Extended Abstract

1. Introduction
An examination of the population of Mashhad city during the years 1986-2011 shows a population decline in the central region and population growth in the margins. The case of existing population and occupations can be explained by the concept of urban decay. The main problem investigated in the present study is that, contrary to this general process, Isar district has been successfully renovated and developed in a region, which faces urban decay. Subsequently, the main subject of the study is to examine the role of economic elites in such a development. It is an important experience due to relatively successful pattern documentation and expansion of the literature on the revival of unorganized urban textures, development based on the private sector, public-private cooperation, and good urban governance.

2. Methodology
The present inquiry is a descriptive-analytical study conducted using the causal, post-event method. The subject was explained through library studies, documents, and surveys. In addition to field data and official census, 97 questionnaires were distributed among store managers across Isar Bazar, 53% of which were completed. Moreover, the spatial and non-spatial relations were tested using general and spatial regression. Instruments used for statistical processing and map cartography included SPSS, Excel, SAGA, and ArcGIS software. Since the concept of growth machine as an independent variable is abstract as well as the fact that decisions made by urban elites occur through real estate investments and population attraction. Some explaining indices were examined as mediator variables; finally, the independent variables were examined in two groups including variables related to investment (5 variables) and variables related to population attraction (12) in Isar district.

3. Results
Testing the hypotheses of the study shows that the coalition between production and commercial elite of Isar district (growth machine) along with the initial investments and business development have resulted in a rise in real estate value, population attraction, and retention along with physical, economic, and social development and an
increase of services per capita. In this regard, the population and family growth of the district during the years 2011-16 have reached 1.1% and 2.6%, respectively. Regression between the explaining variables and population growth shows that the variable of commercial use area in 2015 is of the highest extent of explanation with a determination coefficient of 54%, compared to other variables. The spatial determination coefficient obtained for four explaining variables account for 64-66% of the spatial characteristic relative to the changes in population. An investigation of land use across the district demonstrates that during the years 2001-04, a number of functions were added to the district including 20 for education, 11 for religion, and 6 for healthcare.

4. Conclusion

In confirming the first hypothesis, field investigations showed that a small group of entrepreneurs who are residents of the district were the pioneers of entering Isar Bazar; their investments resulted in a rise in population growth rate and subsequent investments. Regression between the explaining variables and population growth shows that the variable of commercial use area in 2015 is of the highest extent of explanation with a determination coefficient of 54%, compared to other variables; consequently, the second hypothesis is also confirmed.

The third hypothesis is also confirmed through examining the district’s population, as the variable has been witnessing a rising trend during the years 2011-16, ultimately reaching 1.1%. These numerical changes have been accompanied by qualitative changes in the district. Furthermore, given the number of added service functions, the hypothesis stating the increase in service and welfare functions required by the residents as one of the uses of growth machine and a cause of population growth in the district, is confirmed. Other findings of the study are presented in the following:

- Given a context of competition based on the free market, the growth machine could lead to economic growth and it could benefit low-income groups in the district’s society.
- According to field observations, the elites’ strategy for action through the exploitation of a more efficient mixture of production factors, in other words, creativity and entrepreneurship, is the reason for their success.
- The local community of Isar district has been improved which was not through forced migration of disadvantaged groups (the authenticity phenomenon) and replacing them with middle and upper-class groups.
- As the growth machine’s fulcrum, entrepreneurs have had the highest share in developments taken place in Isar district, while others have been less influential. Their absence or lack of influence would weaken the district.
- Since the members of the growth machine adjust their behavior according to the market system (maximum profit), private functions and services have the lowest chance to be actualized.
- Factors such as overcrowded business spaces, fixed and variable population density of the district, noise pollutions, automobiles exhaustion, and increased crime rate are caused by the unlimited development of the district occurring outside its capacities.

As both the development and decline of Isar district is intertwined with the market development at Isar Bazar, the following actions are recommended in order to introduce competitiveness in Isar market:

A) Provision of the required urban infrastructure
B) Improving the environment and perspective quality
C) Preventing the formation of exclusivity in ownership, business, and obstruction in market development
D) Paying attention to the locality and endogenous aspects of district development

E) Paying attention to enhancing the district’s security

Keywords: Urban decay, Urban growth machine, Elites, Isar district of Mashhad, Improvement of districts

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