma). Finally, residents mentioned a **lack of attention to public spaces, such as parking**, and “most buildings do not have a parking lot, and the capacity is not sufficient for all cars, so some neighbors occupy the space for their parking. This issue leads to struggles and conflicts between residents” (8, 53 years old, secondary school).

4. Lack of health facilities

Many residents living in Mehr housing located in New Hashtgerd Phase and Lahijan City cannot live life in this town due to a lack of sufficient amenities. Most clients prefer to go to surrounding cities and use their treatment centers due to a **lack of medical and healthcare equipment** and a lack of drugstores in the town. This issue imposes high costs and is time-consuming for residents. Interviews state, “A suitable health center does not exist in Mehr Housing and a long distance is from there to the first clinic, which is problematic” (10, a 37 years old man, diploma). According to another participant, “garbage is not collected timely, and the municipality does not clean the streets” (3, 45 years old woman, diploma).

5. Poor transportation and accessibility services

Poor transportation and access to amenities like **lack of public vehicles** are one of the underlying issues in Mehr Housing in the opinion of residents: “Transportation is highly poor, so people living here must have a personal car or use a taxi, which is expensive for low-income people” (7, a 57 years old man, diploma). Moreover, some residents point to a lack of taxis: “There are few taxis in this neighborhood” (9, a 45 years old woman, secondary school).

6. Lack of recreational and sports amenities

The lack of recreational and sports amenities for all classes and age groups is another challenge people face in Mehr Housing. Most residents complained about **the lack of recreational and sports amenities**: “No entertainment and recreational center exists here” (10, a 37 years old man, diploma). Another participant pointed to the lack of recreational and sports atmospheres: “The town does not have a suitable place for play and bicycle ride” (4, a 45 years old woman, BA).

Context Factors

1. Unemployment

Almost all interviewees mentioned **unemployment** as a context factor that has worsened the conditions in Mehr Housing. According to interviewees, "the majority of residents living in these apartments are not satisfied with their jobs since they do not earn a high wage, so several members of a family have to work" (6, 47 years old woman, BA). According to an interviewee, "Sometimes wives of family heads have to work in companies, restaurants, and homes because their husbands are unemployed and do not earn high income" (8, a 53 years old participant, secondary school degree).

2. Neighborhood relationships

Neighborhood relationships are among the intervening factors mentioned in interviews. Social relationships shape a significant aspect of human life. However, the current status of residents living in Mehr Housing indicates that their neighborhood relationships suffer from social alienation. According to the experience of one of the participants, "cooperation between residents leads to fewer theft cases" (8, a 53 years old participant, secondary school). According to another participant, "If the management team of the building is professional and neighbors cooperate, the building will be very clean" (7, a 57 years old man, diploma). "These apartments have many problems: not following national construction rules in design and construction process of Mehr Housing, use of low-quality materials, employ unprofessional contractors and builder teams, and non-standard outcome of constructed buildings," another interviewee explained (10, a 37 years old man, diploma).

Intervening Factors

1. Financial Status

The financial status of residents living in Mehr Housing is mentioned as an intervening factor. Interviewees point to **the poor economic status** of residents, "people have a medium economic situation and many have very bad financial positions" (6, 47 years old woman, BA). Others point to the poverty of residents living in this town: "most families suffer from poverty, and few of them have perfect financial positions" (6, a 45 years old woman, secondary school).

2. Cultural Conditions

The cultural conditions of Mehr Housing's residents must be considered intervening factors. The residents expressed some subjects, including **a lack of culture for the how-to live-in apartment, poor educational culture, and not respecting Islamic principles**. In terms of the lack of culture for living in an apartment, one of the residents explains his/her experience: "hygiene level of this neighborhood is medium, and some people are culturally poor, especially in terms of the apartment culture" (8, a 53 years old participant, secondary school). Another participant explains about the low educational culture: "educational-cultural level is low, and alcohol consumption, drug abuse, and smoking behaviors have made parents stressful and worried" (8, a 53 years old participant, secondary school). Another issue is **not respecting Islamic principles**: "residents who live in villas around the Mehr Housing place do not respect Islamic principles" (10, a 37 years old man, diploma).

Strategies

Sociability and accepting conditions

Sociability and accepting conditions are the most important strategies that residents adopt to deal with improper circumstances in Mehr Housing. The sociability of an individual in a society aims to persuade them to accept the traditions, customs, beliefs, and behaviors of the society and follow them to provide the field for social life.

Leaving the town at the first available time, and immigrating to a place that is closer to urban facilities

The residence is realized and the population is attracted where residential conditions are provided, including commercial, educational, cultural, recreational, and sports services. However, the absence of employment and activity focus in the area leads to daily commutation of residents in the path between the town and the metropolis, which imposes economic costs and manpower expenses. In this case, the

population balance is disturbed, and insecurity appears even over the day. Difficult commutation makes residents dissatisfied making them leave the place at the first available time and immigrate to the place that is closer to their job place.

Daily commutation of residents to use urban services

Ongoing escape and replacement among residents eliminate the sense of belonging, so they cannot participate in the creation of urban space and civic life. This case leads to low-quality of urban spaces and their destruction in long term. Therefore, constructed complexes will follow urbanization norms and behaviors and face the subsequent economic, social, cultural, and political consequences.

Cooperation between residents to provide security

Residents chose cooperation between them to provide security as another strategy when facing improper security conditions in Mehr Housing. Cooperation and collaboration between residents are essential in modern societies to achieve urban sustainability. Residents of each town have more information about their residence place and know the problems so can suggest effective solutions to overcome the problems. Therefore, the most successful plans begin on the neighborhood scale with a bottom-top process in which people present their suggestions and participate in the process.

Consequences

Finally, **institutionalized poverty, social-economic implications, economic expenses for residents, and preventing social insecurity** are four implications that studied participants faced when dealing with the mentioned factors and conditions. These implications occur when participants adopt the following strategies: sociability and accepting conditions, leaving the town at the first available time, and immigrating to a place that is closer to urban facilities, daily commutation of residents to use urban services, and cooperation between residents to provide security. If residents accept the current conditions, poverty will be worsened and institutionalized in society. If they leave the town at the first available time and immigrate to a place that is closer to urban facilities, they will bear social and economic consequences. Daily commutation of residents to use urban services makes them spend more cost. If residents cooperate to provide security, they will prevent social insecurity in the town.

Discussion and Conclusion

The large Mehr Housing Project was designed by the ninth government to construct housing for low-income groups who do not have a house. The ninth government of Iran pursued the executive and operational process of this project through many efforts of governors. This project which had extensive dimensions and considerable effect on the micro and macro levels of the economy could be considered the largest construction and massification of housing among all development plans before and after the Revolution. Hence, it is necessary to evaluate and find weaknesses in this project. This project was implemented despite its numerous shortcomings, such as weak support studies, inattention to housing comprehensive plan studies, lack of attention to national and global experiences, not observing climate and socioeconomic considerations of house, direct interference of government in the economy, sudden interference in the housing market and rising demand, and implementing mid- and short-term plan for a long-term problem. This project was implemented in 2007 for six years and left many negative effects. Hence, this study designed some questions. This study evaluated and examined the Mehr Housing Project based on the most important qualitative and quantitative indicators in addition to economic and physical-spatial criteria using a descriptive-analytical approach. This project brought numerous positive economic effects and benefits, including empowering low-income groups to buy a house, mobilizing housing-related industries and activities, creating jobs and boosting the domestic economy, producing and supplying housing mass and increasing land-use productivity, improving industrialization and house massification, removing land price from housing price, and reducing the price of land and housing for a short time. However, many reasons led to the reverse effects of this project: haste in implementation and lack of supportive economic studies, inattention to opinions of experts, critics, and macro-level planners for providing a house for first to third income deciles, liquidity control, and management, prevent inflation effects of government interference in the housing sector. Although the project was successful in the short term, it leads to many long-run

economic problems. People who live in these complexes experience many mental issues due to over-construction and overcrowded aspects in some residential complexes in Mehr Housing, lack of ventilation in buildings, and lack of sunlight inside the houses, especially on lower floors. The deprivation caused my dominance of building over each other's, and the sense of compression and confinement make these mental issues worsen. The most important index of traditional Iranian-Islamic houses includes deprivation, privacy, a sense of security, and mental comfort, which was ignored in the construction of Mehr Housing. This weakness leads to many social-cultural issues causing social conflicts and stresses decreasing the quality of cultural quality and adaptability of the environment. One of the shortcomings of the Mehr Housing project is ignoring the indigenous and cultural identity of individuals and their tendencies and viewpoints in the design and construction of residential spaces. The problem that has made the atmosphere of Mehr residential complexes soulless and far from the inner moralities of residents is houses where residents can open the window and see the adjacent or opposite block. This issue eliminates the sense of mental security and the right to family privacy. It is hoped that planners and governors be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of Mehr Housing and try to overcome the issues of this project and make it more livable and vivid.

Recommendations

- 1) It can be stated that only economic and quantitative aspects of housing have been considered in the policy of Mehr Housing, which has led to lower efficiency and attraction of this project for residents. Regarding the considerable national costs of Mehr Housing and the general effects of this policy on other economic sectors, political structures, and social conditions of Iran, it is suggested to adopt some measures and pay attention to all dimensions and aspects of housing including housing sustainability indicators to optimize investment and achieve efficient exploitation of the project. 2) It is predicted that if this case is ignored then the general quality of Mehr housing is reduced and its residents that need houses may demand sustainable housing. Furthermore, results indicated a low sustainability rate of access, quality, cultural-cultural and ecological dimensions, social security, and safety. Hence, these indicators must be improved to boost the effectiveness of this policy and solve the mentioned problems. 3) Regarding the social, economic, and cultural status of the urban population, Mehr Housing implementation can be evaluated in terms of different aspects. It seems that this project can provide positive outcomes if sufficient scientific studies on location, environmental effects, and suitable population targets. However, studies on this project in New Hashtgerd Phase and Lahijan City, Gilan Province indicate that Mehr housing has not been a successful case to provide the house for low-income groups in the Tehran metropolis and Gilan, the rise of access index, improving physical indicators, promote economic equality, increase employment, reduce housing price, and increase satisfaction in target society.

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