



Editorial

Dilemma of the Housing Crisis in Iran: Urban Renewal or Development of Privacy?

One of the most pressing concerns confronting most Iranian cities is the housing crisis. The construction of four million residences was the 13th government’s key campaign theme to win national elections. In the predicament of the early 14th presidential elections, with little time to present the candidates’ proposals, most programs prioritize meeting the demand for housing. A few months ago, during the legislative elections, the candidates put the housing crisis at the top of their agendas. What strategies may be proposed to address the housing dilemma, which forecasts that today’s youth may not own their own homes until they are 70 years old or older? Candidates discuss housing expenses, such as land, buildings, and taxes, and then calculate housing prices by comparing the price of houses in major cities to the cost of construction. Following that, the notion of a zero land price is brought up, and strategies for expanding the city borders and transforming national land into urban land are presented. Even though land grabbing has occurred throughout history, it is important to note that the majority of the land price is related to its infrastructure and its services. Infrastructure is self-explained, and services, including amenities, are available inside the land’s boundaries. If the land is defined without water, roads, power infrastructure, and essential amenities such as education, health, and public transit, it will not be valuable or have a significant influence on house prices. In other words, the impact of land on house costs is heavily reliant on its infrastructure and services. The candidate’s program neglects the most important approach, which is maximizing the efficiency of urban amenities. While a lot of money has been spent to build cities throughout history, due to trivial reasons such as the development of comprehensive plans or myths such as per capita and standards that have not been documented by scientific and technical sources, reference to the city’s capacity to solve the housing problem has been overlooked. Urban renewal, as a permanent, continuous, and dynamic approach that updates the services and infrastructure of the city based on the changing needs of the residents, is a process that has become a special and neglected form of urban intervention in academic literature to protect historical bodies and zones throughout history. However, the process of urban regeneration is a continuous and essential cycle that must accommodate the changing requirements of people and society. This implies that, in the face of Iran’s current housing problem, urban revitalization demands the development of appropriate and operational policies based on the city’s and its residents’ capacities. The “Neighborhood Secure Focal Point” initiative (Mansouri, 2020) is a redevelopment method that relies on local empowerment to solve problems using the city’s existing facilities without requiring investment or government participation. The government’s only duty is to take a holistic approach to the problem and remove legal and operational barriers to the city’s modernization process to boost facility and infrastructure productivity. This vision of the city, which acknowledges it as an irreplaceable capital for conservation and emphasizes transmission to future generations, prohibits indiscriminate development of natural resources and waste of expenditures by providing urban settings with low densities. It is obvious that for a country with a lower per capita income than the global average, the broad urban model built on huge acreage that incurs greater building and maintenance expenses is unsuitable and destructive. This interpretation of urban renewal, or, in other words, urban restoration, attempts to leverage the city’s economic, infrastructural, social, and historical capacities to make it feasible to live and work in the existing arena of the city and avoids attributing the issue to the surrounding pieces of land.

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