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Original Research Article

Tehran's Housing and the Gaze of State: Definition of Tehran's Housing in *Tarh-e Samandehi-ye Tehran**

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Abstract

Problem statement: The vast body of academic research on State-housing sector relationship has shown various ways by which the State manipulates and controls the housing sector in Tehran. But the image of this phenomenon in the eyes of the state has remained rather vague or even invisible.

Research objective: This study investigates the definition of “Tehran’s housing” by the state – as the sole owner of the right of law-making for material space in its territory – in texts in which the state has defined this phenomenon.

Research method: As the state – the sole owner of the right of law-making for material space in its territory – tries to define and control Tehran’s housing by various degrees of policy and law-making form programs and policies to concrete detailed laws, it produces a rather vast spectrum of texts which both explicitly and implicitly define “Tehran’s housing”. Among these texts, master plans have the significant quality of being both Comprehensive and concrete in defining Tehran’s housing. This article tries to reveal the State-produced image of Tehran’s housing by analyzing discursive articulation of *Tarh-e Samandehi-ye Tehran* (TST) as Tehran’s first post-revolutionary master plan.

Conclusion: Analyzing discursive articulation of *Tarh-e Samandehi-ye Tehran* uncovers an image in which a complex assemblage of people, population, housing, Tehran, and the ideal image of the state in urban scale being produced simultaneously under the gaze of the contemporaneous state, irreducible neither to the economic nor the formal aspects of housing.

Keywords: *Tehran, Housing, State, Comprehensive plan, Empiricism.*

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Introduction and problem statement

Who produces the material space of a given city? Obviously, there is no single answer to this question. In each and every corner of a city, one can recognize a vast and complex spectrum of forces, agents, processes, and dynamics that are producing and affecting material space in any given situation and/or moment. But among these, one agent is clearly among the most influential: State as the sole owner of right to lawmaking can delimit the scope of legitimate actions its territory by both passing and implementing laws, programs, and other forms of legal commands and actions. These legal commands by nature bear the state's definition of each and every phenomenon subjected to legal limits and definitions. Based on this quality, one can find and illuminate the conceptual lines defining and constituting the gaze of the state toward its subjects beneath the "rational" articulation of their documents.

Tehran both as the capital city of Iran and a megacity with high degrees of capital accumulation and concentration of various social, political, and cultural activities, has been subjected to different legal commands, laws, and programs in recent times. Likewise, Tehran's housing sector and "Tehran's housing" in general has the same quality, as it is the biggest and most important of all housing sectors in Iran. These distinctive characteristics raise an important question, which is "what is the inner logic of legal actions and regulations that are designed and implemented to delimit and control Tehran's housing?" The aforementioned literal qualities of legal documents can help us to answer this question by opening a window to the uncharted territory of the gaze of state and the definition of "Tehran's housing" in the current state's mentality.¹

Among these legal documents, Tehran's Comprehensive plans have three distinctive characteristics that render them as the most informative texts about the gaze of the state towards Tehran's housing; first, these documents recognize "housing" as a distinct yet inseparable

part of "Tehran" as a programmable whole and differentiate it from housing in other cities. Second Tehran's Comprehensive plans as upstream legal urban documents, provide a basis for rather more particular laws and legal documents which control and conduct housing in detail. Last but not least, these documents are both comprehensive and detailed text that provides us with a rich collection of evidence that each bears little bits of what we have called "the inner logic" and the "definitive lines" of the gaze of the state towards "housing in Tehran". Hence, this article tries to map this rather uncharted territory through analyzing "*Tarh-e Samandehi-ye Tehran*" – Tehran's first post-revolutionary Comprehensive plan – as a historical text/document.

Literature review

Although one can find a vast body of academic research about the relationship between the state and housing, only those can be of our specific "literature" which is focused on illustrating the image/definition of housing in the eyes of the state. This rather small group is itself made up of three major genres which are somehow deeply connected: most of them reduce this relationship to its mere economic aspects, using terms like "commodity", "policymaking" and "capital" to call different elements of it. Second genre reduces housing to mere consequence of policies, renders it as a secondary subject for the gaze of the state and in so far as doing so, reduces its history to the history of state-made policies. But a more detailed and colorful look makes a rather rare body of works visible that while reducing Housing to an economic phenomenon, not only are focused on legal documents but also try to study the historical aspect of housing and Tehran's housing with regard to the state's influences on it.

"A study of changing house welfare policies in Iran (1979-2013)" (Hezarjarebi & Emami Ghafari, 2019) analyses transformations in economic welfare policies of post-revolutionary states and examines their subsequent effects on accessibility and affordability of housing in Iran. In a similar vein, "Government and housing policy making in Iran

after the Islamic Revolution” (Baradaran, Ghaffari & Rabiee, Zahedi Mazandarani, 2019) investigates the relationship between the state and housing sector by parallel-surveying of housing policies and historical conditions of post-revolutionary Iran. By dividing this period into five distinct eras congruous to five consecutive post-revolutionary governments, this article clearly depicts how such policies are produced as consequences of the ever-changing political agendas of governments while maintaining some degree of consistency which stems from the political stability of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a political regime. As the premise of geography is to recognize the individuality of its subjects, geographers have provided a more detailed and precise analysis of “Tehran’s housing” not as “housing in Tehran” – a manifestation of housing as a general process – but as a distinct individual phenomenon. Sajjadian (2002) in his study, as a geographical one, renders “Tehran’s housing” as a part of Tehran, a much bigger programmable whole which is itself subjected to various policymaking processes, that are at large inefficient and have led to current problematic and critical condition of this city.

Despite all differences, these historical studies generally reduce housing to a mere product of housing policies in particular and economic policies in general, which connects the different scales of state-housing relationship and simultaneously leaves us with one important unanswered question: how the state defines “Tehran’s housing” which leads to such policies and programs?

Methodology: empiricism, articulation and historical analysis

• Empiricist ontology

Based on the literature review, we can count four distinct yet connected types of reduction that represent the generic form of studying the relationship between housing and the state in post-revolutionary Tehran: Reducing this relationship to a straight top-down process of cause & effect, influence, reducing “Tehran’s housing” to housing

as a general process in Iran, reducing housing to its economic aspects and at last, rendering the history of state-housing relationship to the history of policies. These reductions can be surpassed by different tactics and tools. Gilles Deleuze’s definition of Empiricist ontology provides us with a multi-functional ontological toolbox that can swiftly overcome those reductions, hence lead us to a truly immanent and plausible encounter with the contents of state-housing relationship in post-revolutionary Tehran.

This formulation is made up of two main principles: “The abstract does not explain, but must itself be explained; and the aim is not to rediscover the eternal or the universal, but to find the conditions under which something new is produced (creativity)” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, vii). In his view, to explain a phenomenon is to abandon the old ready-made ones and to create new concepts which correspond to the “state of things”:

“Empiricism starts with a completely different evaluation: Analyzing the states of things, in such a way that non-preexistent concepts can be extracted from them. States of things are neither unities nor totalities, but multiplicities...The essential thing, from the point of view of empiricism, is the noun multiplicity, which designates a set of lines or dimensions which are irreducible to one another. Every ‘thing’ is made up in this way” (ibid.).

In other words, to understand the true nature of things one must try to see them as “multiplicities”, that resist any reductionist definition and are always connected and co-existent to/with their historical context and the complex network of forces that creates them. The subsequent consequence of such an immanent ontology for our study is that “Tehran’s housing” and its definition by the state can and must be analyzed by capturing not only “Tehran’s housing” image but also the whole scenery that has caught the gaze of the state, leading to different lawmaking practices and processes aimed to control “Tehran’s housing”. But to see such a scene from the state’s point of view, we have a rather broken

picture that can be restored to its finest condition: as said before, *Tarh-e Samandehi-ye Tehran* (Atek Consultants, 1991) is among this type of documents: On the one hand, it provides us with a comprehensive text, full of statements produced by the state about Tehran's housing. On the other, this legal document is among the small set of regulations and programs that recognize "Tehran's housing" as an integrated part of "Tehran", depicting the qualities and characteristics of piercing gaze of the state to this city as a programmable whole. These two, make *Tarh-e Samandehi-ye Tehran* (TST), much alike other comprehensive plans, a document which can describe housing as being produced and seen by the state.

As we attempt to analyze a historical document another question emerges: to read and needless to say, to analyze a text is to interpret the text (Afshar & Mohammad-Moradi, 2015). So how one should interpret a historical document like *Tarh-e Samandehi-ye Tehran*, so that she can overcome her own mindset and see what the state sees?

• **Interpretation: making the discursive articulation visible**

Like any other historical document, TST is a text that is produced in a specific historical moment, carrying various traces of forces and events that had conquered in that era, including the gaze of its contemporaneous state towards Tehran's housing. As said before, reading such texts to find a specific force is like looking at a broken image whose pieces are shattered all around the surface of the document. Besides, each historical document is produced in a field of historical forces, which cannot be measured or even grasped due to their variety and complexities. Despite these facts, the inner structure and texture of historical entities are always imbued with the traces of aforementioned forces (Foucault, 2010, 152). In other words, while the productive force field of a given historical moment is always situated outside the subject of our observation, it can be understood and mapped by studying the curvature of the subject itself (Mashayekhi, 2017, 31). Thus, one can find

the forces which produce Tehran's housing as a multiplicity, in TST's text.

"Discursive articulation" among the concepts that can help us accomplish this act of restoration and mapping: Discursive articulation can be defined as the connections between each concept to other concepts and needless to say to the whole network of concepts in a given text, which mutual define each other in a rather closed definitive space. Through the lens of articulation theory:

"The [...] parts [of a given text] are connected to each other, but through a specific linkage, that can be broken. An articulation is thus the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute, and essential for all time. You have to ask, under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made? So the so-called "unity" of discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be re-articulated in different ways because they have no necessary "belongingness". The "unity" which matters is a linkage between that articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected" (Grossberg, 1986, 53).

Based on this definition, TST can be portrayed as a complex network of concepts, articulated to be gathered under the discursive hegemony of the state. In this vein, we can discover the true definition of "Tehran's housing" as it appears in the State's mentality, a "multiplicity" which is itself defined by multiple concepts surrounding it in the textual space of TST. To trace discursive articulation of "Tehran's housing", it is necessary to describe the historical moment which has given birth to such a text:

• ***Tarh-e Samandehi-ye Tehran* (TST): A brief history**

For almost ten years since the dawn of the revolution in 1978, Tehran's ongoing spatial changes were not administered or conducted via any kind of comprehensive plan whatsoever. Remnants of legal decisions and the first comprehensive plan, made in

the previous regime like the infamous “60% built area in the northern part of the land”, politically charged laws which passed in the first 2 or 3 years of the new state like “*Zamin-e Shahrī*” law (Kamrava, 2018) and a variety of ad-hoc laws and regulations like “2 floors+ pilot [*Do-tabagheh roo-ye pilot*]” (Moeini & Zarrin, 2007, 3), had made the legal boundaries of Tehran’s housing into a heterogeneous assemblage which could not address Tehran as a programmable whole.

In a way, it was the state which could not find any meaningful connection between Tehran’s housing and Tehran. It led to unprogrammed development of Tehran, making Tehran’s housing the leading factor in defining Tehran’s shape, form and size.

However, despite this haphazard face, serious attempts had already been made to re-program this city and its housing as a unified whole. In 1981, *Daftar-e Motaleat va Barnamehrizi-ye Shahri-ye Tehran* (Office of Studies and Planning of Tehran) set in the preparation of Tehran’s first strategic plan – named “Tehran 80” – with regard to overcome the problems that the first comprehensive plan – developed and passed in the Pahlavi era – could not solve or even address (Farivar Sadri, 2014, 155).

It was in 1984 that *Showra-ye Nezarat bar Gostaresh-e Shahr-e Tehran* (Council and Supervisory committee of Tehran) and the prime minister himself² ordered *Vezerat-e Maskan va Shahrsazi* (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development) to prepare a plan for organizing Tehran’s spatial development, a city that has gone through a major political revolution (Kamrava, 2018, 86).

As mentioned in TST’s preface, “special condition Tehran and its problems” rendered Tehran’s spatial development an emergent problem, hence led *Moavenat-e Memari va Shahrsazi-ye Vezerat-e Maskan va Shahrsazi* (Department of architecture and urbanism of the aforementioned ministry) to initiate the process in 1987 by choosing Atek Consultants to prepare this plan. Four years later, in 1991, TST was published under the title of “Tehran’s comprehensive plan” (Atek Consultants, 1991, 3)

to become the first of its kind in post-revolutionary Tehran.³ After a decade of separation, Tehran and its housing were going to become unified again. In other words, “Tehran’s housing” had been recognized as an integrated part of Tehran in a comprehensive spatial plan for this city. This re-joining indicates the importance of Tehran in defining “Tehran’s housing” in TST, obliges us to first discover the definition of Tehran to find out the true definition of “Tehran’s housing” in the gaze of the state.

• Tehran’s image in TST

As clear as possible, The name of the plan itself i.e. “Tehran’s organizing plan” indicates a simple yet of paramount importance constitutive element of TST, that is a vigorous attempt to solve Tehran’s complex set of problems including its housing under a single unified spatial plan.

TST begins with a bold portrayal of Tehran’s main crisis that is “ungovernable growth of Tehran and its population” which has surpassed the land regulations passed in the first decade of Islamic republic regime, leading Tehran to grow based on the monetary value of land and thus become what they describe as a crisis. TST argues about the utmost importance of crisis and the urgent need to solve it by a brief but powerful description about Tehran and its crisis as distinct from other cities and their crises in Iran and even in Middle East:

“Through the lens of spatial planning approach [*negaresh-e-amayeshi*], Tehran as a regional metropolis, both affected by and affecting national and regional [conditions] and is closely connected to national agendas. Thus conducting through planning de-centralization and balanced distribution of economic infrastructures has a key role in shaping its socio-economic and spatial aspects” (*ibid.*, 6).

Subsequently, TST refers to two main principles of its predecessor – i.e. the first comprehensive plan for Tehran which is called Gruen-Farmanfarmaiyan plan – that is linear [spatial] growth and controlling population growth to introduce two principal policies that must be implemented to overcome Tehran’s main crises:

“The first principle is to conduct spatial programs of Tehran in line with the preferred pattern of [TST] plan and second, is to implement a series of population growth control programs” (ibid., 7).

The clear juxtaposition of controlling population growth programs as a means to control bodily functions of citizens with spatial development programs and plans, indicate that TST clearly defines Tehran as an entity containing two key elements that are its material space and the material body of its citizens, or as TST call them, “the population” within clear physical “territory (*Mahdoodeh*)”. Based on this definition, TST tries to articulate the vast spectrum of problems of a city like Tehran with two interconnected concepts, “population” and “Density” in Tehran’s “Territory”. TST then talks about Tehran in 1997; a 720 square kilometers metropolis with 6.5 million permanent residents. To solve its problems TST proposes two main programs as it was said before: like *the first comprehensive plan*, it calls for controlling urban population growth and organizing Tehran toward becoming a polycentric metropolis. Despite this continuous reference to *the first comprehensive plan*, TST seeks a much more decentralized pattern: in medium-term, it proposes to use Karaj as Tehran’s twin city, which will provide trans-urban services for it. In long-term, TST seeks to solve problems of transportation and traffic, over population and insufficient urban services in Tehran’s central area, by organizing Tehran around five new city centers instead of its original single-centered pattern, and to build building five new cities out of “Tehran’s territory” as its satellite cities to absorb the ever-growing flow of population. as TST defines, Each satellite city would have a Distinct identity due to its distinguished occupants or its specific land use.

As we see, TST recognizes “territory” (*Mahdoodeh*) and population as main factors of Tehran’s problematic, thus formulating this city around these two concepts. Of course, this conception is not innovative at all, as it first recognized in 1969 in designation of “5 year territory” by the then state. TST,

like its predecessors, articulates these to concepts in a way that the most critical of all of Tehran’s crises, namely the overpopulation & settlement crisis, is directly linked to that Tehran’s territorial boundary a geometric entity. Based on this articulation, TST articulates population control to spatial administration of Tehran, which subsequently adds physical bodies of citizens to the programmable architectonic body of Tehran as a city. This rather bizarre articulation becomes more clear as decentralizing spatial strategies come to be complemented by some solutions for the population growth crisis which are uncannily precise for a general spatial plan (ibid., 8-9): the next section is dedicated to a list of “general policies” (ibid., 9) which includes 10 policies directly focused on population growth besides other spatial policies. First policy which – by its place in the list – is the most important of all, delimits the urban population of Tehran to 7,857,000 which will be reached by subsequent policies mentioned in the list. In the next 10 policies, we are introduced to two national policies aimed at decentralizing official and educational institutions in Tehran, three policies that are about building new cities and relocating storage facilities from Tehran to other cities, and 4 policies which are clearly focused on the population growth control by controlling physical bodies of the citizens. These four policies are:

Policy No. 4- Improving the quality and quantity of healthcare and education in marginal areas to reduce the fertility rate of women in these areas.

Policy No. 5- Building more middle and high school girls in these areas.

Policy No. 8- Pursuing the programs that are planned to return refugees from Tehran

Policy No. 9- Emphasizing population growth control and fertility rate reduction programs.

As we see, a tangible problem like population growth is reduced to the bodies of women living in the economic and geographic margins of Tehran. The aforementioned uncanniness rises to its peak when TST represents them as problematic bodies, different both from men and upper-class women.

Joint to the refugees, these bodies are deprived of any decent human quality. In this vein, we are witnessing the articulation of refugees and lower-class women to the main problems of Tehran in the gaze of the state. This political articulation of bodies can be called “*the unpleasant*” or “*ab-normal Demos*”²⁴ of TST’s Tehran which must be controlled or moved to “organize” the metropolis.

The subsequent sentences describe TST’s spatial solutions for Tehran’s cries which include completion and modification of Tehran’s Highway system – originally introduced in first comprehensive plan in 1969 – and building five new satellite cities around Tehran. Besides, it recognizes flood and earthquake as two main crises, threatening Tehran in near in near future. It is worth mentioning that in 1988, as TST was in its early stages, flood caused a major disaster in Tehran, thus made officials and experts aware of the threatened future of this city.

As we see, TST uses the exact same tone while describing and problematizing Tehran’s architectonic body and citizen’s physical bodies that in effect indicates the mere equality and uniformity of the *abnormal Demos* with other programmable entities of Tehran (*ibid.*, 11-14).

After that, the “general conclusions of TST’s studies and plan” is introduced (*ibid.*, 14) in a list composed of projects, aimed at solving a diverse spectrum of physical-spatial problems of Tehran in different scales from large to small: controlling the construction of buildings and land-use, using a modern garbage collection system, expanding *Behesht-e Zahra* (Tehran’s main cemetery) and even insulation details for windows, are all represented as the “general conclusions”, which in fact conveys the degree to which the state sees Tehran, its problems and at least a group of its citizens as mechanical entities, deprived of any social or cultural complexities that can be manipulated or “organized” by a set of physical projects.

this mere physicality is complemented by how TST addresses other problematic aspects of Tehran. It recognizes “Tehran’s historical identity” just to

reduce it to its physical attributes: “Tehran is a 200 years old capital city without any kind of historical or modern shape/character (*sima*)” (*ibid.*).

Noting that the word *sima* indicates the faciality of the city – conveying its character through formal signs – it becomes clear that from TST’s standpoint, each problem can be solved through a so-called “scientific” approach to the complex dynamic multiplicity of Tehran.

The keyword “identity” itself, defined as the problem of the faciality, articulates two other concepts to each other, namely the government officials and a group of citizens which can be called “the normal Demos” of Tehran: 56th “general conclusion” asserts that giving any region a proper *functional identity* depends on “coordination and connection of officials and residents through their participation in regional, districtual and urban councils”.

These words reveal that the main characteristic of the “proper bodies” or as said before, the “normal Demos”, is their coordination and connection with officials through political participation in formal and officially legitimate institutes. These proper & normal bodies, against the “unpleasant bodies” of “abnormal Demos”, can be tolerated and even assimilated to solve Tehran’s identity problem.

Based on these articulations, we can now understand the meaning and definition of Tehran as if we are standing right in the state’s standpoint while it is subjecting Tehran’s entities to its legislative & regulative gaze. This Tehran, according to TST is:

Tehran is a 200 years old capital city without any kind of historical or modern shape/character, centralized, regionally influential that is composed of two main components i.e population and physical entities or spaces, or in other words, an assemblage of programmable human and architectonic bodies. Its cardinal problem is population growth and spatial territory available for this population to live in, which can be addressed by a unified concept that is population density. Tehran – including its two main components – is a physical programmable whole that can be manipulated by the state, as each entity

of this city, from the living bodies to the dead brick of its walls can be programmed, organized, and transformed.

• Tehran's housing in *Tarh-e Samandehi-ye Tehran*

As mentioned before, TST defines Tehran's housing as an integral part of a Tehran, a programmable whole consist of organizable human and architectonic bodies. The first defining command line of Tehran's housing can be found in TST's preface, where the distribution of the population over the land is articulated to the "physical territory" of Tehran and hence to its legal boundaries in a way that the surplus population is defined to be settled in the new satellite cities out of these boundaries. In 48th "general conclusion" we face another command line, which is well situated in the conceptual constellation of "organizable/programmable human-architectonic bodies": "[improving] the construction of residential units through obligations aimed at improvement of technology, high-rise, and mass construction, along with the reduction of building area per capita in accordance with Tehrani middle-class households' affordance" (*ibid.*, 18).

TST defines Tehrani middle-class households as the target group of housing in Tehran and by doing so, complements the definition of "normal Demos" or "pleasant bodies by adding two more modalities: to be born in Tehran and to be a part of the middle class.

This "general conclusion" also adds a new category to our "demos" list: high-rise and mass construction indicate the existence of the third "Demos" that can be called "the perfect bodies" of "exceptional Demos".these are the people that have the material and economic capacity to build as many houses as needed for settling the middle-class Tehrani households, and against the unpleasant bodies, are invited to be an integrated part of Tehran. Moreover, it defines the "normal/pleasant housing" as high-tech, mass-produced residential units that are in contrast with the residences of the unpleasant bodies in the marginal regions of Tehran:

Next, in the 51th general conclusion (*ibid.*, 19), TST call for codification of "regulations and laws to prevent marginal settlement and solve the slum-settling by providing minimum sanitary infrastructures in such areas and using [direct physical] force (*sheddad-e amal*) to prevent their development, along with a plan towards the absolute unconditional solution of this problem."

This is now clear how the unpleasant bodies and their houses are just material bodies that can be manipulated by direct use of bare physical force. These bodies are the "unpleasant/problematic" beings of TST's universe and hence Tehran, that are subjected to municipality's various forms of exercising power besides mere physical force: decreasing the quality of health care as one of these ways, tries to force these bodies to migrate from Tehran, which – in TST's universe – will solve Tehran's slum-dwelling problem. Binding unpleasant bodies to their houses, indicates that "unpleasant settlements" as the "ab-normal housing" of tehran can be wiped out by moving their owners or dwellers.

With regard to our focus on discursive articulations of "Tehran's housing", we can jump to the TST's 5th chapter, which is titled "condition of density in urban areas and districts" (*ibid.*, 83). This chapter begins with defining the concept of "population density per square meter" and after highlighting the uneven distribution of population in legal territory of Tehran, calls for its improvement as its main goal. TST argues that land-population relationship can not be managed and conducted by political ideals corresponding with the revolutionary ideals of islamic republic in its first decade as a state. TST argues that fixing the average density to equalize the distribution of land among all citizens is not only impossible, but also leads to the unprogrammed and out-of control pattern of Tehran's development and so to a city without any significant formal identity. This problem is amplified by Tehran's centralized structure, leading to unequal access to urban land and facilities among citizens (*ibid.*, 86-7). In this

formulation, Tehran's identity is articulated to the formal aspects urban growth and spatial justice.

TST argues that absolute equal access to urban infrastructure and land "all social classes" leads to the proliferation of urban sprawl, thus makes providing urban services impossible and also deforms Tehran's structure into something "without any significant identity" (*ibid.*, 87). As a solution, TST suggests: "Reducing population density in high-density regions of Tehran by converting residential units in response to the shortcoming of urban services these regions, and to increase the construction of housing units in low-density neighborhoods... This strategy in effect not only decreases the density of high-density neighborhoods and increases it in low-density ones, but also leads to a more uniform distribution of density in Tehran. A more detailed strategy will be adopted in the next stages of the study" (*ibid.*, 89).

It indicates that population and building "density" are both linked to crises of service distribution and identity in Tehran, thus the key elements of solving Tehran's main problems. In sum, density – i.e. material space of Tehran in terms of population-land relationship" – as the common basis of these two elements is what TST tries to manipulate in order to solve Tehran's main problems. Based on this definition and conclusion, TST describes its solution in these words:

"To increase building density to the point in which by changing 25 percent of [density in] residential areas to high-rise developments, sufficient building area for settling all of the citizens is provided. Moreover, changing the land-use of 4851 hectares of military-owned lands must be done" (*ibid.*, 90-91).

In simple terms, TST proposes "high-rise construction", thus increasing the building density up to 25 percent, and changing land-use of military-owned lands as two main solutions to Tehran's housing and settlement problem. To mention military lands – just 3 years after a long war – indicates the preferred power of Tehran's municipality under the gaze of the state. But increasing building density

is what constitutes the basis for situating Tehran's housing at the heart of TST's plan. TST describes "high-rise construction along with the consolidation of land and increasing building density" as its main strategy to solve Tehran's problems (*ibid.*, 91) and reduces both Tehran's housing and its problems to "construction". This becomes more problematic when a long list of complex mathematical formulae enters the scene, calculating the efficient height of the residential building as "four-story" just to make it more profitable for the constructors to build more residential buildings.

Besides, TST suggests that financial incentives must be considered for investors, in order to compensate the costs of elevators and mechanical installations. In the following lines, TST calls for land consolidation, by which the share of land price in end-market price is reduced. TST argues that this policy will prevent the end-market price from rising above the economic capacity of settlers, while guaranteeing a safe profit margin for the investors. Hence, TST suggests to give more "density related incentives" to the investors and builders whom are building in consolidated lands, so that building more houses does not decrease the average density of a given area.

TST clearly states that the "investors" are the most important part of its solution for Tehran, removing any right to housing from other groups. These are exactly the aforementioned "exceptional Demos", that are invited by the municipality/state to be a part of Tehran's ongoing development. In other words, in TST's universe, private investors are whom that can solve Tehran's settlement crisis by building more and more houses, thus are worthy of municipality's incentives. They will build 4-5 storey hightech and mass produced residential buildings that is the "Normal housing" of Tehran in this discursive universe. Municipality is consequently a janus-faced institution, that coarsely controls the unpleasant bodies of slum-dwellers with its authoritarian face while encourages the private investors like a silver-tongued businessman. TST's vision about its

favorable municipality becomes more vivid as it calculates the normal density of Tehran's districts, while assuming that municipality can manage TST's proposed organization of density in Tehran and control its profit-based relationship to the city and its dwellers, overlooking the corrupt nature of this relationship. Moreover, TST portrays Tehran as a manageable economic entity, which is in contrast to its depiction in TST's preface as a "as a regional metropolis, both affected by and affecting national and regional [conditions] and is closely connected to national agendas" (*ibid.*, 6).

In conclusion, TST introduces Tehran's housing problem as the core problem of Tehran, that can be solved by an economic co-operation between the private investors and the state. In this solution, the municipality is depicted as an economic institution and profit-organization, which joins the exceptional demos – i.e. investors – in an absolutely economic venture called "organizing Tehran". TST also situates Tehran's housing in a rather complex network of articulations, which can be described as a "picture", formed as the administrative gaze of the state focuses on Tehran. This picture is made up of five main elements, which are "Tehran", "population", "Demos", "housing" and "favorable municipality"; an integrated image in which all of its elements mutually define each other. They – due to their description in TST – can be defined as:

- Tehran

Tehran is a 200 years old face-less capital city, a regionally influential center, threatened by flood and earthquake, that is an assemblage of programmable human and architectonic bodies. Its cardinal problem is population growth and spatial territory available for this population to live in, which can be addressed by a unified concept that is population density. Organizing and engineering this city is administered by a powerful and economically profitable municipality, joining with exceptional demos to develop this city into its destined future. Tehran's municipality also directly controls bodies of abnormal Demos [through actions and regulations

such as birth control programs], trains them [by enhancing highschool's educational qualities] and last but not least, moves them by building new cities to absorb the surplus population of Tehran. it leads to decentralizing Tehran while reinforcing municipality's authority and concentrating more capital in Tehran.

- Population

This term signifies the statistical subjection of human bodies in Tehran and is articulated to their physical needs i.e. settlement, healthcare and biological needs. Moreover, it is a definitive element of Tehran's set of problems, including housing, transportation, migration and material consumption. Being mathematical abstraction by nature, it comes to be a powerful political force when provides the basis of spatial production and control, producing Tehran's dwellers as both individuals and distinct groups of manageable bodies. It also articulates to the organizing gaze and power of the state, making these bodies, countable units of modification and manipulation. The less each body becomes pleasant or normal, the more it will be subjected to the term "population".

- Demos (people)

This term signifies any implicit or explicit formulation of human bodies into socio-political bodies. The state creates these categories by articulating human bodies to different tasks, problems, and concepts, determine their fate and exercising different forms of power on them. There are three major Demoses in TST's universe, which consist of owners, tenants, builders, officials, slum-dwellers and citizens in distinct sets of roles:

- Unpleasant bodies (abnormal Demos)

This demos consists of slum dwellers, low-income households, and refugees. Their unpleasant bodies are by nature problematic, making Tehran a face-less crowded city, which must be controlled by any means possible. Direct use of force, to culturalization and migration are three main forms of exercising power over these Demos, hence solving an important part of Tehran's problems.

- Pleasant bodies (normal Demos)

This category is occupied by middle-class *Tehrani* households which are the main consumers of residential units and can help the state to improve Tehran's identity by cooperating with officials.

- Exceptional bodies (trans-normal Demos)

Private-sector investors are of this type. This demos is the municipality's associate in the construction of Tehran, building high-rise residential units for the normal Demos while gaining profit by selling these units to them.

It is worth mentioning that the materiality of a given human body decreases from the unpleasant abnormal ones to the exceptional valuable, while its economic and social value – in contrast to its materiality – increases in a great manner

- **Favorable municipality**

TST's regulations as executive orders, illustrate specific image of Tehran's municipality; an institution which attempts to mediate the execution of these spatial orders. The state's favorable municipality can be seen in TST as an institution with three major characteristics:

- It is a sovereign powerful agency that is omnipotent while organizing Tehran's human and architectonic bodies;

- It associates and cooperates with exceptional bodies, manages the housing problems of pleasant bodies and severely controls the unpleasant ones.

- It facilitates and conducts the profit-making activities of the exceptional bodies.

Besides, it can control and delimit these profit-making processes with regard to expert opinions.

- **Housing**

It is the combination of various definitions and characteristics of Tehran's housing, which itself can be defined as an element in connection with four other constitutive elements of TST's universe:

- It is a material, economic and technical problem;

- It is built by private investors;

- It is built as a series of high-rise and high-tech buildings;

- It is a settlement for the pleasant bodies;

- It is countered by unpleasant settlements i.e. the

slums that must be cleaned and controlled by the municipality;

- It is bound to Tehran's identity and can improve it if the aforementioned command lines come true.

Conclusion

This study, Demonstrated the possibility of discovering the meaning of Housing under and through the gaze of the State through analyzing a specific legal document, which is imbued with traces of a specific relationship between Islamic Republic of Iran – as a state – in a specific historical moment: Studying the discursive articulation of *Tarh-e Samandehi-ye Tehran* (TST), portrays Tehran's Housing as a multiplicity, which is produced through the gaze of the state, piercing "Tehran" as a programmable whole. Hence, this phenomenon can be truly defined by revealing the characteristics of the aforementioned gaze in such a legal document as TST; a condensed, politically articulated document in which a complex "multiplicity" of elements, concepts, and definitions, are organized into "Tehran" – an integrated programmable whole – therefore express the organizing characteristics of the then state's gaze towards Tehran and its dwellers.

In this vein, Tehran's housing in TST's universe is, far from being a mere economic or formal entity, an integrated element of a bigger image which is both defining and defined by at least four other elements, namely Tehran, Population, Demos and Favorable municipality. These elements are coordinated by a single gaze, thus are irreducible to any economic, cultural or social aspect beyond the network of the politically charged articulations of the state's gaze.

Endnote

1. I.e. Islamic Republic of Iran

2. Karbaschi argues: "Mr. Mousavi [the then prime minister] whom was an architect & expert, had ordered the Ministry of housing to assess the Comprehensive plan, revising it under the title ' *Tarh-e Samandehi* [organizing plan]" (Karbaschi, 2017).

3. There is no legal form titled as "organizing plan" in Iran's legislation, laws and regulations. Hence, in 1933-1-25, Supreme Council of Architecture and Urban Planning ordered the deletion of "*Samandehi* [organizing/organization]" from the title of the program.

4. Borrowed from Greek *demos*, signifies the "populace" or the common people of an ancient Greek state.

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