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Elaboration of Spatial Function in Political Organization of Space with an Emphasis on Country Divisions in Great Khorasan

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Abstract
One of the aims of spatial political management is to increase access to social and economic services to all residents in an area in order to enhance their satisfaction. There is a great space in the action that has a broad scope. If the spatial political organization implemented in a country is unable to organize such services in a condensed manner, it will face reduced efficiency and lack of satisfaction of its residents of their access to economic, socio- cultural services, so it will lose its political authority before its residents. The distance between the rural- urban centers of the Great Khorasan province to its capital (Mashhad) along with its consequent complications have always been one of the problems of this Great province before conducting the political divisions of the province in 2004. One of the most significant purposes of assigning the law of the state divisions in the province has been to lower its physical distance to the political center of the province and to increase the socio- economic facilities provided to raise its inhabitants' satisfaction. The present reearch was conducted using a descriptive- analytric approach to analyze the effects ofthe state's divisions and to increase the effect of the political centers (Birjand and Bojnord) on thesatisfaction level in terms of economic, socio- cutural needs of the citizens in the North Khorasan province. The resultsshowed that reducing thedistance created in the political divisions of the province and adjacency of the urban rural centers to the political sites in the province has failed satisfying the satisfaction of the local residents of these areas.

Key Words: *Great Khorasan, country divisions, distance (economic, social, and cultural), satisfaction.*

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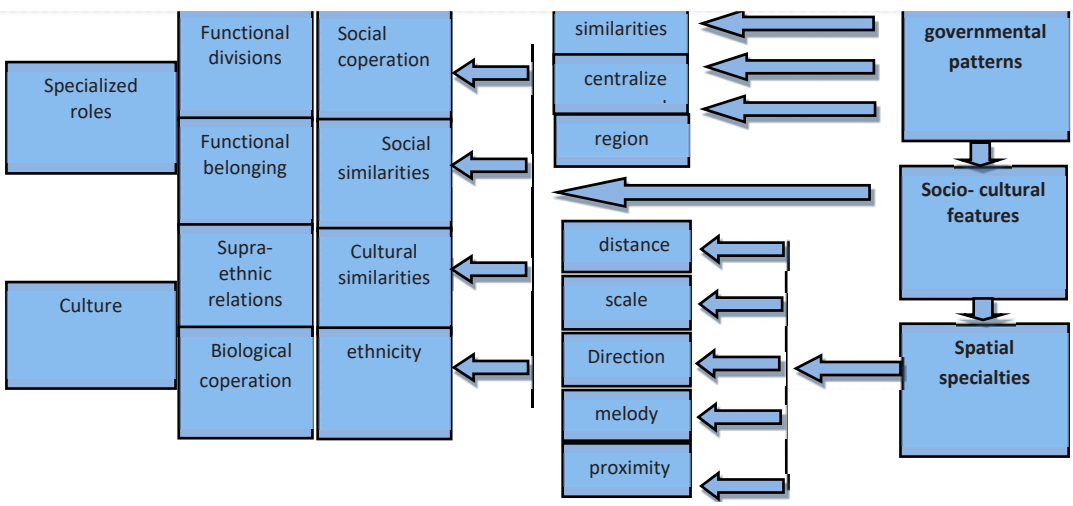
Introduction

Country division is one of the most vital and cricial governmental efforts which leads to promotion of proper management of land and maintenance of unity and coorporation at local, regional and national levels. For better controling their land and counttry, governments have offered more proper services to the citizens- given 3variables,i.e. cultural and social features, so they have allocated a division in the national sphere level (Hafez nia, 1992:194).

Based on the govermental pattern, the space is built and organized and the relationships between the focal points of the nuclear regions, penetration areas, and interactive netweorks are regulated. Drawing the formal borders inorder to organize the country politically is affected by other criteria, so called allocation of expiry, which determines the templates of human acitivities in space. Human acitivities appear in space as clear patterns including scales, distances, population, mass, distribution rhythm, and the closest neghbors. It will lead to changes in the landscape caused by human activity in space. Such perspective will have great effect on shaping the politica areas; Another determining criterion which gurantees the stability of the borders and the official- political divisions or shows theor border is the socio- cultural features. There is a mutual relationship between the political, social, and spatial aspects of such phenomenon. Creating and maintaining of this domestic cohesion is considered as an important goal of the division system of the country.

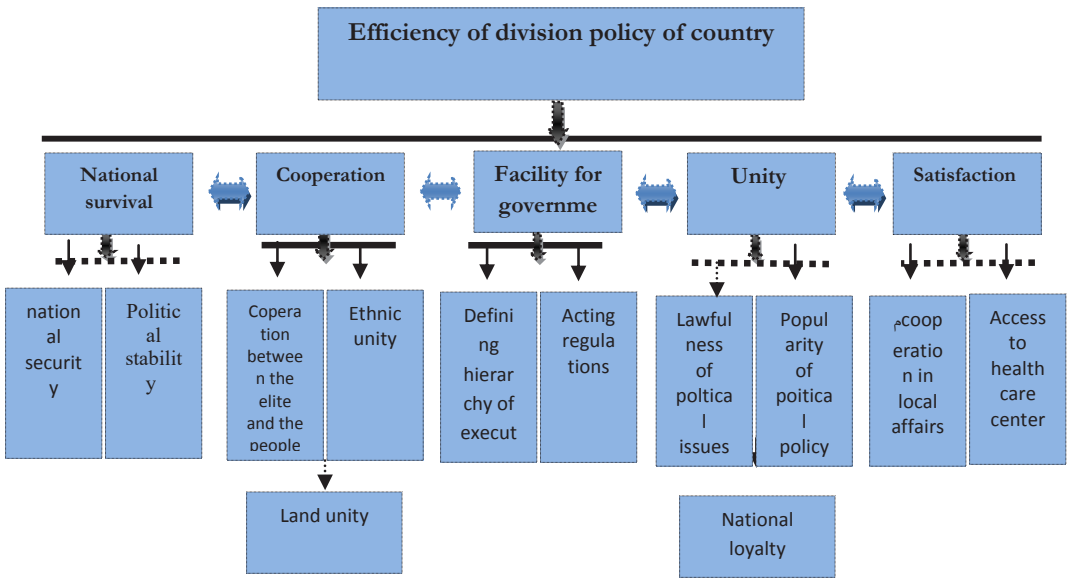
The efficiency of country divisions in the political divisions of space depends on the following variables.

Various factors can result in reduced efficiency so that the political organization may reside in anomalies. Of the main components, ignoring the socio- cultural factors can be attractive. Since human activities in space are center- oriented and man, tries to achieve and maintain a certain level of efficiency by reducing the gap; therefore, people and their activities are spatialized and the strcytures tend toward the condenced and integrated patterns. It is a reaction to the gap and is derived from the distance process, i.e. access. If the political management cannot integrate the settlement of its inhabitants and organize its related acitivities and form its structures in a compressed template, it will face less efficiency and lack of satisfaction of access to services and occupation opportunity. Spatial interaction/ mutual spatial action result from the differences among the spatial specialities, particularly, between sites, which act as the focal points. In this mu-



Graph 1. Items affecting political organization of space; Source: authors

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Graph 2. Efficiency of country divisions; Source: authors

tual action, gap has a crucial role and has a broad scope.these included:

- socio-cultural distance covering components such as education, health, partnership and solidarity, and class
- physical and temporal distance like the shortest distance of access
- economic distance like minimum access cost (gatrell, 44,52,63,73)

Khorasan province is consisted of 23 cities, 94 towns, 90 areas, 238 districts, and 6187 villages covering an area of 313,335 km2 with a length of 750 km and a width of about 420 km. In the national divisions, this area extends from the North East and East borders of Iran, which have crises including insecurity in the border areas. These are mainly due to prolonged crises in the neighboring country (Afghanistan) and the formation of Turkmenistan in the northern areas of Khorasan province have created a great body for the province. Great vastness, relative population density, and inequality in its population distribution in the north and the central areas of the province, inequality of the citizens in terms of access to the services and unability of the central part of the province in managing and solving the problems of its citizens, all indicated that this gap can play the role of a determinor to reduce the rate of efficiency of the nation divisions in the province.

1- main question of the research

Has the distance factor led to reduced efficiency in the nation divisions of Khorasan province? Given the division in Khorasan and reduction of distance for better access of the citizens to official centers and services, has the nation divisions increased?

2- secondary questions of the research

2-1 how does the socio- cultural distance affect administrative efficiency of the nation divisions?

2-2 how does economic distance affect administrative efficiency of the nation divisions?

3- Hypothesis and assumptions of the research

1-3 distances have an effective role on the administrative efficiency of the country divisions.

2-3 socio- cultural distances has an effective role on the administrative efficiency of the country divisions.

3-3 economic distance an effective role on the administrative efficiency of the country divisions.

مدیریت شهری
فصلنامه مدیریت شهری
(ضمیمه لاتین)
Urban Management
No.46 Spring 2017

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Method of data gathering

The required documents were collected using the library method, considering the the theoretical foundations and field method, referring to the environment and building direct relationship with the research samples. Next, the gathered data were analyzed thoroughly.

Sample population

The sample population in this research included the heads of families living in the north and south Khorasan provinces, after division of the great Khorasan province. Next, the capitals of these provionces along with an urban and rural site which had the farthest distance to the central city of the whole province (Mashhad), before and after thedivision compared with the capitals of these two provinces, i.e. Bojnord and Birjand, respectively.

Number of samples

The number of samples used in this study included 300 households. 180 of them were studied in the central region of the province, 90 were evaluated in two towns relatively far from the political centers of the province (Ashkhaneh and Nehbandan), and 30 were in two rural areas which had the farthest distance to the political center of the province.

Theoretical foundations

Political Organization of Space

Harvey believes that the main issue of geography is implementation of social justice and access to a sort of spatial organization provided that there will be a fair social criterion for determining the borders of such areas and allocating resoutrces to them (Harvey, 1997: 31). Since each organization is a geographical order It can be claimed that the political organization of space is dividing the country into different areas through establishing conventional borders, which provide a suitable base for equal expansion, and prevents imbalanced growth of the geographical scope of the country. However, each of the units obtained from the country divisions has its own special political importance. It attempts to achieve maximum effiecincy in providing services regarding the political and historical imperatives as well as facilitating the governance and services (Badiee, 1982:212).

Political divisions of space functional

The levels of different functions of a division unit, to a large extent, depends on how the most optimal political management and political sequence of the country's territory are formed (Romina, 2011: 80). The main goals of nation divisions are to achieve coordinated and integrated bed in terms of the economic and social functions and to progress in accordance with the principle of comparative advantage of the country (Akhbari and Yadollahi, 2006: 27).

On the other hand, these functions not only caused the inhabitants of an area who have defined different levels of divisions (states, provinces, urban areas, and districts) for their separate identitiessatisfy the spatial needs but also increased the legitimacy and acceptance for the political rulers of the space (Jones et al., 2007: 177).

Role of distance in political organization of space

Distance, as a relative and absolute index, is one of the most important factors used in determining the relationship and interaction between places (Behforuz, 1995: 112). It is one of the most complex social phenomena and its complexity is due to its ancient history and universality. It always makes sense with access and is defined with the hypothesis of full productivity (Ballot and Gimoel 314). Distance has severe consequences in the social, economic, and physical aspects of the country including increasing centralization, economic and social dissatisfaction, continous migration, urban marginalization, divergence process, sense of discrimination and social class gap. It will also break the organic links between various economic sectors and different regions of the country. It is the main cause of the uncontrolled growth of large cities, the lack of improvement in employment, unequal distribution of the population, and in some

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areas of the country (Ahmadi-Pour et al., 2007: 22- 49). These factors have encouraged the governments to organize the space politically to reduce the distance and provide better services from the political centers to its surrounding neighborhoods (Buch and Kleinert, 2004: 296). Distance can be defined in different aspects including

Social distance

It is mostly defined as a conceptual distance (expressing interactions between people and groups). It is based on the policy of social classification which is related to social phenomena such as class, social classification, hierarchy, and job divisions and has deep effects on desion making processes about individuals and job conditions (Fiedle haravy. Xin li, 2010).

In its overall sense, social gap describes the social differences between individuals or positions. Stabilizing such unequalities causes uneven distribution of power insociety, creates domesticsocio- political challenges, and provides the political leaders of space with numerous political problems (Challier, 2012, 23).

Economic distance

It is a metaphor referring to more access to market leadfing to increased income (WORLD BANK, 2009). There are plenty of documents indicating the great income distance as the main reason of failure of democracy in countries. One of the main problems of human societies is the class gap between the poor, the rich, and the deprived of a society (Rahmani, 2003:33). It can be concluded that economic distance refers to the different and uneven share of individuals and social groups of the income and wealth of the nation, which is the most important motif of humans for participating in chaotic political activities (Rafii pour, 1997: 26).

Physical distance

Distance is the separating or inhibiting buffer between two or more things. In other words, it is the space between two phenomena that do not overlap each other. (Pirie,2009: 244). Physical distance or access distance can measure the distance between the point of origin and point of destination in different units such as kilometers, meters, miles, .. (Zipcode world.com).

Reducing distance in political management of space

Distance Reduction theory, primary based on the first geographical law of Toiler indicates that everything on the Earth is in relation with other phenomena, thus, closer objects have better interrelated. Distance reduction is a geographical term that describes the effect of distance on socio- cultural or spatial interactions. Each political area, which is equipped with socio- economic components and cultural, ethnic, and economic lines, represents its distance from other areas.

One of the aims of political organization of space is combining these areas with each other to reduce their distance and increase the access rate and their presence in the areas to affect the governmenrtal decisions (Karim pour and Mohammadi, 2009:88). The citizens' satisfaction, lowering costs, regional justice, national survival (security and stability), decentralization, and increased security are among the goals of reducing the distance in the country divisions.

Research variables

Validity analysis of questionnaire items

In order to assess the validity of items, the Cronbach's alpha of SPSS software is used (see below table).

The resulted Cronbach's alpha (<0.7) proves the validity of the questions of the study.

Research findings

Information obtained from a questionnaire survey represent the satisfaction rate of residents of North Khorasan and South Khorasan provinces in case of different items.

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Variables' aspects	Items
Economic variables	**- income and employment (**reduction in access costs, improve,ent in housing, improvement in living conditions, increase in servives of economic centers (banks and financial institutions), income improvement, employment improvement)
Social variable	**- security and** solidarity [increased social -political participation, ethnic-linguistic solidarity,and social security; reduced migration, improved sense of place belonging, public facilities, recreation and leisure, access to transportation]
	- Education [increased educational institutions, increased access to training centers, enhanced quality and quantity of education, increased level of education]
	- health[Increased health centers, better access to pharmacies, increased access to health facilities (hospitals, clinics, health centers ...)

Table 1. Variables and items of questionaire

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.936	**20**

Table 2. Cronbach's alpha of all items

Items	South Khorasan	North Khorasan
Improving living conditions	٪56	٪ 57/3
Improve housing	٪44	٪ 38/3
Reduce travel costs	٪40	٪44/3
Increase in services of Financial institutions	٪52/7	٪55/3
Increase access to shopping centers	٪27/4	٪40
Poverty reduction	٪19/3	٪33/3
increased Industrial employment	٪31/3	٪29/3
decreased Unemployment	٪11/3	٪20
balance of revenues	٪28/7	٪24

Table 3. Effect of reduced gap on increasing economic satisfaction

مدیریت شهری
فصلنامه مدیریت شهری
(ضمیمه لاتین)
Urban Management
No.46 Spring 2017

Analysis of results

Assumptions: reduce the distance, increase satisfaction (social, economic) (North Khorasan)

H0: $\mu = 3 \rightarrow$ satisfaction rate resulting from distance reduction (social, economic distance) in North Khorasan province has not changed.

Ha: $\mu < 3 \rightarrow$ levels of satisfaction (social, economic distance) in North Khorasan province have increased.

Satisfaction level of reduced economic gap

Satisfaction level of reduced social gap

Regarding T-statistic calculated according to the theories, the increased social satisfaction in North Khorasan at 95 % confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$) was significant, but it was not significant in the economic satisfaction theory. Therefore, the statistically null hypothesis was acceptable in case of increases in (social) satisfaction. As a result, the research hypoth-

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Items	South Khorasan	North Khorasan
increase Security	٪59.3	٪56
Enhance sense of identity	٪43.3	/46.7
Increase sense of solidarity	٪44	٪49.4
Improve recreational and leisure situation	٪48.6	٪50
Improve public transport	٪31.4	٪50
Improve roads (infrastructure development)	٪32.6	٪50
Improve education (vocational, universities ...)	٪34.6	٪45.3
Increase literacy level	٪41.4	٪43.3
Improve Health Care	٪39.3	٪49.3
Improve level of public health	٪31.4	٪42
Reduce incentive to migrate	٪44	٪49

Table 4. Effect of reduced gap on increasing socio- cultural satisfaction

Variable	Error	Degree of freedom	T	Mean	Standard error	Standard deviation	Average	Number
Economic gap	0.054	149	-1.939	-0.312	0.068	0.837	2.687	150

Table 5. Overall economic satisfaction in North Khorasan

Variable	Error	Degree of freedom	T	Mean	Standard error	Standard deviation	Average	Number
Social gap	0.000	148	-0.495	-0.312	0.063	0.770	2.687	150

Table 6. Overall social satisfaction in North Khorasan

eses regarding increased levels of social satisfaction in North Khorasan province were acceptable (95 %); yet, in case of increased economic satisfaction, it was not acceptable.

Assumptions: reduced gap, increased satisfaction (political, social, economic) (South Khorasan)

H0: $\mu = 3 \rightarrow$ satisfaction levels in case of reduced gaps (social, and economic) have not changed in South Khorasan province.

Ha: $\mu < 3 \rightarrow$ satisfaction levels of reduced distance (social, and economic) have increased in South Khorasan Province.

Satisfaction level of reduced economic distance

Satisfaction level of reduced social distance

Regarding T-statistic calculated according to the increased social- economic satisfaction in South Khorasan at 95 % confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$) was not significant; therefore, the statistically null hypothesis was not acceptable in case of increases in (social and economic) sat-

فصلنامه مدیریت شهری
(ضمیمه لاتین)
Urban Management
No.46 Spring 2017

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Variable	Error	Degree of freedom	T	Mean	Standard error	Standard deviation	Average	Number
Economic gap	0.066	149	-1.849	-0.122	0.066	0.813	2.877	150

Table 7. Economic satisfaction in South Khorasan

Variable	Error	Degree of freedom	T	Mean	Standard error	Standard deviation	Average	Number
Social gap	0.114	143	1.589	-0.091	0.057	0.693	3.091	150

Table 8. Overall social satisfaction in South Khorasan

isfaction. As a result, the research hypotheses regarding increased levels of social and economic satisfaction in South Khorasan province were not acceptable (95 %).

Conclusion

Prior to the political divisions of Khorasan province based on the average indices of the country in development, it was regarded as a deprived province. In terms of allocations and using the national and provincial resources, the approved share of the province remained unpaid, because what was paid to the great province of Khorasan by far had no harmony with its condition and population status, its potentialand actual needs and capabilities. The 700- kilomemer distance between the northernmost and southernmost cities in the province as well as the population dispersion were a big problem of the province for ages. The unbelievable gap in the hierarchical system of the villages and the provential cities between Mashhad and other cities and villages was one of the key factors affecting the automatic centrality of most facilities in Mashhad city. They all resulted in depriving other regions of the above- mentioned services. Paying attention to these problems and necessities such as promoting the levels of economic development of the regions, creating the national- cultural identity, and increasing the tendency to preserve the rsidents of the border areas of the province, is among factors that were considered by the division law of Khorassan province. Analysis of the existence of centralization over years showed that removing this major obstacle in the way of development required transformation in political- administrative divisions in the country. Political divisions of the province in 2004 indicated the srict decision of the central government to reduce the gap in the province and to increase the efficiency of these divisions along with improving the socio- cultural and economic conditions of the residents, especially on the border regions of the province. Finally, after numerous challenges on locating the central regions of the province, the plan was implemented. Studies done in the research showed that given the results obtained from testing the hypotheses of the research and based on the items of socio- economic satisfaction levels, the created reduced distance had different functions in these two provinces. Analyzing the responses in satisfaction levels of economic situation of the residents of the two provinces indicated that:

a- The distance reduction occurred inthese provinces has failed to increase their satisfac-

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tion level of the current economic conditions rather than the period before the division of Khorasan province. In this regard, evaluating the income and expense rates of the householders in both North and South Khorasan provinces showed that during the years following the political divisions of space, these two have had the least gross income per household among the provinces. For example, North Khorasan province (except in 2006), have had the lowest gross income per household among different provinces and in 2006, it was recognized as the second least gross income per household. The statistics showed that the gap between the gross income and expense of the households in both North and South Khorasan provinces has expanded so that the difference between the gross income and expense per household in 2005 rose to its highest rate (202%) in 2010 in North Khorasan province. It seems this inefficiency of the country divisions in increasing satisfaction levels of income in these provinces is mainly due to factors such as the aris and desert0 like condition of the province, especially in South Khorasan, which has led to increased access to services in this province. Moreover, lack of establishing industrial centers and employment in the areas surrounding the residential sites especially the border areas in both North and South Khorasan provinces, lack of proper economic infrastructure, and waste of monetary resources in form of lack of access to the institutes and financial cooperatives for all areas in the provinces. All these factors have failed to increase employment and reduce poverty in the two provinces.

b- Increased social satisfaction represents the distance reduction among the residents of North Khorasan province. On the other hand, lack of satisfaction of the residents in South Khorasan in shortage caused in health, educational, and cooperative fields represents that this recent distance reduction could not contribute with the increased proximity of the residents in South Khorasan regarding the old conflicts between the inhabitants in various parts of the province, e.g. Qaen and Birjand. On the rate of their function over years and increase ethni- religious coperation in Suni and Shia regions and increased rate of health and educational infrastructure in the North Khorasan province. It indicates the inefficiency of distance reductionin increasing satisfaction level more in South Khorasan than in North Khorasan provinces.

Suggestions

1. Establish developmental infrastructure (economic, social) before the political divisions of space Decentralize facilities in the centers and capital cities of each province.
2. Increase administrative and service sectors such as banking branches in all regions, especially in rural areas
3. Develop medical care centers such as hospitals, clinics and health centers in all regions of the province
4. Promote improved educational sites and centers in all regions of the province
5. Establish educational facilities such as libraries and cultural centers in rural areas of the province
6. Improve communication paths for better access of rural areas to provincial capitals
7. Establish industrial towns in rural areas to improve employment situation in all regions of the province
8. Select the political center of the province in the key points for improving access for the residents of the province.

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