



Special Economic Zone of Amirabad Port in
Caspian Sea; the Gateway to Trans-Regional
Communications and Enhancing of the Corridor
North-South International Transportr

Reza Kheyroddin, Mohamad Hosein Ghadi and Javad Kamali

EasyChair preprints are intended for rapid
dissemination of research results and are
integrated with the rest of EasyChair.

November 4, 2021

Special Economic Zone of Amirabad Port in Caspian Sea; The Gateway to Trans-Regional Communications and Enhancing of the Corridor North-south International Transport

Reza Kheyroddin ^{1*} and Mohamad hosein Ghadi ² and Javad Kamali

1 Associate Professor Department of Urbanism- Iran University of Science and Technology

2 Master student in regional planning- Iran university of science and technology

3 MSc in urban planning- Iran university of science and technology

** Corresponding Author, Email: Reza_kheyroddin@iust.ac.ir*

Key words: Amirabad Port, Caspian Sea, North-south international transport Corridor, Enhance of Trans-Regional Communications

Abstract: Amirabad Port Special Economic Zone is the first third generation port of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the largest port on the Caspian Sea. This port, with its proper transportation infrastructure and equipment, will play a decisive role in the prosperity of the "North-South" international transport corridor as the gateway of this corridor for Iran and the Asian continent. This research is an applied research that uses library documents and resources and field surveillance to explain the role of Amirabad Port Special Economic Zone in the prosperity of the North-South International Transport Corridor. With the expansion of globalization and the removal of borders in the digital age and of course the high volume of interactions between the two continents of Asia and Europe and the cost-effectiveness of the North-South international transport corridor compared to other existing routes in terms of financial and time, the importance of the region The economic special of Amirabad port is becoming more visible. Expanding the amount of communications (via the Persian Gulf and access to open waters) and adding other countries to this corridor, and of course expanding the dimensions of communications in addition to transit discussions, can bring many changes to the countries of Asia and Europe.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, structural changes in the global economy have led to the emergence and intensification of cross-border relations and the global economy (Tabatabaei, 2020). One of the factors influencing the prosperity of cross-border relations is the creation of international corridors and the expansion of multimodal transport. In fact, it can be said that with the advancement of technology and the expansion of digital space and virtual communications, physical borders are being removed all over the world and there is a need to provide a platform for transporting goods in containers through various means to various destinations. In this regard, the North-south international transport Corridor is one of the examples of border removal, which plays an important role in the trans-regional communication and digital space of the region. This corridor, as the shortest, cheapest and most convenient route for transporting goods between Asia and Europe, has been considered by traders, commercial companies and regional governments. Countries in the region (including Iran) can further expand their communications and interactions and introduce this route as one of the main and most important transit routes in the world.

Amirabad port is known as the largest port on the Caspian Sea in Iran as the north-south gate of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is one of the main gates of the north-south corridor. Given the capacities and potentials of Amirabad port and its transformation into a special economic zone (in recent years), this port can play an irreplaceable role in the prosperity of the north-south international transport corridor. North-South International Corridor, in addition to facilitating regional relations of the Caspian littoral countries (with the correct implementation of the multilateral transport policy) can earn high foreign exchange earnings and lead to economic growth and development for the Islamic Republic of Iran and other countries. The Caspian Sea. In this regard, determining the role of Amirabad port as the main gate of the north-south corridor is the main concern and question of the researcher on which the structure of the article is based. In the following, with a brief review of the theoretical foundations, and the introduction of the North-South corridor and Amirabad port, the role of this port in the north-south corridor will be redefined and discussed.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Hadi Weisi in a study entitled: A Study of Geopolitical and Goeconomic Competitions between China and India in Eurasia: Communication and Geopolitical Corridors of Chabahar and Gwadar Ports

(2021), with the aim of explaining the Japanese and Japanese rivalries between China and India In the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the North-South International Transport Corridor. The results of the study indicate that India is trying to improve its geopolitical weight through its brother Iran, the key to Oriran, and to improve itself against China and Pakistan, and through it to establish a kind of balance of regional power with China. Also, in another study entitled: Investigating the Geopolitical Competitions of the Economic Reference of Pakistan and Iran in Creating the North-South Eurasian Corridor, Advantages and Threats, which was conducted in (2017), seeks to examine the existing international courses around Iran. The results indicate that the corridor north-south of Iran in terms of international, security and economic dimension has more advantages than other corridors, including the Pakistan corridor.

Hadi Soleimanpour in a study entitled Strategic Initiatives of Asian powers in the Caspian region seeks to explain the role of the Caspian Sea in the expansion of transregional relations between West and East Asia. The results of the study indicate that the change in the regional system and the opportunities arising from the strategic initiatives of India and China promote the possibility of consensus building through the use of diplomacy in geoeconomic fields and achieving regional convergence based on interactive and normal competition and freshness with Asian powers.

Federco in a study entitled: Modern issues of customs and logistics infrastructure development of the North-South (2019) International Transport Corridor with the aim of determining the development perspective of the North-South International Transport Corridor and determining the most important trends in improving customs and It has provided its logistics infrastructure. The results of the study indicate that the member countries of the North-South International Transport Corridor are very interested in further developing it and increasing the volume of mutual trade. The development of the transport route is especially important for Russia. This will allow us to increase our export potential and increase our budget revenues by attracting significant freight traffic across Europe and Southeast Asia.

Herida in the "Transformation of the North-South International Corridor into a" Digital Corridor "conducted in 2018. The results of the research show that private and private partnerships lead to the use of advanced digital technologies such as IoT, China Blockchain technology, etc., which effectively meet the needs of various activities along the entire corridor. This, in turn, increases the overall strength and utility of the corridor, thus ensuring its lasting success.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study is a descriptive-analytical study that uses library documents and resources to explain the role of the Amirabad Port Special Economic Zone as a gateway to trans-regional communication. The information of this research has been collected through interviews and field surveys of Amirabad port. In the digital age, with the development of technology, the level of communication and its dimensions have also expanded. The important point is how different countries are connected to each other, which is created with the axis of the north-south corridor, and the port of Amirabad can play a decisive role in this corridor as a connecting point of West Asia to East Asia and continental Europe.

4. THEORETICAL CONTEXT; TRANSFORMATION IN THE CONCEPT OF BORDERS

Special Economic Zone is a modified and developed form of free trade zones and export processing zones that was first formed at the initiative of the Chinese. In general, special economic zones are considered as a foreign zone in the domestic territory of a country and Enjoying the goals of business operations are exempt from customs duties and tariffs and have a set of instrumental policies and benefits that can not be applied and used in other parts of a country (Ge,1999). A historical review of world economic developments after World War II shows that foreign trade can act as a driver of development. This issue will be doubly important in today's economic world, which is associated with technological changes and developments. Because no single country will be able to produce everything for everyone, it can be said that development will not happen without global trade. One of the ways to expand foreign trade is to use the tools of the free zone (Rahbar et al., 2014). Free and special economic zones can play a decisive role in this regard due to their access to open waters and seas and different modes of transportation and, of course, with the growth of domestic production at the level of their backward lands.

One of the consequences of the development of information and communication technology is a widespread change in the concept and function of borders. Border is one of the basic and important concepts in political geography; But today there is much debate about the disappearance and insignificance of the border in the age of globalization. In other words, planning from micro-spatial scales has entered a new stage of spatial planning on a large-scale scale (including different countries and their trans-regional and extraterritorial relations). With the advancement of science and technology and the entry into the virtual world at high speed, physical boundaries are practically being removed. Globalization has a great impact on how countries relate to each other, and countries always seek to benefit from the changes resulting from globalization with the aim of increasing the level of communication in different dimensions and levels. Today, globalization is evident in almost every aspect of modern life, from fashion to finance, social media to commercial goods and multinational corporations (Stivemith & Boli, 2020), which reflects the growing level of communication between countries. One of the tools of such change in the concept of borders is multidimensional transportation. Multimodal transportation is one of the most complex forms of transportation and one of the most important developments in the development of the global business environment in recent decades. The continuous process of transportation changes over the past decades from a one-sided approach to multimodal transportation has always sought to reduce the demand pressure of industries requesting the use of transportation services and, relatively, the pressure of this demand on the management of transport companies to fit the role. And performance has been transferred to keep up with the new operating environment. This method is not a kind of transportation method, but a system that coordinates different transportation methods for shipments, and although it is in line with the integration of sea, land and rail transportation methods, but as a system in which total. It is greater than the efficiency of each sector, it is very important (Momeni, 2011). In other words, different modes of transportation, including: (road, rail, sea, air and tube) with the appropriate combination of each other appear in different modes, which is called multimodal transport. Multimodal transport will play an important role in international corridors in general and the North-south international transport Corridor in particular. Understanding the change in the concept of border and the need for multidimensional transportation as one of the requirements of this change, in the continuation of the article, we will introduce the North-South International Corridor.

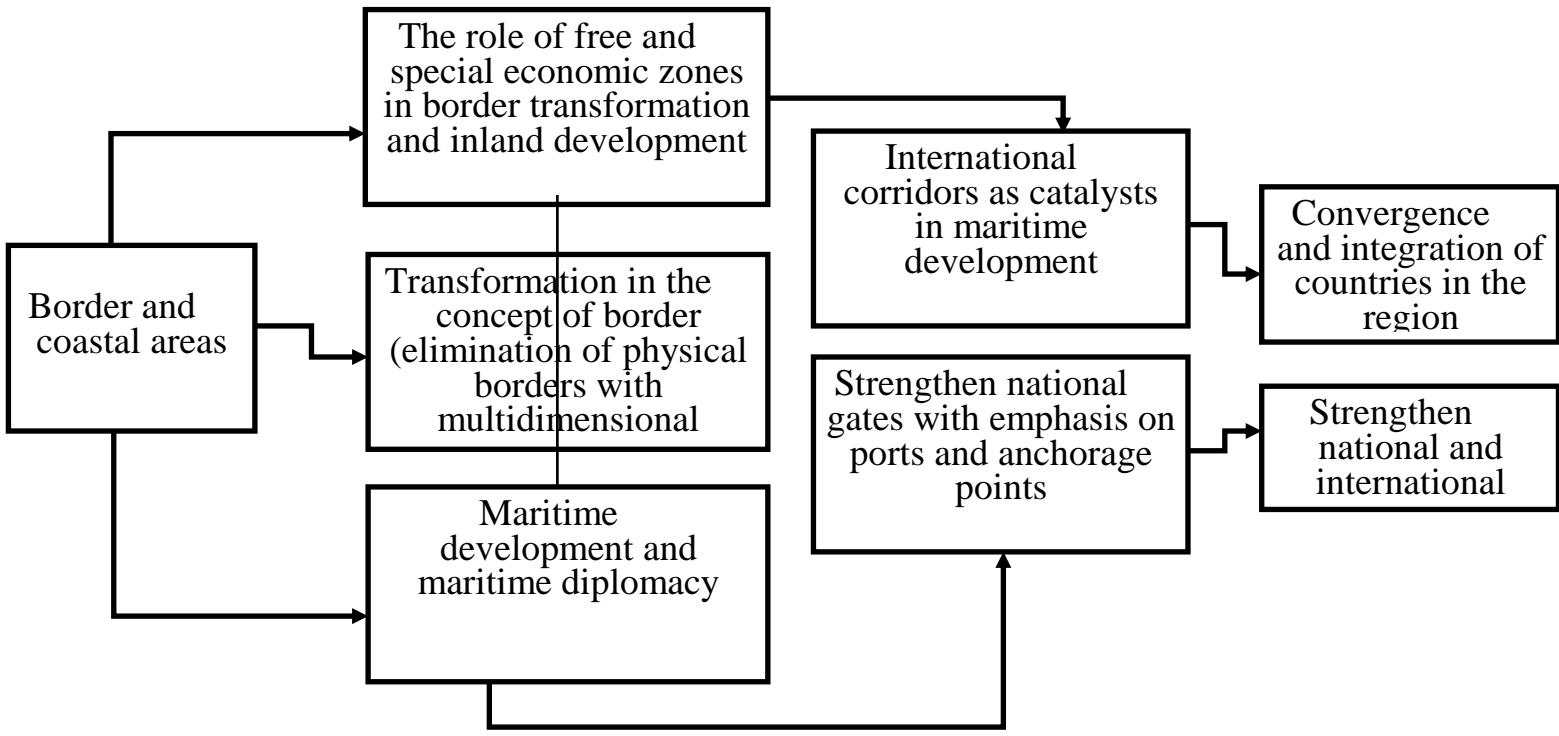


Figure 1: Conceptual model

5. NORTH-SOUTH INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT CORRIDOR; FROM PERSIAN GULF TO CASPIAN SEA

The North-south international transport Corridor was adopted in 1992 in Helsinki, Finland as a transit highway, and the North-South International Transport Agreement was developed to develop transport relations, increase access to global markets, increase volume and Transportation of goods and passengers, safety and environmental protection, coordination of transportation policies, establishment of required laws and regulations, provision of equal conditions for transport service providers by the Ministers of Transport of Iran, Russia and India Signed in September 2000 in St. Petersburg, Russia. This corridor, as the shortest, cheapest and most convenient route for transporting goods between Asia and Europe, has been considered by businessmen, companies and governments of the region (Amir Ahmadian, 2003) who can further expand their communications and interactions. And introduce this route as one of the main and most important transit routes in the world. The North-south international transport Corridor is a competitor to the Suez Canal transit route and in addition to establishing trade and transit links between Nordic countries, the Scandinavian region and Russia with other European countries, through the territory of Iran and using Iranian ports in the Persian Gulf, extends to the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia. Using the north-south corridor, a large number of Asian and European countries can trade their goods. Prior to the formation of the North-South Corridor, merchants and traders in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean generally used the sea and open sea to send their goods to Central Europe, Northern Europe and Russia. In this mode of transportation, goods travel through the Indian Ocean, the Sea of Oman, the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and the Suez Canal to the Mediterranean Sea. Goods destined for southern Russia and Ukraine via the Black Sea to the port of Odessa; Or transferred to the port of Petersburg. This mode of transportation is a very time-consuming and costly method for exchanging commercial goods between the countries of the Indian Ocean and Northern Europe, and using the North-South corridor route can significantly save time and cost of shipping goods between these countries. The north-south international transport corridor has received less attention. This corridor is a network that covers the world with road, rail and sea connections, and Iran became a bridge between Russia and India (to connect the continents of Asia and Europe) (SAHAKYAN, 2020), which focuses on the special economic zone of Amirabad port.

The North-South corridor, a significant part of which passes through the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran, is now considered to be the shortest, cheapest and fastest transit route for goods between Asia and Europe. This corridor starts from Bombay, India and reaches Bandar Abbas, Iran. Inside Iran, transit goods are transported by road or rail to the northern ports of the country (Amirabad port) and from the Caspian Sea to the ports of Astrakhan and Shipped to Russian Lagan. This corridor is 30% cheaper than other roads and has several intersections with other roads in the region that reach Europe, such as Traska and Altid, which also helps to distribute goods along the route.



Map 1: Corridors connecting the continents of Asia-Europe

Through the North-south international transport Corridor, countries can enjoy the benefits of access to three markets and global freight distribution and transportation centers in Asia, including the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia with a population of several billion people simultaneously. In this regard, we can mention the development of railways, shipping and freeways in Iran. In this regard, a consortium of Iran, Russia and Azerbaijan has been formed, in which all three countries are members with equal shares, and the Qazvin-Rasht railway, Astara Iran-Astara Azerbaijan and even Astrakhan Russia will be built in the near future. Russian iron will be connected and will reach Europe from there (Afzali and Mohammadjani, 2008), which shows the irreplaceable role of maritime transport systems and base rail in the regional and extraterritorial context, and therefore in the years. Other European and Asian countries have been interested in joining the agreement. Realizing the importance of the North-South International Corridor and its passage through Iran and the Amirabad port on the Caspian Sea, playing the role of this port as a gateway to the corridor, becomes more necessary.

6. SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE OF AMIRABAD PORT

The special economic situation is the geographical restrictions at the points of entry or within a country in order to support the production and supply of goods for domestic consumption, export development, realization in the regional economy, meeting all imported needs of industries and society. Includes administrative regulations governing the country's customs. In this time limit for storage of goods and purchase restrictions, the need for safe and free conditions by foreign sellers and sellers and domestic partners of production and trade is done until after secondary production, processing or even transit ready to be exported to the mainland or other countries. It is done with the simplest formalities and in the shortest time (Wang, 2013). Special Economic Zone of Amirabad Port is one of the ports on the Caspian Sea, in the east of Mazandaran province and 51 km from the center of the province. The construction of this large and modern port complex began in 1996. Its potential talents and numerous possibilities led to its approval as a special economic zone in 1997, and in May 2001, the emergency phase of the Special Economic Zone of Amirabad Port was opened. This port, as the first third generation port in the country in an area of 1060 hectares, has 15 berths with a length of 2600 meters. Amirabad port, with its extensive support lands, modern multi-faceted transport infrastructure, pier-rail and trucks for transit and transportation of goods, as well as easy access to the consumer market of CIS countries with a population of 300 million people has played an important role. To play in national and regional dimensions.



Map 2: The most important foreign and Iranian ports along the Caspian Sea

Special Economic Zone of Amirabad Port as one of the symbols of Iran's attention to the category of transit of goods and the creation of basic transport infrastructure to achieve international standards and use the maximum transit capacity of the country, a very important role with very large goals such as foreign exchange earnings. Employment, attracting foreign investment and the private sector, increasing the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Caspian Sea and creating a passage in the north of the country for other countries along the Caspian Sea. By connecting to different modes of transportation, it can be a gateway for goods and products of different countries to enter all parts of the world. In other words, the multimodal transport cycle is well observed in this region.



Map 3: Port of Amirabad in different national and regional dimensions

7. EXPLAIN THE ROLE OF AMIRABAD PORT ECONOMIC VISA AREA IN THE NORTH-SOUTH CORRIDOR

7.1 Amirabad Port; The Gateway for Developing of Trans-Regional Communications in Asia

Due to the existence of different modes of transportation in the special economic zone of Amirabad port and the location of this port at the points of entry of goods from Europe to Asia through Russia (and vice versa), this port can be a gateway for goods from The European continent to Asia that it shows the position and importance of the Special Economic Zone of Amirabad Port not in the Islamic Republic of Iran but in the Asian continent. Another important point is the distribution of goods through the Amirabad Port Special Economic Zone in Asia. Due to the direct and suitable communication routes by rail and air, as well as the existence of suitable road communication routes, the incoming goods can be transported through different land and sea borders of Iran to all parts of Asia and Europe. One of the highlights of the Islamic Republic of Iran is its access to open waters through the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, which can even lead to the expansion of cross-border communications through the North-south international transport Corridor. In other words, CIS countries are connected to the Persian Gulf countries and vice versa through the port of Amirabad and through the Oman Sea to the Indian subcontinent and open waters. Amirabad port is in the North-south international transport Corridor and the link between the countries of Central Asia and the north of the Caspian Sea with the countries bordering the Persian Gulf and open waters. The Persian Gulf, the seven-degree orbit of the Indian Ocean, and the Red and Mediterranean Seas are important maritime points in the world, and this expansion and strengthening of this connection could change the trade and economic equations of the region.

7.2 Upgrading the Level of Operation of the North-South International Corridor

The North-South International Corridor, which passes through the Islamic Republic of Iran and connects South Asia to Europe via the Caspian Sea, is one of the reasons for the geopolitical position of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region and the ports located along the Caspian Sea, especially the Port Special Economic Zone. Amirabad port, as the largest port in the north of the country, is the gateway to the North-south international transport Corridor of the Islamic Republic of Iran and plays an important role in creating regional convergence. The Special Economic Zone of Amirabad Port and Astrakhan Port of Russia can serve as a gateway between the two continents of Asia and Europe in the context of the North-South International Corridor and enhance the level of cooperation between them in various cultural, social, tourism and ... areas in addition to convergence. And economic cooperation and investment, etc. are at the level of 2 ports. The Special Economic Zone of Amirabad Port could play an invaluable role in the development of the North-South Corridor, which connects Europe to Asia. In other words, the port of Amirabad is a bridge that connects the Asian continent to European countries and Russia and will

play a prominent role in the economy, transportation and transit of goods between countries. This convergence can lead to various military, political, economic, social, tourism, etc. dimensions. Improving the level of our convergences between the Caspian littoral countries with each other in the mentioned dimensions, away from foreign interference, can be a good platform for the prosperity and development of the Caspian littoral countries. In other words, in addition to its commercial role, this corridor can expand the role of the Caspian littoral states in various dimensions and the connection of different communities in this context can be expanded and strengthened. By playing such a role in Special Economic Zone of Amirabad Port, the prosperity of commercial activities and turning this route into one of the major communication and transit corridors in the world, in addition to increasing security in the region, can lead to the prosperity and prosperity of various industries and ultimately achieve development at the public level. Another important point is the invitation of other large and powerful economic countries to connect to the North-south international transport Corridor. East Asian countries, such as China, can join the corridor through India and Kazakhstan, reap its economic benefits and expand their economic ties with other countries. As the number of countries connected to the North-South Corridor increases, it will increase the level of cooperation between the countries of Asia and Europe, away from foreign interference in various economic and non-economic sectors. Another important point is to invite other large and economically powerful countries to connect to the North-South corridor. East Asian countries such as China can join the corridor through India and Kazakhstan and enjoy its economic benefits and expand their economic ties with other countries. As the number of countries connected to the North-South Corridor increases, it will increase the level of cooperation between the countries of Asia and Europe, away from foreign interference in various economic and non-economic sectors.

8. CONCLUSION

Today, many large and industrialized countries of the world owe the growth and prosperity of their economy to the transit industry. The transit industry is one of the most lucrative businesses in the world, and the nature of the countries that are in the path of transit corridors can benefit the most from this trade. Iran has always been considered by traders as a short and convenient transit route; Because the need of Central Asian countries for access to open waters, the economic growth of East and Southeast Asia and also the neighborhood of the Islamic Republic of Iran with Central Asia, has brought a privileged position for the Islamic Republic of Iran. The north-south corridor, a significant part of which passes through Iran, and its length reaches about 3800 km, is currently the most important and most suitable transit route for goods between Asia and Europe. The corridor starts from the Indian Ocean basin in the port of Mumbai and connects to Bandar Abbas in southern Iran via water. Within Iran, goods are transported by road and rail to the northern brother of the country, based on Amirabad, and are transported via the Caspian Sea to the ports of Astrakhan and Lagan in Russia. At present, road and rail access to the Central Asian countries of the Caucasus and Russia is possible in Iran, and the cost of transporting transit goods is about 30% cheaper than the 9800 km Black Sea route to the Persian Gulf. The presence of more and more Asian and European countries and the use of this corridor, in addition to profits and time and financial savings for

those countries, can achieve the creation of secure economic communication corridors to expand extraterritorial communications in the era of globalization away from foreign interference. Lead and bring development prosperity to these areas . This will not be possible by expanding the capacity of infrastructure and services to other countries applying to use this corridor, and the presence of more and more Asian and European countries and the use of this corridor, in addition to profit and time and financial savings for that country. Providing more facilities and discounts to satisfy foreign customers to the goods transported by these ports can encourage goods owners to use the port and use the North-south international transport Corridor - To be south. Also, more use of the container capacities of Special Economic Zone of Amirabad Port is effective due to the prosperity of more value-added goods as well as the creation of new opportunities. The countries of Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf and Northern Europe can also benefit from its advantages in fast, easy and cheap transportation by joining the North-South International Corridor, which is one of the multifaceted corridors. Use their goods on the Asian and European continents.

REFERENCES

- Afzali, R., and Mohammadjani, M. (2008). Political convergence and divergence in the Caspian region and its surrounding areas. *Political Studies*, 1 (1), 121-134(In Persian) .
- Amir Ahmadian, Bahram (2003), North-South Corridor and its Importance in Regional Convergence, *Central Asian and Caucasus Studies*, No. 41(In Persian) .
- Ch. Sarma ,Hriday (2018): TURNING THE INTERNATIONAL NORTH-SOUTH CORRIDOR INTO A “DIGITAL CORRIDOR” South Asia Democratic Forum, Brussels, Belgium, DOI: 10.24411/2221-3279-2018-10008.
- Fedorenko R.V. (2019) Modern Issues of Development of the Customs and Logistics Infrastructure of the International North-South Transport Corridor. In: Ashmarina S., Vochozka M. (eds) *Sustainable Growth and Development of Economic Systems. Contributions to Economics*. Springer, Cham.
- Ge, W. (1999),Special economic zones and the opening of the Chinese economy: Some lessons for economic liberalization *World Development*, 27(7), 1267–1285.
- Jin Wang (2013), The economic impact of Special Economic Zones: Evidence from Chinese municipalities,*Journal of Development Economics*(101)
- Momeni, Mansour (2011): *Models and Multi-Index Decision Making Software*, Foroozeh Publications, First Edition(In Persian) .
- Rahbar, Farhad, Yavari, Mohammad Ibrahim and Fouladi, Mehdi: (Feasibility study of turning Iran into an energy free zone using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)), *Quarterly Journal of Economic Strategy*, No. 8, 2014(In Persian) .
- Sahakyan, Mher. REBUILDING INTERCONNECTIONS: RUSSIA, INDIA AND THE INTERNATIONAL NORTH-SOUTH TRANSPORT CORRIDOR.<https://hal.archives-ouvertes>. Submitted on 27 Oct 2020.
- Soleimanpour, Hadi (2017): Strategic Initiatives of Asian Powers in the Caspian Region, *Central Asia and Caucasus Quarterly*, No. 99, Fall 2017(In Persian) .
- Stivesmith, J.B, Owens, P, (2020), *The Globalization of world politics and introduction to international relations*, eighth edition, oxford university press.
- Tabatabaei, S.M, Esmeil Poorroshan, A.A, Milani, T, Lotfi, H, (2020), Assessing the economic convergence between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the member countries of the Shanghai Organization, *Journal of New Attitudes in Human Geography*, 12 (2), PP 17-34. (In Persian).

Veisi, Hadi (2017): A Study of Geopolitical Competitions between Pakistan and Iran in Creating the North-South Eurasian Corridor: Advantages and Threats, *Geopolitical Quarterly*, Year 13, Issue 1, Spring 2017 (In Persian) .

Weiss, Hadi (1400): A Study of the Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Competitions of China and India in Eurasia: Communication and Geopolitical Corridors of Chabahar and Gwadar Ports, *Human Geography Research*, Volume 53, Number 1, Spring 1400 (In Persian).