

URBANIZATION TRENDS AND URBAN PLANNING STRATEGIES IN THREE MAJOR MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES: IRAN, EGYPT, AND TURKEY

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Abstract. Rapid urbanization has turned into a problematic phenomenon laying negative effects on the Middle Eastern cities and their peripheries. Although fast increase in urban population of the countries of the region has been well-researched, the connections to urban development strategies and patterns are being neglected. This paper examines the time coincidence of some of the dominant planning trends of the past decades that are considered to be associated with the intensive urban population changes. The paper attempts to discuss over the points in which the three countries witnessed significant increase and decrease in fertility rates. For that, the data of the World Bank have been applied. The graphs seen in this paper have been produced by the Google public data from the World Bank website, which provides the possibility of separating urban and rural populations. The descriptive analysis of this study shows that these vigorous changes of population growth rates have been more powerful in Iran and Turkey and steadier in Egypt. Examples of weak planning in the three target countries of this study, Iran, Egypt, and Turkey, such as failure in new city planning in Egypt, extensive sprawl in Turkish cities, rural-urban migration in Iran and Turkey, and the policy of wholesale land selling in Iran depict uncontrolled and vis-à-vis urban planning taking the wrong route. It is concluded that controlling urbanization trends in emerging countries, like the Middle Eastern states, requires a strong and strict urban planning system that avoids trial and error.

1. INTRODUCTION

After the Second World War, high-density urban areas started to expand outward rapidly and concentrated urban areas were transformed to the sprawling metropolitan regions. Now, more than 70 years after the World War II, the cities are still expanding outward in rapid motion, consuming more land and more resources; putting the life of hundreds of species into the danger of extinction, increase the air pollution dramatically and pollute the water and soil with toxic chemicals, which in turn intoxicate the food we are consuming. In the race to conquer more land, we have put the environment at a big risk apart from the economic, social, health and spatial planning concerns, which can bring about tremendous costs.

All the above occurred in parallel with the rapid growth of urban population and urbanization in the Middle East in the second half of the twentieth century. The outcomes of the demographic studies have clearly defined the circumstances of a rapid jump in urban population in the region. Thus, repeating them is of no significance for knowledge production. However, what is still less-studied is the coincidence of the urban planning strategies and policies with the historical, demographic dynamics in the Middle Eastern countries. This would be more meaningful to be scrutinized with strong focus on urban population changes.

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It is worth-mentioning that the approach of this paper is not analyzing the causality of urbanization trends, but the association and coincidence of the urban population increase with the urban planning strategies that are described. In other words, fast urbanization can be the result of planning decision, or the other way around. However, this is not the topic of the paper. In the context of the Middle East, the planning systems have tried to control the urbanization trends by nation-wide housing and development plans, for instance, the new city development plans of Iran and Egypt that led to planning tens of new cities, many of which are not only satellite towns, but are stand-alone cities intended to provide employment and leisure amenities for millions of residents. The failure of most of these efforts has been put to discussion in several academic studies. What this paper wants to present is the time-line of urban population changes together with the chronological analysis of urban development phenomena.

Another point is that this analysis cannot be generalized to the rich states of the south of the Persian Gulf that have very high urbanization rates. The problems seen in the metropolitan areas of the larger countries of the region have been presented since the aftermath of the world wars, while the urban challenges of cities like Manama, Doha, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and the like date back to the fast developments after 1990s. Thus, it is not relevant to generalize the approach of this paper to those areas.

The objective of this paper is to make a connection between population change trends, particularly urbanization on the one hand, and Middle Eastern housing and urban development on the other hand. It is hypothesized that “strong coincidence and correlation exists between the urban population and urbanization rates in the larger countries of the region with urban policies made after 1960, mostly considered as failure. The failure of such planning policies has led to unsustainability of urban life and also had a secondary effect on urban and rural populations”.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to be able to carry out a precise analysis one should first have a clear definition of urban sprawl and a coherent understanding of this complex process. Yet, finding a common definition for this phenomenon is not as easy as it seems to be. In most papers addressing the issue of urban sprawl, lack of standard definition for this phenomenon is striking.

There are various definitions on which the various measurement methods are based. Looking at different papers in this area, despite the considerable literature, it seems that the authors chose, or presented their own version of “urban sprawl” according to their own background and approach and this for sure has affected the definition a great deal. Opinions on sprawl held by researchers, policy-makers and urban planners differ sharply and these differences complicate the process of finding a common definition. This fact was pointed out in many papers. Harvey and Clark (Harvey & Clark, 1965) noted that urban sprawl is often discussed without any associated definition at all. Bhatta *et al.* expressed this complication in finding a common definition in his paper, as well by saying “there is no common definition of urban sprawl and as a concept, it suffers from difficulties in definition.” (Bhatta, Saraswati, Bandyopadhyay, 2010) Brueckner mentioned that “urban sprawl means different things to different people” (Brueckner, 2000) and that “many would claim to know it when they see it” (Bhatta, 2010).

With regard to all discussions about the definition of urban sprawl, it is clear that, depending on the different geographical, social and economic circumstances, urban sprawl can have different shapes and thus, different definitions. But, according to what was reviewed for this study, the following definition is suggested. It is the essence of almost all the definitions of urban sprawl.

“Urban Sprawl is a planned or unplanned outward expansion of urban areas that usually creates low-density residential patterns.”

Sprawl is one of those multilayered concepts that have been studied over the years, from different perspectives. Surely, huge numbers of papers are dedicated to the factors behind this phenomenon.

Population growth, increase of income and decrease of commuting costs are the main causes of urban sprawl stated in the American literature. Margo (1992) stated in his article that around fifty percent of the suburbanization in the period of 1950–1980 was due to the increase in people's income. In some papers, such as the works of Ewing *et al.* (Ewing *et al.*, 2002) and Brueckner (2000), the change in the taste of an American, regarding the choice of living and working place, changes in residents' shopping habits, and also government, or state mortgage loans are mentioned.

Increasing rates of population growth and urban population increase have been considered to be among the most influential factors behind urban sprawl in Iran, Egypt and Turkey as well. In Iran, this phenomenon has been the result of a high natural population growth rate, specifically in the early years after the 1979 revolution, as well as the increasing rate of rural-to-urban migration (Aliakbari, 2004; UN Habitat, 2008; Movahed, 2004; Shahraki *et al.*, 2012a). In Egypt, population increase, although not steady between 1960 and 2014, contributed to the expansion of cities. Population increase in general can be attributed to the high-fertility rates; albeit their declining trend, yet but they still exceed the substitution rate, the improving health conditions and the decline in infant mortality (Khalifa *et al.*, 2000).

Government policies also play a significant role in shaping this new development pattern. Taxing and zoning policies, subsidization of land and government loans are among the factors that encourage the urban sprawl. Brueckner (2000) emphasizes in several papers that property taxation contributes to urban sprawl a specially “when the substitution between housing and other goods is low” (Brueckner & Kim, 2003). He suggests a land-tax regime to remedy this situation. Ewing stated that “Sprawl is the product of subsidies and other market imperfections.” (Ewing, 1997). Moreover, land transfer and spatial planning policies also did encourage the urban sprawl in Iran as well (Kamrava, 2006; Azizi, 2009).

3. METHODOLOGY

Three large countries of the region are taken to show the status of urbanization and urban population. Iran, Egypt, and Turkey have the largest cities and metropolitan areas. The only megacities of the region, Tehran, Cairo, and Istanbul, are located in these countries. The urban population of the three countries has in recent decades steadily increased. The paper attempts to discuss the points in which the three countries witnessed significant increase and decrease in fertility rates. For that, the data of the World Bank have been applied. The graphs seen in this paper have been produced by the Google public data from the World Bank website, which provides the possibility of separating urban and rural populations. This online tool enabled the authors to undertake a descriptive analysis of the effects of social and political events on urban and rural populations. Moreover, the housing and urban policies of the target counties are linked to the demographic trends explored by the above-mentioned data.

4. RESULTS

Iran is the eighteenth largest country in the world, with an area of 1,648,195 sq.km. According to the World Bank Data, the population of Iran has increased from 21.9 million in 1960 to 77.44 million in 2013 as Figure 2 shows. The country is divided five regions with thirty-one provinces (*ostān*), the provinces are divided into counties (*shahrestān*), and subdivided into districts (*bakhsh*) and sub-districts (*dehestān*). Tehran, the capital of the country, is the most populous city of Iran; Mashhad,

Isfahan, Karaj, Tabriz and Shiraz come after Tehran for being the most populous cities of the country (Fig. 1, table 1).

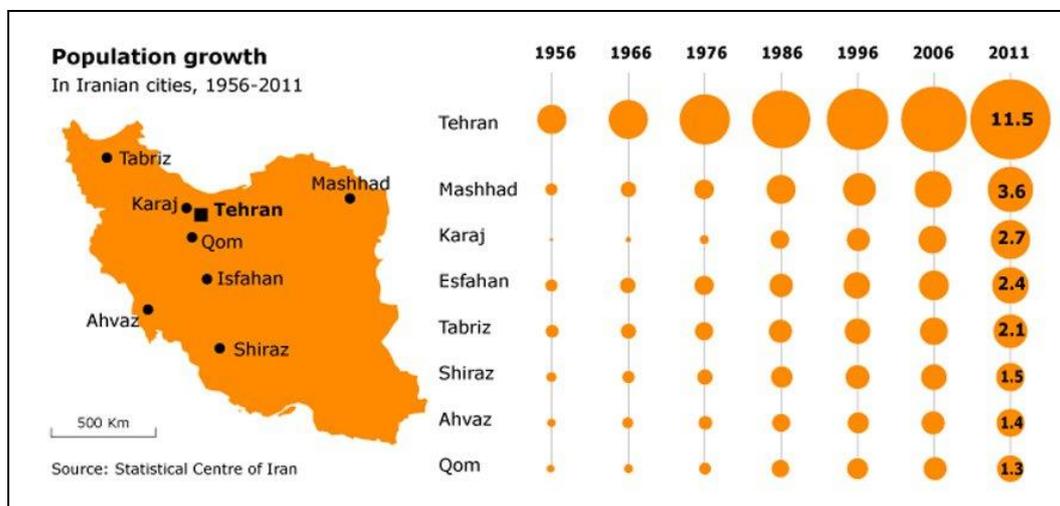


Fig. 1 – The largest cities of Iran and their population between 1956 and 2011. Cited in <https://chronicle.fanack.com/iran/population/>, originally from Statistical Centre of Iran (2012).

Table 1

The population of the 6 most populous cities of Iran according to the Iran Census 2012.

Source: Statistical Center of Iran (2012).

Rank	Name	Province	Population
1	Tehran	Tehran	8,154,051
2	Mashhad	Khorasan-e Razavi	2,749,374
3	Isfahan	Isfahan	1,756,126
4	Karaj	Alborz	1,614,626
5	Tabriz	East Azarbaijan	1,494,988
6	Shiraz	Fars	1,460,665

According to the World Bank data, in the period of 1960 to 1980, the rural population of Iran was larger than its urban population. In 1960, the urban population was almost half the rural one, but this trend would reverse after 1980. As Figs 2 and 3 show, Iran had 19.32 million urban population in 1980, a number slightly lower than the rural population which was 19.56 million. In 1981, for the first time the urban population exceeded the rural one and reached 20.39 million, which was slightly more compared to the 20.04 million rural populations. The rural population had an increasing rate for ten years (1981-1991) and after that, from 1992, on the rural population shown a decreasing rate and reached 21.2 million in 2014.

The share of urban population has dramatically increased during 1960-2014. Data show that 33.7 percent of the population lived in urban areas in 1960. This number changed to 72.8 percent in 2014; the average slope of the urban population from 1960 to 1981 was 0.6, while this value became 1.1 between 1981 and 2014. Considering the constant increase, it can be deduced that the urban population did increase at a faster pace after 1980. This faster pace can be explained by the pro-nationalist atmosphere after the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq (1980-1988) and also by the influx of refugee immigrants after 1980.

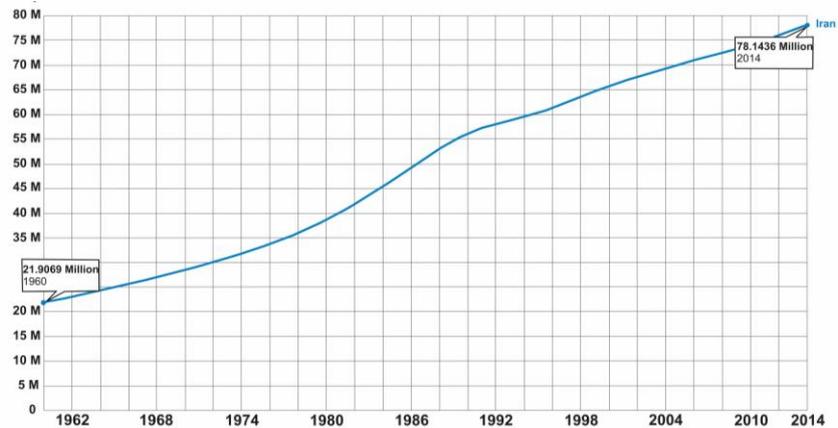


Fig. 2 – The population of Iran: Midyear estimates of the resident population.
Source: World Bank Database.

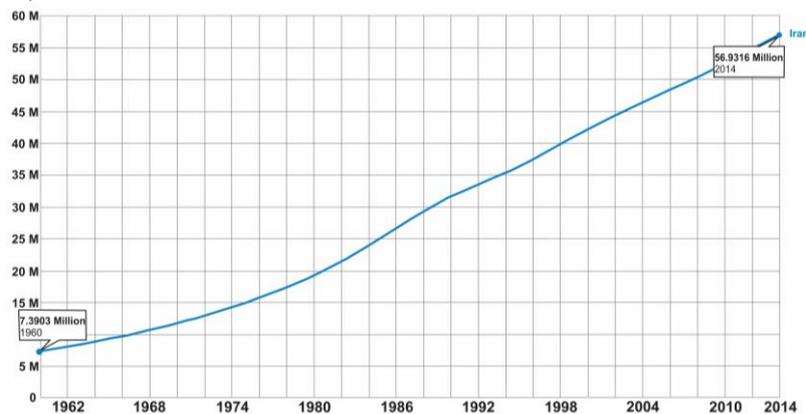


Fig. 3 – The urban population of Iran: Midyear estimates of the resident population.
Source: World Bank Database.

Egypt comprises 27 governorates, with 183 rural districts (Marakiz) and 216 cities (excluding Cairo governorate, which has no affiliations) (IDSC, 2014), most of the cities are capitals of the Marakiz. In the last 5 decades, urban growth and urbanization, spurred mainly by population increase, has been evident in almost all small, medium (moderate) and big sized cities of Egypt (Abu-Lughod, 1965; Robson *et al.*, 2012; Shaalan, 2013). In 2006, 7 cities had more than 500,000 inhabitants (Robson *et al.*, 2012) compared to only two (Cairo & Alexandria) in 1960 (Abu-Lughod, 1965).

As Figs 4 and 5 show, Egypt's population grew from around 28 million in 1960 to around 82 million in 2013 with gross urban population of around 36 million in 2013. However, the data on the share of urban/rural population provides us with another perspective. According to WB data, the share of urban population remained almost steady (around 43%) from 1975 to 2014 and this shows that the major part of the population reside in the areas defined as rural parts. Although the share of rural population decreased from 62.1% in 1960 to 56.7% in 1975, no huge changes were observed since then (The World Bank, 2016). Within that protracted urban expansion, informal infringements upon arable lands in the vicinity of the urban agglomerations and formal new desert cities are symptomatic of urban sprawls. Ostensibly, they represent a dichotomy; but the qualities of urban sprawls are

inscribed within their formation dynamics and in their final spatial form, although some of the sprawling attributes can relatively diminish in time.

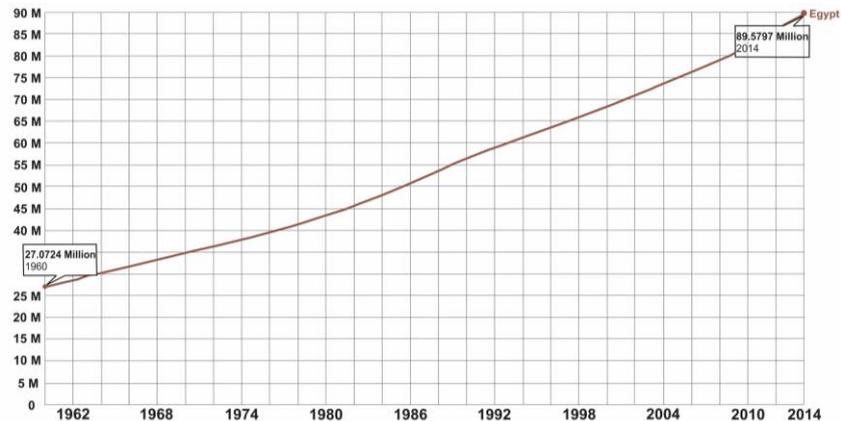


Fig. 4 – The population of Egypt: Midyear estimates of the resident population.
Source: World Bank Database.

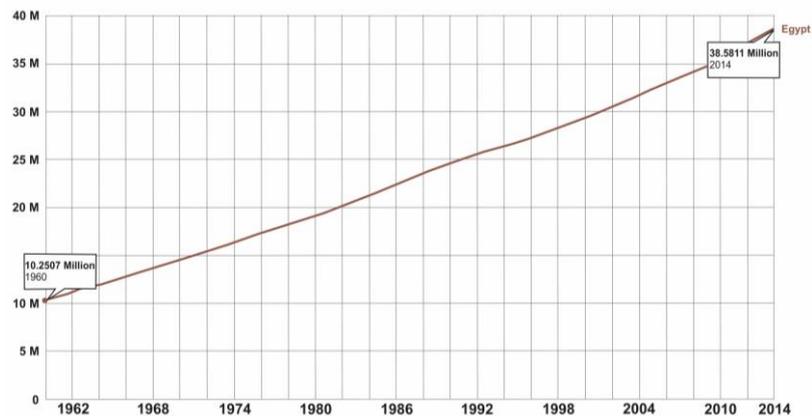


Fig. 5 – The urban Population of Egypt: Midyear estimates of the resident population.
Source: World Bank Database.

Like many other countries in the world, Turkey has experienced a period of rapid urbanization. An increase in population growth, together with the rise in rural-urban migration, created a boom in demand for urban settlement. Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Turkey occupies 783,562 sq. km: 755,688 sq. km. in southwest Asia and 23,764 sq. km. in Europe. The territory of the country is more than 1,600 km long and 800 km wide. Turkey has 81 administrative provinces and each province is divided into districts. There are 923 districts in Turkey. The largest city of Turkey, which is the largest city of Europe in terms of population, is Istanbul. Table 2 shows the six most populous cities of Turkey and their corresponding population. Nearly half the urban population of Turkey live in these six most populated cities (for largest cities and population density of Turkish regions see Figs 6 and 7).

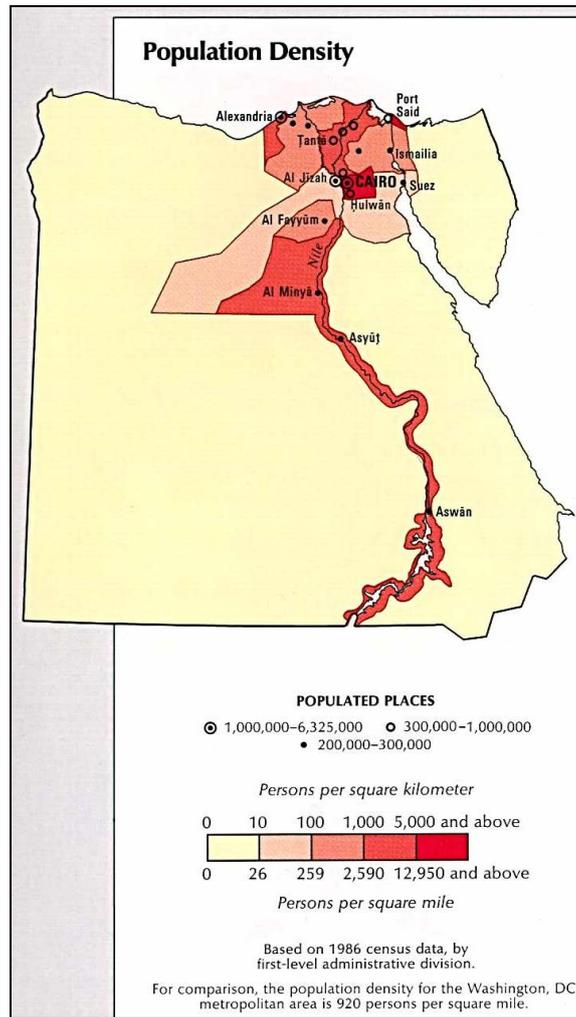


Fig. 6 – The largest cities and population densities of Egypt in 1986.
Source: Atlas of the Middle East (1993), U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, available on the website of The University of Texas at Austin Libraries.

Table 2

The population of the six most populous cities of Turkey. December 2013 address-based calculation of the Turkish Statistical Institute.

Rank	Name	Province	Pop.
1	Istanbul	Istanbul	13,820,334
2	Ankara	Ankara	4,474,305
3	Izmir	Izmir	2,828,927
4	Bursa	Bursa	1,769,752
5	Adana	Adana	1,645,965
6	Gaziantep	Gaziantep	1,465,019

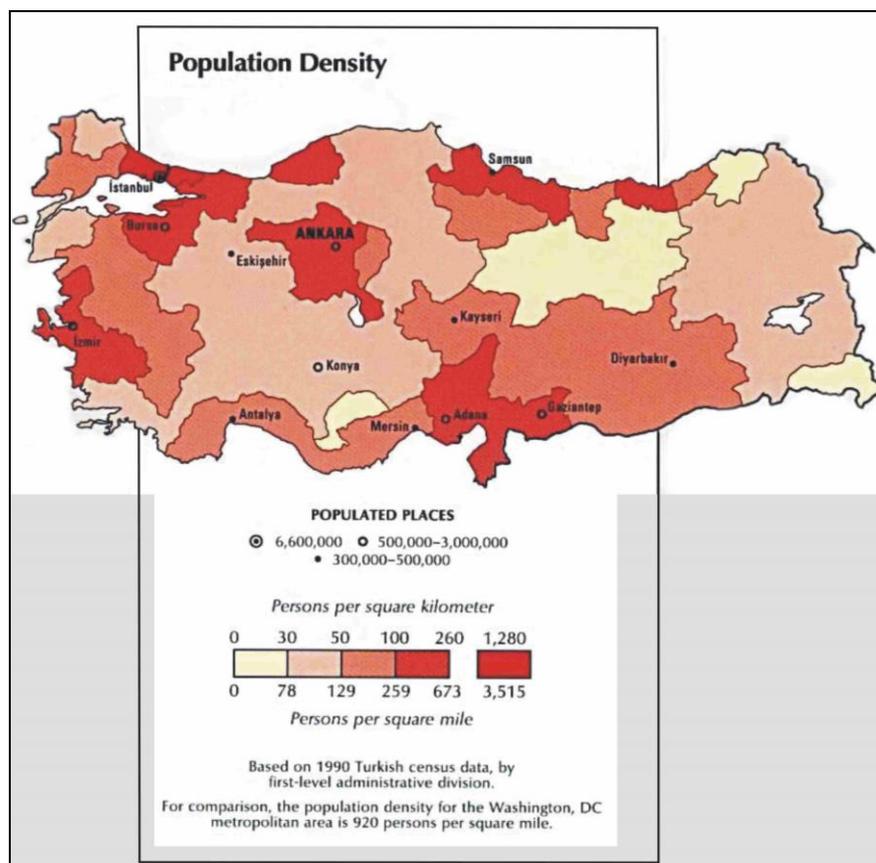


Fig. 7 – The largest cities and population densities of Turkish regions in 1990.

Source: U.S. Central Intelligence Agency available on the website of The University of Texas at Austin Libraries.

The line graph in Figure 8 shows that Turkey had a continuous growth of population in the period of 73 years. It changed from 27,55 million in 1960 to 75,93 million in 2014. According to the 2011 estimate, the population is increasing by 1.35 percent each year. The share of population living in urban areas increased dramatically in Turkey in the past decades. Data shows that Turkey experienced a breaking point in urbanization in the 1950s. The urbanization rate was around 17 percent from the foundation of the Republic (1923) until the early 1950s (Keleş, 2006). The urban population increased from 24.8 percent in 1950 to 69.6 percent in 2010, and is estimated to reach 84 percent in 2050 (UNPD, 2007). This was more obvious in the metropolitan cities of Turkey, like Istanbul, which experienced an enormous rise in its population after 1950 (Terzi & Kaya, 2008).

Figure 9 shows that the urban population increased from around 8.7 million in 1960 to 55.3 in 2014. The graph shows that 55.3 million of the total of 74.93 million people of Turkey live in urban areas, which is roughly 74 percent of the population, this number was around 31 percent in 1960. In the 1950 – 1980 period, due to an import-substitution development interval, people moved from smaller cities and rural areas to metropolitan cities due to the labour requirements of the industrial era (Altinok & Cengiz, 2008). Internal migration from rural areas to Istanbul made the city's population four times larger between 1975 and 2005 (TUIK, 2007).

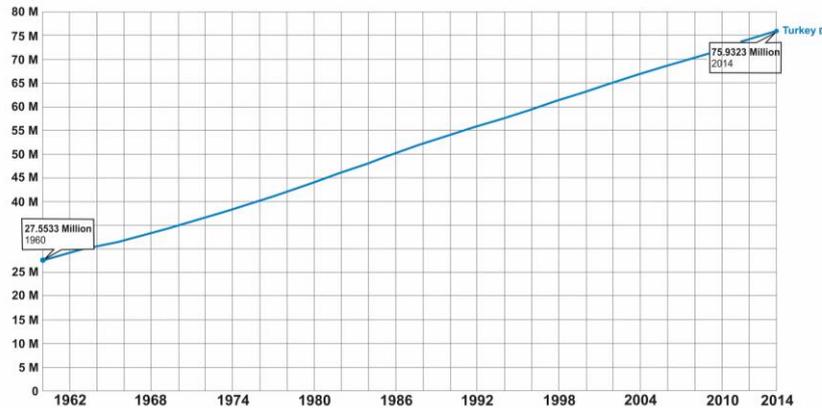


Fig. 8 – The population of Turkey: Midyear estimates of the resident population.
 Source: World Bank Database.

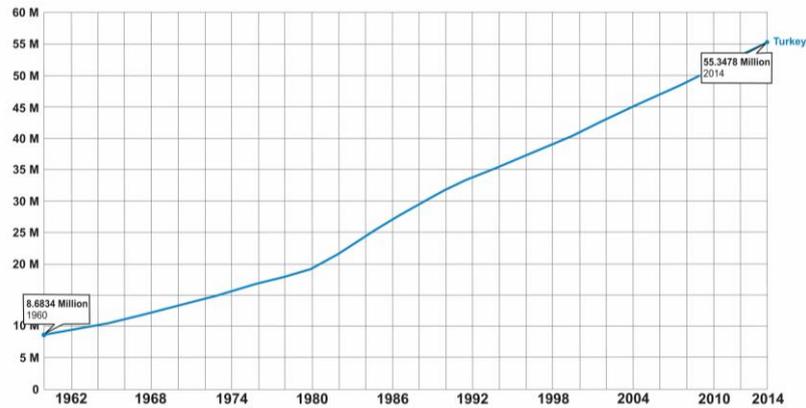


Fig. 9 – The urban population of Turkey.
 Source: World Bank Database.

According to World Bank data, the urban population growth rate was 4.34% in 1960 and reached its maximum level, 6.2%, in 1981, dropping to 2.3% in 2014. The country ranked third among the countries with the highest urbanization rates in the world over 1980–2000, as reported by World Bank data (TOKI, 2008).

5. DISCUSSIONS

This section explains and discusses some of the effective urban planning policies, or trends that were going on in parallel with changes in urbanization rates. Figure 10 illustrates the urban population growth rate from 1960 to 2014. According to the data, Turkey had the highest rate of urban population growth in 1982, with 6.26 percent growth in its urban population in the studied period. Iran reached its maximum in 1983, with 5.52 percent and Egypt in 1960 with 4.42 percent of urban population growth. All the three countries have a decreasing trend in urban population growth, which can be further explained by the lower rate of their population growth.

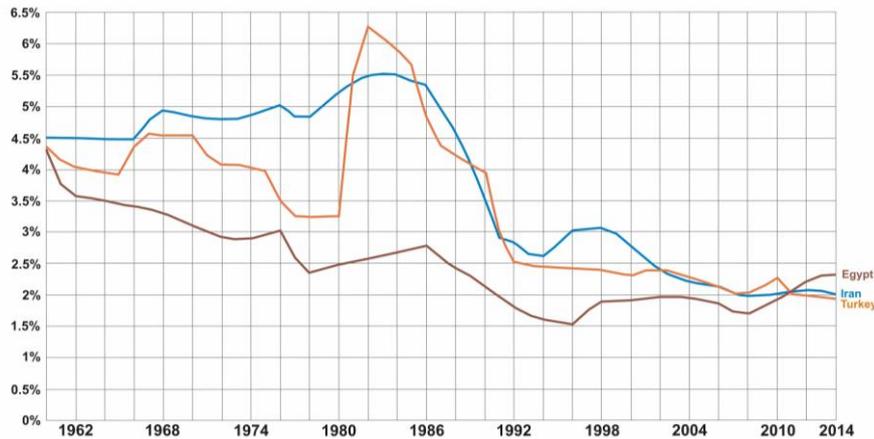


Fig. 10 – Comparison of urban population growth rate in Iran, Egypt, and Turkey, 1960–2014.
Source: World Bank Database.

In Iran, after three years of almost steady urban population growth rate around 3.2 percent (1977-1980), a dramatic jump in the growth rate was observed in 1981, with a 5.49 percent growth rate in urban population, a maximum reached being in 1982. Iran and Turkey had almost very close trends, while Egypt differed from them, yet with no huge ups-and-downs, its urban population growth rate staying always below that of the two other countries until 2011 (Fig. 10).

The population growth rates of Iran and Turkey indicate similarities. Both experienced a peak growth rate in the early 1980s. In Iran, it happened just after the 1979 revolution, when governmental propaganda against population control and an improved healthcare system, on the one hand, and housing policies encouraging young couples to live in their self-built residential units on mass-sold lands on the periphery of the cities, on the other hand, seem to be some of the causes. The wholesale land selling program, was in force between 1979 and 2003, during which 1.7 million residential units were built. However, the most important era of this national policy occurred between 1981 and 1989. Rich in natural resources and fertile lands, Iran enjoys different climates and environmental conditions, ideal for agricultural activities. Prior to 1965, Iran had strict land-use policies, but since then, when an Active Economic Program based on oil incomes was initiated, it experienced a rapid growth of urbanization that converted thousands of acres of fertile lands into urbanized areas. Between 1975 and 1985, Iran had a 27 percent increase in its urban areas, which were mainly built up on croplands (Bigdeli, 2004). Over the last 50 years, the Iranian cities have expanded horizontally, creating unplanned and low-density residential patterns.

The same pattern of a jump in the population boom like in Iran was observed in Turkey in the early 1980s. As illustrated earlier in Fig. 11, Turkey did experience a population boom. Later on the necessity for population control became obvious, i.e. back in the 1990s, population control was considered to be one of the bases for the consolidation of democracy in Turkey along with secularism, bureaucratic reform, market privatization, government decentralization, good income distribution, etc. (Ergüder, 1995)

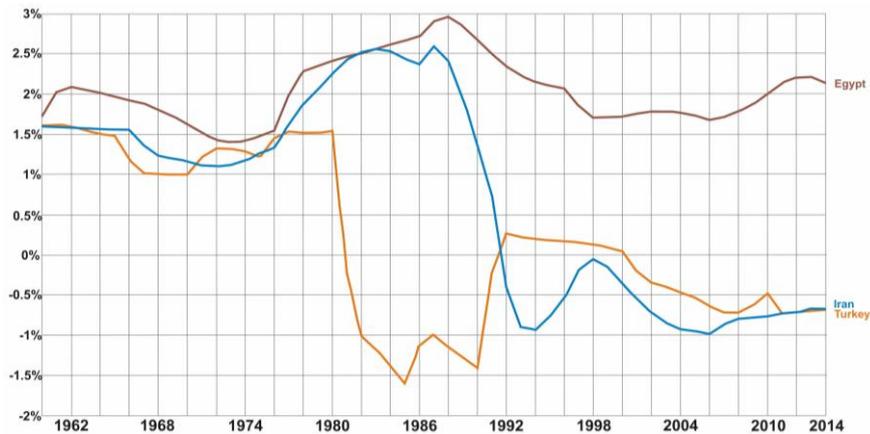


Fig. 11 – Comparison of rural population growth rate in Iran, Egypt, and Turkey, 1960–2014.
Source: World Bank Database.

As Figures 4 and 5 show, the increase in population and of the urban population in Egypt was steadier than in Iran and Turkey. Nevertheless, the fast decrease of population rates happened in the late 1980s in all of the three countries. Apart from the policies to urban planning, discussed throughout this paper, the political and societal turning points such as the Iran-Iraq war, political unrest in Turkey in the early 1980s and the like, seem to be influential in the drop of urban fertility rate. There clearly a delay before a demographic response after influential events comes. Political events like the Arab Spring and revolution of 2011 in Egypt, as well as migration from rural and urban settlements of western Iran to the central cities during the war have also had considerable effects on the increase of urban population. However, this does not mean that the role of political events can be overestimated, while there is a lot to several of evidence of mismanagement in the urban planning of the region that probably led to changes in urbanization rates. In Egypt, a relatively different trend can be observed, with the percentage of urban and rural population fluctuating around 43% and 57%, respectively since the 1980s. In 2014, Egypt had 50.9 million rural population (Fig. 12) and 38.5 million urban population (Fig. 5).

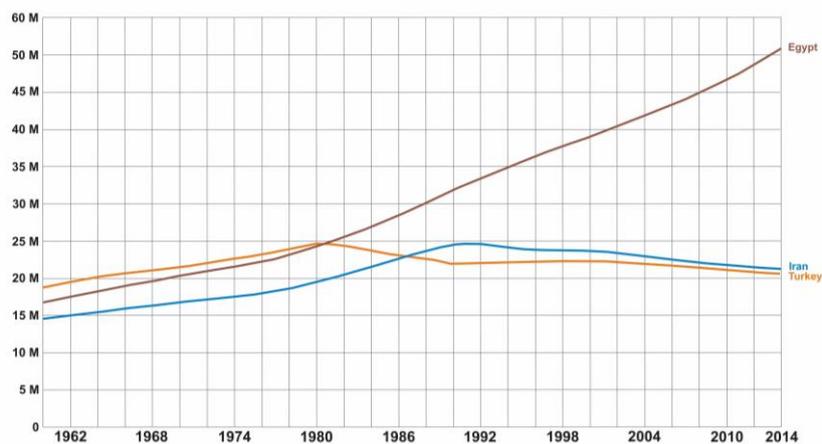


Fig. 12 – Comparison of rural population in Iran, Egypt, and Turkey, 1960–2014.
Source: World Bank Database.

The three countries had almost a very similar trend before 1980, and after that data Egypt's population trend would change. While in Iran and Turkey we see a decreasing rural population, in Egypt we have a relatively sharp increase in rural population. This divergence can be ascribed to the peculiar definition for "urban" in Egypt, it being interlinked with a spatial hierarchy rather than a population threshold, in other words, areas encompassing 10,000 inhabitants and more in some cases, are still considered rural. Such an approach has confined the urban population to almost the same geographical boundaries for decades (Zohry, 2002; Sims, 2012, 30-31). Indeed, if all areas encompassing 10,000 inhabitants or more were to be recognized as urban areas like in many countries, the trend of Egypt would have been closer to Iran and Turkey.

As a result of fast-aging urbanization between 1960 and 2014, Turkey faced a drastic rise in demand for urban housing and due to government failure and the lack of effective policies, illegal settlements were formed. Low-income people, who migrated to the metropolitan cities mainly as labourers, built *Gecekondus* (which means "landed overnight" in Turkish). These were informal buildings, built illegally on government-owned lands or private lands, invading water basins, high quality agricultural lands and forests, historical and green protected areas. (Bolen *et al.*, 2007; TOKI, 2008; Uzun *et al.*, 2010) Over time, *Gecekondus* turned into 'squatter towns' on the fringe of urban areas. (TOKI, 2008) Later on, these areas merged into the cities and became part of city centers in the process of urban sprawl (Kaya & Zengel, 2005). These illegal constructions became one of the biggest challenges for the Turkish government. Studies suggest that the main drives behind urban sprawl in Turkey can be the growth-rate of population coupled with rural-urban migration and lack of effective policies, which led to the formation of illegal settlements and "squatter towns" that later merged into the cities.

There is notable evidence in the literature that the Turkish cities had been sprawling during the past decade. Apart from the majority of studies that cover the causes, consequences and evidence of urban sprawl in large Turkish metropolitan areas, like Istanbul (Altinok & Cengiz, 2008; Bolen *et al.*, 2007; Demiroz, 2005; Geymen & Baz, 2008; Kucukmehmetoglu & Geymen, 2009; Terzi & Kaya, 2008, 2011) Izmir (Egercioglu & Yalciner, 2013; Hepcan *et al.*, 2012; Kaya & Zengel, 2005; Kurucu & Christina, 2008; Park *et al.*, 2014), Ankara (Babalik-Sutcliffe, 2008; Çamur & Yenigül, 2009; Ercoskun, 2013, 2013; Özler, 2012; Sezgin & Varol, 2012), Mersin (Beyhan *et al.*, 2012), Aydin (Esbah, 2007), there are few studies which evidence urban sprawl and land-use changes in mid-sized cities of Turkey, like Kahramanmaraş (Doygun, 2009; Doygun *et al.*, 2008), Samsun (Güler *et al.*, 2007) and Trabzon (Sancar *et al.*, 2009). This happened when the rate of Turkish urbanization was smoothly decreasing.

A driver of jumps and the following drop in urban population rates from 1960s to the end of the 1980s was the failure of urban policies, together with socio-economic phenomena, to prevent rural-urban migration. There are numerous studies in English and Persian about the circumstances and reasons behind this population displacement in Iran. Rural-urban migration occurred in Iran because of unemployment-induced poverty in rural areas (Fanni, 2006; Ziari, 2006). Interestingly, this time period coincided with the rapid sprawl of cities, such as it happened in Yazd, a city in the centre of Iran, from 1981 to 2001, and resulting in a 2.85 time area growth rather than population growth (Masoumi, 2014). Today, almost half of the population of this city has been the outcome of inward migration (Zanganeh Shahraki *et al.*, 2011).

Rural-urban migration in Turkey (between 1950 and 1980) was due to an import-substitution development period, people moving from smaller cities and rural areas to metropolitan cities due to

labour demand in the industrial era (Altinok & Cengiz, 2008). Internal migration from rural areas to Istanbul led to a four-time population increase between 1975 and 2005 (TUIK, 2007).

Egypt tried to provide housing under a new large-city development program. Egyptian new desert cities were elaborated as a long-term solution to accommodate the overflow of population of large cities during the past decades. The plan failed to provide affordable housing for the lower-income class, while by contrast, the wealthiest quantiles of Egyptians, as well as a part of the middle class were willing to move to these new cities (Metwally & Abdalla, 2011). Table 3 illustrates the new cities around Cairo. As seen in the table, numerous new cities were planned and built only around Greater Cairo, most of which failed to attract the middle-to-average class new residents. Back in 1991, twenty percent of Cairo was spent in these satellite cities (Dorman, 2013).

Table 3

New desert Cities near Cairo according to NUCA website data. Source: NUCA, 2014.

	Generation	City Name	Distance	Total Area in thousand feddans	Urban area (i.e. in thousand feddans	Current population in thousand capita	Population Targeted In thousand capita	Target Year	Targeted Density on Total Area (Capita / Feddan)
1	1 st	10 th Ramadan	49 km east of Cairo	94.80	80.00	430	2,300	2032	24
2	1 st	15 th of May	35 km south-east of Cairo	12.231	4.715	200	500	unkn	41
3	1 st	Al-Sadat	93 km north-west of Cairo	119.00	23.700	155	1,000	unkn	8
4	1 st	6 th of October	17 km from the pyramids area in Al-Giza	119.20	61.500	1,350	6,000	unkn	50
5	1 st	New Borg ElArab	60 km from Alexandria city	47.403	26.718	150	570	unkn	12
6	1 st	New Damietta	4.5 km from Damietta port	6,500.00	6.50	135	500	2027	77
7	1 st	New Salhya	40 km from Ismailia city	1.60	1.60	40	80	2022	50
8	2 nd	Al-Ubur	9 km from Cairo	32.40	16.00	300	600	2017	19
9	2 nd	Badr	47 km south-east of Cairo	18.545	14.20	85	840	unkn	45
10	2 nd	New Bany Sewef		37.90	5.486	62	268	2017	7
11	2 nd	New Nubaria	79 km from Alexandria city	1.816	1.816	22	80	unkn	44
12	2 nd	New Menia		24.90	4.80	40	157	2050	6
13	2 nd	New Cairo	10 mm from Nasr city district in Cairo	70.00	70.00	1,200	6,000	unkn	86
14	2 nd	Al-Sheikh Zayed	Close to the pyramids area in Al-Giza	10,400.00	10.00	233	675	unkn	65
15	2 nd	Al-Shuruq	37 km east of Cairo	11.90	9.20	170	500	unkn	42
16	3 rd	New Aswan	12 km to the west of Aswan city	10.20	3.20	0.060	70	2017	7
17	3 rd	New Assiut	15 km from Assiut city	30.30	6.642	25	750	unkn	25
18	3 rd	New Taiba	14 km north-east of Luxor city	9.521	2.421	15	195	unkn	20
19	3 rd	New Sohag	18 km from Sohag city	30.80	7.00	0	420	2050	14
20	3 rd	New Fayom	15 km from Fayom city	13.50	1.669	0	100	unkn	7
21	3 rd	New Qena	8 km from Qena city	24.20	7.00	0	130	unkn	5
22	3 rd	New Akhmim		34.868	3.037	0	unkn	unkn	
Total				761.98		4,612.06			Avg. den.= 30

The findings of this study-case show how failed planning practice coincide with change in urban population. The theoretical value of this study consist in its exemplifying what previous scholars, like Lavallo *et al.* (2001) addressed the linkages between false urban planning and urban population growth in developing countries. The lack of coupling population increase, land-use and housing, the absence of affordable housing, urban shrinkage, informal settlements, etc. was shown to lie at origin of urban problems in some of these countries (Hope & Lekorwe, 1999). Some of these phenomena, such as rural-urban migration, as well as informal settlements have been identified as a failure of urban policy in some of the developing countries to cope with fast-going urbanization (Awumbila, 2014). When looking at previous large-scale practices, it is difficult to have an overall evaluation of their success. Whether planning practices in developing countries have led to resilient habitats, or failed to stop unwanted trends, can be assessed primarily by investigating unwanted trends like fast-going urbanization. This study tries to fulfill this basic gap.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The three target countries had the same fertility rate in 1960. After decades of political conflicts and housing/planning trial and error that had significantly increased rates in Iran and Turkey in the early 1980s, the rate of population increase in the three countries come to be nearly equal in 2014. The interesting point is that after 2011, the urban inhabitants' increase rate in Egypt topped that of Iran and Turkey.

This paper examines the urbanization rates of the region with respect to the national urban planning strategies. According to this analysis, the coincidence of the unsuccessful planning and housing strategies, which were mostly reactions to the public attitude urbanization, are worth being investigated. Some of these planning failures, like large-scale plans aiming at creating new cities in Iran and Egypt, or wholesale land selling to inward migrants to build personal houses in Iran and Egypt are vis-à-vis planning practices done on a very large scale, missing preparatory supporting studies to assess the societal impacts. Some other urban phenomena, that occurred in parallel with fast-going urbanization, were unplanned patterns not strategized by the planning systems. The example of such phenomena is suburban and urban sprawl and dispersal of cities in the absence of powerful control of urban planning organizations. Finally, the third group of trends are larger than the above ones; nation-wide processes that urban planning can have limited effects on, while a wide range of reasons cause the emergence of such large-scale challenges. Uncontrolled rural-urban migration is one of these challenges that only is caused not by deficient urban planning, but also by the absence of efficient urban planning and governance, caused socio-economic and cultural problems in the cities of the region.

For future research-work, causality and its direction would be intriguing. Firstly, it is interesting to know whether urbanization has occurred because of socio-economic and lifestyle changes, which urban planning tried to interfere with, or if urbanization has been accelerated by the failures of Middle Eastern urban planning. It is also significant to know what negative or positive, impacts planning-decisions have made on urbanization rates, and in what way.

The lack of resources, such as possibilities for the researchers of the region to carry out a common work, is among the limiting factors of this study and the like. Since the authors of this study had the opportunity to work with one another for a short time, a primary descriptive work, which is presented in this paper, could be done. The nature of this study is purely descriptive, and can be

completed by more complicated approaches like statistical modeling, longitudinal analyses, expert interviews, etc. Quantification of housing and urban policies by expert interviews and bringing them into longitudinal models with dependent variable of urban population can produce further interesting results.

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