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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### URBAN CONCENTRATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN IRAQ

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#### ABSTRACT

Economic growth and urbanization are often positively linked. Urbanization is an inevitable force of development. Cities provide efficient infrastructure, services, communications and skilled labor forces. They can achieve the economies of scale, agglomeration and urbanization. They are the driving forces of national economic development. They generate positive externalities of agglomeration, scale, diversity and specialization. The aim of this paper is to examine the changes in urban and economic Concentration in Iraq. Based on the results that can be deduced from the spatial development experiment in Iraq, there is a clear duality in development. There are major developed and underdeveloped centers in the cities and governorates. The study indicates that the city of Baghdad is still the dominant city in Iraq on both the urban and economic sides, despite the decrease in the urban concentration rate from 25% to 21%, the decrease in the number of industrial projects from 52% to 18%, and the decrease in the proportion of the labor force, from 60% to 37%. Moreover, poverty and unemployment rates are high in the less urbanized governorates. This is due to the absence of a comprehensive policy for urbanization and spatial development in Iraq. To reduce the impact of urban concentration on economic development in Iraq it is important to put comprehensive strategy for spatial development and urbanization.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Urbanization and economic growth in developing countries go hand-in-hand. The simple correlation coefficient across countries between the percent urbanized in a country and GDP per capita (in logs) is about 0.85. The reason is clear. Economic development involves the transformation of a country from an agricultural based economy to an industrial-service based economy. Production of manufacturing and services is much more efficient when concentrated in dense business-industrial districts in cities (Henderson, 2000). Vernon Henderson shows that productivity growth is not strongly affected by urbanization per se, but it is strongly affected by the degree of urban concentration. On concentration, the findings are (1) there is a best degree of urban concentration, in terms of maximizing productivity growth, (2) that best degree varies with the level of development and country size, and (3) over or under-concentration can be very costly in terms of productivity growth. The strength and consistency of the findings are of some surprise-the priors were that the data are too poor and the issues too subtle to show up in cross-country productivity studies. But that is not the case (Henderson, 2003). Big cities brought about development and prosperity; and development, in turn, made the growth of big cities possible.

Partially inspired by this observation, policymakers and economic theorists have long stressed the role of urbanization and cities for economic efficiency. The size of a city, in particular, is considered an important driver of economic development. Large cities lead to greater productivity and economic growth through the generation of agglomeration economies which allow for a more productive use of available resources (Rosenthal and Strange, 2004). Urbanization has been an essential part of most nations' development towards a stronger and more stable economy. Most of the world's largest cities are in the world's largest economies, which is further evidence of this link between economic wealth and cities. Cities and towns also have important roles in social transformation. They are centers of artistic, scientific and technological innovations, of culture and education. The history of cities and towns is inexorably linked to that of civilization in general (the Habitat Agenda). Cities play an important role in economic development. Cities provide economies of scale, agglomeration, and localization; they provide efficient infrastructure and services through density and concentration in transportation, communications, power, human interactions, water and sanitation services. They attract talents and skilled labor that allow specialization in knowledge, skills, and management capabilities possible. They can achieve the economies of scale, agglomeration and urbanization. Economic growth and urbanization are often positively linked. Cities are the driving force for economic development. Economic growth also

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stimulates urbanization. Such positive relationship is clear in many countries. However, urbanization can also occur in the absence of economic growth. For example, in some Sub-Saharan African countries, urbanization has occurred to a large extent independent of economic development. The negative impact of over urbanization is often over-emphasized such as the concentration of poverty, slums and social disruption in developing cities. However, cities do represent the best hope for growth and opportunities. This paper illustrates the central role of cities as engines of national economic development (Programme, 2011).

**Problem Statement:** Starting in 1950, and continuing on to 1995, most plans in Iraq indicated a clear focus on the levels of economic and social development in a limited number of governorates. This generated a growing movement in mass migration toward these centers in a way that largely contributed to the spatial disparity between the developed and underdeveloped provinces in all aspects of economic, social, and urban development. These influences were reflected in the method of the population's spatial distribution: heavily populated centers were the same centers that enjoyed economic growth, so they continued to attract growth away from other areas. This prompted the researcher to choose this topic to address and illustrates the central role of urban concentration in economic growth and socio-economic development.

### Objectives of the Study

- The main objective is to identify factors that lead to urban concentration and economic activities in a limited urban centers in Iraq.
- Determine how urban concentration affect economic growth in Iraq.
- Some suggestions are presented so as to put an end to the dominant city phenomenon in Iraq as a whole as well as within each province, and to stimulate the growth of medium- and small-sized.

**Study Hypothesis:** The persistent problems of poverty, great disparity, high population concentrations, and spatial inequalities, are in large part due to weak urban economies. Strong urban economies are essential for poverty reduction and the provision of adequate housing, infrastructure, education, health, safety, and basic services. The study is based on the following hypothesis: comprehensive spatial development policy in Iraq can achieve spatial economic development and urbanization goals in a comprehensive way.

**Background Theory of the Study:** Urbanization has been an essential part of most nations' development towards a stronger and more stable economy. Most of the world's largest cities are in the world's largest economies, which is further evidence of this link between economic wealth and cities. Cities and towns also have important roles in social transformation. They are centers of artistic, scientific and technological innovations, of culture and education. As expected from the urban agglomeration literature, too little urban concentration is bad, as is too much concentration, so there is a best degree of urban concentration. However, as Williamson-Hansen anticipate, what is too little or too much changes with income. Initially, the best urban concentration point rises from low income.

But then at some higher income level, the best degree peaks and then starts to decline with further income increases (Henderson, 2000). Cities play an important role in economic development, they provide economies of scale, agglomeration, localization, efficient infrastructure and services through density and concentration in transportation, communications, power, human interactions, water and sanitation services. They attract talents and skilled labor that allow specialization in knowledge, skills, and management capabilities possible. They can achieve the economies of scale, agglomeration and urbanization. There is a strong correlation between urbanization and income growth: both have been led by export-oriented industrialization. Economic output per capita increased throughout the region as the percentage of people living in urban areas went up. (Bajpai and Muzzini, 2016).

strong urban economies are the backbone and motor of the wealth of nations (Jacobs, 1984). As countries become more reliant on manufacturing and services and less on agriculture, urban areas are more likely to become important for fostering marshallian externalities, nourishing innovation, providing a hub for trade, and encouraging human capital accumulation (STROBL, 2003). The negative impact of over urbanization is often over-emphasized such as the concentration of poverty, slums and social disruption in developing cities. However, cities do represent the best hope for growth and opportunities. This paper illustrates the central role of cities as engines of national economic development (Programme, 2011).

**Urban Centers (Cities) and Development Process:** There is a set of important roles for cities, such as the political role that achieves national independence and achieves effective participation in decision-making for society, the economic role that contributes to raising the living standards of the population, the social and cultural role represented by the service, information, cultural and artistic aspects provided by the city, and the strategic role that emerges from During the city's role in achieving the security and military aspects of the population. Urban systems achieve these goals together in a more comprehensive and general manner at the country level as a whole. These roles differ from one country to another, and from one city to another within the same country and from one stage of development to another, so the more important the role the city plays, the greater its relative importance within the national urban system, and with this role it can raise the rank of the national urban system globally as well.

**Political and Administrative Role:** The city is a center of government where the national government agencies based their operation to carry out the programs of the national government. The city is an important place for government (local, regional, central), and the headquarters for public organizations. In it, plans, programs, and policies for political, administrative, economic and social aspects are laid down for the city itself first and for other cities, especially if it is a regional or national center, and it is part of the administrative and political system of the country (Smelser, 1969). Some cities are distinguished in their political and administrative role from other cities, as is the case for capital cities and regional centers. In this regard, reference can be made to the political and administrative role of the cities of ancient Iraq, the administrative role of the cities of Basra and

**Table 1: Total Population and the Urban Population Growth rate and the Percentage of Urbanization for the Period 1985-2025**

years \ Demography	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total population (000s)	15,317	18,078	20,095	23,109	26,668	30,422	34,248	38,013	41,600
Urban population (000s)	10,533	12,987	14,975	17,752	21,000	24,441	27,955	31,483	34,916
Rural population (000s)	4,784	5,091	5,120	5,357	5,668	5,981	6,293	6,530	6,683
Urbanization level (%)	68.8	71.8	74.5	76.8	78.8	80.3	81.6	82.8	83.9

Source: (Mahmud, 2014)

**Table 2. Population Distribution by Governorates 2018**

Governorate	1987		1997		2009		2018	
	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural
Nineveh	67.6	32.4	61.9	38.1	60.8	39.2	60.6	39.4
Salah Aldin	40.2	59.8	45.0	55.0	44.2	55.8	45.0	55.0
Kirkuk	75.4	24.6	70.5	29.5	71.7	28.3	73.9	26.1
Diala	46.2	53.8	42.2	57.8	48.9	51.1	49.2	50.8
Baghdad	100.0	00	89.4	10.6	87.2	12.8	87.5	12.5
Al-Anbar	57.6	42.4	52.7	47.3	48.4	51.6	50.0	50.0
Babylon	46.5	53.5	47.9	52.1	47.2	52.8	48.2	51.8
Kerbala	71.0	29.0	66.0	34.0	66.5	33.5	66.8	33.2
Al-Najaf	72.8	27.2	69.9	30.1	71.1	28.9	71.4	28.6
Al-Qadisiya	56.4	43.6	52.9	47.1	56.5	43.5	57.2	42.8
Al-Muthanna	49.3	50.7	44.8	55.2	43.7	56.3	45.4	54.6
Thi-Qar	53.3	46.7	59.1	40.9	62.9	37.1	64.1	35.9
Wasit	52.8	47.2	53.2	46.8	57.9	42.1	60.1	39.9
Maysan	61.6	38.4	66.1	33.9	72.4	27.6	73.8	26.2
Basra	72.3	27.7	79.8	20.2	79.9	20.1	81.2	18.8
Duhok	74.6	25.4	74.6	25.4	73.4	26.6	74.0	26.0
Erbil	77.4	22.6	77.4	22.6	83.2	16.8	83.2	16.8
Sulaymaniyah	71.5	28.5	71.5	28.5	84.9	15.1	84.7	15.3
sum	70.2	29.8	68.4	31.6	72.4	27.6	69.8	29.2

(Iraq, 2017) Note : population projection calculated according tonumbering &amp; listing results 2009 .

**Table 3. Investment allocations ratio for the industrial sector by governorates in the development plans for the years 1965-1995**

Governorate	1965-1969		1985-1981		1995	
	Investment locations%	Ranks	Investment locations%	Ranks	Investment allocations%	Ranks
Nineveh	4.2	5	5.3	6	11.36	6
Salah Aldin	=	=	20.6	1	16.12	2
Kirkuk	5.8	4	5.3	6	0.37	10
Diala	0.03	10	1.3	12	0.73	9
Baghdad	18.9	1	17.6	2	14.45	4
Al-Anbar	4	6	10.8	4	13.32	5
Babylon	16.2	3	2.7	8	14.56	3
Kerbala	0.3	10	5.9	5	==	==
Al-Najaf	=	=	1.6	10	2.24	7
Al-Qadisiya	0.3	10	0.6	13	==	==
Al-Muthanna	=	=	2.6	9	0.03	13
Thi-Qar	2.3	8	1.4	11	0.07	12
Wasit	3	7	1.3	12	==	==
Maysan	0.3	10	1.6	10	1.98	8
Basra	18.7	2	16.7	3	24.69	1
Duhok	=	=	0.01	15	==	==
Erbil	0.3	10	0.02	14	0.08	11
Sulaymaniyah	0.9	9	4.3	7	==	==
sum	100%		1005		100%	

(AL- Hadithi, 1988)

**Table 4. Number of industrial establishments and employment by governorates in Iraq 1965- 1969**

Governorate	No. of establishments	%	No. of employees	%
Nineveh	62	5	6472	7.6
Salah Aldin	----	----	----	----
Kirkuk	32	2.5	1190	1.4
Diala	21	1.7	1699	2
Baghdad	779	62.4	55319	65.1
Al-Anbar	11	0.90	417	0.50
Babylon	42	3.4	2935	3.5
Kerbala	72	5.8	2652	3.1
Al-Najaf	----	----	----	----
Al-Qadisiya	17	0.30	1453	3.7
Al-Muthanna	----	----	----	----
Thi-Qar	18	1.4	591	0.7
Wasit	10	0.80	1296	1.5
Maysan	30	2.40	1036	1.2
Basra	135	10.80	8016	9.4
Duhok	----	----	-----	-----
Erbil	12	1	297	0.40
Sulaymaniyah	7	0.60	1622	1.90
sum	1248	100	84995	100

(AL- Hadithi, 1988)

**Table 5. Number of industrial establishments and employment by governorates in Iraq 1996-2010**

Governorate	1996				2010			
	establishments	%	employees	%	establishments	%	employees	%
Nineveh	52	9.7	3845	3.3	47	8.9	12202	6.4
Salah Aldin	9	1.7	9051	7.7	10	1.9	13369	7
Kirkuk	20	3.7	1717	1.5	24	4.6	5756	3
Diala	67	12.5	4668	4	54	10.3	5635	2.9
Baghdad	207	38.7	45866	39.2	97	18.5	71279	37.2
Al-Anbar	15	2.8	6455	5.5	19	3.6	10074	5.2
Babylon	35	6.5	12481	10.7	31	5.9	16175	8.4
Kerbala	22	4.1	1013	0.9	30	5.7	2936	1.5
Al-Najaf	12	2.2	2965	2.5	18	3.4	8383	4.4
Al-Qadisiya	17	3.2	4198	3.6	30	5.7	5156	2.7
Al-Muthanna	8	1.5	1089	1	37	7	5791	3
Thi-Qar	77	1.3	4098	3.5	21	4	5917	3.1
Wasit	19	3.6	1308	1.1	33	6.3	7086	3.7
Maysan	27	5.1	2687	2.3	57	10.8	3049	1.6
Basra	18	3.4	15462	13.2	18	3.4	18903	9.9
Duhok	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Erbil	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Sulaymaniyah	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
sum	535	100	116903	100	526	100%	191711	100%

(AL- Hadithi, 1988)

**Table 6. Population Concentrations and Investments in the Baghdad Governorate for the Period 1965–2007**

years	1965	1977	1987	1997	2007	2015
Population concentration as a percent of total in Iraq	25.4	26.6	23.5	24.5	24.1	21.3
Investment as a percent of total in Iraq	30.7	20.7	37.5	37.6	16.4	=

(Planning, 2010),(Iraq, 2017).

**Table 7: Industrial projects and labor force in Baghdad for the years 1960-1992**

Year	1960	1969	1976	1981	1987	1996	2010
Industrial projects	4.52	4.62	8.56	24.55	6.49	38.7	18.5
Labor force	3.60	17.65	7.52	68.49	3.53	39.2	37.2

(Mahmud, 2014),(Planning, 2010),(Iraq, 2017).

**Table 8. Unemployment Rates in Iraq by Environment for the Years 2003-2008**

Year	urban	Rural	Urban and rural
2003	30.0	25.4	28.1
2004	27.7	25.7	26.8
2005	19.3	16.9	18.0
2006	22.9	13.2	17.5
2007	11.9	11.0	11.7
2008	15.2	14.3	15.3

Source: Central Statistics Organization. Surveys of Employment and Unemployment in Iraq for the Years 2003-2008.

**Table 9. Unemployment Rate By Governorate for the years 2008-2016**

Governorate	2009		2008	2018		2016
	urban	rural	Unemployment rate	urban	rural	Unemployment rate
Nineveh	60.8	39.2	21.91	60.6	39.4	==
Salah Aldin	44.2	55.8	18.01	45.0	55.0	10.79
Kirkuk	71.7	28.3	12.63	73.9	26.1	9.92
Diala	48.9	51.1	14.62	49.2	50.8	5.68
Baghdad	87.2	12.8	11.77	87.5	12.5	9.83
Al-Anbar	48.4	51.6	13.77	50.0	50.0	==
Babylon	47.2	52.8	12.34	48.2	51.8	7.32
Kerbala	66.5	33.5	14.20	66.8	33.2	7.10
Al-Najaf	71.1	28.9	14.48	71.4	28.6	9.51
Al-Qadisiya	56.5	43.5	14.78	57.2	42.8	11.86
Al-Muthanna	43.7	56.3	24.89	45.4	54.6	14.46
Thi-Qar	62.9	37.1	30.81	64.1	35.9	14.92
Wasit	57.9	42.1	12.71	60.1	39.9	10.78
Maysan	72.4	27.6	16.58	73.8	26.2	17.06
Basra	79.9	20.1	15.51	81.2	18.8	12.39
Duhok	73.4	26.6	16.91	74.0	26.0	16.61
Erbil	83.2	16.8	13.22	83.2	16.8	13.62
Sulaymaniyah	84.9	15.1	11.88	84.7	15.3	10.22
sum	72.4	27.6	15.34	69.8	29.2	10.82

(Commission, 2012),(Iraq, 2017).

Table 10. Consumption level among governorates

Governorate	Average spending per capita	Ratio to average	Ratio to the lowest governorate
Nineveh	124.0	85.0	125.3
Salah Aldin	103.5	71.0	104.5
Kirkuk	7.144	99.2	146.2
Diala	112.7	77.3	113.8
Baghdad	148.5	101.9	150.0
Al-Anbar	120.5	82.6	121.7
Babylon	111.8	76.7	112.9
Kerbala	110.4	75.7	111.5
Al-Najaf	93.1	135.8	137.2
Al-Qadisiya	116.1	79.6	117.3
Al-Muthanna	99.0	67.9	100.0
Thi-Qar	109.2	74.9	110.3
Wasit	117.3	80.5	118.5
Maysan	114.2	78.2	115.2
Basra	120.1	82.4	121.3
Duhok	222.8	152.8	225.1
Erbil	293.1	201.0	296.1
Sulaymaniyah	297.3	203.9	300.3
sum	145.8	0.100	9.146

(Commission, 2012)

Table 11. The relationship between the rural population percentage, the poverty rate, and the human development index in Iraq

governorate	The proportion of the rural population	Human Development Index		Poverty rate		
		Ranking	Guide value	%	Ranking	
Rural Governorates	Al-Muthanna	56	17	0.570	49.8	1
	Salah Aldin	56	13	0.600	40.5	3
	Babylon	53	6	0.629	42.5	2
	Al-Anbar	52	3	0.652	21.8	13
	Diala	51	11	0.615	34.4	8
Governorates with high urbanization	Erbil	17	2	0.652	3.7	17
	Sulaymaniyah	15	1	0.676	3.3	18
	Baghdad	13	10	0.625	13.9	14

Iraq National Population Commission (INPC), Iraq Population Situation Analysis- PSA 2012, The Second National Report on the State of Iraq Population.

Table 12. Levels of Socio-economic and urban development by Governorates 2009

Underdeveloped		Relatively developed		Advanced	
Governorate	Rank	Governorate	Rank	Governorate	Rank
ThiQar	18	Najaf	11	Nineveh	5
Wasit	17	Erbil	10	Al-Anbar	4
Al-Sulaymaniyah	16	Kirkuk	9	Salah I Din	3
Dahuk	15	Al-Muthanna	8	Basrah	2
Al-Qadisiya	14	Babylon	7	Baghdad	1
Diyala	13	Karbala	6		
Maysan	12				

(Planning, 2010)

Table 13. Deprivation Levels in Basic Needs According to Each Sector In Iraq

Governorate	Economic situation	Protection and social security	Education	Health	Infrastructure	Housing	Standard of living index	General standard of living index
Nineveh	48.5	29.1	30.	28.2	55.3	23.1	34.2	11.0
Salah Aldin	38.2	39.9	33.6	21.9	72.3	21.0	33.5	8.4
Kirkuk	22.5	33.7	22.2	29.8	61.8	13.5	21.0	3.0
Diala	44.1	49.3	16.4	30.6	83.8	18.3	33.7	9.0
Baghdad	21.6	35.9	16.7	21.3	34.3	28.2	18.4	2.0
Al-Anbar	26.8	29.5	15.1	16.5	48.2	3.9	11.6	1.0
Babylon	38.2	27.0	40.3	24.6	74.4	35.1	35.3	13.0
Kerbala	41.1	28.1	52.1	13.3	59.5	39.0	34.0	10.0
Al-Najaf	42.2	29.2	38.6	18.7	40.5	33.0	30.3	7.0
Al-Qadisiya	47.3	34.1	39.3	39.8	63.5	46.5	44.4	16.0
Al-Muthanna	55.3	35.0	46.3	26.3	63.4	39.1	44.8	17.0
Thi-Qar	51.9	33.6	35.8	26.9	74.7	45.2	42.9	15.0
Wasit	42.6	26.1	32.7	37.9	59.6	34.5	36.3	14.0
Maysan	44.4	31.3	51.7	53.2	87.9	44.5	56.6	18.0
Basra	40.7	20.0	21.6	27.6	66.4	25.5	29.6	6.0
Duhok	44.7	34.5	40.4	40.0	30.2	30.4	34.2	12.0
Erbil	22.4	31.3	33.7	38.3	32.9	31.1	26.4	5.0
Sulaymaniyah	18.2	30.3	29.8	29.5	35.6	35.0	24.5	4.0
Iraq								

(Planning, 2010)

the cosmos in the conquests of the East, and the administrative and political role of Baghdad in the Abbasid era. ..., and the same is the case for many cities in the world with different relative importance from one country to another and from time to time.

**Technological Role:** Throughout history, the fate of communities and cities has largely been shaped by technology. The development of irrigation, riverine and sea-going transportation keyed the commercial and cultural development of the earliest centers, from Mesopotamia and Egypt to the Indus River Valley and China. In modern times, the role of technology has become even more determinative. The onset of the industrial revolution, characterized by the railroad, telegraph and mass-production factory, transformed the social and economic reality of cities, towns and rural hamlets in the 19th century. Locations far from traditional trade routes, such as the British Midlands and the American Midwest, suddenly experienced the mushrooming of major urban areas. The development of cheap power for heating made the mass development of cities in inhospitable climates possible. Later, electrical grids allowed for the urbanization of the dry, hot regions such as the American Southwest. Today, in a manner not seen since the onset of the industrial revolution, technology is reshaping the landscape of our communities. The digital revolution is not only accelerating the speed with which information is processed and disseminated, it is redefining space and time in our communities. Location decisions, once dependent upon access to ports, roads, rails or raw materials, are increasingly dependent instead on the ability to link human resources (Kotkin, 2001).

**The Cultural and Social Role:** The cultural role is especially pronounced in the context of capital cities. The cultural role of the capital city is essential in nation forming, underlying the efforts by national governments to form and reinforce a national sense of identity and to use this to tie the citizenry together into a more cohesive and cooperative entity (UNESCO, 2002). The emergence of cities represents the beginning of civilization, and from this perspective, cities continued to represent the symbols that carry and transmit civilization wherever it is found. Indeed, the history of civilization is the history of cities. (Smelser, 1969).

The city is the main source of cultural innovations, in general, not the countryside, and these innovations spread from the city, as it represents the place in which they arise and all development and progress processes consist of ideas, innovations, ideologies, types of sciences and various knowledge, as there are schools, institutes and universities .... Knowledge and the innovation capacities of human capital are at the core of the New Economy. The key source of competitive advantage, be it among regions or industries, is its intellectual capital – that is, the knowledge embedded in its people. In the old industrial economy, the accumulation of hard assets determined economic success or failure. Today, the knowledge, skills, experience and innovation potential of talented individuals has greater value than capital equipment or even capital itself (Kotkin, 2001). The cities of prehistoric Iraq, for example, had a clear role in the cultural field, not only for Iraq, but for the world that became through interest in science, innovation in writing, and interest in schools ..., Baghdad had an important global cultural role, in addition to the political and administrative role in the Abbasid era.

At the global level, Paris is a cultural center, while London is a financial center, and American cities are a center for business and industry (Smelser, 1969). The strong ties between people within communities may lead to social, racial and religious conflicts between people who belong to these communities and those who are perceived as outsiders. Social cohesion can thus easily breed intolerance. It means that if socially and ethnically diverse groups concentrate in certain areas, their internal cohesion certainly will be fostered but at the expense of their integration at a higher level, as it will also increase the risk of exclusion both of individuals from those highly cohesive communities and of these communities from the rest of society.

**Economic Role:** Numerous studies have, time and again, confirmed the positive relationship between per capita income and urbanization levels (FAY, 2000). Other studies have repeatedly demonstrated the disproportionate contribution of urban areas to national income and product (WEISS, 2001). Others again have demonstrated the positive link between productivity and the agglomeration of economic activity in cities (HENDERSON, 1988).

**Center of Production:** The city is a center for industrial production, and before the industry began to search for cheap areas outside the city, it was based mainly on two factors: scientific and technological discoveries, and the increasing demand for manufactured goods, and that the source of these two factors is the city, as there are institutions, institutes and centers Training ... important factors are concentrated in it that make it a center for industrial development such as the presence of power, availability of water, services in Iraq, skilled workforce, ... Therefore, many cities have become centers for atomic and nuclear energy and a place for research stations to serve scientific needs. The search for the optimal location, which has become a problem for the industry, the city seems to be a more suitable place than others for the establishment of industry, especially those in which the transport component plays an important role (Transport oriented industries) (Smelser, 1969).

**Center of Consumption:** Today's agglomeration economies have turned cities into centers for consumption, rather than places for manufacturing goods. In turn, this shift in focus means that cities now tend to attract more highly skilled and highly paid workers—people who want more consumption options. Consequently, modern cities must offer a wide choice of amenities to attract the high-skill workers needed in this new type of agglomeration economy (CARLINO, 2005).

**Center for Providing Services:** The city is considered a place to provide various services to its residents, such as health, educational, cultural, recreational and financial services ..., and therefore it is a service center in addition to its aforementioned functions (Smelser, 1969).

**Information Center:** In the second half of the twentieth century, there was a sudden progress in the technological aspects in developed countries, and behind this progress and development there were a number of reasons, the most important of which is the big jump in the level of income, the transportation revolution and the scientific revolution, which expanded the use of the phone, radio and television ... which caused the spread of information and contributed to the

development of society in terms of science and knowledge (Alonso, 1975). In a study by Toshio-sanuki in the name of "The city in the informational society" on some Japanese cities, he indicated that it is not wrong to assume that the information density increases when the level of urbanization increases further and at a greater rate, and that the pattern The form of the transportation system is what constitutes, to a large extent, the characteristics of regional cities, and it is the transport network and future information network that shape the distribution pattern of cities. He added that the big cities, not the small or medium-sized cities, are the ones that produce, distribute and consume information, and he concluded by saying that the big cities are the ones in which the urban policy achieves the maximum benefits.

**The Strategic and Geostategic Role:** The strategic role of cities means the economic and social goals envisaged by the city as a unit within the urban system, and the geostategic role refers to the military and security objectives envisaged in the spatial organization of cities within urban systems. The strategic role of cities increases with the increase in their size and the diversification of their economic structure, or the increase of their specialization or the number of projects in them ..., the major cities have a strategic role greater than the medium-sized and small cities due to their material and human capabilities, as a high percentage of the population and economic projects are concentrated in them.

**Urban Agglomeration and Economic Sufficiency:** Agglomeration economies refer to the productivity gains derived from the geographical clustering of firms and people. For a particular firm, the gains derived from being located in an urban area can have various sources: scale economies due to greater market size (within close range); lower infrastructure costs (spread over a greater number of users); lower information and transaction costs because of the greater range and facility of face-to-face contacts; more flexible and rapid input relationships, given the diversity (and proximity) of potential suppliers; lower training and recruitment costs due to the presence of a large and diversified labor pool (Pole'se, 2005). Many researchers have studied the size of the economically efficient city from multiple points of view, including:

**Marginal Productivity:** The productivity of the workforce in large cities is more than in small cities, due to the high productivity environment these cities offer as they attract a high quality of workers. This opinion has been strengthened by an American study on the productivity of one hour according to the size of the city, starting from the countryside and extending to the larger regions (from 10,000 - million people). The productivity of the hour has been extracted through knowing the productivity of one region and the number of working hours in it, and it has been shown that the marginal productivity It increases by increasing the size of the city until it reaches a certain size, after which it begins to decline. In a study by the Japanese Economic Planning Authority on the policy of developing underdeveloped regions, the results were the loss of the national economy to 30% of the income in the case of developing backward regions to reach the budget in the development process also bigger (Alonso, 1975).

**Higher Productivity in Cities:** No countries have achieved sustained economic growth without the growth of cities.

Cities generate disproportionately higher rate of economic growth than in rural areas. They generate more than 80 percent of global GDP today. Of which the top 100 largest cities could account for 35 percent of global GDP; the top 600 cities are expected to generate 62 percent of global GDP; the top 1,000 cities could account for 68 percent of global GDP and the top 2,000 could account for 75 percent of global GDP (Programme, 2011).

**Cities as Poverty Reduction Mechanisms:** The importance of cities in poverty reduction has become increasingly prominent. Cities are proven to be better poverty fighters than their rural counterparts. For example, average incomes of urban residents are four times higher than those of rural ones in countries such as China and Thailand. China, with its pro-urbanization policies, has removed 220million people from poverty in less than 25years. With economic growth highly correlated with poverty reduction, the high growth of cities bodes well for poverty reduction. The American cities proved the similar poverty reduction effects as those of China and Thailand. Cities are generally better off than rural areas. In the United States, 1,610 Of 2,288 non-metro counties have a poverty rate above the national average rate (Programme, 2011).

**Wealth Generation in Cities:** Cities are the drivers for wealth generation. In 2009, the world's most economically powerful cities were Tokyo, New York, Los Angeles, London, Paris, Chicago, Osaka, Mexico, Washington DC, and San Francisco. Tokyo produced USD 2.99 trillion; New York produced USD 2.63 trillion; Los Angeles produced USD 1.79 trillion; London produced USD 695.6 billion; Paris produced 658.1billion; Chicago produced USD 657.1 billion; Osaka produced USD 525.5 billion; Mexico produced USD 452.1 billion; Washington DC produced USD 384.5 billion; and San Francisco produced USD 374.5 billion 26. Either Tokyo or New York's economy is larger than the individual national economies such as Italy, Spain, Canada, Russia, South Korea, Brazil, and India. London's economy ranks as the ninth largest in all of Europe, larger than the individual national economies such as Austria, Greece, Portugal, Switzerland, Sweden and Belgium. The top 10 cities in Europe are London, Paris, Milan, Madrid, Rome, Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Barcelona, and Stockholm<sup>27</sup>. In terms of prime residential price, Chinese cities have the highest growth rate in price, which makes Chinese cities the most attractive investment assets. 8.5 million new residential units were sold in China in 2009, compared to about 500,000 in USA (Programme, 2011).

### **The impact of urban concentration in Iraq:**

**Urbanization Trends in Iraq:** At present, Iraq is composed of 18 governorates that vary in terms of area and population size. The three governorates of the Kurdistan have an administrative status (Federal governorates) different from the rest of the governorates of Iraq. The governorate of Anbar is Iraq's largest governorate in area but the least densely populated, Karbala is the smallest governorate in area, while Baghdad has the largest population (Commission, 2012). About 70 percent of the Iraqi population lives in cities and towns. Baghdad alone hosts about 7.5 million people (21.3 percent of Iraq's population). The governorate of Baghdad has the highest urban population (87.5 percent), followed by Suleimaniyah (84.7 percent) and Erbil (83.2

percent) (UN-HABITAT, 2009),(Iraq, 2019),(Iraq, 2017). The percentage of urban population varies by governorate. It rises in Baghdad to 87.5%,and drops in Babylon, Al-Muthanna and Salah al-Din to 50% (Iraq, 2019).

**Spatial Orientation of Investments:** Planning for all sectors in Iraq was highly centralized with the Ministry of Planning playing a key role both in the co-ordination of the planning process and, in consultation with the Ministry of Finance, in the allocation of resources to the respective Ministries. Physical and sector plans were prepared by the corresponding Ministries and Departments in Baghdad, based on information provided by the respective Departments at the Governorate level. Five-year sector plans were normally prepared for the entire country and funding for plan implementation was provided through the annual budget process, which was managed by the Ministry of Finance in Baghdad (Iraq, 2014). Iraqi national interest in the spatial dimension of development began in the 1960s, as the 1965-1969 National Development Plan emphasized the concept of spreading industries throughout several Iraqi governorates, to spread development outside the major urban areas of Baghdad, Mosul, and Basrah.

Spatial development aims primarily to distribute the fruits of the basic development process in a balanced and equitable way among the provinces. It seeks to reduce economic, social, and urban disparities among the governorates of the country on the one hand, and between urban and rural areas on the other hand. In other words, spatial development seeks to create relatively balanced development among governorates, creating balanced spatial development; reducing economic and social disparities; distributing population in a balanced way; and stopping it from becoming concentrated in large urban areas. The Five Year Plan (FYP) in 1965 was known to be the most articulate and sophisticated of all the plans that had been drawn up since the inception of development planning in Iraq since 1950. The early period of the industrial development in Iraq witnessed a spatial orientation of investments in large cities, including the capital, Baghdad and Mosul, at the expense of weakness Attracting opportunities for other governorates that are industrially less developed, although some of them have resources.

National Development Plan (NDP),which covered the period of 1970- 1974was unique in Iraqi economic history in that it was the first development plan to be drafted, implemented and allowed to run its full course under the same political power structure. The plan was also novel in that it was able to draw upon a wealth of studies, planning, technical experience and administrative competence that Iraq had never been able to attain over the previous decades. Interest in the industrial sector increased during the period from 1971-1985 due to the increase in investment allocations by 28% of the total allocations of economic sectors, then the industrial sector allocations rose in 1980 to (37%). Baghdad acquired the highest percentage of investment allocations in the 1965-1969 development plan, amounting to 18.9%, followed by Basra 18.7, then Babylon by 16.2%, and the rest of the governorates ranged from 5.8 for Kirkuk to 0.3 for Maysan. In the 1981-1985 development plan, there was an attempt to spread the development process in other governorates, such as Salah al-Din, which accounted for 20.6%, Anbar 10.8%, and the share of Baghdad was 17.6%

and Basra was 16.7%. This indicates that there is a tendency to reduce the economic and population concentration of Baghdad. In the year 1995, the trend continued to allocate important percentages to other governorates, as the share of Salah al-Din was 12.16%, Anbar 13.32%, Babylon 14.66%, and Basra 24.69% and the share of Baghdad was 14.45%. This indicates a good spatial policy, which is better from previous periods.

**Economic Concentration:** Industry was heavily concentrated in the areas of Baghdad, Basra ,and Mosul .over half of the large establishments with up to 70% of the workers were located in Baghdad , and some 20 percent more clustered in Basra and Mosul. Concentration of small business was somewhat less pronounced, almost one -third were located in Baghdad and nearly one-fifth in Mosul and Basra. The retaining large and small business firms were scattered in small numbers throughout the other 11 governorates (Alnasrawi, 1994).

**Economic and Population Dominance:** The spatial economy model in Iraq shows Baghdad's control as a dominant city at the urban structure level in 2007 as compared to other Iraqi cities. Its dominance was reflected in the results of most development plans. The total population of the second largest city after Baghdad constitutes 1/6 of Baghdad's population and not 1/2 as determined by the well-known Zipf's Rule (Iraq, 2014). Starting in 1950, and continuing on to 1995, most plans indicated a clear focus on the levels of economic and social development in a limited number of provinces. This generated a growing movement in mass migration toward these centers in a way that largely contributed to the spatial disparity between the developed and underdeveloped provinces in all aspects of economic, social, and urban development. These influences were reflected in the method of the population's spatial distribution: heavily populated centers were the same centers that enjoyed economic growth, so they continued to attract growth away from other areas. As a result, there was a correlation between the level of urbanization and economic development. Table 5, shows the relative distribution of population concentrations and investments in the Baghdad province for the period of 1965-2007 as compared to Iraq as a whole.

**Urban Concentration and Unemployment:** The unemployment rate was no higher than 5 percent per1987 statistics. However, after 2003, unemployment rates skyrocketed, their trends varied, and their underlying reasons multiplied and were compounded by current conditions, resulting in an increase in the unemployment rate to 28 percent pursuant to the CSO's 2003 employment and unemployment survey. The rate subsequently declined to 18 percent in 2006and 15 percent in 2008 as a result of the employment policy adopted by the government after 2005 that aimed to increase employment by the state and the security apparatus. The differences are even clearer when comparing urban and rural areas. The unemployment rate in urban areas declined from 30 percent in 2003 to about 15 percent in 2008, while the rate declined in rural areas from 25 percent in 2003 to 14 percent in 2008 (Table 8). The lack of security, failure of reconstruction projects to create new job opportunities, decline in investment spending allocations as a percentage of total public spending, absence of foreign investment supporting the principle of national labor

employment, and the inefficacy of external grants and loans in creating job opportunities are all considered factors in raising unemployment rates in Iraq (Planning, 2010).

**Urban Concentration and Consumption:** Less than half of Iraq's population are consumers; the rest are producers responsible for helping both themselves and the consumer segment of society. This puts pressure on economic resources and makes it challenging for the job market to create new job opportunities (Planning, 2010).

**Urban Concentration and Poverty:** Rural poverty is still an important issue to face in the economic and social growth of developed and developing countries. Rural poverty is transmitted by the cumulative negative effects of vicious circle of labor market, demography, education, agricultural productivity, farm household income, extension services, and basic infrastructures such as water, electricity, transport, communication and markets (BERTOLINI, 2019). Poverty has been one of the most important challenges accompanying development in Iraq over the past three decades. It affects the depths of organizational structures and threatens the social fabric and the mechanisms of its solidarity. Addressing poverty in Iraq has not been allocated the attention required because of the situations, policies, and variables at play in during the past four decades. Having witnessed relative stability during the 1970s, the challenges started to affect the structure of organizations as well as economic and social situations in Iraq after the country entered the tunnel of war with Iran in the 1980s. This was seriously exacerbated by the situation after the Second Gulf War and imposition of the international blockade in 1990. The situation became worse because of the crises that accompanied the changes in the political situation in 2003 and the violence, terrorism, and destruction of the hierarchy of organizations that accompanied them. The continuation of these crises for a long time has left its mark throughout Iraq—and the worsening poverty levels might be the most prominent one (Planning, 2010).

**Spatial Disparity of Development:** Over the past four decades in the last century, spatial development policies clearly tended toward focusing development on specific governorates. This resulted in a clear disparity in levels of development among the governorates, on the one hand, and between rural and urban areas, on the other. At the governorates level, studies in this area confirm three distinct levels of economic, social, and urban development, described as “advanced,” “relatively developed,” and “underdeveloped.” According to studies prepared in (2009), the least developed governorates are Diwaniyah, Maysan, Al-Muthanna, Thi Qar, and Diyala. The relatively developed governorates are Najaf, Kirkuk, Nineveh, Salah al-Din, Wasit, and Karbala. The most developmentally advanced governorates are Basrah and Baghdad, with the latter ranked in first place (Planning, 2010).

**Deprivation and Living Standard Indicators:** The spatial deprivation and standard of living (table 13) was, adopted by the National Report on the State of Human Development. It depicts the spatial deprivation in provinces in education, healthcare, infrastructure, housing, housing surroundings, and economic situation. Thus, it depicts where basic human needs are not met. There is a large scarcity in Al-Muthanna governorate, which is ranked in last place among Iraq's

provinces in terms of the number of deprived families across all indicators. Regarding the seven areas of deprivation listed in the table, the Maysan governorate had a rate of 87.8 percent in the area of infrastructure due to the decline in that sector. The Al-Qadisiya governorate had a rate of 46.5 percent in the housing area. The Nineveh province had a rate of 48.5 percent in the economic situation index. The Maysan governorate had a rate of 56.4 percent in the general standard of living index.

The governorates with a poverty index lower than the national average were Karbala 16.2 percent, Basrah 17.5 percent and Anbar 16.4 percent. In contrast, the rate for Al-Muthanna was 30.0 percent and for Maysan was 30.2 percent. The latter was the worst off according to the poverty index. Perhaps the biggest problem in this province was the lack of access to drinking water, which amounted to 46.9 percent. This province also had the highest illiteracy rate of any governorate, at 34 percent among adults. The governorate of Dahuk and Salah al-Din were ranked 16th and 15th, mainly because of the high rates of illiteracy among adults in Dahuk, estimated at 41 percent, and the low life expectancy in Salah al Din, at 36.2 years. The human development report sees clear differences among the governorates in the Kurdistan region, where Erbil made significant progress in education, health, and income compared to Sulaymaniyah and Dahuk. However, in the rate of female enrollment in education, Sulaymaniyah surpasses Dahuk and Erbil; this will deepen the current disparities if planning authorities do not address this difference (Planning, 2010).

#### **Sustainable Urbanization is Key to Successful Development:**

Understanding the key trends in urbanization likely to unfold over the coming years is crucial to the implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development, including efforts to forge a new framework of urban development. Sustainable development depends increasingly on the successful management of urban growth, Iraq will face challenges in meeting the needs of their growing urban populations, including for housing, transportation, energy systems and other infrastructure, as well as for employment and basic services such as education and health care. Integrated policies to improve the lives of both urban and rural dwellers are needed, while strengthening the linkages between urban and rural areas, building on their existing economic, social and environmental ties. To ensure that the benefits of urbanization are fully shared and inclusive, policies to manage urban growth need to ensure access to infrastructure and social services for all, focusing on the needs of the urban poor and other vulnerable groups for housing, education, health care, decent work and a safe environment.

**Sustainable Urbanization Framework:** To reduce the impact of urban concentration on economic development in Iraq, There is a need for a national framework for economic development and urbanization sustainability. To limit the dual spatial development phenomenon in Iraq as a whole, as well as within each governorate, high population concentrations to a few cities, put an end to the dominant city phenomenon in Iraq as a whole as well as within each governorate, to stimulate the growth of medium- and small-sized cities and reduce the great disparity in public services and infrastructure available among provinces and within each governorate; further, to reduce the disparity in satisfying

basic needs in the aforementioned areas and adopt that approach as a basic requirement for comprehensive spatial regional development. We must urgently find ways to achieve economic and socially equitable growth without further cost to the environment. Part of the solution lies in how cities are planned, governed, and provide services to their citizens. When poorly managed, urbanization can be detrimental to sustainable development. However, with vision and commitment, sustainable urbanization is one of the solutions to our ever growing national population. Efforts to create jobs, reduce our ecological footprint, and improve quality of life are most effective when pursued holistically. By prioritizing sustainable urbanization within a broader development framework, many critical development challenges can be addressed in tandem such as energy, water consumption and production.

The achievement of rapid and sufficient economic development is one of the important indicators of the existence of economic rationality in the urban system, the fact that the urban system is the ground and the container that includes the national economy as a whole. This development can be achieved in cities of medium and large sizes more than in cities of small size, and therefore it can be said that economic rationality can be achieved in urban system in the case of a pattern of "dispersed concentration" represented by the presence of a large number of medium and large-sized cities at the level of the country that results in a gradual process. Hierarchically. A general framework and a future vision can be developed for dealing with the negative consequences of urban concentration and economic duality, can be summarized as follows:

- Cities need to be planned, designed, and developed to lessen their impact on the environment, to contribute to economic growth. With well-designed services and infrastructure, reduce the cost of energy provision, transport, and other services that businesses need. This, in turn, increases productivity and efficiency, and encourages private investment for economic growth.
- Without appropriate planning, design, and investment in the development of sustainable cities, a growing number of people will continue to face unprecedented negative impacts, of reduced economic growth, quality of life, and increased social instability.
- Communities, businesses, and local authorities must be recognized as essential players in developing and implementing national and city-level urbanization strategies and socio-economic development.
- It is quite important to determine the cities of the urban system (the national system, the regional system, and the local system) after conducting more studies, noting that the cities of the national urban system are the most important because of their size, its economic potentialities, and economic role .
- More efforts are still needed to establish urban development policy that can achieve the goals of the urbanization strategy.
- It is necessary to develop a long-term strategy for urbanization in Iraq based on clearly identifying the trends of urban growth during the coming period, and we believe that the appropriate strategy is the strategy of dispersed concentration.

- It is quite important to take into consideration the coordination and integration between urban policy and other policies, such as the economic policy at the country level, which is represented by the distribution of investments sectorally and linking them spatially according to the requirements of urban policy, housing policy, immigration policy, infrastructure, housing policy ..... And all other policies, with the necessity to have a comprehensive view of all urban and regional policies and to complement each other to achieve the goals of the country's urbanization strategy.
- It is necessary to take action and create the necessary administrative institutions to implement the urban policy, with the need to take into account the amendment of some laws in line with the achievement of the objectives of this policy.
- Strengthening the decentralized administration in the cities of the urban system while delegating sufficient powers to be able to plan and implement the development of these cities.
- It is necessary to establish a new structure for urban and regional planning at the country level as a whole, represented by the creation of urban and regional planning departments in cities of the urban system.

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