



Research Article

A Study of the Real Estate Business Implications for Living Conditions in Urban Pakistan: Mixed Methodology Results

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Hira Ashfaq^{1*}, Asif Ali², Ashfaq Maan³

¹Business Management Sciences, UAF Constituent College Depalpur, Okara, Pakistan

²Planning & Development Department, University of Okara, Okara, Pakistan

³Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan

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*Corresponding Email:

hira.angelo4@gmail.com

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Abstract

The major objective of this paper is to delineate implications of the real estate business for living conditions in urban Pakistan. Therefore, the three largest cities (Karachi, Lahore & Faisalabad) were selected. A mix methodology was used for data collection & analyses. The qualitative findings/insights revealed that the development & construction rules were not followed by the real estate developers. In several cases, the plots kept for mosque, graveyard or parks were sold out, later. Similarly, the size of roads and green-belts were cut down. The social and political factors were found backing many real estate developers. Many real estate agents had sold the disputed plots to the common citizens. The heavy rains of Monsoon-2025 opened the secret that the infrastructures in the shape of roads, underground-passes, bridges were of poor quality. This has put the residents and other people in difficulties & hardships. This has also caused heavy financial losses to many citizens. Furthermore, urban flooding has damaged the houses, markets, and other facilities. The overflowing rain water of various drains entered in the houses and damaged everything. Several children were injured or drowned in the mid of the year 2025. It was not the quality but, even, availability of the drinking water, drainage & sewerage, gas and electricity that was making public life worst. Again, the street-crimes, security and safety situations had become more damaging & challenging. It is suggested to develop 'small cities' with all facilities to reduce pressure on and problems of the large cities.

Keywords: Real estate business, Mixed methodology, Urban, Street crimes, Implications, Living conditions, Qualitative, Insights, Data collection, Analyses.

Introduction

Urbanization and Large Cities

While having a careful look at the process of urbanization, the Pakistani cities have been growing very fast among the countries in the region of South-Asia. According to the recent estimates, the proportion of the urban residents has grown from 50% to higher than 60%. A heavy proportion of 80% of the GDP and revenue collection through taxes has been paid by the residents of cities in Pakistan. The poverty prevalence in the cities is almost a half of that in the rural Pakistan. The per capita income and income growth have also been higher in the urban as compared with the rural masses. In spite of presenting this positive picture of the urban areas and people, the urban places, in general, and the major cities of Pakistan, in particular, have been facing acute social, economic, infrastructure, physical, health, development and other issues affecting the life of urban residents in a very serious manner (Maan, 2024). Peri-urban locations and urban-slums are the two most affected areas having the poorest condition. However, most of the migrants from the rural areas reaches there

to start their urban life. This has dampening implications for regulating the urban process and urban development plans & programs (Kugelman, 2014). The residents who have been living in the slums of the four large cities of Pakistan have been making the 50% of the total Pakistani people living in the urban slums. These cities include Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad & Gujranwala (Tahir & Khaliq, 2021; Kugelman, 2014).

The reasons behind capturing or getting the place & space to live in these urban slum can be traced in the political structure & system of the Pakistani culture. This political culture supports their voters & supporters to be owners of the free of cost residential plots in the urban slums. The factors influencing the rural migrants to settle in the per-urban areas are also important to be mentioned here. These include the cheaper price or rent of the plots or houses, the same life-style as of villages, permission to keep livestock to sell milk and its products, these urban ousters closer to the migrants' villages, moving forth & back easier (Maan, 2024). However, the residents of these areas are the major contributors of increase in urban-poverty in Pakistan (Tacoli, 2015).

Villages-Cities Integration

The existing & emerging patterns & styles of villages-cities integration reflect the most common expanding pattern of urbanization in the Pakistani society. The medium and small land-holders have been selling their agricultural lands to the town-planners & developers who have been designing and developing housing societies in the ousters of the existing cities to make huge money out of it. They have also been making huge profits by purchasing old markets or houses in the old parts of these cities and converting these into multistory-markets and commercial hubs. This can be, easily, seen with a careful observation of different old locations and expansions of different large cities such as Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad and others (ADB, 2005; Maan, 2024).

On the one hand, this integration of villages and cities have been absorbing the migrants from the villages to their nearby cities. This pattern is also facilitating the integration of the rural agricultural land with the cities in the shape of development of the up to standard and below standard housing societies by the real estate developers. This is managed by involving the property dealers and investors present in their loop of confidence and having good working experience with them. Both parties, the developers as well as dealers & investors, have had an ongoing relationship based upon the mutual social, technical, business and financial interests & benefits. This integration between the villages entering, from time to time, and being included in the municipal boundaries of different cities have been becoming an emerging source of various business and employment opportunities in the area. This starts with the labor employment and goes up to business in the markets & shopping centers of these newly completed housing societies (Aberra & King, 2005; Farah et al., 2021; Tahir & Khaliq, 2021; Maan, 2024). Another important point to be mentioned here is that all the domestic work has been performed by the domestic workers coming from the nearby villages. Similarly, the watchmen and security personnel have also been belonging to the nearby or integrated villages of these modern housing societies. Furthermore, the rural-urban integration has been working as a crucial factor in adoption of the Urdu language while partially using English words in their everyday communication by the domestic workers. They have also been adopting the use of modern ways of dressing, beautification, cooking and modern communication tools of the social media as an influence of working and living with the modern & educated families of these housing societies (Tacoli, 2003; Mahmud et al., 2010; Maan, 2024).

The Case of Large Cities

The issues of urbanization influencing the quality of life in different spheres of any society have been discussed by the various well-known sociologist of the world. The issues discussed hereby include changing economic, political, employment patterns, demographic transition, urban trends, social & occupational mobility, urban criminality, behavior, individualism and law & orders, health care and pandemics situation in the large cities of different countries (Crockerham & Crockerham, 2022; Entzinger, 2022; Gendrot et al., 2022). However, the case of Pakistani society in terms of rapid urbanization as a result of the fast & huge rural-urban migration has been very different from the growth of the developed countries in terms of the role of the real estate sector

regarding the marketing, management and socio-political dimensions of major cities and quality of life there. The growth of large cities, particularly during the last 20 years of the twentieth and since the beginning of the twenty-first century has been very fast and unbridled. This uncontrolled and poorly managed growth of the large cities have been influencing the quality of life in a very destructive manner.

In this paper, the rapid changes occurring and influencing the life of residents in the three large cities have been discussed. The first reason to select large cities for presenting this paper is that most of the internal migrants have been moving towards the large cities. The second most important reason is that one-fourth of the internal migrants have been residing in the four largest cities of Pakistan. Karachi, Lahore and Faisalabad are included in these cities (MHHDC, 2014; Labor Force Survey, 2014; GOP, 2015).

Objectives

1. To probe the real estate marketing, management and socio-political dimensions in the large cities.
2. To investigate the implications of these dimensions for the quality of life in large cities.
3. To suggest measures to deal with the real estate issues to improve life quality in large cities.

Methodology

Three largest cities, namely Karachi, Lahore and Faisalabad were selected purposively. The history of real estate development tells that the planning and development of the modern housing societies became faster and huge in number since the beginning of the 21st century. The same was the time when the use of social media became maximum in Pakistan. Therefore, it was thought to use the platforms of the social and electronic media for collecting information for presenting in this paper. However, the first tool used for collecting information on the various dimensions of real estate business was the “desk study” of the available relevant literature. The second important source was the use of the social media tools such as reels, advertisements and discussions on You Tube channels, interviews, WHTAPPS and others. The news, interviews, pictures, short films, and discussions on the electronic TV channels were also used as part of data collection for this paper. Furthermore, information from some key informants (social scientists and residents) was also collected. An interviewing-guide was used for conducting telephonic interviews with the key-informants. This collected data were analyzed critically and logically through the qualitative analysis techniques. The ‘content analysis’ was used for analysis of the various dimensions of real estate business. The ‘situation analysis’ was used to analyze the living conditions in these cities. The important qualitative findings/insights have been presented below.

Qualitative Findings/Insights

First, the situation in Karachi, the most populous & largest city, has been discussed. The information regarding the infrastructure, real estate marketing & management and socio-political dimensions influencing the quality of life of the residents in the ‘traditional’ vs ‘modern’ Karachi has been presented below.

Traditional Karachi

Infrastructure

One of the most important aspects making the city of Karachi an attractive place for both the international and national people is the presence of Sea. The only Seaport of Karachi in the country has made possible the international business, trade, particularly the shipment of the heavy and huge goods and services from Pakistan to other countries and from other places to Pakistan. Nationally, a huge population has moved to Karachi for employment, labor, business and trade, as well. This internal migration to Karachi has not been happening only from the rural and other cities of the province of Sindh of which Karachi is the Capital. But, a huge population from other three provinces of Pakistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) has also moved to this city for different reasons, mainly for employment and education. A huge part of this migrant population has settled permanently in this international city. There is also a reasonable number of international and national businessmen who have been traveling forth & back to this city for their business

related issues & matters. Many of these traders have been coming and going daily and weekly, for the purpose. The international and national political leadership has also been visiting Karachi, from time to time.

Therefore, a lot of effort has been put for the development of Karachi, particularly due to its international significance. Different development projects including hotels, markets, roads and other infrastructures were constructed to make the city attractive, worth visiting and worth living. The business offices of many international and national organizations were enhancing the significance of the city. But, the roads, drainage, sewerage, transport were seen as the worst in 2022. We did not get direction of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) delivered more than 14 centuries, ago. He (PBUH) advised that do not build large cities due to three very important reasons. First, human identity is lost. Second, hence, human security is lost and, finally, food-security becomes at risk. The unbridled and unplanned huge size of Karachi has been having all these problems damaging the lives and quality of life of its residents.

Real Estate Marketing and Management

Real estate may be an unknown word in the world of rarely planned, developed, marketed and managed small towns and small with simple designs markets in the traditional city of Karachi. People were knowing each other very well and enjoy a life of mutual respect and confidence. Therefore, plots and shops were booked in a single visit or on one telephone call. However, the streets were small, houses structures were simple. There were no cases of land or plot grabbing or fraud in the registry or occupation of the plot or shop. The promises made for rest of the payment or installments were not compromised. However, the cases of small disputes were resolved with the involvement of some common friend or local leader or respectable. The developments were mostly by the public sector, therefore, there were some political allotments as well but not on the cost of making fraud with the common public.

Socio-Political Dimensions

The residents of different backgrounds such as language, ethnicity, caste, rural, urban and other differentials and belonging to different communities were well known for their harmony, we-feelings, collectivism, brotherhood, mutual help and other characteristics of a good community. Therefore, people desired and aspired to live in Karachi due to a safe & secure environment. Therefore, it was a well-known city due to its peace, safety, security, honesty in business deals and quality of life, internationally as well. It was famous due to its hustle & bustle in the markets, tea-spots, restaurants, hotels, road-sides, parks, gardens and other public places from evening till the midnight. The people were educated, fashionable, modern and open-minded. During 1960s, the size of the Karachi city started to increase due to migration of people from all over Pakistan for jobs, employment and business due to the growing industrialization in the city and surrounding areas. The migrants from East Pakistan in 1971 also added in the population size of the city. The forced migration, particularly from Afghanistan during 1980s, contributed a lot to increase its population and destroy peace, safety and security of the city.

There were few names in the politics of Karachi. Landlords of the rural Sindh and few Urdu-speaking families were active in the political activities of the city. They all were working for the improvement of the infrastructure and welfare of the communities living in their areas. They were helping people to solve their conflicts & disputes at local level rather approaching the police. There were local authorities who were involved in the development of residential colonies and towns. However, political and bureaucratic influence was also used at that time for the allotment of plots in these towns. However, the cases of malpractice, mismanagement and frauds were negligible, several of which were solved by involving the local leadership & real estate administration. Again, the private sector real estate marketing & management was not existing at that time.

Modern Karachi

Infrastructure

The increasing population size started to convert the small size of the Karachi into large and then largest city

of Pakistan. This started to happen due to the mechanization of the agriculture making the agriculture labor surplus in the villages. Meanwhile, the industrialization started in and around the cities of Pakistan. Karachi had the maximum employment and labor opportunities being the economic and business hub and then an upcoming industrial city. People started to move to Karachi alone and with family for job from all over the country. This trend declined during 1980s due to worst law & order situation due to increasing crimes and insecure & unsafe life in and around the city. Particularly, the businessmen and industrialists were being targeted and Bhatta was demanded, otherwise killed. But, afterwards, this internal migration towards Karachi is still on increase up till now. This has converted the beautiful city of Karachi into a place of unbridled and poorly planned & structured small towns and katchi abadis. Furthermore, the city has heavily been occupied by the factories & industries having dampening implications for environment in the shape of poor air quality, health & peace damaging noise, bad smell, and making short earthquakes, even on daily basis, making the land, markets, houses and everything shaking, spreading fear and unrest among the inhabitants.

Drinking water availability has become the worst, drainage and sewerage issues, electricity, gas and other basic needs have become insufficient and of very poor quality. Urban flooding and outflowing drains during rains have been damaging the lives, houses, vehicles and other properties of the residents of this international city. Kidnapping, snatching, threatening, looting and killing have become routines in the lives of common people and business community. Furthermore, the roads are broken, the public transport is insufficient and of poor quality, the health and education facilities are short and of low standards.

Real Estate Marketing & Management

Towards the end of the 20th and most importantly, in the beginning of the 21st century, two new big names Behria Town and Defense Housing Authority (DAH) started planning, marketing, designing, developing, constructing and managing advanced, safe and secure towns outside the old city of Karachi. However, the Behria Town owners, developers, marketers and managers have been in hot water and facing serious difficulties by the sitting government and powerful circles of the country, particularly during 2025. A huge land was allotted for Behria Town by the powerful people in the Sindh Govt. There were voices against the allotment of this public land to a private developer but the development work went on day & night. Plots were designed and marketed to thousands of people. A beautiful, modern and durable infrastructure with all basic facilities was made. Plots were allotted and a lot of houses have been constructed and residents have occupied and living in their houses. Suddenly, a conflict arose between the political/powerful circles of the country and all operations in all the Behria Towns of Pakistan have been stopped due to one or the other reason. But, these are the residents who invested their lifelong savings with a dream to spend their lives in this beautiful place while enjoying all the modern and quality facilities. But, now their life is at risk of suffering from the lack of or non-functioning of existing facilities to make their lives miserable as suffering from various hardships.

There are many other real estate developers in the loop but to mention all of these is neither necessary nor possible. All socio-political deals from approval to completion of the housing societies, all over Pakistan, occurred or occur for mutual benefits of all the parties, groups and departments involved. In many housing societies, the parks, mosques plots are being sold to construct houses. The size of the green belts and roads has been cut down to develop and market extra residential plots, against the map shown to the investors. All cases of the china-cutting had been executed with the support of the political authorities. However, the residents of such schemes then have to suffer in the shape of non-completion and non-availability of the facilities claimed at the time of marketing of these socially and politically motivated housing societies. Ultimately, these are the residents who suffer when the action against these so-called land-grabbers attaining land by hook or crook and unlawful developers is being taken due to any known or unknown reasons. The Karachi has expanded like anything due to huge increase in the population. This population is multicultural, multilingual, multiethnic with diverse interests, priorities, thoughts, practices, lifestyles, businesses, jobs, employments, attitudes, behaviors, actions and reactions.

The real estate developers, marketers, managers have developed many new housing societies, markets, plazas,

and other allied commercial activities. On the one hand, while the positive role of these personals and companies associated with the real estate business is appreciable. However, the malpractices adopted and exercised by the real estate sector has not only made the quality of life of the residents, on the other hand, problematic. Again, the many real estate developers have played very shamefully with the whole-life savings of a huge number of the people, dreaming to get a single plot for their residence. Several building-constructors have also been involved in deceiving and cheating the common citizens who believed in them and did not know the inside story that starts after the initiation of construction of the house. It is because, they are laymen, ignorant and inexperienced of the real story to be faced; alas. Their condition becomes like a sailor who loses his compass in the heart of a stormy ocean, while it is rough, the sky over-cloudy and his destination beyond the horizon.

This is important to develop and truly implement the existing rules in the best interest of the common people involved in purchasing plot and hand over the contractor for making his/her house. But, these real estate planners, developers and contractors are very powerful, resourceful and well-connected with the powerful and political elites of the society; therefore, impossible to be corrected to avoid deceiving, cheating and looting their clients (See Table 2, as well).

Again, after purchasing a plot safely and getting a house built successfully, the everyday life in the streets, bazars, houses, flats, markets and roads have become very unsafe, dangerous and insecure. The life of the residents of Karachi has become miserable, difficult, hard and at risk all the time. The criminal-gangs, street-snatchers and shooters have been wondering here and there to find the opportunity to loot a person, businessman, visitor, resident and any citizen at any place at any time, even at the cost of his/her life.

Socio-Political Dimensions

There became a change in the social and political power scenario in the Karachi city with toppling of the Bhutto Power Regime in 1977. Again, a new party named Muhajir Qomi Movement (MQM) was launched to weaken and replace the social and political power of the Pakistan People Party (PPP). However, giving a free hand to MQM, purposefully, made it an unbridled powerful horse. Therefore, the serious and damaging social evils and crimes such as kidnapping, torturing and killing the opponents became common in the city of lights and development. In addition, Bhatta-Mafia and Bori-Bund dead bodies became source of threats, dangers, extremism, terrorism and murders of businessmen, industrialists and political opponents within the Karachi city and in its surroundings. Ultimately, a great clean-up operation was carried out in Karachi during 1990s. Many of the political leaders and workers run away outside the country but the Bhatta-Mafias, street-crimes, kidnapping, murders and china-cutting are still damaging the quality of life of the residents of this largest city of Pakistan. The roads, markets and residential colonies of the city are unsafe, insecure; hence not a place of business and living. In short, the city of Karachi was declared as “not-worth-living’ city by the international organization in the year 2022.

Politics within the Housing Societies

The social and political dimensions of the housing societies being given importance by the developers through involving the residents and motivating them to develop welfare societies is not so simple. This has been done, basically, through tricks played by the economically affluent owners and developers of the housing societies to keep the power politics within the housing societies in their own hands. It is very crucial for them as still they have to go a long way for selling the whole town. Hence, it is very important for them to divide and rule the residents to make their marketing and management according to their will to watch their interests and benefits. Therefore, they motivate some active and influential residents to come forward to raise their voice to have a welfare society to solve their problems. However, in actual, they push a group of their own favor and spend money and use their influence to make them win. In this way, the developers use this society to promote their marketing and business rather for the welfare of the residents. The important position holders in the society are always the men of their choice who speak and work for the interest of the developers, openly or

silently. In short, these public societies have been being manipulated and used to strengthen their marketing and management by the developers. Again, this has been happening on the cost of deteriorating the quality of life of the residents.

Traditional Lahore

Infrastructure

Traditional Lahore city has its own physical structure in the shape of traditional historical buildings having worth visiting and observing infrastructure. The traditional Lahore was a walled-city with several gates for the sake of safety and security. These famous gates include Bhati Gate, Lohari Gate, Texali Gate, Mochi Gate, Sheranwala Gate and others. The traditional Lahore was situated on the bank of old river Ravi (later called Budda Derya), besides Menar-e-Paksitan. There are historical buildings of Badshahi Masque, Shahi Quila (Forte) and Shalimar Bagh(Garden) on the right side of this old Ravi and Tombs of Noor Jehan and Jehangir on its left side. There was also a Bara Dari which came into the river when it changed its old path. Shahdara (path/door of kings) was/is the path to enter Lahore.

The people of traditional Lahore have been living in the four-walls since the Mughal Regime in the sub-continent. The infrastructure of the traditional city comprises of narrow streets, very old buildings (some of these damaged or broken down), and traditional markets with small shops having items of everyday use. The famous market places of the traditional city included Shah Almi, Purani Anar Kali, Rang Mahal, Tolinton Market and others. On the left side of Budda Derya (old river Ravi) were/are the residential areas called Qasur Pura, Lakkar Mandi and Batti Chowk. Mayo and Sir Ganga Ram hospitals were the two main important health facilities in the traditional Lahore. The traditional infrastructure of the old buildings of the Lahore high court, General Post-Office (GPO), Lahore Museum, National College of Arts (NCA) and Punjab University (PU) old campus have still their own beauty and attraction giving them a differential look and space in the history of architect & design.

Socio-Political Dimensions

The people of traditional Lahore were simple, illiterate or semi-literate and most of them were running or employees of small or medium enterprises or doing jobs. The people were known to one another in the small and traditional community of the traditional city. They were attending the happy and sad ceremonies of the community. There were strong and well-reputed families/individuals who were politically active and serving their people and community with a passion of welfare. Most of the disputes/conflicts were resolved within the community by the elders of the families and community leaders. It was very rare that the case was reported to the police-station. It was felt insulting for the communities if someone did not agree with the opinion/decision of the elder/community leaders and reported to police.

Vendors were used to move in the streets to sell their items of daily use such as fruit, vegetables, toys, etc. There were other hawkers who wondered to repair different utensils or tools of domestic use or to sell cloths, cleaning ears or treating the painful teeth at the doorstep. There were also doctors/hakims and other traditional healers sitting in small shops in the local streets to serve the people. There were traditional small tea and food stalls in the street-corners to serve these communities. Old people were used to sit and gossip on these small places.

Modern Lahore

Infrastructure

The new ventures in the real estate planning, development, marketing and management were observed to take place in the 1960s. There were various reasons underlying this newly emerging real estate phenomena. These included, firstly, surplus agriculture labor due to mechanization. Secondly, rural-urban migration for labor and employment opportunities in the newly established factories and industries in the surrounding of the Lahore city. Thirdly, movement of the residents from different parts of the traditional Lahore to settle in the newly established modern towns of Lahore.

Real Estate Marketing & Management: Since 1960s

The first two modern housing societies developed in Lahore were Model Town and Gulberg. This was the first time that people involved in the real estate marketing and management. These were not only the developers of the modern housing societies but other businessmen and rich people also invested for purchasing plot for their houses as well for commercial purposes. Firstly, the people who became the residents of these towns were those who shifted from the old parts of Lahore from Batti Chowk up to Sanda, Chowburji and Ichra. Second were the rural land lords of Paksitan whose children were studying in the known educational institutions of Lahore such as Govt. Central Model School Lower Mall, Govt. College, F. C. College, Punjab University and others. In 1970s, the college life in general and the hostel life, in particular, became problematic due to students' involvement, especially rich students living away from parents, in the destructive activities such as car theft, gambling, drinking, drug addiction, grabbing residential and commercial areas, firing & fights and others. Therefore, the rural landlords decided to purchase houses in these modern towns to live with their children studying in Lahore. The third category of affluent people such as showbiz stars, filmmakers and businessmen who purchased houses and the commercial shops or markets in these modern housing societies. During the last two-decade of the 20th century a real estate revolution came in the major cities of Pakistan, including Lahore. Several modern housing societies such as Rewaz Garden, Shadman Town, Samanabad and others were developed, marketed and managed. The socio-political dimensions of this new city life remained important in providing facilities to the residents and, therefore, influencing the quality of the residential life in these modern areas, as well.

Real Estate Marketing & Management: 21st Century

The two major players who became well known for the quality of infrastructure of their housing societies were Behria Town and the Defence Housing Society (DHA).. The quality of the landscape, safety & security, educational, health and entertainment facilities of the Behria Town in Lahore are worth mentioning & appreciation. But, there were some complaints, as well, about allotment and transferring the plots to the purchasers. Similarly, conflict on land with the authorities regarding the Lahore Ring Road also remained an issue with the Behria Town management.

However, DHA became the most important player in winning the attraction of the people for residing in and doing business in its markets. The evidence is that the development and marketing of the DHA housing society has gone up to its phase-10, starting with its first phase not long ago. The main reason of residents for choosing DHA was the level of safety & security provided there. But with the passage of time, several mishaps of car snatching, scuffles and, even, murders on the road for nothing, by the youngsters of the filthy rich parents, have occurred during the last few years. These kind of incidents have become common in the posh areas of Lahore. This needs to be considered seriously by the developers, management and security personal of the modern housing societies, to make necessary arrangements for the safety & security of the residents and the people connected to these societies in one or the other way (See Table-2, as well).

The other most important factor of real estate marketing and management that has been influencing the life of the purchasers and investors who put money in the modern housing societies of Lahore is "financial Scams". The saving of whole of the life that the middle class families invested in these housing societies to purchase plot to construct a single house, which is a lifetime achievement for these people, has been looted in a very professional and tricky manner by several of the housing societies. One of the most famous example is a 'mega-fraud' made by the owner of the Eden Housing Society in Lahore. The investigating agencies came forward, did their best. But, nothing could be done to rescue thousands of the people being looted even by the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Again, the most crucial part of the real estate marketing and management in Lahore in the recent years is the unbridled and mushroom growth of the city. The project of Lahore Development Authority (LDA) with the name of "New Lahore" has been expanded from the left bank of the river Ravi up to the faraway town of 'Sharqpur'. We should have learnt lessons from the very large size of the city of Karachi that has made this

place of international city insecure and unsafe; hence a city not worth living. The residents of Lahore have also been suffering many problems related to the basic facilities of life including insecurity and this mushroom growth of the city surely make the life of the residents closer to Karachi; hence the policy makers, political leaderships, powerful circles and real estate icons should avoid to convert Lahore into Karachi in terms of the quality of life in the second largest city of Pakistan.

Traditional Lyallpur

Infrastructure

A brief history of infrastructure-development of Lyallpur has been presented in Table-1, below.

Table-1. A historical sketch of infrastructure-development of Lyallpur city

S. No.	Infrastructure-Development Activity	Year
1	Lyallpur city was established having an area of 110 acres	1895
2	Famous Qaisri-Gate was designed & constructed	1898
3	Famous Clock-Tower was designed & constructed	1905
4	Lyallpur-Lahore Railway-track, Via Sangla Hill, laid-down	1910
5	First settlement of "Douglas Pura" came into existence	1920
6	Canal-water available to make agriculture-land productive	1928
7	Lyallpur Cotton-Mill/industrialization began	1934
8	Two flour mills and another cotton mill started	1930-40
9	New settlements: city expanded up to 03 square miles	1930-40
10	Very huge India to Pakistan migration	1947
11	Lyallpur declared an industrial-zone	1951
12	Industry flourished. City expanded to 29 square miles	1951-98
13	Municipal area, 35 square miles with >20 lac people	2003
14	The city crossed its bypass boundaries	2020
15	A huge industrial-zone in operation	2020-todate

Adopted from Maan (2024).

This city was planned and developed following the Union Jack Map by the British rulers during their regime in the Indo-Pak sub-continent. The city was named after the name of Sir Lyall who was part of the British Rule up to August 14, 1947. The traditional city of Lyallpur was comprised of 08 bazars/streets designed and constructed in a very interesting manner. The names of these streets are Kutchery Barzar (Courts Street), Rail Bazar (Train Street), Karkhana Bazar (Factory Street), Montgomery Bazar (street), Jhang Bazar (Street), Bhawana Bazar (Street), Aminpur Bazar (Street) and Chiniot Bazar (Street). Almost all the people of the city and in its surroundings know these names but never think or try to know their connection with the places towards which they are leading; hence named after the names of these places within/near or outside/away from the city of Lyallpur.

The famous Lyallpur Clock-Tower was constructed at a place and in a way by design that every street meets at this central point. Lyallpur was known as a 'city of eights bazars'. A limited club with the name of "Chenab

Club” was constructed by the British rulers near by the 08 bazars, by following the culture of clubs/pubs in their own country, for recreation and entertainment from evening till mid-night. It was a single white building constructed in 1906 while having several recreational and entertainment facilities to serve the British officers deputed for administration and serving people of the area. There was also a Railway Rest-House nearby this vicinity for the Railway officers to stay during their visits and meetings. Another important building was of the “Lyallpur Agriculture College and Research Institute” which was situated very close to these eight bazars. The historical buildings of Govt. College, Islamia College for boys and girls were also worth mentioning located nearby the eight bazars. The small residential areas, in the vicinity of 08 bazars, other than ‘Douglas Pura, included Gobind Pura, Guru Nanak and Dhobi Ghat.

Socio-Political Dimensions

The life was simple, secure and safe. The residents of these small places mentioned above were having very good relations and knowing each other very well. There were different castes and religions composing the communities of the Lyallpur city but they were living like one unit. There were no street crimes, thefts, or other mishaps occurring in the daily life. People were participating and helping each other at happy and odd occasions, selflessly. There were feelings of collectivism, unity, brotherhood and sympathy among the residents of the Lyallpur city. This all was leading towards spending a quality life. Although people were not that rich but lending money to each other on important and difficult occasions. The political support of vote was based upon the personal relationship, caste/bradri and character of the candidates. The politicians were using the funds honestly and, even several times, serving their communities from their own pockets without expecting any return. They were using their own resources and transport to accompany the needy to visit any office, court, police-station, or any other place. The occasional conflicts and disputes of people were resolved by the elder and local political leaders on merit. It was rare that the case was reported to the police. The development works such as drainage, street, small bridges, etc. was carried out through the local Govt. funds under the responsibility of the local leaders at the union council level i.e. chairmen & councilors.

Modern City of Faisalabad

Real Estate Marketing & Management

The modern city of Faisalabad started with the housing societies such as Gulberg, Jinnah Colony and Model town, People Colony, Civil Lines and Madina Town, in the ousters of the traditional & small colonies mentioned above as part of the Lyallpur city, in the 1960s and 1970s. The boom of housing societies in Faisalabad came during the late 20th century. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the mushroom growth of the housing societies has occurred and these have crossed the bypass surrounding the city. However, the important issue is that several malpractices have occurred in the market and management of these modern housing societies by the planners, developers and builders. This has seriously damaged the poor investors and end-users as many of them have still been wondering in the court or after the developers or brokers to get their plot or money back, but in vain. These powerful developers have been moving around in land cruisers or Vigo Double Cabins with several gunmen, fearlessly. In several cases, NAB has taken action and has been successful in getting the public money, partially, back. But, again, the real situation is still terrible and painful for many law-abiding citizens of the country, including Faisalabad. The drainage, sewerage, safety and security situation is also an open challenge for the societies and the law-enforcing agencies in Faisalabad. The condition in many parts of Faisalabad was terrible during the recent rains in Mon Soon 2025.

Socio-political Dimensions

In all the cities of Pakistan and now even in rural areas, the real estate marketing and management has been controlled and decided by the political powers and real estate mafia, together. For instance, no new housing-society can be approved without involving the powerful real estate personals, political leadership of the area/ city belonging to the sitting government and the concerned development authorities and departments. Several housing colonies which do not fulfill the requirements, rules, regulations are first allowed for development

and marketing. After selling the plots, the concerned authorities visit the places, towns and colonies and destroy, damage and destruct whatever the infrastructure has been built over there. This has been happening from time to time since the boom of the development and marketing of the housing societies in the Pakistani society.

The same is true in the case of Faisalabad. For example, infrastructure development of several housing colonies have been started, half-completed or fully completed. Then, the concerned authorities come with all the machinery and equipment to demolish everything being developed & constructed. This is never in the interest of the common people who invest or interested to invest in different schemes being announced, advertised but not developed accordingly. Therefore, it seems that it is two ways: greedy investors and tricky developers both want to be in the pool of beneficiaries. But, this is the investor who has to ultimately suffer financially, socially and mentally. Actually, these are the brokers who play the game by making stories through telling lies to the people of their confidence and deceive them for their personal commission, profit or other deals with the developers for their own benefit. Again, the cases of fraud have been noticed in several housing societies enjoying good reputation in the eyes of general public. These are only the end-users who come to know the reality at the time of registry, transfer or construction on the purchased plot. These end-users are the most sufferers as their last desire and hope for their own house is being snatched by these cruel developers.

Quality of Life in Large Cities

The findings/insights of the 'situation analysis' for quality of life of the residents in three large cities of Pakistan have been presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Quality of life situation in three large cities (Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad) of Pakistan.

Sr. No.	Situation (1947-1980)	Situation (1980-todate)
1	Traditional	Modern
2	Friendly	Unfriendly
3	Passive	Active
4	Hospitality	Inhospitality
5	Collectivism	Individualism
6	We-Feelings	"I" and "Me" Feelings
7	Primary Relations	Secondary Relations
8	Safe	Unsafe
9	Secure	Insecure
10	Cheerful	Fearful
11	Organized	Disorganized
12	Small-Medium Size	Large-Very Large Size
13	Lightening	Darkening
14	Good & Smooth Roads	Humpy & Bumpy Roads
15	Single-Double Story Buildings	Multistory Buildings
16	Water Availability	Water Scarcity
17	Rare Drainage-Sewerage issue	Ever Drainage-Sewerage Issues
18	No Bhatta Mafia	Different Bhatta Mafias
19	No China-Cutting	China Cutting
20	No Bori-Band Dead Body	Bori-Band Dead Bodies
21	Rare Street-Crimes	Always Street-Crimes
22	Personal Identity Common	Personal Identity uncommon
23	Food Security	Food Insecurity

24	Scarce Population	Over Population
25	Social Order	Social Disorder
26	Strong Social Structure	Weak Social Structure
27	Strong Social System	Poor Social System
28	Transport Service Sufficient	Transport Service insufficient
29	Great Social Cooperation	Poor Social Cooperation
30	Social Competition	Social Conflict
31	Restful	Unrestful
32	Effective Social Control	Ineffective Social Control
33	No Traffic Blockage	Ever Traffic
34	Rare and Peaceful Agitation	Frequent and Damaging Agitation
35	Low Divorce Rate	High Divorce Rate
36	Low Separation Rate	High Separation Rate
37	Few Broken Families	Many Broken Families
38	Few Single Parent	Many Single Parent
39	Rare Family Court Case	Frequent Family Court Cases
40	Joint Family System	Nuclear Family System
41	No Old Age Houses	Several Old Age Houses
42	No Children Sweet Home	Several Children Sweet Homes
43	Arranged Marriages	Love & Court Marriages
44	Rare Child Kidnapping	Several Child Kidnapping Cases
45	Rare Adult Kidnapping	Several Adult Kidnapping Cases
46	Rare Murder of Newly Married	Several Murders of Newly Married
47	Endogamy	Exogamy
48	Socially Developed	Socially Declined
49	Morally Developed	Morally Declined
50	Civilized	Uncivilized
51	Fulfillment of Daily Needs	Un-fulfillment of Daily Needs
52	Not Polluted	Highly Polluted
53	Healthy Environment	Unhealthy Environment
54	Good Climate	Bad Climate
55	Comfortable	Uncomfortable
56	Goods & Services Accessible	Goods & Services Un-accessible
57	Cheap Living	Costly Living
58	Favorable Circumstances	Unfavorable Circumstance
59	Easy Life	Difficult Life
60	Rare Suicide	Several Suicides
61	Theft Rare	Theft Common
62	Rare Road Accidents	Many Road Accidents
63	Rare Child Killing	Often Child Killing
64	Abortion Uncommon	Abortion Common
65	Rare Illegitimate Birth	Often Illegitimate Births
66	Known Domestic Workers	Unknown Domestic Workers

67	Rare Homelessness	Increasing Homelessness
68	Few Beggars	Many Beggars
69	Low Poverty	High Poverty
70	High Employment	High Unemployment
71	No Life Threats	Often Threat Calls
72	Rare Robbery	Often Robbery on Gun Point
73	Peaceful	Un-peaceful
74	Personal Friends	Face Book Friends
75	Print/Electronic Media	Social Media
76	Strong Family Bonds	Weak Family Bonds
77	Strong Social Bonds	Weak Social Bonds
78	Family Marriages	Business Marriages
79	Reference Marriages	Social Media Marriages
04	Economic Hub	Crimes Hub
81	Rare Court Cases	Huge Court Cases
82	Lawful	Unlawful
83	Mostly Law-Abiding people	Mostly Law-breaking People
84	Help at Difficult Time	Do Not help at difficult time
85	Good Governance	Bad Governance
86	Positive Politics	Negative Politics
87	Good Community Service	Poor Community Service
88	No Urban Flooding	Often Urban Flooding
89	Rare Rain Damages	Always Rain Damages
90	Rare Home Run-Away	Several Home Run-Away
91	Rare Drug Use	Heavy Drug Use
92	No Cyber Crime	Heavy Cyber Crimes
93	Industrial Development	Industrial Decline
94	Rare Real Estate Business	Heavy Real Estate Business
95	Rare Property Fraud	Often Property Frauds
96	Rare Smuggling/Money Laundering	Huge Smuggling/Money Laundering
97	Rare Rangers/Army Control	Often Rangers/Army Control
98	Rare Election Rigging	Often Election Rigging
99	Worth-Living Cities	Not Worth-Living Cities

Adopted from Maan (2024).

Conclusions

This study was designed to look into the real estate marketing, management and socio-political dimensions influencing the quality of life in the large cities of Pakistan. The cities included were Karachi, Lahore and Faisalabad. A qualitative methodology was used to reach some critical insights and ground realities regarding the issue in hand. The amazing world of the real estate has been providing services in the field of planning, development, marketing and management of various housing-societies and commercial markets & plazas and shopping Malls. However, the ground reality and experiences of the common citizens who invested in these housing-societies are shocking and painful. They have reported the real happenings in terms of lies, dishonesty, manipulation, deceiving and making fraud by many real estate developers with them and they lost their lifetime compulsory savings while dreaming to have their own homes. The real estate marketing

mechanism are highly bewitching which cause a huge and compulsory attraction to have a plot/home in any of these modern housing societies. The developers and their agents or employees do it with so confident and smiling face that no one can judge the inside real situation. The real estate developers have been affecting, badly, a large number of the small & medium investors and, most importantly, the end-users who want to have their own plot or home. It is because, there are always many slips between the lips of these end-users and the cup of tea (plot allotment & transfer documents) in the hands of the real estate developers. This is triangle of the city development authorities, political/powerful elites and the developers that, in many cases has been providing services of the marketing and management of the housing societies. It is because, they enjoy good faith of each other while watching their mutual benefits. But, at the same time, the incidence of political-power game or financial distrust make them to act to fail, even, the existing schemes of any worth at any time. They do this all to save their skin by ignoring the powerless end-users whose everything goes with the strong blow of the wind of social, political and power conflict between these three partners, shareholders and beneficiaries. It does not make any difference in the life of the members of this triangle as they get the same by some other property developer, politician, bureaucrat or property icon walking into their power-corridor but at the cost of the sufferings, difficulties, troubles and hardships of the common purchaser.

Policy Recommendations

In Pakistan, it is not the case that policy is not existing but the only most important issue is that the policy is not implemented or changed after every 2-3 years without making any impact assessment. Again, in case of the Pakistani real estate, these are not the high level statistical analyses for reaching any research findings by the academics, management experts and policy makers. It is because, many of the issues are as clear as the day light the real estate research needs a focus upon qualitative approaches to dig out the in-depth information having its cause-roots explained by the respondents/residents/sufferers. These issues needs to be dealt with seriously and strictly as suggested below.

- 1-Further expansions of the large cities of Pakistan should be strictly banned by law.
- 2-The new districts and sub-districts having newly born universities should be developed on modern lines and rural-urban migration should be diverted there by design and practice.
- 3-Rule of law should prevail to stop the schemes of the unlawful housing societies to protect the citizens' life-long earnings being looted through frauds & malpractices.

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