

Analysis of Sahand New Town Role in Spatial Order in Tabriz Urban Region

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1- Introduction

Rapid population growth in metropolises and consequences of population concentration in one or few urban areas has been a major challenge to urban management in different countries in recent decades. The situation in developing and developed countries is of different nature; moreover, due to the centralized structure of the most developing countries and approaches merely modeled of developed countries toward population concentration challenge often haven't had a positive reflection and led these countries to encounter a variety of other problems, in practice. During the early years after the Islamic Revolution and the beginning of the imposed war, extensive migrations began all over the country. Many farmers came to cities increasingly because of economic stagnation in villages resulted from land reform and waning of seasonal economy. In addition to farmers' migrations, there were widespread migrations from towns to large cities, mainly to the center of provinces. Configuration of the country's population was changed by these migrations, which led to fast growth of urbanization in the country. According to these conditions and upon evaluating the trends; demographers predicted that the population of cities in Iran will be doubled over the next 20 years. This paper studies the country's population variations in recent decades and considers urban system of the country. It also analyzes the affects of building new towns in Iran. In fact, at the moment, the "new towns" pattern has been accepted as a basis for organization and spatial refinement of large cities and establishing regional spatial order and balance.

2- Theoretical Bases

The background of constructing new towns in the world is often recognized by their formation in France and UK. Paris and London are known as the first cities with satellite towns in the world's history of urbanism that several new towns were created in their periphery to decentralize them. New towns are the product of the modern thought of planning that came into existence after the World War II. The problems of self-grown and unplanned towns have been the major reason for establishing the theory of planned towns in the world. It is more than half a century that the theory of new towns has been applied in various forms in the third world.

In the Third World this theory was employed to enforce the strategy of decentralization, land use planning, establishing growth hub, regional development, transferring the office centers, spatial organization of small towns creating service hubs for rural areas, making centers for integration of village and reconstruction of demolished towns and had various results. Totally, these towns were successful in providing housing for low-income households but their physical, social and economic structure is not consistent to local environment and therefore they are considered luxury and costly commodities that only have caused the social imbalances and in some cases the slums and a number of them are being combined to the metropolises because they have been designed according to local policies overlooking the comprehensive national and regional strategy.

In this research some spatial order theory such as core-periphery theory, Regional disparities and spatial development theory that developed by Hillhorst have been used and tried to use positive aspects of this theories to make new framework to new town analysis.

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3- Discussion

Construction of new towns was fulfilled with the aim of decentralization and controlling the population overflow from metropolises and their executive operations have been continued in the last two decades. Nevertheless, the effects of evaluation of huge investment in new towns on their urban system, and how successful are these in attracting population, are of great importance.

According to statistics, it is concluded that approximately 3,880,000 persons are considered for 21 constructed or in construction new towns and it is estimated that until 2010, roughly 800,000 persons will be settled in these new towns. However, based upon the census, this population has been 356,900 persons until first half of 2008, which is even lower than half of the intended population to be settled by the end of fourth development program.

Beside collectivity problems, it is important to point out that the urban population of the country was over 48 million persons in 2007, while only 7.9% (3.8 million persons) of this population will be settled in new towns. On the other hand, the decision was to settle 1.6% of this population in these towns by the end of the fourth development program; thus by calculating the present population of these towns, only 0.7% of urban population of the country could be settled in new towns.

The key question is that, excluding the construction of new towns requiring such a vast investment, could any other strategy be a proper alternative in order to attract and settle this 0.7% of urban population? Contemplating the urban system and considering the factors effective on the migration from small cities and villages, a much better strategy can be adopted for solving the country's urban network problem. Medium and small cities are potentially appropriate alternatives for replacing new towns and this strategy has been emphasized in national macro plans. In spite of this, pure modeling from conditions of European countries was carried out in making new towns. Consequently, today, it is reasonable to conclude that, construction of new towns in Iran has not been a successful policy.

Sahand New town as the city of Tabriz population overflow, based on the Forth Plan, should absorb more than 45,000 people until the end of forth plan. But it can absorb only about 15,000 people. With the current trend, at least the possibility of achieving such a goal is not possible in the next decade. In this research Entropy models are used to analyze Sahand new town effect in spatial order. Entropy model applied to measurement of disorders in regional urban system and this model can measure effect of each city in urban system.

4- Conclusion

The policy of constructing new towns with the purpose of balancing urban system continued in recent two decades and 21 new towns were approved and established. These towns were unsuccessful in attracting the population and only 0.7% of country's population was settled in them. It was however expected in past decades that the population load of large cities would decrease and be transferred to new towns. Sahand new town can absorb only 13000 people while should have 45000 people until the end of forth plan.

5- Suggestions

The following results are concluded from the analysis of urban population variation and strategies of constructing new towns: Lack of appropriate strategies about anomalous growth of large cities in the country; Mere modeling from the strategy of constructing new towns in Europe without considering cultural and social conditions of Iran; Failure of the strategy of constructing new towns in attracting the population; Appropriateness of reinforcing medium towns instead of investing in the construction of new towns; Dormitory function and lack of identity of new towns; The effect of Sahand new town on balance and spatial order in urban system; Lack of success in decentralization of population from Tabriz metropolis; Need to description of economical role to increase new town quality.

Key words: New Towns, Urban System, Iran, Population.