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Original Research Article

Evaluating the Role of Stakeholders in Urban Policy-Making Based on Good Urban Governance (A Case Study of the Development Plan of Camp B in Bandar Imam Khomeini)*

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the ineffectiveness of urban development plans, particularly in marginalized areas, has stemmed from the absence of effective stakeholder participation and the unilateral decision-making of powerful institutions. The Camp B (Sabbaghan Neighborhood) development project in Bandar Imam Khomeini is a prime example of such a top-down policy-making approach. Although designed by the Housing Foundation to organize the area's informal settlements, the project ultimately failed to improve the quality of life for its residents. This research aims to analyze the role and position of stakeholders throughout the policy-making and planning process of this project. To do so, it utilizes a public policy cycle framework (in five stages) and a power-interest matrix to classify and evaluate the actor groups involved. The roles of stakeholder groups at each stage are assessed, and the factors that led to changes in their roles and positions, along with the implications of altered interactive structures among the actors, are analyzed. The research methodology is qualitative, based on content analysis and a case study approach. Data was collected through interviews with key actors, analysis of official documents, and field observations. Findings indicate that the housing foundation, acting as a key and monopolistic player under the supervision of higher-level institutions, marginalized or eliminated the roles of other stakeholders -including the municipality, local organizations, universities, and residents-from the decision-making and implementation processes. This exclusion led to significant damage across four dimensions: institutional, economic, socio-psychological, and physical-spatial. These consequences include the centralization of power, a lack of trust and a sense of belonging, a shift from social justice to profit-driven motives, and incoherence in design and implementation. The power-interest matrix also reveals a serious disconnect between formal power and the actual needs of the local community. Overall, the lack of multi-level governance structures and effective inter-sectoral interaction were the main factors behind the failure of this development project.

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Introduction

In today's world, the increasing complexity of urban structures and the intensification of crises such as social inequality, economic pressures, and environmental threats have made a re-evaluation of traditional urban development methods an urgent necessity (Karkhaneh et al, 2022; Rostaei et al., 2024). These traditional methods are primarily based on centralized and hierarchical planning, where the central government and higher-level institutions are the main decision-makers, and the role of local organizations, civil society, and community actors is largely ignored (Masnavi et al., 2021; Farhadian Babadi, 2019). This approach emphasizes physical control and quantitative objectives while paying less attention to the genuine needs of the people (Agherian et al., 2024). Consequently, its most significant weakness is the lack of genuine stakeholder participation, which deprives the decision-making system of local and social capacities and indigenous knowledge. Ultimately, this challenges the achievement of sustainable urban development.

In this context, urban policy-making has become a central focus as a key tool for guiding the development process more than ever before (Moslemi Mehni, 2018). Policy-making is the backbone of urban planning systems, defining the executive framework for local plans and projects by formulating strategic goals, prioritizing issues, and outlining guiding principles. In response to traditional approaches to the policymaking process, numerous studies in the new urban planning literature have emphasized the importance of the concept of governance. This perspective regulates the active participation of all stakeholder groups and actors based on principles such as transparency, procedural justice, and inter-sectoral coordination (UN-Habitat, 2005). Within this framework, actors with diverse interests, power, and perspectives ranging from government bodies and municipalities to the private sector, civil society, local activists, and specialized experts and critics play a role. Therefore, stakeholders are recognized not merely as recipients of policy, but as its shapers and co-creators (Ghasemi et al., 2020). In this regard, the present study examines and evaluates the intervention of various stakeholder groups in one of the urban projects, namely the Camp B (Sabbaghan Neighborhood) development project in Bandar Imam Khomeini. This project is a notable example of how stakeholder institutions are engaged. The project was seriously initiated by the Housing Foundation to organize informal settlements after the 2019 flood. However, in its implementation, it faced management challenges, such as a lack of coordination between higher-level institutions, intermediate bodies, and the local community. Currently, the legal status of the land and construction remains ambiguous. The Housing Foundation's plan was presented with objectives like physical rehabilitation and the upgrading of urban infrastructure and services, but due to multiple weaknesses in its decision-making and design, it failed to achieve its goals, leaving the project in a semi-completed state.

This research aims to answer the following questions by evaluating this case study and analyzing the hidden layers from the initial planning to the project's implementation phase:

Who are the key stakeholders in this development plan? What was their role in the policymaking and implementation process of the Camp B development plan? How did their mode of participation and interaction influence the outcome of the plan?

Theoretical Framework

• Urban Policy-making

Urban policymaking comprises a set of high-level decisions and strategies that, much like a roadmap, define the framework and operational path for development plans in various dimensions such as land use, transportation, housing, environment, and economic development (Citaristi, 2022). Its primary goal is to create cities that are sustainable, livable, and equitable for all residents (Boskabadi et al., 2022).

This process, which serves as the theoretical and practical foundation for sectoral and local planning (Jalili Ghasem Agha, 2018), comprises five stages: 1) Problem Identification, 2) Policy Formulation, 3) Policy Adoption, 4) Policy Implementation, and 5) Policy Evaluation (see: Weible & Sabatier, 2007; Howlett & Ramesh, 1995; Dye, 1992). How this process is implemented is one of the main branches in urban development literature, playing a key role in guiding spatial programs, allocating resources, setting regulations, and ensuring inter-institutional coordination. Higher-level institutions, by formulating policies, guide and supervise the performance of local governments and urban bodies, thereby exerting their power at the local level. Although local governments are formed through elections, they often adhere to the macro-policies of the central government (Hosseinabadi & Sharifzadegan, 2021).

In recent decades, this paradigm has transformed. Urban policymaking is no longer a purely top-down, governmental process, as governments are no longer solely capable of responding effectively. Consequently, the concept of urban governance has emerged as a participatory model for policymaking and development planning (Shams, 2023).

• Urban governance

Governance is an interdisciplinary concept in social sciences defined as the efficient management of society with the participation of all stakeholders and the utilization of all capacities to achieve societal goals (Mesa-Vieira et al., 2023; Qaderi et al., 2022). In contrast

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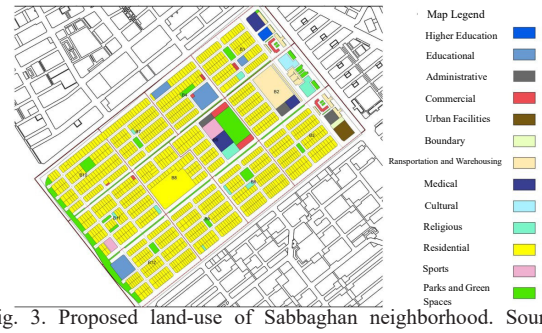


Fig. 3. Proposed land-use of Sabbaghan neighborhood. Source: Natural Disasters Research Institute, 2021.

to the concept of government, governance aims to facilitate better management through principles such as participation, accountability, transparency, efficiency, rule of law, justice, and consensus-building (Keyghobadi, 2024; Hajarian & Barghi, 2023; Tavakolinia et al., 2018; Ebrahimian, 2024; Khademi Kouhi et al., 2023; PNUD, 2014)1. Today, many developing countries face challenges such as informal settlements, inefficient infrastructure, and a lack of health and educational facilities. To address these issues, inter-institutional collaboration must be formed through power-sharing and trust-building (Saboonchi et al., 2024). In this context, actors can play a role at various levels of policy-making, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation.

Various theories have been proposed regarding the concept of governance. For instance, good urban governance emphasizes the active participation of local actors in decision-making and oversight, making government agencies and municipalities accountable to their demands. Furthermore, the theories of participatory governance (Fung & Wright, 2001) and interactive governance (Kooiman, 2004) highlight the importance of dialogue networks and institutional commitment to engaging all stakeholders. This is achieved through tools such as participatory budgeting and local councils (Nasiri et al., 2021). The network governance model (Rhodes, 1997) posits that effective policy-making requires continuous interaction among actors, replacing the traditional hierarchical model. In this view, the government acts merely as one node within this network. In the Ladder of Citizen Participation theory (Arnstein, 1969), it is stated that if urban development involves tokenistic and superficial participation instead of genuine engagement, it will lead to the reproduction of inequality and the exclusion of vulnerable groups (Zangisheieh et al., 2021). In recent years, new governance models such as adaptive and smart governance have emerged. These models emphasize responding to uncertainties, especially regarding climate change, and highlight the link between digital technologies and urban decision-making (Saboonchi, 2024; Saboonchi et al., 2025; Meijer & Bolívar, 2016).

A common thread among these perspectives is the principle of interaction and collaboration among stakeholders. Indeed, a strong and desirable civil society, alongside government institutions, can provide the groundwork for good governance with the least possible time and cost (Ghaderi et al., 2024). This has a significant impact on the redistribution of power in the process of policy-making and the management of economic and social resources (Nuh et al., 2024). Without active participation, any program developed in a vacuum faces a high risk of failure and will be unable to achieve the goals of sustainability, social justice, and local legitimacy (Saboonchi and Abarghouei Fard, 2020; Malekshahi et al., 2019). Therefore, urban governance acts as a bridge between policy-making and the implementation of development, with stakeholder groups serving as the main pillars of this bridge.

• The Role of Stakeholders in the Urban Policy-Making and Governance Cycle

Different stakeholders are involved in the policy-making process, including: 1) Public Institutions (municipalities, local and central governments, regulatory bodies), 2) Private Sector (real estate developers, investors, local businesses), 3) Civil Society (NGOs, local associations), and 4) Citizens (local residents, property owners, tenants).

- Agenda Setting and Problem Identification

Through dialogues, protests, proposals, and representing needs, stakeholders play a role in defining and prioritizing issues. Local organizations, community associations, and councils can shape the official discourse using the lived experiences of residents, thereby bringing key issues onto the policy-maker's agenda.

- Policy Formulation and Design

Public institutions, experts, and in some cases, stakeholder representatives (e.g., from the private sector or local associations) propose and evaluate possible policies through committees, meetings, and working groups. This stage is often influenced by economic, technical, and political considerations. If any group is excluded, the likelihood of conflict and contradiction in later stages increases.

- Decision-Making

In a participatory governance system, the discussion of how to distribute power at the decision-making stage is of particular importance. A balance of power between groups (government, citizens, private sector) leads to the creation of more sustainable coalitions. Decisions resulting from inter-sectoral and inter-stakeholder dialogue have greater social legitimacy and lead to more successful project implementation.

- Implementation

Cooperation and coordination among executive bodies, contracting companies, and local residents are essential. In some cases, residents themselves become the project implementers (e.g., through self-built housing with self-financing loans), which requires continuous technical and supervisory support. The

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absence of this support can lead to projects becoming inefficient, stalled, or damaged.

- **Supervision and Revision**

Supervision in governance is not merely about performance control; it is a dynamic mechanism for learning and policy reform. The presence of independent oversight bodies, councils, universities, and even the media guarantees transparency, accountability, and the re-circulation of decisions back to the policy-making loop.

In a realistic view, the level of influence of different groups in urban policy-making is not equal. Based on the Power-Interest Matrix, stakeholders, categorized by their level of influence and interest in an intervention, have specific tools for participation. If these tools are not available, their interaction and role-playing will shift from active participation to passive or conditional participation (Fig. 1).

Research Method

This is a qualitative and applied study employing a case study method and content analysis of interviews. The study focuses on the power-interest dynamics of actors in the developmental policy-making process of the "Camp B Project" by deeply analyzing the role and position of stakeholder groups. It utilizes theoretical-analytical frameworks to represent the relationships among stakeholders and their outcomes.

• Case Study Area

The Sabaghan Town, also known as Camp B, is a vulnerable and informal settlement in the city of Bandar-e Emam Khomeini (Sarbamdar), Khuzestan Province. It is composed of migrant households with diverse ethnic backgrounds (Fig. 2). Covering an area of over 49 hectares, this settlement, along with the Hasirabad neighborhood, has been a direct target for redevelopment and urban planning projects by the Housing Foundation. A comprehensive intervention plan for this town was initiated following the damage caused by the floods of 2020 and 2023. The area was marked by dilapidated fabric, high population density, a lack of a proper stormwater drainage network, and low levels of public services. The floods, in addition to destroying residential units, disrupting street access, and damaging electricity and sewage infrastructure, led to the emergency evacuation of households from critical areas. Furthermore, this neighborhood is socially recognized as an impoverished area with widespread social vulnerabilities.

The Housing Foundation's measures have been focused on several key areas to improve habitability, enhance resilience, and create sustainable infrastructure:

- Detailed Master Plan: This plan involves the segregation of land uses, street widening, and the provision of service spaces.
- Prioritized Implementation Actions: These include prioritizing actions for neighborhood redevelopment, attracting the participation of various organizations, and allocating land.
- Provision of Construction Facilities: This includes providing housing loans, non-refundable grants, livelihood assistance, and supplying construction materials.
- Allocation of a 20-Billion Toman Budget: This budget was allocated to cover the cost of sewage infrastructure (Fig. 3).

• Data Collection

The redevelopment plan for Camp B has been chosen as a prominent example of top-down policy-making in the field of housing and urban regeneration. The scope of the research includes the institutions involved in this plan (the Housing Foundation, Municipality, Council, local community, academic, and executive bodies) and their related processes. Data classification was based on the five-stage public policy model, which includes: agenda-setting, policy formulation, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation. At each stage, the position and role of stakeholder groups, as well as the types of participation and interaction tools, were examined. Data was collected from two main sources:

1. Primary Data Collection: Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders based on their role and knowledge of the project's process and policy-making. After being recorded, the interviews were transcribed and coded. Given the in-depth nature of the interviews, the sample size was limited but chosen to ensure a diversity of perspectives.

- Participatory panel in the form of an in-depth

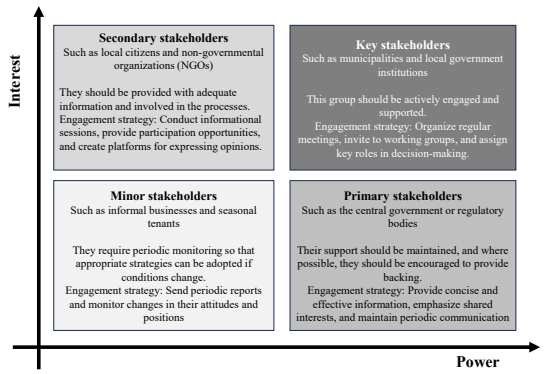


Fig. 1. Freeman's Power–Interest Matrix and the modes of stakeholder participation in policy-making. Source: Authors, adapted from Freeman (1984).

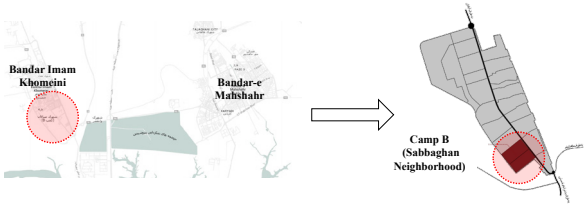


Fig. 2. Location of Camp B in Bandar Imam Khomeini (Sarbandar). Source: Authors.

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interview with the former Mayor of Bandar-e Emam, a representative of the Housing Foundation, a technical expert from the municipality, academic critics, and a representative of the local community.

- Two separate interviews with a representative of the local community as a well-informed source on the details and implementation process of the project.

- In-depth interviews with residents and the local community of Camp B and the newly constructed settlements.

2. Secondary Data Collection: Secondary data was gathered from official documents of the Housing Foundation's project, including design maps, proposed plans, approved land uses, and existing statistical information. Additionally, field observation of the project site was conducted to evaluate the status of construction, infrastructural services, the physical condition of the neighborhood, and local interactions.

• Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using a hybrid approach at two levels: theoretical (documents and reports) and empirical (interviews and field observation). The analyses were based on a valid and replicable theoretical framework. The views of various stakeholder groups, with different and at times conflicting perspectives, were incorporated into the analysis to reduce bias.

- Theoretical Framework for Analysis

Data was analyzed from institutional, economic, socio-psychological, and physical-spatial aspects. This multi-faceted approach was used to evaluate the reasons for the weakening or exclusion of stakeholder groups and the consequences of their ineffective participation in the Housing Foundation's project. Furthermore, based on the Power-Interest Matrix, the roles of actors were classified into four categories according to their level of power (institutional, financial, legal influence) and interest (intensity of impact and willingness to participate):

- Key Stakeholders: These are powerful actors with high interest (e.g., the Housing Foundation). They have both the authority to influence outcomes and a vested interest in the project's success.

- Marginalized Stakeholders: These actors have a high interest but lack significant power (e.g., local residents). Their strong desire to participate is often undermined by their limited ability to influence decisions.

- Apathetic Observers: This group consists of powerful entities with low interest (e.g., some superior government bodies). They have the authority to intervene but are largely disengaged from the project's daily operations.

- Low-Impact Stakeholders: These are actors who lack both power and a noticeable interest (e.g., certain indirect institutions). They have minimal influence on the project's trajectory.

- Content Analysis of Interviews

The interviews were coded based on the stages of the policy cycle (for example, statements related to the implementation stage or objections to exclusion during policy formulation). Furthermore, a comparative analysis was used to evaluate the consistency between the stakeholders' narratives and the project's institutional, economic, social, and physical-spatial conditions.

- Comparative Analysis with Documents and Observations

The plans presented by the Housing Foundation were compared with the on-site implementation status. Subsequently, the inconsistencies between the official design and the lived experiences of the residents were analyzed (for example, the presence of parks and green spaces in the maps versus their absence on the ground).

Findings

In an urban development plan aimed at neighborhood intervention, different stakeholder groups can play a significant role in implementing goals at each stage of the policy-making cycle. Depending on their level of participation and type of interaction, these groups possess various tools for intervening in projects. In the Camp B development project, the key stakeholders are the Housing Foundation, the Municipality, experts, academic and scientific institutions, and finally, the residents. However, based on an evaluation of the project documents and numerous discussions, it is evident that participation has been neglected in this plan. Some of these stakeholders have either been completely excluded from the policy-making and decision-making process, or their role has been weakened (Fig. 4).

A preliminary evaluation of the plan was conducted based on the five stages of the policy-making process:

• Stage 1 - Problem Identification and Agenda Setting

At the beginning of the project, the identification of the problem's structure was carried out by top-tier institutions, such as the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, in a top-down manner at a macro scale (based on the national development plan for flood-affected regions and provinces). This was done without the participation of the Municipality as a local policy-making body, or the local people and councils at a local scale. Disregarding key local stakeholders led to a deviation in problem identification and rendered the entire process baseless. Consequently, the initial planning did not align with the actual needs of the residents or with the project's implementation capacities.

• Stage 2 - Policy Formulation and Design

The physical design of Camp B was based on typical rural housing patterns. According to field observations and interviews with residents, there was no on-site evaluation of the local community's priorities, lifestyle, or preferences. The lack of participation from the end-users and the approach adopted by the Ministry of Interior and

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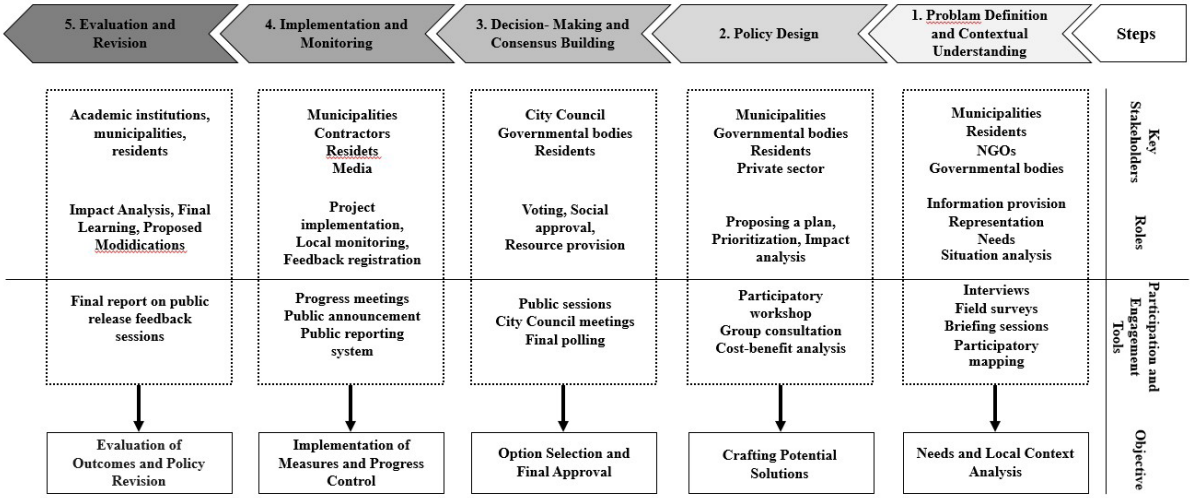


Fig. 4. The roles of stakeholder groups in the stages of urban development planning and their active participation tools based on the policy cycle. Source: Authors.

the Housing Foundation, along with the delegation of the work to a selected consultant (the Natural Disasters Research Institute), resulted in the presentation of options that did not meet the residents' living needs. This, in turn, led to public dissatisfaction and non-acceptance.

• Stage 3 - Decision-Making

Decision-making was carried out by the Housing Foundation without a consensus with local institutions. For instance, there was no informational meeting for the public to raise awareness about the planning process. According to the Municipality and experts, they were not informed of the final plans until the project's implementation phase. This lack of a collective agreement resulted in responsible stakeholder groups not feeling committed to the successful implementation and support of the plan in subsequent stages.

• Stage 4 – Implementation

The foundation of this project was project-oriented, discontinuous, and lacked a social attachment plan or a mechanism for receiving feedback. Residents' protests regarding the construction quality, the inappropriate location of other new settlements, and the disharmony of the new buildings with the local lifestyle are clear examples of the project's failure, causing some households to refuse to reside in the new units. The absence of continuous monitoring, along with entrusting the implementation to residents who lacked technical knowledge and other problems, such as insufficient financial resources for construction completion, disrupted the implementation process and led to widespread protests.

• Stage 5 - Evaluation and Revision

Following the public protests, no official evaluation of the project has been conducted by the relevant institutions, nor has there been any attempt to make physical revisions to the plan. The project has been abandoned in a semi-completed state, with some blocks left unfinished. In addition to the local residents, the Municipality and technical experts have also protested the Housing Foundation's lack of accountability regarding implementation issues. In this project, there is no cycle of revision and learning from the factors of inefficiency that could serve as an experience for improving future policies. Based on a surface-level examination of the plan, the Housing Foundation's project failure was not merely due to inefficiency in its physical design or technical flaws. Rather, it resulted from a disregard for the logic of developmental policy-making and a disruption in the role-playing and interaction of key stakeholder groups at various levels. The analysis of this process, based on stakeholder-centric conceptual frameworks, points to serious gaps in the policy-making process (Table 1).

Discussion

A comprehensive evaluation of the implemented Housing Foundation plan in Camp B, from institutional, socio-psychological, economic, and physical-spatial perspectives, indicates that important factors in the underlying layers of this project led to a lack of participation, the undermining of roles, or the exclusion of various stakeholder groups. Consequently, this has created multiple adverse outcomes (Fig. 5).

• Institutional Dimension

From an institutional perspective, one of the main factors in the development plan's decision-making process is the power and source of power of the stakeholders. Although there was initially a comprehensive participation from top-level institutions in the problem identification stage, their presence gradually diminished in subsequent phases. The power circle formed by a specific group of actors indicates that the ineffectiveness of this plan is due to the monopolization of decision-making power within a closed group, the systematic exclusion of local stakeholders, and the absence of accountability mechanisms and social legitimacy in policy-making.

The distribution of power, through the formation of a power coalition among top-level authorities (the

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Ministry of Interior and the Housing Foundation as an intermediary), led to the complete exclusion of influential actors at the local level (the Municipality, local councils, civil society organizations, and residents)[2]. This occurred even though the Municipality and local government bodies, as key stakeholders with high power and great interest, were relegated to low-influence stakeholders who had no role at the project's inception. Institutions with official backing and sources of power steered the policy-making process in a closed and unaccountable manner, stripping the process of public participation and consensus. This absolute control over all aspects of the city created a context for the increasing dominance and consolidation of central institutional power over local jurisdictions, which will lead to the reproduction of institutional power in other dimensions of policy-making. Consequently, the Camp B project, despite its development-oriented appearance, is a preamble to the consolidation of institutional dominance and the deliberate marginalization of local bodies within the framework of a national plan. This demonstrates a structural discontinuity in the mechanisms of multi-level governance. At the same time, the exclusion of actors like the Municipality points to inefficiency in the inter-institutional structure and the lack of a cohesive framework for continuous planning and governance, which could escalate conflict and competition among institutions and lead to the collapse of the implementation policy.

Within the framework of the Power-Interest Matrix, the Municipality, although seemingly possessing institutional power, has been relegated to the position of a marginalized stakeholder with weakened power. This is due to its exclusion from formal processes and lack of access to decision-making tools. Meanwhile, the Housing Foundation (a high-power, high-interest stakeholder) has predominantly been at the forefront of decision-making, centralizing the power structure. Other top-tier institutions (such as the Governorate) are categorized as powerful but apathetic stakeholders; despite their control over decision-making resources, they remain passive in the face of on-the-ground realities and local needs.

In addition to structural monopolization, consultative processes, project feedback mechanisms, and needs assessments have been set aside. As a result, genuine participation has been replaced by a mere pretense of it. There is a kind of monopoly over participatory tools, which are used only to implement pre-determined decisions[3]. The local community, academic institutions, and experts, instead of actively participating, have become marginalized stakeholders. These groups could have played an intermediary or knowledge-based role to enhance social legitimacy. The lack of effective and meaningful engagement with these groups has led to social non-acceptance, local resistance, and ultimately, project failure. The Housing Foundation is the only actor that has remained in the position of a key stakeholder throughout most of the policy-making stages. Meanwhile, the public, despite being directly involved with the project's consequences, and the Municipality and local institutions, despite their high interest, have never had the opportunity for effective negotiation.

• Socio-psychological Dimension

Micro-stakeholders (the public, councils, and intermediary institutions) in the Camp B development plan have been marginalized, and development has been

Table 1. Comparison of the expected versus actual roles of stakeholders in the Camp B housing project. Source: Authors.

Stage	Actual stakeholders involved in the project	Expected stakeholders (based on good urban governance)	Participation status	Initial outcomes
1 - Problem Identification and Agenda Setting	Housing Foundation, Ministers, Parliament, Council of Urban Planning and Architecture, Disaster Management Headquarters, Ministry of Interior, Mostazafan Foundation, Ministry of Roads and Urban Development (Urban Regeneration Company), Ministry of Energy	Governorate, Municipality, City Council, Local Associations, Academic/ Scientific Institutions, Housing Foundation	Highly limited and top-down	Ignoring local needs, eliminating participation, and weak problem definition
2 - Policy Formulation and Design	Ministry of Interior, Natural Disasters Research Institute (NDRI), Housing Foundation	Consultants, Local Organizations, City Council, Housing Foundation, Residents' Representatives	Centralized without interaction with the neighborhood	Designing without alignment with social and economic realities
3 - Decision-Making	Housing Foundation	All stakeholders with institutional consensus	Closed and monopolistic	Lack of local legitimacy, decisions made without public support
4 – Implementation	Residents (with limited support from Mostazafan Foundation and the Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order), Engineering Organization	Municipality, Technical Agencies, Contractors, Public Oversight	Delegation of responsibility without support	Abandonment of projects, unfinished construction
5 - Evaluation and Revision	Housing Foundation	Independent Supervisory, City Council, University, Media	Lack of effective monitoring and feedback	Persistence of problems, unaddressed protests, and project neglect

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carried out in an environment lacking dialogue and trust. Therefore, this project is a symbol of development that has been accompanied by the exclusion of social voices and a disregard for the socio-cultural fabric.

In discussions, it was repeatedly emphasized that the local residents, due to their cultural background, ethnic affiliations, distinct lifestyle, and even family structures, needed a localized and adaptive plan. The designs (both the location and type of housing units) were created as a predefined, imposed model without any contextual analysis of the residents' social, traditional, and cultural fabric. As one resident put it, "These are not houses in the Khuzestani style." The lack of a place-based approach in this plan alienated citizens from their memories, lifestyle, and familiar spaces. In addition to a lack of psychological acceptance, this has led to a gradual erosion of identity and a sense of belonging.

In the absence of a participatory needs assessment during the initial policy formulation, the plan was not only unrealistic but also created a disconnect between the policies and social realities[4]. The exclusion of local narratives, the reduction of social needs to just physical shelter, the weakening of social capital and public trust, and the transformation of public participation into social resistance are all consequences of unilateral decision-making in an absolute space. Statements from decision-making stakeholders regarding Camp B residents claiming they have no right to express opinions or judge the plan show that the public was viewed not as a key player in development but merely as a passive recipient of services and an invisible micro-group[5]. The failure to hold collaborative sessions and a lack of transparency in information dissemination created a policy-making process devoid of dialogue. In this process, there is neither genuine feedback nor a right for the local community to demand accountability. On the other hand, the absence and passive role of intermediary institutions (such as the neighborhood council, academic bodies, or even NGOs) meant that the crucial link between the public and the policy-making structure was severed. This turned the project into a soulless technocratic process.

In the Power-Interest Matrix, the position of the local community is clearly in the category of secondary but affected actors. This group has been most harmed by the project's outcomes, yet due to the lack of tools, intermediary institutions, and dialogue mechanisms, they have been unable to convey their experiences or exert influence. The structural disconnect between their high interest and their lack of power is a key component of

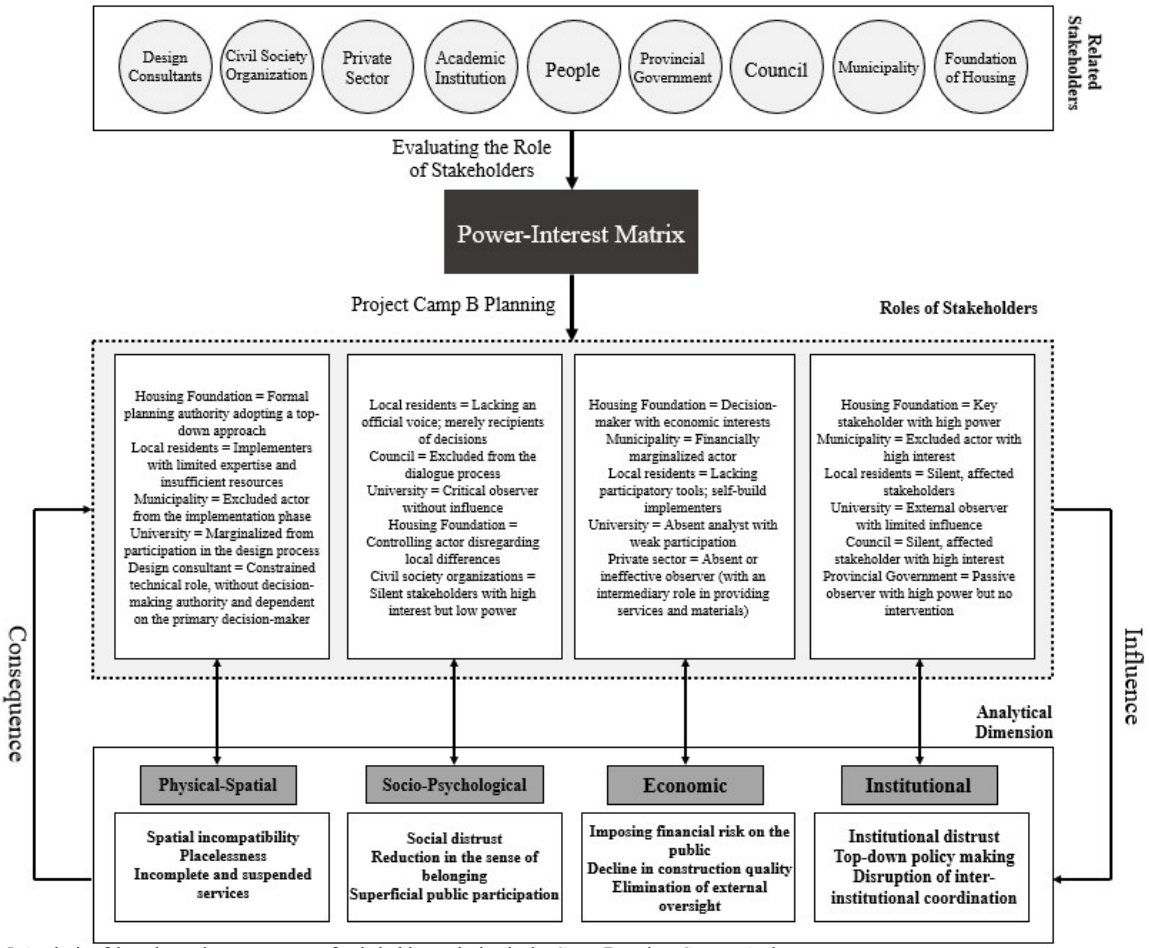


Fig. 5. Analysis of the roles and consequences of stakeholder exclusion in the Camp B project. Source: Authors.

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the failure of social capital and sustainable participation in development projects.

• Economic Dimension

From the very beginning of all development projects, powerful institutions often emphasize solving social concerns. However, the question remains whether these goals are maintained throughout the planning process or if they shift in a meaningful way. There are clear and indirect signs of a profit-driven shift in the objectives of the Camp B redevelopment project. An analysis of the project reveals that the decision-making power circle diverted the policy-making process away from a social discourse toward an economic product. This shift in objective also eliminated the possibility of monitoring, feedback, and correction for low-impact and unsustainable constructions. The repeated emphasis by urban officials and experts on their dissatisfaction with the building model, project location, and disregard for people's lifestyles shows that the Housing Foundation's plan is focused more on rapid implementation and allocating land to local residents. Consequently, the project's main actor has redirected the important social goal of improving residents' welfare and quality of life towards the economic use of land and construction, replacing quality of life with project profitability. The monopolization of decision-making in the form of the Municipality's exclusion or the late involvement of critical academic bodies is a type of resistance to the intervention of oversight institutions and interfering actors who might have threatened the plan's interests and profitability in its early stages. Furthermore, the emphasis on an undelayed and mandatory project implementation without evaluating assessments is a sign of specific stakeholders with a direct dependence on the project's execution. This raises suspicion of organizational or personal profiteering from the construction, such as in the allocation of resources, tenders, or transfers. This profit-driven focus is a reflection of the main stakeholder's position (the Housing Foundation) in the Power-Interest Matrix, as this institution has advanced its goals by leveraging official resources and legal authority, without the need for local consensus. In contrast, the actors who are capable of advocating for public and social interests lack the executive power and formal influence to oppose or correct the project's direction.

• Physical-spatial Dimension

The Camp B project is an example of a severe disconnect between spatial policy-making and socio-local implementation. Here, the Housing Foundation acts as the designer, supervisor, and land allocator. However, the project's product is the creation of incomplete physical spaces, abandoned infrastructure, and spatial disorder.

The designed land uses in the official plan such as residential, green spaces, educational, health, and transportation have not been fully realized. A large portion of the land has been allocated solely to the subdivision of residential units (Fig. 5). Field observations and public feedback reveal the contradiction between the official physical plan and the actual spatial reality. Unpaved streets, un-networked sewage systems, environmental pollution, and a lack of green spaces and basic services indicate that this plan was merely drafted on paper. It has suffered from a lack of coordination during the design, implementation, and operation phases and lacks the necessary institutional support or executive oversight from supervisory organizations. In this project, the Housing Foundation has not been willing to make a radical policy revision, and evaluations have been mostly superficial, lacking interactive monitoring. The plan consists of fragmented spaces and disjointed sections, in which a neighborhood-centric approach or a cohesive service network was not followed. For instance, in Sabaghan, designed with the highest density, lands were not properly opened up or freed, social spaces within the neighborhoods are nonexistent, and the plan lacks an identity or cultural map to anticipate spatial regeneration. The lack of a serious presence from civil society organizations and local trustees has meant that development has been defined not based on the residents' lived experiences but on land partitioning and plot size.

The unity of the project's designer and supervisor and the sidelining of the Municipality (for providing urban services) or the City Council (for allocating local budgets) have compromised the plan's feasibility in urban services and infrastructure. Ostensibly, a division of responsibility has occurred, but authority has remained centralized.

Regarding the construction of residential units, the Foundation acted as the decision-maker and implementer, while the actual contractors were the residents themselves, without technical support, local facilitation, or consultation. Households proceeded with construction through loans, and as a result, some houses are complete, some are semi-finished, and others are just an empty plot of land. This decision entirely transferred the project's implementation risk to residents who lack sufficient technical and executive knowledge, while the top-tier structure maintained control over all major financial and non-financial resources and key decisions. In this regard, the Power-Interest Matrix also helps in understanding the unequal roles of stakeholders in shaping the physical reality. The Housing Foundation, as the main actor, is responsible for design, land allocation, and implementation, while the people, as the project's true implementers, lack any institutional support or continuous supervision. The position of these two groups at opposite poles of the matrix has led to the production of an inefficient, identity-less, and incoherent space.

Conclusion

The analysis of the Camp B project, within the framework

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of the policy-making cycle and the Power-Interest Matrix, has shown that the development process was shaped by top-down models and centralized decision-making. The governance structure suffered from a serious disruption in the distribution of power and stakeholder participation. The Housing Foundation, acting as a dominant and monopolistic actor, played the main role in all stages of policy-making. By excluding other actors, including the Municipality, councils, academia, and local residents, it deviated from a multi-level participatory governance model. The consequence of this situation is a rootless, identity-less, and failed project in the social, economic, and spatial spheres. The elimination of genuine participation mechanisms, a lack of transparency, and the disregard for people's lifestyles led to a decrease in social trust, the erosion of a sense of belonging, and the local community's hidden resistance against the project. From an economic perspective, the project's direction toward rapid land allocation and construction overshadowed the initial social goals. The profit-driven focus and lack of financial transparency weakened the participation of critical and oversight institutions. Ultimately, from a physical standpoint, the plan lacks spatial coherence, necessary infrastructure, and place-based approaches. Its design and implementation, carried out without coordination with local institutions or consideration for residents' real needs, resulted in unsustainable and incomplete development.

Based on a multi-faceted analysis of the project using the Power-Interest Matrix, the study shows an unequal power structure, centralized decision-making, and a resistance to participation. In contrast, the groups most affected by the policies (local residents, councils, academic institutions) were either excluded or reduced to marginalized, ineffective actors. This situation renders policy-makers incapable of designing interactive frameworks to create sustainable development. Relying on the experiences of this project, policy-making processes in urban development plans must be based on multi-level dialogue, power redistribution, and institutionalization of meaningful and active participation for all stakeholder groups within a framework of participatory governance. The following proposed actions can facilitate this process:

• Mandatory Social Needs Assessment: Implement mandatory guidelines for social needs assessment prior to the physical design of urban redevelopment projects or by other implementing bodies.

• Establish a Local Coordination Council: Form a local coordination council comprising representatives from the Municipality, the Housing Foundation, residents, and academic institutions to supervise the implementation and revision of projects.

• Delegate Executive Duties: Transfer a portion of executive duties to local institutions and community trustees, accompanied by training and empowerment, to increase a sense of collective ownership.

• Create a Public Monitoring System: Establish a public transparency and monitoring system that allows citizens to register protests, provide feedback, and report on project progress.

Future Research

This research, with its focus on a qualitative and analytical approach, has sought to analyze institutional structures, actor positions, and decision-making processes in an urban development project from the perspective of power dynamics, the exclusion or weakening of stakeholders, and institutional discontinuities. Although qualitative analyses are highly capable of uncovering hidden layers, multiple narratives, and internal contradictions in policy-making, measuring the quantitative level of participation or more precisely prioritizing the influential drivers of project failure requires a complementary approach and specialized tools, such as developing numerical indicators, designing questionnaires, and conducting statistical analyses. In this regard, designing a complementary research path aimed at developing a quantitative evaluation framework to measure stakeholder participation, analyze resident satisfaction, and weigh the institutional, economic, social, and spatial factors influencing the policy-making process could complement the current study. This would pave the way for providing more precise executive models for evaluating urban development projects with a focus on participatory governance. In the future plan, utilizing quantitative methods and multi-criteria evaluation techniques will determine the level of influence of each stakeholder group at different stages of the policy cycle. Additionally, the degree of alignment between local needs and the policies adopted will also be quantitatively estimated.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there was no conflict for them in conducting this research.

Footnotes

1. Different types of governance include corporate governance, good governance, digital governance, multilevel governance, global governance, local governance and public governance, with participatory governance being the most common conceptual framework.
2. This is an example of the "advocacy coalition framework" where groups with formal resources, institutional access and government legitimacy shape policy and marginalize other groups (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1994).
3. For further reading, see the Governance Void theory (Hajer, 2003).
4. The "relational planning" theory emphasizes the active and interactive participation of all stakeholders in the problem analysis phase (Healey, 1996).
5. The "social invisibility" theory of micro-stakeholders (Cornwall, 2008).

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