

The Analysis of Factors Affecting the Residential Mobility of Afghan Immigrants Residing in Mashhad (Case Study: Municipality Regions 4, 5 and 6)

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Abstract

The settlement of the immigrants, especially foreign immigrants in different cities and city areas has a major influence in shaping and changing socio-spatial structure of these areas. Mashhad has been the target of a large number of Afghan refugees in the past decades (160 thousand people). The initial settlement of immigrants in marginal areas of the city and residential mobility in the early settlement has obvious consequences on the social and spatial structure of different areas targeted by the immigrants. This study aimed to analyze the factors affecting the residential mobility of Afghan refugees residing in districts 4, 5 and 6 of Mashhad- Iran. The research was a survey type and the required data were gathered by field studies using questionnaires and library. The results of this study suggests that a major portion Afghan immigrant (86%) have been settled at the beginning of their arrival to Mashhad in marginal areas and slums including, Golshahr, Panj-tan, Ghaleh Sakhteman and Tollab. In the initial settlement of immigrants in the mentioned places factors such as proximity to fellow coreligionists and affordable rental housing prices are crucial. In terms of residential mobility, 45.7% of immigrant families have changed their location at least once in Mashhad. The highest residential mobility has taken place in the Golshahr areas (28.1%) and Panj-tan (28.1%). Family residential mobility between regions existed in smaller and restricted scale. The stated reasons and motives in relation to residential mobility of immigrants are different in the later stages after primary residence. Generally the factors of insecurity and lack of resources and utilities, improved financial condition and ability to buy a better house, ethnics and religion inconsonance and the tenant conditions are among the reasons stated by the refugees for changing their residence.

Keywords: Mashhad, Migration, Afghan immigrants, residential mobility, Intra urban mobility

1. Introduction

Nowadays residential mobility issue in different urban areas have been taken into consideration because of the inevitable cause and effect relationship between the intra-urban migration and its socio-spatial structure especially in the analysis of urban social geography (Shalyn & Cloud, 1993). The movement of the families from a residential area to other neighborhoods in the city plays a major role in the formation or change of urban social zones. Although migration shapes and changes social and demographic structure of the neighborhood, it is conditioned by the social- special structure of the city (Knox & Pinch, 2014). Mobility patterns of immigrants may be influenced by factors such as proximity to the workplace, duration of residence, employment status, income, age, gender and family circumstances (Wu, 2006). Intra-urban movement of the families has obvious consequences on the land market, housing and rent, new housing construction and renovation and repair of existing housing, changes in the pattern of housing and residential density in different parts of the city and forms and changes the social zones within cities.

In recent decades, several studies on the subject of intra-urban residential mobility and movement have been conducted out of the country including: (Sinai, 2001; Ocucu, 2006) about the African cities (Wu, 2006), cities of China (Karasko & Alenso, 2007) and about the city of Barcelona.

Despite the tremendous impact of residential movement on the social- spatial structure, the focus has been on the

causes and consequences of international migration and urban –village in Iranian studies, however, the intra urban mobility and the fact that why the foreign immigrants after moving to a town change their location is less considered. However, in recent years, few studies have been conducted in this area, which include: Sajjadi (2008) in relation to social and spatial causes and consequences of intra-urban migration in the old Tharanpars-Tehran, Toulaei (2011) about the factors affecting the intra-urban migration in Tehran focusing on the sensing unequal spatial circumstances, Pourahmad et al. (2011) on the role of quality of the residential environment in old intra-urban migration in Khorramabad, Zanganeh and Samieepour (2012) on the issue of immigration and residential mobility in Sabzevar and Safaeipour (2008) on the causes and social- spatial consequences of intra urban migration of Ahwaz city.

There is no doubt that about those cities that have hosted a number of international migrants, particularly Afghans in recent decades the investigation of the reasons and process of the residential mobility of immigrants after primary residence in order to gain the rules and the factors affecting it are particularly important. The presence and significant concentrations of Afghans in the borders of Mashhad such as Golshahr, Shahid Rajaei residential area (Ghale Sakhteman) and Alteymour (Panj-tan) has significant impact on the price of urban land and housing rent and social structure of these areas. So any urban planning regarding Mashhad borders requires consideration of the attendance of the immigrants and their residential mobility and social- spatial consequences. Therefore, this study investigates the process of immigrants' movement after the primary residence and the factors affecting it. The objective of this study is to examine the residential mobility process of the Afghan refugees in Mashhad and the factors affecting it. In line with this objective, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Where did the Afghans settled after the moving to Mashhad?
2. How was their residential mobility after the first settlement?
3. What kind of factors affected Afghans initial settlement and their later residential mobility?

In response to the above questions the following hypotheses have been proposed:

1. It seems that the bulk of Afghan refugees at the time of arrival settle in Golshahr, Panj-tan, Ghaleh Sakhteman and Tollab.
2. It seems that the major residential mobility has taken place after the initial settlement of the immigrants within the primary neighborhoods and outside residential mobility has taken place in limited domain.
3. It seems that, ethnicity, religion, and proximity to citizens, income and better access to facilities and utilities are crucial in the initial settlement and later movements.

1.1 Theoretical Frameworks

Migration in the broad sense means “leaving the mainland and settlement in another land temporarily or permanently” (Sheikhi, 1990) but in the strictest sense which is the most important type of movement of population it means “The collective or individual movement of human being permanently without going back to the origin” (Javan, 2011). In other words migration is a form of geographical or spatial mobility that takes place between two geographical units that can be permanent or nearly permanent (Baikmohammadi & Mokhtari, 2003).

Inland or overseas migration has various effects on the origin and destination and results in the change of lifestyle and thinking of the migrants; hence the immigration areas conditions are never the same as the situation before the migration process (Shaterian, 2010). So according to the Portes theory which is presented as the sector similarity of the migrants' compatibility, the refugees compatibility depends on the human resources of the family, family structure and the types of their participation in the larges society (Portes & Rumbaut, 2005). Immigrants entering the city, especially foreign immigrants, their initial settlement and their later movements in the process of adaptation to the target population affect the amount and direction of intra urban movements.

Residential mobility includes the movement of an urban resident of a residential unit to another unit or from one district to another district of the city. The residential feature of a city or neighborhood is formed by localization behavior or the individual or family decisions made by the families (Gbakeji & Rilwani, 2009). Obviously, freedom of choice is a class function of the urban populations whose income exceeds a certain limit (Shalyn, 1972). However, political and cultural situations usually limit these choices because they form the reaction of the urban population towards the environment, although in these reactions the cultures are also modified (Gagler & Gibert, 1996).

The intra urban movement includes a wide range of movements created by individuals in different countries.

Residential movement can be voluntary or involuntary. The movement is sometimes forced by destruction, damage or dispossession of property but in most cases the people and families move by their own freedom of choice. However, the motivations of movement may be imposed by the outside. The main reasons for the intra urban movement of the families are as follows (Pacione, 2005).

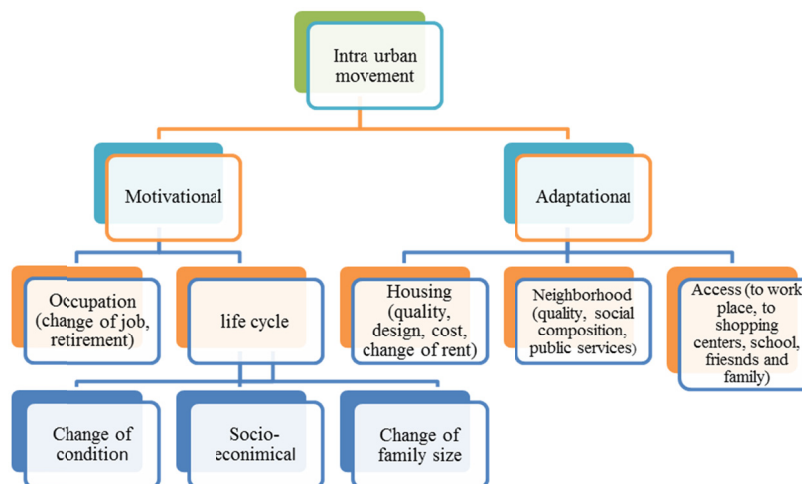


Figure 1. Types and causes of intra urban movement

The factors that motivate families to relocate in the city are affected by their wishes, desires and expectations that are affected by family condition, income, lifestyle, neighborhood and housing status of the family (Robson, 1975).

Changing patterns in an urban area are resulted by population growth, changes in income and improvement of transport services; on the other hand the social and demographic conditions that result from changes in the housing have important effects on changes in employment (Herington, 1984). Although empirical studies of urban housing represent the sensitivity of migration against housing market conditions, but the uniformity in all urban housing markets ensures that housing cannot normally be a major of pressure on the Immigration (Makawski, 1975).

Social and spatial processes are integrally connected to each other. The interconnection origins from the existence of sociological and spatial sense (Harvey, 1973). In addition to the biological and social characteristics the economic and political structures are effective in the spatial separations within the city, in other words spatial separations are impressed by complex combinations among the three forces of economics, politics and sociology (Afrough, 1998).

The entrance of several million refugees into neighboring countries, particularly Iran origins from the multiple repellent conditions of the source country such as the civil war and the attractive destinations of the destination including proximity, shared religion and welcoming refugees in Iran (Jamshidiha & Anbari, 2004). These refugees are influenced by the destination society in the process of adaptation to the social and economic conditions. Academic achievements and job skills of the second generation of Afghan refugees in Iran facilitates their compatibility with the host society has inspired marriage and behaviors different from the first generation (Abbasi-Shavazi et al., 2012).

1.2 Scope of Research

Mashhad as the first religious metropolis in the world and the second metropolis of Iran has been the destination for high percentage of Afghan refugees. According to the census of population and housing in 2006 about 135,013 Afghans have been residing in the city 51.1% of which were male (69,014 people) and 48.9% were female (65,999 people) (Statistics center of Iran). Afghan migrants have been settled in the North East of the city (districts 4, 5 and 6th) to the southwest of Mashhad (districts 1 and 8). Generally by moving toward the east the population density of this group is reduced (Marsousi & Saebi, 2009). More than 70% of the Afghan refugees in Mashhad reside in districts 4, 5 and 6. These districts are considered among the marginal and disadvantaged areas in Mashhad and have regions that have taken different figures from other areas of Mashhad by the presence of Afghan refugees in the form of religious and ethnic ghettos. According to the research carried out in relation to the stability of Mashhad this area of the city is among the most unstable regions of Mashhad.

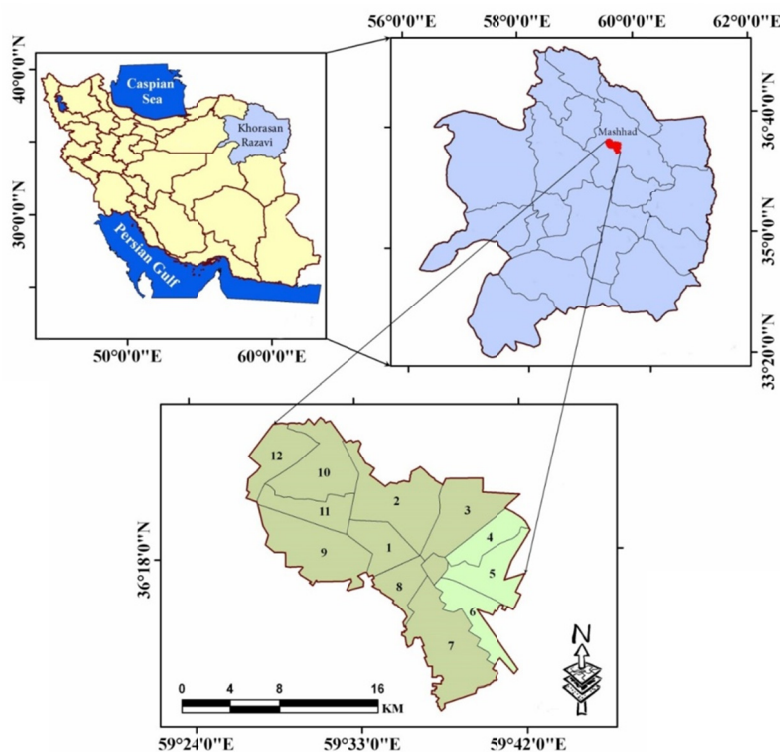


Figure 2. Location of the study area within thirteen districts of Mashhad

2. Method and Materials

The research method of this study was the survey type and the field data were collected by questionnaires and library. The research population includes the Afghan refugees living in Mashhad especially in marginal areas such as Golshahr, Ghaleh Sakhteman and Panj-Tan. Considering the fact that the heads of household has a decisive role in the residential mobility of families the unit of analysis is the household head. The sample size was determined according to the Cochran formula as 389 subjects. About 194 questionnaires were distributed in district 4 (Panj-Tan), 135 questionnaires were distributed in district 5 (Golshahr) and 60 questionnaires were distributed in district 6 (Ghaleh Sakhteman) based on the percentage of the residing population. Information collected through this method was analyzed using statistical analysis SPSS program.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Descriptive Findings

Since the head of the family plays a major role in location and residential mobility of Afghan refugees in this study the respondents were selected among the heads of the families. Here we discuss the most important individual, social and economic features of the samples.

Among the total of 389 respondents 348 (89.5%) were male and 41 (10.5%) were female heads of the household. In terms of income groups, 31.2% of households had incomes of less than 400 thousand toman, 43.4% of households had incomes between 400-700 toman and 18.2% had incomes up to 1 million toman and 5.4 had higher incomes.

In terms of house ownership 33.1% of the households were the homeowners, 51.1 of the houses were rented, 9.3 were living in their parental home and 6.2% were settled in other types of residents such as charity houses.

The literacy and education level of the respondents were low as 18.5% were illiterate, 32.9 had primary school or Quranic degree, 2.9% had the bachelor's or associate's degree and 1.6% had the master's or PHD degree. Also 8.9 had seminary degrees.

In terms of ethnicity and religion 67.1% of the respondents were from Hazaras ethnic group and Shia, 10% were Tajik, 7.23% were Pashtuns, 0.51% were Uzbeks and 15% were from other ethnic groups such as Baloch and Sadat. Generally 85% were Shia and 15% were Sunni (Table 1).

Table 1. Number and percentage frequency distribution of ethnicities and religions of the respondents

Ethnicity	Religion				The frequency and percentage of the ethnic groups		The frequency and percentage of the religious groups		
	Shia		Sunni		Frequency	Percentage	religion	Frequency	Percentage
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage					
Hazara	260	79	0	0	260	67.18			
Tajik	21	6.38	18	31	39	10.07	Shia	329	85
Pashtun	1	0.3	27	46.55	28	7.23	Sunni	58	15
Uzbek	0	0	2	3.45	2	0.51			
Other	47	14.28	11	18.96	58	15			
Total	329	100	58	100	387	100		387	100

The 70s 80s and 90s with 25.4%, 36.5% and 23.9% represent the decades with most Afghan refugees entering Mashhad.

3.2 Hypothesis Testing

According to the first hypothesis, the bulk of Afghan refugees were settled in Golshahr, Panj-tanm Ghale Sakhteman and Tollab on their arrival. The results obtained by the questionnaire data show that among the total 389 respondents, 323 (86%) were settled in district 4 in the time of arrival. Among these samples 139 households (35.7%) were settled in Golshahr, 104 households (26.7%) were settled in Panj-tan, 61 households (15.7%) were settled in Shakhteman and 19 households (4.9%) were settled in Tollab. These results confirm the first hypothesis.

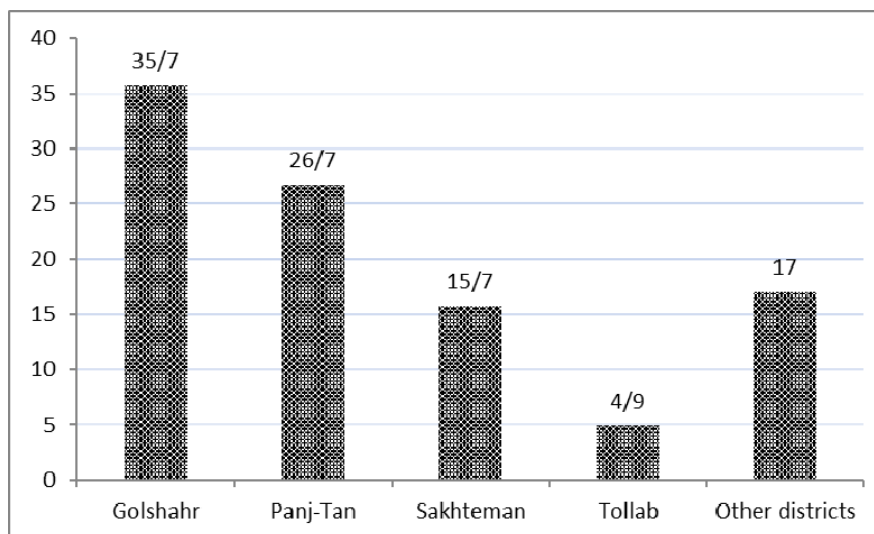


Figure 3. Frequency of early settlement of Afghan refugees in Mashhad

According to the third hypothesis residential mobility took place after initial settlement in the early neighborhoods and residential mobility taken place outside the districts is within limited domain. In order to test the hypothesis 4 districts were selected among the areas under investigation and the mobility from one neighborhood to another was studied.

The results of distribution frequency of families indicate that among the total 389 respondents show that about 176 families (45.7%) have changed their location in the city of Mashhad at least once. The highest residential movements have taken place in Golshahr and Panj-Tan. So that 28.1% of the respondents were moved within the areas. After these two areas 9.2% of the intra urban movements have taken place in Sakhteman and 2.4% of the intra urban movements have taken place in Tollab. These values indicate that intra urban movements are more

prior to the refugees because they are more convergent in terms of ethnicity, religion and income.

Family residential mobility has been less current between the districts. In this case the highest movements of 12.1% have taken place from Golshahr to Panj-Tan. 5.8% of the families have moved from Sakhteman to Panj-Tan; 4% of the families have moved from Sakhteman to Golshahr, 3.1% of the families have moved from Tollab to Golshahr and 1.2% of the families have moved from Panj-Tan to Sakhteman(Figure 3).

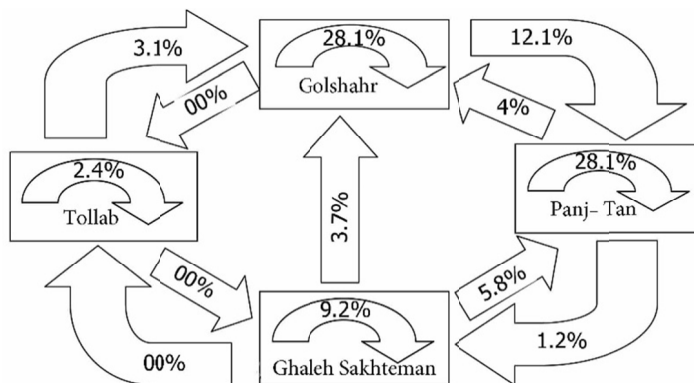


Figure 4. Distribution of respondents' residential mobility between regions and within neighborhoods

The important point in relation to the domain of the residential mobility of immigrants responding to the question: If you could buy a house anywhere in Mashhad, which area would you settle in? Was that 56.6% of the respondents selected one of the four districts under discussion i.e. Golshahr, Panj-tan, Shakhteman and Tollab as their ideal neighborhood? Also 15% of the families selected the neighborhood near and around their current location such as Shohada, Tabarsi, Moghaddam, Darya and Imam Reza streets. Only 12.5% of the respondents chose the affluent and expensive areas of Mashhad such as Ahmedabad, Sajad Boulevard, Hashemite and Mellat Park. This indicates that the domain of residential mobility is limited even as their ideal life and does not exceed their current and nearby location.

According to the information of Fig (3) and above mentioned data it can be concluded that the major residential movement of the immigrants after the initial settlement is within primary areas and the outside residential mobility is restricted to limited domain that confirms the second hypothesis.

The third research hypothesis indicates that it seems that, ethnicity, religion, and proximity to citizens, income and better access to facilities and utilities are crucial in the initial settlement and later movements.

The results regarding the reasons for the early settlement in Mashhad and relocation of them after the initial settlement are summarized in the following table.

Table 2. Reasons for early settlement of the refugee and their later movement after the initial settlement

The reasons and motives of the early settlement		The reasons of relocation after the initial settlement	
reasons and motives	Percent	reasons and motives	Percent
-Proximity to the fellow ethnical and religious groups	63.6	-The lack of facilities and utilities	27.4
-Low rental or housing prices	15	-Improved financial condition and ability to buy a better house	17.5
- Better access to facilities and utilities	8.2	- Lack of cultural and ethnic conformity	15.6
- Proximity to the workplace	6.9	- Involuntary relocation and tenant conditions	15.3
-Other reasons	6.3	- Loss of income	8.1
		-Change of workplace	7.5
		-Marriage and family	

The information extracted from the questionnaires indicates that 241 respondents (63.6%) have considered the ethnicity and religion factors important in the initial settlement. Factors such as low rental or housing prices (15%), access to better facilities and utilities (8.2%) and Proximity to the workplace have been considered important in selecting the initial residence. About 44% of the respondents mentioned their reason of migration to Mashhad as the closeness to Imam Reza Shrine that indicates their religious interests in choosing their city of residence after migration from Afghanistan.

The above mentioned reasons and motives in relation to intra urban mobility after the initial settlement were somewhat different from the primary residence reasons. The data indicated in Table (2) show that the factors of insecurity and lack of facilities and utilities (27.4 percent), improved financial condition and ability to buy a better house (17.5%), lack of cultural and ethnic conformity (15.6%), the tenant conditions (15.3%), loss of income (8.6%) and marriage and family (7.5%) were among the reasons of intra urban movement. The information of Table (2) and the above mentioned facts confirm the third hypothesis.

Also the obtained results of the residential movement of the refugees after the initial settlement indicated that the highest movement has happened inside the districts rather than among the districts. For example, the majority of Golshahr population who are Shia Hazaras has never had any movement to Sakhteman neighborhood with Sunni Pashtuns. The results of the chi-square test between the ethnicity and the movements between the districts indicate that there is a significant correlation between the two variables; so that all 11 families who moved from Sakhteman to Golshahr were Shia that had conformity with all immigrants living in Golshahr. So the second hypothesis is confirmed.

4. Conclusion

The entrance of the immigrants, especially foreign immigrants to the cities and their initial settlement has a significant impact in shaping the social zones and marginal districts in cities. The immigrants through living in the new environment and the social interaction with the host society, obtaining employment skills, education and improving the financial situation try to move into other neighborhoods in the destination city and these intra urban movements have social- economic and physical consequences in the face of the origin and destination neighborhoods. Therefore, for any urban planning in order to organize city spaces the reasons and process of intra urban movement of the immigrant families must be analyzed. This study aimed to analyze the factors affecting the residential mobility of Afghan refugees residing in districts 4, 5 and 6 of Mashhad- Iran. The results of this study suggests that a major portion Afghan immigrant (86%) have been settled at the beginning of their arrival to Mashhad in marginal areas and slums including, Golshahr (35.7%), Panj-tan (26.7%), Ghaleh Sakhteman (15.7%) and Tollab (4.9%). In the initial settlement of these immigrants in the mentioned places factors such as proximity to fellow coreligionists and affordable rental housing prices are crucial and 85% of the refugees were Shia and most of them (67%) were Hazara based on their ethnicity. In terms of residential mobility, 45.7% of immigrant families have changed their location at least once in Mashhad. The highest residential mobility has taken place in the Golshahr areas (28.1%) and Panj-tan (28.1%) which indicates that the intra urban movements are more prior to the refugees because they are more convergent in terms of ethnicity, religion and income. The intra urban movement of families between the districts was restricted to limited domain. The domain of residential mobility is limited even as their ideal life and does not exceed their current and nearby location. This indicates that the knowledge or expectations of the immigrants was low and they did not have enough information about the quality of life in other city neighborhoods. The stated reasons and motives in relation to residential mobility of immigrants are different in the later stages after primary residence. Generally the factors of insecurity and lack of resources and utilities (27.4%), improved financial condition and ability to buy a better house (17.5), ethnics and religion inconsonance (15.6%) and the tenant conditions (15.3) are among the reasons stated by the refugees for changing their residence.

The differences in the reasons and motivations for the choice of initial settlement and later intra urban mobility can be justified that these foreign immigrants in the beginning of their arrival are less knowledgeable about the destination and need the guidance of their fellow friends and citizens for initial settlement especially if the language is different from their host society. Since the majority of Afghan refugees arrived in the city of Mashhad have lower financial circumstances the cost of rental housing is also very important. Another point is that foreign immigrants have to move from their original country due to emergency situations such as wars and riots and they do not have the condition and opportunity to consider other factors related to the quality of the housing in the destination and their main purpose is to find a shelter with minimal facilities. But in the subsequent movements they consider more factors as they become more knowledgeable about other neighborhoods and have a better financial circumstances the most important of which is better facilities and utilities. Portes theory is presented as the sector similarity of the migrants' compatibility. According to this theory the second-generation

enjoy high education and job skills and their adaptation rate depends on the human resources of the family, family structure and the types of their participation in the larger society (Portes & Rumbaut, 2005). The second generation of the immigrants form a special population the experiences and aspirations of which are different from their parents and their counterparts in Afghanistan while they are not homogenous. Academic achievements and job skills of the second generation of Afghan refugees in Iran facilitates their compatibility with the host society and has inspired marriage and behaviors different from the first generation (Abbasi-Shavazi et al; 2012).

5. Recommendations

Since the presence of Afghan refugees in the borders of Mashhad and their later Intra-urban movement of the families has obvious consequences on social and spatial structure of the immigrants' neighborhoods including the land market, housing and rent, the change population density, sustainability of ethnic and religious boundaries in these areas and has intensified the marginalization in Mashhad, in order to organize and control the intra urban movement of the refugees and the social-spatial consequences the following recommendations are provided:

- When organizing the city margins the longstanding presence of Afghan refugees in the region should be considered.
- Encouraging the participation and training of Afghan refugees in activities related to urban issues by entities related to immigrants' issues and Mashhad Municipality.
- Given that the problems of Afghan refugees had macro and multiple dimensions and their resolution is beyond the decisions of one institute, the related entities (Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs in the city of Mashhad) and the organizations responsible for urban issues (Mashhad Municipality, City Council) must work together and be consistent.

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