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MAPS

- Maps are taken from the 1982 *Présent et Avenir des Médinas*. Vols. 10 and 11. Tours: URBAMA Collection: Gdoura, 52; Belfquith and Fadloulah, 168; Harzallah, 38; and Bousquet, 13.

6 The Transformation of Tehran from a Garrison Town to a Primate City: A Tale of Rapid Growth and Uneven Development

HOOSHANG AMIRAHMADI AND ALI KIAFAR

Since the early decades of the twentieth century, many large Third World cities have experienced a major transformation characterized by two parallel trends: a rapid multifaceted socioeconomic and spatial growth and a wide and increasing uneven distribution of benefits across social classes and neighborhoods. The former is manifested by a population increase, physical expansion, concentration of socioeconomic institutions, and politico-administrative centralization. The latter is indicated by the rapid accumulation of wealth and capital by a tiny layer and of poverty by a major section of the population and also by the spatial segregation of social classes within these cities.

The extensive literature on the nature of these problems suffers from three misconceptions: spatial fetishism, demographic determinism, and ahistorical evolutionism. The first makes spatial problems equal to or causes of socioeconomic or political problems of social groups, thus confusing the cause with the effect. The second also confuses cause with effect because it sees rapid urban growth and uneven development as consequences of demographic changes and government policies rather than a result of the capitalist accumulation. The final misconception results from a lack of distinction between the growth process and qualitative change, that is, the fundamental difference between growth/expansion and development. Ironically, this last misconception lies at the heart of the other two, for when qualitative changes are reduced to quantitative growth processes, history becomes reduced to a linear continuum of

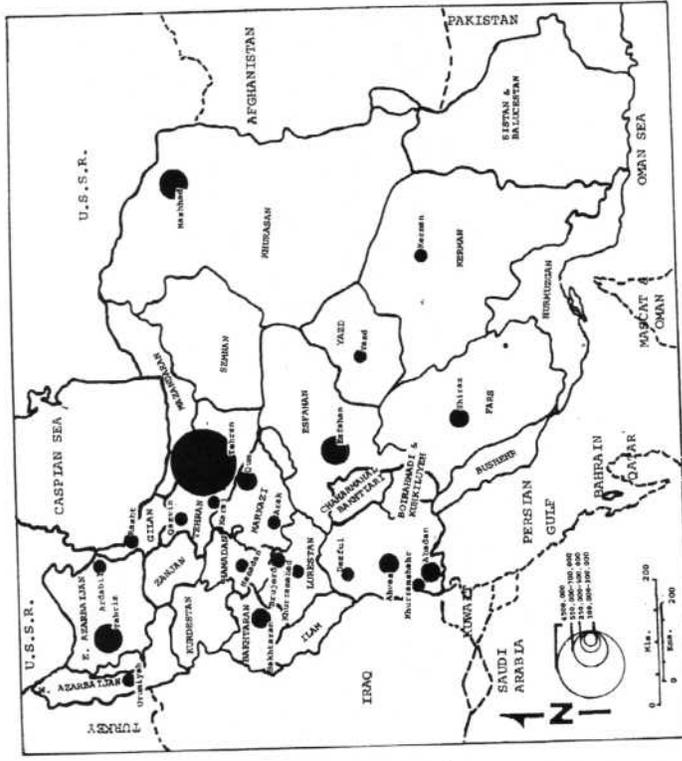
events over time and the space-time constitution of phenomena loses its dynamism. With time's impact nullified, spatial form gets fetishized into a dimension whose development patterns become reflective of the growth of its material content, which is assumed to be largely impacted by exogenous forces, such as state policies. What gets totally lost is the qualitative development of form and content that follows the latter's growth to a certain minimum.

An alternative theoretical framework for understanding the reasons behind the rapid transformation, as well as the simultaneous rapid growth and uneven development in Third World cities, should incorporate a different conception of history, one that views cities as having gone through qualitatively different stages of development corresponding to qualitatively different stages of capitalist accumulation. Starting with this conception, it also becomes possible to reconstitute space-time-matter relationships into an interactive totality where each dimension's development becomes reflective of the other dimensions' impact. Our position is that the material dimension, the accumulation process in particular, leads the historical development processes that shape the form and content of cities.

In the following pages, we apply the above propositions to understand the rapid transformation and uneven development of Tehran, Iran's capital city. Since the early decades of this century, the city has experienced a significant metamorphosis and has witnessed two parallel trends: a rapid and multifaceted sociospatial growth and increasing separation among its social classes. The former is manifested by the city's rapid population increase, physical expansion, concentration of institutions, and administrative centralization. The latter is indicated by the rapid accumulation of wealth and capital by a tiny layer of the city's residents, poverty of most of the population, and spatial segregation of its social classes.

The rapid growth and increasing contradictions in Tehran reflect its transformation from a precapitalist city in the eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries to a transitional capitalist city in the 1920 to 1950 period to a dependent capitalist city after the 1950s.¹ This transformation was a direct result of the one-hundred-year transition of Iranian society, in which capital accumulation was first based on rural subsistence production and later on internationally oriented production for exchange and profit in cities. The cities were transformed from centers of control and rural extraction to production sites and market areas. Because Tehran was the political center of the country in the transition period, it gradually acquired its predominant position (Figure 6-1). The city, over time, became distinguished for its heavy concentration of economic, social, and political activities. This transformation led to the capital's rapid population growth, physical expansion, and widening socioeconomic and spatial contradictions.

FIGURE 6-1. Iranian provinces and major cities, 1976.



Tehran in Precapitalist Iran

In this society, which lasted until the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, agriculture was dominant, and landlords owned or controlled the land—the prime means of production—through a variety of means, including inheritance, royal grants, and commissions (Lambton 1969). Peasants were normally tied to a plot of land. Cities served primarily as political, administrative, and commercial centers, that is, their basic function was not production but control and distribution of the national surplus. The countryside produced the

surplus, and the towns appropriated most of it by political power and through exchange mechanisms (Amirahmadi 1982). Since accumulated surplus did not go to productive uses and thereby required an additional labor force for production and associated economic activities, cities did not grow much. Urban growth was also limited by restrictions on the movement of peasants and the low rate of population increase due to high death rates. Only cities on major transit routes and seats of political power grew substantially. The low level of urban-rural disparity remained largely constant despite heavy surplus extraction from the countryside.

Thus, over the entire 1867 to 1921 period, the Iranian urban population grew by only a 1.64 percent average per year as compared to 2.41 percent for the rural population and 0.96 percent for nomads. The growth rates for larger cities was somewhat higher, 2.17 percent average per annum over the 1867 to 1913 period (Amirahmadi 1982). Among such cities were Tehran in the north-central region and Tabriz and Khoy in the northwest part of the country.

Tehran was a small village and a satellite of the important city of Ray until the seventeenth century. For centuries, the town had grown slowly. Between the mid-fifteenth and mid-eighteenth centuries, Iranian kings ordered the construction of walls, towers and gates, government offices, and royal buildings in Tehran or held their winter courts in the city. The central location of Tehran, which made access to different parts of the royal jurisdiction easy, was no doubt an important factor in this early growth of the city.² After it was selected as the capital of the country by the founder of the Qajar dynasty (1796-1925), it grew into a principal commercial center with a major *bazaar* (marketplace) and many small-scale trading and gardening activities (Bahrambeygui 1977). Following these developments, the city's population, estimated at fifteen thousand in the 1620s, surged to about fifty thousand by the 1800s and reached the 120,000 to 150,000 level in the second half of the nineteenth century (Table 6-1).

In the next fifty years, until around 1920, the population of the capital of Persia (as the country was called by the outside world until 1937) increased by at least another fifty thousand. In 1922, the city's first official census, conducted by the municipality, reported a population of 210,000.³

Tehran's political domination during the Qajar period allowed it to extract surplus (in the form of taxes, rent in kind, and labor) from the hinterland and provinces (Bahrambeygui 1977). The money was spent on the royal court and the nobility, on ceremonial events, on European trips of the *shahs* (kings) and their entourages, on the building of new walls and city gates, and on luxury palaces.⁴ The city was by no means a center of production but rather a center of administration and commerce (Bahrambeygui 1977; Costello 1981). Earlier in the period (around the 1620s), Tehran was said to have been a "garrison town"

TABLE 6-1
Population of Tehran, Selected Years, 1620-1950

Year or Period	Population Estimates
1620-1627	15,000
1780-1800	45,000 to 50,000
1810-1820	45,000 to 60,000
1840	60,000
1850-1860	80,000 to 120,000
1870-1875	120,000
1885-1895	150,000 to 200,000
1900-1920	200,000 to 250,000
1925	250,000
1932	310,000
1934	360,000
1940	400,000
1942	540,000
1950	1,009,539

Source: Data compiled from estimates quoted in Bahrambeygui 1977; Kariman 1976; and Tabrizi 1981.

(Bahrambeygui 1977). Indeed, of fifteen thousand inhabitants of the city, three thousand were reported to have been soldiers (Bahrambeygui 1977).

Before the twentieth century, the class structure of Tehran, like other major Iranian towns of the period, consisted of several propertied classes at the top, including the nobility, courtiers, landlords, higher echelons of the clergy, and wealthy merchants; a large number of middle-class individuals, mainly artisans and shopkeepers of the bazaar; and common people, mostly the lower level of workers in the bazaar and on suburban agricultural land.⁵ Given that the largest propertyless class, the peasantry, lived in the countryside, the nonpropertied Tehranis did not make up a significantly high proportion of population in the city.

Although life was hard for many urbanites, absolute poverty was not a major problem, as evidenced by foreign travelers' and domestic writers' accounts (Amirahmadi 1982). Similarly, spatial segregation among social groups existed but was not conspicuous. For instance, different neighborhoods or residential districts existed in Tehran, but the population was relatively mixed

across the city boundaries (defined by walls and gates). Spatial specialization of activities, however, did occur. Like most other Persian towns, the city had various districts with different functions. Specifically, Tehran had four districts that, as a result of the population increase and the physical expansion of the city, grew into six after 1867 (Bahrambeygui 1977; Oliver 1807). They included the commercial districts of the bazaar, the royal district (*Ark*, or *citadel*), the politico-administrative district (*dowlat*, or government), and three residential districts (Sangelaj, Oudlajan, and Chaleh-Maidan).⁶

In sum, corresponding with the dominant system of production and accumulation process in the entire Iranian society, old Tehran, in the precapitalist period, which lasted until after the mid-nineteenth century, had a relatively small population size, grew steadily but slowly,⁷ and did not experience pronounced contradictions among the bulk of its population (people outside of the court and their associates). The class structure of the city remained basically intact, and for centuries, there were no significant changes in income distribution patterns and formation of new urban social groups (Javaher-Kalam 1946; Kariman 1976; Najmi 1985; Shahri 1978).

Tehran in the Transitional Capitalist Period

Starting in the second half of the nineteenth century, as a consequence of a series of internal transformations, structural developments at the global level, and direct external influences, Iran passed through a process of change that significantly altered many facets of the society, including its economic system, political structure, social power base, and status of the state. While these transformations were highlighted by the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-9, it was not until the 1920s that the process of transition from primarily precapitalist accumulation to capitalism got under way and its impact noticed. These changes were concurrent with, and intensified by, a shift in the political regime.

The regime, which came to power through a coup d'état by Reza Khan, later Reza Shah, the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1979), ended the more than a century old rule of absolutist Qajars. Responding to realities, the new regime took the historical task of driving the country toward full-scale capitalist development by establishing an infant state-capitalism wrapped in an authoritarian political system. The regime rebuilt the weakened state machinery, reorganized the ancient bureaucracies, and modernized the society based on Western models (Banani 1961). The monopolization of foreign trade, the establishment of state banks and commercial agencies, the creation of state-owned industries, the assumption of an active and aggressive governing role by the

state, and, in general, the control of the major means of urban economic activities were the manifestations of the new political-economic system in Iran.⁸

The determination of the first Pahlavi regime to follow a pattern of capitalist development, however, was not sufficient for capitalism to become the dominant mode of production in a short period of time. Precapitalist relations remained strong in every aspect of Iranian society during the next several decades. It was only in the late 1950s and especially in the early 1960s that capitalist relations and institutions grew dominant (Amirahmadi 1980). Nonetheless, under the new regime, accumulation became urban-centered, dominated by service and industrial sectors.

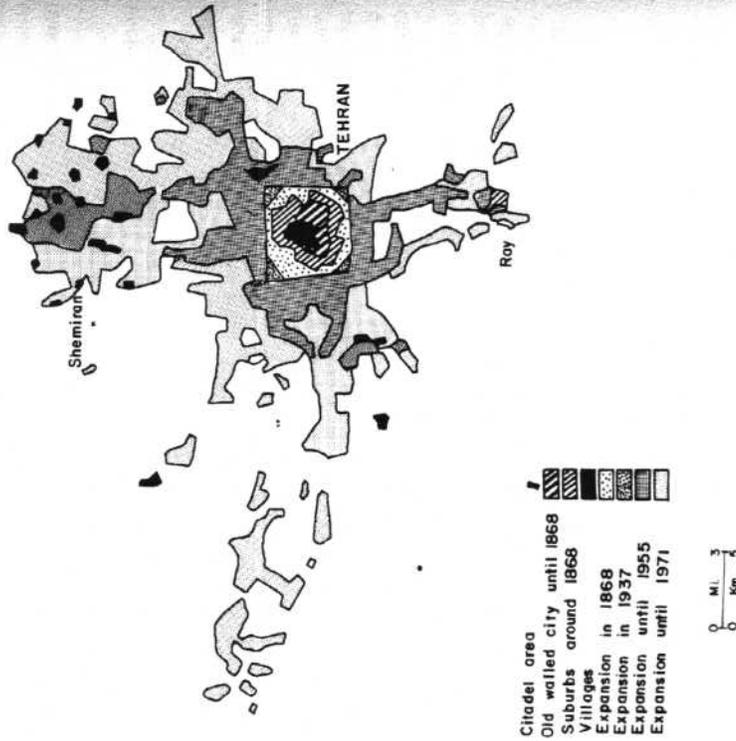
The centralization of the restructured, authoritative state was accompanied by the concentration of new industrial, financial, and commercial establishments in Tehran and, far less, in a few other major cities, including Tabriz and Esfahan. By 1950, more than 38 percent of large industrial establishments were located in Tehran.⁹ Commercial transactions and economic activities were primarily carried out for profit. At the same time, and as a result of the state-led capitalist system of accumulation, two new classes emerged in Iran, predominantly in a few big cities: a new middle class, which included a growing number of state-employed bureaucrats, technocrats, teachers, and students, and an industrial working class. The members of the two new classes were basically the younger generation of the traditional middle classes, especially the *bazaaris* (people associated with the bazaar), and lower level workers formerly involved in traditional trades and activities. Only a few came from the peasantry. In addition, the Western-oriented bourgeoisie, which was already emerging in the latter part of the nineteenth century, grew in size and prosperity due to the increasing integration of the local economy into the global capitalist system. An absolute majority of these people lived in the capital city of Tehran (Adibi 1979; Bharier 1971).

The above developments gave rise to the growth of Tehran, both in terms of population and area, and to a widening socioeconomic gap among social groups. In 1920, Tehran was virtually of the same population size as Tabriz and not much larger than Esfahan, Shiraz, and Mashhad, the other large Iranian cities. It had less than 2 percent of the total national population. During the 1920 to 1950 period, the city developed into the primate city of the country after experiencing a population explosion (see Table 6-1). By 1950, Tehran became a "million city," housing more than 30 percent of Iran's total urban population. A significant portion of the population increase was due to improvements in national health. An equally important part of Tehran's population growth was the result of an increasing migration to the city.¹⁰

Along with the population growth came the physical expansion of the city (Figure 6-2). In 1920, Tehran had an area of 2,450 hectares (approximately

FIGURE 6-2. Physical expansion of Tehran, 1868-1971.

PHYSICAL EXPANSION OF TEHRAN, 1868 - 1971



Source: Adapted from Michael E. Bonine, "Cities of the Middle East and North Africa," in S. D. Brunn and J. F. Williams, *Cities of the World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983). Originally from Martin Seger, "Strukturelemente der Stadt Teheran und das Modell der Modernen Orientalischen Stadt," *Erkunde* 29, 1 (1975): 23.

6,000 acres; one hectare is 10,000 square meters or approximately 2.47 acres), with an average density of 85.7 people per hectare (35.5/acre). The city boundaries, identified with walls, gates, and a surrounding dry moat built years earlier, were clearly separated from those of the nearby city of Ray (about ten miles to the south) and the suburban village-turned-town of Tajrish in Shemiran (approximately eight miles to the north). By the mid-twentieth century, Tehran had expanded to more than 8,000 hectares, with an average density of 187.5 persons per hectare (more than seventy-seven per acre). The city expansion embodied a major transformation in its physical identity and spatial qualities.

In accordance with his authoritative policies of modernization, and in an effort to symbolize the beginning of a "new era," Reza Shah (1925-1941) had the city walls torn down in 1937. He also changed the urban fabric by constructing wide avenues cutting through old quarters (Lockhart 1939). During his reign, a new city was built to the north of the existing quarters, with modern structures, wide and occasionally landscaped streets, and frequent squares. The modern governmental buildings, required for the expanded bureaucracies, as well as houses of the upper classes were primarily put in these newer quarters.¹¹ The modern city was essentially designed and developed based on European architecture styles and urban design concepts. It enjoyed basic amenities, such as electricity and telephone systems. A few commercial strips were created along the newly built streets, forming shopping subcenters that challenged the vitality of the traditional centrally located shopping district, the bazaar.

The physical appearance and qualities of modern Tehran were in sharp contrast to those of the old districts, most of which had evolved in conformance to the traditional Middle Eastern urban models and lacked modern conveniences.¹² The privileges offered by modern districts attracted the better-off portion of the population of older neighborhoods: modern bourgeoisie and upper petty bourgeoisie, particularly the new social group of technocrats and educated professionals. As this shift of population toward the northern city continued—a trend accelerated in the post-Reza Shah era—the traditional quarters came to be filled with new migrants and the lower classes, who moved into the former residences of the affluent (Bahrambeygi 1977). As a result of the new inhabitants' financial hardship or lack of desire coupled with the government's neglect, if not adverse policies, the older neighborhoods were not properly maintained or improved, causing their gradual deterioration. The physical decline of the traditional urban sections and the growth of modern quarters increased the intraurban contradictions. By the late 1950s and 1960s, the distinction between the administrative-commercial sector and the residential sector, as well as between north and south Tehran, became pronounced. The location of new shopping centers in the north and of industries in the south made the contrast even

sharper. New factories were also established in the western and eastern parts of the capital. The spatial segregation of social classes accentuated the growing contradictions of the city.

Furthermore, Tehran did not expand physically as fast as its population increased, and the resulting rise in density was not proportionately distributed among its districts. Generally speaking, the newly built northern districts enjoyed low population density, in the fifty to one hundred persons per acre range, while the corresponding figure for traditional neighborhoods in the central and south parts of Tehran was about 100 to 125 persons per acre.

The uneven distribution of population across the city boundaries was but one manifestation of the growing inequalities—social, economic, and cultural—among social groups in the capital city. The upper classes, modern petty bourgeoisie, and new salaried middle classes benefited much more from the conditions provided by a change system of accumulation and a political regime that promoted expansion of capitalist relations. The state's attempts toward increased industrial production, growth of the government's bureaucratic arm, and incorporation of local economy into the global capitalist system were mostly to the advantage of these social forces.

Benefiting from accumulated capital and improved socioeconomic conditions, the upper and middle classes moved to a life-style that was sharply different from that of the traditional middle- and lower-income groups, the emerging industrial working class, and the majority of newly migrated population. The lower portions of the urban social hierarchy did not enjoy a tangible material improvement in their socioeconomic status. The working class and other low-income groups were by no means financially secure nor able to obtain guaranteed long-range employment. They became essentially dependent on the competitive job market and the fluctuating urban economy, which was particularly unstable in the ten years following the occupation of the city by Allied forces in 1941 as a result of World War II. Therefore, while a minority prospered, the majority of Tehran's population fell behind. The result was the process of widening contradictions, a trend that intensified in the next few decades.

In short, the transitional capitalist period in Iran marked the beginning of an era that accelerated intracity socioeconomic contradictions in Tehran, changed its physical character and spatial distribution of its population, and increased its population size. From a relatively small and undifferentiated city, Tehran grew into a metropolis with clear primacy over other Iranian urban centers. The city went from a compact, preindustrial town containing a centrally located civic and commercial district to a sociospatially segregated, significantly expanded urban area with an increasing number of commercial subcenters, government offices, and industrial factories.

Tehran in the Dependent Capitalist Period

Capital accumulation in Iran entered a new stage in the early 1950s. Following the 1953 coup d'état against the nationalist and democratically elected government of Mohammad Mossadeq,¹³ the monarchic regime launched a series of attempts directed at capitalist expansion of the economy and growth of industrial production based on oil revenue (which had increased from \$817 million in 1968 to \$19,000 million in 1973) and foreign technical assistance. The objective of the state and its foreign allies was to fully integrate the Iranian economy into the core capitalist economies. Such incorporation, which required the abolition of the remainder of precapitalist relations, was seen as the most viable approach to pushing the country out of the persisting "backwardness." Formation of a stable and strong state was a prerequisite. Thus, a significant portion of internal resources and foreign aid in the years immediately following the coup d'état went into creating such repressive apparatuses as SAVAK (the shah's notorious secret police) and army and police forces (Amirahmadi 1980; Halliday 1979).

The state in the late 1950s and early 1960s began large-scale intervention in the economy primarily through planning, expansion of state-owned industrial production, and financial subsidies for private local and foreign industrial and commercial ventures. The state also expanded its direct investments in production and trading activities and subsequently entered into a "triple alliance" with local bourgeoisie and international capital in the form of numerous joint ventures. Consequent to these policies, a modern bourgeois class, which supported the regime and accepted its authoritarian role, was firmly established. Members of this class primarily invested in urban areas and in such high profit-making activities as assembly industries, banking and insurance, trade and hotels, construction, real estate, and urban land speculation.

The 1963 six-point reform program called the White Revolution signified a new turning point. At its center was a land reform package that provided for the sale of nonmechanized agricultural lands to peasant cultivators. The land reform deal was largely regarded as a means to free the rural population for absorption in the urban industrial sector.¹⁴

The accelerated and continuing process of expansion after 1960 resulted in the establishment of capitalism as the prevailing mode of production, as illustrated by the changes in the share of different economic sectors in the gross national product. The industrial and service sectors grew rapidly at the expense of agriculture, their shares in total employment increasing from 16.5 and 20.8 percent, respectively, in 1956, to 23.3 and 22.7 percent in 1966, and to 33.1 and 31.8 percent in 1976, respectively. Agricultural production increased by 83 percent over the entire 1959 to 1975 period while the comparable figures for indus-

tries (excluding oil) and services were 613 and 485 percent, respectively (Amuzegar 1977). The unprecedented increase in oil revenues after 1973 along with the orchestrated capitalist growth policies were instrumental in cementing the changes.

A fundamental consequence was the concentration of industrial and service activities in major urban areas. Tehran, leading other cities by a wide margin, assumed the role of the country's main center of production and distribution. For instance, by the late 1960s, more than 46 percent of all large industrial establishments were located in Tehran (Kazemi 1982). In addition, more than half of all manufactured goods were produced in the city, as most major nonoil industrial operations of the country, including auto assembly plants and home appliance factories, were inside or on the outskirts of the capital. Tehran also functioned as the provider or distributor of all types of services to most other locations in the land.

Heavy concentration also existed in other activities. By the mid-1970s, for example, 82.7 percent of all national companies were registered in the city, and the capital had 52.9 percent of the banking units in the largest cities and 54.5 percent of all telephone services in the entire country (Kazemi 1982).¹⁵ Additionally, one in every ten Tehranis had a car compared to one in every ninety in other cities; 70 percent of those making trips abroad (excluding those going on religious pilgrimages) lived in Tehran; more than 40 percent of total movie tickets were sold in the capital; and the average land values were twice those of other cities (Graham 1978). According to one survey conducted in 1979, at the end of the monarchist regime, Tehran had 40.0 percent of total employment in retail sale, 60.0 percent of employment in wholesale activities, 47.2 percent of all investments in construction, and 41.0 percent of insurance companies. In the areas of health and education, the concentration was equally striking: 56.8 percent of all hospital beds and 57.0 percent of physicians were in the capital, as well as 57.0 percent of all university graduates and 55.0 percent of elementary and high school graduates (Plan and Budget Organization 1983b). In the words of one observer, Tehran has become "the unquestionable center of political, administrative, economic, social, and cultural life" (Graham 1978, p. 24).

The heavy concentration of wealth, industrial production, and services in Tehran was the key to the uneven distribution of population at the national level and to the rapid growth of the city's population. The city's share of the total population of Iran increased from 7.9 percent in 1956 to 10.8 percent in 1966 and 13.8 percent in 1976. Specifically, Tehran grew from a population of 1,584,000 in 1956 to 2,980,000 in 1966 and 4,530,000 in 1976, an increase of 88 percent and 52 percent over the 1956 to 1966 and 1966 to 1976 decades, respectively. The overall population growth was 186 percent in the two decades, among the highest in the Third World, including the largest Middle Eastern

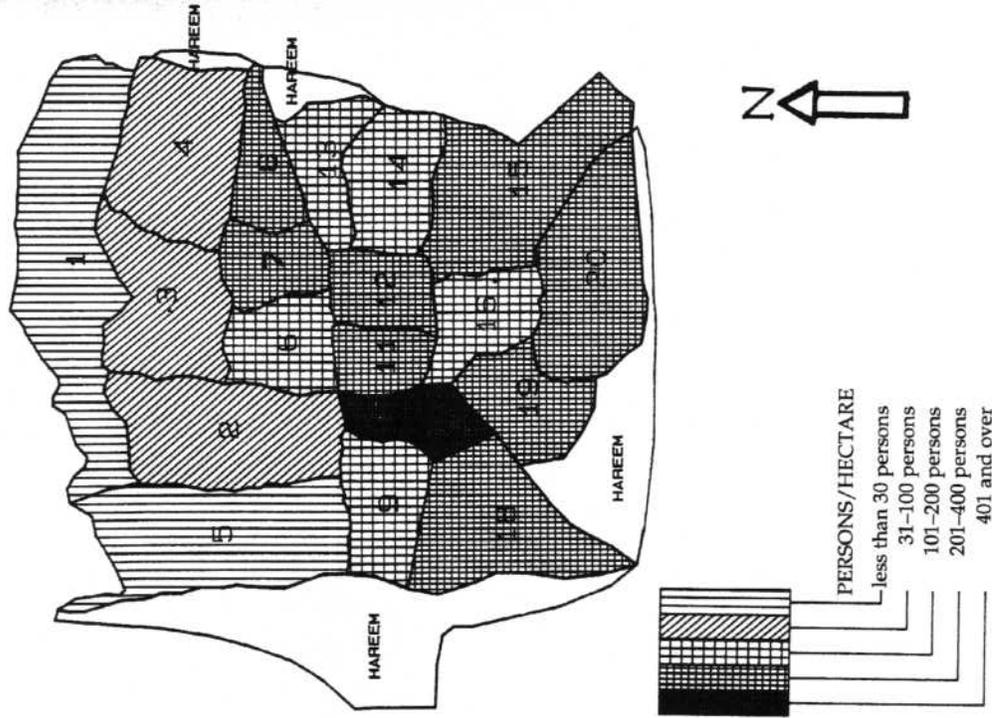
cities (El-Shakhs and Amirahmadi 1987). The city's population has continued to increase, at more than 5.5 percent per year, in the years following the revolution of 1979 (Amirahmadi 1986). Estimates of Tehran population at the present range from 8 million to 10 million.¹⁶

A major portion of the population increase in Tehran in the period after 1950 (and, especially, after the 1963 land reform package) was due to migration, as indicated by the difference between the growth rate of the city's population and that of Iran. Specifically, Tehran had an average growth rate of roughly 6.0 percent per year in the post-1950 period as compared to about 2.6 percent for the nation. In the ten years after 1956, Tehran absorbed 38 percent of all internal migration (Bharier 1971). By the end of the 1960s, the city's migrant population had reached the 50 percent level. In the 1970s, more than 73 percent of the migration between provinces and 44 percent of the population movement between cities went to Tehran (Plan and Budget Organization 1983b). Aside from such powerful "pull" factors as the availability of jobs, social services, urban communities, and higher income in Tehran, a variety of other forces—including the decline in agriculture, the land/labor ratio and income in more rural areas, the direct expulsion of tenants due to modernization, the sale of land and expansion of capitalist farming, the lack of jobs and educational opportunities in outlying villages, the intensification of usury following the land reform program, and the change in class structure of the rural areas—"pushed" many of the working-age population out of rural areas (Alizadeh and Kazerouni 1984; Hessamian et al. 1984).

Natural increase and migration factors led not only to increases in Tehran's population but also to its predominance within the country's urban hierarchy and to its physical expansion. Thus, in 1976, more than 28.6 percent of the urban population of Iran lived in Tehran compared to 25.3 and 27.9 percent in 1956 and 1966, respectively. In the same year, the capital had a population size 6.7 times that of Esfahan, the second largest city since the 1960s. The physical expansion was equally considerable (see Figure 6-2). In 1966, Tehran was divided into ten districts, including the old city of Ray and the new affluent suburb of Tajrish in the north Shemiran area. In less than ten years, the city's rapid physical expansion forced the municipal government to redistrict Tehran again. Therefore, in about 1976, the city was divided into twenty municipal districts covering a total of fifty thousand hectares. In addition, the city limit was redefined to include another five hundred hectares of nonmunicipal area called *harezem*, largely occupied by squatters (Figure 6-3).

Along with significant physical expansion of the city, population density has been growing rapidly, particularly since the 1950s. By 1979, close to 2.7 million residents (or roughly 60 percent of the population) lived in districts that had a density of two hundred to five hundred persons per hectare (or eighty to

FIGURE 6-3. Tehran: Twenty districts and the Hareem. Population density, on the basis of the 1980 (Aban 1359) census.



The Transformation of Tehran

two hundred per acre). Many of these districts are located in the southern, eastern, and southwestern parts of the city, where most of the low-income families and rural migrants live.

With rapid capitalist development came the exacerbation of spatial and socioeconomic disparities, both at the national level and within Tehran (Amirahmadi and Alash 1987; Jabbari 1981; Kazemi 1982; Looney 1982; Pesaran 1982). Nationally, for example, the household expenditure share of the top 20 percent of the population rose from 50 percent in 1969 to more than 54 percent in 1973, whereas the share of the bottom 40 percent plunged from 17 percent to about 11 percent. In 1969, the top 10.0 percent of the national population consumed about 30.5 percent of the total, up to 40.0 percent of consumption in 1976. Within urban areas, the gaps also grew.¹⁷ The high annual inflation rates in the 1970s (in the 20 and 30 percent ranges) probably further worsened the lot of the poorer strata, especially in the city of Tehran, where the cost of housing increased by at least 50 percent between 1970 and 1978 and land prices jumped up by 500 percent in certain locations over the same period. Housing cost and availability were indeed major aspects of the city's problems. A 1966 survey found a shortage of 78,000 housing units for 275,000 low-income families, whereas a surplus of 15,000 dwelling units existed for just 75,000 upper-middle- and high-income families (Kazemi 1982). To put it another way, 12.0 percent of the city population had 15.8 percent of the housing stock at its disposal while 44.0 percent of the residents had access to only 35.1 percent. This comparison does not take into account the striking differences between the type, size, and quality of either group's shelters. The situation worsened in the 1970s, when, according to different accounts, between 42 to 50 percent of the population had housing problems. In 1976, "some 22,000 households were recorded as having seven or more persons living in one room" (Costello 1981, p. 157), and around 50 percent of the annual income of a middle-class family was spent on housing.

The growth of inequality became well manifested in the increasing differences among Tehran's residential districts. In the post-1960 years, the city expanded considerably in all directions, particularly to the east, north, and northwest, where the upper classes and the growing professional, salaried groups came to reside. The expansion of the city from west to east created new neighborhoods for the middle class, especially its traditional strata. The poor and new migrants, along with others of the working class, settled in the expanded south, southeast, and southwest districts. In general, within each district, the center is occupied by lower strata of the classes and is more densely populated than the outer areas.

Aside from the uneven nature of capitalist development, a strategy of planned spatial segregation was instrumental in sharpening the contrast among

various districts. Until 1951, any land on the periphery of the city was considered property of the one who had developed it. Legislation in 1951 placed such lands under a government-controlled Construction Bank, which subsequently developed four suburbs, called new towns, designed for various income groups. Since then, planned segregation by income for the Tehran metropolitan area has been a feature of development policy. The first town was Kuy-e Narmak, whose construction began in 1956 on four hundred hectares divided into eight hundred plots in northeastern Tehran for middle-income residences. Construction on Naziabad began in the early 1960s on three hundred hectares in south Tehran for two-room flats for the working class of the neighboring industrial centers. Construction on Kuy-e Nohom-e Aban began in 1965-66 in south Tehran. More than 3,450 low-cost, three-bedroom houses were built for sale to slum dwellers, who would pay for their units at low monthly rates over fifteen years. Construction started in the early 1960s on Tehran Pars, designed for middle- and upper-middle-income groups, in the eastern part of the city.

Planned segregation of income groups was followed by the government and the private sector throughout the 1960s and 1970s, with four major examples. Kuy-e and Lavizan were both developed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development in north Tehran. Kuy-e Kan has some one thousand three-bedroom flats, built with subsidies for the 475,000 government employees with medium incomes. Lavizan is for forty-five thousand low- to medium-income government employees. Farahabad was developed in east Tehran by the Pahlavi Foundation, largely financed by the private sector for middle- to upper-income groups. Abbasabad was largely developed by the private sector as a high-income residential-business district in north Tehran.

Among the most grandiose projects, to be located in Abbasabad (in the north), was the Shahestan-e Pahlavi project. It was to be built on a 554-hectare area as "the biggest complex of tertiary activities and offices in the world" (Costello 1981, p. 172). This multiuse center was to develop into the Pahlavi dynasty's equivalent of the Persepolis of the Achaemenian kings. The Shahestan-e was planned to include a new national center for government offices, luxury hotels, retail shops, restaurants, parking, and parks, as well as being a focus for the new transport network that was to deflect growth eastward and westward. It was also to serve as a residential area for a privileged 250,000 high-income people (Llewellyn-Davies International 1976). The project was the best reflection of the shah's obsession with large-scale showcase projects and with favoritism toward dominant domestic and international classes. Although this multibillion-dollar project contradicted the redistributive policies of the Fifth Plan (1973-78) and was in competition with the bazaar and the new town projects directed to better the lot of the lower and middle classes in the city, it gained approval of the shah and received his highest possible attention. The pro-

ject, though, was killed by the revolution of 1979, in which the lower and middle classes and bazaaris actively participated. The Islamic republic has plans to turn the place into a religious complex called Musala-ye Tehran. So far, war, shortage of funds, and internal struggles have prevented the government from making any progress in this direction. Prospects for the implementation of this Islamic project are now virtually nil.

A major consequence of these policies was sharpened contrast among various city districts, particularly between the poor south and the rich north (Table 6-2 and Figure 6-4). In general, the northern districts enjoy a significantly higher per capita share of retail shops, medical facilities (such as hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, and professional laboratories), physicians, dentists, educational and cultural services, and other basic urban needs. For example, in 1980, the 830,000 people in the four upper-town (northern) districts¹⁸ had one physician for every 1,628 residents and 25.8 percent of the city's nurseries and kindergartens while the 1,700,000 people in the six lower-town (southern) districts had one physician for every 7,492 residents and 8.3 percent of its nurseries and kindergartens. In other words, one-third of Tehranis had easy access to only 6.3 percent of the city's physicians. Worse yet, there was only one doctor's office for every 236 residents of district 6 compared to one for every 35,547 persons in district 19.

Density in the southern districts (151 persons per hectare) was more than 3.5 times larger than density in the northern districts (forty-three persons). The five lowest densities belonged to districts housing the rich. The gap between average occupancy rates was also wide: 4.3 persons per unit in the north as compared to 8.6 persons per unit in the south. The correlation between density and poverty in Tehran has been noted by many researchers, including Bahram-beygui (1977) and Connell (1973).

The distribution of educational facilities was no better. For example, the affluent northern districts had 6.3 times as many nursery/kindergartens per capita in their proximity compared to the working class southern neighborhoods. In striking contrast, nearly three times as many mosques and other Islamic worship/mourning places (*takaya* and *Hoseinieh*) were located in lower-town districts compared to the upper-town districts. As a result, the percent of literate population is skewed sharply between various districts. For instance, in 1966, district 7 in the central area had the lowest literacy rate (45.8 percent) whereas the two highest rates (79.8 and 77.7 percent) belonged to districts 2 and 9, respectively, in the northwest. The variation among literate women was even more pronounced: 74.2 percent for district 9 compared to 34.2 percent for district 7.

The sharp north-south contrast is also reflected in the uneven distribution of household income. In 1973, the "center-north" and "northern contiguous

TABLE 6-2
Demographic and Social Indicators for Twenty Districts of Tehran, 1980 (per 10,000 Population)

District	Popula- tion	Area in km ²	Den- sity	Dwelling Units	Number of Doctor Offices	Number of Dentists	Number of Health Services	Number of Phar- macies	Number of Mosques	Number of Nurseries and Kinder- gartens	Number of Elemen- tary Schools	Number of Junior High Schools	Number of High Schools
North													
1	182,883	77.5	23.6	2,162	4.9	2.8	1.1	1.1	4.8	0.5	2.2	1.7	0.5
2	220,454	50.2	43.9	2,316	7.4	2.6	0.7	1.0	1.0	0.5	1.1	1.0	0.6
3	222,007	32.0	69.4	2,231	11.8	4.8	1.5	1.2	1.4	1.4	2.1	0.8	1.0
4 (NE)	318,347	56.8	56.0	1,893	2.2	1.0	1.0	0.5	1.6	0.3	1.4	0.8	0.4
Central													
6	231,683	19.9	116.4	2,544	42.4	13.0	2.2	2.6	0.6	2.2	1.9	1.4	1.2
7	325,636	14.8	220.0	1,840	13.2	6.2	1.3	1.4	2.1	0.8	2.1	1.0	1.0
10	343,551	7.2	477.2	1,537	5.4	3.3	1.0	1.1	2.4	0.2	2.0	1.1	0.8
11	276,712	11.1	249.3	1,846	18.9	6.6	1.6	2.3	2.5	0.4	3.1	1.6	1.5
12	348,080	15.1	230.5	1,333	6.5	4.9	2.2	8.6	7.7	0.4	3.3	1.6	1.4
West													
5 (NW)	92,741	51.9	17.9	1,740	1.1	0.5	1.2	0.4	3.6	0.2	1.0	1.9	0.4
9	209,263	18.8	111.3	1,485	2.9	1.1	1.0	0.7	2.0	0.2	1.4	0.3	0.4
East													
8	365,516	12.4	294.8	1,653	5.0	2.7	0.6	0.9	1.6	0.3	1.6	0.8	0.6
13	214,652	14.5	148.0	1,779	3.4	2.1	1.0	0.9	2.0	0.3	2.2	1.4	0.9
14	400,023	20.7	193.2	1,677	3.0	1.6	1.0	0.9	2.1	0.1	1.3	0.9	0.4
South													
15 (SE)	375,349	41.4	90.7	1,466	1.4	1.2	0.9	0.5	2.1	0.0	1.5	0.4	0.2
16	361,605	18.2	198.7	1,306	2.0	1.7	0.7	0.4	3.4	0.2	1.7	0.9	0.4
17	353,428	7.0	504.9	1,165	1.3	1.2	0.6	0.4	4.0	0.0	1.2	0.3	0.1
18 (SW)	211,606	8.9	237.8	1,431	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.3	2.0	0.0	3.1	0.5	0.2
19	142,188	3.6	395.0	1,488	0.3	0.8	0.9	0.4	2.4	0.1	1.3	0.5	0.1
20	258,425	33.4	77.4	1,480	1.4	0.9	0.5	0.4	3.5	0.2	1.9	0.6	0.3
Total*	5,454,149	515.4	3,755.9	1,679	6.6	3.0	1.1	1.4	2.7	0.4	1.9	0.9	0.6

*Only statistics related to totals for the first four columns include those of the harem (a nonmunicipal area). The rest are exclusive of the harem's data. Of 567.2 km² of Tehran's area, 51.8 km² belongs to its harem. For the location of the districts on the city map, see Figure 6-3.

Sources: Plan and Budget Organization (1983a): 97-103; *Tazeha-ye Amari*, Plan and Budget Organization, 1362 (1983): 9.

suburb" districts of Tehran, with a combined 30 percent of total population, had average monthly incomes of about \$296 and \$403 (U.S. dollars), respectively, while the average in the southern and southwestern areas, with 52 percent of the population, was \$111. In the two northern districts, 47 and 32 percent of households, respectively, owned at least one vehicle. The comparable figure for the three southern districts was about 5 percent (SOFRETO 1973).

Finally, the north-south contrast, or as Bonine (1983) put it, the contrast between "the two worlds," was also evident in the size and quality of dwelling units (Janes 1979). Specifically, in 1979, the northern city contained larger single-family residences, including modern apartment buildings with brick and marble exteriors and steel or concrete structures, separate kitchen, living room and bedrooms, as well as electricity and piped water. The average floor space in the north (2,000 to 2,500 square feet) was double the average dwelling unit size for the entire city. For the entire southern end of the city, the average was well under four hundred square feet. This was the location of small, compact houses, shack hovels made of building scraps and cardboard, and tents put up to shelter hundreds of families, including two-thirds of the city's squatter settlers. Many large families of an average of six people occupied one-bedroom living quarters of less than two hundred square feet. These areas were mostly without running water and electricity and suffered from inadequate—in many cases non-existent—sewage systems.

Concluding Remarks

Tehran's historical development fits with the theoretical expectations that cities experience qualitatively different stages of development in line with patterns of accumulation at the national scale, so that cities' growth and contradictions mirror that of the larger society. Transition from precapitalist to dependent capitalism in Iran (as in much of the Third World) has been characterized by both a change from a rural-based to an urban-centered production and by extreme inequalities. Tehran (like many other Third World cities) has become a center of capital accumulation and the arena of major contradictions. While increasing concentration of various institutions and population have exacerbated the urban problems, physical expansion of the city has helped very little.

The Iranian experience suggests that such contradictions may produce revolutions in the Third World. The participants in the 1979 revolution were largely the marginalized Tehranis, including the squatters and those from the southern districts. It was primarily Tehran, not Iran, that toppled the monarchy: the city became a historical scene for massive million-person demonstrations

against the shah. The poor and the middle classes poured into the streets demanding democracy, independence, and social justice, among other things.

The shah's regime is gone, but dependency, capitalism, and inequalities remain largely intact. Most of the trends that besieged Tehran in the pre-1979 period also remained unchanged. The city continues to be the center of politics and political power in the country; the population has continued to increase more than 5.5 percent per year, if not higher in the postrevolutionary years; physical expansion, though now more irregular, continues; concentrations of institutions in the city have reached new proportions; and inequalities of all types seem to have changed very little.

The alarming trends and their implications for the management of the city and for the provision of basic needs for its ever-growing population were outlined in a report by the Plan and Budget Organization in 1982. It concluded that the problems that overtook the city in the prerevolutionary years continue to expand unabated and that the future of the city, given the trends and its natural/physical limitations, as well as its budgetary constraints, is largely bleak. Much before the year 2000, at which time the city population is expected to reach seventeen million, problems with water provision, sewage, housing, transportation, land use, and the city's fiscal situation, among others, will reach crisis proportions. If experience is any indication, these problems will be disproportionately shared by the poor in the south and the rich in the north. The report then outlines a strategy for resolution of the problem, the main components of which are a decentralized administration, planning and budgeting systems, the creation of medium-size satellite towns around the capital, and the formulation of a master plan for the rational growth and expansion of the city. The Islamic republic may not solve the problems of Tehran as long as it refuses to uproot the causes of the city's growth and contradictions.

Acknowledgment

An earlier version of this article was published in 1987 as "Tehran: Growth and Contradictions," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 6, no. 3 (Spring): 167-177. ©1987 Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. The authors are grateful to the *Journal* for its permission to reprint the material in this book.

Notes

1. The controversy over whether the premodern history of Iran was characterized by feudalism, semifeudalism, the Asiatic mode of production, or simply by traditionalism

is not yet well settled. To avoid the controversy, the term "precapitalist" will be used in this chapter to stand for the period up to 1925. For a review of the controversy, see Amirahmadi (1982) and Kiafar (1986).

2. For a detailed history of the expansion of Tehran before the nineteenth century, see Javaher-Kalam (1946), Kariman (1976), and Najmi (1985).
3. Between 1881 and 1932, four censuses of Tehran's population were conducted, in 1881, 1891, 1922, and 1932. Only the last two were conducted by the city's municipality. The results of all four are given in *Sarshemari-ye Nofus-e Shahr-e Tehran* (1933). However, until 1956, when the first national census was carried out in Iran, there were no highly reliable population data for Tehran. Foreign travelers or local observers provided different estimates for the number of city inhabitants from the eighteenth century to 1922. See, for example, Amirahmadi (1982), Bahrambeygui (1977), Najmi (1985), and Tabrizi (1981).
4. There is a period in the history of Tehran under the Qajar that is referred to as the "palace building" period. See Bahrambeygui (1977).
5. For further information on class structure in precapitalist Iran, particularly Tehran, see Abrahamian (1982).
6. For a detailed discussion on structures and the population of each district, see Benjamin (1887) and Etehadieh (1983).
7. Tehran had a growth rate of only 1 percent between 1850 and 1900. This was a very slow growth rate compared to that of the post-1920 period.
8. For further information on the state's control over economic activities during the Reza Shah period, see Akhavi (1986), Ashraf (1971), Bashiriyeh (1984), and Katouzian (1981).
9. According to Bharier (1971), Tehran's share of the total large-scale factories and all manufacturing industries in 1947 was 26 and 17 percent, respectively.
10. In the absence of reliable data, the share of migration in Tehran's population boom may be understood from a comparison of urban population growth in a three-decade span. The total population of Iran increased 56.4 percent, from 11.37 million in 1920 to 17.58 million in 1950, while the urban population jumped 104.6 percent, from 2.39 million to 4.89 million, in the same period. Thus, a sizable portion of the increase in urban population, more than 50 percent, has to be attributed to natural population increase and to the growth of some villages into areas defined as urban (places with a population of five thousand and over) while migration from rural areas accounted for the remaining portion. Tehran undoubtedly attracted the biggest share of the rural-urban population movement. The city also absorbed part of the migrants from smaller towns and other major cities. Tehran's share of total internal movement in Iran in the first half of this century amounted to 60 percent (Bharier 1971; Graham 1978), and, according to a Plan Organization source (1966), only 50 percent of the city's population had been born there.
11. The new north Tehran, originally a peripheral area of the city, was first settled by the middle classes, whose income was gradually growing. The rich *bazaaris* (merchants), the absentee landlords, and the high-ranking state bureaucrats showed little interest in the new suburb and remained in their residences in the center of the city. After

1950, however, these latter groups also began to move to the northern suburb, leaving their old, large houses behind to be occupied later by many poor and working-class families; see Bahrambeygui (1977).

12. For a more detailed analysis of a traditional Middle Eastern urban structure, see Kiafar (1987).
13. Mossadeq was the leader of the oil nationalization movement in Iran during the years of 1948 to 1952. He was the first democratically elected prime minister in Iranian history. For information related to his premiership and events leading to his downfall in 1953, including the Central Intelligence Agency's involvement in the coup, see Abrahamian (1982), Roosevelt (1979), and Zabih (1982).
14. For a comprehensive study of land reform and its effects, see Guerrilla Organization of the People's Fedaii (1976), Hooglund (1982), and Lambton (1969).
15. For further information on the statistics related to the concentration of education, health, communication, and economy in Tehran, see Zonis (1971) for the early 1960s and Kazerni (1982) for the late 1960s to the mid-1970s.
16. The third national population and housing census of Iran was completed in November 1986.
17. For instance, the expenditure share of the top 20 percent of urban households increased from 52 percent in 1959-60 to above 56 percent in 1973-75 while expenditure share of the bottom 40 percent of households declined from 14 to 11 percent over the same period.
18. These include all of district 1 and half of districts 2, 3, and 4. Due to the large size of district 2 and its expansion from north Tehran to central areas, only half of the population and other information related to this district have been used for comparisons here.

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7 Planning Problems and Policies in Tehran

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Tehran has become a symbol, like Moscow or Washington, D.C., immediately associated with a particular political, ideological, and moral stance. It challenges prevailing international orthodoxies, and its challenge is rooted in an interpretation of Shia Islam. Yet the city is not just a symbol; it is also a place. It is a place with physical, demographic, and economic problems in common with many other large cities in developing countries. Since the revolution of 1979, the Islamic regime of Iran has tried to impose an explicitly Islamic ideology on the management of urban problems in this city where, although Islam had been a major element in many people's way of life, the dominant ideology was Western capitalism. At the outset, however, we should note that the nature of the present regime and the need for security during the war with Iraq have made independent social science investigation difficult in Iran.

Many of Tehran's problems stem from its rapid growth (Amirahmadi and Kaifar 1987). The city has grown from a population of just more than half a million in 1940 to 1.7 million in 1956, 2.7 million in 1966, and 4.7 million in 1976. The total in 1980 was put at 5.4 million, increasing at a growth rate of 5.4 percent per annum. Iran's capital alone contains more people than Israel, Lebanon, or Jordan. The population is likely to be between eight million and nine million in 1991 once the census results are tabulated. Tehran is thus one of the largest and fastest growing cities in the Muslim world.