

Full Length Research Paper

Urban management in Kurdish border cities of Iran: Case study of Saqqez

A. Kiani* and A. Heydari

Department of Geography and Urban Planning, University of Zabol, Zabol, Iran.

Accepted 27 July, 2011

Saqqez is the second largest city in the Kurdistan province of Iran. In recent years, Saqqez has been faced with many problems due to emigration from rural centers and small cities. Since immigration has an inadmissible proportion to larger cities, it is blamed on many urban problems. This article wants to review these negative prejudgments in order to delineate specific problems and adopt real urban management solutions for urban managers. It tries to review immigration theory from an array of different studies to provide a conceptual framework and assessment of how continuous immigration to Kurdish border cities will have an impact on the future of Iranian cities. This case study provides programs which have been implemented in national levels. In the current study, librarian methods are used to review past researches about rural to urban emigration and to make suggestions on how the apparent problems in urban management may be solved. The results show that villagers' immigration to areas that have the appropriate capacity for immigrants is essential. Nowadays, immigration as a part of urban development is inevitable and as such, it should be anticipatory. Also, it shows that there are some weaknesses in urban policies and visuals about constructive and integrated policies which is a reflection of urban management.

Key words: Urban management, immigration theories, Kurdish cities, Iran, urban, cultural.

INTRODUCTION

In the past three decades, rapid urbanism, according to governors and experts, was seen in Iran due to unsuitable or irregular immigration. However, villagers should not leave the fresh air and nature of the villages to "ruin the calmness of the developed cities with an attack like wilderness tribes" for passion and false demands, and they should not cause a growth in marginal settlements by using drugs and dirty jobs (Ismael, 2010: 7070). Urban managers are persistently faced with rural immigration as a destructive element that causes the growth of marginal settlement to their urban areas, especially to big cities such as: Tehran in Iran, and Sanandaj and Saqqez in Kurdistan province of Iran. The conclusion of all those critiques is in citizens' dissatisfaction from urban management through the new-comer immigrants, and in fact, urban managers reason that consequences of the immigrations are the rapid population growth and there is no necessary reference and

time coordinated to this growth to supply the citizens' requirements (Amin, 1974:120). In addition, it can be said that all the problems which accrued in cities are as a result of immigrants; otherwise, the nice old cities were still stable. This article looks at these certain assumptions and presumes no right to deprive them of their immigration freedom with certain claims (Bilsbarrow et al., 1984: 20). From another view, we cannot make immigration compulsory. So, after a rapid review of immigration theories on the kind of rural-urban immigration in Iran and Kurdistan, we will attempt to discuss the policies and an approach for encountering immigration by urban management (Chant, 1992:1-29).

The main reason for the high rural poverty levels is the low level of productivity, which is associated with a lack of basic services, such as health services, education, electricity, piped water, and road access. One of the reasons that these basic services are lacking in rural Kurdistan is that the rural population is scattered over vast areas of mountainous or forested terrain. The only feasible way to extend basic services to almost all Kurdish is to make them move to locations where it is possible to deliver these services at a reasonable cost.

*Corresponding author. E-mail: Kianiakbar24@yahoo.com. Tel: +989122463826.

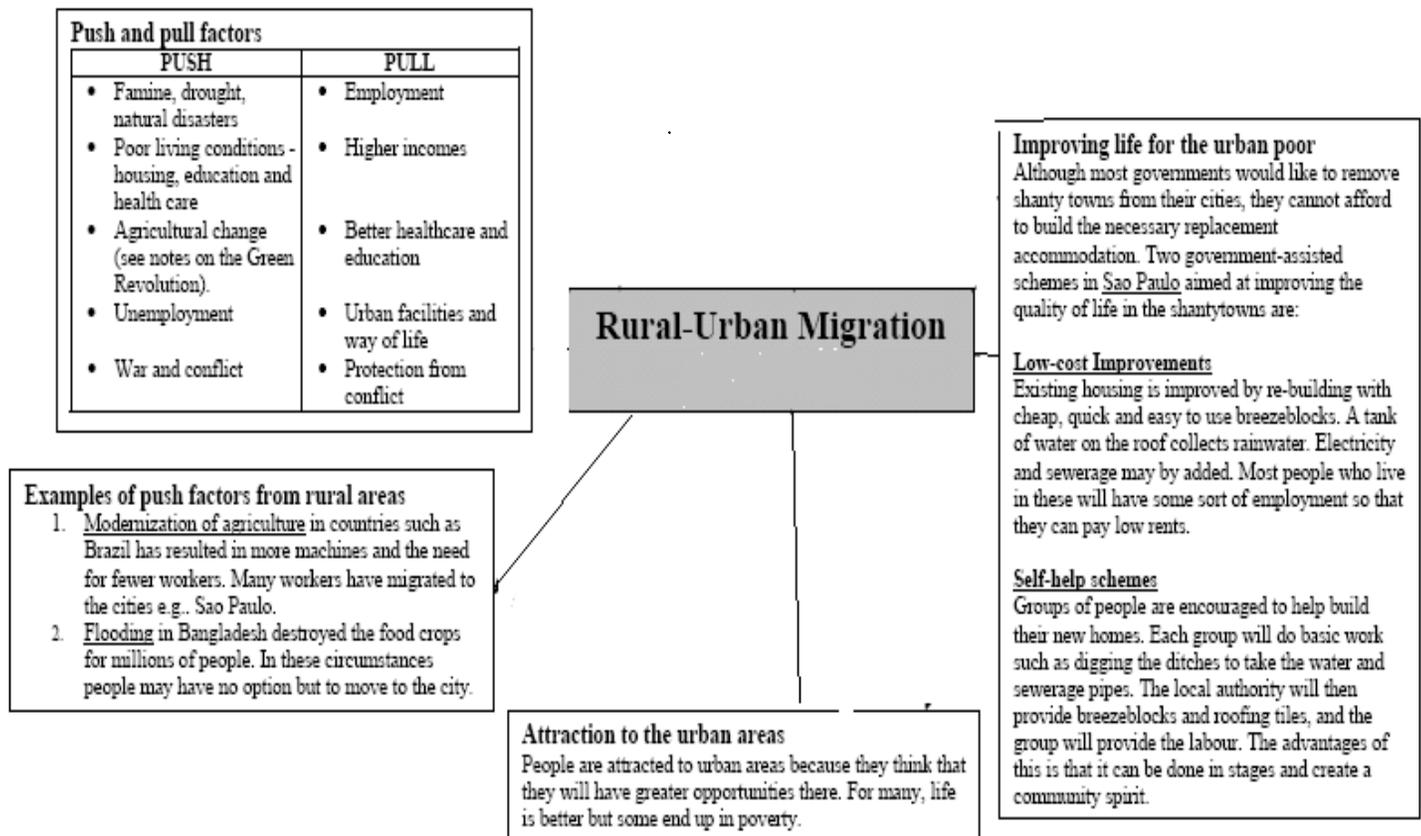


Figure 1. Rural to urban immigration aspects (EU, 2011).

This means urbanization (Anderson, 2002: 7).

CULTURAL CHANGE

Probably, one of the most important negative implications of rural-urban migration in the Kurdish region of Iran is the diminishment of traditional indigenous cultures in these regions. These changes include changes in religion, clothing, ceremonies, sexual habits, etc., though these changes are not necessarily negative. The rural, indigenous people in Kurdistan tend to live in a state with a lack of access to most basic services such as: electricity, piped water, schools and health services (Clark, 1986: 1-3). They have few economic opportunities besides subsistence farming and mining. Due to the division of plots between children, many land holdings, especially in the highlands, have become too small to support a family, and land degradation is a serious problem in many areas (Dovazang, 1981:90-121). This situation does not seem to be improving much over time. It is clearly necessary for some of the young people in the rural highlands to leave agriculture, because there is simply not enough agricultural land to support them. They have two main options. One is to move to the rural

lowlands, where land is more abundant and forest can be cleared to create more agricultural land, while the other option is to move to a city and try a new style of life.

Critics of rural-urban migration often assume that migrants have to give up the good features of their old culture and adopt the bad features of city life (Dejong, 1981:43-50). This appears to be quite an illogical assumption. Migration and change in general, allows some choices that a small, stable and static society does not. When presented with these new choices, it seems more likely that people would adopt good features and reject bad ones, rather than the other way round (Figure 1).

UNDERSTANDING OF IMMIGRATION

"Immigration" is a general word for different kinds of population movement between places, and which causes a permanent or semi-permanent (for a long time) change in the residential place (Johnston and Jalili, 2001: 7). Immigration is a movement by which people leave their main place to live in other places for many reasons such as political, searching for jobs and other reasons for a long time. For the fact that changing a home in a city or

even in the urban area is not considered as a change (in the area bigger than daily communion) in the residential place, some say immigration is the result of dissatisfaction of the places where humans live.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Immigration occurs as a result of widespread factors and it has different effects on people, though everyone do not have the same way of reflection (Parnwell, 1993). The theoretical explanation of the reasons for immigration can be divided into two research levels: (A) macro-level and (B) micro-level.

Theories in macro-level

In this level, immigration is said to be as a result of the social process caused by structural reasons in a country and area. Here, two different theoretical branches can be distinguished. The first branch is driven from the modernization and dual economic theory. This branch mainly sees immigration as a balancing mechanism that transfers the extra labor force from the rural traditional and agricultural sections to the new urban industrial and service sections (Trager, 1988:188). It is assumed that the movement of labor force is the prerequisite of the structural evolution to the modern estate, whereas cities and villages use it in the same way, thus leading to a balance in income and usage of its parts. In fact the zero marginal productivity is considered for the rural immigrants who, with leaving the village, the agricultural part does not hurt (Findley, 1987:60). But instead there shows an increase in productive urban labor force. This assumption in the "south" countries often does not hold true, in that transferring of the labor force has a relation with the reduction of agricultural products. It should be considered that there is no total employment in the city to make sure that urban production increases (Wood, 1981:334-338). Also, the assumption of paying real wages in the city will not hold true until the time of the complete extra rural labor force transfer in the "south". The immigration models explained by Lewis, Fei and Ranis are in this branch (Todaro, 1976). Buoyancy from the villages has been divided into two conditions: first, the condition in which rural economic stagnation, leaving the activities, and environmental and natural resources' decadence cause a "negative" buoyancy of the labor force; and secondly, the condition in which the rural economic activity, substitution of the labor force with new technologies, and the environmental and natural resources' saturation cause a "positive" buoyancy of the labor force. With this framework, Zelinsky (1971) wrote the theory of mobility transition. In this theory, population movement pattern changes according to the society development stage, while rural-urban immigration in the "south" increases gradually; but after the middle stages of development, it reduces (Lee, 1985:16).

Hidden determinism in these theories would not leave a place for the differences of people, societies and areas; so for this reason, they do not have the power to define the various immigration patterns in countries. The third branch of macro-theories, based on an ecological viewpoint, sees immigration as a fact and a sign of increasing population pressure on resources whose root, in Maltosi theory of unbalanced population growth, is against agricultural products (Grigg, 1980). Biologists, using "carrying capacity" concept, justify the rural immigration by natural limitations, because the carrying capacity shows the capacity of an area to keep people healthy and other organisms without declining its ecosystem (Hagget, 1979). So, from this point of view, the immigration is a balancing movement. These theories only emphasize on the natural motivators of population movements, while many studies in the "south" show that against population's pressure on resources

(especially in villages), immigration is only one of the societies' choices, although other choices like: birthrate decrease, compacting the agriculture, land usages, social-economic structures and technologies' alterations (especially from the distribution justice aspect) exist (Bilsborrow, 1987). Also, it is necessary to reemphasize that a lot of rural immigrations end in cities, which in themselves are the birth places of biological unbalancing. Thus, the complex classified theories in macro-level see immigration as a variant, depending on the conditions and structural-contextual limitations that the first and second branches are relied on by the predetermined factors. Incapability of the villagers in labor force employment (about the first branch) and the unequal distribution of resources to the city benefits (about the second branch) are defined as the main reason of rural-urban immigration. Thinking about immigration as a behavioral reflection, the economical goals leave a large share unseen, whereas people immigrate because of some special personal, social factors, or a combination of them. The third branch of these theories, which considers the decadence of environment and the shortage of natural recourses as the main reason for immigration, relies on some predetermined factors in the villages. Regarding the fact that the major population of the south villages did not migrate, the necessity to investigate the other level theories and bring the macro-level theories to perfection becomes clearer (Ismael, 2010: 707).

Rural-urban immigration

Rural-urban migration has long been associated with economic development and growth in the economic literature. In particular, Todaro and Harris-Todaro-type probabilistic models that examine migration have concentrated on the expected wage disparities between rural and urban (formal) labor markets as a driving force behind migration decision. These models, which are static and partially equilibrium in nature, have virtually ignored the cost-of-living differentials across regions that arise from the presence of regional non-traded (home) goods. Moreover, even in dynamic general equilibrium models, equations specifying labor market clearing conditions have neglected the recognition of a missing endogenous variable, the household's choice of residency and the corresponding equations necessary to cause the labor market to clear as well. Effectively, adding these conditions to the model allows agents to move from one region to another and to bring their utility function and budget constraint with them to the new region of residency. This condition profoundly affects the spatial distribution of economic activity. Furthermore, when factor market imperfections are modeled, for example, the segmentation in labor and capital markets across regions, these factors earn different rates of return, thus greatly influencing the pattern of spatial economic development. The main objectives of this paper are to model the residency choice decision in the context of a dynamic general equilibrium economy, to identify the channels through which segmentation in capital markets induces migration from rural to urban regions in developing countries and to explain how uneven economic growth may emerge as a consequence.

Theories of micro-level

Despite the high ability of this model to explain the immigrations in the "south", the following important critiques have been made:

- (1) In "south" countries, the family relations and lifecycle of an immigrant play an important role in decision making, meaning that we cannot consider the immigrant as a single person with merely economic benefits motivation (Greendale, 1988).
- (2) Immigrants want to optimize and not to maximize their use of opportunities; for this reason, the cycle immigration between cities

and villages takes place (Chang, 1981).

(3) The implicit supposition toward the existence of enough information and logical evaluation for immigrants is not true; so for this reason, chain immigration takes place and the background of the immigration stream canalizes the information (Parnwell, 1993).

(4) To reach the urban labor market, the existence of friend and relative is essential but is not equal for all (Spear and Harold D 1988).

(5) While the explained model is alike for all the immigrants, in fact, selective immigration is related to people's age, gender, skill and risk taking.

(6) In this model, the extensive market in the informal part of the southern cities is not cared for.

(7) This model cannot determine the destination of the immigrations, while there is a rationale for choosing different destinations.

(8) Immigration is not the only way that can be used to compensate the income differences in cities and villages, some other ways like specialization or varying the family economy and cycle immigration are also possible (Guest, 1989).

(9) The wish to achieve a better life quality and social activity has not been cared for.

(10) Considering the priority of Push in southern villages, many of the immigrants come to the cities for nonexistence of income and their goal is to achieve the least income instead of expense-benefit (Dasgubta, 1981).

(11) Finally, capital is more moveable than job. In conclusion, to this model with the advantage of a cheap labor force in the village, capital and other productive factors do not move.

The second branch of the theories in micro-level is based on the priority of non-economic factors in immigrants' behavior, such that at present, it is not a dominant theory as compared to other theories based on the priority of the economic factors that are considered to be subordinates. In these theories, in which most of them are compiled using the researches about people's residential place and alteration among cities in "north" countries, the axis is the motivated immigrant's perception of utility of the environment. In stress-threshold model, immigration is looked at as a shape of a person or group's adaptation with the environmental perception change. In this model, a threshold of stress tolerance is supposedly said to motivate and force the immigrant to move toward the new environment (Wolpert, 1966). Therefore, the set of categorized theories in micro-level, sees immigration as a variable depending on how immigrants make decisions, whereas in the first branch, economic reasons for labor force movement relies on income calculation during a person's lifetime in two places and modifies them with the possibility of getting a job (Strak, 1984:475-486). The second branch explains the non-economic reasons depending on the utility of environment and the urban attraction of social facilities for immigrants, that is, exact studies in this case are not available and the immigration policies are mostly inspired from the first branch. In both branches of the theories in this level, the freedom of immigrants' movements is certain, though attention has not been paid to contextual factors (Jaastand, 1962:80-93).

RESULTS OF RURAL-URBAN IMMIGRATION

Regarding the case that most sensitivities reflect the immigration phenomenon and its outcomes in the origin and destination of migrations, a theoretical framework, in this part, is developed to evaluate the consequences of rural-urban immigration. Regarding the other side of migration, urban attraction is classified into two classes: first, the real requirements of the labor market that exist

and the attractive capacity of the urban parts that cause "positive" immigration of rural labor forces to cities; secondly, the condition in which false expectations by villages exist and causes "negative" immigration of rural labor forces, whereas there is no capacity in the urban productive labor market. Paying a little attention to the four classes of immigration, regarding its outcomes in origin and destination, it can be interpreted that two types of it can merely be accounted for as "positive" or "negative", because they affect the origin and destination, though the two other types have different effects on origin and destination, which can be evaluated as "negative" in one aspect and "positive" in the other (Sarraf, 2001). However, in the presented model, based on different criteria, the "positive" and "negative" definitions can be changed; yet in either case, attention must be paid to the fact that immigration must not be evaluated only from the city or village aspect, but also the complexity of consequences in all types of immigrations should be accounted for from the national development perspective (Selier, 1988:31). Considering the review of immigration theories in previous part, it can be concluded that in macro-level, immigration to cities in Iran is inevitable. With regards to the dual spatial development inheritance and its intensification viewpoint as a result of economy globalization, which is either based on the devotion of discriminative resources and development centralization or on historical events, natural deviations and biological straits, it is deduced that the current immigration stream of the country will continue at least for a long time. In fact, stability of Iran's rural areas depends on the immigrant transferring limit which causes the exit of extra population of the rural environments inquiries and thus keeps labor forces and entrepreneurs of the village. In this regard, rural total development will not be able to stop the immigration of extra population from the village; rather it can help to sustain the population.

Urbanism process is one of the decisive factors in "south" countries' development. In Iran, population growth has created unprecedented job requirements, in which the most possible, economic and the quickest place for the creation of the majority of such jobs are inside the urban parts. Nowadays, beside the five hundred thousand urban youngsters, more than three hundred thousand rural youngsters, with low education and somehow unskilled, enter the labor market where better opportunities with lower investment are undoubtedly provided for them in cities as compared to the villages. This is an emphasis on the inevitability of immigration to cities and the necessity to anticipate it from the macro-level perspective. From the micro-level perspective, the theories stipulate that the stream of immigration to cities in Kurdistan is not to be stopped soon (Oberai, 1983:42). Prior to the policy-making argument, it is necessary to pay attention to the following principles:

(1) Motion and transition freedom in habitat and offices are of inevitable civic rights. Policy-making based on

legitimacy derived from social benefits can influence the population's motions with encouraging and sponsoring devices. With a transient look at the literature of the subject and a dominant dialogue in our country, it can be interpreted that at least during the two or three previous decades, the common understanding of rural-urban immigration in Iran is "negative" and by citizens' view, the word "irregular" is an inseparable element (component) of the population's motion which is mostly "regular" in the villagers' opinion (Skeldon, 1990:72-77).

(2) Freedom in choosing habitat and offices contradictorily requires policy-making in which people are not forced to leave their habitat and inhabit in another place (Anderson, 2002: 53).

The institution that gives partnership to the immigrants' society in handling their local problems is among the main elements of this social plan. The complexity of these movements is called empowerment in which urban management acts like a facilitator of capacity-making in these societies and in fact teaches them how to stand on their feet. Succession in this case is open, in that the other aspect of these societies' employment is from the physical one (Hall and Pfeifer, 2000). Development of environmental conditions and improvement of neighborhoods with the least city's help are done through these societies, with improvement of their social-economic situation, while a departure of low income neighborhoods is removed.

Finally, we should revise the "anti-immigrant" view. This view is rooted in anti-urbanism and especially anti-urbanism has been distributed because of its incapability in urban management. So, urban management needs to be altered. However, discussion about the elements of this alteration (like the entrance to all social-economical areas, integrated in the strategic management of the city and zone) would be postponed to other times.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the editors of the Journal of Geography and Regional Planning for their comments and all organizations that assisted us in preparing this article.

REFERENCES

- Amin S (1974). *Modern Migration in Western Africa*. London: Oxford University Press. p.120.
- Anderson L (2002). *Rural-Urban Migration in Bolivia: Advantages and Disadvantages*, Instituto De Investigaciones Socio-Económicas, pp. 1-7, 53.
- Bilsborrow RE, Oberai AS, Standing G (1984). *Migration Surveys in Low Income Countries*. London: CroomHelm. p. 20.
- Bilsborrow RE (1987). *Population Pressures and Agricultural Development in Developing Countries*. *World Dev.*, 15(2): 183-203.
- Chang THP (1981). *A Review of Micro Migration Research in Third World Context*. pp. 303-327.
- Chant S, Radcliffe S (1992). *Migration and Development*, in: *Gender and Migration in Developing Countries*. S. Chant (ed.), London: Belhaven, pp.1-29.
- Clark WAV (1986). *Human Migration*. Beverly Hills. London: Sage, p.69.
- EU (2011). *Rural- Urban immigration*, pp. 1-3.
- Dovazang J (1981). *Microeconomic Approaches to Studying Migration Decisions in Migration Decision Making: Multidisciplinary Approaches* G .F. De Jong and R.W. Gardener (eds.), pp. 90-129.
- Dasgubta B (1981). *Rural-Urban Migration and Rural Development. Why people move*. J. Balan (ed.). Paris: UNESCO. pp: 43-58.
- DeJong GF, Fawcett JT (1981). *Motivations for Migration: An Assessment and a Value-Expectancy Research Model*. *Migration Decision Making*. DeJong GF, Gardener RW (Eds.). New York: Pergamum, pp. 13-58.
- Findley SE (1987). *Rural Development and Migration: A Study of Family Choices in the Philippines*. Boulder: West view, p. 6.
- Grigg DB (1980). *Migration and Overpopulation. The Geographical Impact of Migration*. P. White and R. Woods (eds.), London: Longman, pp. 60-83.
- Guest P (1989). *Labor Allocation and Rural Development. Migration in Four Javanese Villages*. Boulder: West view, p. 27.
- Hall P, Pfeiffer's P (2000). *Urban Future*. London, E and FN Spun. p. 238.
- Greendale MS (1988). *Searching for Rural Development. Labor /migration and Employment in Mexico*. Ithaca: Cornel University Press. p. 27.
- Hagget P (1979). *Geography: A Modern Synthesis*. New York: Harper and Row. p.43
- Johnston RJ, Jalili J (2001). *The Dictionary of Human Geography*. Oxford: Blackwell, p. 504.
- Lee S (1985). *Why People Intend to Move?* Boulder: West view. pp. 15-16.
- Oberai AS (1983). *State Policies and Internal Migration*. London: Croomhelm, p. 42.
- Parnwell M (1993). *Population Movements and the Third World*. London: Rutledge, pp. 72-77.
- Skeldon R (1990). *Population Mobility in Developing countries: A Reinterpretation*. London: Belhaven, p. 193.
- Sarrafi M (2001). *Iran's Giant Urban Issue and the Role of Urban Planners*. *Urban Plann. Arch. quarterly J.* 63: 47-50.
- Selier FJM (1988). *Rural-Urban Migration in Pakistan*. Lahore: Vanguard, p. 31.
- Jaastand LA (1962). *The Costs and Returns of Human Migration*. *J. Pol. Econ.*, 70(5): 80-93.
- Spear A, Harold D (1988). *Urbanization and Development: The Rural-Urban Transition in Taiwan*. Boulder: West view, p. 309.
- Strak O (1984). *Rural-to-Urban Migration in LDC's – a Relative Deprivation Approach*. *Econ. Dev. Cult. Chang.*, 32(3): 475-486.
- Trager L (1988). *The City Connection: Migration and Family Interdependence in the Philippines*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, p. 188.
- Todaro M (1976). *Internal Migration in Developing Countries*. Geneva: ILO, p. 21.
- Wood CH (1981). *Structural Changes and Household Strategies: A Conceptual Framework for the Study of Rural Migration*. *Human Organization*. 40(4): 334-338.
- Ismael YN (2010). *Urban Planning For Small and Medium Cities In Kurdistan Region Iraq "Problems And Available Opportunities*, *Int. J. Eng. Sci. Technol.*, 2(12): 7070-7077
- Wolpert J (1966). *Migration as an Adjustment to Environmental Stress*. *J. Social Iss.*, 22: 92-102.
- Zelinsky W (1971). *The Hypothesis of the Mobility Transition*. *Geogr. Rev.*, 61(2): 219-249.