Urbanism under dictatorship
The emergence of government-imposed spatial segregation in Tehran

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Abstract
Purpose – By analyzing urbanism products, development plans and the process of modernization in Iran, the purpose of this paper is to critically trace the effect of dictatorial control on urbanism and the emergence of government-imposed urban segregation.
Design/methodology/approach – The main body of this work is concentrated on studying the history of urbanism in Iran, of which collecting data and descriptions played a crucial role. To prevent the limitations associated with singular methods, the methodology of this research is based on methodological triangulation (Denzin, 2017). With the triangulation scheme, the data are gathered by combining different qualitative and quantitative methods such as library, archival and media research, online resources, non-participatory observation and photography. For the empirical part, the city of Tehran is selected as the case study. Moreover, individual non-structured interviews with the locals were conducted to gain more insights regarding the housing projects.
Findings – The results reveal that despite the intense propaganda, the regime policies barely mentioned the urban poor. With the rise of new principles of architecture and urban planning, the regime tried to promote the image of an updated society; restructuring of the urban space was part of this process. However, the majority of the urban projects disregarded the financial ability of low-income groups and eventually benefited only the middle and upper classes. Also, by imposing a physical distance, low-income neighborhoods were located in the south in order to marginalize the urban poor who were in contrast with the idea of a modern city. Under these circumstances, severe economic inequality was provoked, which to this day has transformed into a complex socio-spatial segregation.
Originality/value – The works of general historical studies are not concentrated on urbanism and urban researchers have mostly focused on urbanism products during different periods, regardless, of the importance of urbanism as a tool in the service of hegemony. In other words, the majority of existing research investigates the evolution of urbanism and architecture in modern Iran, by questioning “what has been built?” and has ignored to trace the beneficiaries of the urban projects and to question “built for whom?”. Moreover, urbanism under the government of Mossadeq (1951–1953) has been largely overlooked, which could be due to his short time as Prime Minister of Iran. Mossadeq’s government was the first democratic government in Iran; hence investigating the policies used in this period has a great importance.

Keywords Urban planning, Tehran, Pahlavi, Power structure, Socio-spatial segregation

Paper type Research paper

Introduction
The process of urbanization under dictatorship and the concept of dictatorial urbanism form the core of this research. The twentieth century is considered a period tied with the exercise of dictatorial control under modernization and industrialization. In the 1970s, urban space became the focus of attention for numerous social theorists such as Lefebvre (1974), Castells (1977) and Harvey (1973) who emphasized the social and political dimensions of urban space. An initial review of the available literature shows how research on the political role of urbanism has recently been expanded, and how the interdisciplinary education in urban social science has been formed (Brenner, 2013, p. 85).

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However, the influence of power structure and the importance of urbanism for dictatorships and post-dictatorial societies have been underestimated by the urban researchers (Bodenschatz, 2015). On the other hand, “works of general historical studies hardly or only episodically deal with urbanism” (Welch Guerra, 2015, p. 221). Although the architectural portrayal of power has been largely discussed in the literature, dictatorial urbanism has been mostly reduced to its physical features, axes, and individual monumental buildings, and its socio-political elements have not been taken into consideration (Bodenschatz, 2018). In order to analyze the dictatorial urbanism, we must reflect and link the political, economic and religious layers leading to the specific produced urbanism of the time. The modernization projects of the dictatorial era should not be limited to “a transformative idyll or a totalitarian dystopia” (Blackmore, 2017, p. 85) and the dictatorial urbanism should be seen as “part of the consensus – generating socio-political projects that linked a ‘great’ past with a ‘great’ future” (Bodenschatz, 2015, p. 23).

In the case of Iran, historians such as Abrahamian (1982, 2008), Matin-Asgari (2012), Milani (2008) and Katouzian (1999) do not concentrate on urbanism, and urban researchers have mostly focused on urbanism products during different periods, regardless, of the importance of urbanism as a tool in the service of hegemony. In other words, the majority of existing research investigates the evolution of urbanism and architecture in modern Iran, by questioning “what has been built?” and has ignored to trace the beneficiaries of the urban projects and to question “built for whom?”

Moreover, urbanism under the government of Mossadegh (1951–1953) has been largely overlooked, which could be due to his short time as Prime Minister of Iran. Mossadegh’s government was the first democratic government in Iran; hence investigating the policies used in this period has a great importance.

By critically analyzing urbanism of the modern era in Iran during the second Pahlavi, this paper aims to bridge the literature gap by unraveling the effect of power structure on urban planning and products while seeking to find a pattern behind the regime’s policies. The main body of this work is concentrated on studying the history of urbanism in Iran, of which collecting data and descriptions played a crucial role. To prevent the limitations associated with singular methods, the methodology of this research is based on methodological triangulation (Denzin, 2017). With the triangulation scheme, the data are gathered by combining different qualitative and quantitative methods such as library, archival and media research, online resources, non-participatory observation, and photography. For the empirical part, the city of Tehran is selected as the case study. Moreover, individual non-structured interviews with the locals were conducted to gain more insights regarding the housing projects.

Planning the future
With the onset of the Pahlavi dynasty, Iran witnessed radical transformations. The top-down modernization, capitalist development and nationalization of the oil industry not only transformed the planning system but also remodeled the cities particularly Tehran, the capital. However, the urbanization process in this period did not have a steady pace with uniform features. Instead, it was developed under different political determinants. For this reason, the author has divided this era into two following phases:

- Phase I includes the years between 1941 and 1953, the early years of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and the government of Mossadegh, in which Iran experienced a semi-democratic political system. This phase ends with the 1953 coup.
- Phase II starts with the overthrow of Mossadeh’s government after the coup of 1953. This phase includes the return of the king and his effort to legitimize and consolidate his authoritarian regime and ends with the Iranian revolution in 1979.
Phase I: 1941–1953
Although Iran declared neutrality in the Second World War, the country was invaded in 1941 by British and Soviet forces. The geographical position of the country and its oil resources were two essential factors for the success of allies. Upon the occupation of northeastern and southern Iran, the Iranian railway was used to transfer the supply to the Soviet Union. This played a vital role in the victory of allies, whereby Winston Churchill called Iran “the Bridge of Victory” (Eim, 1994, p. 43).

The 1941 occupation was not promising for the Pahlavi dynasty. It ended the reign of the first Pahlavi, abdicated Reza Shah the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty and replaced his son, Mohammad Reza, on the throne. By that time, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was only 21 years old and aimed to firm his newly established reign. Unlike his father, in the first 13 years of the second Pahlavi, the power was placed and displaced in different hands. The struggles between the court, the parliament, the cabinet, the foreign embassies and the general public led to political unstableness. “On average, premiers lasted eight months and cabinets less than five months” (Abrahamian, 1982, p. 170). Under these circumstances, the immaturity of the king mixed with the chaos caused by the war and the occupation of the country created a semi-democratic atmosphere.

The new king tried to persuade the nation that he would not follow in his father’s footsteps. Therefore, the political offenses were pardoned, and the press gained relatively more freedom which prepared the ground for the parties’ rise. As a result, the Iranian Marxists formed the Tudeh Party (lit. Party of Masses) in September 1941. The newly created Tudeh Party focused its activities on the Iranian oil workers in the south and invited them to join the party. Living in impoverished slum-like quarters and under the massive discrimination imposed by Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the oil workers had protested for years under the reign of Reza Shah, but their resistance was repressed by the brutal force of the regime (Damluji, 2012). Following the abdication of Reza Shah and the created open space, the workers’ participation in the political activities and the number of demonstrations grew. One of the most critical demonstrations occurred in May 1946. The main demands of this two-stage protest were for better living and working conditions, and the enforcement of labor laws. “Tudeh raised for the first time the demand for nationalization of the British-owned oil industry. On May Day in 1946, the British consul in Khorramshahr noted in alarm that a female speaker had not only demanded a comprehensive labor law with equal pay for equal work, but had also called for the total nationalization of the oil industry, accusing the British company of exploiting the jewel of Iran” (Abrahamian, 2008, p. 117).

Besides Marxism, nationalism was another growing political movement. The occupation of Iran during the war and the acceleration of resource exploitation by foreign investors sparked new resistance within the society against the foreign domination. The situation paved the way for the rise of Mossadegh and his government. In 1949, while the regime banned the Tudeh Party, the Iranian nationalists formed the National Front in coalition with liberal-democrats, socialists, bazaari, seculars and Islamists. After forming a government in 1951, the front with Mohammad Mossadegh as the founder successfully nationalized the oil industry.

The changes in the political structure, along with the nationalization of the oil industry, affected the urban space in different ways. The country was heading toward democratic urbanism, and the oil revenue could provide the necessary capital for the urban projects. At this time, Iran became the fourth country to nationalize its oil production after the Soviet Union, Bolivia and Mexico (Kobrin, 1985) (Figure 1).

Toward democratic urbanism
By the start of the Pahlavi dynasty, the urban population was around 2.47m, while 9.3m people were still living in rural areas. Despite the increase in population, until 1934 there was no sign of rural-urban migration (Ehlers and Floor, 1993). Conversely, the modernization
projects of the first Pahlavi – centered mainly in the cities, especially Tehran – fueled migratory flows from rural areas. This process was intensified by the start of the Second World War when groups of immigrants came to the cities in search of safety. The influx resulted in the occupation of Tehran barren lands by the deprived citizens, and the unprecedented outbreak of poor-quality housing. At this time Tehran experienced its first population boom and as such struggled to meet the housing demands (Table I). The rise of inadequately serviced, dilapidated and overcrowded slums mainly located in southern Tehran drew the attention of architects and planners, especially the newly returned foreign-educated students.

During the first Pahlavi, the government encouraged the students to pursue their education abroad by providing at least 135 scholarships per year, these students would be later employed by the state (National Parliament of Iran, 1928). The returned Europe-trained architects and engineers established the Association of Iranian Architects (AIA) in 1944 (Khorsand, 1946). Many of AIA members expressed their concerns about the plight of the working class and the growing demand for low-cost public housing, especially in Architekt which was the first Iranian architecture magazine affiliated with AIA. In the first issue, which was published in August 1946 and discussed exclusively the housing crisis in Iran, Shibani depicts the poor conditions of southern neighborhoods in Tehran by comparing the houses to the animal nests (Shibani, 1946), Ajdari highlights the rising prices, the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population (person)</th>
<th>Area (Km²)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>44.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>880,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>1,512,082</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>2,719,730</td>
<td>181</td>
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<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>4,530,223</td>
<td>370</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>5,443,721</td>
<td>567.2</td>
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<td>1986</td>
<td>6,022,079</td>
<td>620</td>
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**Sources:** Author based on data from Tehran first comprehensive plan, 1968 and ATEC Consultants (1987)
overcrowded unsanitary housing, and the lack of public facilities and suggests the construction of new self-sufficient housing projects (Kouy-e Jadid) should be able to meet the rising demands by providing affordable housing and adequate public facilities (Ajdari, 1946). Consequently, for the first time, the preliminary studies on public housing launched by Bayat’s cabinet. However, his administration only lasted five months. Later during the premiership of Ahmad Qavam, in 1946, the first program for housing came into force. The plan led to the construction of Chahārsad-Dastgāh (lit. 400 units) in Tehran (Ajdari, 1947).

One year later, parliament passed a new law to create an independent organization for the country’s development programs and for the first-time planning discourse was introduced in Iran (Bostock and Jones, 1989). The first development plan launched in September 1948 and its cost was aimed to be provided from three sources: first- the oil revenue, second- National Bank and third- International Bank (National Parliament of Iran, 1949). The plan was designed for the seven years between 1948 and 1955 and included low-cost housing as a subsection in chapter six: social and urban reforms, in which 1,500m Rials was allocated for low-cost housing. Its first two years were devoted to the establishment of the Plan Organization (Sāzmān-e Barnāme) and the related administrative matters. Finally, in 1949, the Plan Organization was set up to design the country’s development plans and to supervise their executions (Daftary, 1988).

For the financial sustainability of the housing projects, the government had to provide land at low cost. In the 1950s, due to the fast urbanization, the value of land price increased, which led to massive land speculation (Habibi et al., 2010). The spontaneous and unplanned growth of Tehran had left large pieces of barren lands scattered in the city. Mossadegh, who was appointed as prime minister in April 1951, saw the barren lands as a potential capital to cope with the housing shortage. However, an existing loophole in the Civil Code had enabled the individuals to possess the barren lands. Article 140 and 141 of the Civil Code allowed the transfer of barren lands to the individuals once they claimed reclamation by implementing actions “which make waste and unclaimed land profitable by means of operations which are included by custom under the heading of cultivation, such as husbandry, tree planting, building” (Civ. Code § 141, 1928). The law was easily misused by the wealthy upper class, who had enough capital to fulfill the requirements and claim land reclamation. To prevent the misuse of land speculators, Mossadegh presented the Barren Lands Registration as a new bill to the parliament. By his suggestion, all the barren lands around Tehran and other big cities were owned by the government. The parliament passed the bill on August 18, 1952.

In the next step, Mossadegh called for the establishment of an institution responsible for the development of affordable and low-cost housing. In January 1953, he approved Low-Cost Housing and Rent Reduction Bill, which allocated the revenues from property taxes to the construction of low-cost housing in Tehran and other cities. One month later, with the financial support of the Ministry of Agriculture and Iran Insurance Company, Sakhtemani Bank was established. Based on the Act on the establishment of the Sakhtemani Bank, the primary tasks of the bank were the followings: housing for low-income strata, price reduction, registration of barren lands and accommodation of newly arrived immigrants to urban areas. Some of the barren lands became the property of the bank to solve housing problems, either by redistribution of the lands at a lower price to the individuals or by construction of low-cost housing. The bank was also responsible for the production of high quality but affordable building materials, and the provision of plans and technical guidance (National Parliament of Iran – 19/308, 1955). In the next step, the construction of low-cost housing for low-income groups in Naziābad and Nārmak was launched. Located in the northeast of Tehran, the initial plan of Nārmak contained around 4,000 mostly one or two-story housing units while Nāziābad was built on an area of two square kilometers in the south of Tehran and intended to accommodate 10,000 new residents (Beski, 1997).
However, Mossadegh encountered difficulties implementing the urban and national projects due to the economic recession. The oil nationalization movement had eliminated western business operations and terminated Britain’s control over Iran. In response, Britain initiated a worldwide boycott of Iranian oil to isolate the country from the international markets. The imposed sanctions against Iran resulted in substantial economic burden, as the country had become heavily reliant on the oil in the past years.

The government tried to lessen the shadow of imperialism by applying a non-oil economy strategy. To tackle the country’s financial crisis, Mossadegh introduced government bonds in 1951, and his government pursued import substitution policies. Consequently, imports were restricted, and non-oil exports were encouraged. The government also increased indirect taxes as well as the price of government monopoly goods such as opium, tea, sugar and cigarettes. Although the government managed to control the inflation rate, the inescapable effect of the economic crisis caused a decline in welfare. However, Mossadegh’s popularity prevented any public backlash against the government (Katouzian, 1999).

Due to the continued resistance of Mossadegh’s government to the external pressure, the USA and Britain planned his overthrow. In 1953, the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the British Secret Intelligence Service operated a coup d’état in Iran. The coup, codenamed TPAJAX or Operation Ajax according to the CIA documents, dismissed the government of Mossadegh and returned the king to power (Van Hook and Howard, 2017).

Operation Ajax put an end to Mossadegh’s resistance and stopped all the ongoing projects. Some of the plans were later adapted to the king’s ideology and were pursued by the regime. For example, the housing projects were implemented, but the units were mainly allocated to the middle class such as civil servants and army officials (Habibi and De Meulder, 2015). Mossadegh was sentenced to three years in a military prison, and later was sent into exile and his supporters subsequently imprisoned. After the coup, the regime banned labor unions and the May Day rallies. Instead, the new government syndicates established in which the paid informants had the role of a big spy apparatus within the factories (Abrahamian, 1993). The opposition movements were suppressed more severely after the establishment of the government secret intelligence agency (SAVAK) in 1957, which was set up by the help of American and Israeli advisors and controlled the political activities by using brutal force, torture and jail (Matin-Asgari, 2012).

**Phase II – 1953–1979: the metamorphosis of Tehran**

By return of the king and under the Oil Consortium Agreement of 1954, the oil activities resumed and the oil revenues increased. The capital derived from the oil price enabled the king to launch a new series of development projects. “Iran’s model of development [...] was becoming a planned mixed economy, a form of state capitalism, backed by oil revenues and executive monarchy. A major catalyst for this process was the Plan Organization” (Madanipour, 2010, p. 488). By receiving 60 percent of the oil revenue, the Plan Organization resumed the five-year development plans. Next, a series of new reforms known as the White Revolution and the first comprehensive plan for Tehran came into force. These projects were intended to legitimize the regime and prepare the ground for industrialization, capital accumulation and top-down modernization. Simultaneously, they also accelerated rural-urban migration and the pace of urbanization. Under these circumstances, due to the spatial imbalance of development, Tehran faced another population boom (Figure 2 and Plate 1).

Until 1932 the development of Tehran was concentric around the city center as the residents considered the ease of access to the center of the city and Bazaar. However, the demolition of walls of Tehran and a large part of the citadel along with new urban policies such as the Street Widening and Constructing Law, 1933 – amended in 1941 – during the first and the second Pahlavi, soon changed this situation. In the 1960s, the use of private
cars increased among the upper class. While the absence of an efficient public transport system had limited the commute of low-income strata, the mobility comfort provided by the use of private cars allowed the upper class and upper-middle class to move to the low-density areas in the northern part of the city and far from the polluted city center (Bahrambeygui, 1972). As a result, more public facilities had to be built in the new areas,
which in return absorbed more wealthy families who were eager to escape the southern part. On the other hand, the newly immigrated working class resided in the slums near the industrial areas in the south. This process led to the outward and spontaneous growth of Tehran toward the north and the south.

Following the resumption of oil exports, the new development plans were prepared. The second development plan (1956–1961) contained the Karaj Dam project in order to provide the necessary power and energy for the further development of the modern Tehran and meet the “expectations for mass consumer goods and higher living standards” (Mashayekhi, 2016, p. 112). In the third development plan (1963–1967) a separate section for housing was considered, resulting in the establishment of housing organization (Hosein Zadeh Dalir, 1996). After that, the construction of affordable housing for low-income groups and settling slum dwellers were put on the agenda. In 1966 and upon the approval of Provision 100 of the municipality law “the demolition of unlawful constructions within the city as well as in outside buffer zones” started (Vahdat Zad, 2013, p. 57). These activities were followed in the fourth development plan in which 11,500m Rials budget for housing was considered (Gruen and Farmanfarmaian, 1968) (Plate 2 and Figure 3).

One of the most important low-cost housing projects implemented in the 1960s was Kouy-e Nohom-e Aban. Housing organization was in charge of the project, and the oil revenues provided the necessary capital. The neighborhood was located in the southernmost part of Tehran, on an area of 450,000 square meters, close to the industrial zone, and isolated from the whole city. The land was purchased by Housing organization in early 1965, and by 1967, around 3,450 residential units were built in this area (Mashhoudi, 2009) (Figures 4 and 5).

However, the low-cost housing projects soon were replaced with the luxury residential and mixed-use constructions. During the 1970s, the middle class became the recipient group of the main housing projects. Consequently, the target group of the first National Housing Development Plan, which was introduced to the Plan Organization by Doxiadis Associates in 1971, “changed from the lower strata of the population to the middle-class civil servants and skilled workers” (Moafi, 2015, p. 13).

Accommodation of low-income households was the early goal of Behjatabad housing project when its construction started in 1964. The 14 12-story blocks with a pool in their center were designed by Housing Organization and located on one of the best parts of Tehran in terms of accessibility. Due to the use of luxury equipment such as

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**Plate 2.**

Eskan towers, Tehran

**Source:** Author, February 12, 2018
air conditioners, parquet flooring, and walnut doors, the price of the apartments increased. Upon completion of the construction of the project in 1974, the units were handed to the middle class who could afford to purchase the apartments with an initial down payment of 50 percent and 12 annual installments (Jalili Sadrabad et al., 2013).

Figure 3.
Plan of Behjatabad

Note: Redrawn by the author

Figure 4.
Tehran’s growth between the 1820s and the 1970s

Note: Redrawn by the author based on ATEC Consultants (1987)
Pahlavi Foundation had an active role in the housing sector as well. Established in 1958 as a tax-exempt charity, the foundation was receiving a considerable amount of the annual oil revenues. Eskān mix-used complex was one of the projects invested by the Pahlavi Foundation, which was built between 1972 and 1977. The trio 23-story towers were located along the Mirdamad street in the north of Tehran and were spread across 8,000 square meters of land. Each tower had 90 units including two penthouses on the top floor. These new projects aimed to change the face of the traditional city and to promote a new lifestyle based on massive consumption, luxury and western-style living.

**White revolution**

In the 1960s, the rural regions, which for a long time had been excluded from the government modernization projects, received a new attention. During this time and into the 1970s the government’s revenue from the oil increased sharply (Looney, 1986). The capital provided by the growth of oil prices enabled the Shah to imply new rural and urban projects under a series of reforms called the White Revolution. The reforms, which were proposed by the king and sponsored by the USA during Assadullah Alam’s prime ministry, aimed to not only prevent a rural rebellion or a socialist revolution but also consolidate the power of the state (Katouzian, 1974; Foran, 2019).

Land Reform was the heart of the White Revolution. Shah claimed to diminish feudalism and divide the land between the peasants in order to improve the situation of the workers of the agriculture sector. However, his main purpose was to replace the traditional landlords with satisfied middle-class peasants who could form a new source of support (Graham, 1979). In 1956, around 13m people were living in rural areas (69 percent of Iran’s total population), and their support could help the king to retake its stability (Figure 1).
Moreover, moving toward a capitalist society, the reform would release the rest of the agriculture workers to the cities for the use in the growing industrial and construction sectors. “Between 1953 and 1975, the number of small factories increased from 1,500 to more than 7,000; medium-sized factories from 300 to more than 800; and large factories – employing more than 500 workers – from fewer than 100 to more than 150” (Abrahamian, 2008, p. 137).

In 1962 the original plan of the White Revolution containing the following six programs was introduced: land reform, nationalization of forests and pasturelands, profit sharing (for the industrial workers), formation of literacy corps (sepahe danesh), privatization of government-owned corporation, revision of the electoral laws (granting women’s right to vote and allowing non-muslim minorities to hold office). In 1966, Pahlavi Library published the white revolution book. Written by the king, the book introduced the reform by adding three new points: formation of health corps, formation of reconstruction and development corps, formation of the houses of equity (Pahlavi, 1967).

Afraid of losing their possessions, the landowners, who were the majority at the parliament, tried to modify the plan based on their needs (Zaaheh, 2015). They were not the only opposition, under the years of suppression leftists had lost their trust in the regime. The Tudeh Party considered the White Revolution reforms as an imperialist conspiracy plan and a political try to rescue the shaky government (Nabavi, 2001). The Islamist groups found the suggested reforms an attack on Islam and contradictory to the Islamic rules. A CIA document from 1963 has categorized the proponents and opponents of the reforms as follows: “The White Revolution in Iran, with land reform as its leading element, is about to be given a popular test in parliamentary elections. Support for the Shah’s program is expected from peasants, urban workers and the newly enfranchised women voters – those elements which have benefited most so far. The opposition is centered in those groups – the landlords and the clerics – whose power is being undermined by the reform, and they are backed up by the vocal, nationalistic intelligentsia which distrusts the Shah’s authoritarianism and by the economically dissatisfied merchants and underemployed city workers” (CIA-RDP79-00927A004200010003-4, 1963, p. 1).

Despite the opposition, the White Revolution was launched by the king after a public referendum on January 26, 1963. This increased the resistance among the leftists as well as Islamists with Khomeini as the leader. Khomeini denounced the king and his plans in several speeches, including his sermon on June 3, 1963, in the city of Qom which led to his arrest on June 5 of the same year. His arrest triggered the 1963 demonstrations, which not only highlighted the growing role of the Islamist leaders within the society but also is considered the harbinger of the 1979 revolution (Matin-Asgari, 2012). Through the next years, ten new parts were added to the reform making the White Revolution, a 19-point program containing diverse socioeconomic transformations ranging from the nationalization of all water resources to campaign against corruption and bribery.

Shah envisioned a developed modernized Iran to which he repeatedly referred as the great civilization (Tamadon-e Bozorg). He considered the fast socio-economic transformation of the country under the White Revolution as the gateway of the promised civilization, and to embody his vision the construction of an actual gate (Shahyad Tower) in the form of a memorial building in the west of Tehran was put on the agenda (Javaherian, 2009). Shahyad tower, the symbolic embodiment of the utopian future, was inaugurated in October 1971. Shah’s ambitious dream grew and propagated in the 1970s. In his new year message in 1976, Shah ensured the progression: “We know for certain today that the great Iranian nation is moving down the path toward the Great Civilization, a path which will lead in a short time to a place among the front ranks of the superior world powers” (Pahlavi, 1976). In 1977, two years before the revolution, he published his plans and aspirations for the future of Iran in his book “Toward the Great Civilization: A Dream Revisited.”
The White Revolution, however, was not successful. Focusing on economic reform, Shah never intended to democratize the political structure. From the 1953 coup forward, the democratic elements of the past gradually vanished. The establishment of SAVAK was followed by political repressions in the next years and the creation of an all-encompassing party in the mid-1970s (Matin-Asgari, 2012; Armajani, 1979). In other words, the White Revolution “marked the end of a Western-style parliamentary democracy and the beginning of absolute monarchy” (Graham, 1979, p. 71).

In addition, the economic reforms were poorly implemented. Although some of the rural population benefited from the land reform, the number of those who actually received the adequate amount of land was low, “one-half of all rural families received no land at all; among those obtaining land, about 73 percent got less than six hectares, an amount sufficient only for subsistence farming (growth of crops predominantly for consumption by the farm family rather than for sale)” (Khonsary-Atighi, 2016, p. 159). Furthermore, there was not enough time to adapt the law and educate the farmers to work in a cooperative (Armajani, 1979), and “massive importing of agricultural goods, especially wheat from the United States, and the absence or inadequacy of protective tariffs contributed to the ruin of countless small farmers [and] aggravated rural unemployment” (Ahmadi-Esfahani, 1990, p. 171).

As a result, the reforms triggered the immigration of land-less farmers and owners of small plots to move toward the big cities and accelerated the pace of urbanization (Schayegh, 2010; Vahdat Zad, 2013). Only in the ten years between 1966 and 1976, around 1,500,000 immigrants came to Tehran (Table I). Therefore, not only the new source of support, for which the government was aiming, never formed but also the reforms turned the former landlords to the enemies of the government and a possible ally for the oppositions. Many scholars believe the new changes, which were to bring stability to the regime, took the regime one step closer to its overthrow (Ashraf, 1995). Comparing the result of land reform policies in different third world countries, the CIA named the Iranian land reform “A Classic Political Failure” (CIA-RDP86T00586R000100090006-5, 1985, p. 2).

**Tehran comprehensive plan[1]**

In the 1950s, Tehran was growing sporadically in different parts without any plan. In 1958, Petra Hernes established the Cartographic Department at the Municipality of Tehran and produced the first cartographic map of the capital (Schor, 1964). However, due to the constant change of the city, in 1960 the municipality of Tehran signed another contract with the Cartographic Center to provide a new map in 1: 2000 scale (Ghafari, 1964). Two years later, the Department of Urban Research at the University of Tehran held a seminar regarding the social problems of Tehran. In this seminar, the necessity of a comprehensive plan for Tehran and the required data were discussed.

Finally, in 1964, although the required statistics and the primary data were still incomplete, the first comprehensive plan for Tehran was launched. The plan was directed by Iranian city planner Fereydun Ghaffari under a mutual collaboration between American architect Victor Gruen and the Iranian partner Aziz Farmanfarmaian. The prepared plan was approved in 1968 with five volumes and a 25-year vision.

By 1966, around 90,000 people immigrated to Tehran annually, and the population of the city was estimated to reach 12m in 1991. Tehran Comprehensive Plan (TCP) was intended to control spontaneous expansion and to meet the new economic and social requirements. The new strategies aimed to create a multi-center city with a linear development toward the west (Figure 6). With a 25-year perspective, a maximum population of 5,500,000 was considered for Tehran. The plan aimed to reverse the immigration flow so that by 1991, around 25,000 people would be immigrating from Tehran to the other cities. To prevent large-scale migration from rural to urban areas, the designers suggested the increase of tax burden and
the cost of living. Simultaneously, in order to absorb the waves of migration, the development of secondary cities and the establishment of mother factories outside of the capital were proposed.

The plan created a hierarchy of access to public facilities with proposing three different-sized communities, varying from small (level I) to medium (level II) and large (level III), each providing a range of public services:

- **Level I** was a localized community with an elementary school, a local commercial center and 5,000 inhabitants.
- **Level II** encompassed several level I communities with a regional commercial center, a high school and a population between 15,000 to 30,000.
- **Level III**, the largest community with a range of facilities, consisted of several level II communities along with a big center, a university, a stadium and a hospital. Each level III community inhabited half a million of the citizens and was separated from the other with a green belt.

Same as the first National Housing Development Plan, TCP was oriented toward the middle class rather than the impoverished strata. The designers considered that the oil money would trickle down to the general population causing the rapid growth of the middle class. Therefore, believing the middle class would be the largest future class of the city, they adapted their strategies with the needs and the demands of this group. TCP described the middle class as follows: the high-level officials, managers of enterprises and factories, the self-employed owners of businesses, and foreigners residing in the country. The given description clarifies that the term middle class, in fact, referred to the upper-middle class. However, in reality, the growing social class was neither upper-middle class nor middle class but the new urban working class who immigrated to the city after the failed land reform.
Despite the existing pollution in the industrial sites which was highlighted repeatedly in different chapters, four new industrial centers with an area of 3,500 hectares were suggested in close proximity to the low-income neighborhoods. The proposed density of the residential neighborhoods also varied from north to south. For the high-income northern region, a density of 150 people/hectare (p/ha) was considered while the low-income southern part had a density of 500 (p/ha).

Although the plan had referred to the existing urban inequality, in practice it not only failed to improve the situation but also enlarged the existing gaps. Undoubtedly, the attention paid toward the upper-middle class in the design process resulted in the marginalization of the low-income strata. Besides, by justifying the displacement of the working class toward the south, the plan intensified the segregation of Tehran. Even though the occurrence of the 1979 revolution stopped the implementation of the comprehensive plan, later the plan was pursued by the municipality of Tehran as the main reference for the future development of the city (Tehran municipality, n.d.). Therefore, the 1964 comprehensive plan was a crucial point with a lasting effect on the spatial structure of modern Tehran.

**Tehran action plan**

Although the comprehensive plan of Tehran had provided long-term solutions, the growing chaotic capital needed immediate actions. Therefore, in 1972 and after the approval of the comprehensive plan, Doxiadis Associates was commissioned to prepare an action plan for Tehran. Doxiadis was already involved in different projects in the Middle East and neighboring countries such as Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan; he had as well strong connection with the CIA and other American organizations such as the Ford organization which under the cold war were trying to reshape the middle east in order to conquer the influence of the Soviet Unions (Theodosis, 2016).

Tehran Action Plan (TAP) was prepared in close cooperation with the Iranian experts such as Etessam, Megerdichian and Khorasanizadeh who were the architects and planners of EMCO Consulting Engineers. TAP aimed to furnish “the government with a set of directives and policies which will: a. improves the functioning of the present city and solve its critical problems, b. help to gradually decelerate the present growth and expansion of Tehran end direct it into a consistent and healthy path” (Doxiadis Associates, 1972, p. 2).

By analyzing the situation of Tehran in 1970 and reviewing TCP and the transport study for the city, TAP first classified the city’s problems, and second suggested three five-year plans including 21 programs in three different groups: National programs with a larger scale than the city, urban programs and social programs in the scale of the city.

The action plan continued decentralization and depopulation policies of the comprehensive plan, forbid the future concentric growth of Tehran and proposed West Tehran Development (WTD) – on both sides of the road to the city of Karaj – for the city’s future growth (Figure 5). The proposed area had enough land to host the new facilities and because of its close distance to Tehran could release the pressure on the capital.

Due to the sharp increase in the price of urban land and to control the housing market, the government had to purchase land for the future development. TAP suggested the purchase of land in the west of Tehran with the worth of 40bn Rials to facilitate the implementation of the plan and to use the land for the subsidized housing. Same as TCP, the plan located the low-income neighborhoods near the new industrial zone in the southern part of WTD while considered the northern part for the higher income families: “The greater part of the land should be bought south of the east-west [Karaj] freeway because this is the area to be occupied by middle and low incomes who need government assistance. The Land is more expensive [in] north […] and the climate more pleasant. It is natural that only middle and upper middle class will afford to occupy or build houses there. Furthermore, bearing in mind the places of work of low-middle and Low income people, the area south of the east-west freeway offers better
accessibility to their jobs and, more particularly, to the industrial zone, which should lie south” (Doxiadis Associates, 1972, pp. 137-138). In this way, TAP furthered the existed spatial segregation of the city into the western districts.

Conclusion

The physical characteristics of urbanism and architecture transfer them to an efficient tool. Their products are the vivid and indirect provoker of the ideology, the most seen, in which the citizens must live, work and study. Therefore, urbanism and architecture satisfy the most wanted by the dictators: they embody the utopian vision along with the naked power in everyday life. For this reason, Tehran, the capital of Iran, became the main vitrine of the Pahlavi dynasty, the showcase of the upcoming promised future and the undergone progress to which Shah referred to as the Great Civilization.

However, in the early years of the second Pahlavi, Iran had its closest experience to a democratic political structure. The chaos created by the change of the kings, the Second World War, and the occupation of the country opened the space for political progress, the rise of opposition parties and demonstrations. A decade of political activism culminated in the government of Mossadegh and the success of his cabinet in the nationalization of the oil industry, which was a climactic point in the history of modern Iran. In the early 1950s, for the first time, the country was leading toward democratic planning practices. Mossadegh used the power of urban planning to tackle inequality. By proposing the Barren Lands Registration law, he fought with the massive land speculation and used this capital to cope with the housing shortage and the growing social inequality. However, the 1953 coup stopped this process and prepared the foundation for almost three decades of authoritarian rule. The evolving democratic urbanism did not have enough time to prosper and its significant elements were erased in the following years.

Upon the increase of the oil revenue, the king used the planning system to consolidate his power. The abrupted development plans and the activities of the plan organization were resumed, and the series of new reforms known as the White Revolution was implied. By imposing these socio-economic transformations, the king aimed to create a loyal, supportive class out of the beneficiaries of the projects and sought to subordinate the opposition groups and regain his legitimacy. However, the failure of the White Revolution triggered the flow of land-less farmers to the city who later formed the new urban working class, the required labor force to be a participant of the international capitalism network.

The effect of these policies on the urbanization pace was significantly greater. The massive rural-urban migration and the spatial imbalance of the development resulted in a disproportionate growth of the capital. Southern Tehran was occupied by the formerly agriculture workers who had become the industrial workers of the modern city. In the absence of any planning to host the newcomers, overcrowded slums appeared near the factories, while the northern parts were remodeled to display the regime’s demand: the modern developed city, the modern developed country, the great civilization.

To control the city’s growth, TCP was implemented and TAP was commissioned. These plans aimed to reshape the capital and to embody the image the regime was longing for. Thenceforth, a series of housing projects were realized to tackle the city’s housing shortage while changing the traditional face of the capital.

Despite the intense propaganda, the urban plans and policies formulated by the regime barely mentioned the urban poor while the shanty towns hosting the new working class mushroomed in the suburb of the city. By disregarding the financial ability of the impoverished strata, the first National Housing Development Plan targeted the middle class, the low-cost housing projects halted in the 1970s, and TCP was adjusted to the needs of the middle and upper classes. In fact, the modernization projects only deepened the existing social gaps and the regime’s reluctance to address the expectations worsened the situation.
Moreover, by imposing physical distance, low-cost housing projects were built close to the industrial zone and TCP and the TAP located the low-income neighborhoods in the south which further marginalized the urban poor, who were in contrast with the promoted modern society.

This inherited urban planning to this day has transformed into a complex and rigid social and spatial segregation of Tehran. However, the effect of Pahlavi urban legacy on the current urban planning system in Iran, has not been fully investigated, thus providing space for future research which can answer the following questions: What type of materials and disciplinary legacies from that time still remains? How does the current society and government deal with those legacies?

Note
1. The main source of the provided data and figures – unless another reference has been stated – is the original comprehensive plan by Gruen and Farmanfarmaian.

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