

Research Paper

Spatial Analysis of Rural Floating Population Employed in Urban Areas

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ABSTRACT

Commuting between rural and urban areas is one of the most important and most remarkable forms of incorporation and integration of rural and urban areas. It is a new spatial phenomenon emerging in most developing and developed countries. In this regard, the present study aims to spatially analyze the rural floating population employed in urban areas of Iran. The study data were extracted from the 2011 General Population and Housing Census. The spatial scale is analyzed at county level and the methodology is mainly exploratory. The results show that the share of rural labor force employed in urban areas in 2011 was 12.8%. However, its distribution is not uniform across the provinces and the provinces of Mazandaran, Tehran and Khorasan Razavi have the highest floating rate. Based on the results of exploratory spatial data analysis, three main focal points of rural floating population, including Tehran metropolitan region, Esfahan metropolitan region and southwest of the country with a focus on Bushehr were identified. Concentration and diversification of economic activities, industries and services are a major factor that can explain the formation process of the main centers of commuting from rural to urban areas.

Keywords:

Rural-urban linkages, Floating rural workers, Exploratory spatial data analysis, Iran

Extended Abstract**1. Introduction**

Commuting between rural and urban areas is one of the most important and most remarkable forms of incorporation and integration of rural and urban areas which is seen as a new spatial phenomenon emerging in most developing and developed countries. In this regard, the aim of the present study is to spatially analyze rural floating population employed in urban areas of Iran.

2. Methodology

The research methodology in this study was descriptive-analytical and in some cases exploratory. The studied population comprised the total rural population working in urban areas of Iran. The spatial scale of the research was mainly at county level, but in some cases, the characteristics of the studied population have been analyzed at the national and provincial scale. The data used, were extracted from the 2011 General Population and Housing Census. Exploratory spatial data techniques such as Moran's I and Getis-Ord G_i^* were used to identify the areas of concentration of rural floating populations.

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3. Results

The results of the general census of population and housing in 2011 indicate that the number of workers in rural areas of Iran was about 6.077 million. A significant portion of the country's rural workers, more precisely, 783209 rural workers are employed in the adjacent cities, which includes more than 12.8% of the employed rural population of Iran. Investigating the ratio of the rural population employed in urban areas to the total employed rural population of each province indicates that in 2011, the highest floating rate of rural working population belonged to the provinces of Alborz, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, and Bushehr, and the lowest rate belonged to Yazd, Sistan-Balochistan and Kerman provinces.

The analysis of the floating rural population working in urban areas at the county level indicates that Baharestan county in Tehran Province, Falavarjan in Isfahan Province and Farsan county in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari Province have the highest floating population. The spatial distribution of rural floating populations shows that counties in the north, center, and southwest of the country have the highest floating rate of rural working population, while counties in the west, northwest, east, and southeast of Iran have the lowest rates in the floating rural population. Based on the results of exploratory spatial data analysis, three main focal points of the rural floating population are Tehran metropolitan region, Esfahan metropolitan region and southwest of the country with a focus on Bushehr.

4. Discussion

The results of the analysis showed that three main clusters can be identified as the focus of the floating population; first the central northern part of Iran, focused on Tehran metropolitan region, second the western center of Iran, focused on the Isfahan metropolitan region and third in the southwest Iran, with the focus on the Bushehr industrial zone. The first cluster is in the Tehran metropolitan region which includes counties of Tehran, Karaj, Qods, Islam Shahr, Shahriar, Baharestan, Robot Karim, Savojbolagh, Melard, Nazar Abad, Abiyak, Ray, Taleghan, Noor, Chalous, Zarandiyeh, mainly located in the provinces of Tehran, Alborz and Qazvin. The share of Tehran's gross product without considering oil in 2014 was 25.8% and was the first in the country. Therefore, the concentration of the major part of the services and industries in Tehran Province has increased the intensity and scope of daily commuting to Tehran metropolitan region.

The second cluster is in Isfahan metropolitan region, including Isfahan, Natanz, Borkhar, Shahin Shahr, Meyme, Khomeini Shahr, Najaf Abad, Falavarjan, Mobarakeh, Lenjan, Dehaghan, Tiran and Karvan, Shahrekord, Farsan, Kiar, Boroujen, Ardal and Lordegan mainly located in Isfahan and Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari provinces. In 2014, Isfahan province had a 7.41% share of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the second rank after Tehran. However, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari Province has a share of 0.76% of GDP and ranked 27th. Therefore, the concentration of industries and services in Isfahan Province has expanded the magnetic field of its cities to the adjacent provinces and formed a major hotspot center for commuting from the villages to the city.

The third cluster is located in the southwest of Iran comprising Bushehr and Kohgiluyeh provinces. The share of Bushehr Province of non-oil GDP in 2014 was 3.92% and has ranked the 6th among the provinces of the country. In contrast, Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad Province ranked 30th and its share was 1.34%. In addition, in recent years, with new investments in the Bushehr Province, especially in the natural gas and industry sector, the province's share of the value added of the water, electricity and natural gas sector increased by 22% in 2014. The province's share of the value added of the industry sector has been boosted by a significant leap to about 7% and ranked the 4th. This situation has led to the emergence of commuting from the rural areas of the province and adjacent provinces to benefit from job opportunities in the natural gas sector and industry.

5. Conclusion

In general, concentration and diversification of economic activities in the scope of industry and services is a major factor explaining the formation of the main centers of commuting from rural to urban areas.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.