

Reviewing the Regional Imbalances in Iran

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Abstract

As one of the main characteristics of the Third World and developing countries, the rapid and increasing development of urbanization along with the increasing concentration of population and activities in some regions, has caused regional imbalances. The result of such a feature, which can be known as the effect of the polar growth policies, is that most of the country's facilities are concentrated in one or more regions and other areas acts as the city margins. Another serious challenge in large cities, caused by the speed of urbanization and the increasing concentration of population and activities in some areas, has been the problems such as air pollution, traffic, crime, and so on. In this regard, by the comparative study of the various economic, social and physical indicators in different regions, it is possible to clarify the way in which facilities and services are distributed relative to each other. The status of different geographical areas can be compared, and also, the facilities and constraints can be ranked and prioritized with the help of the indicators. Thus, the capabilities and constraints of different geographical areas in terms of utilization of services, infrastructures etc. can be identified using these indicators and it would be possible to provide the necessary tools for decision making and setting goals with the help of the mentioned indicators. Therefore, the environmental reform approach can be adopted in order to achieve a coordinated and balanced development in the country and also, further investments should be made in reducing regional inequalities so that it would be possible to improve the existing structure through the environment reform, reduce inequalities, avoid creating new inequalities, and promote the people's lives

Keywords: regional development, regional balance, regional planning

1. Introduction

After the Industrial Revolution, especially with the outbreak of the Second World War and its resulted devastation, the development literature has experienced many fluctuations and, has undergone massive changes conceptually according to the different views of the development and planning thinkers (Golmohammadzadeh, 2005: 31). Contemporary human beings have formed the term "development" with perceptions from development such as economic growth and GDP per capita growth, pure economic development, paying attention to growth poles and leading centers, sustainable development and human development. Now, the term "development" is tied with the concepts such as social justice, spatial balance, geographic justice, proportional distribution of services and human development, has deviated from the its purely economic sense, and has a relative comprehensiveness.

From different points of view, the term "development" has been much discussed and criticized. Lexically, the root of the term "develop" means opening which is opposed to the word "envelop". The word "envelop" refers to having covered, holding, or wrapping around something in such a way that prevent its content from being dispersed. The term "development" means totally opposed to term "envelope" or "covered". This means that it refers to the possibility of opening, getting out of the initial state and become more complicated. The root of the term "development" refers to a process and represents changes and transitions. Unlike organic development, where humans do not play a role and are subject to natural laws, humans play a fundamental role in utilizing this term in economics (the Third Development Plan documentation, 1998).

- The word "Development" literally means gradual growth towards become more mature, advanced, or elaborated (Oxford Dictionary, 2001).
- Development is generally a process which is associated with the organization revitalization and the distinctive orientation of the entire social-economic system. In addition to enhance the production and income level, development includes major transformations in institutional, social and institutional structures, as well as public views and positions. In many cases, development even includes people's habits, customs and beliefs (Coleman, 2003).
- Michael Todaro believes that the development should be considered as a process that requires major shifts in the social structure, people's and national institutions way of thinking, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the inequality reduction and the eradication of extreme poverty."

According to Todaro, "development means to move towards a better or more humane life through the continuous promotion of the whole society and the social system." He cited three fundamental values for the inner concept of development including: 1) the means of living, which means the ability to meet basic needs such as food, housing, health, security, etc; 2) self-confidence which refers to the sense of identity, self-esteem, and not letting others to manipulate us and, 3) freedom means the ability to choose, the freedom from the alienating material relations in life and the liberation of human social constraints against nature, ignorance, misery, other human beings, as well as dogmatic institutions and beliefs". From the points of view of thinkers like Maslow, this third dimension has been interpreted as self-actualization, which is a kind of transition from physiological, social, and respectful needs. This view to development is a relatively accepted view, and in most of the societies and centers that addresses the development concept, the development is considered in the same sense in terms of economic, social, cultural and political dimensions, and set indicators for it based on which, some countries is considered as developed or undeveloped.

The development concept in any sense refers to:

"Enhancing social capacities towards meet the tangible needs of the society, or increasing the use of social facilities and capabilities towards the society growth and excellence."

Consequently, in its true sense, development might have the following dimensions:

- Economization (economic dimensions)
- It can have democratic dimensions (democratization) and does not pay attention to a special social group which means the fair rather than uniform distribution of the development positive effects
- It may acts in the decentralized manner.

Anyhow, development can be defined as the advance towards the given and specific public goals that are consistent with specific human and social conditions and can be found in most advanced societies in the modern world. This model is known as the modern society, industrial society, the mass production- based society etc. (Tadbir Eqtesad, 2003).

2. Region and its variants in the field of regional planning and development

The region, According to M.H Gopal, is operationally the most convenient and economical spatial, sectional or time unit for the allocation of resources in which, the purpose of planning is merely the economic growth and prosperity (Masoumi Eshkevari, 2006: 42).

Various people, such as geographers, political science scholars, urban planners and economists, have used the concept of zoning with different meanings and hence, we can say that there is a lot of ambiguity in this concept. By providing the following definition, Smith attempts to solve this ambiguity in the standard booklet of zoning.

The zoning can be defined as follows: an effort to determine the regions, usually larger than local political structure, which is performed to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of local and national government planning". Therefore, zoning is basically faced with the issue of defining new areas that are at a moderate level in terms of government and administrative levels, rather than areas on the earth's surface which have geographical functions based on physical characteristics.

One of the permanent mental concerns of planners and executive directors of the countries has been the issue of geographic zoning and how these areas were shaped and combined. Usually, two dimensions of planning and implementation are considered for zoning. This issue is of more importance and a more objective role, especially in relation to territorial planning including the land preparation.

Zoning, which is used in almost all countries of the world, means to divide the country into areas lower than the national level and in the most common case, within the political administrative divisions. However, other regional divisions are determined for the especial purposes of planning and implementation in many countries in addition to the administrative-political divisions which have universal and permanent uses.

The region is defined based on a common feature (homogeneous region), the functional relationships (functional region) or the administrative power scope (administrative region). The region is a space with the spatial content that has an identified body. Region is a connecting scale between the national and the local level, which makes the

inclusive linkage and integration of communities and government possible. Region is a geographic, social-economic and political scope or a combination of them with a distinct identity (Arabshahi, 2014).

2.1 Types of Regions

2.1.1 Administrative Region: A geographic space that is artificially categorized according to political and administrative criteria like the borders of the provinces of the country.

The focal area: A special form of functional area has a focal point in which there is a regional superiority center and a kind of regional leadership. In other words, in case of the existence of the interaction and reaction between the different areas of a region and the regional leadership functions are concentrated in a region, that zone is called a focal region. It is possible that centralization exists within focal areas at different levels, in that case, the leveling of focal centers or growth centers would be raised. Different regions may select the centrality of a focal point in a focal region for different reasons. Therefore, different systems can be created within a focal region and give it the a systemic structure (Masoumi Eshkevari, 2006: 43)

A set of regions can be considered as a functional area if there is a relationship, interaction between several distinct focal regions. A focal region can also be a functional region due to the interactions within the region.

Polar Regions: the regions in which a city permeates as a pole, the magnetic field and a scope and absorbs and polarizes all activities of the region to itself. Two factors impact the sphere of influence of Polar Regions:

2.1.2 Official regions: The official area was defined as a geographically contiguous area that is homogeneous and uniform on the basis of selected indicators.

Functional area: The functional area is also referred to as a contiguous part of a geographic area, which shows interactions or interdependent components when defined on the basis of certain indices. These types of regions are also sometimes referred to as Polar Regions or gland areas. According to Eshkevari, the functional region is a region where there are many interactions between its different constituent parts with each other and fewer interconnections with external areas (Masoumi Eshkevari, 2006: 43)

2.1.3 Planning Region: a useful framework can be provided for the third type of regional categorization within the planning regions from the official and functional regions, or a combination of them. Planning regions are defined in different ways. Budwil defines the planning regions as the areas with communication or unity in their economic decisions. According to the Lewis Kibel, planning region is a geographic area that is large enough to include major changes in population distribution or employment within its borders, and is small enough to makes it possible to address all planning issues. Also, Klasen believes that planning areas should be large enough to make investment decisions economically feasible, and can provide the necessary human resources for their industries have a homogeneous economic area, at least have a development pole and a common sense regarding the issues of the region (Zalie, 2010: 50).

3. Regional balance and equilibrium

Achieving regional balance between people, businesses and the environment is a good idea. However, the term has been used for various purposes because of the failure to provide a precise and explicit definition at that time. Hence, regional balance can nowadays mean equal population density in the country or the distribution of activities in such a way that the net migration rate among the regions is zero. Regional balance in another interpretation means the execution of a combination of policies by the government to ensure that the level of economic activity is similar in different regions. However, does this really mean "balance"?. Balance does not mean equality, uniformity, or compliance in the regional context. The concept of regional balance in fact refers to having equal opportunity in regions to solve demographic, economic, social and environmental weaknesses in order to achieve all potential abilities of the region, and thus, ensure that the quality of life does is not the function of the place where people work and live (Zalie, 2010: 64).

3.1 Regional Balance: the Barlow Commission used the term "Regional Balance" in England in 1940 for the first time. However, the failure to provide a precise definition of it at that time led to the use of this term for various purposes. Hence, regional balance can today be interpreted as equal population density or the activities distribution in the country so that the net migration rate among the regions becomes zero. Regional balance in another interpretation means the execution of a combination of policies by the government to ensure that the level of economic activity is similar in different regions. However, does this really mean "balance"?. Balance does not mean equality, uniformity,

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Creating a balance and homogeneity in the development of different regions within the territory can be known as the regional balance (by application between the regions) (Sarraf, 2015).

Over the last few years, many economists have paid a lot of attention to the issue of balanced growth. This issue can be confirmed based on the existence of growth poles, regional dichotomy, the decline of major cities, marginalization in cities, and population migration. Two types of forces have been known by researchers that usually affect this issue which one of them causes distribution of economic activities in different parts of the country and it is consequently a positive factor in proximity of income and per capita production in different regions, which it results in some kind of approaching the living standards of people of different regions of the country to each other. Another factor is the concentration of activities in the regions and, as a result, increases the inequality between different regions (Sabagh Kermani, 2001).

Balanced Growth: Harmonious and proportionate increase in the products in different disciplines and fields

Developed countries have usually a growth map for their economies. Thus, the success of a capital formation program depends on the complementary production in an undeveloped economy. Products made by new means of production should be applied by consumers and factors needed by the developing factories should also be available.

Regional imbalance: refers to the status of problematic and significant spatial variations in the level of economic welfare, standard of living and quality of life between the constituent regions in a national territory. For example, the imbalance between the central affluent areas and the declining or deprived regions between the southeast and northeast of England, and the East Coast of the United States and the Appalachia area between the Southeast Brazil and the Amazon lowlands (Seif Aldini, 2004)

There are the problematic and significant spatial variations in the level of economic welfare, standard of living and quality of life between the constituent regions in a national territory; for example, the imbalance between the central affluent areas and the peripheral declining or deprived regions.

3.2 Regional Equilibrium: The equilibrium does not mean 'to achieve full uniformity and harmony in regional development'. Rather, it refers to form an optimal spatial-functional structure that creates opportunities to take advantage of their potential and achieve the minimum of national development and growth facilities for different regions of the country. (Sheikhi, 1997: 183) The regional development investigates the development factors in the spatial dimension.

The purpose of the regional equilibrium is to achieve the maximum consistency in different economic, social-cultural and environmental areas, proportionate with the nature of those activities at a level that can lead to sustainable development of the region. In fact, what is intended is a dynamic balance or balance that can continuously reproduce itself.

Regional equilibrium emphasizes availability and the level of access to tools for addressing the need for territorial realm. This concept can be consequently explained in the two main components of the need and accessibility in dialectics form.

Regional equilibrium implies the dispersion of the areas of activity in such a way that the society is willing to stability.

Fair distribution of the opportunities and benefits of development among the entire population of a region, region or country is one of the most important features of a healthy economy (Rezvani, 2002: 461).

The regional equilibrium has five important indicators:

- A) Economic efficiency: increases through improving the performance of regions with lower levels of productivity.
- B) Social justice: by emphasizing the non-economic dimensions of development.
- C) Sustainability of development: emphasis on harnessing the exploitation of resources in parts of the country's regions without using other sources of resources.

D) Regional convergence: Reducing economic differences between regions can result in the socio-political convergence of different regions.

E) Assistance to macroeconomic policies: Reducing the difference between regions can help national macroeconomic policies through economic efficiency (Arabshahi, 2014).

Establishing regional equilibrium at the territorial level is an ideal condition that will result from the implementation and realization of the adopted principles of the land planning in the development processes of territorial realms.

4. Regional Disparities (differences)

One of the greatest and most difficult problems that the world is facing today is the disparities in various regions. So that disparity, as a regrettable achievement of the present century, has been confronted by various nations in the world and has prevented governments from resolving this phenomenon. The need to pay attention to the inequality that stems from the global system, which results from neglect of justice and equity and opportunities (Van der veen, 2009). The importance of this is due to the fact that an important part of disparity ultimately leads to poverty and is a source of imbalance and inconsistency in access to resources and living standards. Regional Disparities mean imbalances in the spatial structure of the regions and show themselves in different living conditions, economic inequalities and developmental levels (Kutscherauer et al, 2010).

The regional disparities and imbalances in the spatial structure of the regions are considered as the phenomena that most of the countries are facing especially developing countries. The spread of growth and development in some areas, creating and exacerbating the great inequalities of income and social welfare between different regions and socioeconomic complications, and providing for immethodical immigration are among the effects of regional disparities (Masoumi Eshkevari, 2006).

Domination of some regions and creation of political and economic challenges in developing countries are among the effects of regional differences (Kim, 2008).

The phenomenon of regional dichotomy (disparity) is general enough that sometimes can be used to define the degree of development of the regions. Therefore, what has been presented as the "imbalance" in the regional studies is the existence of a specific social economic structure in a region with inconsistencies and imbalances in production growth, production relations and production facilities in different regions, so that the aforementioned factors in total cause disruption in resource allocation and transferring resources, and the gap between developed and advanced regions will be higher in the long run.

Inequality: A state based on which, the amount of a variable (a set of variables) is larger/smaller than a given value. If the value is a "less than or equal" or "greater than or equal" variable, the inequality is weak. Conversely, if the numerical value of the variable is larger or directly smaller than another number, (without the possibility of equality) the inequality is strong. One of the common applications of inequalities in the economy is in determining provisions by the economic constraints.

Types of regional differences or disparities are:

- A) Differences in economic indicators
- B) Differences in underlying services and indicators
- C) Differences in social-cultural indicators (Arab Shahi, 2014).

According to what is mentioned above, the imbalances can be divided into two general categories in the territory realm: 1) inherent imbalance; 2) accidental imbalance.

Inherent imbalance: This situation occurs when intrusive natural and geographic factors and factors such as isolation, severe water scarcity, tightness of the territory, etc., cause the emergence of imbalance.

Accidental imbalance: This situation results from the consequences of human decisions and the inadequate implementation of territorial development plans.

Regional equilibrium can be achieved using the following principles:

- Justly/ fair distribution of development space for social justice.
- Organizing development space towards efficiency and removing the turbulences (interference, contrast, and overlapping).
- preserving resources and the environment, creating ecological balance
- The integration of the capital underlying in development in certain territories, based on the relative advantages and proportionate to the surrounding territories (Kazemian, 2015). The term "regional inequality" clearly implies a regional economic difference that can be divided into "absolute" and "relative" differences. The absolute difference indicates the difference between the overall regional economic outcomes while the relative difference indicates the difference in their economic levels (Shasha et al., 2015)

5. Regional imbalances in Iran

Intense concentration of population, activity, and spatial imbalance in the provision of facilities is among the features of the Third World and developing countries, including Iran. This feature can be seen in Iran before the revolution which effects and remnants are also evident after the revolution. The concentration of a large part of the facilities and population at one or more points and the backwardness of other regions is the dominant trend, and the consequence of such an important problem is not but regional inequalities.

Regional inequalities in a global perspective emerge from two main pillars: first, the natural conditions of each geographic region, and second, the policymakers' and economic planners' decisions. It is worth noting that the importance of the first factor has been reduced and the importance of the second factor has been increased with the advancement of technology. Therefore, the policymakers' and planners' decision play the most important role in creating regional inequality (Zali, 2009). Perhaps this is why FrancoiPero believes that "regional fragmentation has an essential and inevitable component caused by various geographical and economic factors and an evitable component that is generally due to the discriminatory policies of governments in the development of physical and social infrastructure (Hadi Zenooz, 2015: 17).

However, due to the role of various factors (such as political and economic influence, the creation of special conditions for attracting capital in these areas), and the influence of governing mechanisms (such as upstream planning, the nature of the center-periphery, the absorption of economic resources of the city and the lack of distribution), on the economic, social and political structures of this disparity and imbalance, the increasing role of the central government, and the lack of presence of local authorities in economic affairs (given the nature of its focus and its socialism), further increased the gap between deprived and deprived areas (Ziari et al., 2010: 77).

With the advent of the modern government and the implementation of development plans at various national, regional and local levels in Iran, the disparity of spatial and regional development has been raised as a challenging issue. Meanwhile, the answer to the question of what are the factors contributing to the formation of inequality and imbalance formation of spatial and regional development have always been a fundamental question in the academic, legislative, policy and executive circles of the country. The answer to this question has been taken into account from different perspectives and various experts have responded to this question. While some people have mentioned geographic locations and natural issues as inconsistent factors of regional development in Iran, such as the argument that most of the backward regions of the country or areas with low natural potential and potential in comparison with the leading regions, or mostly border regions of the country, which have not been involved in the processes of national development as necessary due to their geographical location and security issues, others have known financial issues and the allocation of national budgets as the driving force behind some of the regions and the backwardness of others. Others are essentially introduced the development spatially as a divergent and uneven process that over time tends towards convergence and equilibrium. However, if in its positive sense, we consider development as the process of economic, social-cultural, political, and spatial change, then surely these changes are stemmed from the underlying factors, that are mainly influenced from legal processes, land management, social and human capacities and potentials, the historical background and so on.

Development, in its modern spatial form, began in the country as an uneven process from the beginning. Therefore, the development process of the national development plans provides a background of inconsistencies to regional development in Iran. Favorable ground for a centralized and powerful government with the support of a number of foreign countries following the constitutional revolution and developments that arose from the people's will to compensate for the backwardness of the progressive nations of the world, and also with the risk of the expansion of the Russian revolution to Iran. The spread and support of modern capitalism in the country became widespread by the establishment of Pseudo-modern state of Reza Shah. Thus, through the use of the new bureaucracy and the new army, the central power was to repress regional powers and integrate the national market, resulting in a new administration

system based on the appointment of the authorities of the regions of the country (provinces) by the center and relying on sectoral organizations instead of regional organizations. This way of managing the country was consolidated and strengthened by gradually increasing centralized oil revenues and reducing reliance on surplus flows from regions to centers. The result was the formation of centralized policy-making and planning institutions dependent on oil revenues and without reliance on revenues from different regions of the country. Consequently, this type of policy has been shaped by the establishment of a development policy-making body since 1937 (the formation of the Economic Council) and, with the formulation and adoption of the first law of the Seven Years Development Plan of the country, the form has been formally adopted from the year 1948. The transformation of the government into the main developmental organization in the country was the final product of this process. Meanwhile, the central government had a special tendency to develop certain areas of the country either voluntarily or unwillingly. At the same time, with the structure and mechanisms, the allocation of national resources to the development of regions in the absence of development programs and spatial plans has led some regions to influence the absorption of national resources and budgets and concentrate on areas susceptible to natural capacity and potential (including in the third development plan before the revolution).

Therefore, as a result of the implementation of modern development programs in the country, the development of the regional development has gradually emerged in the 1960s (Faraji Rad, 2012: 139). National studies on regional differences have been carried out in Iran, including some studies conducted by government agencies, some consulting firms and a number of expert publications. These studies have emphasized a number of variables or shorter time horizons, and their lack of integration has been emphasized. Only a few of them addresses analyzing and grouping the provinces.

One of the spatial developmental features of the country, according to the results of the studies, is the existence of significant regional differences. Some indications suggest that the regional differences may have declined over the past fourteen years. This reduction has not been so large as to change the province's status in terms of level of development. Generally, the provinces of the country can be categorized as many other countries in developed regions, developing regions, and undeveloped regions. Usually, the criteria such as per capita income or household consumption expenditure are used in the regional differences studies. However, the social indicators have also recently been considered to reflect economic factors. The rational state is to utilize a number of indicators suggesting the economic, social and population conditions that can include urbanization percentage, average monthly consumption expenditure per household, income generation, etc. In general, it can be said that important trends on the phenomenon of regional differences can be observed in Iran. First, the regional differences in Iran are quite distinct. Second, in some indices, there is a certain convergence pattern among the provinces. Third, the status of most provinces in the 1970s has not changed in provincial hierarchy despite the convergent development,.

The main reasons for the imbalance in Iran can be mentioned as follows according to the statements above:

a. The dependence on oil revenues (the adoption of extroverted capital investment during the prosperity, and the labor Intensive production methods and introversion that have led to the recession indicate that industrial development in the long run not only failed to address the issues of agricultural development and the improvement of the deprived areas, but also increased the disparity between the city and the countryside and the imbalance between the regions)

B. Government and comprehensive planning which means the imposition of national goals on regional goals without considering the fundamental issues and problems

C. Lack of administrative, official, legal requirements for following the upstream documents (the administration system works independent from the programs in Iran; the programs also imposes regulations independent from regional contingencies; these two movements allocate capital and resources differently which results in regional conflicts; the independence of the executive system and independence of the comprehensive plans from the regional needs).

D. incompetence of the resources geographical distribution system

6. Policies adopted to reduce inequality in Iran

* **In 1946**, based on two principles of promoting the standard of living and adjusting the distribution of wealth, it is stipulated that plans and programs should be proposed.

* **In the third development plan**, the policy of growth poles, infrastructure development and industrialization of cities was emphasized.

* **In the fourth development plan**, the decentralization of some developmental functions was executed. The elimination of imbalances from the fourth program before the revolution was at the top of the agenda.

* **In the fifth program before the Islamic revolution**, attention was paid to the issue of regional inequalities, especially in terms of social services. Nevertheless, pre-revolutionary development programs did not succeed in creating regional equilibrium and made the inequalities, spatial polarization and fragmentation worse.

After the Islamic revolution, the priority was given to regional equilibrium (article 48 of the constitution) and deprivation on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the legitimacy of interference in the development space allocation and the task of facilitating the equitable allocation of the nation to this space was accepted.

The first attempt to formulate a post-revolution plan, by reviewing the performance of the governments of Iran in this regard, comes back to the Supreme Council of the Revolutionary Plans, which presented a report in April 1980. The third chapter of the report focuses on the spatial distribution of economic, social and physical activities, and suggested policies are proposed considering the different areas in the national context, which has been superior to the limited past views. This report identifies the balance between the shares of spatial planning and sectoral planning in national and regional levels needed to be developed, and industrial development combined with the integration of land space.

* In the second development plan of the country, policies such as optimal allocation of resources and facilities for promoting the provinces and regions below the average national quota, taking into account deprived areas and adopting appropriate decisions for dismantling and eliminating regional imbalances in land use planning programs has been stipulated in the subset of the major goals of social justice implementation. The development of deprived villages and the creation of regional equilibrium relying the services and employment plans have been highlighted in this program.

* the third development plan has emphasized accelerating the development of villages, attention to improving livelihoods of villagers, make the cities' and villages' images identified, creation of employment, and social status of the economically less developed regions under the long-term plans for provincial development within the framework of the country's planning system.

* The fifth program has given special attention to the regions and provinces. An example of the legal material for balancing the areas are as follows: Granting the right for the payment of a facility and a portion of the profit margin of the facility to investors, especially in less developed areas to the government; allocating 35% of the natural gas consumption for the implementation of the plan Infrastructure and preparation of Persian Gulf coasts and islands in the Persian Gulf region and their direct area within the framework of the basic principles of land use planning, guaranteeing access to educational opportunities especially in less developed regions; creating identity in the city's physical and physical environment; and creating a balance in promoting the life quality and reducing inequalities; strengthening the economy, transport and exploitation of the country's territorial status; the development of tourism and the optimal use of coastal and domestic waters; and the adoption of an empowerment and local partnership approach based on the model of the basic needs of development and the identification of the need to provide social services by local communities through the incentive system for small-scale development projects proportionate to local capacities through the local levels and by attracting public contributions to justice and social stability and reducing social and economic inequalities.

* The fifth development plan has strongly emphasized the regional balanced development and the reduction of regional gaps. The indication of such an emphasis are legal articles of the plan includes Article 80 (Creating sustainable employment, entrepreneurship development, decreasing regional imbalances and creating new jobs), Article 84 (the Government obligation to distribute of the National Development Fund resources between the departments and provinces of the country in order to achieve balanced development), Article 180 (Distribution of general resources and the facilities profit subsidies with a balanced approach to the country's facilities, fair distribution, elimination of discrimination, promotion of the level of less developed regions, and the realization of development and justice), Article 224 (fair distribution of provincial income surplus to balance and upgrade development indices between provinces) and chapter six of the program's law on the regional development issues (formation of the provincial planning council, establishment of provincial income tax system, distribution of public sources and subsidies, procurement facility, balanced use of the government facilities, fair distribution, elimination of discrimination, promoting less developed areas, and achievement of development and Justice, territorial planning and balanced development).

* obviating of the deprivation especially in rural areas of the country, facilitating and regulating the internal and external relations of the country's economy and promoting social justice and regional equilibrium are also emphasized in the Article 19 of the twenty-year vision document of the country.

7. Summary and Conclusions

The gap between the Iranian provinces status in terms of the level of development, based on the integrated development indicators (economic, social, cultural, infrastructure, health), and using the statistics of different years is evident in the studies of Jamali et al (2009), Tavakoli Nia and Shali (2012), Ghanbari (2013) and Eshtiaqi (2014).

Here is the question: What are the factors affecting the formation and reproduction of the existing gap between regions in Iran? One of the most important issues facing developing countries in the world is regional inequality.

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