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Uneven growth of urbanization in Iran

By

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- *Aim of Presentation:*

The aim of this study is to describe changes in the number and population of cities in Iran.

- *Sources of Data:*

- Censuses and surveys conducted by the Statistical Centre of Iran (SCI), 1956-1996.
- Socio- Economic Characteristics of Iranian Households conducted by Statistical Centre of Iran, 2001.
- Demographic Indicators of Iran, 1956-1996 compiled by the Statistical Center of Iran
- Human Development Report of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1999, prepared by Plan and Budget Organization and the United Nations' Development Program.

- *Historical Background:*

High natural population growth rates and rapid rural-urban migration have greatly increased the population of urban areas in Iran in the past five decades. The expansion of market economy and gradual opening up of Iranian economy to world system after the Second World War, has created a modern but oil-dependent urban sector.

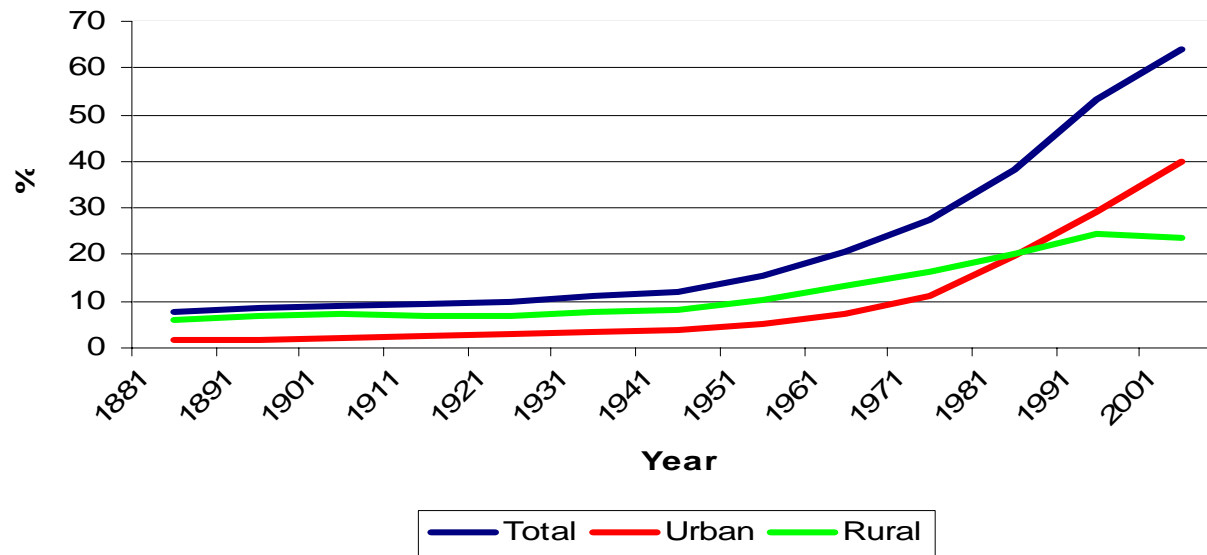
As a result, the share of population living in urban areas (defined as areas with more than 5000 population) has increased from 31.4% to 61.3% between 1956 and 1996.

The annual growth rate of the urban population has ranged from 5.4% (between 1966-76) to 2.9% (between 1986-96).

The urbanization process has created a peculiar pattern of population distribution in Iran. As of 1996, only 59 (9.6%) of the 612 cities of Iran had a population of 100,000 or more. Of these 59 large cities, only nine had populations of 500,000 or more. In 1956, about 53% of the total urban population lived in cities with a population of 100,000 or more . At the time of fifth national census (1996) that percentage had increased to 68.7% meaning that the remaining 553 cities had a

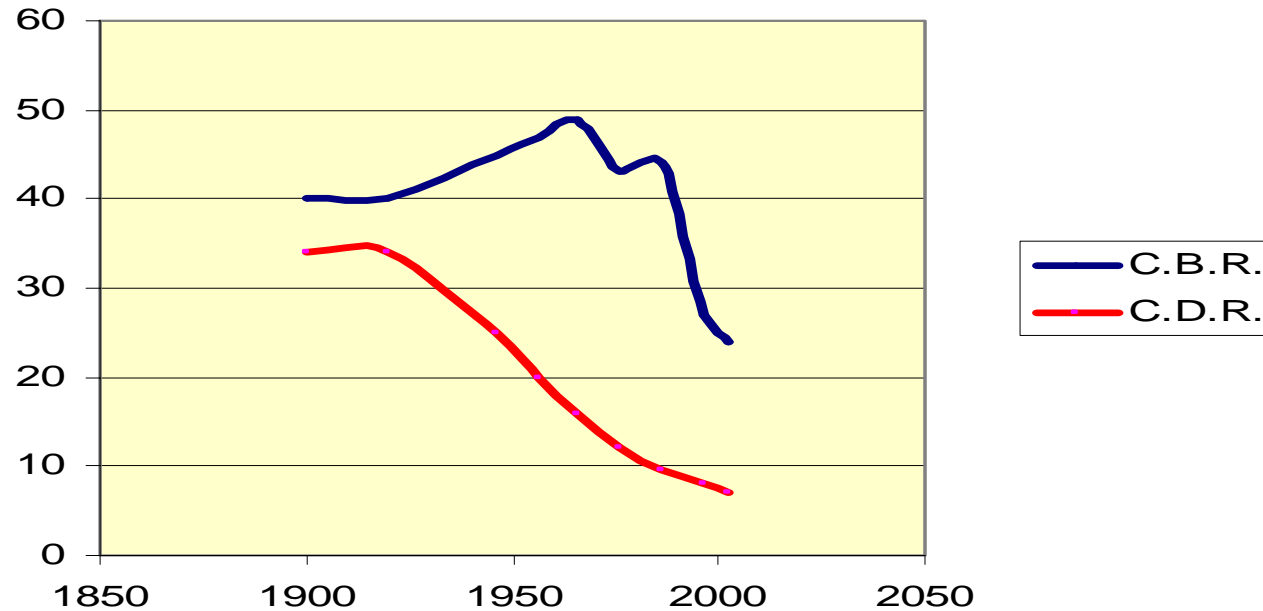
populations of less than 100,000 and accounted for only 31.3% of the total urban population. Of 36.7 million people living in urban areas in 1996, 18.4% lived in Tehran, the capital city.

Fig. 1: Trend of Population Growth in Iran by Urban-Rural Status, 1881-2001



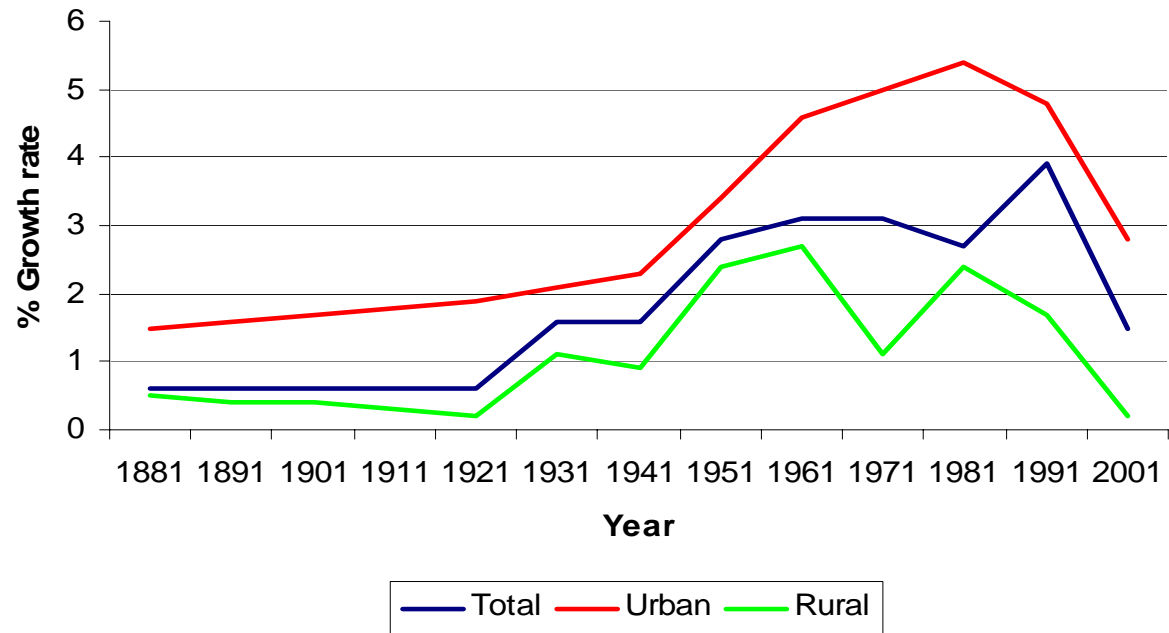
-High natural population growth rates and rapid rural-urban migration has increased the population of urban areas in Iran in the past five decades

Fig.2: Demographic transition in Iran, 1900- 2000



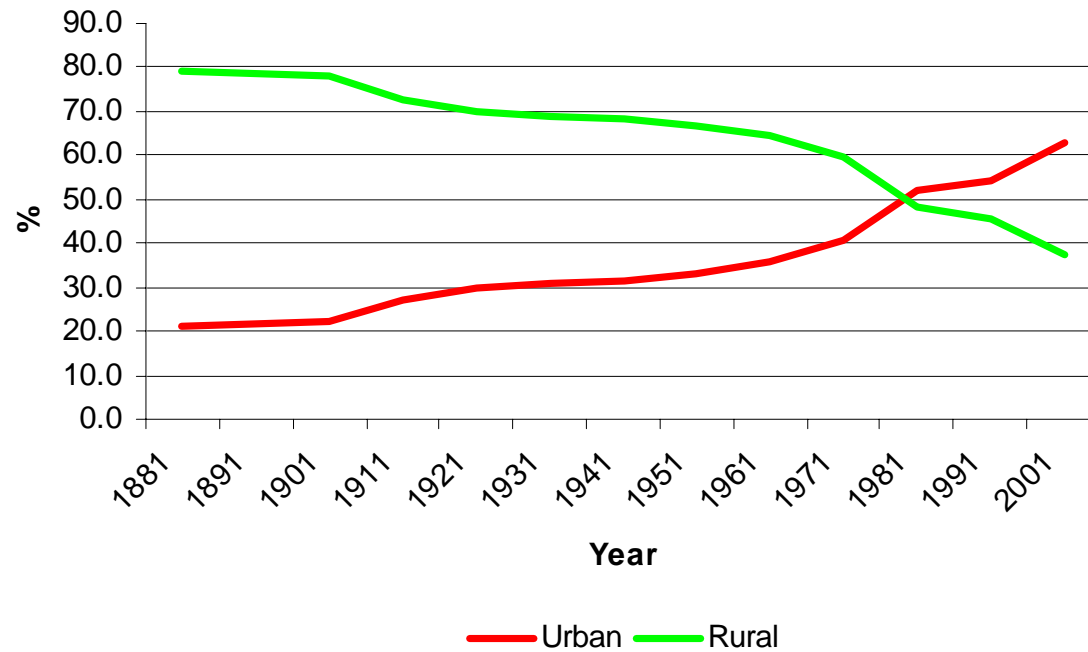
-Expansion of primary health care services led to a drop in mortality rates (CDR and IMR) during the second half of the 20th century, while the fertility rate went up (between 1956-1966) and (between 1976-1986) or remained at a high level until late 1980s.

Fig. 3: Annual growth rate of Iranian population by urban rural status, 1881-2001



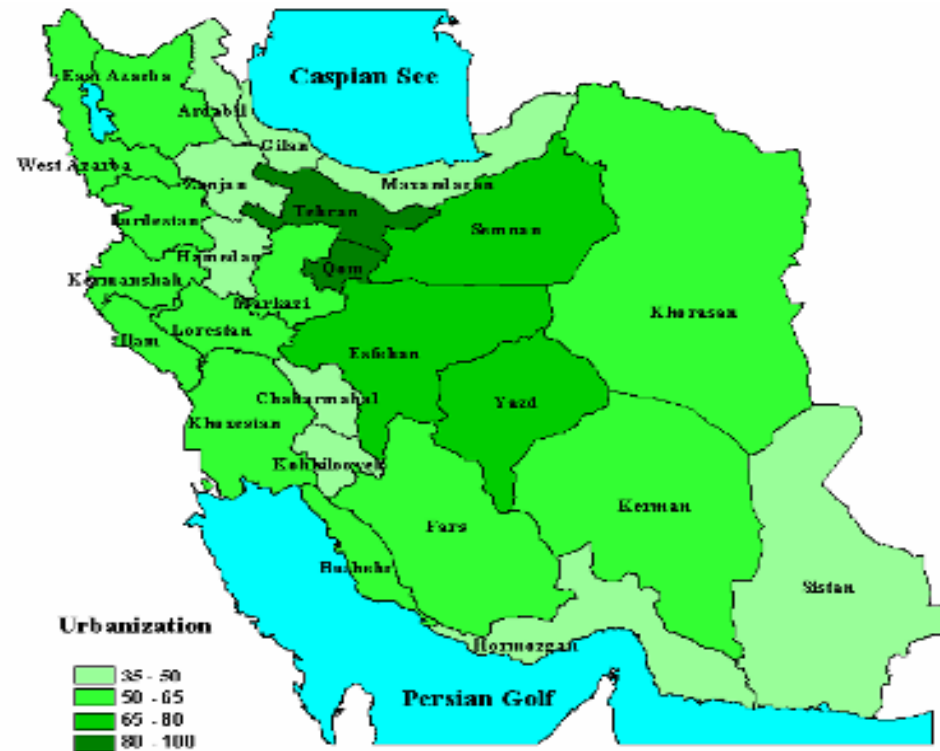
The annual growth rate of urban population has been higher than that of rural population since 1880s.

Fig. 4: Percentage share of urban and rural areas of total population of Iran, 1881-2001



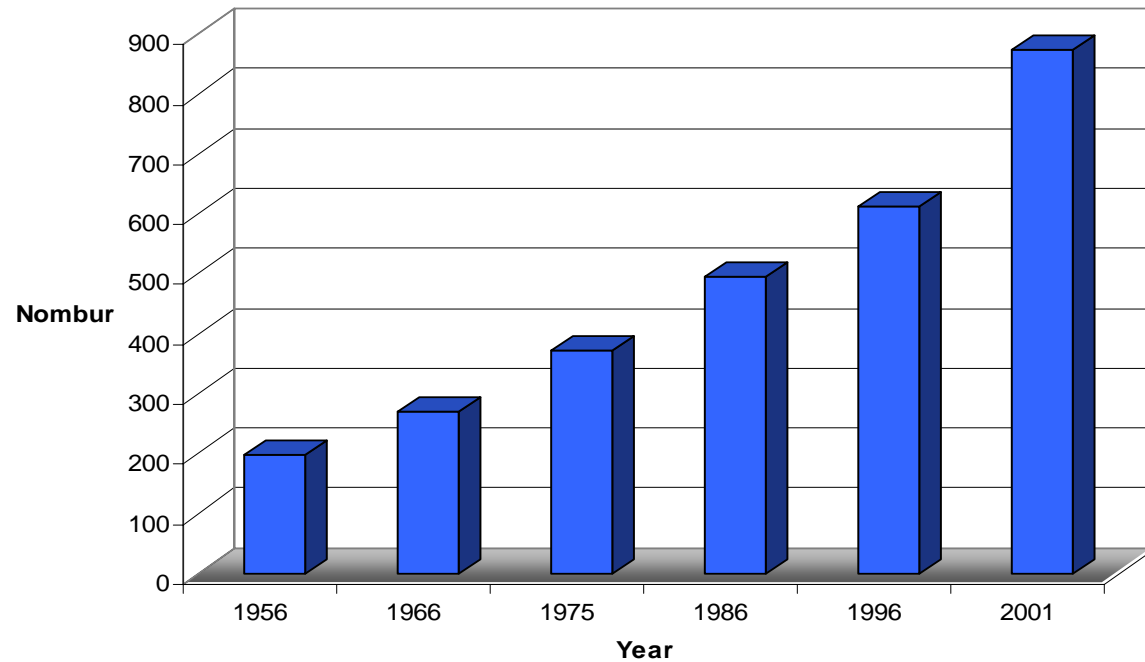
-The share of population living in urban areas increased from 31.4% to 61.3% between 1956 and 1996.

Map 1: Urbanization rates of different provinces, 1996



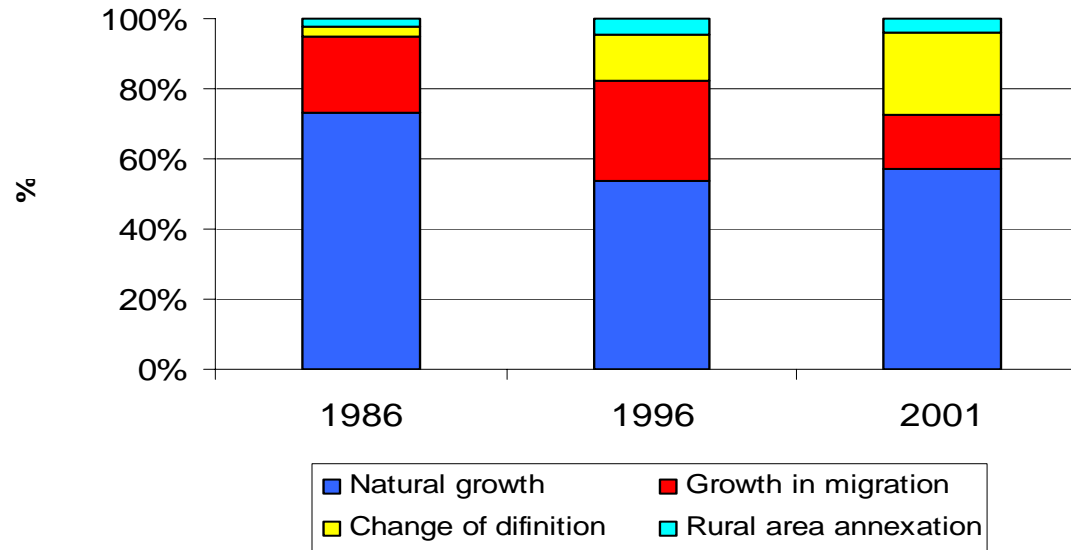
Urbanization rates vary markedly across different provinces. The highest rates belong to Ghom (91.2%) and Tehran provinces (84.1%).

Fig 5: Growth of the number of cities in Iran, 1956-2001



Number of cities has increased from 199 in 1956 to 874 in 2001. In other words, the number has more than quadrupled in 45 years.

Fig. 6: Factor affecting on urban growth in Iran, 1986-2001



Most effective factors underlying urban population growth in Iran are:

- 1-Natural growth**
- 2-Rural-urban migration**
- 3-Changes in the official definition of some rural areas**
- 4-Annexation of some rural areas to urban areas**

Fig. 7: Percentage of urban population by

Human Development Index (HDI), 1996

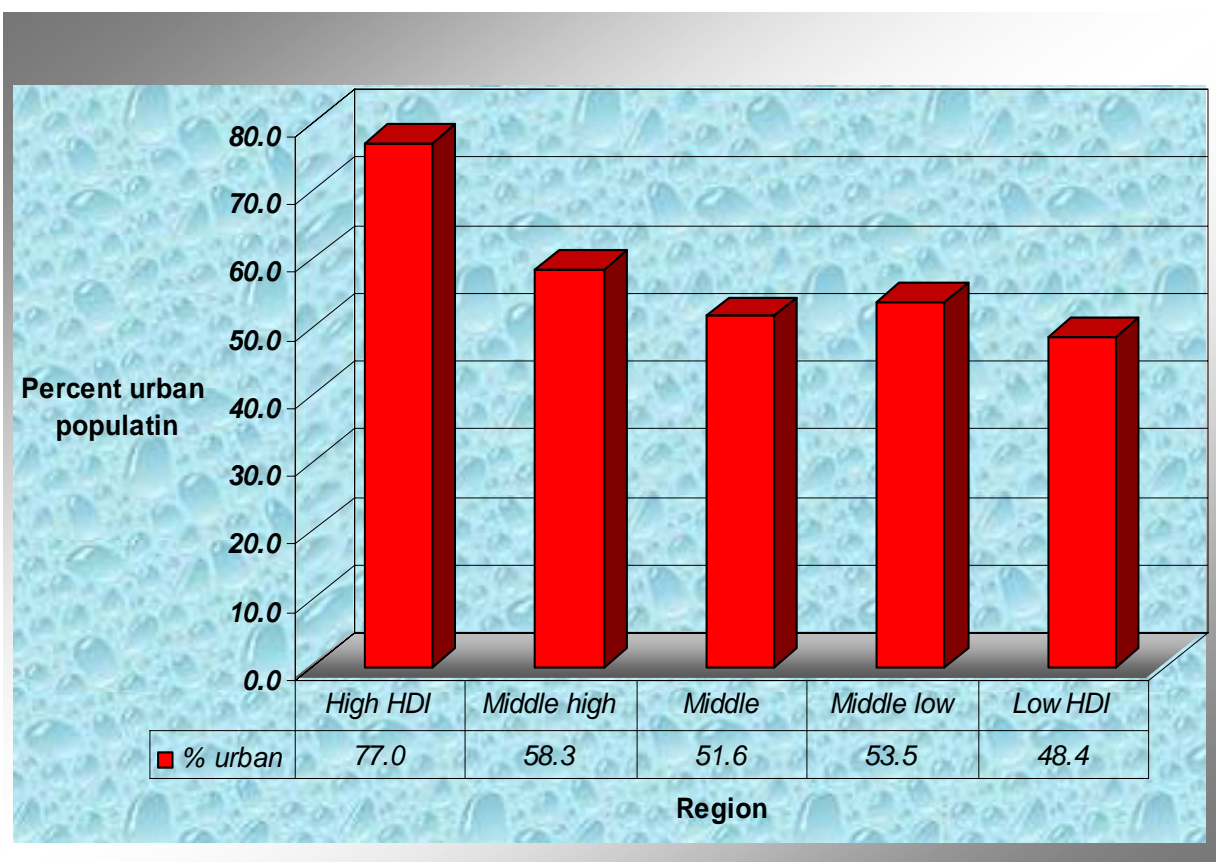


Fig. 8: Ratio of urban population to rural population by Human Development Index (HDI), 1996

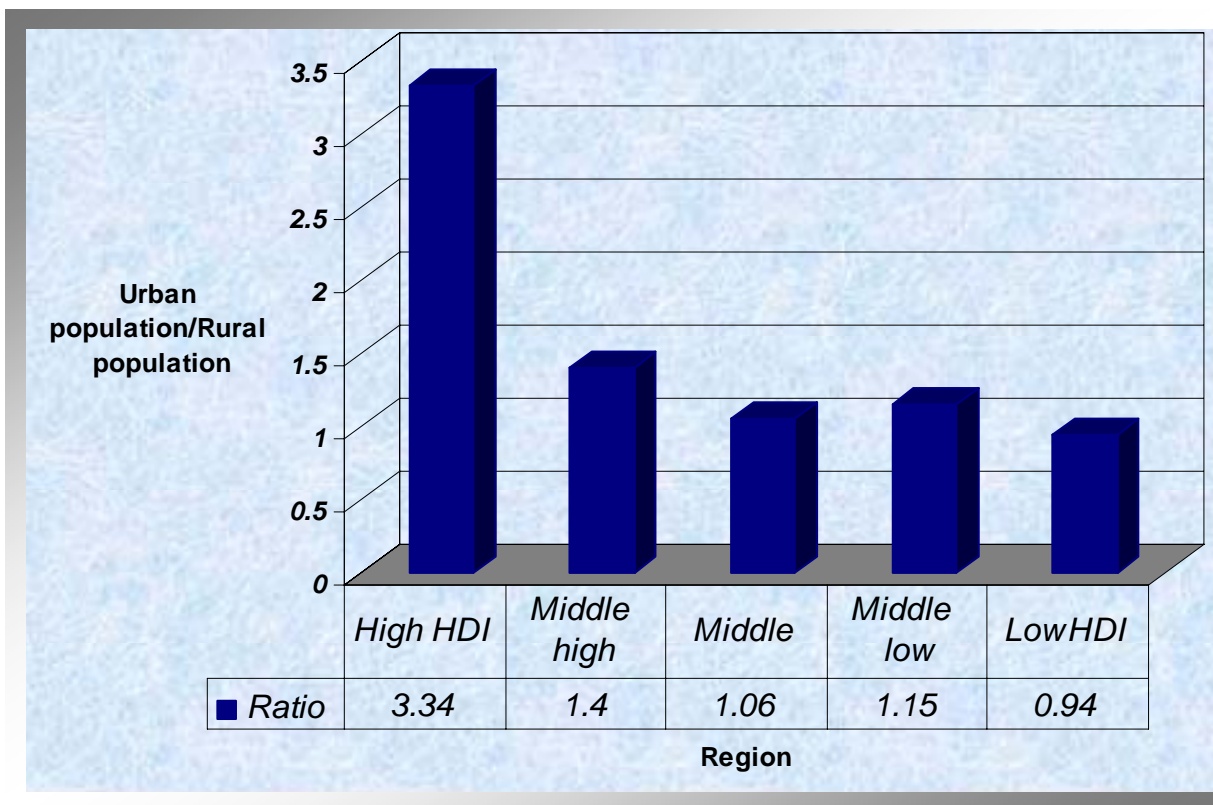
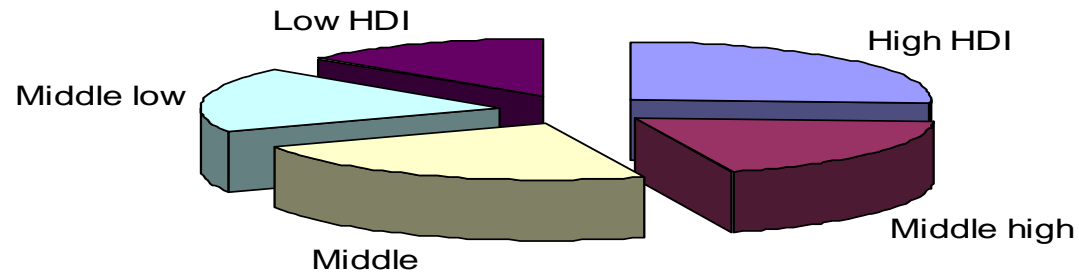


Fig. 9: Mean number of cities by Human Development Index, 1996

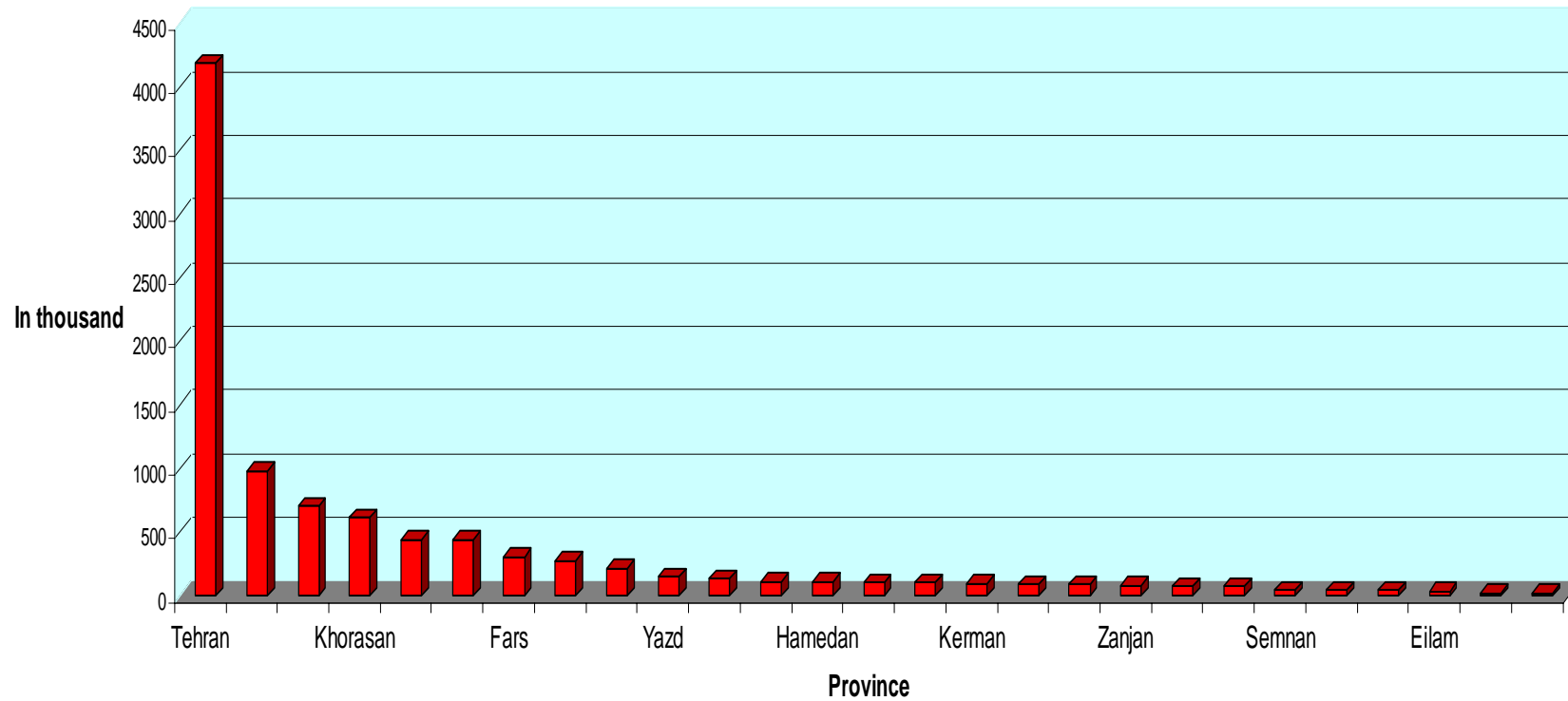


The Human Development Index (HDI) of different provinces varied between 0.842 (Tehran) and .545 (Sistan and Baluchestan) in 1996. By dividing provinces into five groups in terms of the HDI, it is seen that various indices of urbanization vary by level of HDI.

- *Concentration Index of Urbanization in Iran:*

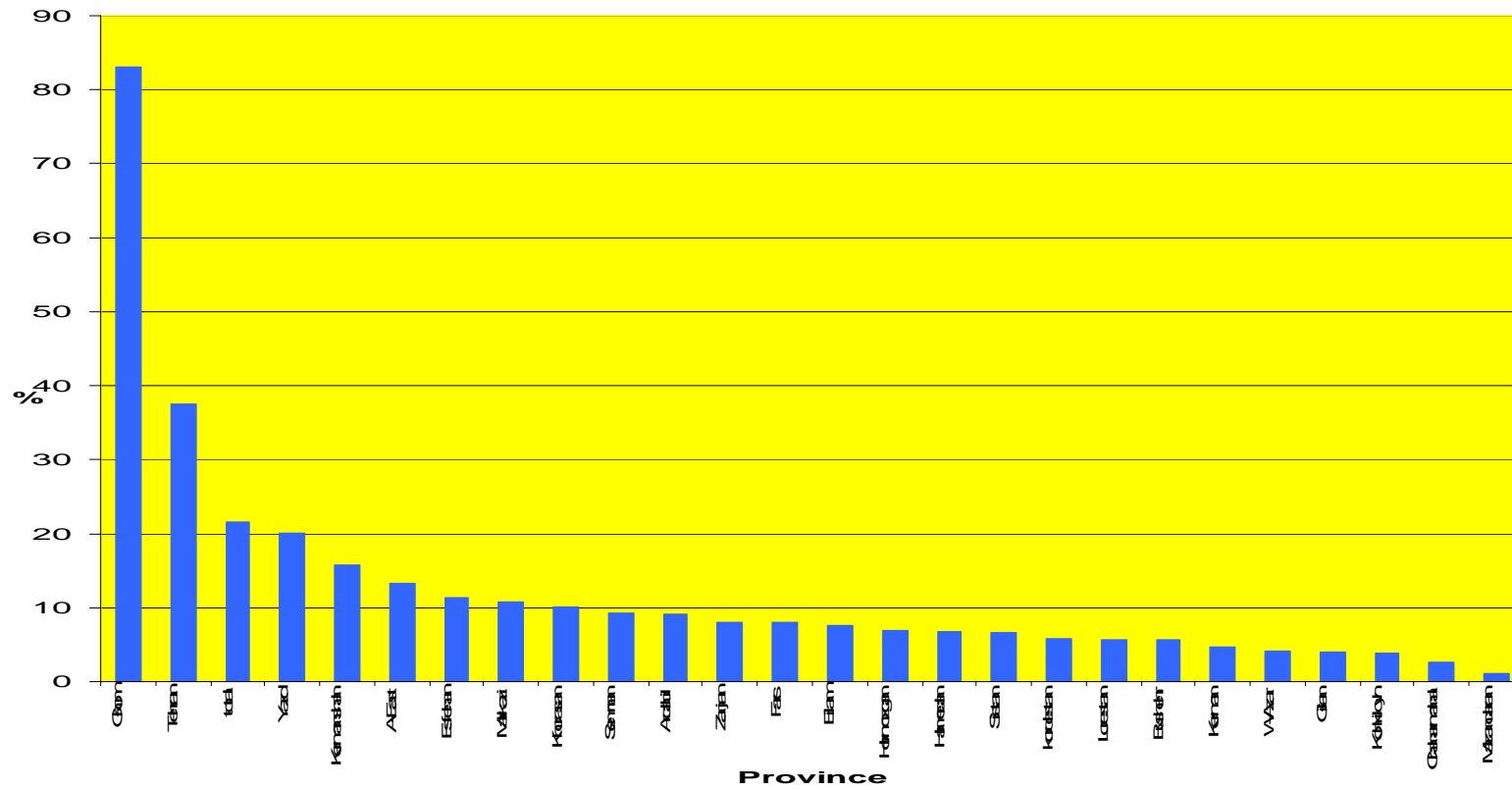
Index	1986	1996
Total population of Iran	49,445,010	60,055,488
Urban population	26,844,561	36,817,786
Rural population	22,600,449	23,237,702
Percent urban	54.29	61.31
Urban/rural ratio	1.19	1.58
Number of large cities	41	59
Population of large cities	17,978,453	25,280,044
PRIMACY INDICES		
First 4 cities	1.766	1.556
First 11 cities	1.77	1.367
Index of city distribution	1.144	1.069
City concentration ratio	0.589	0.582
Index of mean city pop.	879,272	981,290
Index of city concentration	0.018	1.62

Fig. 10: Index of Weighted Mean Population of Cities of Different Provinces, 1996



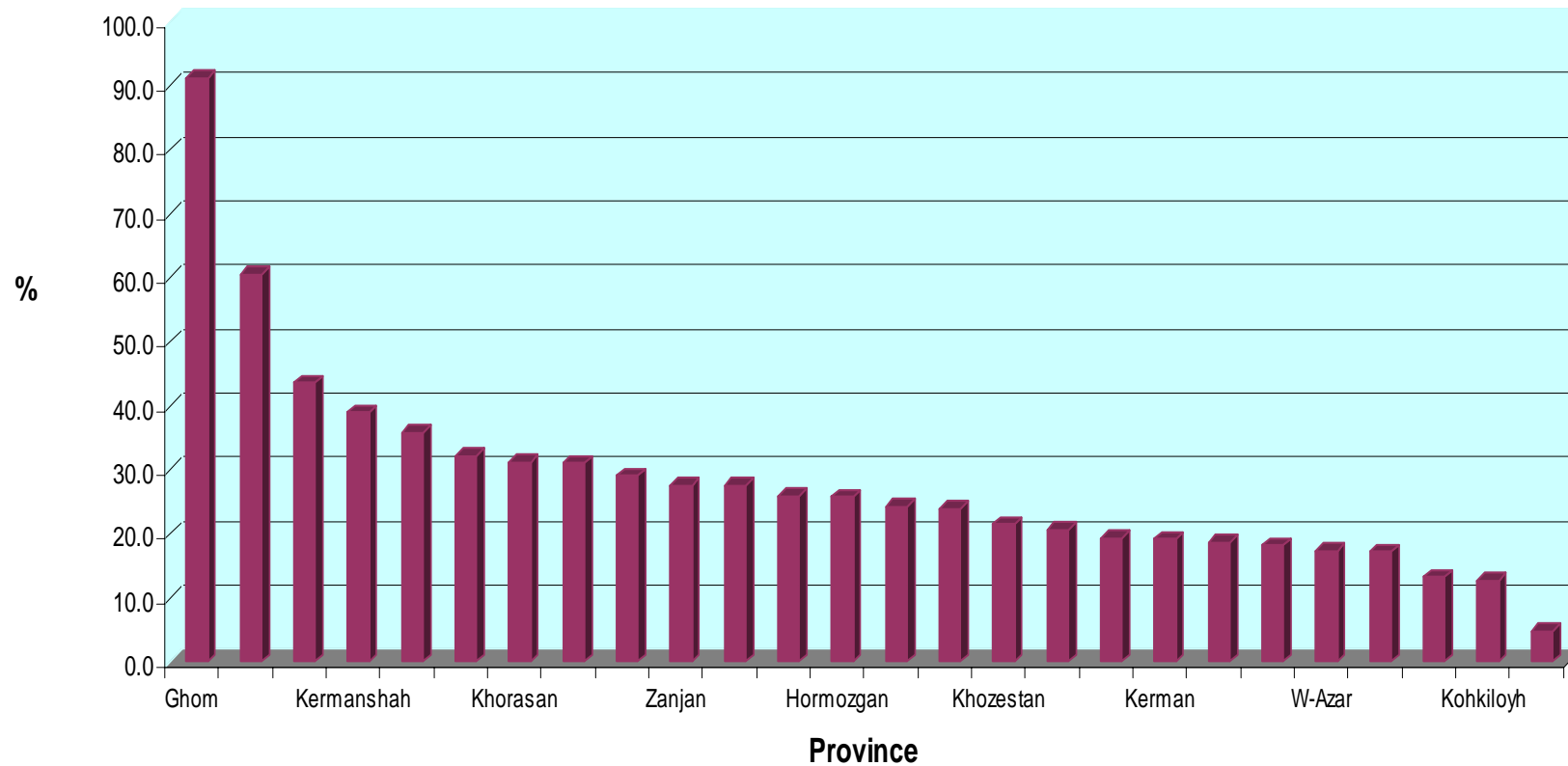
Index of weighted mean of urban population is not equal in different provinces. It is much higher in Tehran than other provinces.

Fig. 11: Index of city concentration in different provinces, 1996



City Concentration Index for Ghom province is higher than other provinces.

Fig. 12: Ratio of population of big cities to total population by province, 1996



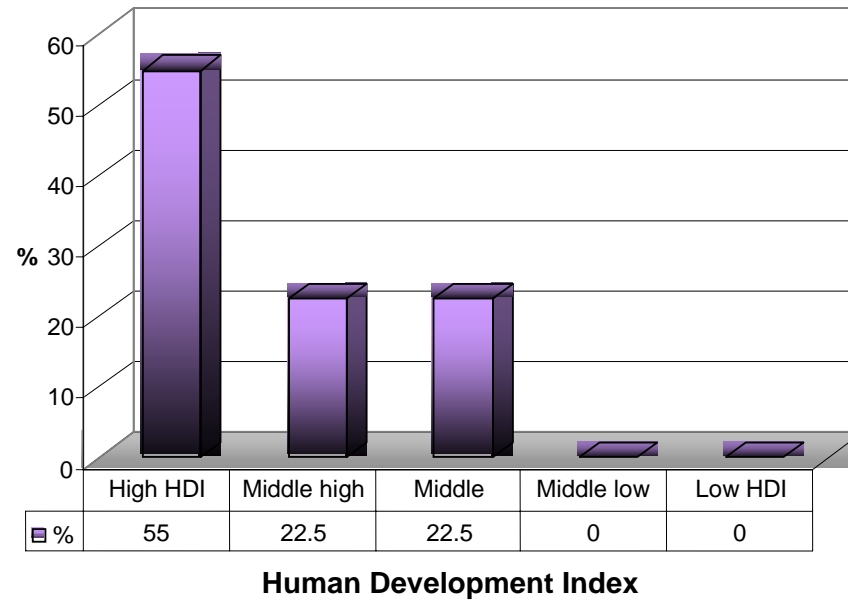
Ratio of population residing in big cities to total population varies considerably across different provinces (from 91 % in Ghom to 4.9 % Mazandaran).

**Map 2. Ratio of the largest city population to second city population
By province, 1996**



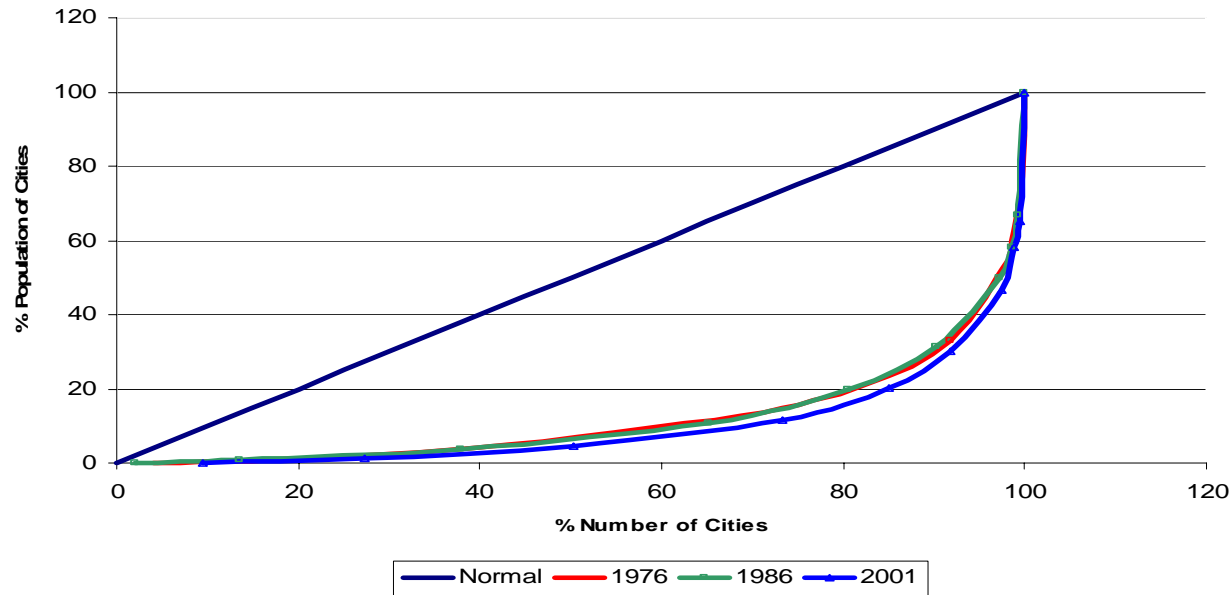
Ratios of the population of the first (largest) city to the population of the second city differ considerably across provinces. The highest ratios belong to West Azarbayjan and Khorasan provinces

Fig. 13: percentage of urban centers with 500,000⁺ population by Human Development Index (HDI), 1996



All cities with a population of 500,000 and over are located in regions with high and middle Human Development Index.

Fig. 14: Lorenz curve of the population of cities in Iran 1976-2001



Above figure shows the distribution of population in urban areas is uneven. Iran has many small cities and few large cities. In 2001, more than 53% of urban population lived in only 2.2% of cities while 47% of urban population lived in 97.8% of other, smaller cities.

● *Conclusions*

- During last 50 years, population of Iran has experienced a three-fold increase (from 19 to 60 million) while population of cities has undergone a six-fold growth (from 6 million to 36 million).
- The number of cities with over one million populations has risen from 2 to 6 during the period 1966-2001.
- All of the major metropolitan cities are located in more developed provinces like Tehran, Esfahan, Khorasan, Fars, and East Azarbayjan.
- More than one-third of urban population currently live in metropolitan areas.
- The population of Tehran metropolitan area is slightly larger than that of all other five major or metropolitan cities put together.
- Nearly one-fifth of urban population of Iran live in Tehran.
- The population of Tehran is larger than the total population of 420 smaller cities put together.
- In recent years, the Gini coefficient of the relative distribution of the number and population of urban centers has increased. In other words, the distribution of urban population has become more uneven.