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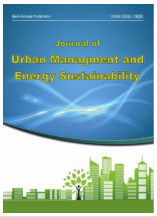

CASE STUDY RESEARCH PAPER

Explaining the conceptual model of the role of local government in decentralization of metropolises using thematic analysis method in Tehran city

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ABSTRACT

Decentralization of metropolises has been increasingly considered as an important strategy for creating a balance in development, economic productivity, and quality of life. The present study aimed to examine the role of local governments in decongesting metropolises. The present research method was conducted with a mixed approach. In the qualitative part, a semi-structured interview tool was used. Using the content analysis method and using MAXQDA.PRO.2022 software, data from interviews conducted with 15 academic experts were collected through three coding stages until saturation was reached through the thematic analysis. In the quantitative part, research questionnaires were distributed among 40 experts. Based on the data extracted from the questionnaire in the case study of Tehran, an explanation of the conceptual model was presented. The research findings show that local governments have a direct impact on reducing urban density in the Tehran metropolis and their actions can help improve the living conditions of citizens. Effective coordination between local government departments is essential for achieving the goals of decongestion and sustainable development of urban areas. This research also concludes that the failure to strictly implement existing laws in the direction of decentralization and organization, disregard for the problematic dimensions of concentration, a one-point view of Tehran and failure to consider the urban area as a single whole, failure to simultaneously pursue organization and decentralization policies, and lack of strong will for decentralization are the most important factors in the failure of the effectiveness of decentralization and organization policies in reducing the dimensions of Tehran's issues and problems.

Running Title: The conceptual model of the role of local government in decentralization of metropolises using thematic analysis method

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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, we have been facing an increase in the world's population, especially in the form of urbanization. This expansion of the urban population is not the same in different regions of the world, as it is more in developing countries than in developed countries. This increase in population also causes various crises in the city, including environmental crises, crises related to human physical and mental health. Since our country is also a developing country, this issue is also important for us (Li, 2020). Also, since the 1990s, this increase in population in urban areas has increased and its rate has reached more than 90 percent in developing countries (Lukas, 2019) (Matejicek et al., 2006). If we take a general look at the history of cities from the past to the present, we will witness this (Heymans & Totemeyer, 1988). Since the middle of the twentieth century, the pace of urbanization has slowed down in most developed countries and this process has been transferred to developing countries. This is because the population of developing countries has increased from about 17.8% in the 1950s to more than 40% in 2015, and it is expected that more than 60% of the population of developing countries will live in cities and urban areas by 2030 (Dutta et al., 2021). With this process, urbanization has become one of the most important major trends in the world, and therefore these cities will face both opportunities and challenges (United Nations, 2020). Urban issues include the rapid growth of cities and the appropriate settlement of the population. Concerns about this issue have led developed countries, especially after World War II, to consider measures to address this problem. This is due to policies such as high-rise construction, mass construction, changing tax laws, establishing land laws for its proper use, renovation and improvement of the old fabric and city centers, the plan to prepare additional new areas, new cities and their expansion, the main point of which is the policy of increasing population and building density in cities (Zhang, 2016). Also, in the last two decades, with the popularity of urban design, the concept of density has been considered and studied from a qualitative and aesthetic perspective (Azizi, 2016). On the other hand, high density itself causes a series of limitations and issues such as traffic, types of pollution, lack of green space, etc. All of these issues cause problems and difficulties in the city space and also reduce the efficiency of the city. Also, with the concentration of wealth and population, we will witness economic and social problems not only in metropolitan cities but also in other cities. In general, it can be stated that metropolises initially create a very good level of welfare due to the wealth and facilities, but over the years and the excessive increase in population, they face a lack of resources and infrastructure, which reduces the quality of citizens. Therefore, most officials and scientists are looking for a suitable solution for decentralization of metropolises. One of the initial conditions for this is to hierarchicalzing the management system at the local level. This causes decentralization in these cities. They play a role in spatial planning and development of the country, and since these components do not appear homogeneously and harmoniously in different parts of the country, the resources and facilities needed by people are not distributed equally in all geographical areas, and as a result, regional inequalities increase and cause the formation of centers and poles of growth and development in a number of centers and an unbalanced distribution of population throughout the country. This is what we are currently witnessing in Tehran (the capital); The long-term establishment of a centralized authoritarian government in Tehran has created a centralized political and administrative structure in the city. The concentration of population and resources in a metropolis like Tehran has become one of the main challenges of this phenomenon, which may lead to social segregation, increased economic disparities, and social instability. Also, migration due to better facilities and services in Tehran exacerbates social and economic problems in other regions.

It seems that the initial condition for population, infrastructure and economic deconcentrating is the decentralization of management and governance in cities. In fact, the initial condition for reducing the process of concentration and densification in metropolises and the reduction of management and planning hierarchies at the micro and local levels is (Broto, 2017). In today's modern governments, with the increasing complexity of the administration of political units, the changing nature and functioning of governments, and the participation of people in political processes, the administrative and management structure and duties of governments have shifted from the traditional form (maintaining order, public security and tax collection) to planning and responsibility to accelerate the process of development and progress. In fact, based on these developments, the administrative structure of the government has undergone a fundamental transformation and its duties have also become complex and numerous. In this process, factors such as the lack of facilitating, comprehensive, and sufficient laws for inclusive public participation; The unclear status of popular organizations and their legal role, disregard for the implementation of enacted laws (such as the implementation of the law on reducing the size of the government), the expansion of the non-participatory bureaucratic system, the extensive domination of the government over the system of production and distribution of wealth, high concentration in decision-making, failure to delegate authority to other non-governmental sectors, implementation of a command and quasi-consultative system in decision-making, inflexible and closed communications, centralized planning, unequal distribution of authority and power, and high formality of the government, traditional bureaucracy and inefficiency in the possibility of realization and accountability, imbalance of power and authority of the government, hierarchical accountability and accountability to the center of power, lack of transparency in the behavior and performance of the government and unilateral behavior of the government and the nation, inappropriate allocation and distribution of wealth resources, and lack of transparency of economic and trade regulations (Hartanto & Siregar, 2021). The aim of this research is to answer a main question. What kind of unique characteristics does local government have that can affect management structures in cities? And through what policies can local governance accelerate the process of decongestion in metropolises? Participation, decentralization, equality, convergence, accountability, responsibility towards the civil society, efficiency in service delivery, sustainability, security, etc. (Lerner, 2019) are among the characteristics of good local governance. On the other hand, characteristics such as being democratic, planning and decision-making from below, being local and locally based, citizen-centered, participatory, responsible, accountable, financial independence and independence in self-government, etc., introduce the local government into a cooperative government with good local governance conditions that, in a horizontal relationship with the levels of power of the national government, seeks assistance and cooperation and, in general, decentralization (as the main and final goal) from the national government. The goal of the local government is to interact with the public and private sectors in order to seek synergy, capacity building and empowerment for desirable decision-making (Mattingly, 1995); this is exactly the desire and goal of good local governance. In fact, local government is a method of good local governance that seeks complete decentralization of all elements (political, economic, administrative, technical, geographical, social, etc.) of the national government. From this perspective, decentralization is the best possible method for achieving good local governance, which is possible by implementing local government. The present study attempts to identify the dimensions of local governance and the strategies for strengthening it, and to identify the capacities

and capabilities of this management method in dividing management in the metropolis of Tehran, and as a result, decongesting this metropolis through the application of the policies of this management method.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Local government is a type of public administration that, in most cases, operates as the lowest level of government in a country. The term local government is often used to distinguish the local part of government from state offices and departments, which act as agents of the central, national, or federal government. In general, local governments generally operate under the supervision of the central government and their powers and authority are determined by law or government regulations and by a higher level of government (Robson, 2021). Local governance (in the form of local government), a network of state and local government actors, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, civil society, and central government representatives, identify local priorities and issues and collaborate to fulfill demands and resolve problems (Roy et al., 2020). Good local governance is opposed to rigid governmental hierarchies and the government's maximum control over all affairs. For the first time, the idea of good local governance and the management of affairs with the participation of the people and the formation of local government came to the attention of scientific and political executive circles in the late twentieth century due to the failure of the centralized government to manage public affairs effectively. Scientific research and studies were conducted in this regard in various fields of law, political science, management, sociology, and geography. Martin Jones, a political geographer, was among the first to propose the idea of the transformation of local governance into governance (good local governance) as an inevitable necessity in the process of devolution of powers to local governments (Rumbach, 2016). Urban governance as a theoretical and research area in urban policy has. This explains that urban governance emerged as an analytical model alongside this normative redefinition of the role of local government and shows that it is more suitable for describing the relationships between the complexities of contemporary local government organization, especially in larger cities and their equally complex localities.

- Urban governance refers to the collective policy and strategy formulation at the city level in partnership with the city government and other organizations. (Shah, 2006)
- The relationships and interactions between the city government, the business sector, and civil society are at the heart of urban governance. Urban political economy is the basis for understanding urban governance (Thomas, 2012).
- One of the important theoretical developments in the study of urban political economy is the urban regime theory, which was developed mainly in the context of the United States (Smit, 2018).
- Based on the basic concepts of governance, it is based on the following principles:
- Governance is attributed to a set of institutions and actors within or beyond the government.
- Governance identifies the ambiguous points that exist in the boundaries and responsibilities of addressing economic and social affairs.
- Governance identifies the power dependencies that exist in the relationships between institutions and collective social activities.
- Governance identifies the capacities to undertake or carry out tasks that do not require command or sovereign power and seeks to use tools and techniques to guide them (Vanhaelen, 2018)

Methodology

In the present study, this method was used to express the thematic literature, present a conceptual model, and also identify indicators of urban governance, urban government, and urban decentralization. (Tab. 1)

Table 1: Bibliography of data and information used in the research

Topic	Data sources and information	Year
Per capita use of urban services	Review of the Detailed Plan of Tehran Metropolitan Area	2013
Index of social issues, social communication and interaction, participation in associations and community organizations, neighborhood social participation	Tehran City Government Statistics Center and Information Technology Center (Life Quality Atlas statistics and report)	2016
Area and share of recreational and touristic land uses, green space, cultural, religious, and sports spaces by 22 districts of Tehran	Tehran City Government Statistics Center and Information Technology Center	2016
Public transportation and traffic services	Tehran City Government Statistics Center and Information Technology Center (Life Quality Atlas statistics and report)	2017
Housing use	Population and housing census of Tehran Metropolitan Area	2017
Local governance model with a decentralization approach for Tehran	Expert and specialist questionnaire	2023

The method of analysis in this study was content analysis. Content analysis is a category of methods that can be used across a wide range of theoretical and research methods, essentially independent of a specific theoretical or epistemological basis. Content analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns in qualitative research data. This method, as a textual data analysis process, can well reveal the patterns in the statements (Clark and Brown (2006) have distinguished between content analysis and theme analysis). Content analysis focuses more on micro-levels and often shows the frequency of data. In contrast, theme analysis pays attention to the context of the data and the unit of analysis is more than one word or phrase. Theme analysis goes beyond counting explicit words and phrases and focuses on recognizing and explaining explicit and implicit ideas. For this reason, using theme analysis, a deeper understanding can be achieved and a theme matrix and theme network can be created by comparing frequencies. In this study, two methods of template analysis and theme matrix were used to organize themes. Since the statistical population in the qualitative part of the study, which was conducted using interviews, includes managers and experts in the field under study; therefore, in the first step, an attempt was made to provide a comprehensive definition of an expert based on the exact characteristics of the experts in order to calculate the desired sample size. After determining the characteristics of the experts, a comprehensive definition of an expert was provided based on the exact characteristics of the experts to determine the samples for the qualitative part of the study and to determine the group of experts for the research. The purposive judgment sampling method will be used. The sample selection criteria for interviewing experts are having tacit knowledge about good urban governance and urban growth and development and urban centralization. In order to select the sample population and also increase the accuracy of measurement, the stratified random sampling method was used. In this method, to select the members of the sample group, the statistical population is first divided into smaller and same-sex groups and then sampling is carried out within each group or class. Thus, the statistical population of this study is classified into 3 groups of experts, managers and senior urban employees of Tehran, and then the proportion of each class's share of the total statistical population, 92 of the aforementioned individuals, is considered as the sample population, as shown in the following table: (Tab. 2)

Case Study: Tehran Metropolis

The metropolitan area of Tehran is more than 600 square kilometers and is located between 35 degrees 31 minutes and 35 degrees 57 minutes north latitude and 51 degrees 4 minutes to 51 degrees 47 minutes east longitude. The city is bordered by the Alborz Mountain range to the north, Lavasanat to the east, Karaj to the west, and Varamin to the south (Tehran Municipality Statistics, 2019: 12). (Fig. 1)

According to the Tehran Municipality Statistics in 2016, Tehran covers an area of 613,440 hectares (Kazemian et al., 2020). It is administered in twenty-two municipalities. The following table shows the physical characteristics of the Tehran metropolis (Tehran Municipality Statistics, 2016). (Tab. 3)

Table 3: Physical characteristics of Tehran metropolis

Division	Legal Area	Count	Area (m²)
Boundaries (Legal)	City	0	615,669,117
Regions	22	615,622,855	100
Subdivisions	123	1,021,122,863	166
Shops	375	628,252,503	102
Block (within legal boundary)	3134 8	471,568,377	77
Parcels (within legal boundary)	9,270,79	471,568,377	77
Passages (within legal boundary)	0	140,524,514	23
(RGMS+AIRPORT) Zone-wide	5	471,568,377	100
Subzones	58	471,568,377	100
Large areas excluding (RGMS)	Airport	4	462,302,274

(Source: Tehran City Atlas, 2016)

Table 2: Population Classes

Row	Groups	Population	Proportion of Population	Sample Population
1	Experts	40	30%	30
2	Employees	45	37%	37
3	Managers	35	25%	25
5	Total	120	100%	100

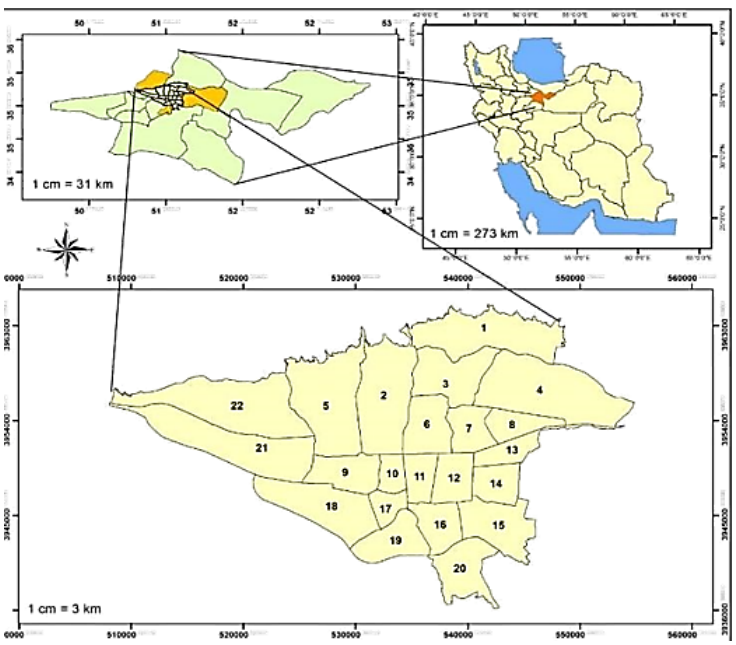

Figure 1: Geographical location of Tehran and its 22 districts

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Extracting speech evidence and concepts

At this stage, the initial codes and concepts were extracted from the verbal evidence and verbal statements of the interviewees, and the necessary conceptualization was carried out. Conceptualization means taking a sentence or paragraph, dividing it into components, and giving each idea or even a name; a label that indicates or replaces the phenomenon. Table 4 shows all the initial codes identified from the 15 interviews, with references to the source. (Tab. 4)

Table 4: Extracted primary codes (indices)

Index	Description	Initial Indices (Sources)
A1	Broad and long-term view of governance by senior managers	P4, P7, P12, P14
A2	Policy formulation and implementation	P3, P4, 9, P10
A3	Facilitation of international interactions	P3, P4, P5
A4	Avoiding politicization in local affairs	P4, P7, P11
A5	Strategic vision and urban development	P4, P9, P13
A6	Extent (scale)	P4, P9, P11
A7	Climatic and geographical diversity	P4, P7, P14
A8	Geographical dispersion	P1, P3, P4, P7, P9
A9	Natural and local constraints	P1, P4, P13
A10	Creating development-appropriate plans for local and regional development	P4, P6, P9
A11	Environmental talent and capacity	P4, P7, P10, P11
A12	Preference for development over quantitative growth	P23, P4, P7
A13	Economic concentration and its damages	P3, P4, P10
A14	Rapid decision-making in the shortest possible time	P4, P5, P11, P15
A15	Financial decision-making	P3, P4, P7, P9
A16	Accountability of managers toward anti-corruption	P4, P7, P10
A17	How built spaces are occupied	P3, P4, P7, P11
A18	Controlling peripheral settlements and haphazard suburbanization	P4, P7, P8
A19	Local and regional urban planning	P4, P5, P12
A20	Upgrading and modernization of inner-city fabric	P1, P4, P5
A21	Physical development of existing cities	P4, P6, P7
A22	Location criteria for new towns	P3, P4, P6, P8, P9, P12
A23	Settled population	P4, P7, P9, P12
A24	Strategic and policy planning	P4, P5, P13
A25	Efficient management of parking facilities	P5, P6, P11
A26	Suitable road networks	P3, P4, P5, P8, P9, P11
A27	Improving non-motorized travel conditions	P3, P5, P5
A28	Protection of green space environment	P4, P5, P14
A29	Management of public services	P5, P7
A30	Reform of tax rates and public services	P3, P5, P11

Index	Description	Initial Indices (Sources)
A31	Improvement of street layouts	P4, P5, P14, P15
A32	Efficient local governance administration	P3, P7, P11
A33	Welfare and lasting peace	P4, P5, P13
A34	Recognition of equal rights for knowledge	P5, P7, P12
A35	Creating equal opportunities	P4, P9, P11
A36	Economic justice	P1, P3, P4, P5, P6
A37	Establishing justice and social protection coverage	P4, P5, P13, P14
A38	Income day	P5, P7, P11
A39	Safety and comfort	P3, P5, P14
A40	Calmness and ease	P3, P4, P5, P11, P12
A41	Rapid access	P1, P3, P6, P9, P11
A42	Human comparison (likely “human comparison” or “humane comparison”)	P1, P3, P6, P10, P12
A43	Responding to cultural needs of society	P1, P8, P9
A44	Strengthening sense of unity in society	P1, P7, P9, P11, P12
A45	Creating walking networks in the community with free citizen movement	P3, P9, P13, P15
A46	Pedestrian-friendly facilities with suitable conditions	P3, P5, P6, P10
A47	Strengthening transportation systems	P3, P9/P7, P11
A48	Encouraging housing development with diverse price ranges in neighborhoods	P3, P7, P9, P14
A49	Waste management	P1, P3, P7, P9
A50	Improvement of public-space gardens	P3, P7, P11
A51	Lighting for buildings and parks	P2, P3, P6, P9
A52	Reuse of underutilized infrastructures	P3, P7, P11
A53	Transparency and reporting causes of failure in local programs	P3, P5, P7
A54	Building trust and motivation in the public through improved communications	P5, P7, P17
A55	Trust in governance structures by managers	P5, P7, P9
A56	Ensuring coherence and political unity across levels	P5, P6, P11
A57	Increasing satisfaction of local service users	P6, P7, P14
A58	Attention to cultural differences	P3, P6, P15
A59	Willingness to collaborate	P4, P6, P9
A60	Cultural trust-building	P6, P11, P13
A61	Acceptance of diverse cultures	P3, P7, P9
A62	Level of religious diversity	P1, P7, P9
A63	Local common interests	P7, P11, P13
A64	People’s democracy	P7, P10, P14
A65	Development of skills and capabilities of local assets	P3, P7, P9
A66	Local community participation in local development	P1, P7, P15
A67	Increased local negotiating capacity toward local development	P3, P7, P14
A68	Influence of local community in development programs	P7, P8, P11

Index	Description	Initial Indices (Sources)
A69	Improved quality level of local communities	P8, P10, P11
A70	Institutionalization of local participation within local NGOs	P7, P8, P15
A71	Development of local governance	P4, P7, P8
A72	Decentralization of resources and authorities	P7, P9, P10
A73	Reduction of government intervention and centralization	P1, P10, P13
A74	Providing land-use planning based on regional development	P3, P9, P10
A75	Delegation of government functions	P10, P12, P14
A76	Reducing risk in local investment domain	P2, P10, P11
A77	Optimizing investment	P9, P10, P14
A78	Integrating local and indigenous plans	P4, P7, P10
A79	Knowledge and resources management	P3, P10, P13
A80	Strengthening private sector role as a production agent	P1, P3, P10
A81	Enabling social and citizen justice	P3, P7, P10
A82	Citizen participation and social solidarity	P3, P7, P15
A83	Strengthening social institutions	P3, P7, P11
A84	Expanding urban culture and civility	P3, P9, P14
A85	Assistance to governmental and private entities	P10, P11, P13
A86	Planning and policy making in megacities	P1, P10, P11
A87	Optimizing religious affairs	P2, P3, P10
A88	Emergence of small businesses	P4, P6, P10
A89	Emergence of microfinance funds	P3, P11, P14
A90	Institutionalization of self-help groups in the form of NGOs/SNAs	P5, P11, P15
A91	Development of local and cross-regional markets	P7, P8, P10
A92	Business sales strategies	P3, P11, P13
A93	Rule of law	P7, P9, P10, P11
A94	Full sovereignty over individual rights	P3, P6, P7, P10, P11
A95	Role of government as facilitator of local activities	P1, P10, P14
A96	Increased awareness of rights among people	P3, P10, P11
A97	Free flow of information and easy accessibility	P3, P11, P15
A98	Accountability of local institutions, organizations, and centers	P3, P7, P11, P13
A99	Hierarchical accountability	P1, P3, P7, P11
A100	Managing public expectations	P3, P5, P11, P14
A101	Integrating internal processes to achieve efficiency	P3, P7, P10, P12
A102	Public participation in local affairs	P7, P10, P11, P12
A103	Providing space for diverse views across areas	P3, P4, P11, P12
A104	Unification and oversight functions	P1, P10, P11
A105	Activating the mining community	P2, P3, P10
A106	Strengthening public participation to influence policymaking	P4, P6, P10

Extracting sub-themes (components)

After extracting the primary codes, the researcher, in search of subcategories, with the assumption of how different primary codes could be combined to create subcategories, grouped the codes based on semantic and conceptual affinities and identified subthemes from their combination. In fact, each subtheme refers to a specific dimension of the data. This reduces the number of units with which we have to work. The themes were then named according to their semantic relationship to the theoretical foundations of the research. Table 4-3 shows the second stage of coding in the framework of identifying subthemes (secondary themes). (Tab. 5)

Extracting the main themes (components)

In the next stage, the sub-themes obtained were placed under the main themes (factors) according to their degree of similarity. These themes are at a higher level of abstraction than the previous stage. By performing three stages of coding, the conceptual structure of the role of local government in the decentralization of the metropolis of Tehran was obtained. (Tab. 6)

CONCLUSION AND RESULTS

The results can be explained as follows: although in the years before and after the Islamic Revolution, there were traces of policy-making, planning, approving regulations, and implementing special plans to curb the rapid population growth of Tehran; however, evidence and evidence indicate their inadequacy and incoherence in preventing or curbing this growth, and the existence of injustice in the growth and development of other regions of the country, along with lack of planning in the management of the capital, all caused the city of Tehran and the capital of the country to suffer from very serious and sometimes dangerous challenges and problems today and gradually lose the standards of a healthy city. Today, the pattern of polarization of densely populated cities and the dominance of the phenomenon of the consolidation of urban system facilities has become a super challenge and has faced the management of metropolitan cities with serious challenges. This has become a pretext for urban-regional imbalance and disproportion in the country, and by dominating and dominating medium-sized and small cities, it has posed many difficulties to other city residents. In such circumstances, and in order to decentralize large and metropolitan cities, having developmental perspectives on small and old cities and redefining the role of these cities can be considered as a logical and principled solution, and in order to balance the country's regional urban system, small cities can have a positive impact. So that these cities, in the role of communication and linkages between villages and medium-sized cities and then large cities, if a level of appropriate and worthy facilities is provided for these cities, they will enjoy the necessary and appropriate efficiency in providing services to the residents of their territory and will provide a sense of relative satisfaction for citizens. Balanced distribution of new facilities and infrastructure in each of the small cities of the provinces can be a solution to decentralization of centers. provinces and large cities and on the other hand, it meets the diverse needs of people from different layers of society. Decentralization refers to greater autonomy, by which they are further removed from the center. Decentralization is the transfer or delegation of planning, decision-making, or management authority from central government officials to local authorities. In other words, decentralization means reducing government ownership of governance matters. Decentralization refers to the potential for greater accountability by moving decision-making closer to the people, which refers to local governance. Decentralization is the transfer of responsibility from the center to local levels of government, often in order to increase overall government accountability.

Table 5: Themes (components) of the role of local government in the decentralization of Tehran metropolis

Primary codes (indices)	Sub-themes (components)
Local Policy Making	Broad, long-term perspective of senior managers on governance; policy formulation and implementation; facilitation of international interactions; avoidance of politicization in local affairs; strategic vision and urban development
Local Government Image	Extent/Scope; climatic diversity; geographical dispersion; natural and local constraints; creating plans aligned with local and regional development; environmental readiness and capability
Local Autonomy	Preference for development over quantitative growth; economic concentration and its harms; rapid decision-making in the shortest possible time; financial decision-making; managerial accountability for anti-corruption
New Urbanism	Occupation of built spaces; control of peri-urban sprawl and unplanned suburbanization; local and regional planning of urban projects; inner-city upgrading and modernization; physical development of existing cities; location criteria for new towns; settled population
Smart Urban Growth Strategy	Strategic and tactical planning; efficient management of parking; suitable road networks; improvement of non-motorized travel; promotion of housing with diverse price ranges in neighborhoods; waste management; improvement of public-space gardens; lighting for buildings and parks; reuse of unused infrastructures
Fair Resource Distribution	Efficient local governance; welfare and lasting peace; recognition of equal rights in knowledge; equal opportunity for economic justice; establishment of social protection and equity
Livable Urban Space	Economic efficiency; safety and comfort; tranquility and ease; rapid access; human scale; responsiveness to cultural needs; strengthening a sense of social unity
Urban Planning Development	Creating pedestrian-friendly city networks enabling free citizen movement; pedestrian-friendly facilities with suitable conditions; strengthening transportation systems; encouraging housing with diverse price ranges in neighborhoods; waste management; improvement of public-space gardens; lighting for buildings and parks; reuse of unused infrastructures
Building Trust and Social Cohesion	Transparency and reporting reasons for local program failures; building trust and motivation in the public through improved communications; trust in governance structures by managers; ensuring coherence and political unity at various levels; increasing satisfaction of local service users
Cultural Interactions	Attention to cultural differences; willingness to collaborate; cultural trust-building; acceptance of diverse cultures; level of religious diversity; local common interests; people's democracy
Development-focused Planning	Development of skills and capabilities of local assets; local community participation in development; increased local negotiating capacity toward local development; local influence in development programs; improved quality of local communities; institutionalization of local participation within local NGOs
Decentralization and Planning	Development of local governance; decentralization of resources and authorities; reduction of government intervention and centralization; providing land-use planning based on regional development; delegation of government functions
Creating Local Investment Preconditions	Reducing risk in local investment; optimizing investment; integrating local and indigenous plans; knowledge and resource management; strengthening the private sector role as a production driver
Sustainable Urban Citizenship	Advancing social and citizen justice; citizen participation and social solidarity; strengthening social institutions; expanding urban civility culture; assistance to governmental and private

Table 6: Conceptual model of the role of local government in decentralization of Tehran metropolis

Main Theme (Main Concepts)	Subthemes (Subcomponents)	Initial Indices (Sources)
Local Governance	Local Policy Making	Broad, long-term perspective of senior managers on governance; policy formulation and implementation; facilitation of international interactions; avoidance of politicization in local affairs; strategic vision and urban development
	Local Governance Image	Extent/Scope; climatic diversity; geographical dispersion; natural and local constraints; creating plans aligned with local and regional development; environmental readiness and capability
	Local Autonomy	Preference for development over quantitative growth; economic concentration and its harms; rapid decision-making in the shortest possible time; financial decision-making; managerial accountability for anti-corruption
Urban Density	New Urbanism	Occupation of built spaces; control of peri-urban sprawl and unplanned suburbanization; local and regional planning of urban projects; inner-city upgrading and modernization; physical development of existing cities; location criteria for new towns; settled population
	Smart Urban Growth Strategy	Strategic and tactical planning; efficient management of parking; suitable road networks; improvement of non-motorized travel; preservation of green space; management of public services; reform of tax rates and public services; improvement of street plans
Improve Citizens' Living	Fair Resource Distribution	Efficient local governance; welfare and lasting peace; recognition of equal rights to knowledge; equal opportunities for economic justice; establishment of social protection and equity
	Livable Urban Space	Financially sustainable daily life; safety and ease; tranquility and comfort; rapid access; human-scale considerations; responsiveness to cultural needs; strengthening social unity
Urban Planning Development	Urban Planning Development	Creating pedestrian-friendly city networks enabling free citizen movement; pedestrian-friendly facilities with suitable conditions; strengthening transportation systems; encouraging housing with diverse price ranges in neighborhoods; waste management; improvement of public-space gardens; lighting for buildings and parks; reuse of unused infrastructures
Local Community	Building Trust and Social Cohesion	Transparency and reporting reasons for local program failures; building trust and motivation in the public through improved communications; trust in governance structures by managers; ensuring coherence and political unity at various levels; increasing satisfaction of local service users
Cultural Interactions	Cultural Interactions	Attention to cultural differences; willingness to collaborate; cultural trust-building; acceptance of diverse cultures; level of religious diversity; local common interests; people's democracy
Supportive Planning	Development-focused Planning	Development of skills and capabilities of local assets; local community participation in development; increased local negotiating capacity toward local development; local influence in development programs; improved quality of local communities; institutionalization of local participation within local NGOs
Decentralization & Planning	Decentralization and Planning	Development of local governance; decentralization of resources and authorities; reduction of government intervention and centralization; providing land-use planning based on regional development; delegation of government functions

Main Theme (Main Concepts)	Subthemes (Subcomponents)	Initial Indices (Sources)
Enabling Local Investment	Creating Local Investment Preconditions	Reducing risk in local investment; optimizing investment; integrating local and indigenous plans; knowledge and resource management; strengthening the private sector role as a production driver
Sustainable Urban Citizenship	Sustainable Urban Citizenship	Advancing social and citizen justice; citizen participation and social solidarity; strengthening social institutions; expanding urban civility culture; assistance to governmental and private entities; planning and policies at the scale of megacities; optimizing religious dynamics
Civil Society Organizations	Formation of Civil Society Organizations (S NGOs)	Formation of small businesses; creation of micro-credit funds; institutionalization of mutual-help groups as NGOs; development of local and cross-regional markets; business sales strategies
Law-Based Local Governance	Local Governance Based on Law	Rule of law; full sovereignty of individuals' rights; role of the government as a facilitator of local activities; increasing public awareness of their rights
Transparent Responsiveness	Transparent Accountability	Free flow of information and easy access; accountability of local institutions, organizations, and centers; hierarchical accountability; managing public expectations; internal process integration to achieve

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