

An Analysis of the Conflicts of Tehran's Large-Scale Shopping Centers from the Public Interest Perspective*

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ABSTRACT

The commodification of the public space is one of the influential processes on the generation of the urban spaces, which has been the origin of considerable evolutions in the recent two decades. An example of this process is the excessive commercial constructions and the unprecedented growth of large-scale shopping centers. Over the last two decades, malls were developed irregularly in Tehran. Various studies have been conducted on the emergence of malls and their effects and consequences on the cities from different perspectives. Some of these studies investigated the shopping centers as public spaces and analyzed their effects and consequences from various aspects. The public interest has not been mentioned directly or indirectly in these studies. However, they stated the characteristics, such as inclusiveness for all social groups, equal accessibility, being free, lack of discrimination, sociability, and security, all of which are considered examples of the public interest. Other research analyzed the large-scale urban projects from a public interest perspective, among which are the mega malls and malls. Since the development of the malls considerably depends on the will of the private sector investors along with the permissions issued by the government organizations, thus, it can be said that the main motivation for the production and development of these spaces is earning profit from the space. On the other hand, the public's welcome of these centers and their role as the public space based on the consumption in the metropolitans requires the study of their effects and consequences from various aspects. The current paper studied the conflicts of the large-scale shopping centers of Tehran from the public interest perspective.

Keywords: Public Space, Large Shopping Centers, Public Interest.

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important public spaces, which represents the production method of capitalism and privatization, is the large-scale shopping centers or megamalls. These centers are the main part of the commercial landscape in most countries and play a significant role in the retail and tourism industry (Jäger, 2016; Ozorhon & Ozorhon, 2014; Farrag, El Sayed, & Belk, 2010). As Fyfe (1998) stated, the shopping centers first emerged in the suburban of North America, and their development was closely related to the development of the highways and the mass production of automobiles, resulting in the segregation of the suburban from the downtown (Fyfe, 1998, p. 26). However, the location of these centers was gradually changed, and they developed inside the cities. Thus, the location of the malls inside the cities led to the emergence of a type of private space with public access most important purpose of which was integrating leisure with shopping and consumption.

Over the recent two decades, the malls in Tehran have been developed irregularly so that from 2005 until 2007, more than 160 shopping centers, malls, and megamalls have been constructed in Tehran (Kazemi & Amirebrahimi, 2018). In some cases, given the size of the land and the built-up area, the floor area ratio of these centers was up to 1100%, indicating a significant deviation from the regulation of the detailed plan of Tehran. The growth and development of these centers in the large cities of Iran, including Tehran, has been to the great extent that was called "Mall construction wave" or "Mall Tsunami".

Since the development of the malls significantly depends on the will of the private sector investors along with the permissions issued by the government organizations, thus, it can be said that the main motivation for the production and development of such spaces is merely earning the profit from the space, and other functions of the space are influenced by this motivation (Izadpanah & Habibi, 2018, p. 39). Hence, they were criticized by many scholars. The public acceptance of these centers and their role as the emerging public space in the metropolitans make

it necessary to study their effects and consequences from various aspects. One of the analytical approaches that have a great explanatory ability in this regard is the public interest approach. In nutshell, public interest refers to anything, which is useful for the public" (Hajzadeh, 2014).

Given that these centers have private ownership and are a type of private space with public accessibility, thus, all the regulations of the private properties also apply to these spaces. Here, the intersection between the public interest approach and the shopping centers, as the private properties, can be identified. The main question and concern of the present study are how the development of megamalls in Tehran is in line with the concepts of public interest and in what aspects it conflicts with the public interest.

Reviewing the previous studies, two groups of these studies can be addressed. The first group is the research that studied the shopping centers as public spaces and analyzed their effects and consequences. In these studies, the criteria of the public interest have not been mentioned directly. However, the indicators, such as inclusiveness for all social groups, equal accessibility, being free, lack of discrimination, sociability, and security, have been stated, all of which are examples of the public interest. Another group of studies analyzed the large-scale urban projects from a public interest perspective, among which are the megamalls. It is noteworthy that the large-scale urban projects are the macro and costly plans of the urban development for new constructions or broad reconstruction in a vast and continuous urban area. The construction of such projects often takes many years and is associated with changes in urban land use (Fainstein & Feflippis, 2016, p. 768). Moreover, two agree and disagree perspectives on the malls as the public spaces can be mentioned. Regarding the above mentioned, the current research studied the conflicts of the large-scale shopping centers of Tehran from a public interest perspective. To this end, four shopping centers, including Arg Tajrish, Atlas Mall, Palladium, and Rosh, located in District 1 of Tehran Municipality have been selected as case studies.

Table 1. The Correlation of the Large-Scale Projects with the Public Interest of the Society Based on the Results of the Empirical Studies

	Researchers	Summary of the Research Results
The Correlation of the Malls with the Public Interest	Erkip (2005)	Despite the conflict of the malls with the public interest, people welcome them.
	Jager (2016)	The closure of small shopping centers, conflict with the local culture of Kazakhstan, the formation of the feminine sexist spaces, high security, the gathering of the youth.
	Warnaby & Medway (2016)	Promoting consumerism, constant destruction, and reconstruction of the urban space, the decline in the retail markets in the suburbs.
	Ozorhan & Ozorhan (2014)	The change in the architectural landscape of the urban space, the change in the consumption culture and the taste of shopping, the formation of the populated suburbs, and the new lifestyle.
	Ozsoy (2013)	Ege Park Shopping center has created a new lifestyle.

Researchers	Summary of the Research Results
Koch & Latham (2012)	The conflict in people and scholars' opinions towards the shopping centers.
Polat & Dostoglu (2011)	The establishment of the shopping centers, creating controlled public space, and changing the people's tastes affect the usage of the other adjacent public spaces.
Ertekin et al. (2008)	The sphere of influence and attraction of the shopping centers in the central part of the city is higher than the influence sphere of the suburban shopping centers of the city.
Abaza (2001)	Malls in Egypt have become spaces for social interaction, consumption, and the formation of the model lifestyle.
Staeheli & Mitchell (2005)	The malls are in conflict with public interest through ways to organize the space and promote private interest.
Voyce (2006)	Privatization of the public space, increasing the control over the space, reducing the cultural diversity, and promoting the culture of consumption.
Manzo (2005)	Malls are the tools to increase social control over people.
Pourja'far et al. (2016)	Creating heavy traffic in the area surrounding the megamall is one of its significant spatialphysical consequences.
Hajiani (2016)	Atlas mall plays a role in weakening the neighborhood identity.
Rostami, Vojdani, & Dorostkar (2015)	Increased traffic, air pollution, and overpopulation increased security, increased investment, promotion of the culture and mental health of the children.
Fallahzadeh & Mahmoudi Pati (2014)	The saturation of the final limit of the capacity of the road network due to the travelgenerating rate of the commercial complex.
Masjedi & Nejadi (2014)	The large-scale shopping centers of Tehran are in conflict with the public interest of the society and unsuccessful due to the inappropriate location, lack of parking, lack of relationship between the commercial lines, and excessive increase in the price of the surrounding lands.
Modiri & Asadian (2014)	Malls play a significant role in improving vitality, creating positive economic effects and tourism development opportunities.
Ahour et al. (2013)	The key role of the megamalls in linking consumption with leisure.
Jia et al. (2011)	The more concentrated the administration system of a country, the less the public interest of the social groups in the projects.
Bornstein (2010)	The construction process of super projects in Vancouver and Montreal in Canada has considered the public interest more than the su-per projects of Los Angeles.
Omidi Bahremand (2017)	Excessive environmental load, reduction in residential satisfaction, increased in the land price and being uneconomical.
Sarkheili (2016)	The super projects of Mashhad are the result of the rentbased mechanism and in line with the interests of the key investors and are not based on their economic, environmental, physical, and social contexts.
Kheiraldin & Omidi Bahremand (2016)	The land price rate in the 6-120- meter distance from Sadr Highway has been more than the other surrounding neighborhoods.
Rastegar Hosseini (2016)	Majd Project of Mashhad has led to marginalizing the residents after implementation from four aspects of economic, social, access, and security.
Rafeian & Pahlevan (2015)	The physical and social consequences of large-scale projects are of more importance than other aspects.
Mozaffari, Papoli Yazdi, Vosoughi, & Hatami Nejad (2016)	The understudied large-scale projects in Tehran are in conflict with the public interest of the citizens due to providing the construction cost from all the regions and mere service to the surrounding area.
Kheiraldin, Kamyar, & Dalayi Milan (2015)	The conflict of the public interest of Tehran residents with the private ownership right of the residents of the neighborhoods around the projects has led to the inefficiency in the Imam Ali Highway Project of Tehran.

The Correlation of other Large-Scale Projects with the Public Interest

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Interest in terms means a benefit, profit, and usage (Moein, 2009, p. 4373) and is the result of profit and opposite of the loss (Dehkhoda, 1998, p. 21681). Public interest is a combination of public and interest. Public means all the society members and in the public interest,

refers to the interest that can be equally implemented to all the members of society. Furthermore, in Cowan urban dictionary, the public interest is defined as something that results in a common profit for a society created in a particular place based on the residence. Policymakers and some professionals (for example, urban planners) play a role in the public interest to

display themselves (Ahmadi, 2012, p. 185).

Despite its simplicity and common association, the public interest is a challenging and complicated concept. Also, regardless of the fact that the interest is considered based on what philosophical and anthropological foundations and how to analyze the inclusion of "public", this concept can be reviewed from various aspects. However, in general, there are two main approaches to the public interest. The first approach considers the public interest as the result of the total of private interests. In this approach, which is advocated by liberal and neoliberal perspectives, the common interest is the result of gathering the personal interest of the individuals. By gathering and aggregating

the personal interest of the people, the common interest is formed (Ahmadi, 2012, p. 189). However, the second approach knows the public interest as something beyond the total of the personal interests of individuals. In this approach, the aggregation of the interests and personal interests of a society or a group does not result in their common interest; because the common interest has a nature independent from the individuals' and a particular group's benefit and interest, and is distinguished from them (Ahmadi, 2012, p. 189). In other words, the public interest is an abstract concept referring to the society as a whole and considers all the members of a society together, not separately (Tiron Tudor, 2013, p. 932).

Table 2. The Criteria of Defining and Recognizing the Public Interest Based on the Perspectives of Scholars and Thought Schools

Theorist	The considered criteria
Benjamin Constant (1914)	- The distinction between personal and public life.
Aristotle	- Legalization of individuals and their attributes - Defining roles and responsibilities - Public life in public space
Jeremy Bentham	- The interest of the society is the sum of the interest of several members.
Liberal-democracy	- Democratic rules (collective choice)
Cassinely (1962)	- The assessment of the public interest based on the political situation which is useful for everyone.
Lipman (1956)	- Selection by the humans - The explicit, logical, benevolent, and impartial perspective.
James Summey (1974)	- There is nothing as public interest. - There are conflict interests in the competition.
Harvey (1985)	- The purpose and skillful ability of the rival's claims - The continuity of the existing social system - The facilitation of the social reproduction
Bell (1993)	- The requirements of the integration and progress of the society. - The net interests of certain individuals are of secondary importance.
Heywood (2002)	- A set of interests for the good of society. Separation from selfish interest, a higher value than individual interests.
Neoliberals	- Rejecting the separation of the public interests and desires from the private attachments; the measures related to the public interest are merely a legalizing cover for their motivation and advance and providing the personal interests.
Campbell & Feinstein (2009)	- Believe in the public interest. - Equal opportunity and support - Public space - Concept of civil society - Social responsibility - It is a basis for a set of values that are respected for planning.
IFAC (2012)	- It is the obtained net benefits, the procedural accuracy used for all the society and in any action, decision, or policy

(Ghannad Rad, 2015, p. 23)

According to scholars' opinions on public interest, the criteria of public interest are not absolute and fixed but are fluid and relative. Hence, this concept must be particularly studied in the social, cultural, historical, and political contexts of various societies. In this regard, the difference in the opinions of urban studies scholars can be stated, such as David Harvey, Don Mitchell, and Micheal Voyce, who considered public interest to equal the interest of the low-income, marginal, and poor groups. However, other scholars, such as

Abaza, Ozorhon, and Jager, know the public interest as something that the majority of society demands. Nevertheless, the generic and inclusive criteria can also be pursued for the public interest, including the right of allocation and usage of the urban spaces, and the right to have clean and healthy weather. Accordingly, the theoretical perspectives of the researchers of this research can be defined assuming the minimum criteria of the public interest regarding the conflicts of the selected shopping centers.

3. CASE STUDY

Four large-scale shopping centers located in the District 1 of Tehran Municipality were selected as case studies, including Arg Tajrish, Atlas Mall, Palladium,

Rosha. According to the available information, out of 359 shopping centers in Tehran, 67 shopping centers (8.18%) are located in District 1, and many others are under construction (Kazemi & Amirebrahmi, 2018, p. 286).

Table 3. The Characteristics of the Selected Megamalls in District 1 of Tehran Municipality

Shopping Center	Construction Year	Area	The Number of administrative Units	The Number of Commercial Units	The Number of Restaurants	The Number of Food Courts	The Capacity of the Parking Lot
Arg Tajrish	2016	78000 Square Meters	0	200	1	0	1017
Atlas Mall	2015	140000 Square Meters	224	331	0	0	1421
Palladium	2014	100000 Square Meters	43	160	4	1	1000
Rosha	2015	33000 Square Meters	0	150	0	0	1000

(<http://www.shoppingcenters.ir>)

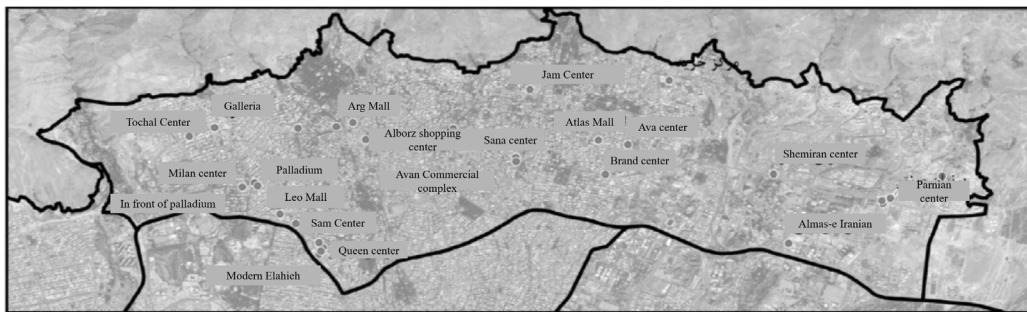


Fig. 1. The Built or Under Construction Shopping Malls in the Past Five Years in District 1 of Tehran

4. RESEARCH METHOD

According to the nature of the current research, the public interest was studied as a qualitative and relative subject. Its research method was qualitative. Taking a qualitative approach results in achieving a more profound and comprehensive perspective on the research problem. The statistical population included those associated with the shopping centers, such as shopkeepers, the residents of the neighboring neighborhoods, and the elites of Tehran. The members of the experts included two groups; the first group included those experts who were identified by the researchers and interviewed. The second group was those who talked about the selected shopping centers

on the websites and journals. The experts recognized by the researchers were all holding Ph.D. degrees in urbanism (2 experts), urban sociology (2 experts), economy, (3 experts), and the experts in the studies of the public spaces (4 experts). Furthermore, the evidence and documents were also studied that were related to the violations committed by the selected shopping centers from 2008 until 2019 based on the results of commissions of Article 5, Article 7, Article 100, and the results of the Supreme Council of Architecture and Urban Planning. The data collection method was the semi-structured interview, conversation, and documentary methods (based on the secondary data). Data analysis was also performed using open and axial coding and deductive reasoning.

Table 4. The Methodological Characteristics of Research

Analytical Sections	Number of Samples	Sampling Method	Data Collection Method	Analysis Method
Analyzing the opinions of experts of Tehran	Recognized by the researchers	7	Purposive	Semistructured interview
	Recorded perspectives on the websites	10	Total population	Documentary (secondary data)
Analyzing the residents' opinions of the neighborhoods in the adjacency of the selected shopping centers	Recognized by the researchers	20	Convenience	Conversation
	Recorded perspectives on the websites	8	Total population	Documentary (secondary data)

Analytical Sections	Number of Samples	Sampling Method	Data Collection Method	Analysis Method
Analyzing the users' opinions using the selected shopping centers	Recognized by the researchers	20	Convenience	Conversation
Analyzing the shopkeepers' opinions of the selected shopping centers	Recognized by the researchers	8	Convenience	Conversation
Analyzing the construction violations committed by the selected shopping centers	Evidence of each project	Total population	Documentary (secondary data)	Deductive Reasoning

5. FINDINGS

Based on the previously mentioned methodology, the analyses were performed based on the experts' opinions, residents of the neighborhoods neighboring the shopping centers, the users of the selected shopping centers, the shopkeepers of the stated shopping centers using documentary studies and semi-structured interviews with the stakeholders and influential people related to the shopping centers and studying the evidence related to the construction violations. Then, the construction conditions were investigated using open coding.

5.1. Analysis of the Experts' Opinions

The analysis process of the current research began by identifying and analyzing the experts' opinions. The results of the interviews showed that the malls in Tehran are associated with a broad range of issues. Some consequences of the development of these centers were assessed positive, including the codes, such as meeting the daily needs of the society, job creation, prosperity of the construction market. However, the number of the codes containing the negative impacts was much more, indicating the conflicts of these centers with the criteria of the public interest. In the following, the results of the open coding and minimizing the descriptive propositions to categories have been presented.

Table 5. Analyzing the Experts' Opinions of Tehran on the Consequences and Conflicts of the Mega Malls Using Open Coding

Descriptive Propositions	Extracted Categories
Providing the needs of the society, the prosperity of the construction and job creation, and stimulating the market of the goods related to the construction periodically are among the positive effects of the shopping centers.	Providing society's needs, construction prosperity, and job creation.
Unlike the shopping centers of the 1990s, new megamalls are multipurpose places in which the change of consumption, shopping, and leisure is completed. These shopping centers have changed shopping from a needbased activity to a leisurebased activity.	Multipurpose feature of the malls and changing the leisure pattern.
Irregular development of the largescale shopping centers of Tehran has disturbed local residents' convenience and comfort.	Disturbing the residents' convenience and comfort,
This is a retail market that gives vitality to the street space along the streets and is also compatible with the human scale. By destroying the retail store, the malls have taken away the pleasure of leisure and shopping along the street from the citizens and changed the style of wandering, spending leisure time, and shopping in their favor.	The destruction of the retail market and vitality and social life of the street.
Multipurpose shopping centers evacuate the public spaces and direct the people to the semipublic spaces. Currently, the public spaces have broken and turned into micro semipublic and semiprivate spaces.	The fictitious space and reduced power of the public spaces.
Malls have caused a decline and reduction in the income of the retail businesses in the city and have seriously damaged the local microeconomy.	The destroyed retail stores.
Although the development of the malls in Tehran has met the needs of a particular class of citizens, they have undesirable consequences due to the violation of the required regulation and rules.	Violating the construction regulations.
The malls are naturally in conflict with the production, industrial economy, and domestic production, and have numerous social-spatial costs.	Conflict with the production and industrial economy.
These shopping centers are changing the lifestyle and taste of the citizens by producing semipublic semiprivate spaces in which some citizens can freely spend time, and threaten the life of the public urban spaces.	The destruction of the actual public spaces through changing the people's taste
These privatized spaces can never play the same role and function as the urban public spaces and if necessary, the citizens will return to the public urban spaces and capture it.	The inefficiency of malls as civil public spaces.

Descriptive Propositions	Extracted Categories
<p>These centers have changed the taste and desire of the middle-class and low-class citizens, which means the destruction of the production and supply the domestic goods. In the long term, the retail centers will no longer exist not only in the city but also in the country. The place in which there is no production and product activity will be gradually declined and it will be the end of urban life and the tragedy of the public interest.</p>	<p>Weakening the retail store and destruction of the domestic product.</p>
<p>The shopping center is the result of the broken-down profitability policy and indicates the poor and unproductive economy. The capitals which should have been used in the production and development of the industries have shifted to a non-productive investment.</p>	<p>The destruction of the productive and industrial economy.</p>
<p>The retail market is declining. The malls increasingly led to weakening the industries of the country, especially handcraft and textile. More shopping from these centers means more imports from China.</p>	<p>Weakening the retail market, weakening the industries, and destruction of the domestic production.</p>
<p>Malls reduce the diversity of the spaces. The behaviors and behavioral patterns become limited yet desirable for the governmental institutions.</p>	<p>Limiting and controlling the behavioral patterns.</p>
<p>The development of the malls in Tehran is in conflict with the public and community benefits.</p>	<p>Conflict with the public interest.</p>
<p>Malls have now replaced real public spaces, and policymakers or the people do not need public spaces. Because demand is also formed under the influence of culture and media.</p>	<p>Changing people's taste towards consumer-ism and fashionism and the role of media in this regard.</p>
<p>Encouraging more consumption and changing people's tastes and desires is one of the most important social consequences of malls.</p>	<p>Municipality's profits at the cost of destroying the public interest of citizens</p>
<p>The municipality benefits from the fees resulting from the issuance of licenses for the construction of these complexes and centers, but not the city and its citizens.</p>	<p>Weakening the function of the traditional market</p>
<p>Megamalls have basically decentralized the traditional market and a limited role has been given to them.</p>	<p>dominance over the active social and economic centers of the city and fragmentation of the economic power of the city.</p>
<p>We currently experience the process of transferring the city center to megamalls. Megamalls want to replace the people's presence in the center and keep people inside instead of being present in the street. Economic power in the city is now fragmented. Some are in the traditional market, some in malls, and some in street retailers.</p>	<p>Formation of a new urban space in the center of the cities.</p>
<p>The malls in Iran have not been developed the same as the American model, which was based on suburbanization. The experience of malls development in the center of the city has led to the formation of new urban living space.</p>	<p>Change in the leisure model</p>
<p>The predominant form of leisure for Tehrani people is still leisure inside the houses, and now the only thing the malls do is to take the citizens out of the closed but diverse space of the malls.</p>	<p>Climate comfort and convenience</p>
<p>Since it is not easy to walk and spend time and shop during the day due to the hot weather in summer, malls are very crowded in the evenings of Tehran where the weather temperature is lower than in the evenings of Berlin or Vienna that are quiet. Also, in the recent decade, since wandering without cars in the city has become difficult due to the air pollution and walking in the streets is not the priority for the cities, malls can easily invite the cities.</p>	<p>The lack of parking, traffic, and overcrowding.</p>
<p>Nowadays, the biggest problem of these complexes is the lack of parking and the traffic situation of the roads surrounding the megamalls that are totally affected by the extra travel caused by the activity of these centers, especially in the evenings and nights.</p>	<p>Supporting personal car and conflict with walkability</p>
<p>Megamalls have turned their surrounding alleys and streets into parking lots, leading to the issuance of the maximum number of traffic tickets for the "no stopping places" around the megamalls.</p>	<p>Destroying civil life</p>
<p>Unfortunately, access to the megamalls using public transportation is minimal, and most visitors to these centers use a personal vehicle.</p>	<p>No place and traffic continuity</p>
<p>The megamalls influence the civic life of the areas where they are created and transform the social and cultural life in those areas, and therefore, megamalls "trample" civil rights.</p>	<p>Design and architectural problems</p>
<p>The problem of megamalls in Tehran is that no detailed urban and traffic studies have been conducted on their location.</p>	<p>The latent external effects on the citizens' lives.</p>
<p>Narrow corridors, inadequate parking, short ceilings, the incorrect layout of brands and products offered in them are among the most important problems of malls that bother users.</p>	<p>The positive effects on the aesthetics and visual landscape of the city</p>

Descriptive Propositions	Extracted Categories
<p>The adverse effects of a project, including social, environmental, etc., are not calculated in the accounting model and are not received from the owners in Iran and Tehran. This is because these projects have considerable costs and external effects for the city and citizens that are not considered. Therefore, the public interest is sacrificed for personal interest, and urban management sells the public interest to the individuals at a low price.</p>	<p>Inappropriate location, crowd, and traffic.</p>
<p>The shopping centers function beyond the economic places. Nowadays, these centers are responsible for the aesthetics of the neighborhoods and define the visual manifestations of the city. Therefore, if in the past, the height, broadness, and beauty of places such as mosques, etc. indicated the appearance and beauty of the city, today, shopping centers are responsible for this.</p>	<p>The positive effects of malls: providing people's needs</p>
<p>Nowadays, we easily issue permission for the construction of the large malls in the alleys and streets that are already dealing with the traffic. For example, if a mall is located in a proper place, the permission for constructing other malls will be issued irregularly in the neighboring of that mall so that after their exploitation, the first mall cannot function well anymore.</p>	<p>The negative effects: not considering social and cultural contexts</p>
<p>The existence of such complexes is generally fine and can meet the services and needs of the people. The main issue is that these complexes have been placed and built without considering the social and cultural contexts, without studying the land uses required by the people in that place. For this reason, it causes serious problems for the residents around it, and since the principles are not observed, this issue becomes a public problem.</p>	<p>Municipalities are benefited at the cost of destroying the public interest.</p>
<p>Municipalities have generated a huge income from all the malls under construction, even if the construction of that mall is not completed, and if this can be considered as a kind of extravagance, it will only have adverse effects on the people.</p>	<p>Disregarding the qualitative aspects of the design and construction</p>
<p>The competition between the mall builders has been merely focused on increasing the number of malls. For example, the maximum floors, the maximum number of stores, the deepest excavation, and alike, lead to the decline in the quality of these centers and affect the users.</p>	<p>Design and construction issues and not considering the type of exploitation of the commercial units of the malls</p>
<p>When designing and building properties in Iran, the least attention is paid to exploitation. However, in many successful projects in other countries, even before the excavation began, it was clear which guild and which brands wanted to be involved in the shopping mall.</p>	<p>Design and construction issues</p>
<p>There are specific companies as developers around the world that are responsible for controlling the mall construction. Not only is not there such a developer company structurally in Iran, but also Iran lacks the knowledge in terms of content.</p>	<p>The damages caused by preselling the commercial units.</p>
<p>Preselling the commercial units of malls play a significant role in their inefficiency. One of the reasons for this issue is the high cost of keeping the money in the bank system of Iran and the high commercial tolls of municipalities to issues the construction permission.</p>	<p>The inefficiency of malls due to the lack of an integrated management</p>
<p>The longterm benefits ensuring high profits for citizens are sacrificed for the shortterm benefits due to the lack of integrated management of the malls and other reasons, and the municipalities and bank systems are most benefited from these profits.</p>	<p>Violating citizens' public interest due to the inefficiency of the laws</p>
<p>The role of laws is also important in this regard. For example, one solution was to sell the area of malls, not their commercial units, to citizens for financing. For example, one could buy three meters of a mall without having billion dollar capital and benefit from renting and participating in the sale of brands and all the revenue-generating contexts of the mall after an increase in the land prices. However, this has not been done.</p>	<p>The decline in the quality of the malls due to the dependence on the public sector.</p>
<p>Most of the shopping malls in Iran are either built by state or semistate companies or banks. However, the highquality malls in the country have been built by the private sector.</p>	<p>The role of the municipality in the inefficiency of the malls for people</p>
<p>The municipality plays a significant role in the inefficiency of the malls. The taken tolls for the permission have led to the reduction in the mall construction and service to the people. Municipalities usually request one-third to one-fourth of the value of a completed mall even before the excavation starts. This value can be seen in the increase of the mall price, which, in turn, leads to increasing the risk of the investor and reducing the power of the management and proper exploitation.</p>	<p>The lack of study appendices, the lack of needs assessment, and the spatial proportion between the malls and urban context.</p>

Descriptive Propositions	Extracted Categories
None of the large-scale and small-scale commercial complexes have study appendices and have been built in the desired. The decision-makers of the master and detailed plans of Tehran have particularly emphasized the construction of the malls and megamalls in the capital based on the needs assessment. However, the proportion has not been considered in the environmental geography.	Monetization approach of the municipality, lack of study appendices, the construction of the mall in the illegal zones, and excessive loading in the permitted zones.
Currently, there are no study appendices regarding the construction of some megamalls, and the monetization of the municipalities is based on their construction. Unfortunately, the master plan of Tehran has not been taken seriously by various violations, except for two zones that have permission for the loading or commercial land use (Zones S & M). The builders should intervene in other zones. Regardless of the violation in the detailed plan zones, one of the main challenges of Tehran is the excessive loading in the permitted zones.	The weakness in the required infrastructures.
Development of the large shopping centers when the minimum infrastructures have not been considered for them is a violation of the citizens' social rights.	Positive effect: providing public comfort
We agree with any service that can provide comfort for the citizens. However, there must be integrated management to include all the groups who must be in this area to serve.	Negative: not including all groups
The existence of cultural studies is one of the most significant prerequisites for creating malls.	The lack of cultural studies
I agree with the totality of the megamalls. However, the permissions of the municipalities for megamalls are not currently logical. Most megamalls are located in the suburbs of the world. A needs assessment has not been performed for constructing the shopping centers.	The lack of needs assessment for constructing malls and the lack of proper locating.
When there are commercial complexes, the shopping will be easier, the traffic will be less, and the costs will be reduced.	Increased speed and easy accessibility

After integrating the similar codes and eliminating the repetitive codes, 53 codes remained. These codes were classified and summarized as axial coding. Finally, 8 main axes were extracted, out of which one axis

included positive effects of the shopping centers and the rest contained the various conflicts of these centers with the criteria of the public interest.

Table 6. Classification of the Consequences and Conflicts of the Megamalls in Tehran from Experts' Opinions Based on the Axial Coding

Main Axes	Extracted Categories
Positive and Desirable Consequences	Providing the society's needs, the prosperity of construction, job creation, increased speed and easy accessibility, climate comfort and convenience, being multipurpose, changing leisure pattern, formation of the new living space in the center of the cities, and positive effects on the visual landscape and aesthetics of the city.
The Conflicts and Adverse Economic Consequences	The conflict with the production, the conflict with the industrial economy, the conflict with the domestic production, the destruction of the retail market and the micro economy, producing the unproductive rent capital, the destruction of the domestic production, the destruction of the industrial and productive economy, weakening the handicraft and textile industry, weakening the function of the traditional market, the domination over the active social and economic centers of the city and fragmentation of the economic power of the city.
Conflicts and Adverse Physical, Spatial, and Environmental Consequences	Disturbing the residents' comfort and convenience, traffic and crowd, environmental pollution, imposing spatial costs on the city, the lack of proper locating, violating the construction rules, the lack of traffic and spatial studies, the lack of needs assessment, the poor infrastructures, the lack of spatial proportion to the urban texture, the latent external effects on the citizens' lives, construction in the illegal zones and excessive loading in the legal zones.
Conflicts and Adverse Social Consequences	Changing people's taste towards consumerism and fashionism, the role of media in promoting consumerism and the function of malls, imposing social costs on the city, the lack of social and cultural studies, and destruction of the vitality and social life of the street.
Conflicts and Adverse Civil Consequences	Fictitious of the space, reduction in the power of public spaces, the inefficiency of the malls as civil social spaces, the total destruction of the public space by changing people's taste, limiting and controlling the behavioral patterns and exclusion and lack of inclusion for all groups

Main Axes	Extracted Categories
The Conflicts and Consequences Caused by the Role of Government Institutions	Municipal monetization approach, municipal profit at the cost of destroying the public interest of citizens, degradation of malls quality due to dependence on the public sector, and the role of the municipality in the inefficiency of malls for the people
The Conflicts and Consequences Caused by the Design and Construction Issues	The design and architectural issues, the lack of attention to the qualitative aspects of the design, and disregarding the type of exploitation of the commercial units of the malls.
The Conflicts and Consequences Caused by the Managerial Issues	The damages caused by preselling the commercial units, the inefficiency of the malls due to the lack of integrated management, and violating the public interest due to the inefficient regulations.

5.2. Analysis of the Residents' Opinions

The residents around the shopping centers are among the social groups who are directly affected by the consequences of these projects. The theoretical literature of the shopping centers in Iran has often studied the dissatisfaction of the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods of these centers. The results of the current field study showed that the results were in line with this to a great extent. The implications obtained from interviewing the adjacent neighborhoods of the shopping center show their agreed and disagreed opinions on constructing these centers in the residential neighborhoods. But the opponents of building these centers were more than the proponents. Prosperous views mainly emphasized the branding of the goods offered in these complexes and the ease of meeting the daily needs of the residents. However, opposite views were often in line with the conclusions presented by the panel of experts, such as traffic and crowded neighborhoods. These views also had different points, including the reduction of property prices near the complexes (due to the lack of comfort for residents) and the increase in the price of more remote properties (due to changes in residential neighborhoods and their conversion into commercial neighborhoods), disturbance due to spotlights of the complexes, expensive goods, and expensive parking prices. Other cases have also been reported. For example, owners and managers of some shopping malls such as Palladium and Arg Tajrish encourage residents to sell their homes to owners due to high traffic to use these spaces to build parking lots or commercial spaces.

5.3. Analysis of Users' Opinions

It seems that the shopping centers are more in line with their users in terms of the criteria of the public interest than other groups of users; because the users of megamalls in Iran are generally satisfied with these centers. The results of the field study on the selected shopping centers showed the following factors:

- About 62% of visitors to selected shopping malls come to these malls for non-shopping purposes. Indeed, major differences were observed between these centers. For example, due to its branding, Palladium Complex has a stronger purchasing function than other centers and has its own regular and special customers.

- Being multipurpose and attractiveness of the space inside the malls are important factors in users' acceptance of these centers.

- Women have more tendency towards these shopping centers than men. Also, among women, the youth and adolescents use these spaces more than other age groups. Spending leisure time, window shopping, and security are the most important reasons for the presence of women in these studied spaces.

Another study previously conducted by the researchers (Izadpanah & Habibi, 2018) also showed that despite all the negative consequences caused by the construction of the megamalls, there is public acceptance of these centers in Tehran most important reasons for which are the multifunctionality of these centers, climate comfort, environmental quality, high security, and the possibility for having prestige by these spaces. According to the results of this research, there are two main reasons for the public welcome of the megamalls in Iranian society. The first reason is the change in the lifestyle of the middle class, and the second reason is the existence of the structural restrictions ruling the public spaces of Iran, resulting in the consideration of the megamalls as alternative public spaces in the absence of the perfect public spaces.

5.4. Analyzing the Opinions of Shopkeepers and Traders

The shopkeepers and traders located in the shopping centers have more moderate opinions than other groups. That is, some of these opinions were in line with the implications of the experts, and some others were in line with the residents of the neighborhoods and users of these centers; in summary, the opinions of the shopkeepers included the following points:

- The retail stores are gradually eliminated by the malls.
- Encouraging to use malls instead of public spaces has gradually changed people's tastes.
- People prefer the shopping center to the parks. It has gradually changed the leisure pattern.
- The presence of various people to wander, drink tea, spend leisure time without shopping is the most significant function of these centers in Tehran.
- The shopping centers have caused issues regarding the damages to the public interest; because the neighbors are disturbed by the commuting of strangers in their neighborhood.

- The development of the shopping centers in Tehran was the result of rent.
- Building parks have no profit for the municipality. The shopping centers are a win-win situation both for the owner and the municipality due to the high tolls.
- Wandering in the shopping centers and window shopping are among the common functions of the shopping centers in Tehran.
- Food courts have the highest amount of sales in the shopping centers of Tehran.
- Shops that are branches of the same brand have no price difference anywhere in Tehran, and therefore the public perception that the price of goods is higher in shopping malls than outside shops is not always correct.
- Palladium complex is more vital than other shopping centers of District 1 due to being brand and the ability of the visitors to shop and presence.
- The residents around the shopping malls have been disturbed due to the influence of the spotlights of these shopping centers in their houses at night.

5.5. Pathology of the Irregular Construction of the Selected Shopping Centers

Reviewing the evidence and documents of the four selected shopping centers in the design and construction stages shows the various aspects of the construction violations in these projects. Indeed, since these centers have a building license and all the required permissions have been taken from the municipality and urbanism commissions, they cannot be considered a violation. However, due to the inefficiencies in the surveillance system on the constructions in Iran and the legal gaps and lack of unity between the executive organizations, the opportunity for irregular construction can be provided. So far, many government institutions and the authorities of the shopping centers have discussed the violations of these projects, most of which were mentioned in media and were accessible through various resources. Hence, this section generally stated the violations of each selected shopping center results of which were presented in Table 7.

Table 7. The Violations of the Selected Shopping Centers Based on Reviewing the Evidence of Each Project

Shopping Center	Violations
Arg Tajrish	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Land use conversion of a 10000 square meter garden to commercial land use (the broadness of the changed land use area) 2. The land use conversion of a place with the cultural and religious function that its function should have not been changed according to the regulations of the detailed plan. 3. The change of the project until the final exploitation due to the length of the review process and issuance of the detailed plan (changing the sign of the project from the parking garage to cul-tural commercial parking garage and then to commercial complex) 4. Ignoring the regulations of cultural heritage organization based on no construction in the area of Saadabad Palace
Atlas Mall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Illegal change of the public land uses: the land of project previously belonged to the municipality with public parking land use and based on the approved master plan of Tehran (2007) 2. Ignoring the criteria of the detailed plan for construction: According to the detailed plan of Tehran, the location of this project is in the M111 zone, but this project has been given a construction permit more than what was allocated to the M111 zone. 3. Violations related to the construction of a project on Tehran Metro Line 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of the project after the approval of the initial loca-tion of the metro and change of the location of the metro after the construction of the project - Placement of concrete foundations of the building on the way to the subway tunnel and the lack of possibility for constructing a subway station in the future - lack of possibility for reinforcing the newly established metro tunnel (which was already built) and creating a vulnerable point against earthquakes 4. Violations related to being located in the area of the historical monuments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Located in the area of Saheboghranieh Palace and creating cracks and vibrations in the building - Damage to the Qanats located behind Saheboghranieh Palace and water infiltration into the building - Ignoring the border criteria of nationally registered monuments 5. Blocking the Qanats path and facilitating landslide
Palladium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Changing the land use of a garden to commercial land use without the permission of Article 5 Commission 2. Ignoring the regulations of the detailed plan, such as area, height, the number of floors, and the type of the mixed land use 3. Establishing less parking (parking deduction) 4. The change of parking land use to commercial land use (buying the required land for constructing extra parking and turning it into commercial land use). 5. Connecting northernoriented and southern oriented buildings through a 40-meter overpass bridge and an underground road 6. Disturbing the neighbors due to the spotlights of the complex at night 7. Construction of the complex in a 6-meter alley 8. Other violations related to the design and construction of the complex (changing the land use of the inner floors. removing the stairway, etc.)

Shopping Center	Violations
Rosha	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Non-compliance of the license with the zoning of the detailed plan and conversion of the garden (with a residential building) into a commercial building (change of the zone and land use despite being identified as a garden) 2. Ignoring the regulations of the detailed plan regarding the surplus building density and the capacity of the parking 3. 100% coverage lot of the building disregarding the regulations and the neighboring buildings. 4. 100% longitudinal advance of the building disregarding the rights of the northern and southern neighbors. 5. Console construction disregarding the contents of the building license 6. The construction of more floors against the building license contents 7. The conflict between approved plans and constructed building 8. Issuance of destruction by the Article 100 Commission yet not implementing it. 9. Other violations related to the design and construction of the complex (change of use of interior floors, removal of stains, removal of parking, etc.)

As can be seen, the land of four projects is the result of changing the non-commercial land use to commercial land use, three of which were considered gardens. According to the table of zoning regulations in the last edition of the detailed plan of Tehran (2016), Arg Tajrish land was located in M221 Zone, which includes the sanctuary of the tombs and Imamzadeh shrines and the decision about this zone was the stabilizing the quo status until preparing and approving special plans, not the land-use conversion. Furthermore, in the current zone of this complex (M211), the maximum permitted density equals 150% and three floors. However, Arg Complex has done seven floors of loading in excess of the regulations. The land of Atlas mall also has been public parking in the old detailed plan. After the municipality sold this land to the owner of this complex,

despite the verdict of Article 5 commissions and Supreme Council of Urban Planning and Architecture, this complex was constructed and has been included in the S222 zone. Table 9 shows that the construction regulations in this zone are mentioned without the exact specifications and are subject to the verdict of the Article 5 Commission. Such regulations let the relevant commissions change the land use of valuable urban lands. Table 10 also shows that the loadings performed by the Palladium and Rosha complexes were in surplus of the M113 zone regulations. As mentioned in the results of interviews with experts, the two main zones of violation of shopping centers in Tehran are "construction in unauthorized zones" and "excessive loading in permitted zones".

Table 8. Construction Regulations in the Related Zones to Arg Tajrish Complex in the Detailed Plan

Code Zone	The Maximum Permitted Building Density	The Maximum Number of Floors	The Maximum Coverage Lot		The Minimum Accommodation Coefficient	The Minimum Dimension of the Plots	Minimum Allowed Road Width
			Lower Floors	Higher Floors			
M221	Fixing the quo status until preparing and approving the special plans				40%	-	-
M211	150	3	50% in the ground floor	50%	30%	300	12
R112	180%	3	60%	-	-	-	-
R122	300%	5	60%	-	250	10	-

Table 9. The Construction Regulations in the Zones Related to Atlas Mall in the Detailed Plan

Code Zone	The Maximum Permitted Building Density	The Maximum Number of Floors	The Maximum Coverage Lot		The Minimum Accommodation Coefficient	The Minimum Dimension of the Plots	Minimum Allowed Road Width
			Lower Floors	Higher Floors			
S213	310%	8	50% until 2 floors	35%	-	1000	12
M111	440	9	80% until 2 floors	40%	30%	750	20
S222	With the topical special plans and approved by Article 5 commission of the city						

Table 10. The Construction Regulations in the Zones Related to Palladium and Rosha Complexes in the Detailed Plan

Code Zone	The Maximum Permitted Building Density	The Maximum Number of Floors	The Maximum Coverage Lot		The Minimum Accommodation Coefficient	The Minimum Dimension of the Plots	Minimum Allowed Road Width
			Lower Floors	Higher Floors			
M113	280	5	80% in the ground floor	50%	70%	350	14

According to a research plan on the conflicts of the detailed plan of Tehran with the master plan of 2007, it was concluded that many of the agreements and the land use changes and high-rise building have been conducted in the period between the issuance of the master plan of Tehran (2008.05. 19) until the issuance of the detailed plan and its reviews in 2012. Such an issue is one of the contexts and grounds of changing the city based on the conducted agreements (Bigdeli, 2017). After issuing the detailed plan in 2012, two reviews were conducted on this plan between 2012 until 2015. In these reviews, main changes have been done on the zoning (changing the zone and population absorption), change of the fixed land uses (green space, urban equipment, and public parking), reserve lands and gardens (not preserving the gardens), compared to the master plan and primary detailed plan (Table 11).

These changes have effects and consequences, such as increased building density, increased population absorption, reduced volume of public service, especially destruction of gardens, serious damage on the livability and healthy life of Tehran city (Bigdeli, Dolat Abadi, & Alipour, 2016, p. 1). There are conflicts with the master plan in the detailed plan issued in 2012 as follows:

- 20% of the residential zone equivalent to 5236 hectares is allocated to other sub-zones.
- 17.5% of the activity zone equivalent to 3172 hectares is allocated to other sub-zones.
- 30% of the mixed zone, equivalent to 1382 hectares, has been allocated to other sub-zones.
- 5% of the preserved zone (green and open) equivalent to 344 hectares is allocated to other sub-zones (Bigdeli, 2017).

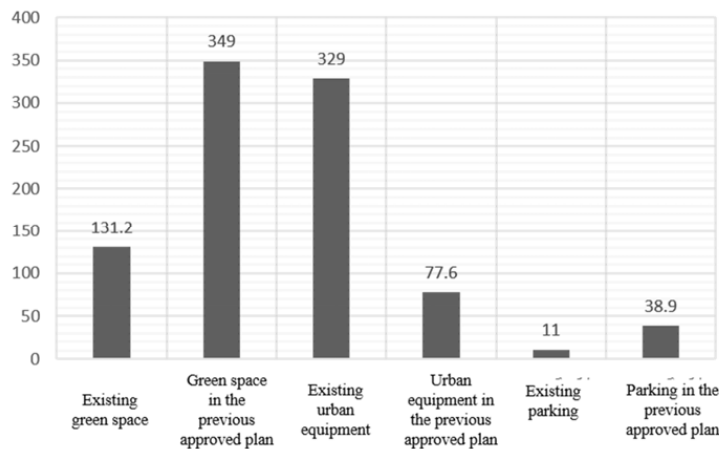


Fig. 2. The Area of the Extracted Land Uses from Fixing the Situation in the Detailed Plan (Bigdeli, 2017)

Table 11. The Conflicts of the Detailed Plan of Tehran with the Master Plan Approved in 2007

Subject	The Studied Characteristic	The Conflicted Cases	Descriptions	The Value of Change	Percentage of Change
Zoning	Changing the zone	Changes of the detailed plan from 2011 to 2012	Added subzones G324, M115, M116, M117, S126	795 hectares	1.2
		Changing the zone of the detailed plan to the master plan in the macro, main, and sub-zone scales	Main changes of the specific zones	5234 hectares	8.5
		Other changes of the zoning	11736	19.2	
Population absorption	Increased limit of population absorption	Increased limit of population absorption of Tehran and other 22 districts with a population of 870000	870000 people	8.2	

Subject	The Studied Characteristic	The Conflicted Cases	Descriptions	The Value of Change	Percentage of Change
Stabilized Land Uses	Greenspace	Changing the green space to the master plan and to the quo status	Inconsistency of existing green space of the master plan with the stabilized green space of the detailed plan	5949 hectares	9.7
			Being out of the stabilization by the consultant engineer of the integrated detailed plan	7.480 hectares	34.3
			Not-preserving the current green space and construction in them		
	Urban equipment	Changing the urban equipment in comparison with the master plan	Being out of the stabilization by the consultant engineer of the integrated detailed plan	6.406 hectares	26.5
	Public parking	Changing the public parking to the master plan	Being out of the stabilization by the consultant engineer of the integrated detailed plan	50 hectares	0.06
Reserve Lands	Legal approvals	Changing the reserve lands of the development and renovation to the master plan	Being out of the stabilization by the consultant engineer of the integrated detailed plan	1175 hectares	23.2
	Status quo		Construction in the reserved lands that were wastelands in the master plan.	200 hectares	5
Gardens and Agricultural Lands	In comparison with the detailed plan	Not preserving the gardens and agricultural lands and construction in them.	45% of the gardens and agricultural lands in the zones related to the gardens (Zone G and Zone R24) were not mentioned in the detailed plan and master plan.	769 hectares	45
			Built gardens and agricultural lands	920 hectares	42
			The change of the gardens to the master plan	Built gardens	222 hectares

The reasons for the construction violations and the conflicts of the detailed and master plans are multiple and various factors. Financial independence of the municipalities and the lack of providing stable income, higher costs of the service and administration of the city, the weakness in the role of the surveillance institutions, such as city council, on the performance of the municipalities, the inefficiency of the mechanisms of implementing the master and detailed plans, the existence of the committees and various commissions, including agreement commission of the district, the poor civil resistance, and social surveillance, and lack of preventing rules of changing the land use of the valuable zones, all together caused a defect cycle in which we experience the manipulation of the city at the costs of the destruction of the long term public interest and providing the short term personal interest.

6. CONCLUSION

The development of the megamalls, as one of the symbols of capitalism and globalization, is the result of the transformation of the cities towards being more consumed. These emerging spaces have influenced

daily urban life profoundly and in layers and could attract people's acceptance to a great extent, which is the result of their multifunctional features and advantages. However, their negative consequences on the body of the cities and citizens' lives cannot be neglected. Analyzing the negative and positive effects of these spaces based on the public interest approach provides a framework through which we can have a more profound perspective on the urban issues and not rely on the short-term advantages and interests of the urban projects. In contrast, we must analyze these effects in the long run by considering all aspects of urban life.

According to the results of the current research, megamalls can be assessed and criticized at three levels based on the public interest approach:

- Malls as public and social spaces; various studies in the literature of the public spaces showed that the development of the malls and megamalls caused changes in the social and cultural structure of the cities and diminished the political functions of the public spaces and citizens' demanding by changing their tastes and desires towards consumption and mere

leisure. Moreover, they prevent spontaneous social interactions and take steps towards increasing control over the urban spaces by providing a homogenous, predictable yet secure, and high-quality space. This critical aspect of the megamalls has been bolder than other aspects due to the private ownership of these spaces and the possibility to cancel the access any time by the owner or the manager of the space, which has an inclusive and generic appearance in many cities of the world that approves the results of the current research.

- Malls as building blocks added to the spatial structure of the city; the second critical aspect of the development of the megamalls, especially in Tehran, regardless of their social function, includes the consequences and conflicts that are imposed on the body of the city and public life of the residents of the urban neighborhoods as a part of the spatial structure; so that the maximum number of the consequences identified by the experts in the current research was a part of this section. Despite all the criticizes of the social and civil function of the malls, mall construction in the world has always followed regulations and principles, resulting in perverse the relationship between the built shopping malls and the urban texture and the surrounding environmental context, which is less manifested in Tehran. The public acceptance of these centers on the one hand and the profitability for the urban management and their investors, on the other hand, have led to the quantitative irregular development of these centers in the center of the residential contexts and inner parts of the cities the direct effect of which is disturbing the comfort and convenience of the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods. On the other hand, the megamalls are the manifestation of the construction violations and inefficiency of the construction control and surveillance mechanism on the production of the urban spaces too. The institutions of the urban manager in Tehran and Iran have always acquired for creating profitable spaces in the cities to ensure the profitability for the builders and urban management institutions while providing leisure and consuming functions for the citizens. It has become legal and legitimized as

the two-way agreements between the owners and the institutions, such as the municipality, through the related commissions. Indeed, the construction violations are not dedicated to the megamalls only and include all the urban constructions in Iran that must be analyzed in a macro-political economy context, which is the domination of the neoliberal economy on the contemporary cities.

According to the public interest perspective, what caused the neoliberal economy in Tehran and other metropolitans is the personal interest of the individuals at the cost of destruction of the public interest of the city and the collective interests of the city have been sacrificed for the personal interest. This issue confirms that the public interest is not the result of the sum of the personal interest of the people. It is possible that all residents of Tehran - assuming their financial affordability- tend to increase the number of floors, high-rise buildings and change their land use. In such a situation, it cannot be said that the public interest of the citizens has been achieved, which, on the contrary, harms the whole city.

- Malls only as the shopping centers; the third critical aspect of the malls is to consider them only as of the shopping centers, and regardless of their other external social and spatial consequences, focus on the conflicts of these built spaces as the shopping center. The obtained result of the current research and similar studies indicate that the megamalls are in conflict with the public interests of the citizens even disregarding their other external consequences. Expensive goods, the destruction of the retail economy, and conflict with the industrial and productive economy in general, and the destruction of the business of other citizens, i.e., destroying their personal interest, are among the most important aspect of this attribute. Furthermore, the construction and design issues of these centers, such as narrow corridors in some malls, unspecific land use until the exploitation, the difficulty of access for the disabled people and groups, the difficulty of access without a personal car, are other issues of this critical aspect of the malls.

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