

# **Contested Understanding of Urban Governance**

A Case Study of Tehran, Iran

Thesis by

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## **Abstract**

In recent years Iran has adopted a new form of urban governance, featuring a higher level of local autonomy, clarification and improvement of legal status and responsibilities, the development of new political and social organisations, and an enhanced professionalism.

This thesis asks: ‘how is urban governance functioning in Iran?’ and aims to answer this by assessing the process and structure of urban governance through a critical evaluation of how urban governance in the capital city of Tehran is understood by its various stakeholders. In doing so, it attempts to fill a gap in the literature, particularly the dearth of local governance studies in the Middle East, as well as providing general insights into what constitutes ‘good urban governance’.

To gain an initial overview, the research starts out with an appraisal of Tehran’s governance based on UN-Habitat’s Urban Governance Index (UGI). This tool allows the evaluation of local governance in Tehran through four dimensions: participation, accountability, equity and effectiveness. Based on the findings of this evaluation, as well as the method’s limitations, a number of areas are identified as requiring deeper examination. The subsequent, central phase of analysis is thus based on interviews with eight different groups of stakeholders in the city including city executives, councillors, civic associations, citizens, urban experts and private sector actors.

The findings indicate that despite the major shift towards decentralisation from 1997, local governance is still undermined by centralised decision-making, due to the continued involvement of central government ministries and departments in city management. A key challenge for local governance is thus to manage the attendant tensions between stakeholders. Local stakeholders expect to be given more space, institutional weight and autonomy in a process of devolution which would bring a more substantial transfer of authority and resources from central to local government, community groups and citizens.

**Key Words:** Urban Governance, UN-Habitat UGI, election, municipality, City Council, citizen participation, Tehran.

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# Chapter 1: Research Contexts and Objectives

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## 1.0 Introduction

The former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, suggests that governance is a key element in enhancing development (UN, 1998). Governance and principles of good governance have been emphasised as a key focus of development procedures since 1990. Yet what constitutes the concept of governance has remained multifaceted (Pierre and Peters, 2000). Governance is defined by UNDP (1996) as the complex ensemble of mechanisms, processes, practices and institutions through which citizens and social groupings manage their interests and conflicts. According to Hyden and Court (2002) governance should be considered as both a process and an activity through which policy is formulated. The concept of governance is broader than that of government and implies a bottom-up approach in the formulation of policy and in policy implementation mechanisms. To fully implement good governance, citizens must be empowered and counted in every sphere of society (UNDP, 2004). Governance practices that are “inclusive, participatory, transparent and socially balanced are more likely to generate effective developmental gains” (Sisk, 2004: 11). Taking this into consideration, good governance is the “effective implementation of policy and mechanisms that are responsive to citizen needs” (World Bank, 1992:6).

Good governance therefore should not be considered a top-down kind of administration, but rather public participation and engagement are an inevitable feature of good governance and government itself is but one of the actors. With good governance, decisions and policies are made through the interactions of various stakeholders, citizens are provided with a voice and decision-makers are obliged to hear citizens’ voices. Good governance depends on how well all various stakeholders fulfil their roles. Kooiman (1993) suggests that good governance is not accomplished through a single measure, but is a complex and time-consuming process which involves different stakeholders. The central factor for enhancing the level of governance and arriving at good governance is to identify the mechanisms and practices that generate motivations and incentives for all stakeholders to function in a collective manner (World Bank, 1997).

According to Wilde *et al.* (2008), the investigation of governance is capable of

identifying breaches and limitations in processes of local policy-making. It can also expose needs to enhance decision-making capacity. Thus, the study of governance has become a popular focus of research, with different studies defining and measuring governance from a multiplicity of perspectives and angles, such as civil society (Heinrich, 2007), corruption (Chowdhury *et al.*, 2008), democracy (IDEA, 2003); e-governance (European Commission Directorate General for Information Society and Media, 2007; Holzer and Kim, 2007); the electoral system (O'Grady, Lopez-Pintor and Stevens, 2007); gender equality (Corner and Repucci, 2009); conflict (Verstegen; Goor; and Zeeuw, 2005); media (UNESCO and IPDC, 2008); parliament (The Parliamentary Centre, 2007); political parties (Transparency International and Carter Centre 2007); and public administration (Asian Development Bank and Asian Development Bank Institute, 2007). Within this context, local governance and decentralisation (UN-Habitat, 2004) are among the main themes. Nevertheless, due to the complex and dynamic nature of governance, their features and elements vary widely over place, time and level.

Governance is varied in terms of the level it takes place at (i.e. international, national and local); and its major dimensions (i.e. economic, political, and administrative). This study mainly emphasises the political and administrative features of governance at the local/urban level. While political governance includes the establishment of policy, political structures and the way in which the political system is designed and functions with regard to citizens, administrative governance involves the mechanisms and methods of policy procedure as well as the competence of public administration (Hyden and Court, 2002; Manasan *et al.*, 1999). Urban governance has a comprehensive and integrated vision at both the practical and theoretical levels that includes all formal and informal factors and elements that exist in a city, such as central government, local government, civic associations, and citizens. On this basis, it is necessary for this investigation to consider the dynamic nature of the many factors and elements within governance.

## **1.1 City Governance Transformation in Iran**

In terms of practical steps towards arriving at improved governance, there has recently

been an escalating international trend of decentralisation and transformation of powers, responsibilities, functions, capitals, funds, authorities, tasks and decision-making from central government to the local government level (Ward, 1996, 1998; Ruble *et al.*, 2003). This has been determined by various socio-economic and political factors. According to Devas and Grant (2003) while in some geographical areas such as central/eastern Europe and Latin America the impetus towards democratic governance has been driven from a bottom-up dynamic, in others, such as Uganda and Ghana, focus on governance is a part of a national agenda and a top-down response to existing concerns. Furthermore, good governance implementation can be determined by external factors, such as demands and coercion from donor bodies (*ibid.*, 2003).

In a similar way, local governments in Iran have been at the centre of attention of political reforms, going back for more than a century (Moqeeemi, 2007). Following the 1979 Islamic revolution, Iranian cities have been at the heart of political and social changes (Hesamian and Eatemad, 1989; Shakoi, 1992), as well as the focus of economic and cultural processes. Demands for devolution led to a governmental shift and to the 1997 local-level governance transformation, which is considered the most significant example of institutional; decision-making and administrative devolution in Iran (an important transition which will henceforth be referred to as 'the shift'). Thus, the process and formation of a new form of urban governance in Iran can be dated to the beginning of February in 1997. Through the shift, Iranian cities now have an opportunity to design their local government mechanisms to a certain extent. While formerly most management and supervision tasks were handled by central government, following the shift, local governments and local powers have been offered opportunities to play a more active role in the city and the developing context of governance. In the new scheme in Iran the local institutions and organisations are able to contribute to the shaping and forming of urban areas, alongside the central government organisations such as the Ministry of State.

This has been a shift from simple forms of urban management, with cities governed by a single mayor appointed by the State ministry, to a more complex and decentralised form of urban management in which Islamic City Councils play a significant role (Imanni-Jajermi, 2000), and citizen inclusion and participation in urban decision-making can be facilitated. The new governance form includes features such as a higher level of local

autonomy, clarification and improvement of legal status and responsibilities, the development of new political and social organisations, and a sense of enhanced professionalism that has led to the emergence of new forms of communications between the actors and the public.

## **1.2 The Context of the Study and Main Issues**

The key issues within the local governance transformation revolve around the questions of “what exactly is being transformed and who are the actors involved” (Coaffee and Healey, 2003: 1982). To date, studies on Iranian cities seem to have focused little attention on city governance, despite the significance of the 1997 shift and the need to explore the new frameworks introduced for governance and participation processes. This necessitates consideration of the functions and responsibilities of the various institutions and bodies that are now involved in urban governance and in participation arrangements. While the shift in urban governance and urban regimes plays a significant part in the decentralisation process occurring in Iran, it is important to acknowledge that it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the complexities inherent in the transition and in the practices that it introduced.

In light of democratic governance principles, public participation was thought of as a key component for the local transition in Iran, in terms of both enhancing citizens’ engagement in city issues and in empowering citizens. However, despite the organisational amendments, it is becoming apparent that the shift suffers from major governance drawbacks that include issues of participation. Tavasoli, the first post-revolution mayor of Tehran, believes that the public have had no real opportunity to be deeply involved in city governance (Sarmayeh, 2008). Despite the organizational and administrative reforms improving the functions of urban professionals, ordinary citizens are widely excluded from governance practices and decision-making processes that have an effect on their lives. A concern here is to what extent have local institutions succeeded, or can succeed, in achieving effective citizen engagement and improving governance practices.

Moreover, despite the shift, the distribution of power between central government and local organisations in terms of their weight and influence in governance is unclear.

Moqeeemi (2006) suggests that organisational autonomy and related issues are the major concern for local governments in Iran. Within this context, there is a lack of understanding of the manner in which local institutions and central government have interacted on the one hand, and on the other hand, of the way in which issues of governance and participation have been taken into consideration by both local and central government: these are therefore central to this research.

Subsequent to the shift, Tehran has experienced three City Council elections. In order to elect the first council's representatives, an inaugural local election was carried out on March 8, 1999 and the 15 elected city councillors were legally empowered to begin their tasks by May 29, 1999. Second and third elections followed in 2002 and 2006. This research includes an examination of the capacity and level of voter turnout in the local elections, because in democratic theory, citizen participation has to do with quantity, that is, how many people are involved (Pateman, 1970). If governance refers to "public" processes of decision-making which are made "by" and "for" the public, then participation is the application of governance and the enhancement of good governance.

The manner in which the mayor is selected has also been at the centre of debates on Iran's urban governance (Aliabadi, 2003). While formerly, the selection of the mayor was among the state's ministerial responsibilities and exercised in a top-down and centralised manner, since the transformation, the responsibility of selecting a mayor for a four year term of office has been assumed by Islamic City Council (ICC) representatives. Thus, mayoral candidates are now selected and recommended through a new process based on the public's representations, though the continued state influence over the mayor chosen is undeniable. This follows from the fact that the mayor recommended by the ICC needs to gain the consent of the state ministry or governor in cities with, respectively, a population of more or less than 200,000. The new approach for mayoral selection is not without complexities, regardless of the reduction in state power in the urban governance machinery. An alternative mayoral selection proposal has recently come into view, offering participatory significance to the municipality, as the mayor would be selected through direct public participation. The advocates of this proposal believe that it would enhance governance principles, in particular participation in the city. Yet, it is important to recognise that to evaluate the aforementioned

approaches for the selection of mayor, research also needs to identify the limitations and potential capacities of these approaches in governance.

This research evaluates urban governance in Iran to explore the barriers to effective citizen engagement in city matters. The aim of the study is to explore the basic issues, including structural and organisational factors, which influence governance at city level, by investigating the nature of key factors that are associated with urban governance and public participation. To fully understand the complex nature of governance in Iran requires analysing the role of key stakeholders and decision-makers who influence the machinery of governance in the city. While an exhaustive articulation of urban governance networks in Iran is beyond the scope of this research, the study will explore the Municipality; the Islamic City Council; the Neighbourhood Councils; and the Civic Associations and their circumstances with regard to the issue of participation, as the foundation for the current governance practices in the city. This study offers a review of recent research on governance and presents an analytical framework for city governance in Iran in relation to both the recent initiatives at national level towards decentralization and to local political discourses.

Tehran has been influenced by political, economic, and social/cultural centralisation to a much larger extent than the other major cities of Iran. Equally the city has played an important role in shaping national urban policies and strategies. Tehran was selected to represent the level and quality of transformation of the new form of urban governance and participation practices, which were intended to provide a more publicly-oriented, inclusive, urban governance system and to reduce the challenges of the previous urban administrative system. Researching Tehran is therefore critical in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the urban governance shift process in the face of its practical challenges and implementation opportunities.

### **1.3 Research Aims and Associated Questions**

This study explores the dynamic nature of, and the interrelationships between, the factors that influence urban governance and local participation in Tehran.

To achieve this aim the research questions are:

1. How can urban governance be evaluated?
2. Which of the basics of good urban governance in Tehran are currently adequate or failing?
3. What measures can be taken to improve governance in Tehran?

## **1.4 Research Strategy**

To achieve this aim, it is essential to gain sound and reliable knowledge of:

- ☞ Developing a methodology for assessing good urban governance
- ☞ The overall performance level of governance systems in Iran
- ☞ What should be enhanced to improve governance
- ☞ How far and where action is needed

The study will explore a series of related themes such as the good governance principles of participation, accountability and effectiveness. A theoretical framework is derived through the analysis of a wide range of literature and then examined empirically. The study initially focuses on governance assessment strategies, in order to decide on a suitable assessment method. The early stages of this research draw on a quantitative approach using the UN-Habitat governance assessment method. This approach was used to understand the main areas of concern and deficits related to governance in Tehran, to highlight the main dimensions of the topic and indicate the areas that need to be explored in greater depth. This led to the development of a conceptual framework which needed to be examined in a deeper and more comprehensive manner through empirical research. The study is therefore based mainly on a qualitative approach, using a variety of data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews and secondary documentary data, the analysis of which has made it possible to clarify the governance pattern in Iran.

This allowed an exploration of the limitations of areas identified by the UN-assessment through considering the role of different stakeholders involved in governance. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with various governance stakeholders, including citizens, urban experts, municipality executives, council representatives and government officials. The study procedure is cyclical rather than linear (Trochim, 2006) and based

on a sequence of steps. The initial key to this study is assessment of governance through applying the UN assessment approach. This leads to identifying the main problems and then to designing the research methodology and data collection strategies. Correspondingly, three months of field work in Tehran were designed to gather the central data for this investigation.

## **1.5 Structure of Thesis**

Overall, the thesis is divided into ten chapters:

**Chapter One** provides an introduction to the research project, as well as presenting the objectives and focus of the research. The chapter offers an overview of the features of the study area in terms of urban governance and participation. The section also contains a brief overview of urban governance in Iran/Tehran.

**Chapter Two** develops a conceptual framework for understanding governance elements and principles. The chapter is focused on the literature of governance and its background, and reviews the definitions, aims and values of governance as expressed in the contemporary governance literature. The section looks at the shifts and transformations in the phenomenon of governance from a global perspective. In addition, a brief overview of approaches to evaluating governance is presented.

**Chapter Three** presents the methodologies, methods and assumptions of the research, gives an explanation of the criteria for data collection, capture and integration processes, as well as clarifying the criteria for selecting the participant sample and data analysis procedures. It offers a summarised introduction to the research design and method applied in this study. In addition, it presents a discussion on the UN approach to governance evaluation and its application, and how this method will contribute to the research processes.

**Chapter Four** presents an evaluation of urban governance in Tehran through the UN-index indicators. It also demonstrates an overview of the circumstances of governance in Tehran based on the UN's four principles of good urban governance: Effectiveness, Equity, Accountability and Participation. Furthermore, it shows how the UN evaluation

method helps the researcher in identifying the existing gap between “good urban governance” and governance in Tehran, as well as facilitating other aspects of the research process.

**Chapters Five to Eight** present data collection and findings based on key themes and subjects. They analyse the qualitative empirical data through descriptive and narrative techniques. The chapters present an in-depth analysis and critical appraisal of the aspects and features of urban governance. They also unravel the actors and bodies in the decision making process as well as their positions, functions and responsibilities.

**Chapter Five** is devoted to the Elected Council (ICC) and its role in city governance. **Chapter Six** presents a discussion on role of voter turnout and representative democracy in the city and its effect on the machinery of governance. **Chapter Seven** is devoted to the selection of a mayor and the manner in which the mayor has been chosen. This chapter also explores the impact of the municipal election on the quality of governance delivery in the city. **Chapter Eight** presents the role of existing “Public Forums” or “Neighbourhood Councils” in the enhancement of governance in Tehran. This chapter is also devoted to Civic Associations and Community Based Organisations in the city and investigates their contribution to governance.

**Chapter Nine** aims to link the data back to the research objectives, to theoretical frameworks, to the UN approach to governance evaluation and to the fieldwork findings. The discussion covers the research objectives, the literature review, research findings and methods, considered through an integrated approach. The chapter highlights the gap between the status and definition of urban governance in theory and practice. **Chapter Ten** finally summarises and concludes the study’s investigation of governance in Tehran. This is followed by a presentation of the study’s limitations. Furthermore, as well as underlining the original contribution of this research to the existing literature, it formulates recommendations in light of the results.

## **Chapter 2: Governance Definitions, Principles and Themes**

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## 2.0 Introduction

As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, the purpose of this research is to explore the dynamic nature of and the interrelationships between, the factors that influence urban governance and local participation in Tehran. This chapter considers the multiple dimensions of governance with respect to its definitions, values and principles. The chapter presents background knowledge central to the study themes and reviews literatures devoted to urban governance and its features, including participation, effectiveness and accountability. The literature that is most closely associated with the research topic will be highlighted in this chapter and the review will present and define key words for the research topic. The aim is to develop a theoretical framework that would form a basis for undertaking the investigation.

The discussion on the principles and components of governance contributes to the research not only in providing an inclusive vision of the assessment and evaluation of governance, but also in enabling an exploration of the extent to which these values identified through the literature are taken into account in governance implementation. This chapter firstly reviews the existing definitions of governance and how they differ from government, describing the complexity and variation of perspectives in the term governance. Secondly, it outlines the main principles of good governance and presents a comprehensive overview of these principles. Finally, this chapter presents approaches to governance assessment and the implementation of these approaches in the evaluation of governance.

## 2.1 Definitions of Governance

Since the 1980s, the utilisation of, and demand for, the concept of governance to measure the practice of urban policy has developed considerably, with a growing number of organisations adopting the governance concept. Governance refers to the procedures and trends according to which public policy decisions are formulated and practiced (Wilde *et al.*, 2008). On a deeper level, governance can be defined as “public” processes of policy making which apply to the processes of decisions that are made “by” and “for” the public. Governance is defined by the UNDP (1996) as the complex ensemble of mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and social groupings manage their interests and conflicts. Additionally, the UNDP (2001) characterizes governance as the set of machineries, procedures and associations through

which public and civil societies communicate their interests, apply their citizenry rights and commitments and reconcile their dissimilarities.

The World Bank mainly views governance from an economic and financial perspective, according to which it refers to transformations in the public sector towards privatization and marketization (World Bank, 1992). Many other organisations consider governance from a democracy perspective. Amongst these is the International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance), which defines governance as the stage of democracy where there is a possibility of efficient citizen involvement in the decision-making process (IDEA, 2001). However, other, divergent meanings of the term have been appealed to. For instance, the Local Government and Whitehall Plan (organised by the British Economic and Social Research Council) employed governance to refer to an innovative form of interaction between civil society and state (Stoker, 1999). Governance was identified by UNESCO<sup>1</sup> as a set of processes that conduct and consider various relationships involving the government, local establishments and citizens. It considers both bottom-up and top-down approaches to support the involvement of publics and collaboration among stakeholders, enhancing the transparency of decision-making, and advancing urban executive policies and strategies. The focus on “interactions” between governance stakeholders is encapsulated in the significance given to them, which spells out “how” tasks are implemented and put into practice.

Alongside emphasizing “processes” of governance and “how” governance works, it is also important to acknowledge “who” is making decisions and “who” is being influenced by decisions, meaning therefore that the nature of governance includes both actors and processes. Schacter (2000) suggests governance relates to power, in terms of who has influence, who makes decisions; interaction and answerability; how citizens and other stakeholders get their voice heard; and how decision makers are held responsible. The concept of governance merges concepts concerning political authority and the management of economic and social capitals (which are more fully defined later in this chapter), as well as the capability of governments to devise sound policies and perform their roles in a valuable, competent and fair manner (Smith, 2007).

The functions and forms of government itself have been modified over time and nowadays, better incorporate the notion and patterns of “governance” (Table 2.1). This

gives rise to dissimilarities between the notions of government and of governance; in this context, considering “good government” and “governance” as equivalent might be an issue and merits further discussion. Governance is noticeably broader than government – even the ideal of good government. The complexity and extensiveness of urban governance makes it difficult to view formal structures and notions such as government or management within governance on an equal footing. While governance corresponds to the running of the city by all its actors and stakeholders, the function of government and management is that of guidance, formal leadership and supervision of decision-making. Governance is therefore much more complex than government. According to the UNDP (2002), governance as a concept recognises that power exists inside and outside the formal authority and institutions of government, including the civil metropolitan authority, especially power over financial matters.

**Table 2.1 Comparing the functions of the new and old government**

<b>Old Form of Government (Modern period)</b>	<b>New Form of Government (Post-modern period)</b>
Self-command	Not exclusively self-commanded
Territorial	Not exclusively territorial
Military	Non-military
Single sovereignty	Shared sovereignty
Single law	Shared law
Closed citizenship	Shared citizenship
National	Multi cultural
Centralized	Decentralized
Bureaucratic	Non-bureaucratic
Integrated	Non-integrated
Autonomy in policy-making	Shared policy-making
Autonomy in finance and taxation	Financial control and shared taxation
Welfare autonomy	Transnational welfare

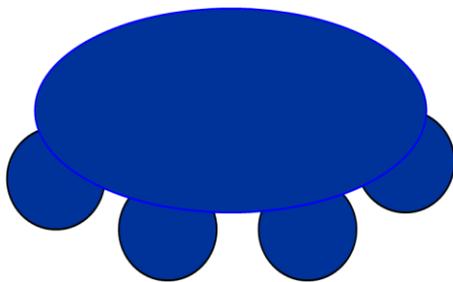
Source: adapted by the author from Thorns, 2001; Bogason, 2000 and Dear, 2000.

Governance refers to the correlation that exists between “civil society and state, between rulers and the ruled, the government and the governed” (Irazabal, 2005: 3). The factors of creditability and legitimacy of both governing institutions and community institutions, and their respective politicians and leaders, play central roles in governance (ibid., 2005). The pathway to enhancing integrity and authenticity leads through responsibility, intelligibility, receptiveness, genuine contribution, empowerment of

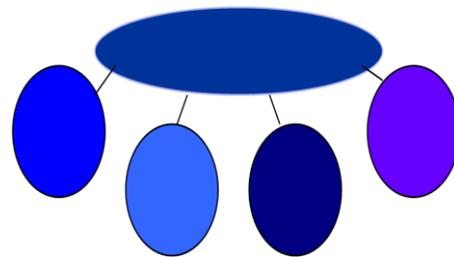
communities in civil society and public consultation. These are the characteristics that certify an open and valid relationship between society and the state. It is this relationship that differentiates governance from government (Laquian, 2002b).

Within this context, the shift from government to governance refers therefore to a move away from centralised and hierarchical structures of government towards a collaborative approach with social agencies and non-governmental actors, including the private sector. One important effect of this shift has been to blur the distinction between state institutions and civil society (Hirst, 2000). In these terms, governance can then be conceptualized as a move towards decentralization, whereby the shift from government to governance can be paralleled with the change from centralization to decentralization. In other words, by considering the main basics of the decentralization process, it can be generalized into a process of shift from government to governance. However, while decentralization takes place through a set of political, administrative, organizational and financial bottom-up shifts, to arrive at the governance arena a sort of transformation in power, tasks and decision-making through a top-down approach is required. At the same time, it is important to recognise that decentralization alone cannot ensure the formation of governance, although governance can be supported and affected by the decentralization process and its mechanisms. For example, a large scale decentralization process has recently taken place in African countries, but the process has failed to launch practical local institutions and governance practices (International IDEA, 2004). By contrast, the successes of decentralization processes in Latin American countries to some extent appear to have endorsed the governance process (Sisk and *et al.*, 2001). In this regard, what is at issue here might be the depth and efficiency in the decentralization process, as decentralization itself can vary in terms of degree and extent. “Deconcentration”, for example, consists of relocating certain duties and tasks to lower levels of decision-making, while the main responsibilities still remain under central government control. Basically this type of transformation leads to forming “government at local level” (Figure 2.1). On a deeper scale “devolution” is identified as powers and authorities shifting from central government to locally independent and legitimated subordinate bodies or divisions of decision-making that can result in “local government” (Figure 2.2). However, some suggest that “delegation” would be a more appropriate term for what happens when responsibilities and decision-making procedures are transferred in a context of deconcentration and devolution (Coudouel

and Paternostro, 2006). It follows that a deeper degree of decentralization, or in other words devolution proper, might be a more likely turning point for the achievement of democratic governance. Furthermore, the idea of governance highlights the role played by a broader set of institutions, organisations or associations beyond the formal structure of local, regional and national government (Boddy and Parkinson, 2004). These authors consider governance as the sphere of public debate, partnership, interface, dialogue and conflict entered into by local citizens and organisations and by local government. Mhlahlo (2007) points out that governance also involves the understanding of a set of rules made by society and by its institutions. Such rules are approved by all groups and represent the values of that society (Mhlahlo, 2007). However, it could be argued that even the acceptance of one particular rule by all groups in today’s widely-differentiated societies might be too idealistic. This further reinforces the fact that defining governance is not a straightforward task, due to the lack of consensus on its meaning and on the rules by which it should work. This may be associated with the complex and dynamic nature of governance, which embraces a wide range of issues such as democracy, civil society, e-governance, the electoral system, public administration and decentralisation.



**Figure 2.1 “Deconcentration”  
Or “government at local level”**



**Figure 2.2 Devolution or “local  
government”**

Source: Coudouel and Paternostro, 2006.

In this context, what is central to this research is to acquire a wider and an inclusive insight into the variety of views of governance, and select an approach that is in line with the Iran/Tehran context. On such a basis, Schacter’s definition of governance seems to provide the best fit for this study. He suggests that governance regards power, “who” has influence, “who” makes decisions, interactions and answerability; “how” citizens and other stakeholders get their voice heard, and “how” decision makers are

held responsible (Schacter, 2000). This definition embraces values and principles of governance; while at the same time including practical aspects about the implementation of governance. Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter 1, since the implementation of, and move towards, governance in Iran is somewhat recent and still uncertain, an engagement with the full range of these practical aspects is likely to be required, if an inclusive governance system is to be built in the country.

## 2.2 Defining Good Governance

At a local level, ‘good governance’ signifies the value, competences and capabilities of local direction and delivery of local services; the capacities of local community and decision-making practices, their inclusion and precision, and their responsibility; and the way in which authorities and rights are implemented at the local level (Wilde *et al.*, 2008). Good governance “concern[s] integrity, efficiency, effectiveness and economy of government in meeting the ends to which government organization and activity are directed” (UNDP, 2001: 15). There are numerous variations in the preconditions for the foundation of good urban governance which are mentioned by individual researchers or organisational scholars. The UNDP (2001: 15) suggests that attributes of good governance include “participatory, transparent; accountable; efficient in using resources; rule of law; includes central government, civil society and private sector”.

If governance is considered as the “interactions” between main actors, then good governance regards the manner in which the “effective interactions” of the state, civil society and the private sector take place. In this respect, the focal issue for building good governance is associated with the formation and configuration of these stakeholders in a society. Most developed countries have been able to create a balance between the three stakeholders. While central government delivers the political and legislative setting, the private sector creates employment and revenues, and civil society motivates the public. Mubvami (1997) underlines that effective governing or ruling is believed to follow a set of provisions. These comprise responsibility, unambiguousness, competence and responsiveness to the needs of the public and the offer of options to the governed (*ibid.*, 1997). However, in most developing states the influence of the private sector and of civil society are insignificant and undermined by the state, and non-comparable with the central government in weight and role (International IDEA, 2004).

This is said to affect the process of delivering good governance in developing societies (ibid.).

The notion of good governance represents the concept of a modification of the function of governments (Marc and Byong-Joon, 2002). Good governance is a term that symbolizes the quality of governance as it articulates itself through multiple dimensions and principles (Abdellatif, 2003). According to Surendra (2004: 33) good governance:

signifies a participative manner of governing that functions in a responsible, accountable and transparent manner based on the principles of efficiency, legitimacy and consensus for the purpose of promoting the rights of individual citizens and the public interest, thus indicating the exercise of political will for ensuring the material welfare of society and sustainable development with social justice (Surendra, 2004: 33).

### **2.3 Accomplishing Good Governance**

There is a mounting tendency among local and international bodies to endorse wide-reaching principles that are presented as a prospective direction for achieving democratic urban governance. According to the World Urban Forum (WUF) (2006), the capacity of incorporated decision-making at international scale among local actors and international organisations for achieving and building a universal approach in governing cities is at an exceptional stage of development. In this respect the UNDP's agendas, such as the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), The Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI) as a regional urban governance programme, and the UN-Habitat Global Campaign on Urban Governance, have been intended to lead the formulation of theories, strategies, and policies in both developed and developing states. Their aim is to identify challenges and improve the capacities of urban governance development, and eventually prioritise local governance concerns. The World Bank employed the concept of "good governance" as a benchmark for making loans to developing countries (World Bank, 1992).

Since 1996, the World Bank has published good governance classifications for 209 countries at the urban/local level, using several hundred indicators in order to tackle the six main features associated with good governance. These main features include voice

and accountability; political stability and absence of violence; government effectiveness; regulatory quality; rule of law; and control of corruption (World Bank, 2006). Similarly, UN-Habitat looks at 26 good governance factors grouped into five clusters: **effectiveness, equity, participation, accountability and security** (Table 2.2; United Nations, 2004). Due to the complexity of gathering local information, a smaller number of attempts have been made to attend to good governance at the local scale.

**Table 2.2 UN-Habitat urban governance indicators project categories and measures of “Good” urban governance**

Effectiveness	Equity	Participation	Accountability	Security
1. Major sources of income 2. Predictability of local budget transfers 3. Published performance delivery standards 4. Consumer satisfaction surveys 5. Vision statement	6. Citizens' Charter 7. Percentage of women councilors 8. Pro-poor pricing policies for water 9. Incentives for informal business	10. Elected council 11. Elected Mayor 12. Voter Turnout 13. Public forums 14. Civic associations per 10,000	15. Contract, tenders, budget and account publication 16. Protection from higher levels of government 17. Codes of conducts for officials 18. Facility for citizen complaints 19. Anti-corruption commission 20. Disclosure of income and assets 21. Independent audit	22. Crime prevention policy 23. Police services per 100,000 24. Conflict resolution 25. Violence against women policies 26. HIV/AIDS policy

Source: UN-Habitat: Urban Governance Index, 2004.

To accomplish good governance by meeting its principles and themes requires huge financial resources, implementation tools, a systematic decision-making process, and transparency of regulations and functions. This further widens the gap between developed countries and the developing countries in terms of the degree of financial and practical powers, systematization of actors, mature regulations and plans. For example, in some developing countries, governments are unable to progress basic governance tasks, and citizens struggle to achieve elementary rights as a result of deficiencies in funding, institutional design and regulation. By contrast, most countries in the developed nations are placed at an advanced stage of governance practice. Financial resources and funding are considered instrumental for ensuring good urban governance

in developing states. Thus the economic underpinning of governance is a complicating factor in achieving good governance. However, Omar (2009) argues that inadequate financial resources should not be a key factor: even without the necessary funds, local governance should be able to perform better than the almost insignificant level of service delivery that currently exists. He signifies a lack of transparency and mismanagement issues as key matters that are faced by developing countries.

The World Bank's diagnostic approach for exploring governance provides a useful framework for clarifying the potential financial and fiscal concerns with regard to achieving good governance. These comprise the level or frequency of corruption; state confidentiality; unofficial money laundering; street crime; red tape; cost of imports; diversion of public funds; illegal party financing; reliability of banks and trust in politicians (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004).

The UNDP–TUGI<sup>2</sup> has been one of the primary regional projects to intentionally move beyond urban management to the wider notion of urban governance. UNDP–TUGI points out five visions for well-governed and sustainable cities that rely on the principle that, if cities are definitely our habitat, then they should operate in a social context of justice, ecological sustainability, political participation, economic productivity and cultural vibrancy.

**Table 2.3 UNDP–TUGI's five-point vision for cities**

Socially just – the benefit of economic development would be shared equitably by all sectors of society, including the poor, women, children and the physically challenged.
Ecologically sustainable – the maintenance of the ecological processes that keep the ecosystem in balance; the renewable use of natural resources; the maintenance of biological diversity.
Politically participatory – the participation of all sectors of society in development and governance activities.
Economically productive – the creation of employment and the generation of income for the on population in order to meet its needs.
Culturally vibrant – the sustenance of a culture with a proactive respect for diversity.

Source: UNDP-TUGI, 2006.

When introducing and popularizing the concept of good urban governance, the UNDP–TUGI (2006) has adopted the 11 principles of good urban governance put forward by the UNDP and the UN–Habitat Global Campaign on Good Urban Governance. These are participation; rule of law; responsiveness; consensus orientation; equity;

effectiveness and efficiency; accountability; security; subsidiarity; strategic vision; and security (UNDP–TUGI, 2006).

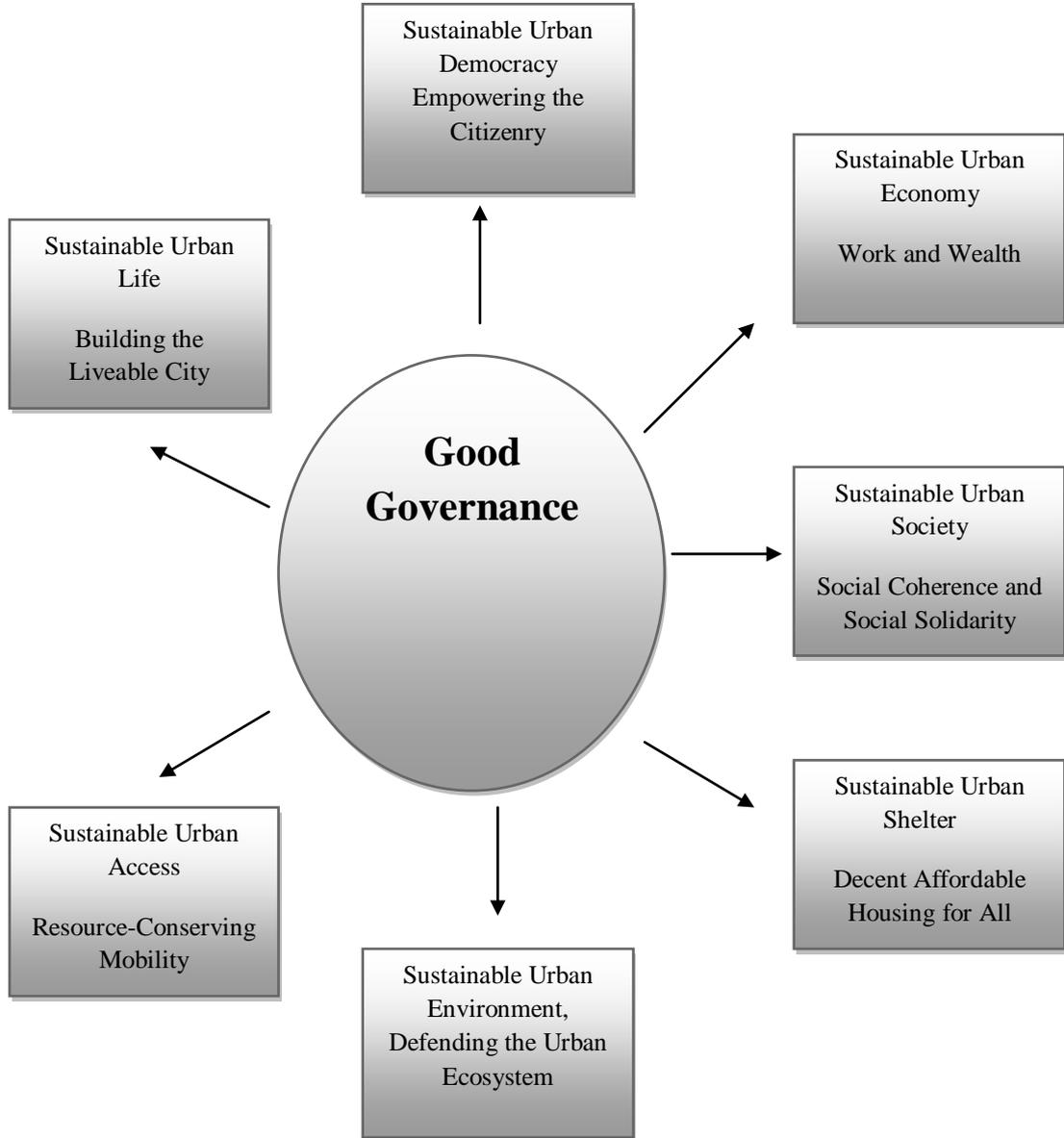
A different approach to the issue is exemplified in the Government of India's launch with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) in September 2001 of a Good Urban Governance Campaign (GOI, 2001). This included a study which monitored urban governance movements at national and local levels, with networked debates between local bodies, public societies, service suppliers and other stakeholders. The operation put forward that good urban governance is characterized by the following interdependent and jointly emphasised means (ibid., 2001):

- Sustainability in the entire scope of urban development.
- Complementarity of powers and capitals (financial) at an appropriate contiguous level.
- Fairness of access to decision-making procedures and to the essential requirements of urban life.
- Effectiveness in the delivery of public services and support for local economic growth.
- Transparency and accountability of decision-makers and all stakeholders.
- Public commitment and citizenship.
- Security of individuals and their living environment.

Laquain (1995) suggests that the governance of metropolitan regions needs to achieve the following main factors: efficiency in the delivery of urban services; equity in urban society; economic development; and environmental sustainability. Based on innovative views supported by Laquain (1995), good governance is a process in which the problems of urban society in various physical, social, economic and managerial sectors can be solved and settled by collective efforts depending on public power. Moreover, in any case where a concept of governorship emphasizes “quality” and “how” to perform its tasks, the concept of governance should be present. Hall and Pfeiffer (2000) consider good governance as comparable to sustainable development (Figure 2.3). They argue that the several components of good governance will work towards good urban development that acts as:

the motor and political driving force, keeping the different elements of sustainable development in balance, integrating them in policies, and ensuring that all the different

agencies in the city share the responsibilities and the benefits of sustainability as the principle, and good governance as the practice (ibid., 2000: 164).

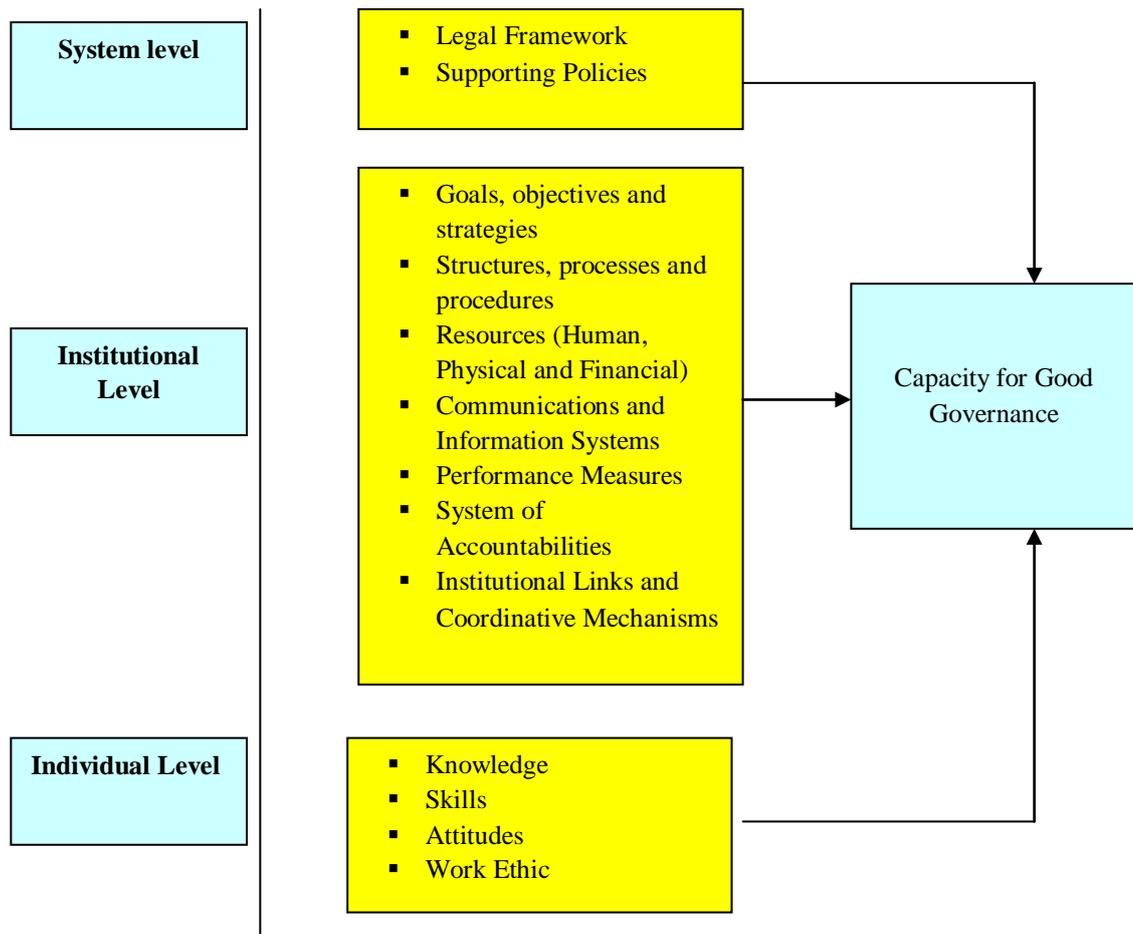


**Figure 2.3 Good Governance, an all-embracing concept with sustainable development as its central objective**

Source: Hall and Pfeiffer, 2000.

It seems from the above that the main principles and elements that illustrate good urban governance require collective decision-making, and the sharing of powers and responsibilities between citizens and states. In fact, identifying the capacity of social capital to formulate collective decision-making and consequently design good urban governance is considered an essential step (Maloney *et al.*, 1999). The capacity of governance is identifiable at three levels: the institutional, organizational and individual levels. Principally capacity is required to consist of two key features: the individual abilities of the public (their skilfulness, aptitudes and manners) and the organizational potentials (practical, systemic, political and innovative competences) (Morgan, 2006). A number of researchers have considered social capital as the key characteristic for creating good governance (Leadbeater, 1997). Social capital is defined as a citizen's tendency to participate in voluntary associations and to engage in social networks aimed at the provision of collective goods. Social capital and its attendant propensity of trusting one's own fellow-citizens has been classified into three types: "bonding social capital", characterised by tight links within a homogeneous group, "bridging social capital", meaning weaker links that connect different groups and associations; and "linking social capital" between those with differing levels of power and social status (Woolcock, 2001).

To arrive at good governance, it is necessary to formulate competence across three arenas. At the individual level, there should be an emphasis on building social capital, raising the knowledge level of civil staff and other actors, as well as developing stakeholders' skills and acquaintanceships. At the institutional level, consideration should be given to transforming formations and practices existing inside associations; and to the direction and circumstances of interactions amongst institutions. In the systemic arena, reforms will target legitimating, legislative; and regulatory instructions and guidelines that exist within organizational and administrative sectors to augment competencies. In Figure 2.4 core elements of developing capacities for good governance are presented.



**Figure 2.4 Essential elements of building capacities for Good Governance**

Source: Astillero and Mangahas, 2002.

## 2.4 Four Principles for “good governance”

As discussed, to realise “good governance”, certain features and elements need to be attained. For the purposes of governance research in Iran, the literature review will explore good governance elements and principles, as well as highlighting various propositions about good governance.

### 2.4.1 Citizen Participation and Involvement

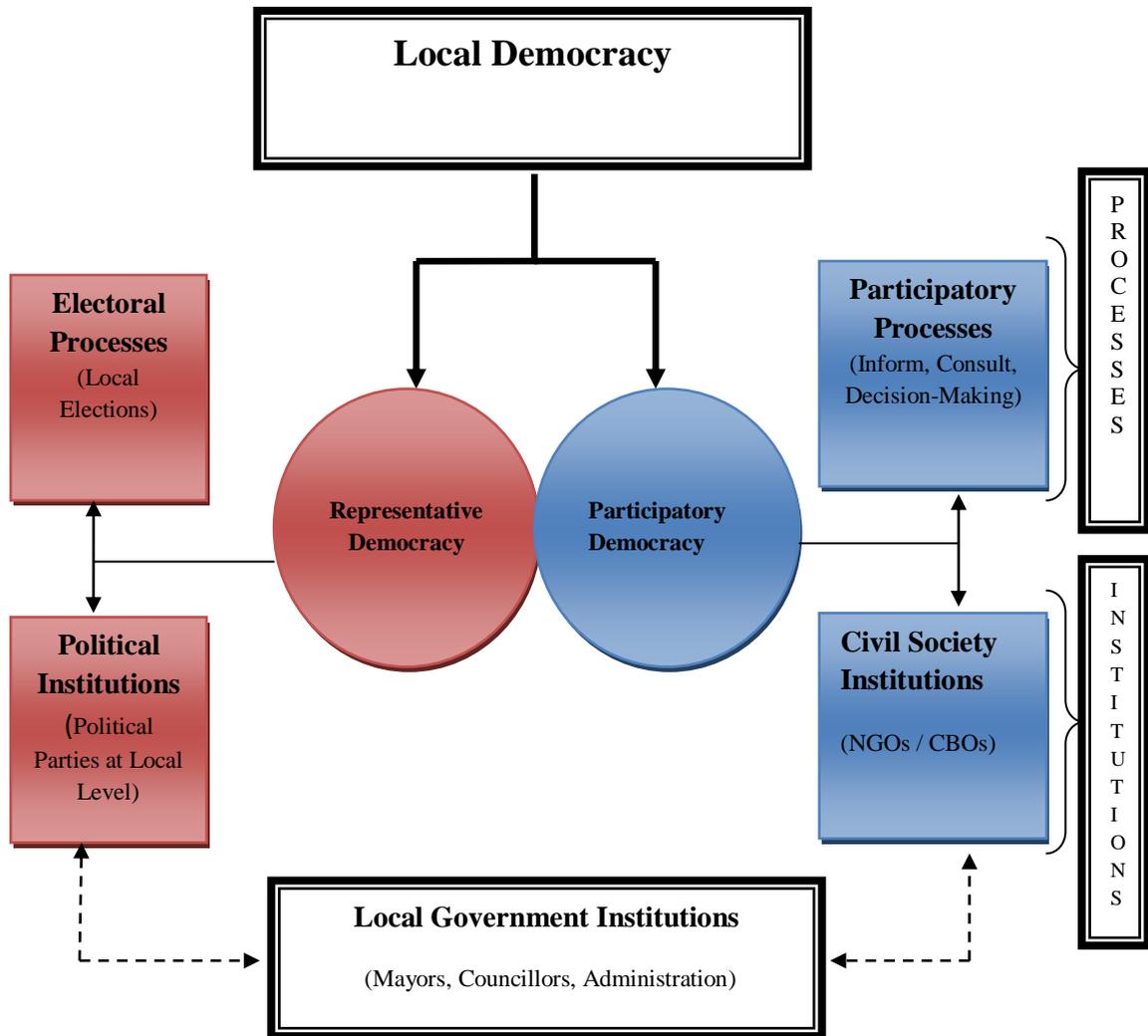
According to Prud’homme (2001), citizens prefer the decisions they made themselves to decisions that have been imposed upon them and consequently, the development of good governance is vitally connected to the concept of local participation. Following the recent global shift in the features and qualities of urban governance, overall public

participation and the citizens' role in particular, have been thought to progress due to the initiation of new spaces for local level involvement and community-based organisations. In fact, political involvement and participation connected with a liberal democratic system has led to the development of new democratic practices based on common foundations, contributing to new political prospects. This has resulted in new strategies offering participation opportunities in budgeting, policy discourses, planning, development, poverty measurement, observation or appraisal, and "participatory" alternatives to the more traditional expert-driven processes (Cornwall, 2000). Such participatory approaches can trigger a fundamental transformation, for example, between a situation which delivers central government-led urban administration to one where urban governance is based on public participation in decision and policy making. A number of institutions and scholars have reflected upon the role of participation in good governance. According to UN-Habitat,

Participation in governance implies mechanisms that promote strong local representative democracies through inclusive, free and fair municipal elections. It also includes participatory decision-making processes, where the civic capital, especially of the poor, is recognized and there exists consensus orientation and citizenship. (UN-Habitat, 2004:4).

This definition, despite being universally applicable, places great emphasis on representative democratic processes for electing local officials, mayors and the institutions that are brought into power in democratic settings. Yet a more holistic view of participation requires a cautious consideration of both representative and participatory democracy (Figure 2.5). Commonly in the traditional form of participation known as representative democracy, public involvement takes place through voting activities, contributions to political parties; supervision of electoral processes and participation in exchanges with representatives. However, in participatory or direct democracy citizens take part in initiatives, local consultations, in the collection of information and in civil society procedures. In representative democracy, elections present a new authorization on a specified occasion, where nominated representatives are followed by an executive on behalf of the citizens and are held responsible to the citizens. Overall, in representative democracy, citizens play a passive role in shaping their cities. By contrast, in participatory democracy citizens play a noteworthy role in

the decision-making processes that have an effect on their quality of life (Centre of Governance and Democracy, 2000). There is thus an urgent concern about the extent to which representative democracy can make a full contribution to the governance process.



**Figure 2.5 Representative and Participatory Democracy**

Source: International IDEA, 2004.

Haus *et al.* (2004) argue that it is principally the citizens' involvement that translates government to governance. In reality, long-established citizen participation in governmental administration signifies contributing to the procedural code, course and performance of community policies. For instance, this sort of participation is summarised in the writing of letters to council members, remonstrations, in the presence at civic assemblies, and in taking an active part in political in elections (*ibid.*, 2004).

Consequently, there are elements that enhance a system of “direct democracy”, initiating a deeper “representative democracy”. “Direct democracy” is associated with the establishment and systemization of citizen involvement in decision-making, generating methods for constructing participation as a standard aspect of civic contributions (Transparency International and United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2004:7). In effect, methods such as boosting the nature and occurrence of public participation, intensifying the rationale of citizen liability and expanding the accountability of elected bodies can lead to a deepened democracy.

As Blair (2000: 25) points out, “increased representation offers significant benefits in itself”. For instance, he suggests that involvement in local self-government elections should direct an improvement of character and worth, and help to disintegrate cultures of imbalance and intolerance. Moreover, participation in local decision-making bodies is able to offer determining roles (e.g. leadership) at the neighbourhood scale. However, contributions to governance also have the potential to be associated with involvement in a comprehensive rationality of participation. Taking part in governance is tied strongly to mechanisms relating to cooperative decision making, whereby publics, consumers, political parties and private foundations take part in the decision-making process and are engaged in its outcomes (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000). Additionally, participation in governance is equivalent to civic engagement, which is appreciated as the dynamic involvement of the public in city issues. Another definition of participation, put forward by Gaventa (2001), is that it can represent a mechanism whereby economically deprived citizens can exercise their voice through new configurations of inclusion, symposium and assembly, in the interests of enlightening and persuading local institutions and of influencing policies.

It is possible to contend that the level, value and quality of participation in urban matters differ between the global North and South. While participation in the North often goes beyond municipal and council elections, participation in the South places more emphasis on the political and traditional sides of participation, focusing on local and urban elections. In fact such dissimilarities, and the extent to which practices and traditions are democratic, determine the characteristics of delivering urban governance in the North and South. A comprehensive evaluation of political participation traditions in different contexts should, therefore, include a consideration of a range of

circumstances, such as “contest competitiveness, seat-to-vote proportionality, and whether those elected to local legislatures reflected demographic characteristics of the general population” (Stewart, 2006: 5). Elections are significant in improving citizen participation, local government accountability and the provision of information to electors. However, undesirably, funding issues, violent behaviour and fraud often dominate both municipal and general elections (Olowu, 2003).

When analysing the notion of participation it is important to note that good participation may not always have positive outcomes and does not guarantee good governance. However, the level and quality of participation can nevertheless determine the quality of governance. Furthermore, while public participation can be considered an essential factor, it does not guarantee a transition to democracy. This echoes the views of Lowndes and Wilson (2001: 639), who argued that “Institutional arrangements that ensure access for interest groups and individual citizens to the processes of government do not necessarily guarantee democratic decision-making”. Participation mechanisms will only be successful in entrenching good institutional delivery if institutions take full account of their accountability to the public (Brett, 2003). On the contrary, participation and local engagement may not foster the achievement of a local cohesive community, of social inclusion and self-sufficient decision-making, nor will they manipulate input. Nevertheless, participation and local engagement might augment public association (Lowndes and Wilson, 2001; Jones, 2003; Peck and Tickell, 2002).

Enhanced participation is likely to create more confidence in the end result and in the institutions which deliver policies (Bull and Jones, 2006: 10). Citizen participation can contribute to good governance if it is aimed at boosting the quality of policy-making and at stimulating the autonomous character of local communities (Haus, 2005). Biased participation in deliberative processes (in terms of gender, class or occupational status) can be compensated by the opportunity of the citizenry to make use of their electoral veto power (ibid., 2005). In democratic theory, citizen participation is based on quantity – how many people are involved – as well as quality – what effect citizen participation has on the outcomes of the policy process (Pateman, 1970). Also, Boddy and Parkinson (2005) suggest that the process of participation is sustainable where power is devolved. The achievement of urban governance therefore depends on an understanding of participation and on an awareness about local affairs.

Advocates of participation have argued that public involvement is not possible without “Institutionalizing a decision-making role for that involvement” (Thomas, 1995: 163). Citizens who are resident in areas with well-constructed establishments and institutions are likely to have a greater tendency to participate by virtue of the fact that the mechanisms for them to do so are already in place. Conversely, residents in areas that have less responsive institutions are less likely to be involved (Berry *et al.*, 1993). Thus, the extent of citizen contributions and involvement appears to be directly related to the quality of existing structures of administration (Bull and Jones, 2006). Other socio-economic factors such as wealth, education and class play a key role in the level and quality of participation as well, whereby middle class residents tend to participate more than the poorer and less educated citizens.

There is a considerable body of literature concerning the dissimilarity of participation in terms of level and quality in different parts of the globe (Hickey and Mohan, 2005). In spite of the function of political, economic and social aspects in defining the level and quality of participation in diverse geographical territories, the common issue that reduces participation appears to be ‘loss of trust’, and the need for ‘confidence-building’ (Veenstra, 2002). Indeed, a lack of faith and confidence may result in the withdrawal of citizens and dishearten them from becoming involved in the decision making process (Transparency International and UN-Habitat, 2004). Trust in a “public body is affected by on the one hand the quality of services that citizens receive and on the other hand how open and honest [the] performance of urban establishments [is]” (The Audit Commission 2003: 8). Trust enhances the level and quality of participation, and is directly related to transparency and accountability. It could be argued that there is an interconnection between the features and characteristics of good urban governance and thus there is a need to evaluate governance with an integrated approach.

According to Vreeker *et al.* (2009) citizen participation can be empowered by:

- Promoting strong local democracy through free and fair municipal elections.
- Establishing the legal authority for civil society to participate effectively through such mechanisms as development councils and neighbourhood advisory committees.

- Making use of mechanisms such as public hearings and surveys
- Promoting an ethic of civic responsibility among citizens through mechanisms such as city or neighbourhood watch groups.
- Undertaking city referenda on important urban development options.

Given that enhanced participation can be achieved through inclusiveness and the empowerment of citizens in the decision-making process, the “Inclusive City” identified by the *Global Campaign on Urban Governance* appears to provide the appropriate space where every individual, regardless of affluence, sexual category, age, ethical or religious background, is facilitated effectively and confidently to contribute to the cities’ developmental and decision-making processes (Global Campaign on Urban Governance, 2002). The Campaign labelled “participation” as the main and universally-accepted principle of good urban governance (Table 2.4).

**Table 2.4 Principles, objectives and practical measures for the inclusive city**

Principles	Objectives	Practical Measures
<b>Participation</b>	Leadership for public participation and stakeholder involvement and responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making use of mechanisms such as public hearings and surveys, town hall meetings, citizen’s forums, city consultations and participatory strategy development, including issue-specific working groups;</li> <li>• Undertaking city referenda concerning important urban development options</li> </ul>
	Building democratic culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting strong local democracies through free and fair municipal elections and participatory decision-making processes;</li> <li>• Promoting an ethic of civic responsibility among citizens through such mechanisms as “City Watch” groups</li> </ul>
	Enablement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling the equal contribution of men and women and the full participation of citizenry in civic life</li> <li>• Establishing the legal authority for society to participate effectively through such mechanisms as development councils and neighbourhood advisory committees.</li> </ul>

Source: UNDP, *The Global Campaign on Urban Governance*, 2002: 27.

### 2.4.2 Accountability

Accountability and transparency are known as fundamental aspects of good governance that necessitate government, private sector and the public to work together to highlight outcomes, communicate comprehensible goals and make progress towards efficient approaches, scrutinizing and explicating achievements (UNDP, 2001).

A is accountable to B when A is obliged to inform B about A's (past or future) actions and decisions, to justify them and to suffer punishment in the case of eventual misconduct (O'Donnell, 1999: 17).

To what degree can urban managers be held accountable for their actions? Are there forums for citizen complaints and feedbacks? Who is responsible for the activities of the urban governance network? From the government viewpoint and following Irazábal (2005) there are three aspects of accountability which are essential in urban governance: political, legal, and bureaucratic. She suggests that an organisation is politically accountable when the political platform is based on a credible and reliable voting process; that legal accountability requires public officials' strict compliance with the rule of law; and that bureaucratic accountability necessitates the free exercise of governance and the competent flow of information by the mass media, public press and executors regarding decision-makers relationships with citizens (Irazábal, 2005). Mehta (1998) considers urban governance through its feature of accountability, drawn from the manner in which cities handle their financial affairs, utilize resources and their benefits for their publics, and linked to executive necessities and decision-making procedures. An issue arising from the literature on accountability is an over-emphasis on governmental and administrative accountability, and a disregard of the function and role of citizens in accountability. Hyden *et al.* (2003) suggest that in building good governance, accountability is an inevitable requirement, and not only for the governmental and organizational sectors. They believe citizens too should be accountable to the administration and its regulations.

Accountability signifies that people will be able to hold government responsible for its actions as they are affected by them. The combination of "accountability" and "participation" are at the heart of the democratic factor in local governance (Blair, 2000). According to UN-Habitat,

Accountability implies that mechanisms are present and effective for transparency in the operational functions of local government; responsiveness towards the higher level of local government; local population and civic grievances; standards for professional and personal integrity and rule of law and public policies are applied in a transparent and predictable manner. (UN-Habitat, 2004: 5).

According to The UN Global Campaign on Urban Governance (2002), the accountability of local bodies to their public is a fundamental element of good governance. Accountability is vital to participant comprehension of local government and is further enhanced by appraisal and performance measures:

Formal publication of contracts, tenders, budget and accounts; control by higher levels of government; Codes of conduct; Facility to receive complaints; Anti-corruption commission; Disclosure of personal income and assets and Regular independent audit are the key elements of accountability in urban regions. (The Global Campaign on Good Urban Governance, 2004: 6). Within this context, Table 2.5 presents the Institute of Development Studies' framework on how to enhance accountability for both citizens and local government officials.

**Table 2.5 Citizen Voice and organizational responsiveness**

Conditions for effective citizens' voice initiatives	Conditions for effective responsiveness of local government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad membership base and alliance with middle class and elite groups</li> <li>• Technical knowledge</li> <li>• Knowledge of official policy discourses and of effective alternatives</li> <li>• Publicity – ability to effectively utilise the media</li> <li>• Lots of time and starting small</li> <li>• Social capital – where trust and mutual support has been built</li> <li>• Horizontal coalitions with other bodies</li> <li>• Formal standing in policy making areas and in oversight agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal champions/reform entrepreneurs</li> <li>• External pressure</li> <li>• Vertical slice strategies – commitment of top leadership to reform</li> <li>• Incentive system rewarding</li> <li>• Participatory processes and client focus</li> <li>• Involvement of street level bureaucrats in policy making and planning of service delivery</li> <li>• Involvement of external actors in local monitoring systems</li> <li>• Linking agency income to performance-user fees, bonuses etc</li> <li>• Investment in attitudinal change</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Institute of Development Studies, 2001.

Accountability stands on three key pillars: financial, political and administrative. Jabbra and Dwivedi (1989) argue that the term also includes executive, authorized, proficient, political and moral dimensions. In addition, scholars such as O'Donnel (1999) differentiated accountability into horizontal and vertical types, in reference to opposing or alternating concepts. Horizontal accountability stresses the capacity of public institutions to monitor and evaluate the activities of other urban institutions, and the subdivisions of state government. In other words, horizontal accountability expresses the powers of state institutions to check abuse of office and excesses of other governance institutions. On the other hand, vertical accountability is a means through which public officials are held accountable and urged to implement the principles of good performance by citizens and civil society. There is diverse opinion as to what comprises horizontal and vertical accountability (Cornwall and Gaventa, 2001), based on who determines whether one agency of government exercises control or supervision over the other. The typical top-bottom flow of authority in the civil service may be viewed as vertical accountability, while horizontal accountability is society's ability to participate directly or indirectly in the imposition of accountability from the public service.

Another form of accountability is that of "diagonal accountability"; it better represents convergence between horizontal and vertical accountability, highlighting citizens' participation in policy-making practice and their interactions with horizontal accountability through getting their voices heard (Goetz and Gaventa, 2001). Accountability has an administrative dimension whereby elected government officials and representatives of the public must be accountable to the citizens (Blair, 2000).

The World Bank categorised accountability into three major types: political accountability, expressed in local elections; administrative accountability, exercised using administrative structures by organizations; and social accountability, linked to a system and process that holds establishments accountable to the public (World Bank, 2004). Political accountability based on elections has an inadequate capability to endorse accountability due to its intermittent nature, and its role in supporting mechanisms against corruption is rather restricted (Transparency International and UN-Habitat, 2004). Administrative accountability appears to limit itself to horizontal and vertical mechanisms involving institutions. Their interrelationships do not always admit a significant contribution from outside decision-makers in urban governance.

The major difference between the World Bank and UN propositions on accountability is that, in the latter, the public has become the single hub of social accountability; while in the former, stakeholders, including government institutions, citizens and the private sector, are involved in the decision making process through their different roles and capacities to achieve the goal of good urban governance (ibid., 2004).

The contemporary debate in the governance literature is that of measuring accountability and what type of scheme and process can enhance and guarantee accountability. It is generally recognized that accountability schemes are efficient and successful once they are collective and inclusive (Olowu, 1999b; Blair 2000). In some developing countries, the mechanism for solving local government accountability issues emphasises central government horizontal power and monitoring. The failure of this form of accountability is that governmental supervisors often mishandle and mistreat their widespread influence and control over local governments. For example, local bodies are exploited on the basis of political affiliations or by prejudicing urban councils run by an opposition party, and severe delays are inflicted on the disbursement of budgetary allocation to local governments. These are current issues in assessing accountability which are also common issues in tackling good urban governance across a number of developing countries (Haque, 1997; Olowu, 1997). In fact, a major difference between the global South and the North in exercising urban governance lies in their mechanisms for applying legislative control when government institutions are not adhering to appropriate administrative ideals or the functioning of citizens' accountability is flouted (Boachi-Danquah, 2001).

One major concern that has constrained the quality of accountability, particularly in developing countries, is the issue of funding and the financial dependency of local bodies. Evidence has shown that central government uses financial power as a tool to influence local government. The increasing dependence of NGOs and urban administrations on the state for resources and financial support negates the needs for bottom-up accountability mechanisms (Edwards and Hulme, 1996). Another major aspect of measuring accountability is the quality of service delivery in cities and often the delivery of urban services is shaping the relationship between government, consumers and providers. The World Development Report (2004) developed a framework that explores accountability for urban services by characterising the “short

route” between the public and service providers and the “long route” between citizens, decision-makers and service providers. The report suggests that the most influential remedy for an absence of strong accountability is empowering citizens with a stronger voice, as well as increasing customers’ participation in service delivery, which can guarantee that local bodies or central government are made aware of the quality of government services, and that the public’s needs are met. Likewise, as part of the inclusive city, the global campaign on good urban governance designed a guideline for urban governance stakeholders, to aid development of the principle of accountability (Table 2.6). However, “to create real accountability is by far more complex than many participatory theorists currently assume” (Brett, 2003: 6).

**Table 2.6 Principles of Accountability**

Principles	Objectives	Practical Measures
<b>Transparency and Accountability</b>	Transparent and accountable decision-making processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular, organized and open consultations of citizens on city financial matters; and of others on the participatory budget; transparent tendering and procurement procedures and the use of integrity pacts and monitoring mechanisms in the process; internal independent audit capacity; and annual external audit reports that are publicly disseminated and debated;</li> <li>Creating public feedback mechanisms such as an ombudsman, hotlines, complaint offices and procedures, citizen report cards and procedures for public petitioning and/or public interest litigation.</li> </ul>
	Access to information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting the public’s right of access to city information;</li> <li>Providing access to city information to create a level playing field for potential investors.</li> </ul>
	High standards of ethics and professional conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular, independently executed programmes to test public official integrity;</li> <li>Removing administrative and procedural incentives for corruption, including simplifying practical measures, local taxation system and reduction of administrative discretion in permit processing;</li> <li>Promoting an ethic of service to the public among officials while putting into place adequate remuneration for public servants;</li> <li>Establishing codes of conduct and provision for regular disclosure of assets of public officials and elected representatives;</li> <li>Developing practically enforceable standards of accountability and service delivery, such as ISO, that will transcend the terms of public office holders.</li> </ul>

Source: UNDP, The Global Campaign on Urban Governance, 2002: 28.

### 2.4.3 Effectiveness

Studies about effectiveness in governance have been faced with major concerns at both the organisational (Goodman and Pennings, 1977) and network level (Provean and Milward, 2001), with the key question guiding these studies being: effectiveness for whom? Although “effectiveness” has been investigated from an array of perspectives such as network and organisation approaches, unexpectedly scant attention has been paid to “urban/local governance effectiveness”. Effectiveness in the local context is viewed at the scale of urban governance, using the following questions to guide the discussion. What criteria can formulate effective urban governance? Is it driven by the quality of public service delivery or by the interactions of the private sector and NGOs, or through the efficiency of financing policy and funding factors? It is apparent that all of the features reflected in the questions can potentially have a strong contribution in generating an effective system of governance. Effectiveness means the best exercise of the existing resources is achieved in procedures and institutions (Giya and Mukotsanjera-Kowayi, 2009). A number of scholars who consider effectiveness in urban governance focus on issues such as bureaucratic powers within large hierarchies. They identify a lack of responsiveness and innovation as causes of deficiencies in effectiveness (Barton, 1980; Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999). While there is a pessimistic tendency regarding the function of public bureaucracy (Goodsell, 1994; Stillman, 1996), others describe and explore admirable direction and supervision within governmental organizations (Cohen and Eimicke 1995; Holzer and Callahan, 1998).

In clarifying the concept of effectiveness, it is necessary to distinguish it from the concept of ‘Efficiency’. The notion of efficiency compares the quantity of a service provided (e.g. tons of refuse collected) to the resources (e.g. labour hours) used to provide it, and thus efficiency provides a measure of how reasonable service costs are. But, as Epstein (1998) spells out, effectiveness measures service responsiveness to public needs and desires; service quality is an important effectiveness consideration. The valuation of effectiveness in local governance may include analysing public circumstances, capacity achievements, public or customer contentment, awareness of individuals and combating corruption (Sisk, 2001).

According to the UN (2004: 21)

Effectiveness of governance measures the existing mechanisms and the socio-political environment for institutional efficiency (through subsidiarity and effective predictability) in financial management and planning, delivery of services and response to civil society concerns.

For its part, the World Bank views Government Effectiveness (GE) as comprised of citizen perspectives concerning the quality of public services, measures of its autonomy from political forces, the quality of originating policy and its accomplishment, and the ability of the central administration to adhere to such guidelines (World Bank, 2009). Similarly, Kaufmann *et al.*, (1998) use government effectiveness as a principle of good governance, making it refer to the combination of inspections of the quality of civil service delivered, the quality of officialdom and the administrative system, the capability of public staff, the autonomy of public facilities and provisions from central government forces and the reliability of the local administration's dedication to following correct procedures. It is clear based on the abovementioned characteristics that governance efficiency needs to be addressed through organizational, operational<sup>3</sup> and institutional frameworks. Supporting this is the argument that the cooperation and assistance of NGOs play a key role in shaping the effectiveness of local governance (as proposed in Pierre's Urban Regime Theory – Pierre, 1998). That means that effectiveness as an output of local bodies such as municipalities and urban councils is dependent on the cooperation of citizens, NGOs and the private sector.

Therefore, an inclusive approach is required to assess the effectiveness of the administrative system in cities. Lindblom (1965) identifies a direct relationship between participation and the effectiveness of governance. He argues that effective governance is generated by participation. Citizens' involvement alone may not guarantee the effectiveness of governance; however, it is essential for the system's efficiency (Haus *et al.*, 2005). The effectiveness of local governments has been shaped by a variety of factors such as financial autonomy, delivery of services, proficiency of local bodies and also through interaction between citizens and local institutions. According to Manor (1999), financial and administrative decentralised policy has practical consequences on improving the effectiveness and accountability of local governance. Furthermore, to progress effectiveness at local level, local government must be prepared to formulate basic budgeting and management services in addition to scrutinizing and watching over their legitimate third-sectors. The UN approach to assessing the effectiveness of urban

governance, summarised in Table 2.7, depends on local government income and transfer, investment budgeting, tax collection, publication of local government performance, customer satisfaction assessment and existence of a vision statement (UN Habitat, 2004:3). It is clear from the UN Framework that funding and financial independence play an important role in developing the level and quality of effectiveness. At the same time, transparency has a key role in shaping effectiveness.

In the developing countries local government performance in delivering urban services has a valuable role in measuring effectiveness. To run effectively, urban services require significant financial resources, sound management and adequate human resources, requirements which many local bodies in developing cities are struggling to cope with in delivering services. Generally, the concept of “effectiveness” at the local scale refers to efficiency and quality of local administration, the delivery of public services, the value of local public policy, and decision-making processes.

**Table 2.7 A practical guideline for enhancing governance effectiveness**

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt clear objectives and targets for the provision of public services, which maximise the contributions all sectors of society can make to urban economic development; encouraging voluntarism.</li> <li>• Delivery and regulation of public services through partnerships with the private and civil society sectors;</li> <li>• Promote equitable user-pay principles for municipal services and infrastructure;</li> <li>• Encourage municipal departments to find innovative means of delivering public goods and Services through management contracts;</li> <li>• Promote integrated, inter-sectoral planning and management;</li> <li>• Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of local revenue collection;</li> <li>• Removing unnecessary barriers to secure tenure and to the supply of finance;</li> <li>• Developing and implementing fair and predictable legal and regulatory frameworks that encourage commerce and investment, minimize transaction costs, and legitimize the informal sector.</li> </ul> |
|--|

Source: UNDP, Global Campaign on good urban governance, 2002:23.

Turning to the dimension of efficiency, according to the global campaign on good urban governance (2002), to be efficient, cities are required to be fiscally fit and worthwhile in the administration of their income, resources and expenses. Meanwhile, the management and delivery of services depends on the competence of the government, NGOs and the indirect participation of the public in generating urban wealth. In addition, increasing the effectiveness of local governments cuts into the power and

profits of many powerful vested interests and generally requires an intimate knowledge of local context and constant local support (Satterthwaite, 2001: 13).

#### **2.4.4 Equity**

The context of “equity” is complex and can be considered from a variety of aspects and views. On issues of local fairness, equity and efficiency are regularly balanced against each other; and values of equity function as a tool for public services to deal with local fairness issues when effectiveness alone is not able to offer a determining outcome (Young, 1994). Equity literally means “treating equal cases alike”. An explanation gathered from the administration of service delivery to citizens indicates that equity in terms of public consumption of services is frequently infringed (McGeary *et al.*, 1988). In order to establish whether each individual receives a fair distribution of all there is to obtain, class and group need to be identified. Harvey (1989) identifies sexual categories, ethnic backgrounds, class and even way of life as foundations for distinctions. Lefebvre (1996: 174) believes that in considering the concept of equity in the city, the rights of age, gender, state of employment, instruction, learning, ethnicity, vacation, wellbeing and accommodation are essential. For Lefebvre “the right to the city” manifests itself as a superior form of rights: right to freedom, to individualisation and socialisation, to habitation; and to the inhabitants, the right to the city signifies citizens’ rights (Lefebvre, 1996: 173 and 194).

According to the UN-Habitat (2004: 21) the context of

Equity implies inclusiveness with unbiased access (be it for economically weaker sections, women, children or elderly, religious or ethnic minorities or the physically disabled) to basic necessities (nutrition, education, employment and livelihood, health care, shelter, safe drinking water, sanitation and others) of urban life, with institutional priorities focusing on pro-poor policies and an established mechanism for responding to the basic services (UGI: 2004: 21).

The UN framework emphasizes principles of citizenship, rights to access basic services, percentage of female councillors, capacity of women in key positions, pricing policy for low income citizens, street trade, equity of access to decision-making processes and the basic necessities of urban life (UGI, 2004). It seems the main categories of equity framed by the UN emphasise social equity, particularly gender equity in the urban

decision-making process. UN Habitat has been playing an important role in addressing gender issues in urban regions through raising awareness of the need to link gender equity with development projects. In parallel to the UN-Governance approach, the Millennium Project (2004) set up a scheme of proposals and suggestions to further gender equality and women's power and concentrate on women as principal determinants of success. The project focused on a power-sharing strategy based on the idea that the distribution of power would result in equity of accessibility and resource utilisation. Thus, gender balance and women's participation become necessary in all processes of urban policymaking, prioritizing schemes and resource distribution. The inclusive city (Table 2.8) as a model provides every individual – including the economically deprived, adolescent or elderly citizens, different ethnic communities and the physically disabled – with fair access to food and drinking water, instruction, work and income, wellbeing, housing and hygiene (Global Campaign on Urban Governance, 2002).

**Table 2.8 Principles, Objectives and Practical Measures for the Inclusive City**

Principles	Objectives	Practical Measures
<b>Equity</b>	Resource allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing equitable principles for prioritizing infrastructure development and pricing urban services;</li> <li>• Establishing investment incentives for targeted sectors and geographic areas;</li> <li>• Removing unnecessary barriers to secure tenure and to the supply of finance;</li> <li>• Creating a fair and predictable regulatory framework;</li> </ul>
	Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that women and men have equal access to decision-making processes, resources and basic services and that this access is measured through gender disaggregated data;</li> <li>• Establish quotas for women representatives in local authorities and encourage their promotion to higher management positions within municipalities;</li> <li>• Ensure by-laws and economic development policies support the informal sector;</li> <li>• Promote equal inheritance rights for land and property.</li> </ul>

Source: UNDP, The Global Campaign on Urban Governance (2002: 27-30).

Urban governance needs to be gender-aware if it is to be unbiased, sustainable and efficient in addressing the objectives of governing cities. On the other hand, a gender perspective refers not to voters or contributors but to the practice of urban decision-making, development, management and organization. In fact, highlighting gender in governance aims to increase women's participation not merely in politics but also in civic society processes and to build up gender sensitivity and competence. The gender proposition in urban governance equity is linked to the acknowledgment of and awareness to the diverse position and functions of women and men in human life and the social relationships between them (Beall, 1996). However, the level and quality of women's demands differ between cities and within a city. The expectations and demands of women are also differentiated between different areas and spaces. Holston (1998) states that for the deprived and for women with lower-socio-economic status, survival and common living issues may be the most important aspects, while women with higher status may focus on democratic participation or equity. Formalising women's demands, needs and rights to be included in the decision making process has been reliant on urban regimes and schemas (Isin, 2000).

## **2.5 Approaches in Governance Assessment**

The question that might be raised at this point is: why assess local governance? According to the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre (2009) the assessment of governance can be conducted for four reasons:

1. Pathologic: the main purpose of undertaking the assessment is to perceive and understand concerns and their extent and scale.
2. Scrutinising: measurement is carried out on a routine and scheduled basis to monitor and observe the achievement or malfunction of the governance agenda and schemes.
3. Weighing up: this assessment answers the question of whether schemes or programmes have gained their initial scheduled objectives.
4. Discourse: this assessment aims to involve citizens and residents in well-informed dialogues and debates about local issues.

Different studies of governance have measured governance from a multiplicity of perspectives and angles. While it is not the aim of this research to discuss them all, this

section will review governance assessments which have made contributions in line with the research aim.

The UNDP, tracking its early initiatives on local governance, notes the development of a regional scheme for Latin America entitled “Methodological guidelines for local governance analysis” which determined to assess, persuade and advance the level of governance at the local level. These guidelines are based on six domains of good local governance: a “strategic vision for the city, legitimacy and leadership, active and positive relationships between actors, appropriate institutional capacity, citizen participation, and a focus on human development” (UNDP, 2004). As well as collecting data through public surveys and citizens’ interviews, official reports and codes are mined for information with regard to local affairs. The efficiency of the scheme is shown in its capacity to design an initiative proposal suitable for local citizens which, on one hand, enables them to measure governance processes, and on the other hand is designed to enhance and encourage the quality of governance at the local level.

The assessment tool known as the UGI (Urban Governance Index) was established by UN-Habitat and focuses on four main Urban Governance features: Effectiveness, Equity, Participation and Accountability, which are subsequently divided into 25 sub-indexes. According to UN-Habitat, the purposes of UGI are twofold: at a comprehensive level the UGI intends “to demonstrate the importance of good urban governance in achieving broad development objectives”, while at a local scale “the index is expected to catalyze local action to improve the quality of urban governance by developing indicators that respond directly to their unique contexts and needs” (UN-HABITAT, 2004b:11).

CIVICUS measures governance through the Civil Society Index, which is initiated and implemented by and for civil society organisations (Heinrich, 2007). Basically, this method has integrated a participatory research approach by involving key stakeholders including government, donors, scholars and the community, based on 74 indicators that aim to achieve strength and sustainability for civil society. The survey’s questions interrogate structure – civil society’s circumstances in terms of its social, economic and organisational state; environment – legal and political space offered to citizens; values – the dimension covers a broad range of issues in governance (transparency, democracy, non-violence and gender equity); and finally impact – emphasising civil society’s

contributions. On a practical level the survey has been implemented in Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and the Mediterranean, Post-communist Europe and Eurasia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Western Europe – overall in nine countries. The report on this implementation process concludes that citizen participation in civil activities is somewhat low, even in Latin American countries, where although citizen involvement increases where there is a political and social dispute, it is also more likely to decline promptly to stabilize a political situation (CIVICUS, 2006). The result excludes Western Europe, where citizen participation is said to be at an appropriate level and stable (ibid., 2006). A similar scenario to that found in the assessment of participation emerges for transparency and accountability mechanisms, which have been practiced poorly in every region except for Western Europe. However, the findings on participation, particularly in Western Europe, emphasise citizen involvement in civic organisations and do not observe any noteworthy degree of citizen political participation, which even in Western European countries is relatively low. However, an issue that might be raised here is the extent to which the methods and generated data are competent for cross-country governance assessments and comparisons, and the extent to which they are capable of measuring governance at the small and local scales.

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) initiated an independent index in 2000 to measure local governance and the state of democracy around the world. Early research focuses on representative democracy and participatory democracy, aiming to discover the strengths and weaknesses of local governance in Southern and East Africa (IDEA, 2003). Using data integrated through a questionnaire, the index assesses elections, political parties, elected officials, civic engagement and community based organisation in selected cities. As noted, one constructive part of the approach is that both participatory governance and representative governance indicators were included in this approach, and covered through a wide range of themes. The IDEA concludes by confirming the need to enhance service delivery, citizen participation and conflict management in the selected cities (ibid., 2003). The IDEA approach is a scheme to assess local governance and its quality of democracy via seven key governance areas including: Citizen Participation; Authorisation; Representation; Accountability; Transparency; Responsiveness; Solidarity (Landman, 2008). Recently the method has been developed universally and practiced in 20 countries including: Bangladesh, El Salvador, Italy, Kenya, Malawi, Peru, New Zealand and South Korea, through a

democracy building approach (ibid.). The method tends to emphasise public perceptions as being key elements in the democracy building process and participatory research.

Good Governance for Local Development (GOFORGOLD) develops a scheme to assess governance at sub-national, regional, municipal and local levels (Wilde *et al.*, 2008). Differing from the most existing methods of assessing governance which place more stress on macro-level and cross-country appraisal, the method productively underlines governance measurement from the sub-national level towards the local level. Despite the conceptual design of the index that has been made to conform to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), since it is promoted by UN-Habitat, it actually has similarities with the Urban Governance Index in terms of function and practice. All types of data, such as population, budgets, and regulations are transformed into quantitative data under two categories: single numbers that are articulated by standards, means, ratios, fractions; and dual indications stated via 0/1. The index is composed of seven main aspects and 25 indicators (Table 2.9).

**Table 2.9 Principles and indicators for the GOFORGOLD Index**

Representation	Participation	Accountability	Transparency	Effectiveness	Security	Equity
1. Elected Councils	5. Public Forum for Women, Youth and PWDs	8. Anti-Corruption Policy	12. Facilities for Citizens Complaints	16. Total Sub-National Budget and Expenditure	20. Conflict Resolution	24. Affirmative Action for the Poor
2. Elected Village Leaders / Municipal Mayors	6. Existence of Civic Groups	9. Control by Central Government	13. Right to Public Information	17. Predictability of transfers in Local Government Budget	21. Protection Against Crime and Violence	25. Affirmative Action for Women
3. Voter Turn-out and Voter Participation by Sex	7. Citizen's Capacity to Engage in Decision-making	10. Independent Audit	14. Public Review of Budget and Financial Reports	18. Total number of Civil Servants	22. Territorial Boundaries	
4. Women Councillors		11. Codes of Conduct	15. Formal Publication contracts/ tenders	19. Published performance Delivery Standard	23. Security of Land Tenure and Land- Use	

Source: UNDP Oslo Governance Centre: A Users' Guide to Measuring Local Governance, 2008: 167.

In spite of this the index has been seeking to uncover a broad range of issues that are directly associated with governance. The major issue in this regard is that the index merely stands on governmental or municipal reports, which puts the credibility of the

outcome somewhat at risk. As an example, when the index was implemented in Afghanistan, there was an issue about the extent to which the data produced through official reports in a country such as Afghanistan (which has a non-transparent and embattled government with a high level of corruption) are consistent and reliable. Hence, a solitary emphasis on such objective data could be risky.

The Local Government Barometer has proven itself in practice to be a useful tool to address governance issues at local level in South Africa as it translates complex governance concepts into locally contextualized and relevant issues (The Impact Alliance, 2008: 2).

The Local Governance Barometer (LGB) is an example of a universal model of governance assessment. It was initiated in 2005 and revised in 2007 to analyse local governance circumstances and to augment the capacity of local governance. The index was characterised by five main governance aspects: effectiveness; accountability; rule of law; participation and civic engagement; and finally equity (The Impact Alliance, 2007). The scheme arrives at quantitative data based on multiple data sources, including governmental data, interviews and surveys and citizen's views, principally through random sampling. The method mixes qualitative and quantitative approaches on the one hand, and on the other hand the index stands on both objective and subjective sources of data; thus it is more likely to arrive at a reliable product. Additionally, another dynamic function of the approach is summarised in its applicability across triple scales: national, provincial and city. The Institute for Democracy in South Africa (*Ideas*) concludes that in those countries where the method has been implemented, including Botswana, South Africa, Cameroon, Ecuador, Ghana, Madagascar and Tanzania, most municipalities have not succeeded in dialoguing with citizens with regard to their vision for city development, and in most municipal councils the lack of an efficient form of leadership is in place. Furthermore, the study acknowledges that poor transparency, accountability and information flow in budgetary and planning functions are endemic (*ibid.*, 2008).

In another approach the Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative (LGI), in cooperation with the Tocqueville Research Centre (T-RC), develops the tool: Indicators of Local Democratic Governance, to measure and explicate local governance. The index addresses the creation of primary survey data and specifies the circumstances of local governance in Central and Eastern Europe through public survey, municipal and

elected council survey. The index design is based on political, legislative and socio-economic dynamics, based on five main indicators (Wilde *et al.*, 2008: 74):

- 1- Policy-Making Performance: Informed and Coordinated Decisions;
- 2- Democratic Performance: Openness and Fairness;
- 3- Policy Implementation: Effectiveness;
- 4- Responsive Performance: Satisfaction and Goal Congruence;
- 5- The Level of Service Provision as a Performance Measurement.

Each indicator is evaluated through a number of dimensions. For example, the “democratic performance: openness and fairness indicator” is assessed by several sub-indexes consisting of transparency in budget; public accessibility to local governance documents, state of the public forum and citizen’s voice; information flow; and communications of local government with citizens (Soos, 2001). Generally, in spite of the generation of a set of primary data, the major difficulty regarding the method can be summarised in the over-complexity of the assessment process, which requires a highly-informed technical body to administer the method.

In several studies the World Bank research groups measure governance from a public administration and service delivery point of view (Ritva, and Svensson, 2002a; 2002b). In terms of its construction, the method was designed and developed through a participatory approach by involving key service delivery decision-makers, including governmental bodies, service providers, NGOs and the private sector in its design. The resulting approach, the Quantitative Services Delivery Survey (QSDS), assesses service delivery through six main variables: a) Facility features and characteristics, consisting of size, ownership, ease of access; b) Input, which includes financial value and capacity; c) Output; d) Quality, such as employees performance in a particular service; e) Financing, meaning fiscal resources; f) Organisational mechanisms and responsibilities (Dehn *et al.*, 2002). The survey questions reflect issues conveyed in terms of incentives, service suppliers (government, NGO and private sector) performance, expenditure effectiveness, and quality of service. Overall, the method focuses on the efficiency of public spending and on both the quality and quantity of delivering services. Dehn *et al.* (2002) believe that the method is valuable as a tool to position and measure “political and bureaucratic capture, leakage of funds” (ibid.: 10-16). Also it can be beneficial for

assessing and developing financial and fiscal transparency and quantifying the quality of interaction between donors, executives and service consumers.

The Council of Europe in 2005 initiated a methodological guideline named “Concerted development of social cohesion indicators” meant to design indicators for and with citizens to address wellbeing. The five dimensions of governance included: “Institutional relations with citizens, non-discrimination in rights, rule of law, social services; and civic dialogue and public consultation”, with a scoring scheme banded between 0-5 (Council of Europe, 2005: 17). The productive part of this method is the involvement of broad citizen groups, including adolescents, senior citizens, marginalised and low-income people; entrepreneurs, civil employees and the Institutes representative. However, the major concern noted is the citizen’s perceptions of the credibility and accuracy of the key data sources.

Parallel to international organisations, at the national scale governance assessments have been accomplished by a number of country-level organisations. The *Kemitraan Partnership* (2008) is an independent Indonesian research initiative that has developed a comprehensive governance assessment index to measure governance through the interaction of government, bureaucracy, civil and economic societies (Partnership Governance Index, 2008). In another national example, the Indian Public Affairs Centre (PAC), in partnership with the Asian Development Bank, has developed a Citizen Report Card, which assesses the quality of service delivery from a citizen’s perspective. The CRC tackles the quality of services delivery in terms of consistency, accountability, standards, citizen’s rights, expenditure and budgeting policies (Asian Development Bank and Asian Development Bank Institute, 2007). Despite the simplicity of its tools and its sole focus on quantitative measurement, the CRC method has succeeded to some extent in capturing good governance principles with regard to service delivery. Furthermore, the *Swiss Foundation for Development*, along with *CARE* in Bangladesh, have launched the Local Governance Self-Assessment (LGSA) schedule in 2006, which aims to assess the local governance situation and to boost participatory and accountable governance in Bangladesh (Swiss Foundation for Development; International Cooperation and SHARIQUE, 2009). The LGSA method is largely based on a bottom-up approach, building social capital by enhancing public awareness and education at the

neighbourhood scale on local governance issues. However, the index is totally reliant on public perceptions as a source of input and this might affect the reliability of the final product.

What has emerged from the above discussion about governance assessment approaches suggests that measurements of local governance present significant facts about specific concerns at the local level, such as decentralization and participation strategies and local accountability procedures (UNDP Oslo Centre, 2009). A governance measuring tool is an appraisal that expresses the extent of development in the existing conditions of governance on one hand and its prospects appointed situation on the other hand (ibid, 2009).

Although having a number of constructive characteristics, the existing tools are not without their deficiencies. Generally the issues fall into two categories: theoretical and operational. In terms of theoretical issues, some tackled the state of democracy in spite of an ostensible focus on governance processes. It could be argued that the lack of clear distinction within governance indicators and the complex nature of the governance exacerbate this ambiguity. To some extent, governance indicators have been faced with questionable boundaries and overlapping spheres. Furthermore, some of the concepts envisaged by these instruments are insufficiently realised through the quantitative approach or objective data used for their measurement. In terms of operational concerns, some require well-trained experts in methodology and highly-experienced in analysis. Time and cost are other issues that the assessments have been faced with.

It may be understood that despite the significant efforts made recently in this regard, the challenges of selecting a tool for a comprehensive governance assessment are undeniable. For example, Court *et al.* (2002: 4) highlight the absence of a “holistic” approach to measuring governance. Others underline the need for progress in developing a survey on an international scale based on perceptions of governance, as well as in designing precise country in-depth indicative governance assessment (Kaufmann *et al.*, 1999). In a wider context, the basic issue of governance assessment is the massive creation of measuring mechanisms among multi-dimensional establishments (UNDP, 2005).

In terms of type and nature, the local governance assessment indicators can potentially be categorised as “input”; “process”; “output”; “perception”; and “outcome” indicators (UNDP, 2007). While process indicators signify the manner in which the outcomes or performance are accomplished, performance or outcome indicators underline governance achievements and goals in a typical dimension such as level of fraud (Court *et al.*, 2002). Disregarding any of the above indicator categories in designing governance measurement can put the precision and accuracy of the method at risk. Combining and linking these indicators together can notably enhance the effectiveness of governance assessment. However, Kaufmann *et al.* (1999) suggest that the tendency to aggregate measures by merging indicators from various bases does not improve the precision of the assessment.

The evaluation of good urban governance not only necessitates precise “indicators”, but also a set of “standards” by which the elements are measured (Stewart, 2006: 200). After cautiously considering the variety of governance assessments conducted by diverse institutions, this research will employ the UN-Habitat approach (Urban Governance Index) as an assessment scheme to measure the urban governance mechanism in Tehran. As noted earlier, this focuses on four main Urban Governance features: Effectiveness, Equity, Participation and Accountability. The UN-Habitat approach fits well with existing research on these issues, as it embraces ideological features as well as theoretical values and principles of governance. Moreover, the global implications of this method and its origination and introduction by one of the best acknowledged international bodies further justify the selection of this method. However, the methods that attempt to measure complex phenomena in simplified numerical forms have their limitations. This is one of the reasons why the application of the UN-Habitat approach will be followed by qualitative research for understanding the contexts, motivations and problems involved, which would be essential in analysing and evaluating urban governance in Iran. The method will be explained in more detail in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3).

## 2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has considered the contemporary body of literature related to the topic of study. It has provided a review of governance, including its definitions, values and principles. The body of literature has highlighted that the governance definition must take into account the values and principles of governance. Basically, governance is driven forward through the interaction of values and principles, whereby issues of citizen participation and state accountability are taken into account. This chapter has shown that in recent years governance has been defined and shaped by a variety of international organizations, regional agencies and scholars, according to their understanding and interests. The three major bodies, namely the UNDP, the World Bank and UN-Habitat governance, have had an influential role in shaping the definition of the features of good governance. According to their approaches, citizen participation, accountability, effectiveness and equity are the common features of urban governance. The multi-dimensional and complex nature of governance has been discussed under five fundamental dimensions which are: 1) political, 2) contextual, 3) constitutional, 4) legal and 5) administrative. The enhancement of accountability and transparency; and the empowerment of citizens in the decision-making process are the main benefits that can be offered by a good conduct of governance.

Parallel to its conceptualization, governance assessment has been mainly delivered by international bodies such as the United Nations and World Bank. The current dominant mode of governance measurement is based on institutionally-originated schemes which principally stress good urban governance characteristics. In governance assessment, there is a danger in placing too much focus on any one aspect of governance, as the governance features are robustly associated in an intertwined manner and cannot be clearly distinguished. Thus in governance assessment and implementation, it is crucial to view urban governance from an integrated perspective, taking into account several key aspects. The next chapter will consider the research methodology that is needed to answer the key research questions.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/most/most2.htm> (Accessed on 12/04/2009).

<sup>2</sup> (TUGI) The Urban Governance Initiative is a regional project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that began in 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Operational efficiency refers to the provision of services at reasonable quality and cost (see Asian Development Bank, 2005).

## Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

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### **3.0 Introduction**

As stated, the research explores the dynamic features of, and interactions between, the elements that influence governance practice in Tehran. Due to the multifarious nature of governance, which brings in various areas such as social science, political science, management and planning, selecting a proper method needs cautious reflection. In line with the research questions and aims, the research applies both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore urban governance in Tehran. This chapter presents the research methodology and the qualitative and quantitative approaches used in this research. Furthermore, it presents the implementation of the UN-Habitat governance assessment in this study (Urban Governance Index), and how its results led to the recognition of a need for a more in-depth exploration of the issue of participation in Tehran's urban governance. This is followed by a presentation of the rationale of the interview as a technique for primary data collection for the in-depth exploration of participation issues. The final sections of this chapter explore ethical dimensions, the limitations of the methodological approach and reflections on the research processes.

#### **3.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Research**

Quantitative research aspires to discover an interaction between variables, while qualitative research aims to explore a particular social concern or fact (Creswell, 1998). Cornford and Smithson (1996) suggest that quantitative research is a type of research that attempts to develop measures and figures that can be presented and manipulated to express the event (things and correlations) in an investigation. In contrast, qualitative research generates data that has not been processed and prepared through numerical approaches (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods is common among researchers in the governance field. As discussed in Chapter 2, several international organisations such as the World Bank (2008), UN-Habitat (2004a) and International Transparency (2004) use quantitative approaches in governance assessment. On the other hand, Gissendanner (2003) suggests that the inductive features of governance studies are better suited to qualitative methods, as they allow a critical interpretation of the multiple aspects of

governance. This may imply that quantitative methods, as an unintegrated method, are incapable of covering the multifarious aspects of governance. In any approach to investigating governance one basic point needs, however, to be taken into consideration: governance is about understanding “how things are done” and not “what the result is” (UGI, 2004a: 16). According to Creswell (1998), questions and issues that start with “how” or “what” are likely to be addressed through a qualitative research account. As stated in the literature review, the nature of governance is complex. In this respect, following Yin (1994) qualitative research offers an enhanced selection of tools to investigate and analyse a complex fact, and should therefore be recommended. As discussed in the introductory chapter, urban governance is a relatively new subject in Iran, and the issue is not yet well-defined. Accordingly, a qualitative approach is considered appropriate, as it is suitable for circumstances where the information on a subject or issues is limited and the issue has not been deeply explored (Creswell, 2005).

Many researchers (e.g. Berry, 1993; Irazabal, 2005; Giersig, 2008; and Nyseth, 2008) in the urban politics and governance field have employed qualitative methods to explore urban governance procedures. However, employing qualitative methods alone is not sufficient to penetrate all aspects of the research questions and goals. In this respect, using either a qualitative or quantitative approach has to date, been considered a deficiency in governance studies (UNDP, Oslo Governance Centre, 2009). In this study, due to the relatively new and underexplored nature of urban governance in Iran, it was suitable to start out by mapping the field through a quantitative method (the UN-UGI assessment instrument). This method revealed areas of particular concern for urban governance in Tehran, that could then be investigated through targeted qualitative interviews, which made up the main body of the data gathered. Thus, in order to address the research objectives and enhance the credibility of the study’s account of urban governance, the methodology that was chosen for this project was mainly qualitative but the questions for the qualitative part of the study were developed based on a quantitative research approach. Both quantitative and qualitative strands of the study relied on both primary and secondary data.

### 3.2 Data Collection Approach

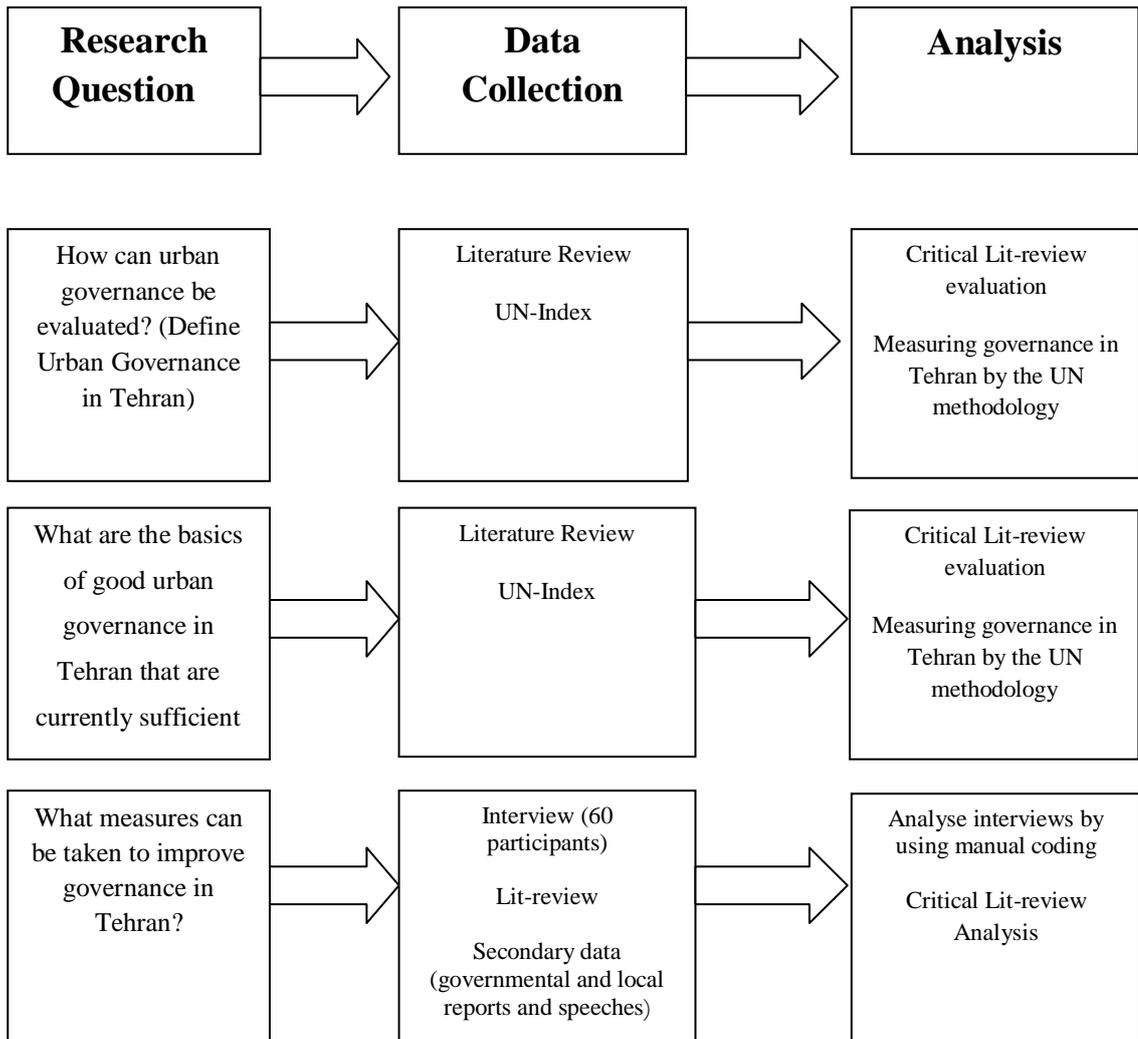
There are “a range of social situations in research in which particular researcher/researched relationships signal different kinds of social construction of data” (Cloke *et al.*, 2004: 127). The first category of social situations is labelled as “robotic”, wherein there is no communication between the researcher and the researched. The second type is “remote”, where there is no direct or face-to-face interaction. The third category, named as “interactive”, is where data are established through the interactions of the researcher and researched. The issue here is about owning, shaping and leading questions and answers. The fourth type is “involved”, where questions are swapped by dialogue (*ibid.*, 129). This study in particular, benefited from various data collection approaches at different stages of the research. The research exercised the second type in its early stages and developed further via the third and fourth types.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the purpose of the research was to investigate and assess the state of, and issues around, urban governance in Tehran following Iran’s urban governance transformation. In order to gain a clear vision of Tehran governance and identify its positions, in the first stage of research, the researcher employed the UN-Habitat methodology to assess urban governance in Tehran. More in detail, the UN-Habitat assessment addressed the first and second research questions, defining the characteristics of urban governance in Tehran as well as identifying its failing areas (see Table 3.1). Arising from the UN-Habitat governance assessment result, the third main question and (and later, arising from this, four subsidiary questions) were designed. To answer third question and these sub-questions, in this phase the priority areas were critically deepened, mainly through the qualitative method, in the form of interviews with urban actors, policy-makers and stakeholders. It is noticeable that early research on urban governance

focused on basic dimensions of network discrepancy such as size, hierarchy structures, sectoral representation, and contact frequency with other reputedly influential individuals, and gathering data on the most influential people (Gissendanner, 2003: 672).

Accordingly, primary data is obtained through a two-tier interview strategy first, with urban stakeholders and decision-makers in governance and policy making practice, and then, with actors involved in urban governance mechanisms.

**Table 3.1 Research Outline**



Sunders *et al.* (2003: 137) suggest that “many of the secondary data sets available from governments and data archives are of higher quality than you could ever collect yourself”. This research used qualitative data and non-statistical sources including newspapers, policy documents, first-person accounts and biographical materials. The quantitative statistical sources used include national surveys conducted by the Iran Statistics Centre, as well as Tehran surveys carried out by the Tehran municipality statistics centre. In the process of gathering secondary data, census data and existing

records collected by governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations were considered as well. Archival materials such as the municipality's and Islamic city council's financial records and reports were also considered. Additionally, records from specialised magazines such as *Shahrdariha* (Municipalities) / *Modiriat-e- shahri* (Urban Management) and newspapers, for instance *Hamshahri* (Fellow – citizen) were used.

The steps outlined below summarise the methods adopted in the research to source the data:

- 1- Application of the UN methodology for governance assessment;
- 2- Derivation from the results of the UN assessment of areas of concern for urban governance in Tehran, to be further researched through qualitative interviews;
- 3- Interviews with urban decision makers and urban authorities (municipality and city council authorities);
- 4- Analysis of secondary data, including the series of surveys conducted by central institutions and organisations such as the electoral participation censuses produced by the Iran Statistics Centre and the Interior Ministry; and civic statistics generated by Tehran's City Research Centre and Tehran's Neighbourhood Statistics Services;
- 5- Survey of documentary sources including local press and publications, administrative records as well as personal papers and interviews.
- 6- Contextualisation of official and unofficial information, including surveys and assessments of unpublished reports on unofficial bodies, independent institutions and individuals. In the same manner, data was extracted from government and municipal reports, speeches and papers;
- 7- Analysis of online secondary data from civic association and neighbourhood council websites. Here, data provided by governmental and non-governmental institutions were considered;
- 8- Analysis of international secondary data, for instance the transparency and accountability projects conducted by the UNDP; and the UN reports on different aspect of the city.

### **3.2.1 The UN Urban Governance Approach**

International bodies such as UN-Habitat, World Bank, UNDP and Global Campaign on Urban Governance have contributed to formulating indicators for urban governance

assessment. As indicated earlier, this research employed the UN-Habitat methodology (Urban Governance Index) as a method for assessing urban governance in Tehran. It is based on four main Urban Governance features: Effectiveness, Equity, Participation and Accountability, which are subsequently divided into 25 sub-indexes (Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2 The UN-Habitat Urban Governance Index: Main features****1. Purposes**

The UGI has a double purpose: at a *global level* it aims ‘to demonstrate the importance of good urban governance in achieving broad development objectives’, while at the *local level* ‘the index is expected to catalyze local action to improve the quality of urban governance by developing indicators that respond directly to their unique contexts and needs’.

**2. Focus**

The UGI intends to measure urban governance by focusing on ‘mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meets their obligations and mediate their differences’. In particular, it gives ‘emphasis on the quality of relationships and processes between key stakeholders at the local level’.

**3. Principles**

The initial five principles chosen as the framework of the Urban Governance Index have been based on the five measures of freedom of Amartya Sen, linking *Effectiveness* with Economic Facilities, *Equity* with Social Opportunities, *Participation* with Political Freedom, *Accountability* with Transparency Guarantees and *Security* with Protective Security. Eventually, the security principle was not recommended as part of the Index because of its weak representation with regard to the selected evaluation criteria.

**4. Indicators**

Urban Governance Indicators have been chosen according to the four basic principles listed above. The final set of UGI indicators consists of 25 indicators – including the core set of 18 indicators – chosen on the criteria of *ease of collection*, *universality*, *relevance* and *credibility*. These indicators have been selected through UN expert group meetings and are characterised by the following features (UN-HABITAT, 2004a; Narang, 2005):

- UGI indicators focus on the process of decision-making (e.g. involvement of civil society in a formal participatory planning and budgeting process before undertaking investment in basic services) rather than on inputs, outputs or outcomes of these processes.
- They intend to be credible and robust in order to properly measure the quality of governance and to be sufficiently universal to enable comparison.
- They try to tackle both the issues of universality and contextualisation. According to this purpose, UN-Habitat proposes as a useful approach identifying ‘core’ indicators relevant across different countries and contexts and ‘satellite’ indicators specifically suited to each country’s particular context.
- Indicators should allow stakeholder participation and local ownership in the data collection process and in the following application of these indicators to the decision-making process.
- UGI indicators focus on quantitative data collected at the city level, even if qualitative information is considered important to complement the core set of quantitative indicators.
- In addition, UGI indicators have been selected in line with the aim of disaggregating national/sub-national indicators from the local ones. This has been done in order to take into account urban governance issues at national level but also at the local level, which is closest to citizens.

Source: UN-HABITAT, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c; Narang, 2005 and Moretto, 2007.

According to the UN-Habitat, the purposes of UGI are: “to demonstrate the importance of good urban governance in achieving broad development objectives” at a comprehensive level; and at the local level: “to catalyze local action to improve the quality of urban governance by developing indicators that respond directly to their unique contexts and needs” (UN-HABITAT, 2004b:11). The UGI method has been created “to enable cities to objectively measure the quality of local governance” (Narang, 2005:1). In brief, the underlying rationale for selecting the UN methodology can be summarised as the global applicability of this method. After the standardisation of the indicators’ credibility through the development of comprehensive implementation methods, in 2004 this methodology was applied in 24 cities in both developing and developed countries. The methodology was integrated by international bodies such as UN-HABITAT, UNDP, UCLG and GUO through a comprehensive formula of selecting, standardizing and granting loadings to the different variables (Table 3.3). After allocating loadings to the indicators through advanced statistical techniques such as principal component analyses (PCA), the UGI designed formulae for each main indicator.

Additionally, since the UN seeks to measure good urban governance worldwide, its urban governance index design is expected to be globally relevant and applicable. The existence of a clear normative framework for the methodology consisting of the following principles “a) Ease of collection; b) Universality; c) Relevance, and d) Credibility”, facilitates its application (UN- Habitat, 2004: 12). Furthermore, in contrast to existing measures, the Urban Governance Index steers clear of firmly underlining economic indicators and focuses, instead, on a set of tools to tackle the issues of citizens’ inclusion and participation (Moretto, 2007). Furthermore, its application represents that the UGI does not simply rely upon quantitative data gathering; it may also, equally, be applied to qualitative data (ibid., 2007). To conclude, the UN-UGI methodology was chosen because it employs a multi-disciplinary approach; it is globally relevant and its framework is flexible at the point of use to evaluating urban governance in different contexts. Furthermore, due to its multi-level functions, the method is capable of endorsing application at international, state and city levels.

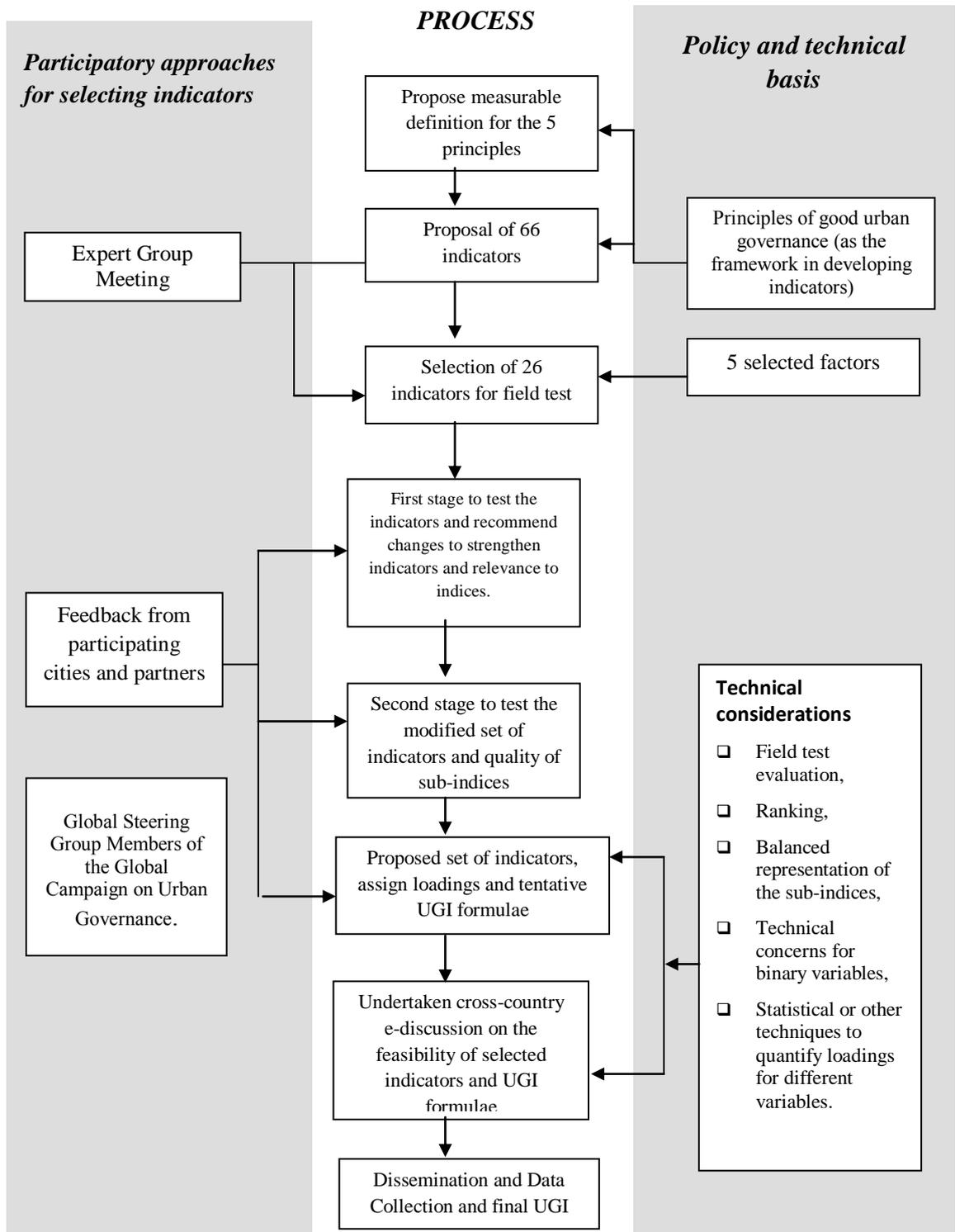


Figure 3.1 Proposed methodology for arriving at the UGI (UN- Habitat, 2004a: 20).

However, the UN approach has its limitations (see sections 4.4 and 9.1). For instance, there is not enough room in this methodology to debate all the normative potentials in multifaceted urban governance. On this basis, to critically analyse the complex nature of urban governance processes in Tehran, the research needed to go beyond the UN-Index methodology, in terms of both method and content. Thus, in terms of method, the research collected primary data and subjective data through interviews. The investigation through interviews focused on the “mechanism” and “processes” of urban governance in Tehran. In terms of content, two issues particularly raised by the results of the UN-UGI exercise were investigated in the qualitative interviews. These were: the dynamic nature of urban governance and participation in Tehran. In particular, five indicators of participation were selected for the study: **elected council, voter turnout, selection of mayor, public forum and civic association**. Exploring these areas also inclusively and explicitly identified the governance gaps in the Iranian context; and the measures which needed to be taken into account to enhance urban governance in Tehran.

### 3.2.2 The interview as a method

Primary research was necessary since this research is the first of its kind in Iran. The interview was the selected approach for primary data collection in the study. Gissendanner (2003) claims that all practical governance investigation is premeditated with the target of collecting data from three main elements: the people who have dominant power in the decision-making process; the qualities and circumstances of the institutional assets which individuals dispose of to manipulate systems; and the value of performances or strategies taken in a particular era. This research used semi-structured interviews to address the data collection. The literature on the strong points and limitations of the semi-structured interviewing style is broad (Atkinson, 1990; Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Gilbert, 1993; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Warren, 2002). The semi structured interview is a qualitative data collecting approach, intended to gain data about an individual’s views, ideas, beliefs and experiences (Arksey and Knight, 1999). In other words, semi-structured interviews are discussions in which the researcher has identified *what* he/she want to uncover and consequently has a series of preformulated questions and a good idea of what themes and issues will be faced. By contrast, structured interviews deliver programmed

questions that are closed for every respondent – there is a choice of answers from which the interviewee cannot deviate. But semi-structured interviews allow for dialogue and engaging the respondents in order to tackle issues to be addressed (Miles and Gilbert, 2005). Moreover, the semi structured interview is also very important as it provides up-to-date and precise data compared to other secondary data collection techniques (Davis and Cosenza, 1993). The “Interviewer will use pronouncement and decree to improvise, [they are] partially interviewer-led, partly informant-led and also the validity [is] to some extent reliant on schedule, and partly on interview dynamics” (Arksey and Knight, 1999: 22).

The motivation for using this method was its flexibility, which permits the discovery of potential agendas whilst enabling the researcher to ensure all essential matters are included. At the same time, it allows the participant to introduce issues they regard as important. In this research, interviews were used to explore the practical advantages and limitations of the urban democratic shift in Tehran and to investigate the engagement at local or neighbourhood level of the innovatory urban administration formation. Furthermore, the interviews are intended to support appraisal of the urban governance system in Iran. A number of major urban stakeholders were involved in the research project as interview participants.

### **3.3 Selection of Respondents and Application of Interview**

Baxter and Eyles (1998: 521) suggest that “researchers need to be more explicit about the research process including the rationale(s) for, among other things, respondent selection, key changes in research direction and analytical procedures”. The research employed purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling approach. The method is common for qualitative studies where the quantity of interviewees is not a fundamental issue. However, the core significance of this technique is the measure and criteria that are applied to decide on target groups or individuals.

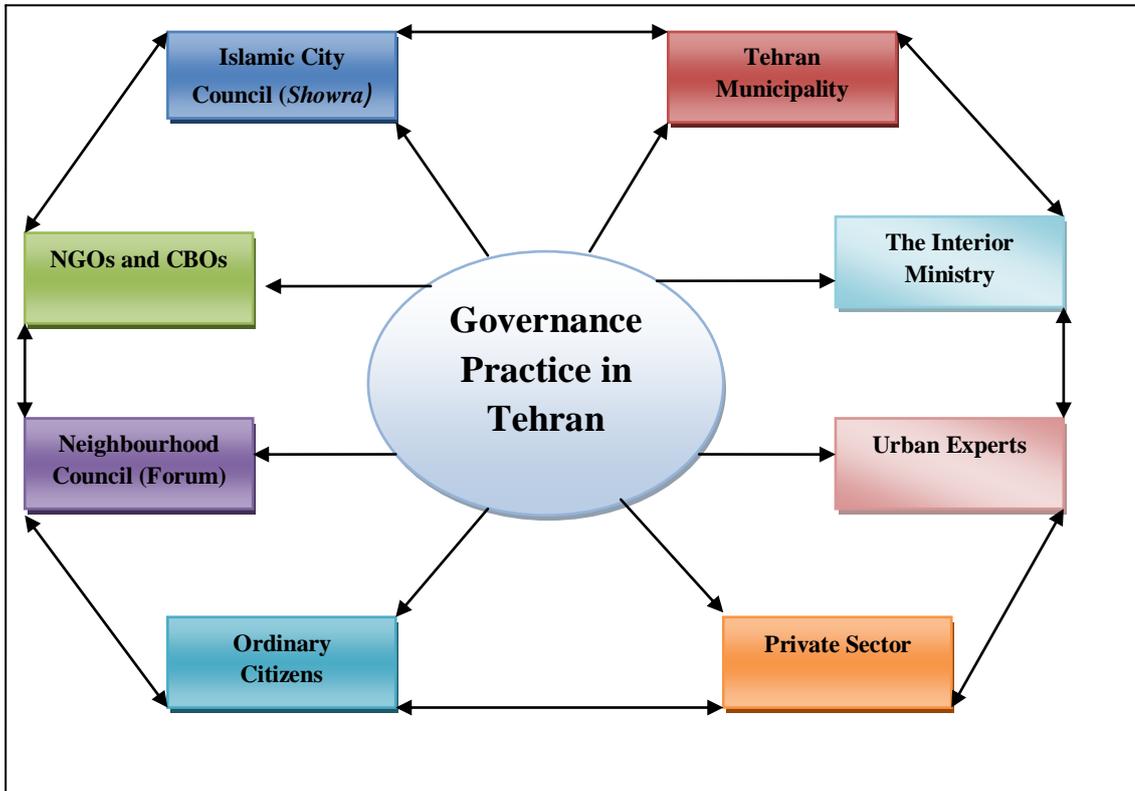
Since the research investigation is about governance, the initial step for choosing participants was to identify the main stakeholders and decision-makers who are/should be involved in the practice of governance in Tehran. Following the identification of

central governance actors based on literature and research frameworks, a set of criteria were selected to ensure the sampling process. The criteria for the selection process were:

- i) Target respondents should include all potential and practical governance stakeholders.
- ii) The sample should include three levels and spheres of stakeholders: central state officials; local government officials; and the public.
- iii) The sample should include urban experts and NGOs
- iv) The sample should include male and female as well as three age categories.

Based on these criteria, the interviews focused on eight groups of institutions and sectors which are believed to have the most influence on urban governance tasks and participation mechanisms. A total of 60 interviewees were interviewed from the following eight groups (Figure 3.2). The first group represented **Tehran's Municipality**, executing mayoral responsibilities; and the second group, the **Islamic City Council (ICC)** in Tehran, which has representative responsibilities parallel to the executive role of the municipality. Interviewing the major urban policy-makers at the urban level, such as officers from the Islamic City Council (ICC) and municipality as the key urban actors, can be considered as an efficient way of recruiting interesting accounts from their representatives. The third group included the **Interior Ministry**, as the main state level headquarters for urban associations with regard to governance and participation issues. The fourth group was represented by **NGOs and civic associations**; and the fifth group by **Neighbourhood Councils** (*Anjomanhaye Showrayari*) as the lowest tier of the urban hierarchy which includes citizens' representatives at the neighbourhood scale. The sixth group included **urban academics and experts (well informed-persons)** in order to investigate their beliefs and perspectives on recent urban governance activities and the circumstances connected with the governance shift. The seventh group included representatives from the **private sector**. For these seven groups, five individuals were selected and interviewed from each group. However, according to the research framework and objectives, ignoring citizens and failing to take their views and perceptions into account could to some extent jeopardize the accuracy and quality of the research. In this context, to minimize

the inaccuracy of the research, **ordinary citizens** which hold no executive power in the decision-making process, were also interviewed. From this eighth group, 25 randomly selected individuals resident in Tehran were interviewed.



**Figure 3.2 Interviews Key Informants through Purposive Sampling**

The interviews were semi-structured and conducted face to face in different venues. The decision-maker interviews were all conducted in the respondents' office. In fact, one advantage of interviewing elites is that they are generally able to offer an appropriate space for the interviewing process (Stephens, 2007). However, the restricted accessibility of urban elites in some cases led the researcher to consider the possibility of telephone interviewing. The number of interviews conducted was limited to a total of 60 interviewees (35 urban actors and stakeholders; 25 ordinary citizens) which was the number of participants prepared for. Although the researcher had aimed to expand the number of participants if accessibility became much easier, in practice, it turned out that accessibility issues limited the participants to 60. As mentioned, the interviewees were drawn from three main groups. Firstly, urban executives, representatives and administrators (urban decision-makers) who have a responsibility and duty in the administration and policy making structure, including actors in the

municipality, city council and state ministry. Secondly, members of non-governmental organisations and urban experts including academic staff, scholars and urban professionals who are working in academic environments and thirdly, ordinary citizens selected for the interview process. These groupings are appropriate because the opinions of urban scholars, NGOs and citizens are often divergent and in some cases are at odds with current urban government policies in regard to governance. This helped to enhance understanding of the urban governance procedures and practices associated with the participation process in Tehran. Each interview was introduced with a brief letter explaining its purpose, measures to safeguard confidentiality and the importance of the research to the respondents (Appendix, 1). Since the study covered Tehran, the data collection as well as the process of analysing the results was a costly and lengthy process for the researcher. The interview questionnaire per respondent took on average about 45-60 minutes to be completed and discussed. Despite prior arrangement and permission gained for using a tape recorder to record the interviews, in the event, the device was rejected respectfully.

The interview questions were based on the main aspects of good urban governance and participation (Appendix, 2). The extent of representative and participatory urban governance and its processes were taken into account. In particular the research examined the effectiveness of the Islamic council and the neighbourhood council with regard to participation, with the following questions. Does the existence of the Islamic City Council contribute towards strengthening public participation in urban decision making? What are the main policies and programmes of local government that encourage citizen participation and governance values and principles? To what extent are these policies and programmes for involving citizens applied in the governance process? At which scale have citizens participated and become involved in urban matters? This question covered aspects relating to the process of selecting and electing a mayor, urban and local council representatives at the city and local levels; and the debates on the participation of community based organisations and civic associations in the decision-making process. Also discussed were the autonomy of local governance, the performance of elected politicians; and the extent to which decisions and policies made by local government have been affected by council representatives. The intensity of cooperation between the ICC and municipality and its effectiveness

were also broached. The relationships within the central government and local bodies in terms of participation and its mechanisms were considered. In fact this research explored both, the “breadth” of public participation, which includes the extent of citizen participation in the governance process; and the “depth” of citizen participation which includes influence and meaningfulness of citizen engagement in decision-making.

It is important to acknowledge that semi-structured interviews do not come without problems. A major difficulty that can be encountered is the lack of any check on the effectiveness of the communication. In order to reduce the challenges, the questionnaire was carried out face-to-face, which is accompanied by a certain reduction in the convenience and openness of the interview.

### **3.4 Data Analysis Approach**

The research used an analysis process based on the nature of the data gathered. Thus, the interview analysis was conducted manually. The first section presents the UN-Habitat (UGI) analysis approaches and the second section discusses the analysis approaches used for the interviews.

#### **3.4.1 Urban Governance Index**

The purpose of analysing the UGI data is not merely to view the performance of urban governance through a quantitative approach. Rather, it is to explore the particular aspects of the UGI that characterise urban governance and participation practices in Tehran. Two general approaches have been suggested by the UN-UGI methodology:

- Alternative 1 included only indicators that obtained a high ranking through the design and loading processes of the methodology.
- Alternative 2 included indicators that received both a high and a moderate ranking (Table: 3.3).

**Table 3.3 Urban Governance Index, selected indicators for two alternatives**

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Alternative 1: Only high ranking</b>	<b>Alternative 2: High and selected moderate ranking</b>
Effectiveness sub-index	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local government revenue per capita</li> <li>2. Local Government transfers</li> <li>3. Ratio of mandates to actual tax collection</li> <li>4. Published performance standards</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local government revenue per capita</li> <li>2. Ratio of actual recurrent and capital budget</li> <li>3. Local Government transfers</li> <li>4. Ratio of mandates to actual tax collection</li> <li>5. Predictability of transfers</li> <li>6. Published performance standards</li> <li>7. Customer satisfaction survey</li> <li>8. Vision statement</li> </ol>
Equity sub-index	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Citizens charter</li> <li>6. Proportion of women councillors</li> <li>7. Proportion of women in key positions</li> <li>8. Pro-poor pricing policy</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Citizens charter</li> <li>10. Proportion of women councillors</li> <li>11. Proportion of women in key positions</li> <li>12. Pro-poor pricing policy</li> <li>13. Street vending</li> </ol>
Participation sub-index	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Elected council</li> <li>10. Election of Mayor</li> <li>11. Voter turnout</li> <li>12. People's Forum</li> <li>13. Civic Associations (per 10,000)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Elected council</li> <li>15. Election of Mayor</li> <li>16. Voter turnout</li> <li>17. People's Forum</li> <li>18. Civic Associations (per 10,000)</li> </ol>
Accountability sub-index	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Formal publication of contracts, tenders, budget and accounts</li> <li>15. Control by higher levels of government</li> <li>16. Anti-corruption commission</li> <li>17. Disclosure of personal income and assets</li> <li>18. Regular independent audit</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19. Formal publication of contracts, tenders, budget and accounts</li> <li>20. Control by higher levels of government</li> <li>21. Codes of conduct</li> <li>22. Facility to receive complaints</li> <li>23. Anti-corruption commission</li> <li>24. Disclosure of personal income and assets</li> <li>25. Regular independent audit</li> </ol>

Source: UN-Habitat, 2004a: 6.

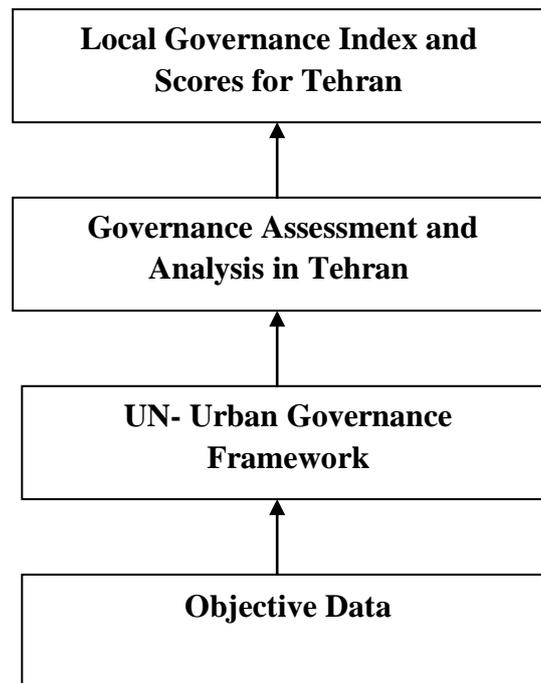
To tackle the complexity of the issues at stake and to uncover a broader range of critical issues in the fieldwork, the Alternative 2 was preferred in this research. On this basis, 25 indicators for assessment were considered and split into 9 quantitative indicators and 17 qualitative indicators. All indicators and criteria were addressed through the secondary (manipulated) data, in which each indicator is given a score (weight) according to the rank of the indicator, its significance to the policy objective and distribution of weight. For instance, in Alternative Two the following weights are assigned to the Effectiveness, Equity, Participation and Accountability sub-indicators (see table, 3.4). The indicator score is expressed in values ranging from 0 to 1, where 1 means excellent performance and 0 means poor performance. Also the binary response in 'Yes' or 'No' will transform to 0 or 1. For instance, is there currently a signed

published statement (charter) from the local authority which acknowledges citizens' rights of access to a basic service? 'NO'= 0 and 'Yes' =1. All information is then converted into quantitative data of two types: single numbers (expressed by averages, means, ratios, percentages), and binary variables 'yes' or 'no', respectively expressed as '0' and '1' assessments. The final calculations for each sub-indicator are conducted through formulae which are detailed in Appendices 5 and 6 of the thesis. In fact in order to formulate and then to establish the UN- UGI approach this research aimed to use publicly existing data: national and city statistics and regulations; and available administrative data on population, budgets and procedures (Figure, 3.3). With the exception of a small number of sub-indicators, such as sub-indicator number 13, the information has been gathered quite straightforwardly. Due to the nature of the data, the gathering process involved directly a number of local and national institutions. The researcher consulted the official Tehran Municipality Statistical Centre, the Islamic City Council, the Interior Ministry, and the National Statistical Centre; complemented by access to the official websites active in urban governance and administration practice.

**Table 3.4 Proposed experimental formulae for the Urban Governance Index, Alternative 2**

<b>Sub-Indices</b>	<b>Formula</b>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	$0.25 * \text{LG Revenue per capita} + 0.10 * \text{Ratio of recurrent to capital budget} + 0.10 * \text{LG revenue in transfer} + 0.10 * \text{Tax collection} + 0.10 * \text{Predictability of transfer} + 0.15 * \text{Published performance standards} + 0.10 * \text{Consumer satisfaction survey} + 0.10 * \text{Vision Statement} = 1$
<b>Equity</b>	$0.20 * \text{Citizens Charter} + 0.20 * \text{Women councillors} + 0.10 * \text{Women in key positions} + 0.15 * \text{household water connection} + 0.10 * \text{Pro-poor policy} + 0.10 * \text{Water price} + 0.15 * \text{Street vending restrictions} = 1$
<b>Participation</b>	$0.15 * \text{Elected Council} + 0.15 * \text{Mayor Selection} + 0.25 * \text{Voter Participation} + 0.20 * \text{Peoples Forum} + 0.25 * \text{Civic associations} = 1$
<b>Accountability</b>	$0.20 * \text{Formal publication: contracts, tenders budget and accounts} + 0.15 * \text{Control by higher levels of government} + 0.10 * \text{Codes of Conduct} + 0.10 * \text{Facilities to receive complaints} + 0.15 * \text{Anti-corruption commission} + 0.15 * \text{Disclosure of personal/family income and assets} + 0.15 * \text{Independent audit} = 1$
<b>Urban Governance Index</b>	$(\text{Effectiveness sub-index} + \text{Equity sub-index} + \text{Participation sub-index} + \text{Accountability sub-index}) = 4$

Source: UN-Habitat, 2004a: 49.



**Figure 3.3 Overview of the Index process**

### **3.4.2 Interview analysis**

Yin (2003: 112) recommends three basic schemes for analysing case study data. The first one consists of “relying on theoretical propositions”, where the researcher outlines a proposed assumption relating to the case study and applies it as a direction for case study investigation. The second scheme is “thinking about rival explanations” which focuses on validating or challenging hypotheses. The third scheme is “developing a case description” to categorize the case study. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this research to use all three of these schemes, the research has to some degree benefitted from the first and second schemes. According to Merriam (1998), the appropriate method of analysing data that surfaces from qualitative research, is to undertake the analysis at the same time of the collection process. Thus, for this study, the initial steps of data analysis such as breakdown, further preparation and cleaning of the data began while the research was in the data collection stages.

There is a palpable ambiguity about how accurately qualitative data needs to be analysed (Bryman and Burgess, 1994). Hence, this research used a thematic analysis approach, an approach that is well-defined (Creswell, 2003) and fits the aims and goals of this research. On this basis, categories and themes were used for the general

issues about governance. This helped to make explicit the framing and illustration of the identified themes as well as generating deep insights and meaning. Moreover, the break-down, merging and articulation of collected data is facilitated through employing thematic analysis. In this analytical approach, a ‘theme’ can be considered an account and a concept that essentially permeate the data. Accounts which are raised by small number of participants can also be referred to as themes; they should, however, embrace a significant concept that is related to aims and principles of the research.

As the interviews were conducted in Persian, it is likely that part of the “richness” and “validity” of the original discourse was lost in the translation process. This issue was consciously taken into account in reviewing the initial text to minimise risk and to avoid etiolation of the primary data. To reduce potential bias, each Persian and English interview was confirmed in terms of validity and reliability of the translation, by three Iranian PhD students based at Leicester and Durham universities. Following the translation, data were transcribed and then coded based on the issues under investigation, by identifying accounts and stories relevant to the research aims. For example, with regard to the selection of a mayor, the participants’ responses were focused around three key themes: a) selection of a mayor through direct citizen participation; b) selection of a mayor by the Islamic City Council (ICC); and c) the selection of a mayor by the Ministry of State. Thus, the views and concepts emerging from the interviews were redefined and grouped into three sets accordingly (see Table 3.5).

As indicated in Table 3.5, the manner in which the selection of mayor can take place was suggested by the interviewees. This type of analysis helps to identify the consistency, variation and divergence of views emerging from the various stakeholders who participated in the interviews, allowing the researcher to highlight similarities and differences as well as echoing the significance of certain views or comments. Supporting this, Ryan and Bernard (2003: 85-86) noted the significance of thematic grouping analysis, as without this approach the “researcher has nothing to explain, nothing to compare, and nothing to describe”.

**Table 3.5 Example of categorization of data gathered from the fieldwork**

<b>Interview code</b>	<b>Selection of mayor through direct citizen participation (reason mentioned)</b>	<b>Selection of mayor through the Islamic City Council (reason mentioned)</b>	<b>Selection of mayor by the Ministry of State (reason mentioned)</b>
<b>M.E-01</b>	Offering a fresh participatory space for citizens' engagement  Distribution of power in local governance		
<b>C.R-03</b>		Situations where ICC voices are heard and respected will be diminished via the authorisation of direct participatory method	
<b>L.C-02</b>			The traditional method defined as a solid, integrated and steady form of urban management for which the monitoring process had been refined

In terms of its methodological aspect, secondary data analysis can be employed for triangulation purposes (Becker and Bryman, 2004). As discussed earlier, this research used the initial findings of international, national and municipal surveys connected with urban governance matters in order to support or to critique the quality of governance in Tehran. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), the literature can be used for the purpose of extension, amendment, modification and contrast with the primary data. For instance, this research analyses the statistics on a range of issues including the number of citizens participating in successive instances of council elections in the country as well as their participation in neighbourhood elections at the local scale; and the number of Civic Associations and their mechanisms with regard to citizen involvement, in order to build up information of primarily important theoretical relevance and for purposes of comparative overview. In fact in this research the UN-assessment results which were derived from the secondary data, were first scrutinised on their own terms, and then compared with the primary data collected.

### 3.5 Positionality

The concept of positionality focuses on the idea that the researcher-self is “a transparently knowable agent whose motivations can be fully known” (Rose, 1997: 30). From a feminist point of view, to take a well-known epistemology, the most important aspects that illuminate research practice are the perception of *positionality* and *reflexivity* (Harding, 1987; England, 1994; Rose, 1997; Aitken and Valentine, 2006). England (1994) summarises *positionality* as how an individual’s outlook on the globe derives principally from personal perspectives. How they are consecutively situated and countered by others is instead captured in *reflexivity*, an approach based on which the researcher’s self-awareness mirrors their personal function in the research process and their relationships. Lewis-Beck and his colleagues point out that the responsibility of the surveyor – the affiliation between investigator and items investigated, and between the researcher and society studied – has been progressively eroded and challenged recently (Lewis-Beck *et al.*, 2003). A key notion at this point is that the “personal is the political” (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 65).

The issue of positionality is robustly linked with ethical matters. As indicated by Jorgensen (1971: 321), matters of ethical concern for those involved in social research take place in five major areas:

- (a) Relations with the people they study;
- (b) Professional relations with one another;
- (c) Relations with the institutions and foundations which support them;
- (d) Relations with the governments of the nations in which they conduct research; and
- (e) Relations with their own governments.

Additionally, the researcher’s positionality includes who the researcher is within the overall research process. What does the researcher bring in terms of roles, values, beliefs, and experiences? Is the researcher an insider or outsider to the research? Somewhere on this continuum lies the question of who the researcher is in terms of hierarchy and status. There is also the question of how these multiple positions impact the research design and process (Herr and Anderson, 2005). Also positionality occurs not only in terms of inside/outside, but also in terms of one’s position within the organisational or social hierarchy, and one’s position of power vis-à-vis other

stakeholders inside and outside the setting (ibid., 2005). In his role as a PhD student and academic researcher from an institution in the UK and based on his relationship to the research topic and participants, the researcher was considered an outsider. As a researcher, it was concerned with how the researcher positions himself within the research project. The researcher was involved for a number of years as a collaborator with an urban geography magazine during my BSc and MSc degrees in Tehran. To some extent the researcher was informed about a range of urban researchers and administrators in Tehran and up to a point, had established relationships with them. This led to building up better relationships through the PhD research project and helped to make progress quite straightforward. However, the multiple situations of the project and its links with urban hierarchies might have affected the project. Also, as stated in the ethical issue section, the researcher's identity as someone from abroad could be problematic in the fieldwork. Recently, a growing nervousness in Iran about researchers from Western institutions has arisen, in comparison with the overwhelming acceptance of local researchers working on similar subjects.

### **3.6 Ethical Issues and Reflections**

Regarding the research framework, normative ethics is more essential for this research than other types of ethics, such as metaethics.<sup>(1)</sup> Normative ethics present the “moral norms which guide, or indicate what one should do or not do, in a particular situation” (Kimmel, 1988: 43). The key issue in normative ethics is “how may or should we decide or determine what is morally right for a certain agent... to do, or what he /she morally ought to do, in a certain situation”(Frankena, 1973: 12).

An initial practical and ethical issue in any “interview-based research as well as gaining access to the target population is the existence of imbalanced power relationships between interviewer and interviewee” (Winchester 1996: 122). Pile (1991) underlines the complexity of the power nexus in interviews and identifies that power structures arise during the process of the research. Accordingly, the researcher was aware this type of research, which contributes to political analysis in Iran, would be subject to the respondents' reservations. However, the researcher deployed various standard approaches to reducing these challenges. Additionally the cosmos of the research boundary could have contained all potential urban governance stakeholders in

Tehran, though the research approach; financial features; relationships between the interviewer and the interviewed are nevertheless complex and unstable (Pile, 1991: 464).

It has been argued that access to “elite” groups is more complex than to other classes (e.g. Desmond, 2004; England, 2002; McDowell, 1998; and Sabot, 1999). However, an issue might arise concerning the criteria for identifying an “elite” group. From a poststructural viewpoint the possibility of clarifying, labelling and recognising a specified group of people as “elite” is a challenging task (Smith, 2006). This is particularly the case in the case study area, where there is a noticeable existence of power and decision-making influence in the informal sectors, hence distinguishing an elite cluster is more problematic.

Generally, when seeking to interview urban elites in Iran, the researcher will be faced with two main issues: firstly, most urban authorities are inaccessible and unreachable. Access to powerful groups must regularly be tackled through formal and informal networks. Furthermore, due to the unequal relationships between interviewer and interviewee, power relations influence and manipulate both access to target groups and the structure and conduct of the interview. Secondly, these elites are not confident and positive regarding the interview outcome. Therefore the decision to interview high-level urban managers and elites in Tehran was rather overoptimistic because they are not easily accessible. In cases where access was impossible, urban actors on a lower level of the hierarchy were therefore interviewed.

In order to reduce the challenges, it was mandatory to describe the purpose of this research as clearly as possible. Participants were given an *informed consent form* (see Appendix 3) which lays out the way their confidentiality will be safeguarded, allowing them to withdraw from the research process at any time without explanation and giving them the opportunity to find out the results and outcomes of the research. A further ethical issue could be argued is that some secondary data may reflect the purposes and attitudes of a particular organisation, political group and party, which may perhaps lead to prejudice and misguide. Therefore, to reduce controversies, the study draws on a range of research projects which have been carried out by multiple institutions and organizations.

Additionally, because of recent political tensions, there is a high level of sensitivity and suspiciousness towards any researcher from outside the country, especially towards researchers affiliated to any British body or institution. Securing permits requires a process through different hierarchical establishments. To some extent this could affect the regularity and straightforwardness of the research process. It has to be stated explicitly that there are many obstacles that may impose physical and time limitations, making it compulsory to narrow the themes of the research to a certain aspect of urban governance.

### **3.7 Constraints and Permissions**

From a theoretical and methodological point of view, there is a danger of an over-dominance of deductive approaches, a lack of explicit methodological guidelines, and a less than rigorous application of what has become a multitude of overlapping theoretical concepts. This is due to the general problem that governance concepts and models have yet to merge into an overall theory of governance (Gissendannerô, 2003). In parallel to operating good urban governance, developing good urban governance indicators has faced challenges. Stewart (2006) considers that, in the theoretical context, developing good governance indicators faces four major challenges: concept definition, measure choice, sample choice and indicator evaluation. He believes that, while data collection and manipulation are often of primary concern, normative considerations are at least equally important insofar as they establish which indicators best represent 'good' urban governance and the standards by which selected indicators should be judged. (Stewart, 2006:1).

In general, the limitations of the research can be summarised in the following points:

- Limitation of theoretical and applied resources in relation to Iran. There is a particular dearth of literature on Iran regarding urban governance: the most recent literature on urban governance follows Western criteria and disciplines, while Iranian urban governance is divergent in its methods and paradigms.
- Lack of information and resources regarding public participation, supervision, NGOs, and Civic Associations in the city. There is no focused publication regarding participation issues by national and local administrations and related organisations;

- The relatively wide range of the case study for which data collection is time consuming and costly;
- The theoretical basics of the subject being unknown amongst urban governance stakeholders, actors and citizens. Generally the context of urban governance is a new phenomenon for Iranian society.
- Limitations in access to urban managers and urban actors, as well as difficulties in accessing formal and informal data; the research had to employ a gatekeeper in order to reach a number of urban administrators and policy-makers (insiders).
- Gap in the methodological narrative in relation to studying individuals in positions of influence and power (e.g. Bradshaw, 2001; Ostrander, 1995; Kezar, 2003; Puwar, 1997; Parry, 1998; Hughes and Cormode, 1998).
- Difficulties in carrying out enquiries on political issues in Iran, and the risks and challenges that this brings. The researcher aimed to create an honest relationship with administrators in order to reduce the sensitivity of the research topic.
- Political transformations: political shifts and changes at governmental and local level may lead to a shift in urban actors. This might cause some difficulties in accessing information from urban administrators.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the research methodology that has been applied in this study. The methodology reflects the focus on qualitative approaches outlined in the research questions relating to urban governance practices. However, the quantitative approach is considered crucial for the preliminary stages of this research, both in terms of method and content. As a method, it is comparatively quick and straightforward to both collect quantitative data, and thus, in terms of content a comprehensive range of topics and issues may be covered. However, as highlighted, quantitative data gives at best a superficial and at worst a misleadingly decontextualised picture of the actual situation. Thus, the interview questionnaires have been described in their role as a secondary tool for developing the research in greater depth on particular issues of concern, as well as penetrating diverse aspects of urban governance and participation in a metropolitan city such as Tehran. The participants were selected from eight diverse groups of stakeholders involved in governance because of their potential to uncover major urban governance challenges. The purposive sample includes the

executives and the administrators of the municipality, city council and neighbourhood councils. Interviews with academic experts and higher level legislative administrators were used to corroborate and complement the secondary data. Secondary data on the urban governance in Tehran were gathered and the potential implications and management strategies for governing the city (Tehran) associated with the practice of participation were assessed. The research project also used secondary sources of data, including urban literature, newspaper articles, official documents, and the views of academic experts. To conclude, the research employs a thematic and interpretative approach for purposes of data analysis. The next chapter discusses and presents the application of the UN-Habitat index that has been administered to assess urban governance in Tehran and answers the first and second questions.

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<sup>1</sup>‘Meta ethics’ is concerned with the analysis or logic of moral concepts and involves exploration of the meaning, function, and justification of normative judgements (Jorgensen, 1971, p. 322).

## Chapter 4: Governance Outlook in Tehran

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## **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter mainly presents the analysis of the UN-Habitat Urban Governance Index for Tehran and presents an overall assessment of the circumstances of governance in Tehran based on four principles of good urban governance: Effectiveness, Equity, Accountability and Participation. Before arriving at an explanation of the implementation of the UN-index and to understand the existing circumstances of governance in Tehran, this chapter provides an introductory overview of Tehran. The chapter therefore consists of two main sections: 1) an introduction on governance in Tehran; and 2) an assessment of governance based on the UN-Habitat Index. The main aim of this chapter is to provide an integrated portrait of the Tehran governance with regard to the diverse set of 25 UN sub-indicators. This assessment allows for the clarification of Tehran governance situations and deficiencies, and points out further enhancements required for good governance. With regard to research methodology, this section outlines the results of the application of the UN-Habitat index in Tehran, followed by a brief general explanation of the sub-indicators themselves. However, this chapter does not attempt a critical qualitative analysis of the indicators nor does it provide an investigation of policy documents. It simply provides an overview of urban governance based on the UN perspective in order to lay the foundations for the next empirical chapters where the assessment of the indicators is critically deepened. In particular, the areas of governance that are shown to be weak in this general assessment will be selected for further investigation.

### **4.1 Introduction on Governance in Tehran**

In order to understand the formation and circumstances of the existing urban machinery, this section provides an overview of governance in Tehran including first, a general description of Tehran; second, a portrait of urban governance and participation before the Islamic Revolution, presenting the chronological events that culminated in contemporary urban governance in Iran. Finally, it presents the key stakeholders concerned in governance.

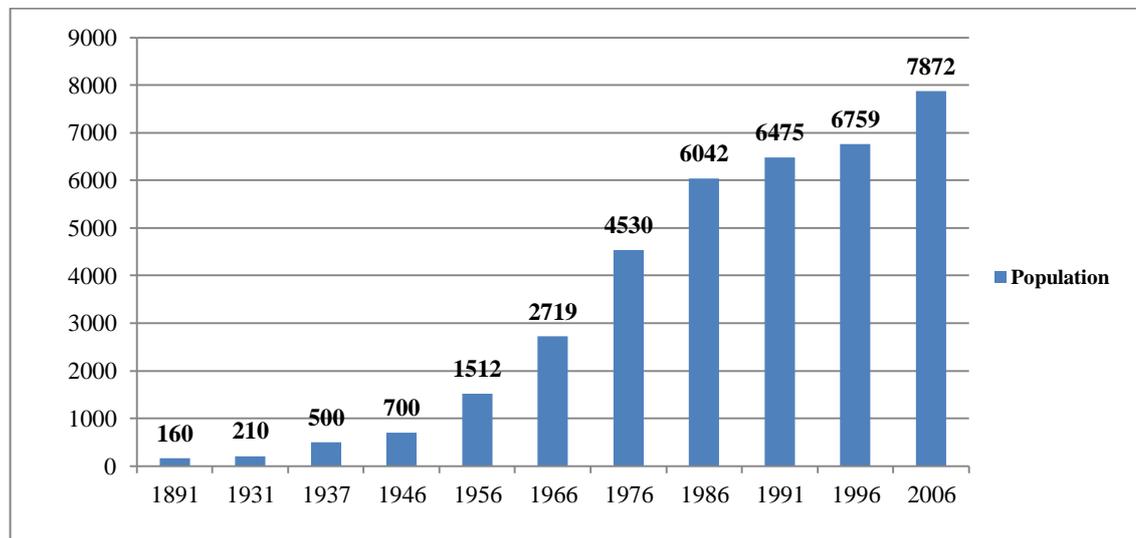
### 4.1.1 General description of Tehran

After the Islamic revolution, rapid urbanization continued and intensified in Iran, directly affecting urban policy-making at the national and local scales. The growth of cities has led to the occurrence of issues with regard to housing, social welfare, security, health, marginalization, water supply and traffic jams. The eight-year war with Iraq further accelerated these dynamics (Abrahamian, 1998, Kohli, 1977). Urbanization trends have been subject to unprecedented increase in Iran over the past three decades, reaching 68.5% of the population living in urban areas in 2006 (PRB, 2006). The rapid expansion of urbanization, however, is viewed as a negative point for urban policy-makers. During the first 40 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the population of Tehran grew by only 50,000 people, but from 1956 to 2006 its population rocketed by more than 500% (Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1).

**Table 4.1 Population increase trend in Tehran City (in thousands)**

Year	1891	1931	1937	1946	1956	1976	1986	1966	1996	2006
Popula tion	160	210	500	700	1512	4530	6042	2719	6759	7872

Source: SCI, Statistical Centre of Iran, various census data, 2006.



**Figure 4.1 The Trend of Population Increase in Tehran (in thousands)**

Source: SCI, Statistical Centre of Iran, various census data, 2006.

From 1960–1975, Tehran grew more rapidly than cities such as Calcutta, Bombay,

Mexico City and Manila (Brown, 1983). The records of the demographic processes in the Tehran Metropolitan Region (TMR) from 1966–2006 disclose that the population grew to 12.2 million over this period. Also across these years, the share of the Tehran City population in the TMR decreased from 87% to about 65.5% in 1996 and 63% in 2006 (Table, 4.2). The table also shows that within 40 years the population of Tehran City grew 2.3 times, whereas the population of the rest of the TMR has grown 7.8 times. “The slowdown in the population growth of the city has been paralleled by the population explosion in the suburbs, which grew (1976–1986) at 10.28% annually” (Madanipour, 1999: 5).

**Table 4.2 Population increase in the Tehran Metropolitan Region, 1966–2006 (in thousands)**

Population Census	1966	1976	1986	1991	1996	2006
<b>Tehran CITY</b>	2719	4530	6042	6475	6758	7797
<b>The rest of the TMR</b>	417	715	1885	3506	3584	6571
<b>Total MRT</b>	3137	5245	7927	9982	1034	1226

Source: SCI, Statistical Centre of Iran, various census data, 2006.

#### **4.1.2 Urban governance and participation before the Islamic Revolution**

A single-authority, totalitarian and centralized model was dominant in the Iranian historical-political structure (Abrahamiyan, 1982; Rahmani, 2000). Administrations had been built upon individual-led monarchies and empires, which in practice largely excluded the public from decision-making practices. On the contrary, ministers, officials and particularly the public were largely controlled and influenced by the ruler (Shamim, 1992). This condition was in operation up to the dawning of the constitutional revolution (*Enghelaabe Mashroteh*) in 1906. The revolution was thus a starting point for decentralisation and modernization (Saidnia, 2004). In fact the revolution sought to reduce central government influence and to intervene in local affairs (Abolhamd, 1970). The national legislation had been shaped and influenced by a number of European countries constitutions’, particularly France and Belgium, which resulted in the introduction of urban management and administrative mechanisms of European origins (ibid.). With respect to the constitution, Iran’s administrative system was transformed from an autocracy into a constitutional monarchy. From this point forward, local matters and related issues were governed by local assemblies (*Anjomanhaye Iyalati and Velayati*) which were constituted of representatives of the public (Vazirnia, 1972).

However, by some accounts, these local assemblies actually operated as representatives of the central government and their duties were to monitor governmental officials and elections, and collect tax (Ettahadiye, 2002; and Khoobrooy-Pak, 1998).

The first attempt to formulate urban institutions for Iranian cities goes back to 1907, with the passing of the first Municipal Act (*Anjomanhaye Baladiyeh*). This was a turning point, as for the first time the public's political rights were acknowledged. According to this Act, the management of cities was to be transferred to the elected City Institutions. However, four years later following the defeat of the constitutional revolution and the beginning of a new dictatorship, City Institutions were abolished. The new administration believed that with the introduction of the National Assembly (*Majles Showraye melli*), City Institutions had been rendered unnecessary (Abolhamd, 1970). However, the fundamental outcome associated with the elimination of City Councils was central government-imposed totalitarianism and a climate of fear within civic institutions (Amir-Arjmand, 2005).

In order to implement the totalitarian strategies, a new centralized form of city institution had been established in 1930, with the responsibility for the selection of mayor and for members of the new version of City Councils transferring to the interior ministry. Only three socio-economic classes – landlords, business-owners and syndicates – were able to participate in electing members of the City Councils. Although the head of the institution was appointed by the Interior Ministry, the Act nevertheless institutionalised a greater degree of respect for citizens' rights and participation in cities (Taheri, 1999). According to the 1930 Act, the position of the urban administration can be summarised as assimilating both centralised and decentralised arrangements, whereby local taxation for each city was applicable following the approval of both the Municipal Institution (*Anjomane Baladi*) and the ministerial board (Shakiba-Moghaddam, 1999).

Matters of budgeting, city regulations, renovation and development projects were formalised through the authorisation of the Interior Ministry (ibid., 1999). Consequently, the independence of the Municipal Institution was questionable and except for the participation of a number of socio-economic groups, the general public was mainly excluded from participation. In fact over this period, City Councils were cut

off from their initial democratic principles and priorities and were instead exploited as a tool by the central government (Shafiei, 2004).

In 1949 in order to promote citizen's involvement, the third Municipality, City and Local Councils Act (*Shahrdariha* and *Anjomane Shahr*) was approved by the National Assembly, replacing the antecedent Act. Small, medium and large cities respectively appointed 16, 20 and 30 representatives who were to be directly elected through citizens' participation for a four year period. In comparison with the 1930 Act, a fundamental modification had been introduced with regard to the status of elected representatives and participants. Put simply, the 1949 Act not only gave landlords, traders and syndicates authorisation to participate in local elections but also offered the general public a chance to engage in local issues. According to the 1949 Act 1, Article 3, item 5, eligibility to participate was conferred to a citizen by residence of no less than six months in the electoral neighbourhood (Alavi-Tabar, 2000). Furthermore, electoral candidates no longer needed to belong to a particular class or group, although they had to have resided in the electoral district for at least five years. The way in which the mayor was to be selected was another main aspect that differentiated the 1949 Act from its 1930 antecedent. According to the new act, the mayor was selected on the basis of three nominations by the City Council with the endorsement of the interior ministry. According to these arrangements, without appointment by the City Council (*Anjomane Shahr*), the mayor had no power to act; and at the same time, in the case of any disagreement, the City Council's decision was prioritized over the wishes of the municipality (ibid., 2000). Although the new Act had been improved in comparison with the 1930 version, the decision on mayoral selection was still not entirely governed by the City Councils.

In 1952, a more far-reaching mechanism was introduced, whereby Tehran and other large cities were divided into neighbourhoods, and based on local populations each neighbourhood had the opportunity to send their representative to the City Council (*Anjomane Shahr*). This constructive phase of legislation was to some extent able to link City Councils representatives to citizens and to enhance the responsibility of City Councils members. According to the shift, face-to-face meetings and public forums could potentially take place, whereby on the one hand people were able to make more informed choices in electing their representatives, and on the other hand the representatives themselves had a clear vision about their local issues. However, in

practice urban and local administration remained under the command of central government (Habibi, 2000). A new Municipality Act in 1955, following the 1953 coup d'état which removed the elected councils, the democratic reform were scaled back.

The central reasons for the failure of the City Councils in Iran before the revolution can be summarised in two concerns. First, the interference of central governments in local associations' affairs, whereby the local councils were dominated and influenced by central authorities. Thus the locally elected government had no real power over decision-making and their autonomy was in doubt. Imani-Jajermi (1999) suggests that despite the authorisation of the Civic Councils in Iran since 1907, in practice it had no power in the decision-making process. Second, the socio-economic circumstances of the Iranian society could be the reasons for the lack of success (ibid., 1999). Basically, at that period, urbanization in Iran was very low, with only 20% of the total population residing in cities. Thus the modern forms of urban administration and management had not been understood and supported by people (Saidnia, 2004). The lack of political understanding and political culture with the urban population could be considered as a further contributory factor underlying the failure of City Councils.

It is clear, therefore, that the formation, function and nature of urban councils in Iran had been undergoing amendments and fluctuations under various administrations over time. From its starting point up to the contemporary administration, urban governance can be separated into six distinct periods (Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3 The Historical Trend of Iranian Urban Associations**

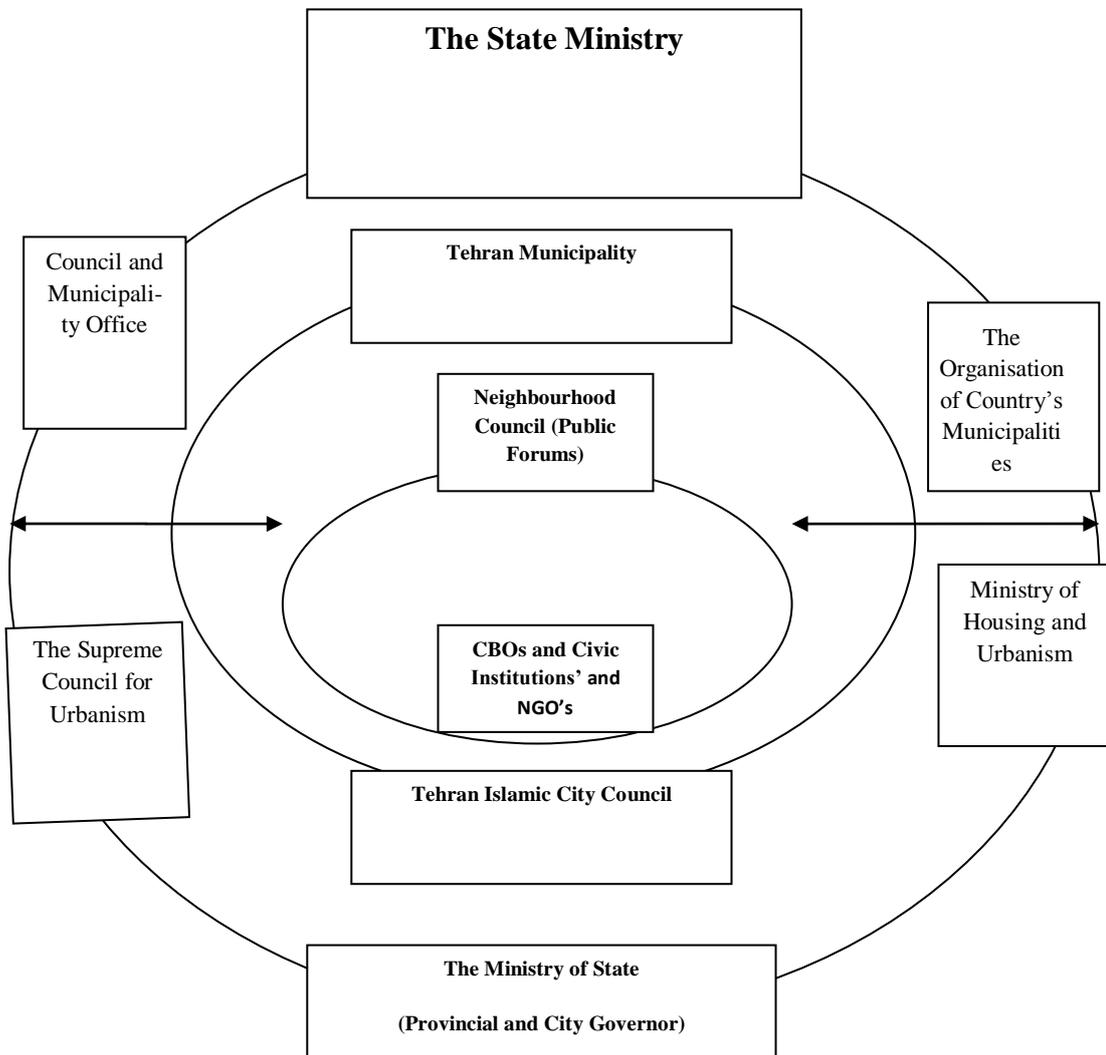
1. Constitutional Revolution idealism (First Decentralisation movements)	1905 - 1925
2. Erosion of Municipality Act ( Beginning of contemporary centralisation)	1925 - 1941
3. Liberalism and democracy movements (Restore decentralisation and renovate constitutions)	1941 - 1953
4. Strengthening of autocracy and defeat of civil councils defeat (Shift to centralisation)	1953 – 1979
5. The Islamic Revolution (Return to centralisation)	1979 - 1999
6. Establishment of the city councils (Uncertain Progress to decentralisation)	1999 - present

Source: Extracted from Imani-Jajermi, 1999 and Shane-Chi, 2000.

### **4.1.3 Current key formal stakeholders in city governance**

The formation of urban governance in Tehran is built on a multi-phased relationship between institutions and organisations (see Figure 4.2). The position of bodies in governing practices is defined in technical and legitimacy-related terms. Governing bodies exist at levels and scales that vary from national to neighbourhood scope, with major actors including the Ministry of State and its sub-organisations, such as the country's Municipalities Organisations and the Council and Municipality Department in the Ministry of State. In addition, the Supreme Council for Urbanism and the Ministry of Housing and Urbanism have a role in technical contexts. Key roles in delivering city management tasks are held within the TMA (Tehran Metropolitan Area) by the governor of Tehran province; and at the city level by Tehran's Municipality and Islamic City Councils. Finally, at the local and neighbourhood level, the urban machinery is currently struggling to build up a new formation through neighbourhood councils (public forums) and community-based associations which could play a role in shaping governance in Tehran.

Figure 4.2 Formal Stakeholders and Density at Different Scales for Urban Governance in Tehran



*Ministry of State and other governmental organisations*

The Ministry of State is known as an influential stakeholder and the central government's representative in urban affairs (Figure 4.3 and Table 4.4). Although there has been a reduction in the Ministry of State's influence in urban governance following the 1997 shift, the body still plays a significant role in monitoring local elections; in authorising a mayor subsequent to the ICC's selection of a mayor; in revoking the regulations authorised by the ICC; and in terminating ICC associations in the city (Mansour, 2006). Currently, the legal responsibilities and tasks within the Ministry of State's remit include therefore those listed under Article 53 of the ICC Formation Act, whereby the Ministry of State is considered as a proxy for the ICC in any case of cancellation (Taheri, 2001). This causes the municipalities and the ICCs to be monitored by the Ministry of State and by its sub-administrations, such as the provincial and city governors.

Due to the abolition of the Municipalities Associations following the Islamic Revolution in 1980, the necessity of forming a coordinator organisation led to an Organisation of National Municipalities to be established in 1986. Based on Article 62 of the Municipalities Act, the establishment of a sub-organisation of the Ministry of State took place years later in 2002. The main objectives for the organisation are summarised in the formulation of schemes intended for the improvement of the municipalities through education, management and supervision. Relationships between the municipalities, between the municipalities and state ministries, and between the municipalities and state organisations are among the organisation's responsibilities (Organization of Municipalities and Rural Administration, 2002). But when considering the organisations' responsibilities, a key concern is the insignificant volume of technical, legal and monitoring tasks that have been devolved by the Ministry of State to the organisation. Thus, key responsibilities such as monitoring the legal and institutional affairs of the municipalities and ICCs remain among the Ministry of State's duties, through a centralised approach.

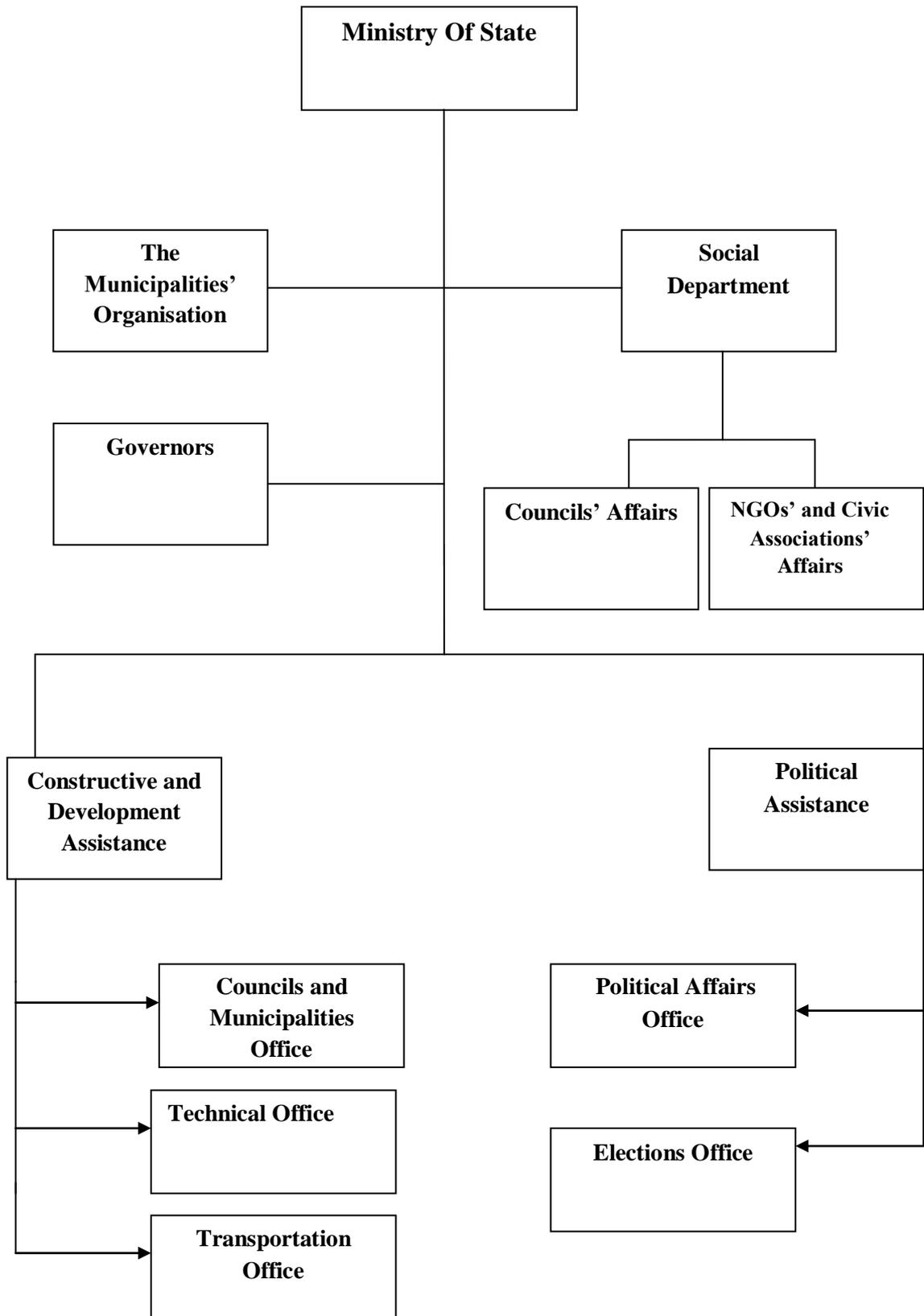


Figure 4.3 The Organisational Structure of the Ministry of State.

**Table 4.4 Classification of Ministry of State Responsibilities Regarding Urban Governance**

<b>Monitoring and Managerial Areas</b>	<b>Tools for monitoring and management tasks</b>	<b>Legal Frameworks</b>
<b>Organisational and Formational</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approval and consent regarding the municipality's establishment</li> <li>- Abolition of the municipality</li> <li>- Authorisation of mayoral appointments<sup>1</sup></li> <li>- Consent on the administrative formation of the municipality</li> <li>- Authorisation of municipality sub-organisational constructions</li> <li>- Providing and recommending employment regulations</li> <li>- Providing and recommending various municipalities' directives</li> <li>- Monitoring and classifying employment affairs</li> </ul>	<p>Municipality Act</p> <p>Municipality Act Municipality and ICC Acts Municipality Act Municipality Act</p> <p>Municipality Act Municipality; Renovation And Construction Acts Municipality Act</p>
<b>Administrating ICC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Taking responsibility for the ICC's successor in any case of termination</li> <li>- Accomplishment of ICC elections</li> <li>- Monitoring ICC</li> </ul>	ICC Act
<b>Financial Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allocation of finances to municipalities</li> <li>- Approval of guidelines and strategies with regard to financial affairs</li> <li>- Consent on renovation levy</li> <li>- Monitoring budgeting and financial reports in municipalities</li> <li>- Collecting tax and its distribution among municipalities</li> </ul>	<p>Municipality Act Municipality Act Renovation and Construction Acts Municipality Act Municipality Act</p>
<b>Technical and Development Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Authorisation of development programmes in municipalities</li> <li>- Approval of constructional and renovation proposals</li> <li>- Monitoring implementation of development proposals through technical offices of governors and states' ministry</li> <li>- Providing and directing technical codes, regulations and standards</li> </ul>	<p>Renovation and Construction Acts Renovation and Construction Acts Municipality Act</p> <p>Municipality Act</p>
<b>Legal and Institutional Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Authorisation of catchment area and urban boundary</li> <li>- Addressing complaints with regard to municipalities and related consents</li> <li>- Scrutinizing municipalities' affairs</li> <li>- Appointing a representative to the Resolution Commission and Commission 100</li> <li>- Monitoring the implementation of technical codes, regulations and standards</li> </ul>	<p>Municipality Act Municipality Act</p> <p>Municipality Act Municipality Act</p> <p>Municipality Act</p>
<b>Unofficial Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Necessity of having Ministry of State ministerial and gubernatorial agreement with regards to appointment of mayors;</li> <li>- Influence of State minister and governors on mayors</li> </ul>	

Source: Extracted from the Centre for Urbanism and Architectural Researches and Studies, 1996.

Another arm of central government which is engaged with city governance issues is the Ministry of Housing and Urbanism. The Ministry is responsible for technical monitoring and completion of urban programmes and the planning agenda, as well as the implementation of regulations and measures that have been authorised by the Supreme Council for Urbanism. The Ministry is also obliged to introduce, implement and monitor large scale development projects which maintain national finance in cities. Also among the Ministry's responsibilities is the duty of authorisation and announcement of indicators, standards, regulations and procedures with regard to urbanism. Furthermore, the Supreme Council for Urbanism which consists of 11 state Ministries is considered the highest association for policy-making and approval of macro-level guidelines and strategies (Kazemian and Saidi-Rezvani, 2002). This organisation is also responsible for authorisation and modification of the Master Plans in cities (ibid, 2002). Thus, based on its institutional framework, article 7 of the Municipality Act the municipalities and urban executives are obliged to work together in this association.

It is apparent from the above discussions that the function of the Ministry of State is central to city governance and participation exercises. Thus, urban and participatory associations are largely influenced by the Ministry and in addition, issues around elections and their procedures in the city are controlled by the Ministry of State.

#### *Islamic City Council (ICC)*

The credibility of any association in Iran is highly dependent on its position within the ideological and legal frameworks. Following the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the formation of the city councils was highlighted as the main tool for establishing the new form of local legislation. Ideologically the establishment of urban councils was considered one of the main principles and objectives of the Islamic Revolution, thus in the revolution's early phases (24/09/1979) the first endorsement to activate local and urban councils was made by Imam Khomeini<sup>2</sup> and Ayatollah Taaleghani<sup>3</sup> (Imam Khomeini Publishing Association, 1999). This consequently led to their establishment and integration into the constitution. The Councils Act was taken into account in the new constitutional law, with articles 7 and 100-106 of the Constitution highlighting its significance. According to section 7 of the Constitution approved in 15/11/1979, the council was in theory considered to be the main locus of decision-making and

administration, wherein the code 103 obliges governors, mayors and administrators to respect the council's decisions (Fakhroleslam, 2005). Furthermore, it could be argued that the establishment of the ICC was a practical step in line with Article 44<sup>4</sup> of the Constitution.

Despite its institutional design and ideological endorsements, the Islamic City Council only came into practical operation a few years after their introduction. Following their authorisation, Councils were introduced in 116 cities. However after two years the Council institutions were inactivated, coinciding with the first Act concerning the Islamic City Council in 1982; and subsequently underwent five sets of further amendments.

A number of general issues delayed the launch of councils in Iran. Subsequent to the Islamic Revolution, political challenges and instability dominated in the country, which postponed the coming into effect of the Councils Act. In addition, after the revolution the war between Iran and Iraq to some extent prevented further political development and there was no sign of civic progression (Moqeeemi, 2007). Thus there was no room to implement a scheme such as the councils' initiative. Furthermore, a centralized pattern of administration and totalitarianism did not tolerate confrontation with a new foundation. Moreover, socio-economic and cultural factors also played a significant role in hampering the implementation of the Councils Act. Due to the narrowed level of public understanding and knowledge with regard to civil associations, the value and significance of councils for society was basically unknown. Eventually after the revolution, society had no chance of building up social capital and shaping its actors and tools because the wider circumstances had led to a centralized mode of administration.

The Islamic City Council (*Showra*) was set up to redefine urban governance and to develop a new arena for citizen involvement at the local scale. The Council has been implementing a bottom-up network as part of its agenda and has also been typified by a sub-elite participation, including highly educated people and political elites who were elected by direct citizen participation.

The establishment of the Islamic City Council (ICC) was part of the reform, transformation and decentralisation of responsibilities, tasks and powers to local institutions and citizens. It was a spark that initiated the greater visibility of alternative

perspectives and the practical involvement of the public in city matters. For the first time, the public had participated to elect a legislative body (in April 1998) for the Islamic City Council, whose members were offered the responsibility of selecting a mayor (before that point this was the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior). The council was endowed with legislative powers relating to the municipality's executive authority, thus this governance shift changed the method through which the municipality was being monitored.

Up to this instance, the municipality had been overseen “bureaucratically” by the Ministry of State. However, the municipality is now being monitored through a relatively “democratic” structure, the Islamic City Council (Nikzaad-Larijani, 2002). The ICC is considered to be the major accountable and participatory urban institution, elected by direct citizen participation. The institution is responsible for electing and also for deposing (if necessary) the mayor. In addition to being able to offer a participatory space in the ICC elections, according to Article 71, Code 6, the council also has a responsibility to encourage people to participate in social, economic, constructional, cultural and educational affairs in the city (Shafiei-Pour, 2010). The council is also responsible for approving plans for the city, including budgeting and other financial provisions of the municipality (Table 4.5).

The City Council in Tehran is formed by fifteen elected representatives, and structured into three key commissions and 13 committees (Figure 4.4). The 13 committees are in charge of reviewing buildings and infrastructure plans, and setting regulations and proposals under five main headings: urban development; culture/society; urban environment; budget and planning (Hashemi, 1999). There are also two particular boards, one for by-law 38, working on disputes with regard to contracts and financial issues on municipality contracts; and the other for by-law 77 that deals with tariff issues.

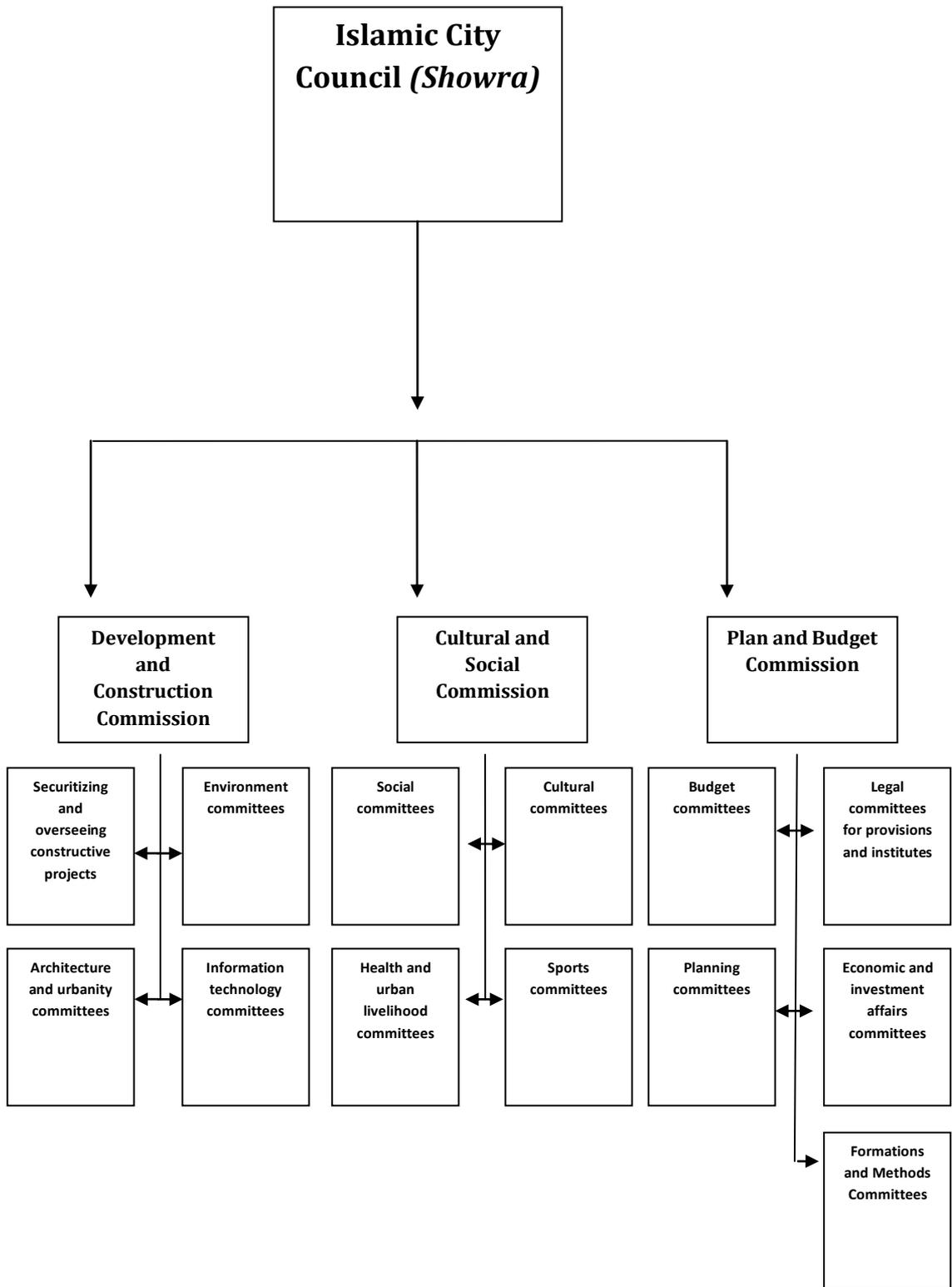
**Table 4.5 Selected Duties and Tasks of the Islamic City Councils**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electing mayor for four years;</li> <li>• Identifying social, cultural, educational, health, economic, and welfare shortages, needs, and insufficiencies of respective jurisdictions, formulating plans and corrective proposals as well as applied solutions in the above fields to facilitate planning by concerned officials;</li> <li>• Approving bills on levying or cancelling urban duties and changing their type and amount in line with general government policies, which will be announced by the Ministry of the Interior;</li> <li>• Supervising urban health affairs;</li> <li>• Passing regulations and supervising the installation of canals and paths in the city;</li> <li>• Overseeing implementation of plans related to the development of streets, avenues, squares, green spaces, and public facilities in the city according to the relevant regulations;</li> <li>• Approving the names of streets, squares, avenues, alleys and neighbourhoods in cities and changing those names;</li> <li>• Supervising the good management of municipalities and all organizations, institutes, and companies affiliated to the municipality; protecting capital assets, as well as public and private assets of municipalities; and supervising the expenses and costs of those entities by selecting official auditors, reporting violations to the municipality, and taking necessary legal action.</li> </ul>
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Source: Islamic City Council, 2009a.

The advantages of the establishment of the Councils have been summarised as devolution and decentralisation, political and social development, enhancing equity and citizen rights; accelerating the urban development and scrutinizing and monitoring (Matani, 2003). Kamali, the head of the Social and Cultural Commission in the Provinces Supreme Councils, suggests that according to the council's importance and status in the constitution, they are an outstanding opportunity for decentralised policy-making, power diffusion and participation (Provinces Supreme Councils, 2009).

Despite these advantages, what has emerged from the literature about the general sentiment towards governance supports the view that it faces two major obstacles: firstly legal and legislative-oriented insufficiencies; and secondly technical and organisational hindrances that prevent the ICC from proactively supporting participation procedures in the city (Taheri, 1998; and Madani, 1998).



**Figure 4.4: The Administrational and Functional Pattern of Tehran’s City Council (*Showra*)**

Source: Designed and translated by author.

### *Municipality*

Prior to the shift, the duty of the municipality as a sub-organisation could be summarised simply as delivering services in the city. Following the urban transition, as in many other public institutions, the municipality redefined its position in managerial and administrative structures that relate to the city (Table 4.6). In larger cities the municipality translated itself into a more complex and broader body (Mozayeni, 1998). With the new form of urban management, a new degree of financial and functional independency has emerged. This modification leads to municipalities being more independent structurally and practically and consequently having a greater role than just sub-organisations executing central government policy. Thus, the unprovoked and imbalanced hierarchical relationships between the municipality and the Ministry of State are significantly modified by the interactions taking place between the municipality and the ICC.

Structurally in the municipality of Tehran:

management was now formed of management boards for finance and administration, welfare, urban services, research units, traffic and planning, and also Tehran was divided from 12 into 20 independent municipalities as a result of an expansion of the city's boundaries (Madanipour, 1998: 70).

The Tehran Municipality soon came to comprise eight departments, 22 mayoral districts and 21 co-bodies (Figure 4.5). The eight specific departments and assistants included: construction and technical; administrative and financial; planning and coordination; architectural and urbanism; district affairs; cultural and social affairs; urban services; and finally traffic and transportation assistance (Tehran Municipality, 2009). Despite having limited influence in Tehran, the mayor technically has the executive power and is accountable to the city, while the governors are held responsible for urban issues from different perspectives.

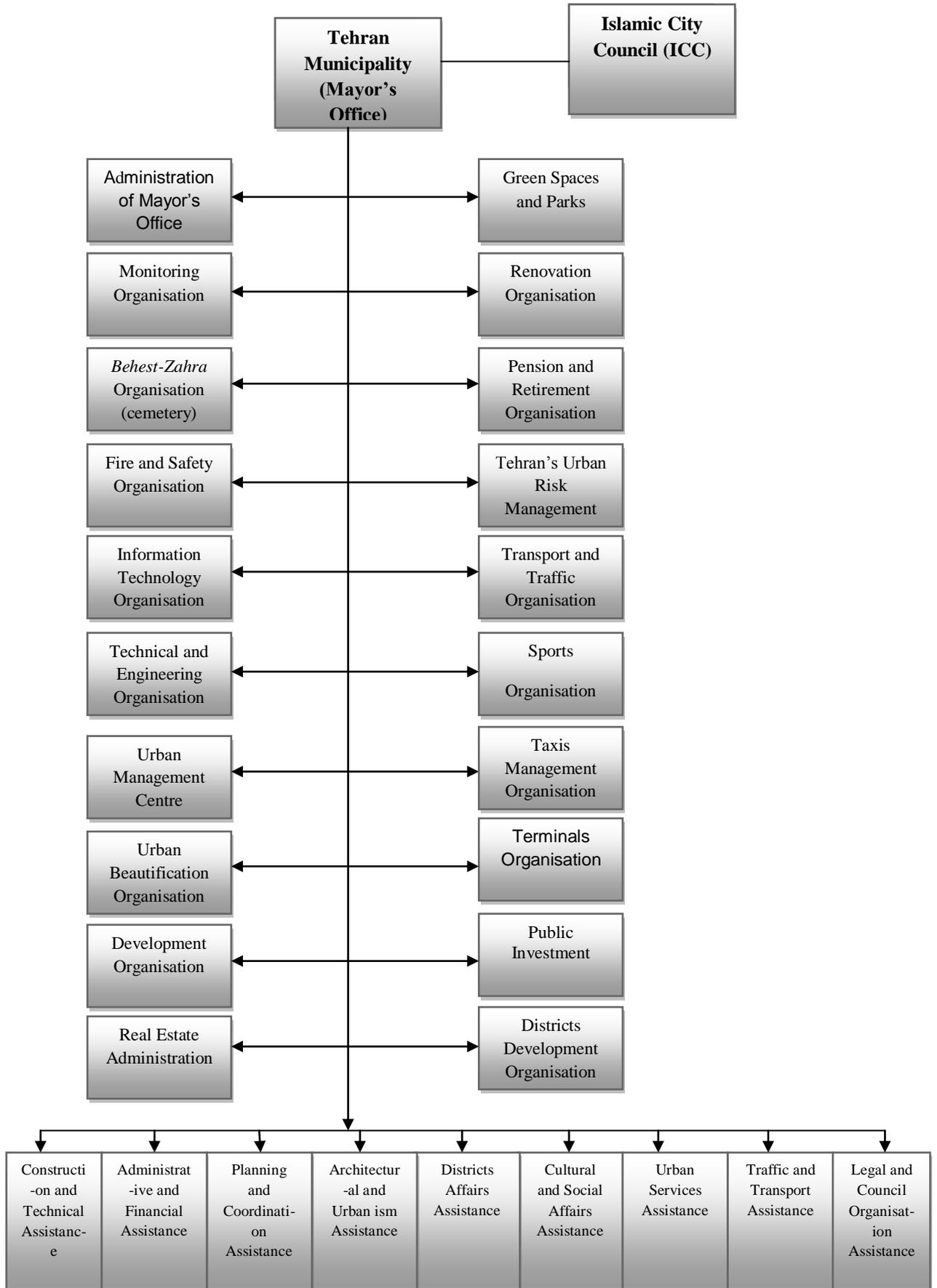
The municipalities in Iran, as the main actors and elements in the city administrative system, are regarded as public associations and non-governmental bodies which technically depend on elected public representatives. Despite this, however, the municipalities in Iran have not benefited from complete legal autonomy but have been constantly influenced by the state authority (Amir-Arjmand, 2005). Whereas in Tehran

the municipality is not considered as the sole policy-making and decision-making organisation in the city, expectations from the municipality generally and mayor specifically extend much further than the ICC's legal responsibility (Madanipour, 2009). In the international literature, five major aspects are used to draw a line between strong and weak mayoral powers: "control over budget; control over policy; power of appointment of senior staff; direction of lines of authority and accountability; and existence of other elected officials" (Ross *et al.*, 1991: 84-9; Hambleton, 1998: 3-5; Boddy and Parkinson, 2005: 354). These attributes of the mayor have actually been enhanced by the Iranian urban transformation, which brings to the fore the need for cautious analysis of the mayoral position and responsibilities in Tehran.

**Table 4.6 Mayor's Executive Power in the City**

1 - Legal, council and parliamentary affairs
2 - Social and cultural
3 - Traffic and transportation
4 - Urban services
5 - Planning and coordination
6 - Financial and administrative
7 - Urban planning and architecture
8 - District affairs
9 - Technology and development

Source: Extracted from Tehran's Municipality, 2009.



**Figure 4.5 Tehran's Municipality Organisation**

Source: Tehran Municipality Statistics Centre, 2008

*Neighbourhood Councils (Public Forums)*

Following the transition based on Article 71 of the Council's codes and regulations, the Council was committed to launch the Neighbourhood Councils in 1999. In addition to this legal commitment the Neighbourhood Council was also aimed at integrating the bottom-most sphere of city governance and to provide a fresh participatory space at local level. Kazemian and Shadmanfar (2008) argue that the institutions' establishment was intended to enhance association and reduce the existing communication gaps between the ICC and the public. Thus, advisory tasks were offered to local forums to re-establish a new form of interface and communication between citizens and decision-makers. In fact the neighbourhood council aims to realize and implement ICC goals through the enhancement of citizens' participation in local affairs (Alavitabar, 2001). Additionally by the introduction of the institution, local responsibilities could be taken on by citizens to a greater degree, which could persuade citizens to be more responsive (ibid., 2008).

In other words the Neighbourhood Council is a local institution which functions legally as the ICCs' sub-establishment in the city, which is defined as a non-governmental, not-for-profit, voluntary and non-political body that takes advisory and monitoring roles in relation to city governance (Davoudi and Yahyapour, 2009). Yet legally and institutionally, the Neighbourhood Council is beyond the three key constitutional forces of the state (executive, legislative and juridical) and is basically considered to be a publicly-orientated institution formed through a local independent framework.

In addition to its role in participatory democracy, the Neighbourhood Council provides a representative democratic space for citizens to elect and to be elected. Thus in its recently-implemented election about 12,000 candidates competed for a representative position in Local Forums. Subsequent to its first period which was based on a pilot experiment in a number of Tehran districts, the participation level for the second period was about 330,000 (Imani-Jajermi, 2009). Compared with the second period, participation was encouraging and constructive, thus almost half a million people were involved in the recent forum elections (ibid., 2009). In the existing system, approximately 3,700 representatives delivered local forum tasks across 22 districts and 400 neighbourhoods in Tehran.

### *Civic Associations*

The development and growth of public participation requires systematisation, institutionalisation and the creation of appropriate arrangements. In other words, participation cannot be formulated through the creation of organisations and associations alone. While these associations and establishments do give participation its particular character in each case, civic associations should potentially be valued as a dynamic mechanism for public participation and building correlations between people and states. According to the Ministry of State, the term “civic association” refers to associations that have been established voluntarily by non-governmental individuals based on not-for-profit and non-political intentions (Ministry of State, 2005). The National Youth Organisation in Iran (2003) defined five factors and characteristics of civic associations: 1- Having an organisational framework, 2- Non-governmental, 3- Not-for-profit, 4-Voluntary and finally 5-Formulated to address social need. The areas in which civic associations are allowed to operate in Iran have been named as scientific, cultural, social, sports, arts and charitable trust, women, marginalized groups in the population, health and medication, rehabilitation, environment and reclamation (Ministry of State, 2005).

Despite the growth of civic associations and non-governmental organisations in Iran, which has soared since the 1990s, this has not assured the effectiveness and efficacy of these associations on issues of participation (Saidi, 2003). Thus, the civic associations have been faced with a number of structural and organisational issues. As shown in Figure 1.3, the authorisation of civic associations and NGOs in Iran is among central government responsibilities, and the approval and establishment of these associations are linked to the Ministry of State. In addition, according to Waiver 5 of the instructions authorised by the state dated 28/07/2005, regardless of the responsibilities of the ICC and civic association representatives, the monitoring role regarding civic associations is handled mainly by the Ministry of State (ibid., 2005). In consequence, the existence and identity of these associations are linked to the state, initially and procedurally (ibid., 2003). Thus, the perspectives through which these associations have been taken into consideration vary according to different ruling administrations.

Ultimately, concerns regarding the establishment and authorisation of civic associations

can be considered as the main hindrance for the civic associations in Iran (Kazemi, 1999 and Namazi, 2002). The stability and continuity of these associations also is a matter of concern (Sadeghi-Ahangar and Mohebbi, 2009). Alavi (2004) considers the lack of a legal framework specifically designed for civic associations, the state's attitudes regarding civic associations; and cultural issues as the key barriers to civic associations in Iran. These issues affect the productivity of civic associations with regard to their participatory and governance objectives.

## **4.2 Governance Assessment through UN-Habitat (UGI)**

As mentioned in the introduction, this section presents the governance assessment through the UN-Habitat Urban Governance Index in Tehran, based on four key indices: Effectiveness, Equity, Participation and Accountability. The UN survey is composed of 25 main questions reflecting 25 indicators and the four abovementioned variables of governance (Appendix 4). These questions are answered following the methodology guidelines provided by the UN (see Appendix 5), and subsequently all answers are translated into quantitative data. The data is then processed through specific formulae that provided for each variable. Appendix 6 shows each result multiplied in line with the particular weight given to it, based on the methodology design. It also shows the total result for each of the four main indicators and 25 sub-indicators is presented as a quantity between 0-1. It is impossible to give a clearer textual explanation of the approach to transforming data for the purposes of analysis as they are too diverse: to gain an idea of the operations used, the reader must refer to the detailed presentations in Appendices 4, 5 and 6.

### **4.2.1 Effectiveness**

As mentioned in the earlier part of the research, the evaluation of effectiveness through the UN approach places greater emphasis on financial aspects. This is because financial factors are hugely significant for cities. In particular, the process of assessment of local governance effectiveness is based on eight diverse components or indicators: Local government revenue per capita; Ratio of actual recurrent and capital budget; Local government revenue transfers, Ratio of mandated to actual tax collection; Predictability

of transfers in local government; Existence of a vision statement; Published Performance delivery standard and Consumer satisfaction survey.

*Local government revenue per capita.* In the pre 1997 urban governance system in Iran, local urban bodies such as the municipality depended on central government and on financial support from higher level administrations. However, following the shift in 1997, the new approach towards urban management offered financial and functional independence. As a result, municipalities became more autonomous structurally, practically and functionally, and more than mere sub-organisations, pursuing central government policy. To some extent Tehran municipality turned into a key player in the distribution of revenue and in providing sufficient funding for the city. Despite two decades of the municipality's financial autonomy from central government and the enhancement of local government revenue, the quality of urban governance in Tehran has been affected by funding challenges. The main concern that the municipality currently faces is the allocation of sustained financial resources for purposes of city administration. Masoumi, a Tehran Municipality Civic and Architecture Assistant, claims that in 2008-2009 almost 80% of municipality income derived from the construction permission tariff (Communications and International Affairs of Tehran Municipality, 2009a). Furthermore, in 2009-2010 (1389) there was a similar revenue source scenario. This explains why the Tehran mayor believes that the municipality's income is shaped mainly by the construction sector and the municipality is unable to generate any new source of income for the city (Irna, 2010a).

Generally municipal income is characterised by two types of resources. 'Regular income' which includes renovation and project development tax, commercial registrations and sewerage charges; and 'Sporadic income' which consist of retailing density (high-rise building permissions), construction infringement levy, occupation tariff, building consent (Communications and International Affairs of Tehran Municipality, 2009 b). It follows that the financial flexibility of the municipality is undermined by constraints from a number of consistent resources. For example, due to the recession in the housing market and the decline in the numbers of requests for planning permission to construct, the municipality revenue began to decrease in the first part of 2005-2006. Consequently, the municipality was incapable of fulfilling its forecast agendas. Furthermore, the fact that construction tax and particularly retail

density permissions are major fiscal sources for the municipality has negative effects on the city in terms of its economy and landscape. Even with its current population, Tehran has been struggling with a number of basic issues, such as the municipality's continuous offer of high-rise building permissions (retail density) which is exacerbating the expansion of residential areas and population in Tehran. With respect to this issue, Ebtekar, a member of Tehran's ICC, believes that in 2006-2007 (1386) the municipality sold 24million m<sup>2</sup> of planning permissions, which led to the construction of 4 million m<sup>2</sup> of new spaces, meaning that an extra 1.2 million people can settle in the erected spaces (Etemad, 2008). The issue here is whether in parallel to retailing density and the expansion of the population, the municipality is able to offer urban public spaces, green space, and public transportation.

As noted, in Iran the metropolises have been relying on the construction levy as a major source of municipality income. In Tehran 75 to 80% of municipality revenue is supplied from retailing construction permissions, which is a form of value capture through negotiated development tax. It would seem, therefore, that urgent action is needed to generate reliable funding streams through formulating a regular taxation mechanism. To arrive at that point, the Municipality has been aiming to expand a portion of its regular sources of income by introducing a scheme which has boosted its regular income each year by 5% (International and Public Relationships, 2009 b). It is expected that by 2012 this portion of regular revenue (from renovation and *pasmand* tax) will reach 40% of the total municipality income (Table 4.7).

It has been argued that focusing on the potential of land value tax (LVT) in Tehran could help the municipality in reaching the appropriate quantity of revenue from sustained income sources. According to the statistical centre of Tehran municipality (2009), the area of Tehran is about 730 km<sup>2</sup>, which includes 33% residential land of which 15% is allocated to the service sector. In 2008-9 the average value for 1m<sup>2</sup> residential and service use respectively was 15 million and 30 million *Rial*<sup>5</sup>. If 0.5% of this value in LVT for residential units and 1.5 % in LVT for service and commercial units had been received annually from proprietors, then the municipality income from LVT would have exceeded earnings from construction and density permission by 70% (Centre of Technology Studies, 2009).

However, the question that arises here is to what extent has the municipality succeeded in achieving its regular funding stream through the mechanism of taxation? It can be argued that due to central government economic policies which rely on enormous revenues from oil exportation, the central challenge is that of tackling taxation, because in spite of the existing encouragement policies, the culture of tax payment in Iran has not yet normalised among citizens who prefer to evade tax where possible.

This may be caused by a lack of public understanding regarding tax implementation, tax authorizations and their indicators. To some extent it seems that the municipality has not succeeded in informing citizens regarding tax and tariff circumstances. In addition, limitations on the legal capacity of the municipality to authorize taxes were highlighted by disagreements with central government about the municipality's right to levy and formulate taxes, as well as other issues around attaining enduring income resources.

In Iran municipalities have no role in levying taxes and central government is responsible for formulating and drawing the implications of taxation mechanisms and policies. According to regulation number 30, municipalities are allowed to receive levies, tariffs and service costs following the approval of their indicators and operating guidelines by the State Ministry (Mansour, 2009a). From a brief review of Tehran municipality revenues, it is clear that municipal revenue has increased sharply by almost seven times since 2005-2006 (Table 4.8).

**Table 4.7 municipality income (sustained and sporadic income sources)**

Year	Sustained sources	Sporadic sources
2007 - 2008	12%	88%
2008 - 2009	17%	83%
2009 - 2010	25%	75%
2012 - 2013 estimated	40%	60%

Source: Communications and International Affairs of Tehran Municipality, 2009.

**Table 4.8 Municipality income**

Year	Income (Billion Rial)	Income (US\$)
2005 - 2006	10,000	1,000,000,000
2006 - 2007	19,760	2,000,000,000
2007- 2008	23,407	2,600,000,000
2008- 2009	47,000	5,200,000,000
2009- 2010	74,000	8,200,000,000

Source: Abstracted from the Financial Assistance of Tehran Municipality (2009-2010).

*Ratio of actual recurrent and capital budget.* The Tehran municipality budget in 2005-2006 was equivalent to 5% of the total government budget, twice as much as Tehran's provincial budget and 23% of the total budget of the country's provinces. By reviewing these figures, it might be realised that alongside its political significance, the Tehran municipality is one of the most wealthy and affluent centres in the country. The municipality's annual budget can be defined as an integrated financial scheme that includes all activities and services with forecast expenses and expenditure, applicable following Islamic city council approval (Poorsalim-Bonab, 2009). Comparable with the burgeoning of municipality income, in recent years local government total budget has been on the increase, mainly supplied through citizen contributions to tariff charges. Generally, local government budget reflects income from capital and recurrent resources (see table 4.9). There is a shift in the implementation of the municipality's budget, which means that municipality's income has been targeted at the further development of projects, rather than on customary expenditures. For instance, in the planned budget for 2010-2011(1389) approximately only 15% of budget has been allocated for continuum and maintenance projects, while the remaining is being assigned to new and prospective projects.

**Table 4.9 Municipality Budget Income (Billion Rial)**

Year	Total Budget	Recurrent Budget (R)	Capital Budget (C)
2005 - 2006	14,000	-----	-----
2006 - 2007	23,400	-----	-----
2007 - 2008	34,000	-----	-----
2008 - 2009	65,000	36,500	27,000
2009 - 2010	70,600	40,600	30,000
2010 - 2011	74,600	40,000	34,580

Source: Tehran municipality statistic centre, 2009.

*Local government revenue transfers.* This UGI indicator is mainly aimed at assessing the independence of local government in terms of its fiscal aspects. In recent years, fiscal management in Tehran has been based on internal resources and has not relied on transfers from higher levels of government and other external sources. With regard to central government support for Tehran municipality, the role of transfers is insignificant for the municipality's budget (Table 4.10). Despite increasing central government financial support and finance, in the year 2009-2010 just over 12% of the total local revenue was derived from central government distribution and finance transfers,

consisting principally in public transport support, in terms of central government aid for developing metro networks and subsidies on public transportation ticketing.

**Table 4.10 Revenue Transfers from central government and finance (Billion *Rial*)**

Sector/ year	2007- 2008	2008- 2009	2009 -2010
Developing metro networks	860	2,900	2,300
Subsides on Bus and metro Ticketing	130	390	130
Finance	-----	3,000	7,000

Source: IRNA, 2009.

*Ratio of mandated to actual tax collection.* In recent years the municipality has largely succeeded in obtaining its annual mandated tax collection. For instance, according to tax collection trends, in 2009-2010 the municipality was able to successfully collect a large proportion of its mandated tariff. The head of the city council budget commission believes that the municipality is able to gain almost 95% of its planned tax income (Islamic city council, 2010). According to the research calculation which took place nearly three months ahead of the end of annual tax collection time, the municipality's estimate is not far off. At this time (mid February 2010) the result demonstrated that nearly 76 % of municipality mandated tax had been collected, further affecting the flexibility of decision-making in the municipality. Generally in Iran, to avoid being fined and increases in the charges, people prefer to pay their levies and taxes before the beginning of the Iranian New Year (end of March) which causes municipalities' income to increase sharply by the end of the year. As a result, it is predicted that municipal income by this time will have reached the mandated level.

*Predictability of transfers in local government budget.* This factor emphasises the quality of local governments in relation to their prospective financial planning. In other words the forecasts that enable institutions to predict their resource transfer budgets two or three years in advance (UN-Habitat, 2004). In Iran it is hard to forecast local government resources deriving from central government transfers in advance. The issue is not the lack of regulations or edicts that allow the precise sum of transfers to be anticipated; rather, the concern is about the implementation for such regulations being absent or unpredictable. For example, according to the fourth development schema for 2009-2010, almost 40,000 Billion *Rials* were allocated for metro development projects in Tehran and other large cities. Yet in practice government expenditure was just over a

quarter of this amount (Fars, 2009). The allocation of 10,000 Billion *Rials* to projects for the renovation of old urban areas, based on clause D and H (code one in the budgeting agenda), has not been assured in practice (ibid., 2009).

*Published performance delivery standards (PPS)*<sup>6</sup>. This UGI indicator is measured based on the existence or absence of formal publications about basic services and their quantity. In Iran the delivery of all basic services including water supply, electricity, sanitation, health and education is beyond the remit of local government. The responsibility for delivering these key services and their characteristics is determined by central government and its ministries. Thus, currently there is no publication of standards by local government. Solid waste management is the only service which has been handled through local government procedures and it is among the Tehran municipality's duties to administer this.

*Consumer Satisfaction survey*. Basically this sub-indicator enquires the existence or absence of consumer satisfaction mechanisms within local government priorities. The establishment of mechanisms that address consumer satisfaction and accountability concerns is one of the constructive achievements of the existing local government in Tehran. In parallel to the operation of its mechanisms (i.e. 1888), the municipality has implemented regular consumer satisfaction surveys with regard to urban services, including public transports, green spaces, traffic and waste management.<sup>7</sup>

*Existence of vision statement*. A new version of the comprehensive plan for Tehran, as a guideline for the urban planning of Tehran over the next 20 years, was articulated and approved by the authorities in 2006.

The new principles for Tehran's long-term development (Architecture and Civic Supreme Council, 2007) are focused on:

- Tehran as a creative city with an Iranian /Islamic identity.
- Tehran as a knowledgeable, ingenious and global city.
- Tehran as a sustainable city with a suitable structure for residence, activity and pleasure.
- Green, beautiful, inviting, lively and with various and extensive public spaces.

- Tehran as an affluent city providing public welfare and appropriate infrastructures through reducing inequality and delivering citizens rights equally to all.
- Tehran as a safe city with resilience against harms, hazards and disasters.
- Tehran as a metropolis with national and global functions, with a developed economy and centralizing cultural affairs, standing as one of the three primary cities in the south west region of Asia. Development guidelines for Tehran have been envisaged in terms of the following factors (Table 4.11).

**Table 4.11 Tehran Development Guidelines**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organize and protect the region, prevent any extension of city.</li> <li>- Organize and protect the urban expanse.</li> <li>- Enhance the function and position of Tehran on the international, national and provincial stages.</li> <li>- Social development and coordination of the settlement of population.</li> <li>- Economic development and fostering the flourishing of Tehran’s metropolitan activities.</li> <li>- Improving the conditions of connection networks and transportation and traffic systems.</li> <li>- Protecting the environment.</li> <li>- Securitising and providing resistance against environmental disasters (earthquake, floods).</li> <li>- Improving strategic management systems</li> <li>- Supply water needs, develop and provide water construction and urban sewerage, organize riverbeds and riverbanks.</li> <li>- Improve and enhance conditions, organize Tehran’s physical structures (urban spatial organization).</li> <li>- Enhance the quality of effective urban environment with zoning to include land use and arrange construction and build.</li> <li>- Regeneration and dynamic protection of the natural, historical and cultural inheritances of Tehran.</li> <li>- Organize and improve the image (vision) identity and urban view in order to regenerate Iranian and Islamic architecture and urbanism.</li> <li>- Develop green, public, promenade and tourism spaces.</li> <li>- Supply requirements and organize urban services.</li> <li>- Renewal, sanitation and regeneration of obsolescent urban fabrics.</li> </ul>
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Source: Architecture and Civic Supreme Council, 2007.

#### 4.2.2 Equity

The equity index covers a wide range of issues. The indicators include ‘Citizens Charter’ and ‘Proportion of women councillors and women in key positions’. They are jointly intended to tackle organizational accountability by presenting citizens’ rights of access to basic services and gender equity in urban decision-making. The other indicators addressed by the Equity index are ‘Percentage of households with water connection’; ‘pro-poor pricing policy’ and ‘water price’; they mostly focus on institutional policies and processes by providing public access to water. The final

indicator is ‘incentives for informal business’ which tackles local government endorsement of measures to stimulate informal businesses.

*Citizens Charter: right of access to basic services.* As discussed in the section on the delivery standard indicator, in Iran the responsibility for delivering basic services is within the central government’s remit and in practice the local authority takes no part in the decision-making process, in spite of the existence of general directives that address citizens’ rights to access basic services. Notwithstanding this, there are no formal publications of standards that tackle citizens’ right of access to basic services. Legislation is limited to provider issues. For example, according to code three of the national constitution, central government is accountable for delivering free education services (Fakhroleslam, 2005). In such a context, the lack of an authorised charter from local government that grants public rights of access to basic services is comprehensible.

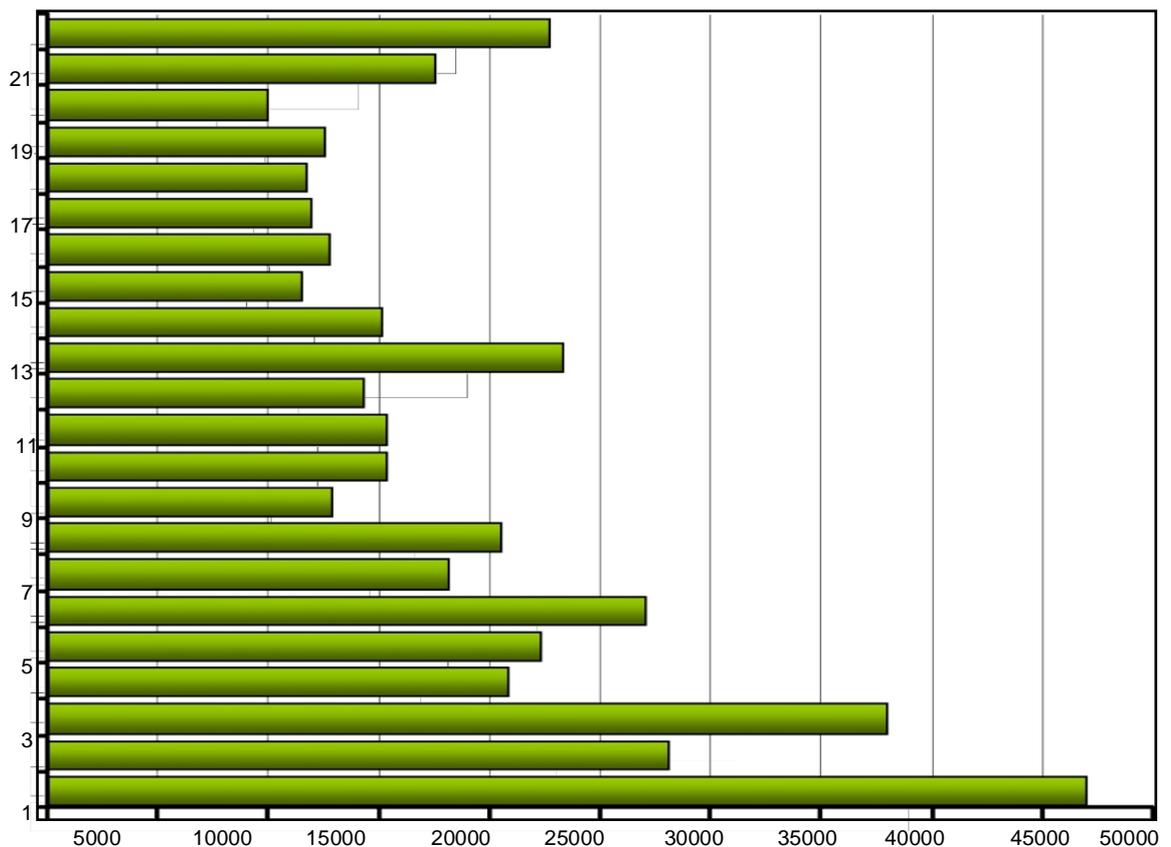
*Women councillors.* The indicator “Percentage of women councilors” addresses the extent of women’s participation in the decision making process and deals with gender equity. In fact, to some extent the establishment of urban councils in Iran was an evolutionary mechanism for including women in the urban decision-making process. In the most recent election, from a total of almost 1,200 nominees 78 women were nominated to stand for urban council elections in Tehran (Sedigh-Sarvestani *et al.*, 2006). The ultimate number of women elected as councillors in Tehran in the last council election, reached three out of 15 representatives, making one fifth of total urban councillors women.

*Percentage of Women councillors in key urban positions.* Each ICC representative serves a 4-year term, during which, they cannot be employed in a certain number of governmental departments and sub-departments, such as electoral bodies or military posts. Furthermore, it is impracticable for any member of the ICC to hold any key executive position in the city in addition to the position of councillor.<sup>8</sup>

*Pro-poor pricing policies for water.* Particularly after the Islamic Revolution, Tehran is by its own acknowledgement a bipolar and unbalanced metropolis (Shakoi, 1992; Madanipour, 1999). Social and economic gaps have been embedded and enforced by geographical boundaries. Although Tehran’s district boundaries are not defined and set in stone, from a socio-economic perspective Tehran can be divided into three parts. The north which provides high-quality neighbourhoods for well-off citizens; the centre can

be described as a location for the middle-class, and the south for the deprived citizens. There are numerous characteristics that distinguish these districts from each other, such as quality of life, employment, level of income, crime and immigration.

The value of properties and the cost of rent in Tehran can be used as a basis for classifying the city into different socio-economic classes, setting social and economic boundaries. The average retail price in Tehran for a square metre property was approximately 21,000,000 *Rials* in 2008 (Statistical Centre of Iran, 2009). Of the 22 administrative districts, district one in the north is the most highly-priced area at roughly 47,000,000 *Rials/m<sup>2</sup>* and district twenty in the south is the lowest at a value of 10,000,000 *Rials/m<sup>2</sup>*; district six, which is a central district, is considered a middle-class spot with an approximate value of 27,000,000 *Rials/m<sup>2</sup>* (ibid., 2009) (Figure 4.6). It follows that district one has the highest rental fee, district six has an average price, and districts nineteen and twenty in the south of Tehran have the lowest land values (Figure 4.7).

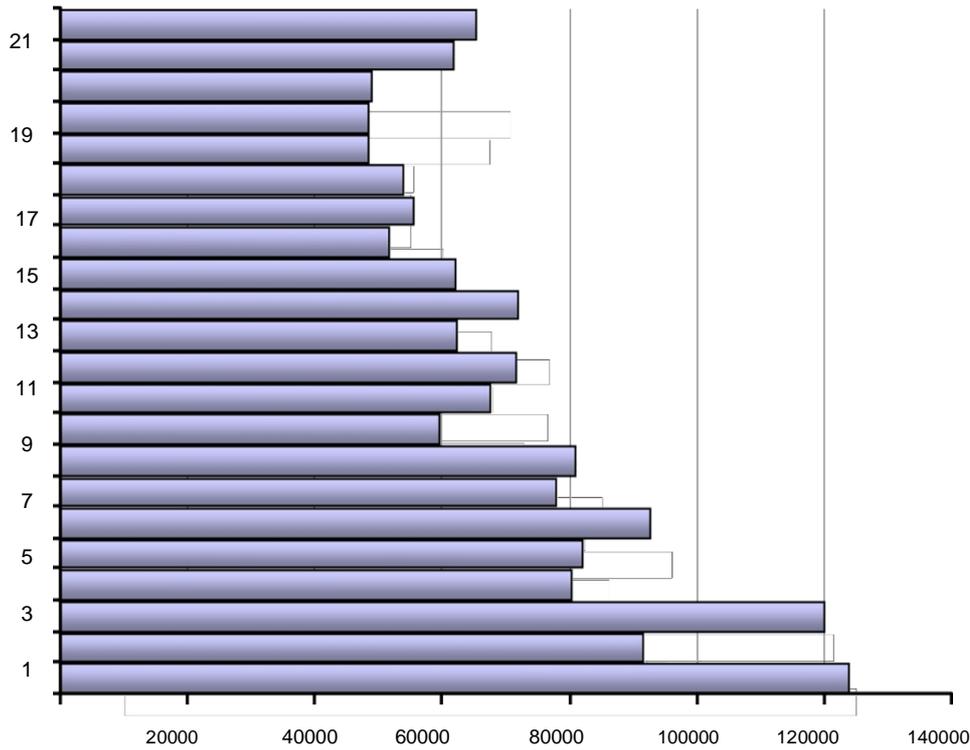


**Figure 4.6 Price comparison for a square metre of residential unit across Tehran (numbered) Districts in 2008 (thousands of *Rials*).**

Source: SCI, Statistical Centre of Iran, various census data, 2008.

By considering the water tariff across different municipal districts, it is apparent that the water pricing policy in Tehran could provide an appropriate measure of equity, and that prices follow the correspondence between location and socio-economic characteristics (Table 4.12). The classifications of water price for different districts of Tehran were set according to socio-economic circumstances and by controlling water prices. This reveals that water prices have not changed noticeably from 2004, due to government subsidy strategies which set a water price policy that adheres to the principle of supporting poorer consumers. According to statistical data, the cost to central government of generating  $1\text{m}^3$  water is approximately 4,000 *Rials*, while the price for consumers is about 800-850 $\text{m}^3$  *Rial*, suggesting that the strategies for water prices are based on the principle of consumer support (Econews, 2010).

The water tariff for the households in Tehran, as for many cities in the world, depends on the level of consumption and type of land use. The water tariff for customers who use more than the average consumption and up to twice as much as the average consumption, is multiplied by 10%. For the consumers who exceed this level by more than twice, the water tariff is multiplied by 50% (Tehran Province Water and Wastewater, 2008). Furthermore, the prices set for the business and industrial sectors are differentiated from those that apply to household consumption. Thus, to some extent, the categorization of water prices according to districts and consumption averages can be considered as a pro-poor policy.



**Figure 4.7 Rent comparison between Tehran’s (numbered) Districts for a square metre for the year 2008 (In thousands of Rials).**

Source: SCI, Statistical Centre of Iran, various census data, 2008.

**Table 4.12 Water branch costs for households in Tehran**

Districts	Water branch cost for residential households( Rials)
1, 2, 3	6,000,000
4,5,6,8,9,10,22	4,500,000
7, 11,12,13, 14	3,500,000
15, 16,17,18,19,20, 21	2,500,000

Source: Tehran Province Water & Wastewater, 2008.

*Incentives for informal businesses.* There is an enormous amount of international literature on the motivations of the informal business sector and its functions in the economy (Lubell, 1991; Yamada, 1996; Galli and Kucera, 2003). However, the circumstances of this research preclude a detailed critical discussion of informal business and its circumstances. Informal businesses are considered both, a concern and solution for developing countries (Portes and Schaffler, 1993).

Generally speaking, in Iran, due to rapid urbanization and population growth, economic and social inequity, and unfairness in distribution of wealth and resources, the informal economic sector plays an inevitable role, with 28% of total employment being in this sector. In his research on informal business in Tehran, Jomepour (2000) argues that there is a direct relationship between immigration and informal business. Surprisingly he found that 33% of his respondents were paying part of their daily earnings to the municipality and named the municipality as their entrepreneur and employer (ibid., 2000). While the remit of informal business affairs is outside the duty of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, it is handled by the Municipality and the city services department of the municipality.

In Tehran there is evidence of a chronic issue with particular residential areas in the centre of the city, such as the *Moulavi* crossroad and the *Seadkhandan* Bridge. They are occupied by informal businesses that cause many issues in terms of security, health and congestion. Consequently, in recent years the municipality has formulated a number of restrictions and regulations on informal street vending, and more recently it has planned to allocate informal businesses to particular areas. As an example, shifting the traditional informal bird market from the *Moulavi* (district 12) residential area to a standardized built environment in the *Azadegan* highway (district 18) at the outer route of the city, can be an example of an appropriate action for the future of informal businesses (online network, 2010).

#### **4.2.3 Participation**

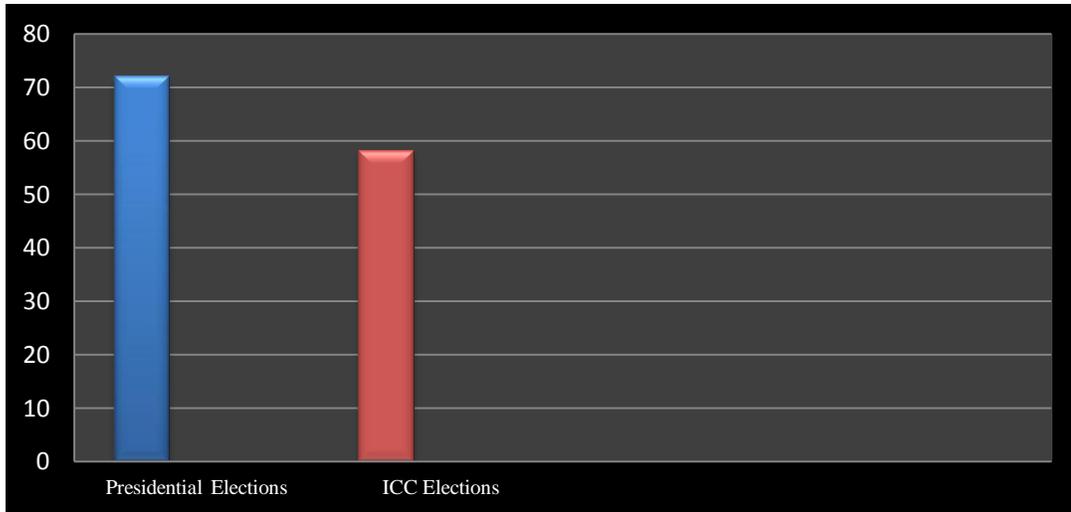
In general five indicators support the participation index. The initial indicator is *elected council*; *voter turnout* and *selection of mayor*, which measures the level of direct public participation and urban democracy. *Public forum* and *civic association* indicator assesses the opportunities to express views publicly and the existence of civil society institutional bodies in the city.

*Elected council.* As mentioned above, the ICC in Tehran is composed of 15 representatives elected directly.<sup>9</sup> To qualify for election as a councillor, a candidate must be an Iranian citizen and, on the day of registration, 25 years of age or older and able to

read and write; as well as having resided in the related constituency for not less than 1 year preceding the day of the election.<sup>10</sup>

*Selection of mayor.* This sub-indicator measures how the mayor is selected. Mayors can be directly elected by voters, elected from among the councillors or appointed. According to code fifty of the municipality regulations and guidelines, the city council can nominate to become mayor a candidate who is not a member of the council, provided that the council approves (Mansour, 2009a). The selection of mayor is conducted through a secret ballot and the winning candidate must be selected by the majority (two-thirds) of the representatives, and is then formally appointed to the position by the Ministry of State. As can be seen, despite the existence of a voting system for the selection of a mayor by elected councillors, the final mayoral appointment requires the approval of the Ministry of State.

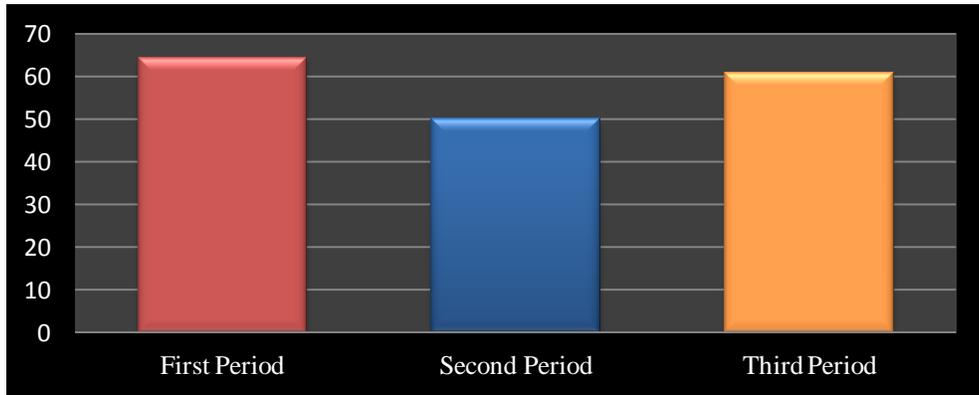
*Voter turnout.* This indicator measures the percentage of total voter turnout (both male and female) in the last election. In democratic theory, citizen participation has to do with quantity, thus how many people are involved (Pateman, 1970). Generally after the shift, Tehran has experienced three City Council elections. In order to elect the first-ever set of Islamic city council representatives, the first local elections were held on March 8, 1999 and the city council was legitimately able to begin its work on May 29, 1999, with 15 representatives. The second and third elections occurred in 2002 and 2006 respectively. The key issue with regard to voter turnout is that generally in Iran the level of participation in urban council elections is not as great as in presidential and parliamentary elections (see Figure 4.8).



**Figure 4.8 Voting Turnout in Presidential and ICC Elections, Average for three recent periods (Percent)**

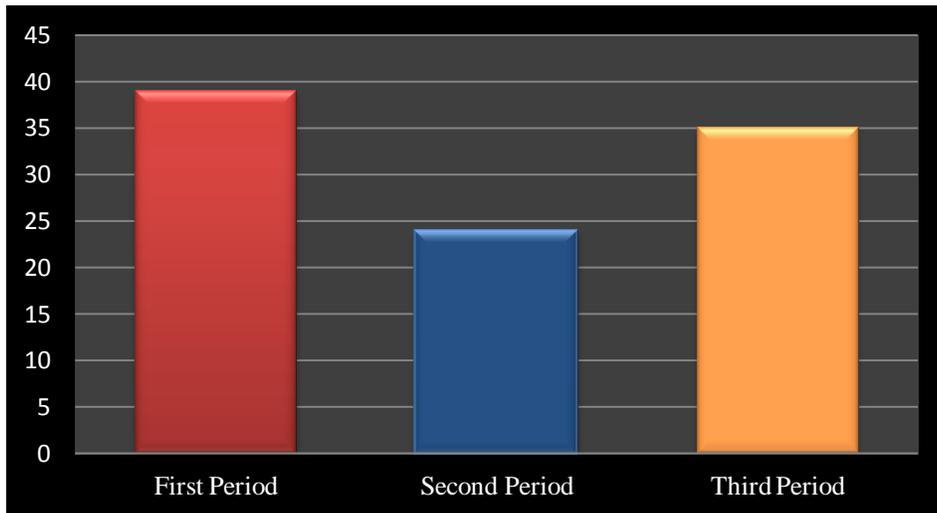
Source: Extracted from Election Results, Secretary of State, 2006.

While the average participation of citizens in ICC elections across the country reached 64.42% in the first period, in the second and third periods it only reached 49.96% and 60.75% percent respectively (Figure 4.9). However, in Tehran the situation is even worse, in that the level of voter turnout is actually lower than the country's average. Despite its maturing performance and functioning as an establishment, particularly in recent years, the level of electoral participation in Tehran is comparatively low. As an example, citizen participation in the first period of the ICC elections in Tehran reached just over 39%, representing 24% less than the country's overall average participation in ICC elections. In the second period, the result was poorer than in the previous election, with only 23.87% of the constituent population participating in the local election, thus 26% lower than the country's average. In the third Islamic City Council elections, in spite of an apparent increase in turnout shown in the previous election, citizens' participation reached just over 35% of the constituent population (Figures 4.10 and 4.11). While the total population able to vote had been estimated at almost 5,300,000, the actual number of voters was only 1,800,000 (The Secretary of State, 2006).



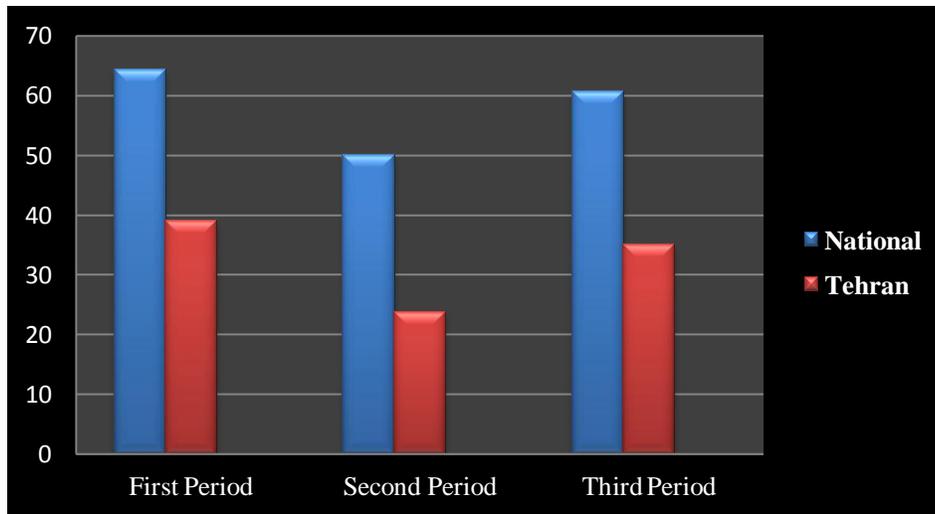
**Figure 4.9 Voting Turnout in ICC Elections in Iran (Percent)**

Source: Extracted from the Election Results, Secretary of State, 2006.



**Figure 4.10 Voter Turnouts in ICC Elections in Tehran (Percent)**

Source: Extracted from the Election Results, Secretary of State, 2006.



**Figure 4.11 Voting Turnout in ICCs' Elections in Iran and Tehran,**

Source: Extracted from the Election Results, Secretary of State, 2006.

*Public forum.* According to the UN-index, the existence of any neighbourhood council, town association, district consultative board or local meeting is classified as a public forum (UN-index, 2003). Recently in Tehran, Neighbourhood Councils have been introduced to further engage citizens in the decision-making process. The Neighbourhood Council representatives (*Anomie Showrayariha*) are elected by direct participation of the local people and function as a link point between citizens and local government. According to codes one and two of the internal local council regulations, each Neighbourhood Council has seven main representatives and three substitutes (Alkajbaf, 2008). The number of local meetings depends on the representatives' decisions as well as local priorities. However, according to code six of the internal local council regulations, such institutions are obliged to systematically schedule a minimum of two meetings a month (ibid.).

*Civic Association per 10,000 population.* In recent years civic associations are increasingly penetrating Iranian society (Saidi, 2002). According to the State ministry, which is the organization responsible for civic association affairs, the number of formally registered NGOs in Tehran is about 510 (Ministry of the State, 2009). A brief comparison between the Tehran population and the number of civic associations suggests that the number of NGOs is insignificant when taking into account the city's size.

#### 4.2.4 Accountability

Besides focusing on accountability features, this indicator targeted the transparency, responsiveness and autonomy of local governments. It addresses seven sub-indicators including: the Formal Publication of contracts/tenders, budgets and accounts; Control by higher levels of Government; Codes of conduct, Facilities for citizen complaints; Anti-corruption Commission, Disclosure of income / assets; and Independent audit.

*Formal Publication of contracts/tenders budgets and accounts.* One constructive aspect associated with the operating of the recent urban administration system in Tehran is that it publicises its contracts and budgets. Recently, as part of its financial transparency enhancement agenda, the municipality has initiated publication of its financial plans and contracts, which has been presented as a turning point in the urban governance process in Iran. Code seventy one from the municipality and council regulations obliged the municipality to publicise its financial activities inclusively every six months (Poorsalim-Bonab, 2009). On a practical level, the mass publication of budgets, statements and tenders can be accessed by the public through the municipality statistical centre.

*Control by higher levels of Government.* This indicator measures the extent of central government influence in relation to local government. Following the governance transformation in 1997, the influence of central government was somewhat reduced and local bodies became empowered by supportive regulations. The issue raised here by the UN-index is whether or not a higher level of government can close down a local government body or remove individual councillors. According to the council and municipal formations (Functions and Elections Regulations, code seventy six, article four), the mayor's term of office can be prematurely terminated under four conditions: first, a printed offer of resignation with council approval; second, dismissal by the city council through formal proceeding; third, suspension under the conditions specified in the formal regulations; and fourth, deficiency in any of the conditions that are considered essential to the role of mayor by the council's authorization (Mansour, 2009a). Furthermore, according to Article 106, the disbanding of an Iranian city council requires the resolution to be proposed by a committee and approved by the central supreme commission, which consists

of three representatives, including one from the supreme judicial commission; the supreme provincial commission and the interior ministry (Poorsalim-Bonab, 2008). Moreover, the sacking of any member of the council necessitates the proposal of three quarters of the total number of council representatives and the endorsement of the judicial system. Thus, in contrast with the old urban administration system, the suspension and removal of local government (council and municipality) in Iran/Tehran, is not in the command of the higher level of government and requires formal procedures.

Another aspect addressed by the UN-index is the fiscal independence of local government, taking into account whether local governments, without permission from higher government, can set local tax levels and set user charges for services, borrow funds and choose contractors for projects. According to Article 26 on the establishment of the council and Article 1 on tax implementation in cities, the city council is responsible for generating an accepted service charge and tariff mechanisms for the city (Alekbajaf, 2008). As mentioned earlier, the municipality is unable to independently and fully operate taxation mechanisms and functions because these are among central government responsibilities.

With regard to municipality's independence in accepting contractors for the project, Article 6 of the municipality financial regulations clarifies that the responsibility for selecting contractors and offering tenders is controlled by the municipality (Mansour, 2009a). Moreover, according to Article 40 any loan or borrowing by the municipality requires the consent of the city council (ibid., 2009a).

*Codes of conduct.* This criterion aimed to address the existence/absence of a signed published statement of the standards of conduct for elected officials and local government staff. According to the Islamic City Council Establishment Act, Article 71, Clause 2, as public representatives, members of the city council are accountable and responsible for addressing limitations and social inadequacies in their electoral quarter (Alekbajaf, 2008). As part of their accountability and equity enhancement programme, the municipality publishes complex signed standards of conduct at the state level that determine “people’s rights from the municipality”; “the rights of citizenships” and “rules and regulations of the

Islamic council and municipalities in Iran”. These standards offer citizens basic knowledge and familiarity to their citizenship rights with regard to their municipality and council.

*Facility for citizen complaints.* This indicator addresses the existence/lack of a facility for citizen complaints for receiving complaints and information on corruption. The municipality of Tehran has formulated mechanism 1888, to ensure effectiveness and organizational transparency; tackle the public’s grievances; and enhance the culture of responsibility and accountability (Information Centre and Public Supervisions of the Tehran Municipality, 2009). Statistical mechanism 1888 (*Samaneh*) has been productive in creating supportive relationships between local governments and citizens. Samaneh 1888 can be considered as a multifunction mechanism based on public observation for monitoring the quality of services rendered by urban management (Mahmoudi, 2008). The Mayor of Tehran describes the mechanism (Samaneh 1888) as an efficient tool for the transparency of Tehran’s administrative system that removes the chronic negative view of the municipality, which has been a feature of its public image for a long time (Hamshahri, 2009). He believes that these arrangements should be endorsed and observed by the public.

*Anti-Corruption Commission.* This sub-indicator aims to address the existence of a local agency to investigate and report cases of corruption. The responsibility for investigating and reporting cases of corruption in the municipality has been tackled by the municipal audit organization (*Sazmane Bazresi-e Shahr-dari*). In fact this body has aimed to monitor and address corruption; accomplish investigations by all municipality units; control the quality of service delivery in the municipality and scrutinize staff positions and functions (Audit Organization of Tehran Municipality, 2008).

*Disclosure of income/assets.* This issue deals with the existence of a public mechanism that discloses locally elected officials’ income and assets prior to taking office. There is no body of rules or regulations that obliges urban councillors to publicize their incomes and assets. The single rule associated with income and assets control in Iran arises from Article 142 of the constitutional law, which is linked to higher level government office-holders, including the president and vice president; ministries and their families, who are obliged to

declare their income, positions and assets prior to and after taking office by the head of the justice department (Fakhroleslam, 2005). As a result this section has received no points.

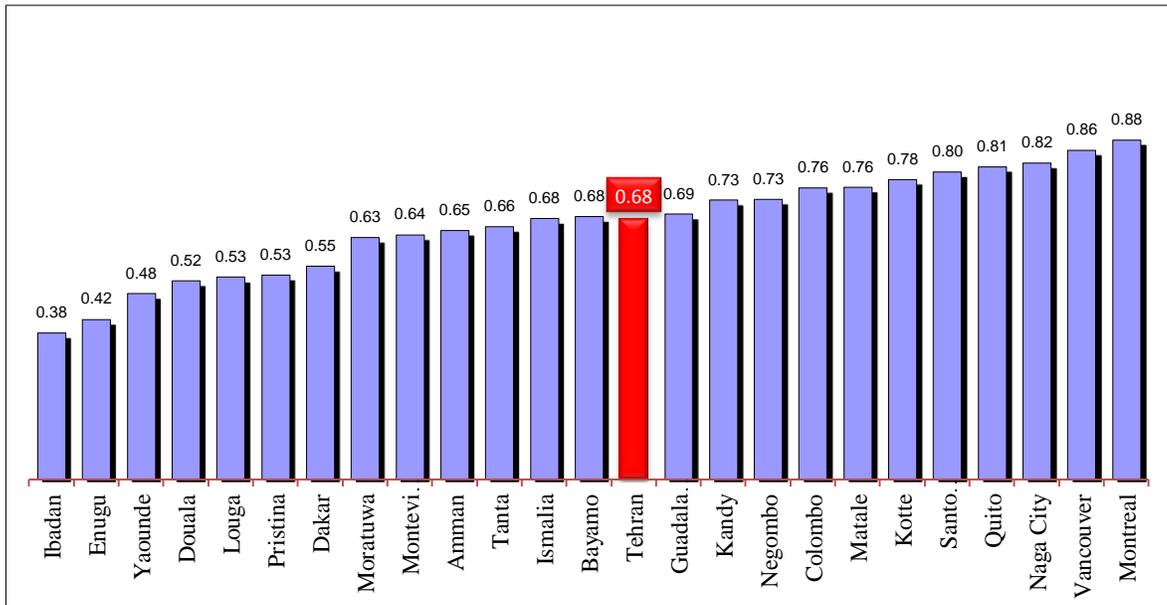
*Independent audit.* According to the Islamic City Council Establishment Act, Article 71, Clauses 12, 15 and 30, reviewed in 28/ 9/ 2003, monitoring and auditing the financial records and accounts of the municipality, are among the city council's main priorities (Alekbaf, 2008). At least once a year, the urban council is responsible for carrying out an independent audit with regard to the municipality's financial and fiscal affairs. Also, by considering code seventy one, the municipality is obliged to present a comprehensive account of its financial activities to the Ministry of the State every six months (Mansour, 2009b). Parallel to the council's regular auditing role, an organizational audit body at the state level that occasionally takes on the oversight of municipal financial affairs also exists. The National Audit Organization (*Sazman-e Bazresi-e Keshavr*) and the Supreme Audit Court (*Sazman-e Hesabresi-e Keshvar*) are responsible for the application of auditing programmes in organizations that employ public or governmental budgets.

### **4.3 Tehran Governance International Ranking**

According to the research design and methodology, the comparative approach is not one of the priorities of this research. However, in order to roughly classify the Tehran Governance position against other cities, it might be worth taking the UN-Index results into account. One constructive part of employing the UN approach to measure urban governance has been its applicability in cross-country comparisons based on a standard mechanism. Following the research calculation and results procedure, the place of governance in Tehran in comparison with selected cities where the UN approach was applied can be defined. This comparative overview nevertheless provides recognition of Tehran's position among 24 selected cities from both the global south and north.

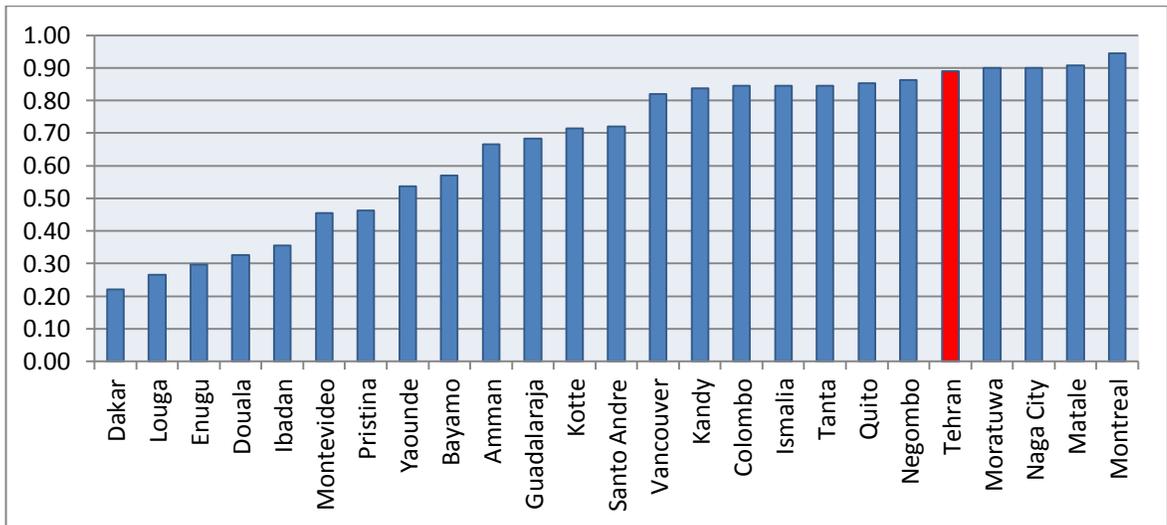
Overall, Tehran Governance is situated in 12th place, alongside cities such as Ismailia and Bayamo (Figure 4.12). Tehran's best result was achieved in the 'accountability' index, which placed it among the five best cities in this regard (Figure 4.13). Conversely, in terms of 'participation' Tehran is positioned among the four worst cities (Figure 4.14). Finally,

the equity and effectiveness indexes are located respectively in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> place (Figures 4.15 and 4.16).<sup>11</sup>



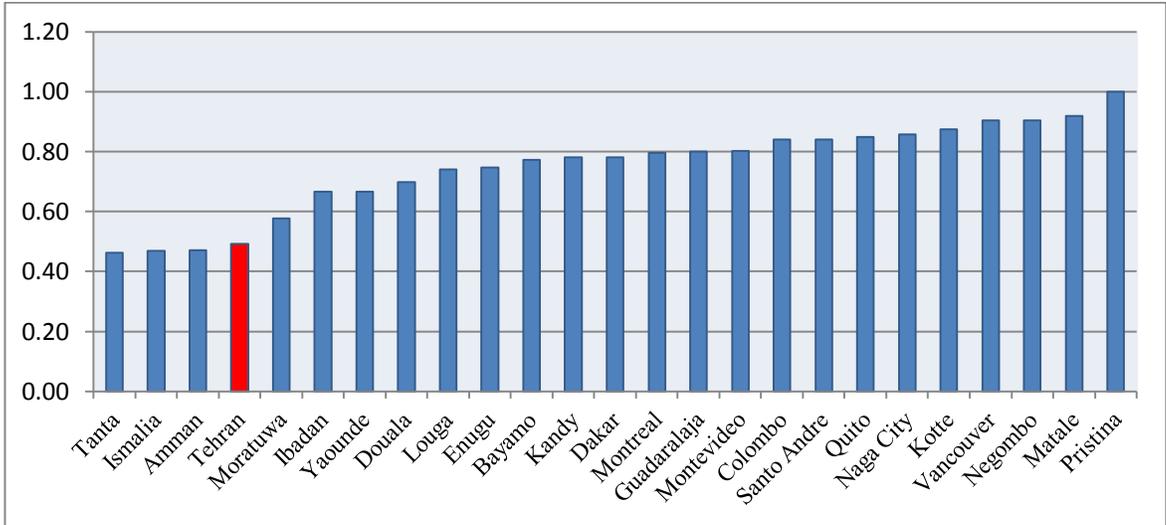
**Figure 4.12 Tehran’s Governance Position Among Selected Cities**

Source: Extracted from the UN-Index (2004) (modified by the author).



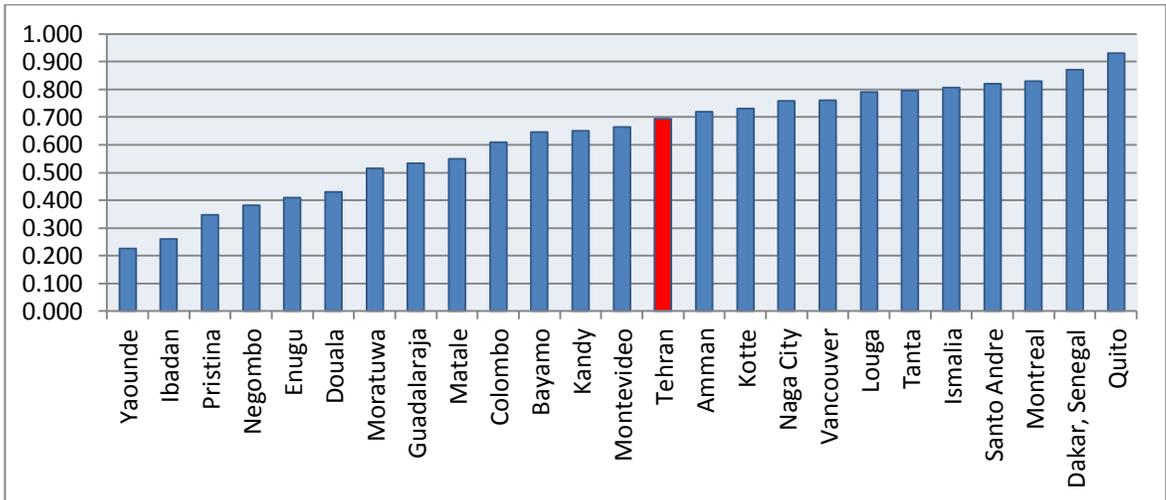
**Figure 4.13 Accountability sub-index**

Source: Extracted from the UN-Index (2004) (modified by the author).



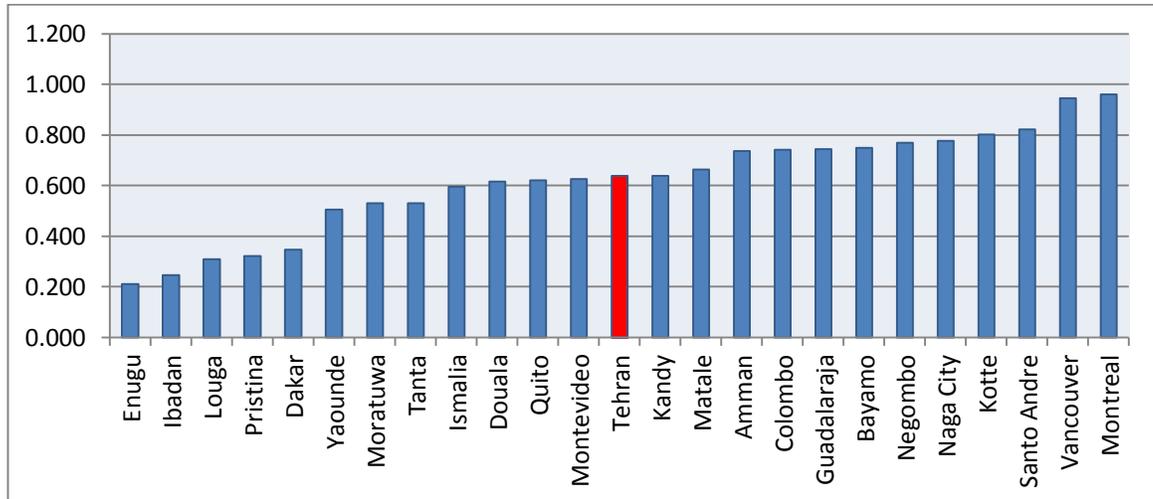
**Figure 4.14 Participation sub-index**

Source: Extracted from the UN-Index (2004) (modified by the author).



**Figure 4.15 Equity sub-index**

Source: Extracted from the UN-Index (2004) (modified by the author).



**Figure 4.16 Effectiveness sub-index**

Source: Extracted from the UN-Index (2004) (modified by the author).

#### 4.4 Assessing Governance in Tehran

The governance assessment in Tehran employed the UN approach to analyse urban governance conditions in terms of 25 sub-indexes based on four main features: Effectiveness, Equity, Participation and Accountability (Figure 4.17 and Appendix 6). The methodology involved assessing it against a number of indicators with equal weights, each of them having a value between 0 and 1. The outcome of the assessment indicates the pre-eminence of ‘accountability’ above the rest of the city’s scores for the various indices, while ‘participation’ receives the lowest indicator score. The overall governance score for Tehran, based on the UN Governance Index (UGI), is 0.681.<sup>12</sup> In terms of the four features that compose the UGI, Tehran attains **top** performance for ‘accountability’ (0.897) followed correspondingly by ‘equity’ (0.695), ‘effectiveness’ (0.638), and ‘participation’ (0.497) (Figures 4.18 and 4.19). The high score achieved for accountability might reflect the progress that has been made recently by local government in enhancing accountability and transparency mechanisms in terms of their design and practice. The lowest outcome achieved by the participation index may be the result of a lack of a directly elected mayor; poor voter turnout in the last election; and relatively low number of civic associations in the city.

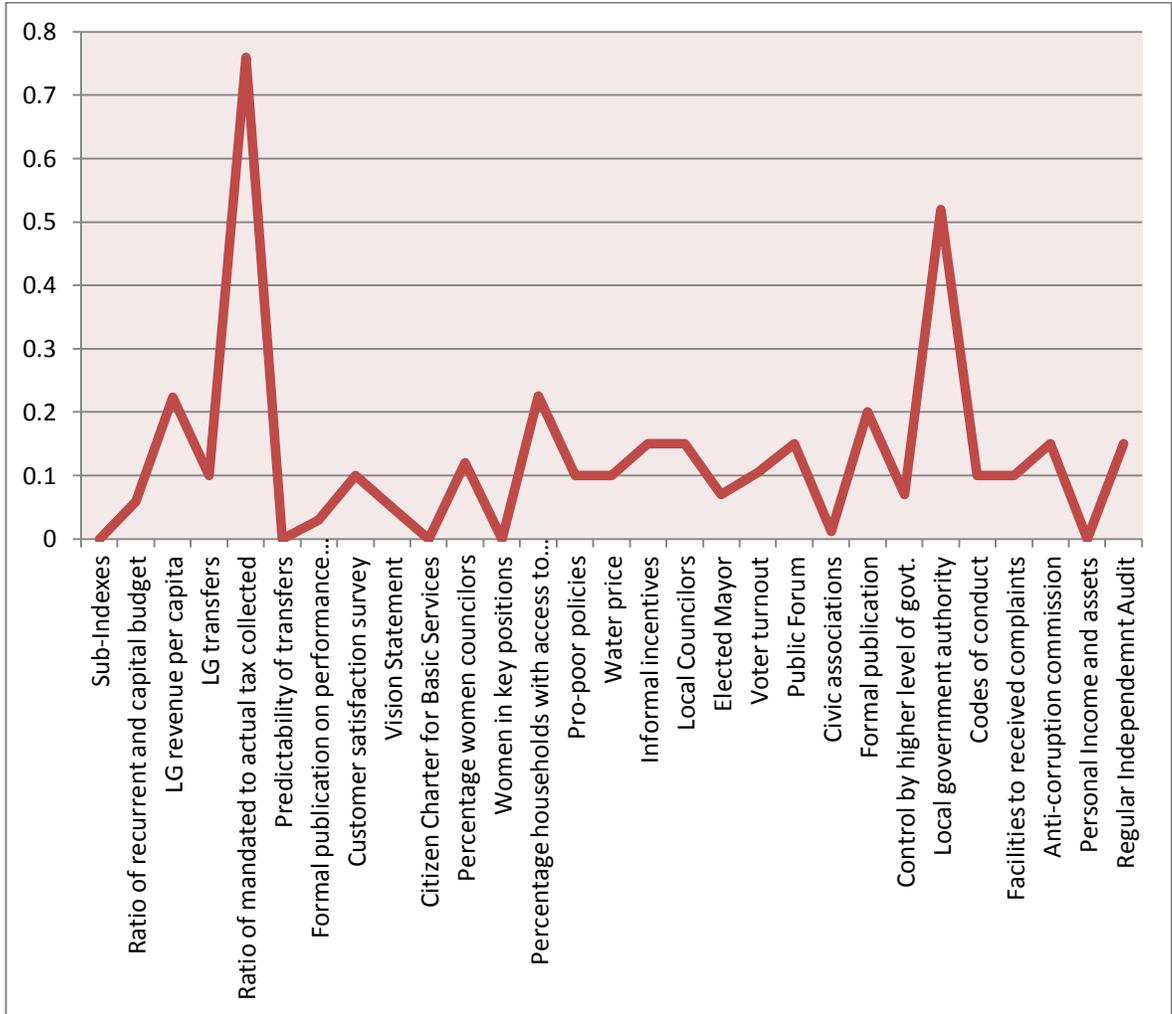


Figure 4.17 Urban Governance Sub-Index Components Scores

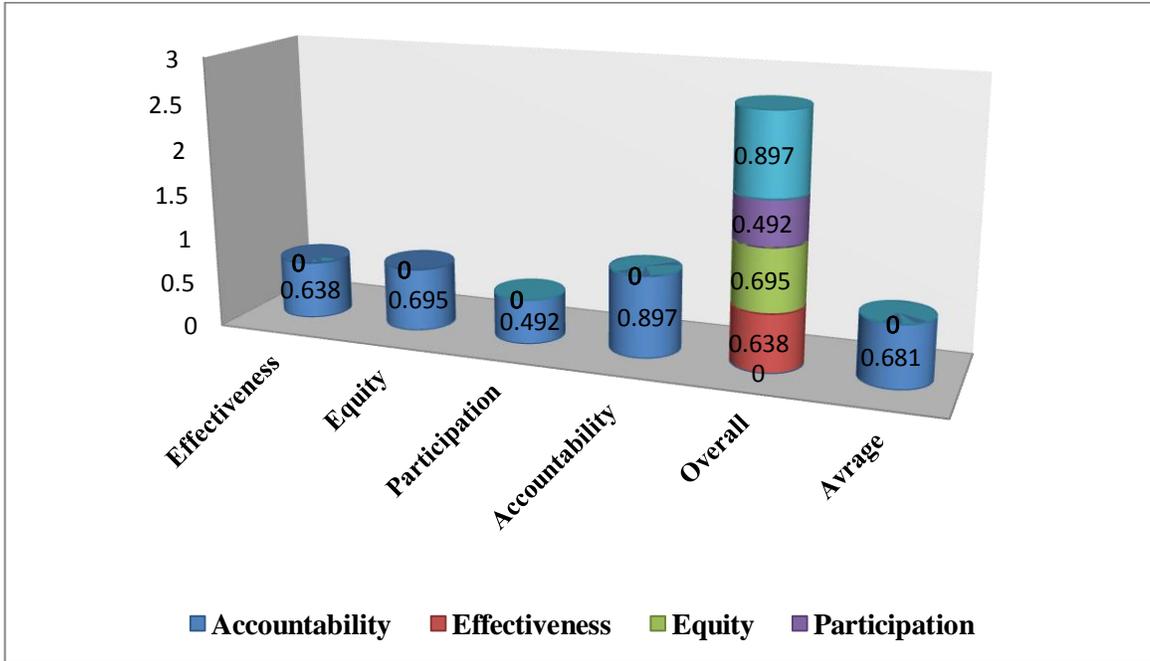


Figure 4.18 Urban Governance Index in Tehran

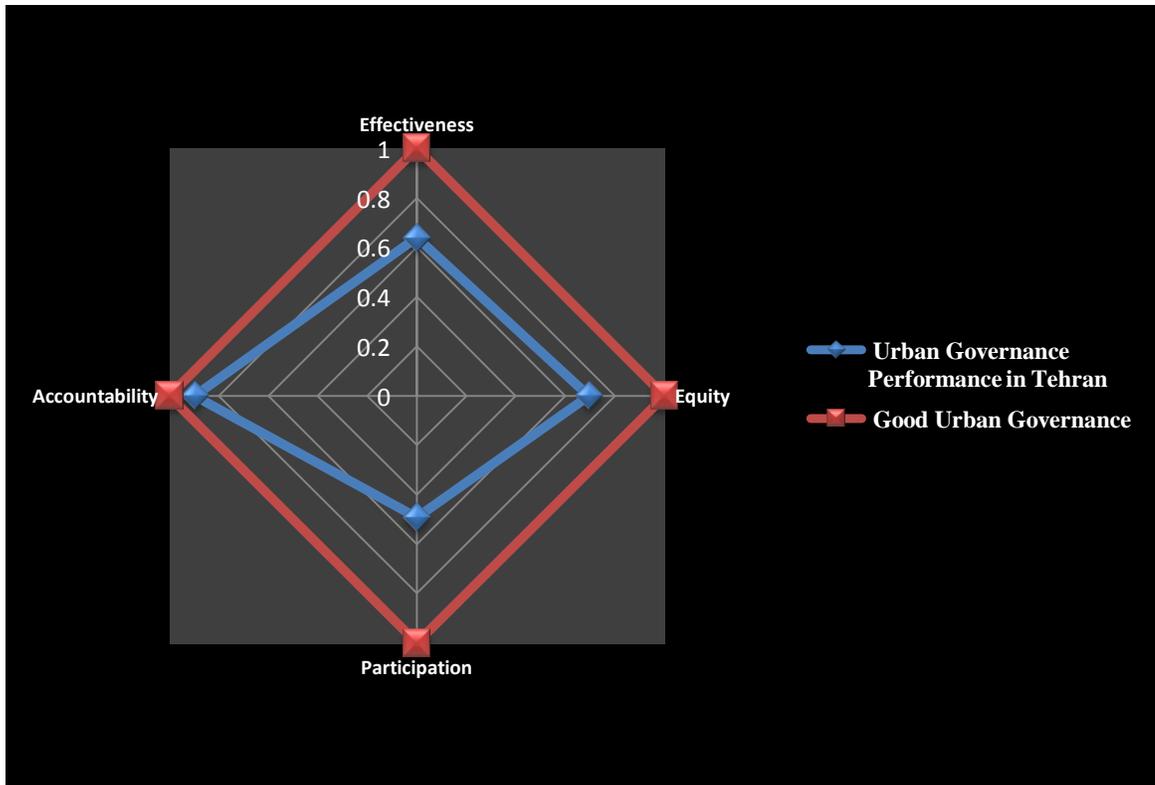


Figure 4.19 Urban Governance Index in Tehran

As discussed in section 2.8, the evaluation of good urban governance not only necessitates of precise “indicators”, but also of “standards”, which supply the dimensions to be measured (Stewart, 2006: 200). This research used the standards derived from the *UN-Habitat Urban Governance Index (UGI)* to generate an account of city governance in Tehran, based on which, the most vulnerable theme in Teheran city governance appeared to be “participation”. The UN method includes structured sets of indicators that provide a primary assessment tool aimed at systematizing information and data regarding city governance in Tehran. The assessment offers a foundation and a general picture of existing governance and allows a comparison of outcomes, which was presented in chapter 4. This method, however, does not come without deficiencies and the implementation of the *UGI* for assessing governance issues in Tehran highlighted some critical challenges. Whereas governance can be defined as the result of interactions, relationships and networks linking different stakeholders involved in governance (Wilde *et al.*, 2008); the issue of how the *UGI* can inclusively measure these interactions for the entire body of stakeholders who are supposed to participate in governance in Tehran, still remains. Similarly, a question arises about the extent to which the UN approach can provide an insight into, and deepen our understanding of governance in Tehran.

One major issue is that there is insufficient scope in this methodology to debate all of the normative potentials of multifaceted urban governance. For example, an indicator such as ‘Voter Turnout’ in the *UGI* assessment simply presents a figure, without yielding any information on the procedures and circumstances which greatly affect the electoral outcome, such as the electoral process, procedure, legislative Act(s) and norms, and political processes. Playing a significant role in measuring governance are attempts to establish ‘who’ has power, ‘when’ and ‘how’ (ibid, 2008); yet, features including the electoral codes and the manner of conduct of elections are entirely missing from the *UGI* assessment. It follows that the indicator ‘Voter Turnout’ is unable to include and illustrate the design of the electoral system, the legal framework within which the electoral process is carried out, and the decision-makers and government institutions that are involved in the electoral process. The nomination process, electoral malpractice and misconduct issues prior to and throughout the elections are also not taken into consideration. What this means,

is that qualifying or disqualifying criteria and procedures that aim to ensure fair and free elections and credible measures are not considered. This means that the ‘Voter Turnout’ indicator reflects a partial and superficial account of electoral procedures.

Similarly, with regard to the “Consumer Satisfaction Survey” indicator, beyond assessing the existence of this feature, the indicator gives no measure of the effectiveness and depth of consumer satisfaction surveys that have been accomplished by the local government in Tehran.

Furthermore, from a methodological perspective, using secondary data as a single source to spot gaps and constants in local governance can also be a risky approach for governance assessments. As the UN-Index is entirely based on using only objective data based on administrative documents and statistics, this method was not fully capable of expressing the sophistication of governance in Tehran, which largely materialised through the interview findings. The UN-method was able to cover therefore only ‘soft’ dimensions.

Within this context, while the UN approach is thoughtful in its development of principles and indicators, its application reveals limitations. Its implementation can show a basic picture of governance in any particular city, but cannot capture the nuances, describe the context and explain the obstacles and conflicts that cluster around different issues. This is why it needs to be complemented by a deeper level of analysis and insight, which can be made available through qualitative research. Therefore, this research uses the qualitative interview as a tool to deepen the study’s evaluation of governance in all its complexity.

Based on the implementation of the UN-Index in Tehran ‘participation’ has scored the ‘lowest’ factor. The result demonstrates the limitations and deficiencies in current urban participatory mechanisms both in terms of their designs and practices. Thus, based on the research design and objectives, this research will explore further the issues of ‘participation’ in governance, its tools and its circumstances, as the main priority for arriving at good governance in Tehran. Subsequently, using the participation sub-indicators as a framework, Chapters 5-8 will analyse and discuss participation in the city, based on the following five criteria: elected council, level of voter turnout, selection of mayor, civic

associations and public forums. Accordingly, to achieve this, the subsidiary research questions are:

SQ1: How is the Islamic City Council (ICC) functioning in Tehran?

SQ2: Why is the voter turnout in local elections insufficient?

SQ3: Based on existing governance circumstances, what is the most appropriate method for mayoral selection in Tehran?

SQ4: How are public forums and civic associations functioning in Tehran?

## **4.5 Conclusion**

The result of the evaluation shows the pre-eminence of ‘accountability’ above the rest of the city’s scores for the various indices, while ‘participation’ receives the lowest indicator score. The overall governance score for Tehran, based on the UN Governance Index (UGI), is 0. 681. In terms of the four features that compose the UGI, Tehran attains **top** performance for ‘accountability’ (0.897) followed correspondingly by ‘equity’ (0.695), ‘effectiveness’ (0.638), and ‘participation’ (0.497).

- <sup>1</sup>. The authorization of mayoral appointment in cities of more than 200,000 population is carried out by the Ministry of State while in cities with less than 200,000, the task is delivered by the provincial governors<sup>7</sup>.
- <sup>2</sup>. The Islamic Revolution Supreme Leader in 1979.
- <sup>3</sup>. One of the key actors and leaders throughout the Islamic Revolution in 1979.
- <sup>4</sup>. Article 44 of the Constitution is considered as the essential decentralisation manifesto in the country, aiming to reduce central government authorities and roles through the devolution of powers and responsibilities to people and the private sector.
- <sup>5</sup>. The *Rial* is the Iranian currency and currently 10,000 *Rial* is approximately equal to one US dollar.
- <sup>6</sup>. Water, solid waste management, electricity, sanitation, health and education should be considered as key services for which performance delivery standards should be present.
- <sup>7</sup>. A draft of the consumer satisfaction survey was submitted to the researcher (see Appendix 7).
- <sup>8</sup>. Sections one and two, Article 26, of the Formation of the ICC ACT.
- <sup>9</sup>. Sections one and two, Article 26, of the Formation of the ICC ACT.
- <sup>10</sup>. Full details of how a numerical value and rank was derived for the various UGI dimensions are presented in Appendix 4, 5 and 6.
- <sup>11</sup>. Average of Urban Governance Index = (Effectiveness sub-index + Equity sub-index + Participation sub-index + Accountability sub-index) = (0.638 + 0.695 + 0.492 + 0.897) / 4 = 0.680.

## **Chapter 5: The Elected Council (Islamic City Council)**

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## 5.0 Introduction

As stated in Chapter 3, the aim of this research is to investigate the dynamic nature of urban governance and participation through identifying the features that influence local governance practices in Tehran. The Islamic City Council (ICC) is considered a key constituent in representative city governance and the main product of the urban governance shift in Iran. This chapter focuses on the ICC and on its role in governance practices and procedures. This is based on a presentation of the findings from interviews with representatives from each of the eight stakeholder groups.

Overall, the interview findings from the different stakeholder groups reveal a certain degree of variation in responses; this may be attributed to differences in roles, status and administrative positions fulfilled by the interviewees. For example, the findings suggest that the citizens' opinion of the city's executives and of the ICC is tied to the way in which governance practices are viewed in the city. Moreover, that the local council's viewpoint, due to its contributions to decision-making processes, is shaped and formed by the way in which it interacts with the ICC and with the municipality. Subsequently, these variations and the different stakeholders' perspectives on the ICC are discussed, and presented in terms of two categories:

**1- Role of the ICC as perceived by different stakeholders.** This category presents the ICC's impacts on the existing governance machinery, looking particularly at local government autonomy, accountability and at women's contributions to decision-making;

**2- Barriers and challenges in the ICC as perceived by different stakeholders.** This category provides an overview of the issues related to the ICC's current limitations and constraints, looking at political, technical and institutional concerns, and at the challenges that lie ahead.

## **5.1 Role of the ICC**

Generally speaking, the findings indicate that the shift that took place in 1997, and in particular the establishment of the ICC, have had an effect on three governance areas: local autonomy, accountability, and women's contributions to city governance.

### **5.1.1 Decentralisation and local autonomy**

One of the issues that emerged from the interviews with municipality officials and local councillors and with some interviewees from the experts group is that of decentralisation of, and “bottom-up” approaches to, the ICC. More in detail, three members of the municipality office highlighted how prior to the shift and following a “top-down” rationale, central government was the main and dominant policy-maker in the city. However, the post-1997 strategy appears to be limiting the influence of central government in Iran's cities, initiating by contrast, a mechanism that follows “bottom-up” rationales. This is further reflected in the comments of one municipality executive official:

“The decline of the state's authority and the consequent division of power and influences in the city accomplished by the shift modified the mechanism from top-down into a bottom-up approach.” [ME-02, Interview: 18 February 2010].

Three urban experts and members of an academic society viewed this as a transition towards a “decentralized strategy” of decision-making. They asserted that the state's authority has been conferred on its citizens, ensuring an identification and characterisation of the public's rights. Whilst it may be too early to talk about devolution in a wider context due to inefficient coordination of processes; the delegation of policies and services from central government to local government is nevertheless viewed by the experts as a direct consequence of the shift. This is based on the suggestion that the decentralisation of service delivery, of competencies and of tasks from central to municipal level continues to be mainly implemented through support supplied by the ICC.

Two members of the experts group, however, were sceptical about using the term

“decentralisation” within the context of the government shift. According to their view, decentralisation has three dimensions: political, administrative and fiscal, and none of these features has been fully addressed, either in the shift or in the attempts undertaken towards decentralisation. Doubts were also put forward by members of the civic association and local councillors groups, who suggested that the accomplishment of decentralisation does not definitely enhance governance principles and values. For one interviewee here the problem was attributed to the bottom-up accountability mechanisms in the city which are undermined by the decentralisation practices delivered in the city. A sense of scepticism also emerged from the citizens, particularly with reference to issues around “equity”. Two citizens stated that decentralisation does not necessarily ensure equity in the city, in terms of the distribution and allocation of resources and accessibility to funds for those living in the more disadvantaged areas. By contrast, other two representatives of the citizen group argued that prior to the shift, pro-poor and equity agendas were already in place.

The municipality officials supplemented the comments made by experts and civic associations according to which decentralisation can enhance governance principles. According to their view the ICC, as a decentralised institution, contributes towards the political decentralisation through which power, authority and influence are somehow transferred from the centre to the public. In addition, while decentralisation brings decision-makers closer to citizens and improves the responsiveness and transparency of decision-making processes, the autonomy of local bodies’ decision-making is respected by the higher and central level government bodies. The municipality officials pointed out that as a key representative and electoral institution, the ICC is at the heart of these enhancements. Supporting the arguments of the municipality officials, the local councillors suggested that to a certain extent the decentralisation to local governments has enhanced the quality and distribution of both public services and public servants.

Representatives from the state, the municipality, the ICC and the local council argued that the new decentralising mechanisms introduced by the shift (i.e. electoral process and selection of mayor) contrast with Iran’s centralised mode of decision-making. For the

citizens, civic associations and private sector groups, however, the shift is said to have created controversial and contentious spaces within central and local government, where the friction between the state and local governments is increasing to the disadvantage of citizens. This is further reflected in the comment of a member of the civic association group, suggesting that the shift is “not reducing the challenges, but is rather increasing the tensions between stakeholders in the city”. [CA-05, Interview: 6 March 2010]. Similarly, a small-business owner asserted that the issues and challenges in the city will not be resolved through the creation of new organisations and the accumulation of associations, but rather through thoughtful experiments and wise decisions. One of the academic experts argued that the establishment of the ICC has had negative effects on integrative and cohesive forms of urban decision-making. Furthermore, an expert and a member of the Urban Research Centre asserted that currently city governance has been facing a “messy duplication of urban management”. Thus the contested understanding of city governance and its “messiness” appears to be what best characterises the interaction of four major governance driving forces: the state, the municipality, the ICC and the general public.

Despite the concerns mentioned above, almost half of the interviewed citizens, civic associations, and private sector interviewees thought that the ICC has had a constructive effect on decentralisation procedures in the city. For example, fiscal decentralisation is viewed by the civic associations and by the private sector respondents as a significant step towards local autonomy. They stated that it signifies an attempt to support urban government as a key and independent player in the urban decision-making landscape. As a legal body, the local authority manages its property and financial assets autonomously through an authorized legal framework. Furthermore, to a large extent the processes of revenue-raising and spending are devolved, and the system of taxation intended to supply resources for urban use have also been reformed with the intent of making it more efficient and coherent. Half of the citizens, civic associations, and private sector interviewees argued that when taking such reforms into account, the local authority’s dependence on higher level government has been largely reduced. The citizens in particular indicated that overall the ICC had had a positive role, asserting that prior to the introduction of the ICC the executive powers were a joint duty of the municipality and of the state. They viewed

the municipality as having been at that time entirely dependent on central government. When referring to the existing financial constraints that are faced by local government, three academic experts and private sector interviewees suggested that decentralisation and fiscal autonomy may perhaps be accompanied by risk. They stated that given their unsteady and limited state of finances and revenue capacity, local governments are unable to develop key transport networks. This proves the necessity for financial transfers from central government, which has so far undermined the extent of decentralization.

### **5.1.2 Accountability and Transparency**

When it comes to accountability and transparency, all interviewees agreed that the lack of a cohesive and integrated pattern of governance has been a challenging issue for cities in Iran. This is reflected in their concerns about the urban administration's responsibility for delivering a number of services, including monitoring urban projects and development. A range of tasks such as those that relate to the provision of health, welfare, policing, water, electricity and gas are carried out by central government. The interviewees suggested that delivering governance in the city through different decision-makers and organisations affects vertical accountability in the city. Ten interviewees in particular, including representatives from the citizens, private sector and civic associations groups, said that it is hard to distinguish who is running the city. It appears that the ICC's function and position may be undermined by this form of task distribution, whereby the ICC is responsible for the municipality's performance but not for the entire city's functioning.

The issue of accountability of the ICC to the higher level represented by the Divergence Resolution Board (DRB) was mentioned by a selection of interviewees concerned about the attendant "political interests". In all, 22 interviewees, including experts, members of civic associations and state and municipality officials, confirmed that the ICC is accountable to the DRB, as the body designated to inspect and monitor the ICC. They argued that the ICC is recognised as an accountable association, proactive in soliciting input from higher level scrutinising bodies, such as the DRB and sub-governors.

Generally, a range of interviewees, including citizens, civic associations, private sector, local councillors and expert groups, supported the role of the ICC in improving

governance accountability and transparency in the city. According to the findings, the recent enhancements in accountability and transparency can be structured into three main themes: **monitoring**, **flow of information** and **strengthening relationships**. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 show a summary of the state of accountability in the city, with an emphasis on the ICC's impact on shaping such matters, as perceived by different stakeholder groups.

**Table 5.1 The ICC's Contribution to Accountability**

Interviewee Groups	Views
<b>Experts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevents fraud and embezzlement practices in decision-making</li> <li>• Reduces the municipality's risk of financial failure through implementation of auditing responsibilities</li> <li>• Enhancement of E-government at the local level</li> <li>• Gradually enhances the mechanisms for disseminating information which have lead to trust-building in the city</li> </ul>
<b>State officials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficiency in the ICC's accountability to the oversight of the Divergence Resolution Board and governors</li> <li>• Deepened the publics' views on city features'</li> </ul>
<b>Citizens, Civic associations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing the accountability of the governors to the governed</li> <li>• The ICC as a reliable, self-directed and impartial monitoring entity</li> <li>• Enhancement of trust and confidence with regards to urban decision-makers</li> </ul>

**Table 5.2 The ICC's limitations in contribution to accountability based on groups' views**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of integrated form of decision-making undermines accountability in the city.</li> <li>• Capacity of the ICC is insufficient for true accountability (the Council is mainly accountable for the municipality's actions and performance but is not accountable with regards to the entire city)</li> <li>• Ambiguity in distinguishing who is responsible and accountable for city affairs (state or municipality)</li> <li>• The ICC legislative and institutional restrictions affect accountability in the city</li> <li>• Municipal districts' and local councils' websites are faced with the lack of a programme for keeping them up to date</li> <li>• The ICC does not hold enough public hearings and organise discussion with civic associations, local councilors and experts on planned budget</li> </ul>
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### *Monitoring*

According to all stakeholder groups, the ICC's role in promoting accountability through administrative practices which are mainly handled by the municipality, has had a beneficial effect on fostering executive accountability in the city. A total of 40 interviewees found that the ICC had a constructive role in fostering the municipality's accountability. It was believed that the simple existence of the ICC enhanced the accountability of the municipality in the city. Three interviewees from the expert group argued that, although the ICC has no remedy for the majority of the city's current problems, it has to some extent succeeded in making the municipality more accountable.

When an urban researcher was asked whether the ICC has an impact on accountability, she responded:

“Undoubtedly accountability and transparency have been augmented in the municipal organisation through the council's good offices.” [UE-02, Interview: 22 February 2010].

Representatives from the citizens group emphasised that since the character of the council depends on people's votes and participation, city representatives want to be considered accountable by the people. It was widely remarked that prior to the ICC's existence, the lack of a reliable monitoring establishment was understood to be an issue for the city government. Currently the ICC, as a self-directed institution, has taken on the mission of impartial scrutiny of city governance, affecting therefore the transparency and openness of city governance.

The matter of confidence and trust was raised by three members of civic associations. In accordance with local representative's viewpoints, the ICC has to some extent succeeded in building confidence and trust in the city. This is further reflected in the comment of one executive member of a civic association, who stated that “the trust and confidence that exists between the boards of executives and citizens is primarily a product of the shift”. [CA-04, Interview: 10 March 2010]. All interviewees highlighted that prior to the establishment of the ICC, city management tasks had been faced with serious failure

regarding “transparency effects”. In support of this argument, several citizen interviewees argued that, prior to the formation of the ICC, the municipality has on several occasions been accused of financial corruption and lack of transparency. A university student and member of a civic association described the pre-ICC governance approach as “intractable and unbridled”. A number of citizens and private sector interviewees viewed the fraud allegations in the municipality prior to the ICC’s existence as politically motivated accusations. However, in general, the citizens, civic association and private sector interviewees largely indicated that the city suffered from a series of financial and administrative ambiguities. Furthermore, there was a lack of accountability, reflected in the absence of any kind of independent regulator. It follows that the municipality had “no commitment” to be accountable for its decisions. The citizens argued that transparency and responsibility were enhanced when a key executive body (the municipality) was obliged by the local council representatives to be “accountable and responsible” with regards to decision-making in the city. Two urban scholars also considered that monitoring budgeting and finance-related issues was a beneficial responsibility delivered by the ICC.

The fact that prior to the establishment of the ICC, the three roles of policy-making, implementation and monitoring were under the authority of the state, and city mayors were accountable to the state alone (the Ministry of the State), was also highlighted by experts as a matter of concern. However, it was believed that the ICC as a third-party policy-maker and scrutiniser has been functioning as a major stakeholder capable of monitoring decision-making in the city. As an example here, the experts made reference to article one, paragraph two of the ICC Act, based on which the ICC representatives cannot belong to the city’s executive boards. According to the experts, this condition supports the prevention of fraud and embezzlement practices, by separating the monitoring board and the executive bodies. Their view is based on the suggestion that municipality decision-making in areas of particular concern, such as financial issues, is open to legislation and to ICC scrutiny. In support of this, the local representatives argued that to a large extent the council has succeeded in auditing the municipality’s financial functions; thus, transparency and accountability concerns have been considerably diminished through the formation of the ICC.

However, a doubt was put forward by three local councillors and civic associations. Because the Council has no authority over the other chief decision-makers and deputies in the municipality, the accountability of the key decision-makers in relation to the Council might be affected. Three interviewees from Council organisations mentioned that on several occasions the mayor's municipal deputies were unaccountable to the ICC's monitoring and investigations. In the same way, concerns over the accountability of the district mayors were also emphasised.

Bureaucratic issues were viewed as a barrier to transparency and accountability by three citizens and local councillors. "The bureaucracy has been reduced in governance processes by the ICC", stated a citizen belonging to a civic association in one of the interviews [CA-03, Interview: 21 February]. According to their view, urban administrative tasks and city projects have previously been exercised with bureaucratic complexity and ambiguity. However, under the current structure and thanks to the procedural changes in the manner of conducting the city agenda, concerns about bureaucratic processes have been eased. Notwithstanding this, two citizens blamed the ICC for deferring the implementation of a number of city projects for bureaucratic reasons.

#### *Flow of information*

The ICC's recent performance in informing citizens by publicising its decisions and administrative activities has come to be considered as reliable. It is also seen as instrumental in communicating with and in enlightening the public regarding relevant city issues.

A university student commented:

"To consolidate the municipality's accountability, both the constructive and negative sides of its actions have been displayed to the public via the Council."

[OC-02, Interview: 21 February, 2010].

Municipality officials considered the publication of contracts, tenders, budgets and accounts as an internal organisational practice taken up by the municipality following the

shift. However, according to representatives from the experts, local councillors and civic associations groups, the ICC irrefutably has played a part in achieving such transparency. Access to public information and files is considered to have therefore improved considerably following the establishment of the ICC. The expert interviewees also suggested that E-government at the local level is proceeding well through the websites of Tehran municipality, its 22 municipal districts, and the ICC. They further suggested that the websites provide broad information on the municipal budget, balance and income; policies and regulations; investment agenda and strategies; real-estate property rights; thoroughness of information, and organisational staff (contact information, function and educational qualification). However, a concern raised by 11 citizens, private sector and civic association interviewees emphasised that, apart from the main websites (such as the municipality and the ICC websites) which are updated and revised regularly, the municipal districts' and the local councils' websites are often out of date. There was consensus amongst the experts that the information provided was insufficient. The websites lacked, for instance, reporting of public debates on the municipal budget drafting process, undermining the transparency of decision-making. Within this context, the experts suggested that holding public hearings and organising discussions with civic associations, local councillors and experts on the planned budget would be a constructive act for the enhancement of transparency.

### *Strengthening relationships*

The view that the role of the ICC is to support relationships between the public and urban administrations is emphasised by ten interviewees representing civic associations, citizens and private sector groups. According to the civic associations in particular, the ICC strengthens relationships and interactions between citizens and urban executives. While prior to the shift citizens were isolated from urban actors and decision-making processes, the establishment of the ICC somehow creates a “bridge” between the general public and the city's administration. In the same way a senior citizen stated that:

“It cannot be fully concluded whether the ICC has a considerable effect on accountability, but with regard to building strong relationships between public

and urban decision-makers, the ICC has achieved reasonable outcomes.” [OC-05, Interview: 21 February, 2010].

Supporting this idea, three interviewees from the private sector mentioned the ICC’s effective contribution in inviting citizens to share their concerns and how this would gradually nurture a better level of trust in the city.

The public meetings set up by the councillors were considered by some experts and citizens as an appropriate method for dealing with citizens’ concerns and for hearing their voices. Table 5.3 shows the interviewees’ perceptions of public meetings. While citizens formerly had no access to decision-makers, under the new arrangement councillors supported the improved accessibility of urban decision-makers and administrative procedures. Supporting this viewpoint, a citizen working in civic services made the following comment:

“Indeed the Council has enhanced the accessibility of urban administrators in order to hear the citizens’ voice. Representatives have scheduled regular meetings with residents in the different municipal districts.” [OC-017, Interview: 20 April 2010].

Similarly in another comment, the executive director of a civic association stated:

“The public has had no opportunity for frequent contact with the city administrators and executives. Following the coming-into-being of the ICC any resident from any socio-economic background can attend city council public meetings and discuss any city matter with decision-makers.” [CA-02, Interview: 25 February 2010].

However, concerns over the efficiency of the public meetings resonated in the interviews. Seven interviewees representing the citizen, civic association and private sector groups, criticised the public meetings facilitated by the ICC representatives. A citizen working in the welfare sector commented:

“The meetings are incomprehensive and incapable of boosting accountability. Thus there is doubt over the efficiency of their approach, due to a vast number of issues and their complexity in a city such as Tehran.” [OC-06, Interview: 26 February 2010].

A member of a civic association asserted that merely relying on the 15 ICC representatives' public meetings in a city with 12 million residents is an “unrealistic” approach for endorsing accountability in a comprehensive way. Two interviewees representing small private sector businesses supported this view, stating that the approach to these meetings is based on a “populist incentive” occasionally followed by “publicity inspirations” and “motivations” that prevent any practical interaction from taking place. The issue of irregularity and inconsistency of meetings was also raised by five citizen respondents. According to their view public meetings have not been operationalised in a systematic manner. The need for consistent, organised and open consultation with citizens regarding city matters was suggested by 21 interviewees including representatives of the citizens, private sector and civic association groups.

Experts and local councillors said that the sessions of the ICC are open to all citizens without any restrictions. However, when asked to assert their opinion about the ICC sessions, almost 20 interviewees representing the citizen, civic association and private sector groups stated a lack of awareness regarding the schedule, place and time of the open sessions of the ICC. In effect, the way in which the sessions are announced to the public by the ICC was a matter of concern for the civic associations, citizens, private sector and local councillors. Furthermore, the way in which the municipality advertises the time of the meetings was a matter of dissatisfaction. According to the interviewees, the ICC's publicity and information mechanisms were only partly functioning, negatively impacting citizens' awareness with regard to public meetings. There is no sign of anything like a fixed advertisement in the local media with regard to the forthcoming public sessions and their agenda.

**Table 5.3 Interviewees' perceptions of ICC public meetings**

<b>Interviewee Groups</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Interviewee Groups</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Citizens and Civic associations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Helps various citizens' voices to be heard</li> <li>-Contributes to citizens' concerns and issues</li> <li>-Offers Councillors access to information and knowledge</li> <li>-Enlightens and informs citizens regarding city agendas</li> </ul>	<b>Citizens and civic associations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lack of comprehensiveness and depth of method</li> <li>-Irregularity and inconsistency of meetings</li> <li>-Lack of awareness regarding publicised schedule, place and time of the sessions</li> </ul>
<b>Experts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Creates bridges between public and urban decision-makers</li> <li>-Open to all citizens without any restrictions</li> <li>-Enhances the accessibility of urban administrators</li> </ul>	<b>Private sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The method is based on populism as a driving force, instead of on realistic achievements</li> <li>-Publicity and political motivations instead of supporting governance values</li> </ul>

### 5.1.3 Gender Equality in City Governance

It was widely believed by the interviewees that women's participation in urban decision-making should be improved in order to enhance governance practices in cities. In this context, 26 interviewees from groups including civic associations, experts, state, local council and citizens, said that the ICC provides innovative pathways and means for women to participate and engage in city governance. As state officials argued, the initial space for women's participation in city governance was launched through the establishment of the ICC, which emphasised their role in local government. Similar views were echoed by three members of civic associations, who viewed the enhancement of women's contribution in city governance as constructive. In this context, two experts compared the ICC with other associations at the state and city level, suggesting that from its establishment the ICC has been offering a good portion of its capacity to women, which have demonstrated their

“capability and aptitude confidently”, as they play a key role in decision-making in the city.

Despite providing initial steps to involve women, their participation in the ICC is perceived as deficient by ten interviewees, including those from expert, local representatives and civic associations groups. This is partly due to the ICC being incapable of establishing sufficiently meaningful participation mechanisms for women. A member of the Council association commented:

“Women’s participation in the most advanced sphere of city governance, as demonstrated in Council practices, shows technically and legally that the council is incapable of introducing an enhanced mechanism for women participating in the city.” [CR-02, Interview: 18 February, 2010].

In this respect, the Councillors themselves highlight the fact that the ICC restricts women’s input into city governance and decision-making, and that this can be simply tested by the small number of representative positions that women hold.

Yet, the experts asserted that the ICC is not in a position to expand women’s participation in urban decision-making, and is unable to recommend any employment policy to the municipality. However, the municipality as the executive board of the city does have sufficient ability to develop women’s involvement in city matters. According to the experts’ view, although the municipality has clearly allocated a portion of its workforce to women employees, up to this point it seems that the allocation has not been fully operationalised. It was claimed (although somewhat arguably) that the existing urban administration in the municipality employs a good number of women in its framework. However the concern highlighted here by the experts and citizens and civic associations is to what extent have key decision-making posts been offered to women. A female citizen formerly employed in the cultural sector stated:

“In general, women’s participation in urban decision-making in Tehran is insignificant; it seems that the municipality’s executive board for the city

largely excludes women from its key policy-making arrangements.” [OC-01: Interview: 27 February 2010].

Similarly, when the interviewees were asked about the reasons behind the absence of any real contribution by women in governance decision-making, the responses varied. The responses can be classified into three types of views: socio-cultural, administrative and technical. These are summarised in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4 Reasons for the lack of meaningful participation of women in governance**

<b>Interviewee Groups</b>	<b>Views</b>
<b>ICC Officials and Local Councillors</b>	-The powerlessness of the ICC to establish an enhanced mechanism for women’s participation in governance
<b>Municipality</b>	- Absence of sufficient technical and individual abilities among women by comparison with men  - Social and cultural structure of society
<b>Civic Association and Citizens</b>	-Socio-cultural issues (traditional thoughts and tendencies)  -Degree of public confidence and trust accompanying male executives as compared with female  -Lack of a meritocratic system
<b>State</b>	-Economic factors affecting women’s level of employability  -Lack of inspiration and motivation for offering places to women among city executives
<b>Experts</b>	-Lack of formalisation in offering executive positions to women at city level; the municipality’s capacity has not been fully operationalised  -Apprehension over allocating senior positions to women  -Society giving its male members a dominant role  -Weak contributions by women to higher level decision-making affects their participation at city level (women are generally excluded from top level decision-making)

*Social and cultural features*

Almost ten interviewees from various groups confirmed that equality between men and women in urban governance was undermined by the shift. It was widely understood throughout the interviews that it is hard to believe that within the existing system women and men have an equal chance to achieve a decision-making position in the city. In total 15 interviewees from the expert and citizen groups referred to socio-cultural factors, public culture and tendencies with regard to women and their position in society, as barriers to the employment of women in city decision-making. Supporting this argument, four interviewees from the civic associations group argued that, although a tendency exists among higher level decision-makers to offer posts to women at a more advanced level, typically “social” and “cultural structures” and “patterns” of the society have been functioning as a hindrance. Traditional thoughts, beliefs and attitudes are therefore considered significant factors influencing the participation and employability of women in city governance and related activities. The interviewees referred to the government decision to allocate a ministerial post to a woman for the first time following the Islamic Revolution (Minister of Health). This was faced with controversy and contentious discussion.

The experts defined the Iranian society as strongly leaning towards a “dominant patriarchy”, in the context of which it is hard to expect women to be able to compete with men for any decision-making post. Thus, in practice such a tendency undermines women’s position in the urban governance structure. Connected with this, official interviewees referred to statistics and figures at a national level where, quantitatively speaking, due to socio-economic and cultural factors, the majority of women are unemployed; and the majority of unemployed citizens are women. This is an additional factor affecting women’s employability at city level. From a qualitative and social perspective, civic associations have argued that men are in a better position when compared to women with regard to obtaining senior administrative posts. The posts allocated to women are of a lower rank, class and status compared with the posts offered to men.

Additionally seven interviewees from citizen and civic association groups referred to the degree of "public confidence" and "trust" which can be higher for male executives' than for females. A citizen and executive member of civic associations argued that "typically male decision-makers have been considered more appropriate for the city executive's tasks and positions". [CA-01, Interview: 3 March 2010].

#### *Administrative and Technical features*

The issues around top-down approaches and their impact on local governance have been raised by three interviewees from the experts' group. Their view is based on the suggestion that the place of women in local government is affected by higher level circumstances. This is further reflected in the comment of one sociology scholar:

"Due to the country's executive and administrative structures, the placement of women in macro-level of management has been narrowed. There is therefore an apprehension over allocating responsibilities to women in the local government decision-making structure." [UE-03, Interview: 25 February 2010].

The view that employing women in governmental decision making is summarised as being an insignificant consultative or ceremonial post resonated in the interviews. Correspondingly the act has not been regularised and contextualised at the city level, as suggested by two urban experts. An academic expert stated that the "lack of contribution by women in macro level decision-making circles affects women's employability in the city governance structure". As a result, if women are distanced from the key circles of power at the higher level and have not been given a voice at the top level of decision-making, then their position in the lower echelons will automatically be influenced. In addition, most of the higher ranking executives in the city who are men view women as rivals and challengers.

Concerns over the lack of a scheme based on "meritocracy" were expressed by six participants from the groups of experts, citizens and civic associations, as the selection of women executives is influenced by favouritism. A senior academic interviewee stated: "for

women, achieving a position in urban government is manipulated by lobbies, dealers and links, instead of a systematic set of arrangements.” The necessity of applying a transparent, impartial and comprehensive machinery to avoid such treatment was suggested.

Concerns over the technical incompetence of women were raised mainly by four municipality senior officials. Executives from the municipality stated that since women’s abilities are not guaranteed for most urban executives, offering a position of authority is considered a risky option for urban executive boards. According to a municipality official, women’s (lack of) capabilities and abilities as individuals is what prevents them from contributing effectively to urban decision-making. Typically male and female capabilities have been considered different, because of unequal structures in society with men fulfilling the more technically enhanced positions. The level of education was also considered a significant aspect affecting the state of women’s employability in city governance.

Interviewees from the state and experts groups argued that the existing inadequacy in employing women in urban executive and administrative structures is associated with the lack of power distribution among the higher ranked urban managers. As the state officials asserted, since the municipal administration is entirely independent in its implementation of “recruitment policies”, the lack of women employed in key decision-making roles in the municipality is defined as an internal issue. They further criticised the idea that the technical insufficiency of women is a major weakness by referring to the recent testimony to women’s abilities and aptitudes shown by their achievements in higher education, where female students have overtaken their male counterparts in attaining university places.

## **5.2 Barriers and Challenges**

For most interviewees, the ICC’s limitations and constraints have had a significant impact on the institutional capacity and weight of the organisation, raising some doubt over its competence. This view is based on the suggestion that the ICC has not been able to deeply influence governance practices due to its limitations. A representative of a local council commented:

“Because of the complex nature of issues in Tehran, particularly the ICC’s limitations, the ICC was unable to influence governance in Tehran.” [LC-02, Interview: 25 February 2010].

The ICC’s limitations in a broader sense were emphasised by all interviewee groups. The limitations raised included the insufficient capacities and tools for enhancing governance and developing governance principles, which put the ICC’s achievements at risk. According to the interviewees, the reliability of the ICC’s current configurations has not succeeded in responding to public expectations. Based on the findings, the ICC’s limitations can be ranked under three headings: political; structural and technical; institutional and legislative. These are subsequently discussed in more detail.

### **5.2.1 Political limitations**

Concerns of a political nature were mentioned by 15 interviewees, particularly those representing civic association, citizen and expert groups. Citizens saw the political purpose of the ICC as a limitation, and would prefer if it had a more social foundation. This is because in their view and in accordance with its origins, framing the ICC as a social association would be helpful in limiting the politicisation of urban management, which they consider to have a negative influence on the quality of governance. A citizen employed in a private company made the following assertion:

“Since it seems that the ICC devotes itself more to political and organisational issues rather than to management matters, the Councils have undermined their credibility with regard to governance practices in the city.” [PS-02, Interview: 25 February 2010].

According to civic associations, despite the commitment of the ICC to be considered neither as a local government nor as a political establishment, its conduct and existing performances were viewed in a somewhat “politicised” manner. Supporting such arguments, experts mentioned that the ICC was designed as a decentralised organisation run by publicly elected members. Furthermore, that the purpose behind the ICC was intended to be the exercise of public power and a move from a centralised government-

based structure towards a more decentralised local approach. A member of an academic society commented that: “the ICC has been contextualised and then characterised misleadingly as a political power at city level in recent years.” [UE-05, Interview: 7 March 2010].

According to the interviewed experts, the manner in which governance is effectively shaped and delivered is influenced by the manner in which the state and local associations, including the ICC, interact. However, these interactions and relationships were regarded as being shaped by political interests, rather than the result of systematic and efficient interactions. Two experts argued that the quality of the relationship between governance stakeholders (the central government, the ICC and the municipality) has depended on “political interests”. One of the expert interviewees from an academic association mentioned the following with regards to second (2003-2007) and third (2007-2011) terms of office of the ICC:

“Where governance stakeholders have somewhat comparable political interests and originated from identical political tendencies, the interactions and relationships have been strong, except in the cases where relationships are inconsistent.” [UE-01, Interview: 5 March 2010].

The municipality and Council staff interviewed viewed the role of political circumstances in shaping the quality of relationships between the stakeholders as “irrelevant” and “impractical”, in contrast to the views of the civic association, citizen and expert groups. A respondent from the civic associations group asserted that “basically the interaction has been affirmative, except where different political propensities clash”. He further emphasised the necessity of building relationships through “regulative” and “technical” frameworks, which would lead to reduced concerns.

The influence and impact of the national and higher level agenda on local politics and the ICC was also a matter of concern for the experts. One issue in this respect is the existence of politicised tensions and challenges between governance stakeholders, which have intensified in the second and third periods of the ICC. The experts viewed such tensions as

a major hindrance to the progress of governance. Thus, it appears that politicised conduct has led to governance stakeholders engaging in political competition, instead of contributing to the incremental enhancement of governance principles.

When the interviewees were asked about the grounds behind the politicisation of the ICC, different responses were provided; these are summarised in Table 5.5. Three state officials referred to the “political capacity” of the ICC in Tehran as the grounds for this politicisation. Thus in practice, the ICC has mutated into a site of political competition and a battlefield. The interviewees argued that the political capacities and aptitudes of the ICC, particularly in Tehran, have an undeniable effect on its functions and performances, overshadowing the ICC’s original position as a non-political institution. However six respondents, mainly from the civic associations and expert groups, viewed the politicisation of the ICC as related to the “centralised” manner in which the power and influence have been distributed in the city. Civic associations stated that power is vested in three major stakeholders (the ICC, municipality, and state stakeholders), while grassroots organisations, civic associations and local foundations are in practice excluded from any kind of contribution. According to the experts, political parties and their local branches have a high influence on the ICC and consequently on city governance; while the impact of civic associations, CBOs, private sector and ordinary citizens is limited. In addition, two NGO participants to this research asserted that the lack of institutionalisation of the ICC can be considered as a basis for politicising the ICC. They argued that formulating ICC implementation through political tendencies and circumstances, rather than through social and public means, may put the ICC’s legitimacy at risk.

State officials indicated as a limitation the influential position of Tehran as the prime city of Iran, with political and socio-economic domination over the urban system. The way in which power is distributed among metropolises at the national scale was also highlighted. They argued that the ICC is not politicised in other major cities to the same extent that it is in Tehran.

Arguably, the responses provided by two participants from the experts groups appeared to be tied up with “election” issues. They argued that “elections” themselves are viewed as

politically motivated in line with the political circumstances in Iran. Since the formation of the ICC is entirely a product of electoral procedures, the involvement of the ICC in political contests is unavoidable.

Some experts argued that “elections” and their effects may lead to the politicisation of the ICC. However, according to five interviewees from the citizen and civic associations groups, the elections are perceived as a tool that prevents the ICC from becoming political fixtures. Since the nature of the ICC is deeply linked to direct public participation, the ICC’s enhancement of the public’s rights are said to have fully supported governance procedures for the city. Fifteen participants from different groups were sceptical about the potential of the ICC to augment political decision-making in the city. According to the citizens interviewed, prior to the implementation of the ICC, decision-making was largely under the influence of leading political collectives or individual figures. By contrast, the Councils put forward proposals based on “public interest”, instead of “following political party lines”. This is further reflected in a comment of one citizen employed in the education sector:

“It could be realised that the key priority for every decision made by the ICC is in the public interest, not any political or influential categories.” [OC-07, Interview: 1 March 2010].

In support of this view, citizens further described the ICC as a very ground-level entity, whose credibility needs to be ensured through grassroots circles and not through the higher political organisations. Thus, the ICC representatives require people’s votes, rather than endorsement from high-level organisations or figures. These interactions resulted in an unbiased and apolitical decision-making process in the city.

Three members of the state administrators and the municipality senior officials groups emphasised the role of the ICC in supporting impartial decision-making. They stated that the ICC has been an impartial and neutral player in the city’s courses of action. An administrator from the Organisation of National Municipalities put forward a view supportive of this commenting:

“While formerly the city was operating subjectively and without regular guidelines; since the shift the ICC has been playing an effective role in systematising city governance practice.” [GO-02, Interview: 28 February 2010].

In support of this, municipality staff commented that the ICC replaces hierarchical political frameworks with a structured and regularised pattern.

**Table 5.5 Grounds for the Politicisation of the ICC**

<b>Interviewee Groups</b>	<b>Views</b>
<b>Civic Associations, Citizens</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of institutionalisation of the ICC in Iran</li> <li>- Centralised power distribution in the city which concentrates on three stakeholders and excludes grassroots associations</li> <li>- Following political parties and interest group lines instead of public interest</li> <li>- ICC structure is mainly formed by political actors</li> </ul>
<b>Experts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ignorance regarding technical features and functions</li> <li>- Influence of political parties and their local branches on the ICC, and consequently on city governance, is high</li> <li>- Involving and devoted to political fixtures and competition</li> <li>- The poor impact of civic associations, CBOs, private sector and ordinary citizens on the ICC</li> <li>- The influence and impact of the national and higher level agenda on local politics and the ICC</li> <li>- The ICC is a product of electoral procedures wherein the election itself is entirely viewed as a political process</li> </ul>
<b>State official</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political capacity of the ICC</li> <li>- Political and socioeconomic position of Tehran as a prime city at the national level</li> </ul>

### 5.2.2 Structural and Technical

Throughout the interviews, the ICC structure has been at the centre of debates. It was understood that currently the number of the ICC representatives in Tehran and the other large cities is 15 and ten, respectively, which has been seen as too few by some. According

to the experts interviewed, to address this issue a proposal to increase the number of ICC members was formulated through parliament, suggesting that in Tehran the number of representatives is raised to 23 and in cities with more than two million inhabitants, the number of ICC representatives is to expand to fifteen. To date, this proposal remains unapproved and the number of representatives unchanged. For some this proposal is seen as likely to enhance the position and effectiveness of the ICC in Iran. However, those who opposed it argued that the proposal can lead to consequences of artificial modifications and increased bureaucracy within the ICC.

With regards to the ICC's structure, the interviewees were asked to define whether the quantity and quality of the members composing the ICC's structure is appropriate for a metropolitan city such as Tehran (see Table 5.6).

**Table 5.6 The ICCs Structural and Technical Limitations**

<b>Interviewee Groups</b>	<b>Views</b>
<b>Experts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The ICC's quantitative composition ( number of representatives) has not been coordinated with the complexity of governance in Tehran</li> </ul>
<b>Citizens ,Civic Associations and private sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of technical and practical equality between the ICC and the municipality</li> <li>- Lack of a scrutinising mechanism to evaluate the competency and fitness of ICC representatives for their posts</li> <li>- Lack of a sufficient level of understanding among ICC representatives regarding urban issues</li> <li>- Lack of implementation of an inclusive approach to authorising potential candidates for a representative post</li> </ul>
<b>ICC officials and local councillors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial and budgeting constraints</li> <li>- Limited use of professionals and persons of expertise as consultants in the ICC framework</li> <li>- Lack of a hierarchical system in the ICC to distribute its weight across the city</li> </ul>
<b>State officials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employability of experts and professionals within the ICC's framework</li> </ul>

What emerges from the interviews appears to be consistent with the view articulated in the literature, that the ICC's framework needs to be enhanced in terms of both structure and quality. Almost 30 respondents from different groups emphasised that the existing configuration is not appropriate for the city, and that urgent action is therefore needed. According to three experts, the structure of the ICC is not fit for purpose, particularly in cities that are faced with complex issues. "Since cities such as Tehran have been faced with complex issues, the technical and structural features of the ICC need to be reviewed" said one of urban researchers interviewed [UE-02, Interview: 22 February]. Five representatives from the state and civic associations groups supported the experts' views. One of the state officials from the Provincial Governor's Office criticised the existing structure of the ICC stating that "the number (quantity) of the ICC representatives is inadequate for Tehran and does not correspond to the volume of tasks." [GO-03, Interview: 29 February 2010].

However, for other two respondents from the expert group, the existing number of representatives of the ICC is proportionate to the ICC's responsibilities, and there is no basic rationale for raising the number of ICC representatives. They went on to state that the amount of tasks and responsibilities delivered by the ICC are not "massive and considerable" so the present structure is reasonably suitable for the association. An expert and member of an academic society asserted that "if the ICC's responsibility and authority expands, it would be a constructive action to increase the number of ICC representatives". [UE-04, Interview: 6 March 2010]

Members of civic associations, local citizens and experts suggested that rather than raising numbers of representatives in the ICC, there should be an increased focus on Neighbourhood Councils and further development of existing local forums. Shifting influence to such bodies was seen as having the potential to culminate in more centralised decision-making. In order to enhance the productivity and efficiency of the ICC, local councils in neighbourhoods should be expanded as an endorsed mechanism for governance in Tehran. A civic association executive further mentioned the ICC leader's viewpoint, which stated that "*even three hundred representatives would be insufficient for Tehran*" from a different angle. He supported his statement by saying:

“If we want to find a practical solution for Tehran, the wisest way is, where possible, through implementing Neighbourhood Councils at the local level, creating a situation where there are more than three hundred representatives at local level. By accepting this, localisation can be boosted realistically.”

[CA-01, Interview: 3 March 2010].

Despite the recognition of the functional and organisational distinction between the executive and legislative entities in the city, the issue of inconsistency between the municipality and the ICC in the allocation of supplies is mentioned by three members of local councils and civic associations. As well as highlighting the structural and technical gaps between the municipality and the ICC, this also underlines the limitations of the ICC. The interviewees further emphasised the existing gaps between the urban legislator and policy-making body (ICC) and the executor (municipality) in terms of technical and financial capacities. According to the interviewees from the local council, the municipality consists of several boards and assistants alongside its 22 district headquarters spread across the city. However, the ICC and its policy-making tasks are handled by a single board in a centralised manner. These limitations can also potentially result in the interference of the state level legislator and policy-makers in urban issues. They also imply that the ICC has insufficient weight to influence governance in the city.

The employment of experts and professionals in the ICC was suggested as a limitation by three members of the state official group. They asserted that the issues arising with the ICC are due to the lack of competent individuals acting as representatives within the ICC's structure, rather than with the number of councillors. A state official from the Council and Municipality Office suggested that the ICC's structural limitations and technical deficiencies can be reduced by recruiting consultants and advisors to the ICC committees. A member of a local council supported this view commenting that “the productivity of the ICC depends on the manner in which its professional actors have been configured. However, this does not stand on numbers and figures alone.” [LC-04, Interview: 8 March 2010]. The present ICC structure was assessed by a member of the Urban Scholar's Society as follows:

“Despite the existence of three main commissions and 13 committees in the ICC, based on the extent and nature of the issues, there still need to be more professional actors within the ICC’s framework.” [UE-05, Interview: 7 March 2010].

When the interviewees were asked about the possibility of using more professionals in the ICC, their responses once again highlighted the financial constraints under which the ICC operates, as the basic obstacle for employing further professional actors. The issue of financial constraints was echoed particularly in the interviews with the ICC officials. They argued that the issue largely derived from legislative and institutional limitations. In support of this argument, an interviewee from the Council pointed out that:

“Financial and budget related issues count as the main barriers preventing the ICC from functioning in a deeper manner. Due to this, the ICC has no administrative staff, and administrative services for the ICC are supplied by the municipality.” [CR-04, Interview: 8 March 2010].

The issue of the competency and fitness of ICC representatives also resonated in the interviews with citizens, civic associations and experts. This will be further discussed in Chapter Six (Voter Turnout).

### **5.2.3 Institutional and Legislative**

A basic concern expressed across all interviews appears to be institution-based limitations. With reference to the ICC’s restrictions, over 15 interviewees emphasised the ICC’s limited legislative capacity and the influence of political and structural factors over its functioning. Representatives from the citizens group considered structural and consequently technical issues as insignificant concerns. However, the ICC’s institutional capacity and legal weight was viewed as a major challenge undermining its functions. Similarly, almost 20 council administrators referred to the allocation of power and weight to the main stakeholders in the city which has not been formulated to create a situation of balance.

Basically, for almost all interviewees, the legislative and institutional limitations undermine the ICC's original position in the constitution. The gap between the ICC's theoretical frameworks on the one hand, and its driving practical circumstances on the other hand, was raised by participants in the professional groups. It follows that the most recently modified ICC regulations and guidelines are considered to be far removed from its constitutional roots and principles. From the experts' viewpoint, according to Code 103 of the constitutional law, the central government executives, including governors and managers in cities and at the provincial scale, ought to respect the Council's decisions. However, by referring to the latest ICC regulations, the governmental organisations or administrators can waive their obligation to respect the council's decisions and orders. According to the existing circumstances, it was believed by the experts that the ICC is at some distance from functioning as an "urban parliament" or a "city council". The experts suggested that the "municipality's council" is a more realistic label for the present ICC system in Iran. Hence, based on current regulations and the existing governance system, the only organisation which is accountable to the ICC is the municipality. It was argued that the ICC's contemporary functions are in contrast with its constitutional arrangements. As an academic expert asserted, "there has been a controversial gap between the ICC's position in the constitutional law and its actual performances." [UE-02, Interview: 22 February 2010].

Similarly, for the municipality administrators there are clear signs of incongruity between the ICC's responsibilities in the constitutional law and its existing authority. They consider the current legislative weight and power of the ICC insufficient, and exhibiting systematic malfunction with regards to the effective delivery and influence over governance procedures in the city. It was argued by municipal officials that the legislative and regulation-based concerns seem to be key grounds for the interference of the state in urban issues, which consequently affects the governance process. For the municipal administrators, the ICC would be able to have more influence over governance tasks, if it could reposition itself consistent with its meaning in the constitution. This enhancement would also institute a more balanced distribution of city governance contributions between key stakeholders (the state, the ICC and municipality).

The lack of practical assurance and sanctions with regards to the implementation of the constitutional regulations was raised as an issue in the interviews with local councillors and civic associations. The motivation and driving force are devoid of practical mechanisms for realistically implementing the constitutional criteria with reference to the ICC. “The lack of executive assurances to practice regulations is a further concern that causes fundamental deficiencies in delivering the ICC task”, said one member of a local council [LC-03, Interview: 10 March 2010]. It was widely believed by local councillors that, despite the constitution offering an appropriate range of tasks for the ICC, in practice it has no power to implement the large reach of these authorities and influences. According to the local councillors, 23 monitoring missions are being offered to the ICC based on Article 71 of the ICC Act. However, these duties are not defined clearly. For example, the ICC’s position and monitoring duties with regard to health affairs in the city lack clear definition.

In addition, the lack of willingness and determination among the higher-level decision-makers to offer the ICC further institutional space and weight was identified as a limitation by interviewees from civic association and expert groups and by four well-informed citizens. They highlighted the indecisive position of the ICC, whereby throughout its existence progress has been characterised by a lack of assurance, political willingness and uncertainty. The state’s attitudes towards the ICC has been considered as discouraging, insofar as they have persistently not been taken into account by successive administrations. In effect, an urban expert argued that “A resistant tendency has been functioning as a barrier in Iran to granting further authority to the ICC”, as [UE- 01, Interview: 5 March 2010]. The hindrances due to the ICC’s institutional capacity are summarised in Table 5.7.

Furthermore, the representatives interviewed from the ICC highlighted the legislative barriers, by referring to Codes 100 and 101 of the constitutional law, according to which, the operation of the ICC at all levels of decision-making including neighbourhood, rural, county, city, and provincial scale is to be taken into consideration. Yet, this issue has not been taken into account entirely by the driving machinery of governance (the state-level policy makers and legislators) and is being equally disregarded. According to the ICC representatives, negligence over the implementation of a comprehensive hierarchical

approach means for the ICC has continuously taken place. Thus, a lack of integration and association between the ICC institutions at different levels of decision-making exist.

To conclude, the impact of the ICC's financial, technical and institutional limitations on the quality of governance was revealed by an expert. The way in which the financial auditors, who are ICC staff and monitor the municipality, interact with the municipality organisation was also a matter of concern. While the monitoring undertaken must be wholly delivered by the ICC, the auditors are officially employed and paid by the municipality. This undermines the ICC's autonomy and transparency with regard to financial oversight procedures, as it stresses the absence of a fully independent and transparent body.

**Table 5.7: Hindrances to the ICC's Institutional Capacity**

Views	
-	Controversial gap between the ICCs position in the constitution and its institutional capabilities
-	Lack of clarification and explanation with regard to some duties meant for the ICC
-	The ineffectiveness of the ICC's present institutional weight and influence to support governance
-	The ICCs legislative motives are mixed up with political motives
-	The lack of state willingness and determination to offer more institutional weight to the ICC

### 5.3 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research findings with reference to the ICC and its role in the existing city governance of Tehran. In the first phase, the ICC's contribution to the quality of governance was identified. Its key positive features include decentralisation and local autonomy; accountability and transparency through monitoring and scrutinizing practices, communication of information, and the strengthening of relationships between urban decision-makers and citizens. In addition, the ICC supports to some extent gender equality through providing an initial space for women's participation as ICC representatives.

However, various limitations and barriers with regards to the ICC were also identified. Political, technical, structural, legislative and institutional factors were considered as significant hindrances. It was conveyed that these limitations have negative impacts on delivering good governance in the city.

Discussion of the Islamic City Council and its effects on governance can be summed up by the view expressed by a sociology scholar interviewee: despite the mechanisms initiated by the establishment of the ICC, it is incapable of assuring an enhanced governance mechanism. However, the existing mechanism is not to be considered as a retrograde step with regard to the governance principles it embodies. The shift that introduced the ICC can therefore still be considered as a foundation and initial step towards improved city governance.

## **Chapter 6: Voter Turnout**

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## 6.0 Introduction

Based on the interview findings, the main idea behind the shift in urban governance was enhancement of citizen participation and public involvement in city affairs. However, in practice, greater public involvement has been mostly limited to electoral participation. It is within this context that the ICC's elections are considered a key feature for enhancing urban public participation, as well as a challenging prospect, particularly in Tehran. To explore the extent to which elections can be considered as a key participation activity within Iran's existing governance machinery, this chapter focuses on voter turnout. Two concepts, derived from the interview data appear to be key:

**1- Electoral participation in governance:** which presents the role of electoral participation and its impacts on governance;

**2- Voter turnout in the ICC elections:** which aims to explain voter turnout deficiencies in ICC elections. It addresses four key areas enhancing the level of participation in ICC elections. These are: 1) Combined elections, 2) Enhancing public trust and awareness, 3) A well-judged and fair selection of candidates, and 4) Enhancing the ICC's institutional position.

Subsequently, the interview findings are presented using the two concepts suggested above as a framework.

## 6.1 Electoral Participation in Governance

Although the responses provided varied, 25 out of 60 participants to the interviews suggested that the ICC elections uphold general democratic principles at city level, as every citizen is offered equal rights to participate in city affairs. However, 14 interviewees, mostly consisting of representatives from the citizens, civic associations, private sector and urban experts groups were sceptical with regards to comprehensiveness of the ICC elections and their impact on urban governance. Their responses indicate that public

participation and citizen engagement in decision-making has to some extent been “insufficient” in arriving at effective participatory governance. According to three urban experts, given that the public’s input into the post-governance shift system has been recognised through the ICC elections, the distinction between the current and previous system in terms of enhancement of participatory decision-making has been described (however unfair this might seem to a more informed observer) as “negligible”. They went on to suggest that the pre- and post-governance shift excluded the public from the practical aspect of sharing in decision-making procedures. Thus, according to the interviewees, the contemporary urban governance strategy ignores the public’s input into decision-making because citizens’ contributions are solely solicited through the city council elections every four years, with no attempt to go any deeper.

With regard to introducing a deeper meaning and level of citizen contributions and involvement into decision-making, some enthusiastic and dedicated responses were expressed by the citizens, private sector and civic association interviewees. “While, following the initiation of the ICC elections the citizens expected that deeper participation schemes such as participatory delivery of services in neighbourhoods, would be gradually introduced, decision-makers have yet to take any action”, said a citizen working in the welfare sector. A university student interviewed stated

“I would like to see a profound sense of participation in the city in which the meaning of the citizenry taking part in urban decision-making is not undermined by being focused on electoral processes alone.” [OC-09, Interview: 27 February 2010].

Despite this deficit, the idea that the role of urban elections is to strengthen the position and participation of citizens was supported by interviewees across different stakeholder groups. For example, an administrator from the central government asserted that “At least the benefit of the ICC elections is that for the first time citizens have been taken into account in city decision-making.” [GO-01, Interview 4 March 2010]. She argued that prior to the

governance shift there was no mechanism through which citizens could have a say in any city matters. An optimistic perspective on power sharing and distribution also resonated in other interviews. A local councillor interviewee expressed his support for the urban elections by stating: “Society should accept that the election distributes influence and power in the city, and that through it, citizens to some extent share in the decision-making processes.” [LC-05, Interview: 13 March 2010].

For three urban experts the electoral process has been intended to strengthen the notion of governance in the city, as the role of urban elections is to support the value and meaning of democracy. They stated that for the first time, the following have been recognised as essentials for urban democracy and that to some extent, are a feature of the ICC elections: citizens’ contributions to urban affairs, the distribution of power and influence in the city, giving a voice to the public and the recognition of other opinions with regard to city issues. However, with regard to the extent to which the elections are efficient, urban experts identified the inadequacy of representative democracy to support entirely the exercise of governance functions. A member of an expert group commented:

“While citizens’ participation in the ICC elections can be implemented to strengthen representative democracy at city level; the functions necessary for good governance require the application of both representative and participatory democracy.” [UE-02, Interview: 22 February 2010].

It was widely asserted by interviewees that the achievement of governance is associated with the understanding and implementation of both representative and participatory governance. While urban experts pointed out that representative democracy offers a passive form of citizenship; participatory governance citizens are actively engaged throughout governance procedures.

According to three representatives of the civic associations group, rather than lacking the capacity to contribute fully to governance, urban elections have had a concrete influence on the development of urban democracy in Iran. In general, civic associations agreed strongly

with the impact of ICC elections in developing democracy at the city level, as they offer opportunities for sharing the practice of governance with women, minorities, the young, the elderly and disabled citizens, thus, regardless of one's class and position. A member of a civic association put forward an optimistic view, stating that:

“I believe that ordinary citizens from various socio-economic groups, who were previously excluded or ignored from contributing to the urban governance process, are now taken into account through their inputs to ICC elections.” [CA-03, Interview: 25 February 2010].

In addition to the civic association members, six interviewees from the private sector and local councillors groups also supported that statement. According to two small business employees before the establishment of the ICC elections, individualism was the dominant attitude in city decision-making, with power to influence concentrated in the hands of selected individuals. In the same way, local councillors suggested that monopolisation and segregation in the city were demolished by the introduction of the ICC elections. A senior member of the local council asserted

“With the machinery of the past, the mayor, interior minister and other influential individuals were in a position to influence and shape the city along their own pathways.” [LC- 01, Interview: 17 March 2010].

However, he also recognised that thanks to the realisation of the election process, the city is now formed by a more “shared and cooperative decision-making” approach.

In addition, two interviewees from the Ministry of the Interior suggested that on the one hand, the election led to the engagement of “new actors and ideas” [into city governance] through pluralism principles; and on the other hand, it put a stop to fashion-driven, single-voiced and monopolistic decision-making in urban management. This offers “legitimacy”, “credibility” and “reliability” to the urban machinery. It was also suggested that city elections support the credibility and integrity of the city administration, which in turn,

reflects credit on the manner in which the city is being run. However, concerns that a sole reliance on ICC elections might be misused to manipulate urban governance processes were echoed throughout the interviews with state officials. Primarily, it was thought that the ICC elections draw attention to the issue of participation in the city. However, since the electoral process was unable to deliver the entire value and meaning of participation and was not complemented by participatory practices, it has been incapable of strengthening participatory governance principles in the city. A senior state official in Iran's Organization of Municipalities Administration commented that:

“Despite the accomplishment of three urban (ICC) elections, there is no sign that any significant modification in participatory city governance has taken place.” [GO-04, Interview: 7 April 2010].

He further stated that in general, the governance of the city has not been deeply influenced by the election, and that the city council has had limited influence.

## **6.2 Voter Turnout in the ICC Election**

Whereas in Iran the level of participation in general elections (i.e. presidential elections) is high; at the city level (i.e. council elections) the level of participation is low (see figures 4.10 and 4.11). In Tehran, the voter turnout in ICC elections appeared to be even lower than the voter turnout at national level and less than the country's average (see figures 4.12 and 4.13). The insufficient and poor voter turnout in Tehran was validated by the responses provided by over 40 interviewees.

Generally, the interviewees indicated that the implementation of urban councils and particularly the operation of urban elections in Iran is a new phenomenon, further emphasising the need to build experience and knowledge about these issues. For the urban experts, expectations about the level of participation in the new system should not be too high, as the changes to local governance are still at an initial stage of implementation and

that improvements to the system will take place in a gradual manner. The same point was raised by the officials from government departments, which used a comparative approach to address the concerns over low participation in ICC elections. A state official suggested:

“In countries where local authorities have been in existence for a long period, the level of participation in elections is comparable to the voting rate for the ICC. Therefore, there is a need to have realistic expectations about the new system in Iran.” [GO-03, Interview: 29 February 2010].

He further stated that practising democracy at the local level in Iran is a new phenomenon and that the achievement of local democracy needs to be “gradual” and “timely”.

Decision-makers with positive attitudes about the ICC elections were considered important, as they are able to influence the voter turnout in ICC elections. Thus, decision-makers are capable of influencing the public’s outlook on ICC elections, as argued by two urban experts. These issues were reflected in the following statement:

“The circumstances of the ICC elections, including the manner of selecting the potential representatives and the matter of publicity, have been largely shaped and influenced by leading decision-makers.” [UE-04, Interview: 6 March 2010].

The momentum and drive with which the election processes were endowed by major actors was also highlighted as an influential aspect by two senior officials from the municipality. They stated that the manner in which organisations and decision-makers deal with the ICC elections would be an essential influence on voter turnout. Moreover, that in all presidential and parliamentary elections society has witnessed a “collective momentum”, whereby various associations including “governmental” and “non-governmental groups” are “besieged” with information and prompts about electoral procedures and issues, making society fully equipped for involvement in the election. However, this sort of “willpower

and driving-force” has not been applied to the ICC elections. This lack of momentum has greatly affected the way in which the ICC elections have been carried out, suggesting that for high-level executives the ICC elections may be considered less important than the presidential and parliamentary elections. Within this context, one of the private sector employees stated:

“Since the effectiveness and value of the council compared with the state executive (president) and legislative machinery (parliament) is insignificant in the eyes of the public, the ICC elections have not been considered as a decisive turning point, for neither the citizens nor the city.” [PS-03, Interview: 8 April 2010].

Furthermore, the issue of institutionalisation of the elections was highlighted by civic associations. Despite a decade passing since the establishment of the ICC, the bond between the city councils and the society within which they function is still weak. Part of this is due to the fact that the ICC elections have not been highlighted in the attention of the general public, and thus it was suggested that the elections should be publicised more widely. The concern here is that the existing approaches introduced by key policy-makers were incapable of stimulating “an interactive commitment” that could develop a bond between citizens and ICC elections. A member of a civic association asserted:

“While citizens on the whole felt obliged to engage with presidential elections, the understanding of the nature of their duty and obligations towards ICC elections is weaker.” [CA-03, Interview 21 February 2010].

Table 6.1 summarises the reasons behind the low level of public participation in the ICC elections. Based on interview findings, to boost the level of voter turnout in the ICC elections, the following areas should be addressed: 1) Combined Elections, 2) Enhancing Public Trust and Awareness, 3) A well-judged and fair selection of candidates, and 4) Enhancing the ICC’s institutional position.

**Table 6.1 Reasons behind the low level of voter turnout in ICC elections**

<b>Interviewee groups</b>	<b>Views</b>
<b>Urban experts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of accurate awareness among the public with regards to the ICC's position and competences</li> <li>- Politicised and ambiguous process of candidate selection</li> <li>- Lack of an inclusive approach towards selecting potential nominees for the ICC elections</li> </ul>
<b>Civic association and citizens</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of trust and confidence</li> <li>- Lack of a positive view based on previous ICC elections</li> <li>- Doubts over ICC candidates' promises during electoral campaigns</li> <li>- Concerns about candidates' competence and capability</li> <li>- Low level of publicity and advertising for elections</li> </ul>
<b>Municipality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insufficient awareness among citizens regarding their rights and status in the city (narrow public awareness )</li> <li>- Lack of momentum and commitment contributed by higher level decision-makers to the success of the ICC elections</li> <li>- Lack of a collective commitment and driving-force among various organisations and entities dealing with the ICC elections</li> </ul>
<b>Council representatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Institutional, legal and technical limitations of the ICC</li> <li>- Doubts over the competency and capability of the ICC to tackle urban challenges</li> </ul>

### 6.2.1 Combined elections

Almost 20 respondents observed that the experience of combining elections has shown a constructive effect on the level of participation to ICC elections. The view is based on the suggestion that the recent integration of the ICC elections and of the Assembly of Experts of the Leadership<sup>1</sup> election (*Majles-e Khebragan-e Rahbari*), showed a better result in terms of voter turnout, if compared with previous ICC elections. However, ten representatives from the urban experts group argued that despite some progress, that integration did not achieve an appropriate outcome in terms of voter turnout. Their concern

relates to what might be the best kind of election to combine with the ICC election.

The view that in order to increase participation, the ICC elections need to take place simultaneously with national elections (i.e. presidential and parliamentary) was echoed by five civic association and urban expert interviewees (see table 6.2). From their point of view, since the ICC elections have mainly taken place as isolated events, timing them to coincide with presidential elections could have positive results in terms of increased levels of voter participation. Supporting this argument, one of the civic association representatives stated that:

“Normally the level of participation in presidential elections is very high, so the combination of ICC with the presidential elections would be an effective mean for expanding the level of participation in the ICC elections.” [CA-05, Interview: 6 March 2010].

The view that combined elections would augment the level of participation in the ICC elections was further supported by the urban experts. They suggested that if combined, citizens will feel encouraged to get involved in the ICC election process as well as in the presidential elections, feeding on the electoral enthusiasm that already exists for the presidential elections. However, concern over the potential politicisation of the ICC elections and the change in significance which is likely to occur through the juxtaposition of the two different kinds of plebiscite was expressed by almost ten participants, in particular those representing state and urban expert interviewees. This view is based on the suggestion that, since the context and significance of presidential elections is entirely tied up with political circumstances, the combination of two elections would augment the risk of politicising the ICC elections. According to the state representatives, the ICC elections are supposed to be considered as apolitical processes. Yet the presidential elections are completely political in terms of what they involve and contribute to. Thus, according to the findings, the aforementioned combination would shift the ICC and its elections further into the realm of politics.

Similarly, it was suggested by two municipality officials that ‘local’ elections (i.e. the ICC)

and ‘national’ elections are devoid of any correlation, so it makes no sense to combine them. Their dissimilarity was also emphasised, with some considering a combination against the urban constitution. This is further reflected in the comment of one junior municipality official:

“The elections are totally dissimilar to each other in principle, application, and implementation, and each one has its own independent administrative tools.” [ME-03, Interview: 16 March 2010].

Furthermore, if combined, the electoral arrangements will be complicated for both citizens and decision-makers.

In addition to the above barriers, the interviews with state officials mentioned a technical concern about the combination of the ICC and presidential elections. According to existing fixtures, the presidential elections and the ICC elections do not follow the same timescale. Therefore, in order to synchronise the two elections, two suggestions were put forward by the respondents in support of combined ICC and presidential elections. The first suggestion was to expand the third term of office (2007-2011) of the ICC (i.e. the existing council) from four to six years. The second suggestion was to suspend the ICC for two years, subsequently ending its third period in time for the next presidential election. Yet, according to the interviewees, both proposals had controversial aspects. Officials from the Interior Ministry referred to the fact that council representatives are elected by the public for a fixed term of four years, and not for six years. An expansion of the council’s duration would therefore be in contrast with the Constitution. On this particular issue, an urban expert and a legal consultant claimed that the duration of councils in seat is not precisely indicated; and that the national parliament could perhaps define the duration and extend it if needed. The second proposal, which suggested suspending the ICC for a period of two years, has been largely criticised by almost 20 interviewees. Their criticism is best explained through the comment of one interviewee from the council:

“A proposal that considers a suspension of the ICC largely reflects the

unsteady position of the ICC in Iran, and the lack of sympathy and understanding of the significance of urban councils for society.” [CR, 03, Interview: 10 April 2010].

Similarly, the members of local councils mentioned that there is not “enough sensitivity” concerning the existence of the ICC, with its position and value considered sometimes “unsustainable”. Surprisingly, two urban experts and civic associations in support of the second proposal stated that the temporary suspension of the ICC after its third period for nearly two years would be an exceptional chance for the ICC to redefine and restructure itself according to the public’s needs and desires.

Instead of presidential elections, the combination of ICC elections with parliamentary elections was supported by almost 15 interviewees, representing in particular state and municipality interviewees. According to their view, since the parliamentary and ICC elections are both implemented at the local (city) level, their combination could be achieved in a more integrated way. Their view is based on the suggestion that if compared with the presidential elections, parliamentary elections have been accompanied by less tension and conflict. It follows that bringing parliamentary elections together with ICC elections could potentially keep the ICC free of politicised challenges. In support of this argument, two senior municipality executives emphasised that the ICC election is a local process with a local remit, which can be synchronised with other elections at the local level such as parliamentary elections. However, two urban experts were concerned about the voter turnout in parliamentary elections being somewhat limited in comparison to the presidential elections.

**Table 6.2 The strengths and weaknesses of combining ICC elections with national elections**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expands the level of participation in the ICC elections</li>   <li>- Prevents the ICC elections from taking place in isolation</li>   <li>- Increases electoral enthusiasm by building on the popularity of presidential elections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Politicisation of the ICC elections, consequently affecting the perceived significance of the resulting governance bodies</li>   <li>- Lack of correlation and integration between urban and national elections in terms of identity, values and principles</li>   <li>- Based on existing terms of office, presidential elections and ICC elections do not coincide chronologically</li> </ul>

### 6.2.2 Enhancing public awareness and trust

According to the interviewees, account needs to be taken of the relative unfamiliarity of local councils and elections of local councillors in Iranian society. While public perceptions can have a substantial impact on the level of participation, public perceptions and understanding of the ICC are to some degree restricted by this lack of familiarity. What surfaced from the data about public awareness supported the view that public understanding of the ICC and its election is insufficient. A lack of public awareness with regard to the role of citizens in local governance was also echoed in the interviews.

For 23 participants the dearth of knowledge and understanding among citizens with regard to the ICC elections would potentially be an explanation of lower participation in the ICC elections. This resonated in the interviews with representatives from the municipality officials, local councillors, citizens, urban experts and civic association groups. According to their views, in Iran people have a clear view about executive bodies (i.e. government) and even the legislative body (i.e. parliament), but not about the function and position of the urban council. A local councillor asserted: “After more than a decade from its first implementation, the majority of citizens are not really aware of the significance of the ICC election.” [LC-02, Interview: 25 February 2010]. Similarly, a senior municipality official commented that “citizens have not been informed through the standard avenues with regard to ICC performance and activities.” [ME-01, Interview: 1 February 2010]. The ambiguity

and lack of clarity over the role of the ICC also emerged from the interviews with citizens and with the professionals who spoke about them. The municipality representatives confirmed that based on their routine dealings with people, they've noticed that citizens have insufficient awareness of their rights and status, as well as of the function and status of the ICC. Ten interviewees from the citizens' group mentioned that this lack of awareness is a fundamental limitation for the ICC and a hindrance to the progress of participation in the ICC. One senior citizen stated that "the value, responsibilities and functions of the ICC are uncertain for the majority of the general public." [OC-03, Interview: 6 March 2010]. Another citizen strengthened this view by stating that "the ICC position and agenda have been missing in the city." [OC-09, Interview: 17 March 2010]. The lack of a clear distinctive sense of the division of duties between the ICC, the municipality and central government was also emphasised by the citizens interviewed. There should also be some consideration about clarifying to the public the breakdown of handling and delivery for city governance tasks between the municipality and the ICC.

The issue of citizen awareness about the ICC was further highlighted by three interviewed urban experts. Due to fact that the ICC and local governance are still in their early stages of implementation, the experts also thought most citizens are unaware of the ICC's role and capacity and of the institutional position it occupies in the city. The urban experts stated that popular expectations of the ICC far exceed its actual capacities. Thus, according to experts, the dearth of meaningful participation in the ICC elections was largely affected by a lack of "accurate awareness" among the public. They stated that limited public awareness regarding the ICC's applicability and productivity marginalised the contribution of the ICC elections in Iran. Supporting this view, an academic expert commented that:

"If the public was really informed about the ICC's influence and authority, then their expectations would not be too idealistic and impractical." [UE-01, Interview: 5 March 2010].

Furthermore, the urban experts suggested that citizens' expectations of the ICC do not

correlate with the ICC's actual weight in the city, affecting the level of public participation in the second and third period of the ICC elections. The public's expectations of the ICC are normally high, but the ICC has not been successful in meeting public needs. For the urban experts, these high expectations about the ICC are largely due to the lack of clarity and transparency about the ICC's role in the city.

Similarly, the state officials unanimously agreed that citizens wanted measures to be introduced to improve information about the ICC, through knowledge-building mechanisms at the neighbourhood scale. They stressed that public seminars and lectures in the short term and use of more current information technology in the long term regarding the ICC and participation issues would be effective measures to address awareness concerns. Training workshops to build knowledge and to strengthen the relationships between citizens and decision-makers would also be a helpful tool to boost public understanding of urban issues. The significance of neighbourhood councils (Public Forums) in the promotion of public understanding was highlighted by state officials. Seven representatives from the state and municipality recommended that information strategies should be re-established. Municipality executives stated that similarly to the municipality, the ICC should define its own innovative strategies in building public awareness. They argued that the responsibility for implementing information mechanisms in every detail falls on the municipality itself, but it should be complemented by the ICC. When these issues were discussed by the local councillors and urban experts, once again the issue of fiscal and technical limitations of the ICC emerged. The ICC's constraints were perceived as a major barrier that inhibits the ICC from developing its capacities in this regard.

A large number of the interviewees, particularly those representing civic associations, the private sector and ordinary citizens, mentioned that the ICC website is the only option available for learning about the performance of the ICC. However, an IT specialist and an expert in the municipality were concerned that deficiencies in the IT infrastructure, ability to use and access the technology, suggests that citizens' had limited access and skills to the internet. According to the urban experts, use of the internet is not widespread in Iran, and

based on this, in the short term the ICC should have more recourse to the conventional public press and local media. One interviewed urban researcher commented:

“Since the municipality recently gained advantages from the implementation of its own newspaper, magazine and virtual space, the public are well-informed with regard to municipality performance.” [UE-03, Interview: 25 February 2010].

Despite the mentioned concerns, the need to make better use of information technology was expressed in the interviews with civic associations and citizens. Operating the ICC representatives’ information websites as enhanced mechanisms to improve communications with citizens, increasing their awareness and confidence, was expressed by ten civic association and citizen representatives. According to their view, there is a necessity to advance the ICC website and individual councillors’ websites with feedback, comments and facilities, allowing the exchange of opinions with citizens.

On the matter of election, the issue of campaigning during the elections was raised by ten interviewees, particularly those representing citizens’ and civic associations. Their view is based on the suggestion that in comparison with the presidential and parliamentary elections, publicity and communication in the ICC elections is inadequate, as potential candidates are not been appropriately presented to the public. Additionally, the main media do not offer adequate attention to the ICC elections, in contrast with their coverage of the national elections. This is further reflected in the comment of one citizen and member of a civic association: “I am not convinced with the way in which the ICC elections are tackled by the main national media.” [CA-01, Interview: 3 March 2010]. However, the representatives from the state pointed out that, since the ICC elections do operate at city scale, it is impracticable for the national media to focus on the local agenda, thus on the ICC elections. For one state official the local media (i.e. Tehran TV Channel) could play a more meaningful role in this regard. Citizens who support this view criticised the existing information mechanisms which rely on conventional methods as opposed to comprehensive

informing mechanisms. One young citizen who has not yet voted in an ICC election said

“Personally in the three periods of the council elections I did not achieve the necessary level of understanding and information regarding individuals who were nominees in the ICC elections in Tehran.” [OC-10, Interview: 3 March 2010].

In addition, the interviewed citizens suggested that since Tehran is not comparable with any other city in the country in terms of size and population, choosing a candidate based on the information provided through conventional methods (i.e. the distribution of candidates’ posters around the city) is impracticable.

With regard to the public’s high expectations about the ICC, once again the matter of trust was suggested as an important factor by almost 20 interviewees. The civic associations’ interviewees referred to how trust could increase citizens’ respect for the election process. Many recommended that enhancing transparency in the ICC and its administrative undertakings in the city would also help. According to the citizens, trust in the ICC nominees is dependent on the faith given to the candidates’ promises. One retired public sector employee stated that:

“In their electoral campaigns, in order to accumulate more votes, candidates offer hollow promises based on unachievable and unrealistic pledges.” [OC-04, Interview: 4 March 2010].

Similarly, an interviewee in the private sector asserted that “what the candidates claimed in the proceedings of the ICC elections was mostly absurd.” [PS- 01, Interview: 8 April 2010] According to citizens, experts and civic associations, unfeasible promises which go far beyond the ICC’s capacities and powers, affect public trust and confidence, and function as grounds for pejorative opinions of the ICC.

For the civic associations' representatives, citizens have not held a positive assessment of previous ICCs, particularly in Tehran. Thus the ICC's reputation is being challenged by its earlier unsatisfactory performances. A senior citizen and a member of a civic association supported this view by commenting that "the lack of trust characterized by the previous ICC is a fundamental issue that prevents the public from participating in the ICC elections." [CA-05, Interview: 6 March 2010].

### **6.2.3 Well-judged and fair selection of candidates**

According to the interview findings, the ICC election procedures are not fully inclusive. Concerns over the way in which the monitoring bureau screens the registered candidates for the ICC elections were raised by interviewees. In detail, they asked "to what extent does the new form of urban governance include actors and stakeholders from a multiplicity of disciplines?" For some interviewees monitoring the capability of nominees through a political lens is rather risky and excludes a large number of applicants from a range of categories. This is further reflected in the comment from a representative from the council: "Measuring council election procedures through politicised scrutiny could negatively affect ICC objectives and principles". [CR-01, Interview: 9 April 2010]. Supporting this view, some citizens mentioned the lack of judgement in the selection of candidates for ICC elections as a discouraging fact that negatively affects participation in the election.

According to the urban experts, whilst the ICC and its elections are supposed to represent local social networks and interrelationships, the composition of the ICC largely consists of political figures, politicising therefore the ICC operations. They mentioned that according to article 28 of the ICC regulations, government and legislative bodies are excluded from participating in ICC elections. It follows that individuals who are functioning in any governmental establishment and organisation, such as employees of a juridical establishment, the national media heads and assistants, provincial governors and military heads, are not legally allowed to hold a representative position in the ICC. The urban experts argue that placing such a requirement in the regulations is supposed to prevent the ICC from being converted into a political space. Given that the ICC was designed as a

social and technical association, if it devotes a significant proportion of its capacity to influential political players, then the inclusiveness of the ICC in selecting competent candidates may be undermined, leading to the exclusion of some individuals from a range of backgrounds and professions. Two citizens who see the ICC as a technical body, expressed the unfair view that political figures must be excluded from participating in the ICC elections as nominees. However, two urban experts criticised this idea, viewing their exclusion as a “controversial proposal” which would undermine the value and meaning of governance.

According to the urban experts, employing political actors as influential voices is “beneficial” for political parties, as political “motivations” and “inspirations” are regarded as a foundation for using further political figures. When the interviewees were asked about the reasons for making considerable use of political actors, they collectively emphasised “electoral results”. According to an expert and member of a research body:

“In order to augment their chances, political parties prefer to deploy political actors in their electoral campaigns in order to win more seats in the ICC election, an effort clearly not aimed at [increasing the quality of] governance and participation.” [UE-03, Interview: 25 February 2010].

The interviewees collectively expressed that the application of monitoring must be fair and independent. Thus, the manner of implementation must ensure the validity of monitoring tasks whereby rather than submitting to the influence of particular political interests, the process must be conducted in the public interest. The importance of impartial selection of individuals without discrimination and favouritism was further expressed in the comments made by senior urban decision-makers in the municipality. They said that “to include further fresh and eager individuals into the decision-making circle, filtering methods need to be re-considered.”

Another concern put forward by the interviewees, particularly those representing citizens, civic associations and urban experts, is a lack of confidence in the candidates up for

election. According to their view, some candidates' lack of competence for the representative position is clear. A young university student who has not been interested in voting in the ICC elections said:

“Frankly I was not convinced of the ability of the candidates who were selected by the monitoring board for the final list. The list mainly consists of opinionated figures.”..... “I am not sure to what extent the nominees are fit for the position.” [OC-013, Interview: 6 March 2010].

In addition, it was emphasised that monitoring mechanisms should be enhanced in order to attract more professional actors. This is further reflected in the comment of one member of an academic society:

“In terms of quality and value some representatives are unfit for this level of decision-making duties, thus the task is heavy for some of them.” [UE-05, Interview: 7 March 2010].

He further added:

“In the first period of the council the arrangements were messy and immature, in the second and third periods the council has to some degree succeeded in magnetising a number of professionals from various disciplines.”

In addition, concerns about an insufficient level of awareness with regard to urban issues among the ICC representatives were reflected in the interviews with members of the private sector:

“Practically speaking, the members in charge of the ICC mostly lack sufficient understanding, knowledge and experience in urban policy-making.” [PS-02, Interview: 9 April 2010].

Similarly, almost 15 urban experts, members of civic associations, municipality and state representatives, suggested that the way of assessing the competence of ICC representatives must be re-evaluated by the monitoring board. According to their responses, there is a strong preference for a mechanism that is based on guidelines and codes instead of narrow political interests. This should include the wherewithal to recruit a variety of individuals and disciplines for the purposes of election. These interviewees criticised the existing criteria, which are based on a number of general competences without more detailed requirements. According to their view, since the council handles various technical and legal responsibilities in the city and has consequently been confronted with matters from different areas of expertise such as transportation, planning, environment and health, there is a need for a detailed and comprehensive set of criteria for including more professional actors in the council's composition. They further argued that this would enhance the progress of governance.

#### **6.2.4 Enhancing the ICC's institutional position**

The findings in this section mainly reflect the technical and structural limitations of the ICC, which were broadly discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter 5). Based on the interview findings, the ICC's legal and technical capability largely contributes to the level of electoral participation. In this respect, once again concerns over the ICC's ability and competence were put forward by the interviewees. What emerged from the data gathered suggests that to enhance the level of participation in the ICC elections, the meaning, role, influence and weight of the ICC needs to be made clearer and perhaps upgraded. According to the responses provided by almost 30 participants, the existing deficiencies in the ICC's governance practices function as a barrier to public participation in the ICC. As discussed in section 6.4.2, while some citizens' expectations far exceed the capacity of the ICC, other citizens harbour great scepticism with regard to the ICC's competence. This is based on the suggestion that citizens are not convinced of the competency and capabilities of the ICC in solving urban challenges. Citizens, civic associations, private sector and expert representatives confirmed the fact that as the ICC has limited weight and power in the city, it can present no answer to most concerns raised. A citizen employed in the education

sector pointed out that:

“With the current arrangements, despite the councillors’ aptitudes and tendencies to respond to the issues, the capacity of the council to deliver governance is insufficient.” [OC-07, Interview: 7 March 2010].

This view is further reflected in the comment by an academic expert:

“The absence of effective voice, decision-making influence and weight exercised by urban associations and the ICC in particular on key issues in the city has an impact on the public’s expectations. This shapes the public’s beliefs regarding the worth and value of ICC elections.” [UE-04, Interview: 6 March 2010].

Similar views on the public’s lack of belief and confidence were supplied by citizen interviewees, who were asked to identify the reasons for the lack of engagement. A citizen commented “I am not convinced about the seriousness of the ICC”. Another citizen stated that since the ICC contribution is limited to some immaterial regulation-based functions, its meaning has been marginalized in cities and the association’s credibility has therefore suffered: “I would not like my vote to be wasted on an institution that is mostly insignificant across city management procedures” said one citizen, which also stressed the need to empower the ICC by offering it further responsibilities.

It was also mentioned by civic association members that the ICC’s value is undermined by the general public because of its inadequacies, given that the public does not respect a body with “partially constrained” institutional power. One interviewed member of a civic association who works in the environment sector said: “I am not convinced that the ICC affects city governance to a significant degree.” [CA-01, Interview: 3 March 2010].

Another member of a charity-orientated NGO stated:

“Since Tehran is the centre of political and economic activities [in Iran, in

that city] and the ICC's performance has been marginalised by high level decision-making, its independence has largely been destabilised by interference. In fact citizens do not view the ICC as a determining and influential association and the ICC's performance has been overshadowed by various higher level organisations." [CA-01, Interview: 3 March 2010].

In the same way, another doubt expressed by three local councillors concerns the degree of effectiveness of the ICC in its contribution to governance. According to their view, since the ICC's performance has effectively contributed to reducing citizen's concerns, the public's experience about the ICC has induced a degree of scepticism. This view was based on the argument that the ICC is a deficient institution in the city, with a more ceremonial than practical position. This is because within the existing centralised pattern the ICC has not been offered voice in various city issues. Furthermore, because of its limitations the ICC is incapable of establishing an effective voice in the city, affecting the public's view on the significance of the ICC elections.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed and analysed the data collection by the study on voter turnout in the ICC elections. On the one hand, the chapter characterises the key issues with regard to voter turnout, and on the other hand it provides interviewees with explanations and solutions to overcome the existing dearth in voter turnout. It is clear that the urban elections on their own are supposed to function as the key tool for the reform, transformation and decentralization of responsibilities, tasks and for the diffusion of power to local areas and citizens, within the governance transition process. For most civic association, citizen and private sector interviewees, urban elections offer a space to include the public in governance exercises. Despite introducing a level of representative democracy, the new arrangements have failed to fully support participatory governance. What emerged from the data gathered through the interviews supports the view that public participation in urban elections has been unable to reach a satisfactory level. To address the deficiency in voter

turnout four key areas were identified: 1- Combining elections; 2- enhancing the public's awareness and trust in the ICC; 3- a well-judged selection of ICC candidates and 4- Enhancing the ICC's institutional position through practical measures for empowering the ICC.

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<sup>1</sup>**Assembly of Experts of the Leadership of Iran** (*Majles-e Khobregan* or *Majles-e Khebregan-e Rahbari*), also translated as **Council of Experts**, is a deliberative body of 86 **Mujtahids** (Islamic scholars) that is charged with electing the **Supreme Leader of Iran** and supervising his activities. Members of the assembly are elected from a government-screened list of candidates by direct public vote to eight-year terms (see [www.Majlesekhubregan.ir](http://www.Majlesekhubregan.ir)).

## **Chapter 7: Selecting the Mayor**

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## 7.0 Introduction

As mentioned in previous chapters, to date, Iran has experienced two modes of mayoral selection. Prior to the governance shift in 1997, conventional mayoral selection was based on a top-down approach through appointment by the State Secretary. In the pre-shift pattern the functions and authorities of mayor were also controlled and monitored mainly by the central government, and the municipality was considered as a dependent central government sub- entity. Following the shift and the ICC Act, code 71, the responsibility for selecting the mayor moved to the ICC. In the existing system, the selection and dismissal of the mayor is considered to be a key ICC duty. The mayor is selected for a period of four years and should not hold the position of an ICC representative. According to this system, following the selection of the mayor by the ICC, for the cities with populations greater than 200,000, the mayor must receive the consent of the Ministry of State. In smaller cities, the mayor must receive the consent from the provincial governors.

Recently, a proposal has been put before parliament, according to which mayors are to be selected through an electoral process in cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants. This proposal still processing its way through parliament and the way of selecting a mayor as yet remains unchanged. This chapter discusses the issues that concern the process of mayoral selection by looking at the ways and means through which mayors can be selected. The interview findings show a variety of opinions about the most appropriate method for selecting a mayor. Interviewees' responses are summarised in Table 7-1 and can be grouped into the following categories:

1. Selection of Mayor by the State Secretary (Previous Method)
2. Selection of Mayor by the ICC (Existing Method)
3. Selection of Mayor through the electoral process and direct public participation (Potential Method)

**Table 7.1 Preferences for methods of selecting a Mayor, based on interviewees' responses**

<b>Interview Groups</b>	<b>Direct Election</b>	<b>ICC</b>	<b>Central Government</b>
Citizens	19	3	3
Civic Associations	4	1	0
Private Sector	4	0	1
Neighbourhood Councils	2	3	0
City Council	0	5	0
Urban Experts	4	1	0
Central Government	2	2	1
Municipality	5	0	0
Overall	40	15	5

### **7.1 Selection of Mayor by the Secretary of State (Pre-shift Method)**

The selection of the mayor by the Secretary of State is the method that was in place prior to the shift. It was rejected by 55 interviewees, representing all groups. According to the interview findings, this method was bureaucratically involved, centrally managed and politicised. In addition, the old method is viewed as a step backwards that undermines governance principles and values. Notwithstanding these objections, five respondents stressed that the old method had some social benefits. They define the previous method as a “solid, integrated and steady” form of urban management in which the monitoring process and exercises were well established. They further argued that the method offered an independent mode of decision-making that excluded interference from external actors.

Other views in support of the previous method were based on considering the existing tensions between the municipality and the ICC. According to two citizens, the conflict between the municipality and the ICC has an important impact on the municipality's performance. It was argued that even the divergences between ICC members negatively

influenced the quality of governance and supervisory functions in the city. It was argued that the process of selecting a mayor following the existing method is time-consuming and lengthy. A citizen and employee in public services stated:

“Currently the number of cities that are without a mayor has exceeded 100. The average time that each mayor is in municipal office is only one year and a few months. This is insufficient for any development to take place.” [OC 014, Interview: 11 April 2010].

By contrast, under the previous system where the mayor was selected through the state ministry, a city lacking a mayor was a very rare phenomenon, demonstrating the need for more certainty and firmness. Another concern expressed by citizens was disagreement towards the authorisation of regulations, planning and development agendas, which are seen to be affecting the development and construction agenda in the city.

In a similar way, the financial and fiscal weaknesses that exist in city councils resonated in the citizens’ interviews. The traditional method was “practically effective and financially sufficient”, asserted a citizen working in a small local business [PS 05, Interview: 12 April 2010]. According to two citizen and private sector interviewees, under the existing system the municipality has been largely independent from central government in terms of drawing its financial revenues from taxes and levies. However, the revenues derived in this way have been unsteady and uncertain and on many occasions the municipality has faced a budget deficit. In addition the state has no obligation to endorse the city’s agenda. This therefore affects the course of development in the city. However, under the preceding method where the mayor was appointed by the Ministry of State, the central government was committed to fully support the chosen mayor both technically and fiscally. Thus financial features were effectively sustained in the city. In contrast and with regard to financial issues, the experts emphasised the financial autonomy of the municipality as a strength which could uphold the self-sufficiency of local government.

Surprisingly, four interviewees from the state officials and executives group showed no interest and enthusiasm over the previous method where the mayor was selected by the central government. Only one of the interviewed state officials from the Council and

Municipal Office in the Ministry of State supported the conventional method. Interviewees' support for the former system appeared to be linked to current weaknesses and delays being experienced with the implementation of city projects such as the metro, the deficiency in municipal accountability, tensions between the municipality and the ICC, and the mismanagement of fiscal resources.

## **7.2 Selection of Mayor through the ICC (existing pattern)**

The selection of the mayor through the ICC (existing pattern) was supported by almost 15 interviewees, particularly those representing the council associations groups. In general, two factors were put forward by the interviewees who support the existing method as adequate for the selection of mayor: 1) It has strengthened the position of the ICC and the state of accountability in the municipality, and 2) It allows for a proper choice of candidates and avoids the politicisation of the municipality.

### **7.2.1 Strengthened position of the ICC and the state of accountability in the municipality**

In contrast to the municipality administrators, none of the official participants from ICC associations showed any support regarding the proposal for direct election in the selection of a mayor, due to the fact that attention and respect for the ICC's voice and decisions is thought likely to be diminished via the authorisation of the new proposal. Interviewees mainly argued that despite the strengths behind the public voting method for mayoral selection, there was a consensus that the implementation of the new proposal would negatively affect the ICC's function and position as the key symbol of governance shifts in Iran. By the same token, the three local councillors suggested that if the duty of appointing the mayor were eliminated, the ICC would be at considerable risk of losing some of its value. Their view is based on the suggestion that by transferring the duty of electing the mayor to the public through the operation of the electoral scheme, ultimately the ICC's policymaking and monitoring roles would also be removed. This would erode the

effectiveness and usefulness of the ICC and, according to their view, the organisation would be considered to be weak and passive. Two representatives from council institutions viewed the scheme as a gradual expunging of the ICC. They argued that any proposal about mayoral selection that does not take the ICC's role into account would diminish even its minor authority and influencing powers. Thus in a future phase the ICC could be considered a redundant and meaningless institution.

Comments from municipality officials mainly criticised the abovementioned view. As senior officials from the municipality stated, the function of the ICC cannot be summarised in terms of mayoral selection only, and it cannot be assumed that the ICC's existence will end with the implementation of the direct election method. They unanimously argued that the monitoring duty is the main function of the ICC and will remain so even if the electoral proposal were to be implemented. By contrast, two interviewed expert and civic association representatives suggested that, in constitutional terms, the selection of the mayor is not the key duty of the ICC; it nevertheless plays a significant role in shaping and forming the ICC's other functions. As a result, if the ICC were to lose this role, it is likely that its monitoring role would also be undermined, leading to failures of accountability and responsiveness in the municipality.

The issue of monitoring resonated particularly in the interviews with the central government officials. Two state official interviewees from the Social Department and the Organization of Municipalities confirmed that the only body in the existing structure that is able to accurately perform the monitoring tasks associated with urban management and administration is the ICC, which through the implementation of the electoral proposal would lose its screening capability. According to their view during the previous state of administration (pre- 1997) financial concerns were highlighted in the municipality, while under the current structure the ICC has adequately succeeded in its financial and fiscal monitoring mission, without interfering in political matters. Furthermore it was claimed that the state of accountability and transparency in the urban administration would be affected due to the weakening of the monitoring capability and capacity of the ICC under the direct election method. This was further reflected in the comment of one state official:

“The selection of a mayor through citizens’ contribution widely relies on the public’s vote and power, instead of the ICC votes, which would put the accountability and responsibility of the municipality at risk.” [GO 05, Interview: 17 April 2010]

He concluded by stating:

“The mayor would simply not be answerable to the monitoring bodies due to citizens’ supporting assumptions.”

Similar views were echoed by three citizens. According to their view, despite the enhancement of participation levels, the proposal would challenge the monitoring concept and screening tasks in the city. They argued that the shift would affect the manner in which the interactions between the ICC and the municipality have been established, diluting the existing transparency and confidence in the municipality. Citizens mentioned the process of dismissing the mayor under the existing structure as being accomplished through a certain set of procedures by the ICC. However, following a participatory method of removing the mayor from office would not be an easy task, even in the case of misconduct.

### **7.2.2 Proper choice and avoiding the politicisation of the municipality**

For seven interviewees representing council associations, the direct election of the mayor may enhance democracy in the first instance, but the method may not assure an apposite and fit choice of incumbent for the mayoral post. According to this view, since the selection of the mayor is a specialised and focused exercise and not a political practice, it needs to be undertaken competently and with expertise. It was suggested that the selection criteria would be undermined by insignificant and irrelevant considerations if the direct participation method were implemented; thus direct election may result in an “inappropriate” and “unsuitable” outcome. Their view is based on the suggestion that public knowledge and understanding about the competence of potential candidates in large cities is limited, making the selection of the mayor a decision-making process that is lacking in “confidence” and “certainty”.

However, three urban experts criticised the view that the “public is incapable” of selecting a mayor by stating that “considering the public’s collective willpower and decision through the lens of its deficiencies is very sensitive”. Furthermore, they suggested that if the public is competent to participate in appointing the most significant executive actor in the country (i.e. the president), then they should be considered to have the ability and capability of electing their own mayors, as well. According to the experts, the public selection of the mayor can have a positive influence on the competence and capability of the mayor elected, offering a competitive arena, wherein citizens are able to evaluate the appropriateness and suitability of candidates and then decide on the best alternative. However, under the existing form (selection by the ICC) there is no opportunity for comparing and monitoring the suitability of individuals. Thus the ICC bases its selections on its own interests and tendencies, rather than using transparent eligibility criteria and measures to single out an individual for the position. By setting electoral criteria and conditions for accepting mayoral nominees, the process would result in more competent mayors. One member of an academic association stated:

“In the existing system there is no sign of competition or even comparison for the selection of mayor, as the ICC selects the mayor according to its own advantages and circumstances.” [UE 04, Interview: 6 March 2010].

Supporting the argument a young citizen asserted, “I think the view that considers the public’s sense and decisions to be reckless is illogical and irrational” [OC 08, Interview: 10 April 2010]. Similarly, two members of civic associations, perhaps somewhat tendentially assuming that a more participatory process could result in more competent mayors, criticise the current method because under it, the ICC has to some extent failed to identify competent individuals to undertake the mayoral role in a large number of cities, and in many cases four to five mayors have been appointed during one period of the ICC.

A different view that was favoured regarding the ICC’s existing method of mayoral selection was expressed by the participants, including four respondents particularly representing the Secretary of State’s office, citizens and civic association. According to their view, the existing method does not undermine public competence. However, because

of their understanding and knowledge about the credibility of actors, the ICC representatives are able to come to a better decision compared with the general public. In addition, since the ICC consists of trusted professionals and elites who are aware of the aptitudes of potential individuals eligible for the mayoral position, the credibility of their decision is ensured. As one of the administrators from the Secretary of State's office stressed:

“The ICC's performance in appointing the mayor for the city has been admirable; thus the ICC committed itself to select the most appropriate option for mayoral position, because of their needs for public support.” [GO-01, Interview: 4 March 2010].

Another concern put forward by the eight interviewees representing council associations is that the electoral proposal could drive the municipality into a political focus and context. Thus, the risk of shifting the significance of the mayor's role from a specialised position into a political position emerges alongside the introduction of mayoral elections. They argued that the electoral proposal goes against the attempts made recently to redefine the municipality's structure and practices away from politicised approaches. Since the mayoral elections and their procedures are likely to be fully politicised in Iran, the risk of forfeiting the municipality's main core value would be anticipated as a result of the electoral approach.

Supporting this argument, an expert confirmed that mayoral elections are not the only type of process esteemed to politicise the system in Iran. According to his view, the politicisation of the municipality has already had a negative effect on its ability to attract public support as well as trust and confidence. They believe that the municipality is the key urban institution and it needs to isolate itself from current political contests. The possible politicisation of the municipality following the implementation of the direct election scheme was also emphasised by a respondent from the civic associations. He referred to the accumulation of political power which may result through the implementation of the new proposal that would distance the municipality from its core functions and duties as a social focus; and may also exacerbate frictions that exist between the municipality, the ICC and

central government. He argued that the proposal would engender a challenged and competitive space, unfavourable to positive interactions between the state, the ICC and the municipality.

The weakness of the proposed direct election method is that it would not contribute much support to the main principles of the existing governance set up. This is identified by the interviewees in Table 7.2.

**Table 7.2 Weaknesses of direct election of mayor**

- The risk of losing the value and weakening the position of the ICC
- Failure of accountability and responsiveness in the municipality
- Number of elections in Iran
- Respect for the ICC's decisions will be decreased due to the authorisation of the new proposal
- Inability of the method to fully support governance values, principals and exercises in Iran (Instead of introducing a new space for representative democracy, there is a need to focus on the issue of participatory democracy in city)
- Questions over the impartiality of the monitoring mechanism throughout electoral procedures (Doubts regarding the fairness and trustworthiness of the mechanism for selecting potential candidates proposed for the mayoral position)
- Considering elections in terms of fashionable, rather than practical, issues.
- The risk of an inapposite and unfit choice compared with the ICC representatives' selections (with reference to the need for the incumbent of the mayoral post to act competently and expertly rather than making general public contributions)
- The risk of shifting the significance of the mayor's role from a specialised position to a political position

### **7.3 Selection of Mayor through Direct Election**

According to another tranche of interviewees, an electoral process with direct public participation would be the most appropriate method for selecting a mayor. This view was supported by 40 interviewees representing experts, civic associations, citizens and municipality officials. The reasons underlying their support for this method are: 1) the

promotion of good governance principles and devolution, which was particularly recognised by citizens, private sector, civic association and expert interviewees; and 2) the need to give more weight to the mayor's position, as particularly suggested by the municipality officials (see Table 7.3).

However, the interviewees acknowledged that this approach to selecting the mayor is not without its constraints. For ten interviewees, representing experts and civic association groups, the details of the current proposal for direct mayoral election are considered as deficient and needing to be complemented by supportive measures. In addition, the need to implement an impartial and fair mechanism for selecting the potential candidates for the mayoral position was emphasised. This is based on the suggestion that similar to the ICC electoral process, candidates for the mayoral position with no basis tend to be excluded from the process, prompting the need for the nominee selection process to be more "fair and inclusive". One of the urban experts and a member of an academic society expressed the following view:

"If the direct participation of citizens for mayoral election is not accompanied by an impartial monitoring mechanism and a sound competitive pattern, the participation in the mayoral election will in itself be insufficient." [UE 02, Interview: 22 February 2010].

Similar views were expressed by civic associations and citizens. Two citizens active in civic associations further suggested that the election of a mayor by citizens must not be a 'fashionable action towards enhancing governance'. It should rather be a 'practical step' for listening to citizens' voices and for facilitating governance processes in the city. A university student mentioned that the criteria for accepting or rejecting candidates should be "transparent" and "traceable", "clear" and "understandable".

The risk of interference by the central government into urban issues due to its role in placing restrictions on the exercise of governance was highlighted in the direct participation method by municipality officials. As a municipality executive stated, according to the proposal for direct election of the mayor, in any case where the elected mayor must be dismissed or discharged, the state secretary would be responsible for appointing an acting

mayor until the new elections have taken place. This could potentially therefore cause central government to place some impediments on urban decision-making. In the interviews, such a view was expressed by the expert and legal advisor who argued that, “in the direct participation method after the dismissal of the mayor the secretary of state would be held accountable for the appointment of the new mayor” [UE 05, Interview: 7 March 2010]. It was also stressed that by accepting the proposal the interference of the state in urban issues would once again be legitimatised. However, interestingly it was suggested by a senior official from the municipality that in order to avoid the interference of any third party, the mechanism must include the condition that parallel to the election of mayor, his deputy be simultaneously elected through direct participation, so that in any case of resignation or dismissal, the deputy can act as a substitute.

**Table 7.3 Strengths of the direct participation method for selecting a mayor**

<b>Interviewee Groups</b>	<b>Views</b>
<b>Experts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limits the influence of political lobbying, as outsiders can play a strong and direct role in appointing the mayor</li> <li>• enhances the level of trust and confidence in mayoral selection</li> <li>• presents a realistic means of shifting power and responsibilities from the centre to society</li> <li>• can prevent the mayor from being ejected from his post on the basis of political, tactical and even ethnic dissimilarities</li> <li>• offers a competitive arena, where citizens are able to measure the appropriateness and suitability of candidates</li> </ul>
<b>Civic Associations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offers a fresh space for citizens' participation</li> <li>• enhances citizens' weight within the wider body of stakeholders in urban governance</li> <li>• offers a significant and permanent role to the citizens</li> <li>• enhances the independence and autonomy of the municipality (local government)</li> <li>• enhances cooperation and interaction between citizens and urban decision-makers</li> </ul>
<b>Citizens</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• allows citizens' voices to be heard and taken into account more visibly</li> <li>• prolongs and accomplishes the spirit of the first urban governance act (i.e. participation in the ICC election) in 1998</li> <li>• ensures that the public's interests are taken into account</li> <li>• reduces ambiguity and uncertainty with regard to the process of appointing a mayor</li> <li>• limits favoritism and discrimination in the selection of a mayor</li> </ul>
<b>Municipal Officials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gives greater weight to the position of the mayor, particularly in terms of public confidence</li> <li>• limits the interference of the ICC into the municipality's executive authority.</li> <li>• enhances the weight, influence and credibility of the municipality among key governance stakeholders</li> </ul>

### 7.3.1 Good governance principles and devolution

According to the interviewees who supported the direct election of the mayor (i.e. representatives of citizens, the private sector, civic associations and expert groups), direct public participation must be taken into consideration in order to boost the existing city

governance machinery in Iran. Their view is based on the suggestion that the mayoral election would be the second major practical measure subsequent to the shift in 1997 that furthers decentralisation and devolution at city level; it is a measure that can be seen to support and complement the first move towards participatory city governance in the form of the ICC election.

The view that mayoral selection through citizen participation could strengthen the value and principles of governance was supported by private sector interviewees. They argued that the public's direct contribution could enhance "accountability" and "responsiveness" in the municipality, in contrast to the existing system where the municipality is accountable to the ICC. However, in the proposed scheme, wherein the mayor is appointed by the public, the municipality might be expected to be more openly and directly accountable to the citizens. This is anticipated to bring to bear greater pressure on the mayor to act for the benefit of the public.

In the same way, the electoral process offers the opportunity to affect the way in which power is distributed in the city. According to the civic associations, this participative approach not only enhances the responsiveness of the municipality, but it also promotes the weight of citizens' role within the wider group of urban stakeholders. One member of a civic association commented:

"The public's position in the main body of the stakeholders is insignificant within the recent decision-making pattern. By changing the manner of mayoral selection, the citizens' will power and capacity will be considered as the key dynamic in the city; thus this proposal would offer an influential and permanent role to the citizens." [CA 02, Interview: 25 February 2010].

Another member of the civic association group argued that this may help citizens to be heard and taken into account within the decision-making machinery.

A total of 19 citizens unanimously agreed that they wished to have the right to select the mayor. It was argued that the appointment of the mayor by the ICC did not underwrite the public's rights. According to five interviewed citizens, as citizens have only limited

influence over appointing the mayor through the ICC, the manner in which the mayor is selected does not guarantee that citizens' interests will be taken into account. In addition, the selection of mayor through the ICC seems likely to respond to the influence of political or other privileged interests, as opposed to public interests. A graduate student criticised the current scheme by stating that although the import of citizens' views is taken into account in the input phase of the current mayoral selection method, citizens are excluded from both the process and outcome phases. He thus implies that citizens make no contribution to the procedures and results of the mayoral selection process within the ICC. According to the citizens interviewed, the way in which the mayor has been selected by the ICC is not inclusive and does not ensure equality. However, they believe that the direct voting system designed for the selection of mayor will be devoid of favouritism and discrimination regarding disadvantaged and marginalised people, and that all socio-economic groups will be offered an equal opportunity to engage in the task.

For citizens, a direct public contribution to the selection of a mayor would be a useful tool for limiting the over-politicised and partial decision-making in the ICC. A representative from the citizens group working in the education sector asserted that:

“Regardless of the strengths of the individual selected for the mayoral post, in all three periods that the ICC appointed figures to the mayoral position, decisions were commonly politicised, even where the technical competences of the individual in question were taken into account.” [OC 012, Interview: 13 April 2010].

Similarly, four experts confirmed that under the existing system, political lobbies and outsiders play a major role in appointing the mayor. They go on to suggest that the existing method may play a role in inhibiting trust in the process of mayoral selection. For experts and citizens, one of the advantages expected from the electoral method is the enhancement of the level of trust and confidence in the selection of a mayor. One expert observed that:

“There is no doubt over-confidence in the majority of ICC members. However, the ICC should accept the fact that the processes and

circumstances of selection of the mayor are ambiguous and unclear for the general public.” [UE 03, Interview: 01: 5 March 2010].

A similar comment was made by a pensioner from the citizen stakeholders group, stating:

“I have participated in three ICC elections; however, I am not aware of and convinced by the procedures and circumstances that lead to the decision on the mayoral position.” [OC, 015, Interview: 13 April 2010].

He further stated that since the process is not transparent and comprehensible for citizens, it is thus exploited by political groups and lobbies.

In similar accounts, the majority (three) of officials from the state department suggested that the electoral method is good and would enhance participation as the key constituent of governance, along with supporting the democracy at the city level. However, two representatives from the state offices were sceptical towards the electoral method for the selection of mayor. Thus, there were discrepancies among views particularly those held by the state interviewees. One government official from the Organization of Municipalities and Rural Administration (O.M.R.A.) commented:

“Participation in mayoral elections will not automatically lead to enhanced governance in the city. In spite of experiencing participation in ICC elections for almost a decade, I do not personally believe that electoral participation constructively affects the manner in which the city is being governed. Instead of introducing a new space for representative democracy, there is a need to focus on the issue of participatory democracy in the city through neighbourhood councils and CBOs.” [GO, 02, Interview: 28 February 2010].

Another concern put forward by two state representatives is the number of elections in Iran. According to their view, the excessive number of elections fulfilling different purposes in Iran (i.e. presidential, parliamentary, Assembly of Experts of the Leadership and ICC) – coming to 30 elections in 30 years – have inflicted deleterious consequences on the country. Elections impose substantial expenses on the nation. One state official commented that “the number of elections is absolutely soaring in Iran. Thus I believe the expenses and

tensions have exhausted the society and it is suffering from the electoral process” [GO-01, Interview: 4 March 2010].

As discussed earlier, prior to the implementation of the electoral method, certain supportive adaptations would be required. According to state officials the need for structural preparation and legislative reform both within the ICC and the municipality, based on the government and parliament interaction model, would need to be taken into consideration in relation to the implementation of the electoral method. They suggested that, similar to the apportionment of roles between central government and parliament whereby the latter is responsible for approval and dismissal of key officers in the executive, if the mayor were to be elected through direct participation, the approval and dismissal of his deputies and key administrators would need to be handled by the ICC.

### **7.3.2 Enhancement of the mayoral position**

All of the interviewed municipality senior officials preferred the mayor to be elected by citizens instead of being selected by the councillors. Meanwhile, interviewees from the citizens, civic association, private sector and expert groups also supported mayoral selection through the electoral system as a realistic measure in shifting power and responsibilities from elected elites to wider society. For municipality executives, the issue of uncertainty and lack of confidence regarding mayors under the existing system was a significant factor in considering the electoral method as the most appropriate means. It was argued by municipality officials that the selection of mayor via the ICC can have a negative influence on the mayor’s performance, and might be a factor in the dismissal of the mayors. This lack of trust is said to affect the process of administration, planning and development in cities. According to their view the fear of being removed from office by the ICC made the mayoral position “unsteady” and “trembling”; thus making mayors less effective and efficient actors in the existing format. Furthermore the ICC’s monitoring role with regard to the municipality means the imposition of certain policies and procedures on the latter, based on forces and pressures from inside and outside the ICC. One municipality director commented, in support of the electoral proposal, that the election of the mayor through

direct participation would reduce the lack of trust in the municipality's key decision-makers. Thus the mayor, his deputies and key urban decision-makers will encounter a better sense of "security in the role" and a more "consistent" reception in delivering governance tasks.

In the same way, according to two expert interviewees, the issue of dismissing mayors because of "disagreement" and "disparity" between the ICC and the municipality is a widespread concern. The majority of experts believe that in many cases the perception that mayors can be dismissed on the basis of "political", "tactical" and even "ethnic" dissimilarities, rather than on purely "practical" and "technical" grounds, detracts from the value of the ICC being the body that chooses the mayor. By implementing the direct election proposal, the mayor could not be removed without any convincing reason. It was also suggested that the responsibility for the mayor's dismissal needs to be shifted to the Resolution Council. As a third party it can secure the mayoral position on the one hand and avoid claims that no valid principles underlay a dismissal on the other hand.

In the same way the issue of the ICC's interference in the municipality's legal and institutional framework was stressed by the respondents who were in favour of a direct election scheme. For instance, two senior officials from the municipality referred to the risk of converting the ICC's legal oversight role into a source of interfering behaviour. For example, it was argued that the interference of the ICC into the municipality's executive functions and interfering in the dismissal and appointment of the city executives (i.e. mayor's deputies and city directors) within municipalities is a common issue within the existing system.

According to two representatives of civic associations the idea behind the new proposal is not merely about limiting the interference of the ICC into the municipality's internal affairs; it is also about enhancing the independence of the municipality. They argued that since the municipality depends on the ICC for many issues, the ICC regularly interferes in the municipality's internal affairs under the current structure, a pattern of interactions that complicates the issue of the municipality's autonomy. The electoral method would therefore support organisational sovereignty and autonomy in the municipality. Similarly, it

was highlighted by municipality officials that the weight of the municipality among key governance stakeholders would be enhanced through implementation of the new scheme. For municipality representatives, the municipality has insufficient institutional power to implement its policies and strategies under the existing system. However, public participation in electing its mayor could offer more weight, credit and influence to the municipality, thus resulting in a better balance of power in favour of the municipality in the cases of disagreement between the municipality and the ICC or the central government. As a senior member of the municipality stated:

“Generally people’s votes in Iran extensively offer a sort of credibility and weight to the elected organisation body and to the individual who leads the machinery. The citizens’ willpower provides bargaining and negotiation power to the municipality in any situations where it is challenged.” [ME 05, Interview: 16 March 2010].

It was also highlighted by interviewees representing the civic associations and citizens groups that the relationships between citizens and urban executives would be enhanced if the mayor were selected through the direct participation method. A member of the NGO group mentioned that this could result in municipal decisions being more respected and valued by citizens. Given that the mayor’s power and authority would be accredited by the public, it could also result in enhanced responsiveness in the municipality. Similarly, two members of the civic association group asserted that the mayoral election will distinguish and promote interaction between citizens and urban decision-makers and executives, which could in turn build cooperation and partnership.

In the same way the experts suggested that the citizens’ responsibility and trust could be promoted in relation to the municipality and mayor, enhancing further cooperation between citizens and urban decision-making. Under the current system, the ICC election is regarded as the only space for public contributions to urban governance. Accordingly, the public have been largely isolated from the urban decision-making process. Moreover, it was suggested that the scheme could prevent further social segregation, exclusion and

distancing of citizens from urban decision-making processes because their power would have to be taken into consideration in the appointment of the most important post in the city

Two experts who agreed with the direct election proposal spoke about the contradictions that exist within the ICC's responsibilities. They referred to the fact that while the ICC has been functioning as a legislator and policy-maker, it has also been delivering monitoring. Through direct participation for mayoral selection, the ICC would remain the primary entity of scrutiny in the city, but its policymaking duties would be shifted fully to the municipality. According to the experts, under the system currently in place, the ICC's capacity and authority is wasted and overshadowed because it is overwhelmed by issues of mayoral selection, while actually the ICC's powers should be focused on key guidelines with the purpose of fostering development and planning agendas in the city. Despite this, the ICC's capacity and authority has been overused on the subject of its mayoral assignment. As an expert respondent from an academic society pointed out:

“The selection of the mayor has been overemphasised in the ICC; as such, some councillors assume that the selection is the only obligation and duty that should be addressed by the ICC.” [UE 03, Interview: 25 February 2010].

He further commented that it might be problematic to engage the ICC further in monitoring, policy-making exercises and city development agendas and also held that the duty of mayoral selection should be transferred to the citizens.

## **7.4 Conclusion**

What is remarkable to consider from the mayoral selection debates is that the majority of interviewees, particularly the citizens, civic associations and urban experts, were optimistic and encouraging about the direct election method and assumed that this would contribute to public confidence in the urban governance process. The mayoral election provides ways and means for democracy and decentralisation to take place. It was argued that these advantages can be exercised for the benefit of urban governance. They would overcome

many of the trust and confidence related challenges that have arisen through the previous and current methods of mayoral selection. Similarly, it would help to enhance the mayor's status and weight compared with key stakeholders, therefore the urban machinery would speed up through the implementation of the proposal. The ICC frequently takes an interfering role with regard to the municipality's missions. This compromises the independence of the municipality. The proposal would thus shore up the municipality's autonomy. However, as mentioned in section 7.2.1, the implementation of the proposal could also diminish the power of the ICC, raising issues about accountability.

According to the current system, the municipality is committed to being liable and accountable to the ICC and the public. However, by transferring the selection of the mayor from the ICC to the direct electoral method, it is hard to believe that the municipality remains to the same extent an accountable institution regarding its decisions. The implementation of mayoral selection through the electoral method must therefore include and redefine a full account of the ICC as a complementary space for participation and accountability. It must be noted that the ICC has been handling the task of monitoring and supervising the municipality; thus any proposal with regard to direct election of the mayor must take into consideration the monitoring, accountability and transparency issues that are associated with the declining position of the ICC.

In general two difficulties with regard to the selection of the mayor through an electoral process were raised. These included the possibility that citizen's choice of mayor might be inappropriate compared with the mayor selected through the ICC; and the politicisation of the municipality following direct participation. It was argued that since the selection of the mayor is a specialised task, rather than a political exercise, citizens may fail to select the right individual. In the existing method the ICC, which consists of a number of professional elected actors, will thus to some extent assure the suitability of the person chosen for the mayoral position. Also it was argued that the elections and their circumstances could convert the municipality from a social actor into a politicised node, thus removing it from its core values and guidelines. Finally, the selection of the mayor by the Ministry of the Interior (previous method) was not supported by the majority of interviewees. The method was considered centralised, top-down and against good governance principles.

## **Chapter 8 Neighbourhood Councils (public forums) and Civic Associations**

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## 8.0 Introduction

In 1999, following the governance shift and the inception of the ICC, the necessity of forming a mechanism for participation at the lower (neighbourhood) level was appreciated by decision-makers. Based on this, the machinery of governance committed itself to launching Neighbourhood Council institutions (*Anjomanhaye Showrayari Mahallat*), also known as Public forums. Their aim is to function as the primary level of urban decision making in Iran; they are conceived as non-governmental institutions that are decentralised, apolitical, participatory and voluntary. According to Article 71 of the Islamic City Councils Act, October 1999, the implementation of public forums as a dynamic space for local citizens' interactions in Tehran was authorised by the ICC and was followed by the first neighbourhood elections in 2000, which appointed Public forum representatives.

Similar to the Neighbourhood Council (public forums), Civic associations would potentially be considered as a dynamic mechanism for public participation and for developing interrelationships between citizens and the state. Despite the soaring growth of Civic Associations and non-governmental organizations in Iran since the 1990s, their effectiveness and efficacy in terms of participation has not been assured (Saidi, 2003). Related to this, Civic Associations have been faced with a number of structural and organizational issues which will be discussed in this chapter. More in detail, this chapter discusses the existing circumstances of Public forums and Civic Associations, based on responses provided by the study's interviewees. The findings are structured into the following two main categories: Neighbourhood Councils; and Civic Associations. Then strengths and weaknesses of each category are discussed.

### 8.1) Neighbourhood Councils

**8.1.1. Strengths and benefits of Neighbourhood Councils:** this section presents governance outputs, including the service management and advisory support associated with Neighbourhood Councils.

**8.1.2. Weaknesses and barriers in Neighbourhood Councils:** this section illustrates the technical and institutional barriers that Neighbourhood Councils have been faced with, including the nature of the relationship between forums and higher level urban stakeholders;

## **8.2) Civic Associations**

**8.2.1. Strengths and benefits of Civic Associations:** this section illustrates governance outputs, including participatory governance and enhanced social capital

**8.2.2. Weakness and barriers in Civic Associations:** this section presents the central administration's attitudes towards Civic Associations, as well as the internal/technical issues that the existing Civic Associations have been faced with.

## **8.1 Neighbourhood Councils (Public Forums)**

### **8.1.1 Strengths and Benefits of Neighbourhood Councils (public forums)**

Overall, 40 interviewees spread across different stakeholder groups demonstrated an overwhelming interest in the establishment of Neighbourhood Councils. They view Neighbourhood Councils as mechanisms that are capable of developing participatory city governance. From their perspective the single systematic space for public forums that Neighbourhood Councils provide is a tool that successfully supports citizens' involvement and contributions. In general, the interview findings indicate that Neighbourhood Councils have constructive impacts in two areas: 1) the enhancement of governance values and principals; and 2) the enhancement of policy-making and services. Table 8.1 summarises the strengths and benefits of the existing Neighbourhood Councils, based on the interview responses.

**Table 8.1 Strengths and benefits of Neighbourhood Councils**

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Views</b>
<b>Experts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhances good governance conduct and standards</li> <li>• Strengthens social capital by practising democracy, enhancing citizenship values, and by learning to elect and being elected</li> <li>• Transforms passive forms of citizenry into active forms of citizenry</li> <li>• Supports the prioritisation of local projects and agendas consistent with local residents' perceptions</li> </ul>
<b>Citizens and private sectors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offers citizens opportunities to express their views</li> <li>• Offers an opportunity to assess and criticize the neighbourhood agenda in a legitimate manner</li> <li>• Provides opportunities and possibilities for electing and being elected at the local level</li> <li>• Positively enhances trust and confidence among citizens</li> <li>• Accelerates and simplifies servicing in neighbourhoods'</li> <li>• Reduces bureaucratic barriers facing neighbourhood projects, through, for example, time reduction and direct communication with higher level decision-makers</li> </ul>
<b>State officials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a fresh space of electoral participation and interaction</li> <li>• Enhances inclusiveness and collectiveness in the process of nominee selection, by avoiding discrimination and partiality towards women; the disabled; disadvantaged and ethnic minorities</li> <li>• Reduces local and spatial inequality in neighbourhoods</li> </ul>
<b>Civic Association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generates a deep sense of citizen empowerment, as the urban decision-making tasks are no longer in the hands of urban elites and influential actors</li> <li>• Enhances the approval and recognition of decisions made in neighbourhoods by the urban machinery</li> <li>• Helps reduce inaccuracies and errors in policy-making and servicing of neighbourhoods</li> </ul>
<b>Municipality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affects the way in which information is disseminated among local citizens, given that neighbourhood representatives are members of the Public forums</li> <li>• Exercises professional competence and capacity in city matters without costs and complexities</li> <li>• Supports the policy-making agenda and fosters dialogues at local level</li> </ul>

*Enhancement of governance values and principals*

There was a unanimous agreement among 25 citizens forming the citizen group of stakeholders on the establishment of the Neighbourhood Councils as a fitting mechanism for the public to express robust opinions and communicate with decision-makers in a timely manner. Moreover, they saw it as a mechanism for emphasising “localisation” and “local decision-making”. It is on this basis that Neighbourhood Councils are considered to have been able to shift the manner of handling urban issues from an existing top-down approach to a bottom-up approach.

Supporting the citizens’ views, seven interviewees representing municipality and state officials suggested that the forums have been welcomed by the majority of local residents. In particular, they referred to the Neighbourhood Council’s elections, where public participation has recently been found to have improved in comparison to the first and second periods. According to their view, this demonstrates that citizens’ expectations and attitudes towards the forums have to some extent been met. By contrast, the interviewed urban experts criticised the manner by which the effectiveness of public forums is assessed through electoral measures. They unanimously viewed public forums as a form of support for (direct) participatory governance, rather than a form of representational democracy. They further recommended that when attempting to measure the effectiveness of public forums, the interactions and communications that citizens engage in through the forums must be taken fully into account.

Overall ten interviewees, representing in particular the experts group, suggested that “good” public forums should support the “good governance code” and “standards”, and aim to strengthen the values and ideals of urban governance. According to one member of the expert group, “every citizen has equal rights to be involved in public forums and everyone should be heard in local forums” [UE-03, Interview: 25 February 2010]. In the same way, public forums must be inclusive and devoid of any bias which might affect the “equal opportunity” of every resident at neighbourhood level to be involved in the forum. When the citizens group were asked to explain the matter of inclusion in practical terms, their

responses confirmed the importance of a state of openness and availability in Neighbourhood Councils. They indicated that the availability of council meetings is broadly convenient for citizens. Additionally, the possibility of being selected as a nominee in the Neighbourhood Council's elections also was substantiated by 22 of the interviewed citizens. The interviewed officials from the Secretary of State's office stated that one of the major strengths of Neighbourhood Councils is the fact that their members are elected through a system of direct participation, whereby representatives of the forums are nominated by public vote. As far as state officials are concerned this method is devoid of any discrimination and partiality towards women, the disabled, the disadvantaged and ethnic minority groups.

Within the context of participatory governance, the devolution and distribution of power came up in interviews with six citizens and Civic Association members. It was suggested that through the development of the Council, power and authority was to some extent disseminated across the local level, generating a sense of empowerment in citizens. This could occur because the urban supervisory tasks would no longer be in the hands of urban elites and influential actors, but in those of ordinary individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, through the forums, citizens at the lowest possible level of the social hierarchy can be voluntarily involved in advisory and dialogue processes.

Similarly, ten interviewees representing citizens and Civic Associations suggested that levels of trust and confidence among citizens had been affected positively throughout the Neighbourhood Councils' implementation. Their view was based on the suggestion that neighbourhood forums consisting of neighbourhood designated representatives who are to a certain extent involved in urban supervisory tasks can potentially strengthen the confidence and trust experienced by the local residents. One member of a Civic Association commented:

“When decision-makers take into consideration the Neighbourhood Council, the approval and recognition of decisions in neighbourhoods made by the urban machinery is enhanced among local residents.” [CA-03, Interview: 21 February 2010].

In the same way it was suggested by two municipality representatives that the degree of transparency and accountability has been improved through forums. According to municipality officials and in their capacity as members of the Neighbourhood Council, neighbourhood representatives can affect the way in which information is disseminated among local citizens. They believe that the circumstances in which urban decision-making proceeds also become more explicable to the public, enhancing therefore the state of transparency through securing procedural openness. Supporting this and making reference to issues of accountability, an official member of the municipality asserted:

“On one hand public forum representatives (Neighbourhood Councillors) are assiduously involved in the city administrative exercises, and on the other hand, higher level urban administrators are commonly available and accessible for the forum representatives. This suggests that the level of accountability has to some extent been improved at local level.” [ME-01, Interview: 1 February 2010].

The point about strengthening social capital was also recognised by six interviewees, in particular those representing the urban experts group. For three representatives of this group, public forums are the most effective and appropriate way to support social interrelationships and interactions at the local level. Their view is based on the suggestion that through public forums, democracy can be practiced; and ordinary citizens can learn how to elect and be elected. Forums also have the potential to transform citizenship from a passive into an active and dynamic form. According to this view, to a certain extent, forums place the responsibility for tackling neighbourhood affairs in the hands of local residents. This results in citizens' collective wishes not being routinely determined at a distance from the actual decision-makers. The value of citizenship is therefore defined through the dynamic participatory and localized mechanisms within public forums, developing a sense of responsibility and liability amongst citizens, which includes the capacity to monitor local affairs.

In addition, three officials from the municipality suggested that as the scope of the issues that urban decision-makers in Tehran have been faced with is substantial, there is a need for

local citizens' capacities and competencies to be fully exercised across various agendas. From the municipality executives' point of view, public forums have these absorptive capacities. This is further reflected in the comment made by one municipality senior executive:

“If human resource management is delivered effectively in the local forums, then the capacity and advantage of Neighbourhood Council representatives who are commonly considered as local elites would routinely be exercised throughout the urban machinery without costs and complexities.”[ME-04, Interview: 11 March 2010].

#### *Services management and policy-making*

Throughout the interviews, when citizens were asked to spell out the forums' effects and influences on their neighbourhoods, their responses connected more with the level of “local services management” and “local basics”, rather than with policy-making. According to their perspective, institutions address citizens' demands in local service sectors and attempt to enhance civic services both qualitatively and quantitatively. In support of this, almost 20 citizens confirmed an enhanced delivery of neighbourhood services through public forums. In their view, the “acceleration” and simplification of services in their neighbourhoods demonstrated the advantages of public forums. They referred to services that increase the quality of living conditions and consequently diminish problematic neighbourhood issues such as traffic concerns. In one remark, a senior citizen said: “honestly, the public forums' effects on local issues are considerable; to some degree they reduce barriers and concerns in the neighbourhoods” [OC-011, Interview 10 April]. In addition, public forums support connections and interactions between different organisations, including the central and local entities that function in neighbourhoods to promote servicing tasks.

According to ten representatives, representing urban experts and municipality officials, alongside services support, public forums have been supportive of the policy-making process and facilitated dialogue in the city. Their view is based on the suggestion that the main roles of the public forum are first to “identify” and “monitor” neighbourhood issues, and second to bring about “consultation” and “collaboration” with the local authority to

address the neighbourhood issues. On this basis, they suggest that the forums are likely to support the “prioritisation” of neighbourhood projects, as their agenda is consistent with local residents’ perceptions on neighbourhood issues. This is further reflected in the comment of one urban expert:

“The remarks, dialogues, comments and even criticisms made by local citizens are exercised through public forums as the prioritized agenda designed for neighbourhood development.” [UE-01, Interview: 5 March 2010].

In addition, since the nature of the challenges and concerns that each neighbourhood has been faced with are different in various municipal districts, there is a need to act locally. According to the experts, transferring local demands and requests – including those of residents and of the private sector – to higher level decision-makers through systematic surveying has been enhanced through the public forums.

In the same way, it was suggested by three Civic Association interviewees that inaccuracies and imprecision in policy-making largely reflect the “dominance of top-down” approaches in the contemporary urban decision-making machinery. However, public forums have the potential capacity to reduce existing policymaking and servicing faults in neighbourhoods by enhancing localism. According to these interviewees, development and planning agendas treated through public forums should be based on local needs and priorities. Thus, since forum members are long-term residents of their constituencies and are involved on a daily basis with neighbourhood issues and affairs, their capability and awareness regarding the barriers that exist is superior to any top-down administrative views.

According to four citizens and private sector interviewees, involving local citizens in urban decision-making through public forums can to some extent support a more direct delivery of local agendas and a reduction of “bureaucracy”. Their view is based on the suggestion that local issues and problems are reflected directly by forum members to the ICC and to the municipality without intervening bureaucratic barriers. They referred to the period prior to the establishment of public forums when it was unlikely that citizens’ views on local issues would be heard by urban authorities without engaging in complex processes. Yet with public forums, citizens’ voices can be heard in a “legitimate” and “authorized”

manner. In effect, based on the findings, local residents appreciate the public forums' ability to offer opportunities to access decision-making hierarchies, a chance to participate in local dialogues, and to assess and criticize the neighbourhood agenda.

Two interviewees from the state officials groups suggested that “local” and “spatial inequality” would be reduced by the augmentation of localism. In their view, direct public contributions to local affairs foster a degree of localization in which local services are shaped and ordered according to local needs and requests. This is based on the suggestion that Neighbourhood Councils provide equal influence and voice to each neighbourhood, enhancing fairness and equity in the distribution of wealth and resources.

### **8.1.2 Limitations and Barriers of Neighbourhood Councils (public forums)**

Similar to the ICC (see Chapter Five), “legislative” and “technical” limitations were considered the main barriers affecting the effectiveness of public forums. According to the interview results, the functions of public forums are overshadowed by the existing governance structures, and the driving force of governance must therefore aim to address the barriers associated with forums in a proactive way. The limitations and barriers in the public forums are further summarised in Table 8.2 and presented in terms of stakeholder group viewpoints.

**Table 8.2 Limitations and Barriers of Neighbourhood Councils**

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Views</b>
<b>Citizens</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrow level of citizen awareness with regard to public forums</li> <li>• Risk of converting public forums to small neighbourhood level administration centres</li> <li>• Insufficient criteria through which public forum candidates gain consent for their position as representatives</li> </ul>
<b>Public forums</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealings with public forums are devoid of coordination and correlation between various levels of urban machinery</li> <li>• Higher level decision-makers fail to recognize forums as co-operators and advisors in local matters</li> <li>• The relationships and communications between forums and key urban decision-makers are devoid of any regularized and legitimated pattern</li> </ul>
<b>Experts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of an integrated and collective mechanism for dealing with forums with reference to policy-making, strategies and guidelines</li> <li>• Indecisive and unsecure position of public forums in the country's consultative landscape</li> <li>• Lack of institutionalization of public forums</li> </ul>
<b>Civic Association and Private sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainty and unwillingness among decision-makers in dealing with public forums</li> <li>• Lack of understanding and knowledge with regards to contemporary issues in the city among forum members</li> </ul>

### *Institutional Limitations*

What emerged from the interview data suggests that interactions with public forums are devoid of coordination and correlation between the various spheres of urban decision-making. According to three experts, this underlines the absence of an integrated motivation in terms of strategies and guidelines. The extent to which public forums are appreciated by governance stakeholders varies. This reflects the insufficient credibility and legitimacy of public forums. To clarify this point, forum representatives indicate that since the majority of local services are outside the influence of the municipality and of the ICC, service operators and decision-makers do not have adequate interactions with public forums. It was mentioned that electricity, gas and water corporations, which are under the authority of the

state, do not cooperate and coordinate well with forums in dealing with neighbourhood concerns. This is further reflected in the comment of one forum representative:

Many organisations do not acknowledge forums as a co-operator or advisor in local matters and on most occasions when they are asked to give an explanation about local concerns, they commonly produce reluctant and reckless responses to the forum's requests. [LC-02, interview: 30 Feb 2010].

Four Civic Association and private sector interviewees noted the dominance of centralisation as an obstacle for urban machinery that translates into a threat for local forums. According to their view, despite the implementation of urban (ICC) and local (public forum) mechanisms, the dominant tendency in decision-making structures is formed around centralised norms and strategies. For the Civic Association and private sector interviewees, the implementation of local forums has to some extent been faced with the "lack of a convinced attitude" toward these institutions, exhibited in "uncertainty" and "unwillingness" among decision-makers.

Another concern expressed by seven interviewees, particularly the public forum group, was the unsteady manner in which local forums' key urban stakeholders (i.e. the ICC and Municipality) take them into account. According to three forum representatives, many local decisions are established without considering the public forum's advisory role. They refer to the public transportation pricing agenda as a case in point, where the ICC and the municipality simply paid no attention to the views of the public forum and established a pricing agenda without taking the forums' voices into account. This affects the value and accountability of Forums in response to local citizens. Forum members asserted that relationships and communications between the forums and key urban decision-makers are devoid of any regularized and legitimated pattern. For example, they argue that at most meetings, instead of attendance by senior municipality and ICC decision-makers, a number of experts and less significant figures (in terms of their hierarchical position) are delegated to attend. According to the forum representatives, this shows that forums have not been tested by key urban actors as a sound mechanism for neighbourhood participatory governance. Supporting the argument, two urban experts pointed out that since the forums

have not been recognized as established bodies in the urban hierarchical structure, some organisations have not accredited the correspondences, communications and demands made by the forums.

According to responses provided by the experts, citizens, Civic Associations and forum representatives, despite achievements in the “identification” of neighbourhood concerns and in part, “consultation” with decision-makers, the public forums are unable to constructively collaborate and associate with local authorities. Within this context, according to the urban experts, in its existing configuration the forum is not a “well-defined and standardized” consultative body, therefore it rarely has a significant influence on policy-making. Moreover, the interactions and dialogues between public forums and higher level stakeholders have not yet been effectively established; thus public forums are principally excluded from contributions to the policy-making agenda. Urban experts have argued that senior urban authorities prefer views and decisions to be imparted by their own centralised consultative figures, rather than by local citizens.

The insignificance of the forum’s position in the urban hierarchical structure was particularly represented in the responses of four interviewees from the Civic Association and the experts groups. According to their view, not only do the Forum representatives have no voice and influence to amend decision-making that concerns their regional and local municipal position, but, in most cases, they are also unaware of local administrative changes taking place in their constituency. It was suggested that a prospective role which could be given to forums to empower local voices might include the contribution of the forum’s representatives in the selection of local and regional administrative figures. This is further reflected in a comment by a member of a Civic Association: “Public forum representatives must be involved and their voice must be heard in the process of appointing the districts’ and regions’ mayors.”[CA-05, Interview: 6 March 2010].

#### *Technical Limitations*

What emerged from the interviewees’ views, particularly those representing experts and Civic Associations, supported the idea that despite being in place for a decade, public forums have not translated into a significant participation space. They confirmed citizens’

involvement and input into forums as being “dissatisfying”. When less enthusiastic citizens were asked to discern the basis that negatively affects their view of public forums, their responses appeared to be linked to the public forums’ efficiency. This is further reflected in the comment made by one citizen: “personally I have no interest in participation in Local Forums since I think my contributions are a waste of time.” [OC- 018, Interview: 11 April 2010]. According to the five citizens who were not interested in any communications with the public forums, participation would have no influence on local circumstances due to the fact that decision-making in the neighbourhood was formulated beyond the local level and out of local residents’ power.

Since forums function locally at the neighbourhood scale, it was expected that citizens will have attained an acceptable level of understanding and awareness about them. However, when compared with their understanding regarding the ICC, their awareness about public forums seemed to be somewhat narrow. For 15 citizens and private sector interviewees, their awareness about public forums was summarized in their knowledge of the existence of forums in their neighbourhoods. One of the citizens working in a small business stated “Personally I am not aware about what is going on in my local forums and I am uninformed of the agendas and programmes that are scheduled at my local forum.” [PS-05, Interview: 12 April 2010]. This view was supported by three representatives in Civic Associations. According to their view, not only local citizens but even a large number of decision-makers and administrators involved in urban issues are uninformed about the public forum’s agenda and circumstances.

Equivalent to the ICC, the issues of lack of institutionalization of public forums also resonated across the interviews, particularly those representing urban experts. They highlighted the manner in which the culture of participation and collective decision-making was explicated and defined for the public. They stated that for many citizens their perceptions and attitudes towards the meaning of participation in the forums could be summarized by their participation in the forum elections; thus, the promoted meanings of contribution to the forums were weakened because of an inadequate characterization of forums.

In the previous section, a number of citizens and private sector interviewees stated that the bureaucracy has been lessened following the implementation of public forums. By contrast, according to the responses provided by five local citizens “bureaucracy” was considered as a “threat” to the existing public forums. Their view is based on the suggestion that public forums are supposed to be locally trusted and composed of local informants who are outside the bureaucratic and administrative frameworks handling the prioritization and clarification of local issues. However, to some extent forums appear to have been converted to small administrative centres at the neighbourhood level, which are equally afflicted by common bureaucratic concerns and challenges.

In addition, as discussed earlier, interviewed citizens confirmed that in contrast with the ICC elections, everyone - regardless of his/her socio-economic category - has the right to fully contribute to election exercises. However, the degree of inclusiveness of the public forums was mentioned as a matter of concern for seven interviewees, in particular citizens, Civic Associations and private sector interviewees. According to their view, the sufficiency and effectiveness of the criteria through which candidates are given consent to stand for election as forum representatives by the supervisory board was open to question. They referred to “literacy” as the minimum level of educational competence for potential forum nominees, which they regarded as insufficient and inadequate for any representative position in public forums. According to their view, the preconditions and requirements for addressing the awareness of standards and codes designed for forum candidates need to be reconsidered. In line with this view, two experts suggested that despite public forums having only an advisory role and not handling any executive, administrative and technocratic exercises in neighbourhoods, there is a need for forum members to possess a certain level of knowledge and awareness with regard to urban issues. This is further reflected in a comment made by one urban expert:

“Not acknowledging representatives’ familiarity and understanding of local issues may lead to structural and technical deficiencies in public forums.” [UE- 02, Interview: 21 February 2010]

## **8.2 Civic Associations**

### **8.2.1 Strengths and Benefits of Civic Associations**

The better impact of Civic Associations in governance practices was acknowledged by almost 30 interviewees, particularly those representing urban experts and Civic Associations. They emphasised that Civic Associations contribute to wide-ranging issues and features, including the organization of aid, socio-economic and cultural activities, development discourses, and the capacity to affect city governance practices. Thus, the full implementation of Civic Associations could lead to the realisation of participatory governance and enhance social capital. According to three urban experts, there are meaningful relationships between Civic Associations and social capital. The enhancement of Civic Associations results from the production of social capital which itself is strongly dependent on three essential elements: “social trust”, “social integration” and “social participation”. Without these elements social capital would not emerge. In the same way, Civic Associations are core initiatives that can acquire creative and entrepreneurial strength, and capacity for knowledge and experience that could be considered a driving force and foundation for social capital. In addition, Civic Associations are well-established spheres in terms of their form and connections, as they can collectively “facilitate”, “accelerate” and “simplify” public inputs into urban matters.

The responses provided by the two Civic Association interviewees demonstrates that, due to the lack of balance between state-oriented and grassroots-based participatory spaces, there is a need to establish bottom-up mechanisms to enhance equality between the two categories: the state-orientated and grassroots-based participatory space. Furthermore, because of Civic Associations’ “economic” and “social” weight, they potentially have the ability to define further meanings of equity in terms of the distribution of power and resources between the state and public.

According to the four interviewees representing the state and the municipality groups, in comparison with public forums, the major strength of Civic Associations can be defined in terms of their traditions and history. For the state and municipality officials, citizens’ contributions and inputs into “traditional associative spaces” are still widely admired,

where this adapted and customised culture of participation played a key role in forming and shaping contemporary Civic Associations. As one of the officials from the state department suggested, traditional mechanisms have an inevitable role in building present-day Civic Associations in Iran, with public participation being mainly effected through traditional means. Current charitable foundations, communal companies and cooperatives (*Ta'avoniha*), charitable trust banks (*Sandooghe Gharzolhasaneh*), donor institutions and religious communities (*Hey'athaye mazhabi*) were referred to as common traditional types of Civic Associations.

Furthermore, the view that the traditional forms of Civic Association<sup>1</sup> tend to focus more on citizen participation than the contemporary forms of Civic Association do, was expressed by ten councillor respondents. According to their view traditional Civic Associations refer to the traditional spaces of public participation which have a well-established history and are strongly linked with foundational socio-cultural factors in Iran such as mosques, religious organisations and groups and religious charities. However, concerns were raised by experts with regard to traditional associations. Five urban experts and NGO representatives pointed out that although there is no doubt about the importance of traditional Civic Associations for participatory city governance, the autonomy and independence of these associations is a matter for concern. This has overshadowed the value of the exercises undertaken by the Civic Associations, leading to some traditional Civic Associations not fully embracing the codes and conduct guidelines designed for Civic Associations.

### **8.2.2 Limitations and Weaknesses of Civic Associations**

The “effectiveness” of Civic Associations as a participatory device to support governance bodies was a concern for 20 interviewees across various stakeholder groups. In their view, the influence of Civic Associations on city governance procedures is “negligible” and their position in the urban machinery has been “ignored”. Similarly, when Civic Associations were asked to clarify their influence and impact on the course and practices of city governance, they unanimously emphasised the lack of effective contributions. As well as highlighting the “isolation of Civic Associations” from decision-making procedures, they

also stressed the insignificant position of Civic Associations in the existing configuration of stakeholder governance. In general, according to responses provided by the interviewees, the limitations were twofold: 1) central government attitudes towards Civic Associations; and 2) internal and technical hindrances. Table 8.3 shows the weaknesses and limitations that lead to the isolation of the Civic Associations in the city governance structure, as identified by the study's interviewees.

**Table 8.3 Civic Association Weaknesses and Limitations**

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Views</b>
<b>Civic Associations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centralised and lack of collective decision-making with regard to Civic Associations</li> <li>• Lack of determination and willingness of the state to deal with Civic Associations</li> <li>• Financial and budgeting limitations</li> <li>• Bureaucratic barriers and complexities</li> <li>• Obstructive and fussy administrative procedures in the registration process for Civic Associations</li> <li>• Lack of inclusiveness in the state's attitudes towards Civic Associations</li> </ul>
<b>Experts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of an established strategy and agenda in dealing with Civic Associations</li> <li>• Civic Association members lack understanding regarding organisational and team-working activities (self-centred and self-prioritising concerns among Association members)</li> <li>• Lack of effective contribution of social elites in Civic Associations' financial affairs</li> <li>• Lack of effective communications between Civic Associations and international organisations (deficiency in universal mechanisms of information dissemination among Civic Associations)</li> <li>• Poor status of Civic Associations in the stakeholder configuration</li> <li>• Insufficient public awareness about Civic Associations</li> </ul>
<b>Citizens and Private Sectors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of healthy interactions between the state and Civic Associations based on trust and confidence</li> <li>• Insufficient public awareness</li> <li>• Centralised way of dealing with Civic Associations has often imposed a tendency of favouritism, with many forms of Civic Association being excluded.</li> <li>• Dependence of Civic Associations on the state and their manipulation by the state</li> <li>• Lack of innovation, originality and enterprise within Civic Associations</li> </ul>
<b>State officials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interference of outsiders and threats to the state's value</li> <li>• Manipulations of Civic Associations by influential bodies</li> <li>• Motivated by narrow organizational goals (i.e. financial grounds)</li> <li>• Foreign aid is narrowly targeted to certain specific themes</li> <li>• Politicization of Civic Associations</li> </ul>

*Political structures*

As indicated in Table 8.3, in terms of the support originating from higher level decision-makers, there is general consensus that the central government's attitudes and behaviours towards Civic Associations is a significant factor in the enhancement of these organisations. According to ten interviewees representing Civic Associations and urban experts, Civic Associations are devoid of basic endorsements from higher level administrations. In their view, a lack of trust and confidence, as well as a degree of friction, best defines the existing relationships between the state and Civic Associations. Their view is based on the suggestion that the top-down attitudes towards these Associations are dominated by "suspicion" and "doubt" rather than by "promotion" and "endorsement". They argued that this "uncertainty" and "hesitation" towards Civic Associations can undermine their position in the city, as it translates to a lack of consistent communication. For these interviewees, the communications and relationships between the Civic Associations and administrative bodies are devoid of "consistency" and "strong interactions". This excludes Civic Associations from contributing to supervisory committees and boards, weakening therefore, their role as effective stakeholders in governance.

The view that the support from the higher administrative level is "sporadic" and "irregular" was also expressed by the Civic Associations themselves. They suggested that there is a clear lack of willingness and determination among the higher level executives to enhance Civic Associations. According to their view, the rare measures and policies that actually encourage and favour Civic Associations tend to be the product of political changes and circumstances, rather than resulting from a "systematized" and "regularized" focus on the matter of Civic Associations. With the exception of state officials, ten interviewees from all interviewed groups agreed that an established strategy and approach in dealing with issues of Civic Associations at state level, including the manner in which Civic Associations are run and organised, is lacking. This is further reflected in the comment of one Civic Association member:

“Civic Associations have been suffering from uncertainties and suspiciousness through various administrations, resulting in diverging and contrasting views of the Civic Associations.” [CA-02, Interview: 1 March 2010].

Similar views resonated in the interviews with citizen representatives, which pin-pointed as an issue the dominance of top-down approaches. For the citizens, since the responsibility for handling Civic Associations’ affairs, including decision-making, conduct and monitoring, is delivered in an entirely centralised manner, the state is the sole responsible legal player. Concerns therefore about the comprehensiveness of centralized policy-making were raised. For example, citizens referred to the way in which permissions and authorisations are given to Civic Associations based on “centralised” and “mistrustful” procedures. Supporting this argument, all Civic Association interviewees emphasised the complexity of procedures along with “bureaucratic” and “institutional” barriers. According to the Civic Association representatives interviewed, the process of registration for Civic Associations is time-consuming, fussy, ambiguous and without legitimated milestones.

By contrast, the majority of interviewees (21) from all groups view the state’s attitudes towards Civic Associations in a positive light. All state officials interviewed waved aside the concerns over restrictions by pointing to recent advances made through the establishment of fresh policies and strategies relating to Civic Associations. Their view is based on the suggestion that the implementation of Iran’s third and fourth national development schemes led to increases in the number of Civic Associations and NGOs. State executives referred to the quantitative increase, as well as to the rate of expansion of Civic Associations, which over the last 10-15 years have multiplied tenfold. This position was in some measure also confirmed by four urban experts. They suggested that despite Civic Associations being faced with extensive barriers and challenges generated by political and social infrastructures, the third decade of the Islamic revolution has been considered a turning point to their progress. They suggested that the way in which Civic Associations are taken into account was modified through policies and strategies promoted by new administrations in the late 90s. Since then, for the urban experts, the development of Civic Associations was decisively taken into consideration by policy-makers. However,

three experts viewed the recent advances as a partial and largely quantitative expansion of Civic Associations, rather than representing a qualitative and comprehensive development of these organisations.

Another issue expressed by five interviewees, particularly from citizens and private sector-groups, was the lack of inclusiveness in dealing with Civic Associations. Their view is based on the suggestion that central government measures towards Civic Associations do not have a comprehensive and inclusive approach. They referred to the tendencies and motivations towards the development of a certain form of Civic Association that has commonly prevailed, with the significance of a particular Civic Association being highlighted receptively, in comparison to the other less favoured forms of Civic Association. Such selectivity is focused on particular matters and interests which are in line with different administrations in power, of which each tends to stress a particular agenda. Central government's support for Civic Associations often excludes therefore many "potential themes" and "categories". Furthermore, citizens argue that the centralised way in which Civic Associations are dealt with, thus without the existence of collective decision-making, has often imposed a tendency of favouritism for Civic Associations. This causes Civic Associations to largely depend on central government patronage, rather than mooring themselves in a public and bottom-up foundation. Additionally, they emphasized that the "manipulation" and "exploitation" of Civic Associations is likely to occur as a result of the centralized form of policy making. As one citizen said, the "interference of the state into Civic Associations' affairs undermines the autonomy and value of Civic Associations" [OC-022, Interview: 20 April 2010]. Another citizen working in the public sector supported this argument by stating: "Notwithstanding the meaning of Civic Associations entailing the idea of institutions created for and by the public, they are profoundly linked to the state in nature" [OC-16, Interview: 22 April 2010]. Thus, an accurate and precise label for Civic Associations which can best express the current situation is that of 'governmental-associations' instead of Civic Associations. According to one executive member of a private sector company, due to the extent to which Civic Associations depend on the state, administrative changes and governmental transactions undermine their "stability" and

“solidarity” in terms of policy-making, strategies and agendas. It follows that the Associations have been unable to gain a long-term and stable profile.

When government officials were asked about the interference of the state in the affairs of Civic Associations, the responses emphasised the necessity of monitoring. This view is based on the suggestion that, while Civic Associations should reflect public visions and attitudes in a broad sense, in practice they should be treated as “radical parties”, which are typically opposed to government procedures and strategies. According to one state official, the majority of existing Civic Associations are politicised in nature. This is in contrast with the Civic Associations’ values and principles, as they aim to address a certain political group’s objectives rather than the interests of the wider public.

Similarly, concerns over the manipulation of Civic Associations by overseas organisations resonated in the interviews with state administrators and urban experts. Their view is based on the suggestion that since Civic Associations engage freely and openly in public interactions, they are at risk of “exploitation” and “co-option” by “outsiders” (i.e. foreign governments and organisations), which impose their own motivations and interests in place of national interests. According to this view, foreign countries (particularly Western countries) take advantage of some Civic Associations, particularly of NGOs, and infiltrate their own interests and ideas into the country. Thus, on some occasions, it seems that Civic Associations’ activities are not just opposed to the government, but they are also opposed to the state’s values. This is further reflected in the comment of one urban expert, who criticised overseas aid:

“Matters of trust and confidence are an overwhelming concern with overseas support. Through aid targets they concentrate on particular selected themes and issues which are considered sensitive issues in this society.” [UE-03, Interview: 5 March 2010].

These include themes such as women issues, with an emphasis on the “gender equality agenda” from the western context, which has been triggered by many foreign entities.

To reduce the aforementioned challenges, and better engage Civic Associations in governance exercises in the city, 12 interviewees representing the Civic Associations suggested that the responsibility for overseeing the conduct of Civic Associations must be reassigned to local government (i.e. the ICC and municipality) instead of central government. Their view is based on the suggestion that local administrations are capable of dealing with Civic Associations in an enhanced manner without interfering in political matters. According to their opinions, if compared to the relationship with central government, the extent of interactions and connections between Civic Associations and local governments mean that this is a deeper exchange. Consequently, this preferred mode of interaction is able to build trust and confidence between the two stakeholders in a manner which facilitates the wider involvement of Civic Associations in the city. By contrast, the state officials and two urban experts defined this proposal as a “controversial scheme”. In their view, due to the complex and multifaceted nature of Civic Associations concerned with “political”, “social” and even “security” issues, the subject must be tackled through central government.

#### *Internal or Technical issues*

Parallel to the consensus about the state’s attitudes, concerns about internal and technical hindrances within the Civic Association were echoed by interviewees across all selected groups. They emphasised the significance of internal and technically-orientated hindrances that are equal to external barriers.

The practice and understanding of Civic Association actors was a matter of concern for three interviewed experts. The absence of a sufficient level of understanding and familiarity among Civic Association members with the necessary organisational and team-working activities was regarded as generating internal difficulties. Despite recent improvements, for the urban experts this is largely due to the lack of an effective contribution by social elites in Civic Associations. On this basis, to be effectively involved in governance Civic Associations need to be a focus for elites, as they are capable of enhancing the interactions between the government and Civic Association. They argue that this would improve overall public and administrative attitudes towards Civic Associations.

Furthermore, the deficiencies in the overall information dissemination mechanisms among Civic Associations were raised by two urban experts. According to their view, a lack of enhanced communications and networking practices between the Civic Associations in the city, even those that are operating within similar disciplines and categories, exists. This lack collaboration lessens structural “integration”; “stability” and “firmness”, hindering the extent to which Civic Associations have an impact on the political, social and cultural life of the city and undermining their capacity to take part in the practice of governance.

These technical and procedural deficiencies have negative effects on the financial fitness of Civic Associations. Financial issues are key concerns put forward by 15 interviewees, particularly those representing Civic Associations and experts. The nature of the financial constraints includes a lack of facilities, with the majority of Civic Associations being devoid of a place and location for carry out their meetings. Furthermore, four representatives of the civic association group view their socio-political circumstances as key to the financial barriers they experience. For example, for most Civic Associations using overseas assistance and aid is not considered a common and regulated way for gaining resources. Their view is based on the suggestion that Civic Associations are affected by macro-level circumstances such as the country’s international relationships with other countries. Moreover, that political circumstances and interactions with “outsiders”, affect the way in which Civic Associations interact and communicate with overseas supporters.

However, the urban experts pointed out the deficiencies of attracting financial resources on the bases of technical constraints, rather than those based on political circumstances. According to their perspective, international donations and aid represent a major source of financial support for Civic Associations in developing countries. However, technical barriers and constraints, such as communications-related issues, hinder the use of this support in Tehran. This view is based on the suggestion that the majority of Civic Associations are not aware of the processes and means through which communications and interactions with international donors can be constructed. Therefore, the majority of Civic Associations do not benefit from established international organisational support in terms of logistics, facilities and services.

Furthermore, since a lack of innovative and pioneering activities is pervasive in the existing pattern of Civic Associations, it was believed that they have generally relied on the traditional ways in which financial expenses can be met. According to ten interviewees, membership fees and donations are a major source of earnings for Civic Associations, though they are not considered efficient and sustained sources of income. A state official commented:

“Existing Civic Associations prefer the financial contributions of their members, rather than any other kind of input and involvement, which in the long term can put the effectiveness of Civic Associations at risk.” [CV-04: Interview: 5 March 2010].

The financial expectations placed on members of Civic Associations were considered by 20 interviewees as a discouraging and off-putting factor that diverts citizens from the broader meanings of contribution.

Another basic issue with regard to financial circumstances expressed by two state officials is the motivation behind the establishment of Civic Associations. According to their view, rather than enhancing participatory processes, economic and financial motives appear to represent the fundamental grounds behind the establishment of Civic Associations. They argued that the fiscal and financial profitability intended for members of Civic Associations was often considered as a key driving force, rather than the use of financial incentives as a means to persuade public participation. Furthermore, the lack of contribution by the private sector to Civic Associations was also raised as an issue by three state officials. They pointed out that usually, Civic Associations are supposed to rely on private sector contributions. However, it appears that the involvement of the private sector has been very small and limited. Reasons for this appear to be the lack of “innovation”, “originality” and “enterprise” within Civic Associations, as emphasised by two private sector interviewees. According to their views, the issue of confidence overshadows the engagement of the private sector with Civic Associations. This raises risks and uncertainties which largely reflect the position of Civic Associations in the power structure. One executive member of an entrepreneurial organisation confirmed this by stating that “due to constraints and lack

of assurances underwriting Civic Associations, the private sector's interest in Civic Associations in Iran as a whole are low". [PS-03, Interview: 8 April 2010].

Based on the responses provided by the citizens, the everyday understanding and awareness regarding Civic Associations appears to be slender. The fact that Civic Associations were unable to develop general information and establish a broad knowledge platform intended for a range of participants from various socio-economic classes emerged in the interviews with four municipality officials and urban experts. In order to overcome the issue of a dearth of citizen inputs, it was suggested that "informing", "marketing" and "publicity" mechanisms must be implemented fully and widely; and that Civic Associations' activities and actions should not be limited to a few themes. This view is based on the suggestion that Civic Associations must extend their area of activity across a range of socio-economic disciplines, including the environment, health, charity, women, young people and children-related themes, educational and cultural areas to embrace different and wider socio-economic groups and interests.

### **8.3 Conclusion**

From the analysis of the data collected on forums, it appears that the majority of respondents are optimistic about the Neighbourhood Councils (public forums) prospects, and regarded them as a constructive mechanism for both representative and participatory governance. This is based on the fact that public forums have provided fresh spaces for participation and interaction based on localisation. The fact that public forums provide a platform for exchanges and strengthen relationships between urban decision-makers and citizens, and that they enhance the quality of local level service support was expressed throughout the interviews.

Notwithstanding this, various institutional and technical concerns were considered as barriers for public forums. These largely appeared to be linked to the attitudes and motivations of the higher executives who deal with public forums, and to the resulting uncertainties and doubts over their purpose. As indicated, the idea behind public forums

was to support the ICC and the municipality in identifying and tackling local concerns; however, according to the responses provided, in many cases the forum's views have not been taken into consideration. Despite their patchy advisory role, public forums lack systematic and regularised advisory weight. In addition, there is a lack of correlation between different levels of urban decision-making and state hierarchies. As a result, better coordination between different levels of governance was seen as necessary to enhance the effectiveness of the forums.

Based on the interview findings, the traditional ways in which the Civic Associations formed (largely through religious origins) have contributed to the forming and shaping of existing Civic Associations in Iran. Thus, compared with the latter, it appears that the traditional associations are in a more advanced position to absorb public participation. However, the poor position of Civic Associations within the governance structure, and their lack of power and weight, prevents them from making an effective contribution. According to the interview findings, the manner in which Civic Associations are characterised in Iran is unconstructive, and uncertainty and lack of direction in terms of how to deal with Civic Associations predominate. For some respondents, the state's attitudes towards Civic Associations are not inclusive; thus it is common for the state to limit their supports to particular types of Civic Associations.

The lack of institutional, financial and technical support from the state were considered, along with bureaucratic barriers, as general obstacles preventing Civic Associations from effective participation in governance practices. Also the state's seems to be more interested in providing financial and technical support for traditional forms of association, rather than for the contemporary associations. The widespread lack of confidence and trust in overseas support for Civic Associations was echoed across many interviewees, which argued that in most cases, financial aid imposes and promulgates certain interests and values only.

Concerns regarding the competence of Civic Association representatives and their understanding of organisational and cooperative requirements, as well as budgeting and financial issues, were considered as significant issues. Another concern which was mentioned widely is the exiguousness of public awareness regarding participatory

mechanisms. When citizens were asked about the state of their understanding and perceptions regarding Civic Associations their responses suggested a widespread deficiency in terms of general awareness and knowledge about the contemporary meanings of Civic Associations in the city.

## Chapter 9 Research Discussion

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## 9.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to integrate and synthesise the core issues raised in the study. It comprises the discussion section of the thesis, in which the research findings are evaluated against the theoretical and experimental frameworks developed during the research. The chapter discusses key findings from the fieldwork, the literature review and the UN-Habitat Urban Governance Index (UN-UGI) assessment. It consists of three main sections. The first section evaluates the UN-UGI method as a governance assessment approach. In the second section, consideration is given to the main governance challenges. Finally the third section expresses the quality of interactions between the key stakeholders involved in the decision-making process.

### 9.1 Review of the UGI Assessment

As discussed in sections 2.5 and 4.4 of this thesis, the assessment of urban governance not only necessitates of precise “indicators”, but also “standards”, which supply the dimensions to be measured (Stewart, 2006: 200). This research used the standards derived from the *UN-Habitat Urban Governance Index (UGI)* to generate an account of city governance in Tehran, based on which the most vulnerable theme in Teheran city governance appeared to be “participation”. The UN method includes structured sets of indicators that provide a primary assessment tool aimed at systematizing information and data regarding city governance in Tehran. The assessment offers a foundation and a general picture of existing governance and allows a comparison of outcomes, which was presented in chapter 4. This method, however, is not without deficiencies and the implementation of the *UGI* for assessing governance issues in Tehran highlighted some critical challenges.

One major issue is that there is insufficient scope in this methodology to debate all of the normative potentials of multifaceted urban governance. For example, with regard to the ‘Selection of Mayor’ indicator, for its capacity to enhance citizen engagement mayoral

selection through direct participation received the highest score 1, compared to the mayoral selection by councillors which received 0.75, and other methods of appointment, which tally 0.5. The selection of mayor indicator, however, is devoid of information about the surrounding electoral circumstances, which play a key role in the mayoral selection. As discussed in chapter 7, if the method of direct participation does not include an impartial monitoring mechanism and a sound competitive basis, then direct participation in the mayoral election could be a defective procedure.

As discussed in chapter 4, general governance indicators can be categorised into: Input, Process, Output, Perception, Outcome and Impact indicators (UNDP, 2006 and Fonseca, 2000). Yet, the UN-index method appears to be mainly based on Output indicators, which ‘demonstrate’ results which are already visible. The key challenge for these Output indicators is to reflect those activities that are invisible, expressed by ‘**input**’ and ‘**process**’ type indicators. This is in line with what MacLeod and Goodwin (1999:505) observed, thus, that the kernel of the problem is in theorizing and understanding “**process**”. In effect, one fundamental inconsistency between the UGI findings and the interview findings presented in this research is the focus on context. While the UN-UGI predominantly reflects ‘what’ indicators privileging the end output of governance (i.e. election result) over the ‘how’ and ‘why’, the interview findings attempt to include issues of input and process.

The over-simplicity of some indicators restricts therefore the analysis of the more complex urban governance features, such as the quality of governance actors, governance mechanisms, decision-making processes and institutions. This is further reflected in the indicators that are summarised by scorecard options of “yes or no”, such as “Existence of Vision Statement”, “Elected Council” and “Public Forum” indicators, which limit the enquiry to the existence, or lack of, a particular “facility” or “service” for citizens. Such indicators are unable to capture the different dimensions, components and qualities of governance principals. For instance, the existence of a “Vision” and even the implementation of two Master Plans in 1968 and 1992, were not able to conceal and solve many basic urban issues in Tehran (Rafiei and Athari, 1995), although there was some

improvement in physical and infrastructural sectors (Mozayeni, 1998). In fact, it could be argued that problems with the recent shaping of social and physical urban issues under these planning approaches has been the result of the poor context of the plans or the misleading nature of these planning approaches. In fact 'Existence of Vision Statement' indicator clearly lacks the ability to address the context and the issue of failing to respect the plan/vision. Furthermore, the operation of a council or of a forum could be hampered by the inadequacy of some of its features, such as its role, composition and efficiency, along with the institutional abilities and competencies of members considered key for enhancing the council's performance. In general such oversimplified indicators merely allow for a holistic assessment. For example, as suggested by the research findings, although an elected city council (ICC) and public forum (Neighbourhood Councils) may exist in Tehran, this does not guarantee the adequacy of their performance, and consequently, of their success in delivering good governance.

Indicators such as "local government revenues" theoretically imply the financial autonomy of local government as a constructive factor for governance. However, this does not necessarily ensure good governance practice. An example that emerged from the interviews suggested that in Tehran the central government's financial support for key servicing areas such as public transportation could respond to several existing governance dilemmas in the city, despite the reduction in the municipality's financial sovereignty. Consequently, citizens could directly benefit from central government financial aid, and public faith in decision-makers might be enhanced. As it can be seen, the indicator is unable to rationally express how the lack or dearth of central government financial support might be a beneficial point for local government, meaning that the exclusive consideration of local government autonomy as a positive point is rather risky.

The lack of comprehensiveness of some indicators limits their application. For instance, an indicator such as 'Percentage of women councillors in the key urban positions' is not achievable in urban governance structures and designs where the legislator and monitoring body (council) is separated from the executive (municipality), as they function separately as

two distinctive institutions. In such cases having a member of the council act in both legislator and executor positions is impossible. At a more practical level, the indicator cannot be addressed in Iran/Tehran because of the existence of regulations that restrict council representatives from having an additional executive role and responsibility in city, beyond the one that they already fulfil with the council. From a governance perspective, to some extent these regulations have had beneficial effects on transparency. For instance, if the monitoring board is considered equal to the executive board, then transparency in governance may be undermined. What, in other words, are the likely consequences of a councillor holding a position of responsibility in both the executive and the monitoring boards of the city, that is, taking an active role in monitoring finances and budgeting in the city and also playing a key role in budget implementation? The issue here is to what extent can such a structure ensure that the councillors having an active role in both organisations are impartial in their (complementary) monitoring and implementing roles? Despite the significance of women fulfilling key positions in the city for enhancing gender equality in governance, the interviews revealed that based on the existing design of city governance through separation of the executive role and monitoring and legislative roles, transparency and accountability have been promoted. Thus, offering an executive role to the councillors will alter the position of the urban council from being an observer to being an evaluator of the municipality.

A further technical challenge that concerns the aforementioned indicators is that they mainly address ‘democracy’ rather than ‘governance’. Democracy at the local level focuses on the foundations of local government, for example, in terms of the existence of regular elections and citizen participation rights (International Idea, 2001). By contrast, while including issues of local democracy, governance assessment also cuts across a number of broader and complex issues, addressing primary features such as the nature of the local political and electoral system, the policy process, codes and conducts of elections, candidate and party certification (UNDP, 2004).

Initially, what emerged from the exploration of the meaning and context of governance through the UN methodology mainly concerned issues of “quality”. Despite the ease of

collecting data on quantitative variables (UN-Index, 2006), the over-quantitative nature of a large number of indicators make this method unable to explore the multifaceted nature of governance in the city. Although the reliance on quantitative data provides a clear-cut outline of existing governance in Tehran, the deficiency in the breadth of the quantitative indicators undermines the value of the results. For example, as analysed in Chapter 4, the ‘Civic Associations indicator’ simply seeks to identify the number of associations that exist in the city. The issue here is to what extent the indicator is able to articulate important aspects of the civic associations in the city. Even if the results indicate the existence of a large number of civic associations in the city, does this ensure the contribution of these associations to decision-making? Does the figure show the extent of their active engagement? A single figure would fail to provide a response to these questions. This is further reflected in the views of Saidi (2003), who suggests that despite the soaring growth of civic associations and non-governmental organizations in Iran since the 1990s, their effectiveness and efficacy in terms of participation has not been assured. By contrast, the data gathered from the fieldwork goes beyond numbers, providing greater insight for example into the extent of interactions between the civic associations with central and local government codes of conduct and top-down policies..

Furthermore, with regard to methodological issues, in the existing sources of governance data, objective (official, documentary etc.) data plays a major role in the evaluation of governance. This could be considered as a limitation since the role of subjective (individual, perceptual etc.) data is underrepresented in existing governance assessment. This is in line with Kaufmann *et al.*’s (1999) views’ that perceptions, for instance, carry greater weight and meaning compared with objective data in assessing citizens’ faith in organisations. The lack of inclusion of the views and perceptions of individuals and stakeholders involved in governance fails to provide the full story on governance in Tehran.

## **9.2 Obstacles to Good Governance**

This section presents the obstacles associated with governance identified in the research. It is structured in four parts, corresponding to the issues that arose from the interviews. These

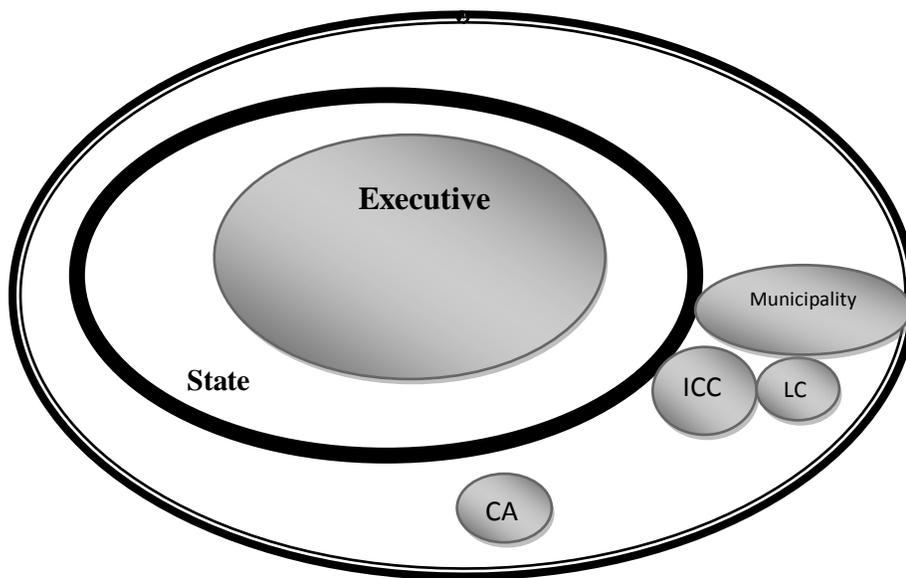
are centralised dominance, lack of governance direction, lack of an integrated form of governance; and technocratic rationality or democratic principles.

### **9.2.1 Centralised dominance: government or governance?**

Successful local government is dependent on a well-defined structure of decentralization (International IDEA, 2004), where an appropriate balance of power between governance stakeholders is considered vital for 'good governance' (UNHABITAT, 2002). However, what emerged from the research findings is an emphasis on the way in which power is often not equally shared between national and local government in Iran. This is particularly indicated in the unbalanced structure of governance shown in Figure 9.1. According to the existing structures and distribution of administrative functions, Iran can be considered a centralised country. Central government looms large, exercising a potent influence on the relationships with local government/institutions, and having a dominant voice on a wide range of issues in Tehran. It follows that to a large extent, local government/institutions rely upon central government. Based on the data collected, central government has both the ability to monitor local government (municipality, ICC) and to play a significant part in local affairs, because it has responsibilities that extend across both domains. In general the establishment and termination of local institutions; their ability to approve, consent, appeal and reject the authorised regulations is exercised under central government authority. Article 53 of the ICC Establishment Act discussed in Chapter 4, emphasised the central government's role in the structure of governance. The same views were echoed by the first mayor of Tehran, who was quoted in a newspaper article saying that following the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and after a decade of experiencing urban shifts, centralisation is still a dominant tendency within the existing executive driving force in Iran (Mehr, 2007). In another article it was asserted that the following are controlled by local government: monitoring ability with regard to local institutions through authorization of regulations, codes and agendas; delegation and substitution of the ICC in terminations and cases of unattended cases; assessment on implementation of the local agenda, and on research investigating and identifying local issues; consent to loans and financial supports with regard to local associations (Ghahari, 1985; Kazemian and Saidi-Rezvani, 2002). These circumstances enable central government to directly and indirectly influence local

institutions in general, and local government institutions in particular. In the same way, as discussed in Chapter 8, Civic Associations and NGOs are governed in a centralised manner. The establishment, approval and termination of these associations are handled by central government and by its sub-entity, the state ministry.

Overall, the interviews revealed that top-down and hierarchical types of interaction weaken the autonomy and independence of civic associations and NGOs.



**Figure 9.1 Unbalanced Governance Structure**

Despite central government's loss of some power in the city and the 1997 attempt to support local government as a key and independent player in urban decision-making, the research findings show that local government is largely devoid of sufficient political and institutional competence to function as a key player in the city. Some interviewed urban experts were however sceptical about using the term "decentralisation" within the context of the 1997 shift. They suggested that decentralisation has three dimensions: political, administrative and fiscal, and that none of these features had been fully addressed in the shift. This remark is in line with what emerged from the literature review, based on which, decentralization can vary in terms of the degree and extent of deconcentration, delegation

and devolution (Coudouel and Paternostro, 2006). In practice this can be seen in the gap between the ICC's constitutional position discussed in Chapter 4 and its existing role discussed in Chapter 5. Codes 7 and 100-106 of the Constitution take into account the ICC Act and highlight the ICC's significance. According to section 7 of the Constitution approved in 15/11/1979, councils are the main bodies for decision-making and administration in the country, whereby governors, mayors and administrators must commit to respecting the councils' decisions (Fakhroleslam, 2005). This raises questions about the extent to which existing councils have succeeded in achieving the idealistic principles that are described in the constitutional act. As previously stated, based on the constitutional act, the position and function of the council is substantial. However, based on the findings of this research, the lack of practical position and weight offered to the elected council (ICC) places limits on local governance capacity. This shows clear signs of inconsistency between 'rhetoric' and 'reality' that undermine local government capacity. The most recently modified ICC regulations and guidelines are considered to be a long way from its constitutional roots and principles. On this basis, the ICC's influence can be summarised as being more effective in municipality affairs, rather than in city affairs. Such a view is indeed a point worthy of consideration and reflects the views expressed by the interviewees. They claimed that in its current form, the ICC is far from being an "urban parliament" or a "city council". As suggested by the experts, "municipality councils" seem to be a more realistic label for the present ICC system in Iran.

According to the Constitution, all organisations involved in the city are obliged to respect regulations authorised by the ICC. However, as emerged from the interviews, in practice the ICC's orders are applicable only to the municipality, therefore various entities active in the city are not obliged to commit to those orders. This has a negative effect on the role and status of the ICC as an effective council in the city. In the same way, the limited institutional power and influence of the ICC in the centralised pattern of governance affects the 'voter turnout' in the ICC elections. The evidence from the interviews suggests that, since the ICC only has a marginal capacity to act as an influential governance player, the public has been sceptical with regards to their real impact on urban governance. Indeed, the

findings emphasise that the effectiveness and value of the ICC are ‘insignificant’ for most participants. This perception negatively affects participation in the ICC elections.

These are in line with the position expressed by Beheshti (2001), who argues that the legal and institutional status of local government bodies, particularly of the Islamic City Councils, have been faced with ambiguity and uncertainty within the city’s multifaceted governance structure. Consequently, the heft and reach of such institutions can be questioned. The main concern is not about the lack, comprehensiveness, integration and creativity of regulations and codes (Putnam, 1993); rather, it is about the lack of practical assurances around the operationalising of these codes and regulations. As discussed in Chapter 5, due to its institutional limitations, the bulk of ICC responsibilities come without legislative and practical assurances. Talaie, the head of Social Commissioning in the ICC, argues that although a decade has passed since their establishment in Iran, doubts still remain about the extent of responsibility and weight to transfer to the ICC (Fars, 2010). Similarly, Ghalibaf, the current mayor of Tehran, argues that processes of administrative and political decentralisation have not succeeded in the country, suggesting that the transfer of power is being ignored across a range of central administrative bodies (Hamshahri, 2010a).

Supporting this argument and based on the third Development Scheme and article 44 of the constitution (see Chapter 4), Chamran, the head of the ICC, suggests that it was expected that 23 responsibilities and tasks would be transferred from central government to local government and to non-governmental institutions (Hamshahri, 2010b and Irna, 2010b). He goes on to suggest that not only has there been no attempt to transfer these tasks to local institutions; but that an attempt has been made to reduce their existing roles (ibid.). For instance, while previously the ICC alone was responsible for approving the municipality budget, through recent changes, the state ministry now has a voice in authorising it. Supporting this, Akbarnejad, a Member of Parliament, argued that central government has a desire and interest to expand its command and authority on urban issues, suggesting that there is no will or enthusiasm for reducing its existing influence and power in the city (Hamshahri, 2010c). These remarks support the absence of a solid ‘determination’ and

‘motivation’ to devolve responsibilities to the local government level, a point that was echoed widely throughout the research findings. The interviewees argued that the attempts undertaken to counter decentralisation mean that there is a lack of confidence and purpose about transferring power to local government.

### **9.2.2 Integrated Urban Management or Management of Urban Units**

The nature and context of governance as discussed in the literature is about collectivity, sharing, power and inclusion of a range of stakeholders in the city (Boddy and Parkinson, 2005). However, based on the empirical research, the existence of multiple organisations and institutions responsible for the city emerged as a concern. The evidence suggests that the duty of management in the city has been delivered through a range of local and central stakeholders (see Table 9.1). According to the existing system, over 25 organisations are formally involved in governance issues in Tehran (see Organisation of Municipalities, 2002). The key concern here is: ‘who’ is/are making decisions in the city and who has power and influence over decisions.

What emerged from the interview findings indicates that due to the existence of several policy-makers and executive bodies, the city has suffered from the lack of an ‘integrated’ and ‘coherent’ form of management. There has been inconsistency and contradiction in decision-making. Each organisation in the city is dealing with instructions and circulars which have been authorized by related ministries or organisations. These organisations are distributed in the city in line with their own organisational remit. The lack of uniformity in instructions for various organisations about how to address similar issues in the city has led to confusion.

In general, the confusion relates mainly to city services, the monitoring and control of the construction and supply infrastructures in the city that are handled through local government. However, a wide range of other key services such as policing, security, welfare, water, gas and electricity, health, education, housing and so on are delivered by the central government and by its sub-entities. The fact that these organisations are outside of the influence and control of local government has an effect on governance. For instance, if

the role of local government and of the ICC is to ensure accountability, then in the absence of coherent governance accountability is likely to be undermined. While the ICC merely carries out the monitoring role for tasks that are handled by the municipality, other organisations and stakeholders active in the city tend not to recognise the ICC's monitoring role on many issues. This has emerged from the interviews with citizens, for whom it is hard to distinguish 'who' is running the city. It appears that the functions and position of local government may be undermined by the existing form of task distribution, because local governments have no voice on many key issues in the city. As a consequence, local government has simply been considered as an institution intended for the delivery of services, instead of an institution that is meant to handle city issues comprehensively.

Such distribution of roles has implications on the extent to which local governments are inclusive and comprehensive in dealing with urban issues. Although it is expected that local government will be a key coordinator and leader which will engage closely with citizens on various issues, at the same time, local government is not considered a key agent in social life. This means that local government is unable to cooperate and to respond to citizens' concerns on a wide range of issues in the city. In practice, this is largely reflected in the interviews with Forum representatives, which indicated that since the majority of local services are outside the influence of the municipality and of the ICC, service operators do not have adequate interactions with the neighbourhood council on local issues. This negatively affects the level of 'public trust' in the competence of the ICC and of the municipality in the city.

Supporting these findings, Fadaie, a representative of the ICC and spokesman for the Provincial Supreme Council, argued that an integrated form of city management would enhance public perception and confidence regarding local government, which would therefore have a constructive effect on public input in urban affairs (Hamshahri, 2010a). On the one hand integrated urban management can correlate and integrate decision-making between central government, local government and civic associations. On the other hand, it can reduce divisions and schisms between these stakeholders. An integrated form of city management was intended to merge processes, systems, functions and conducts to create

solidarity in city governance. By transferring key duties to the municipality, the municipality itself can act as a key coordinator in the city.

The question that may arise here is to what extent local government is prepared to assume these responsibilities. As discussed throughout the research, the need for capacity building in terms of legal, political and technical matters is essential for local government. However, an integrated form of urban management cannot be achieved without citizens' contributions. It cannot be formed through the modification of administrative structures and regulations or the creation of technological infrastructures; rather, it requires public input and the contributions of all actors involved in governance (Ellis and McKay, 2000).

**Table 9.1 Multiple stakeholders for governance**

<b>Intervention Zone</b>	<b>Organisations</b>
Monitoring, Control and Technical Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry of State and related Departments</li> <li>• The Housing and Urbanism Organisation</li> <li>• The Engineering Advisors</li> </ul>
Providing Budgetary and Financial Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry of State and related Departments</li> <li>• Plan and Budget Organisation</li> <li>• Ministry of Economics and Estates Affairs</li> <li>• Municipality</li> </ul>
Providing Urban Infrastructures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water and Sewerage Organisation</li> <li>• Regional Electricity Company</li> <li>• Gas Company</li> <li>• Transport Administration</li> <li>• Telecommunications Company</li> <li>• Post Company</li> </ul>
Providing Public Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Administration</li> <li>• University and Higher education entities</li> <li>• Health and medication organisations</li> <li>• Sports organisations</li> <li>• Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance</li> <li>• Administration for Estates Registration</li> <li>• Administration for Devotion</li> <li>• Department of the Environment</li> <li>• Department of Business and Unions Committee</li> <li>• Department of Industry</li> <li>• Department of Culture and Heritage</li> <li>• Police Department</li> <li>• Justice Department</li> </ul>
Providing Housing and land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Housing and Urbanism Organisation</li> <li>• Administration for charitable trust</li> <li>• National Organisation for Land and Housing</li> <li>• Administration for Estates Registration</li> <li>• Municipality</li> </ul>
Providing Urban Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality</li> </ul>

### **9.2.3 The direction of urban governance: forwards or backwards?**

As discussed in Table 4.3 in Chapter 4, in Iran the implementation of local organisations and the decentralization process are lacking in direction. The initial attempts by

government to extend governance date back to 1907, with the passing of the first Establishment of Municipal Act (*Anjomanhaye Baladiyeh*). However, four years later, due to the defeat of the constitutional revolution, these city institutions were abolished. Thus, throughout the 20th century the move towards governance has been faced with trembling and unsteady progress in Iran. In the same way, what has emerged from the findings has shown that the recent governance initiative implemented through the 1997 shift, which was intended to empower local institutions and citizen engagement, has encountered obstacles. This has made it difficult for the research to draw a clear-cut line regarding governance trends since 1997. This is mainly reflected by the lack of a firm strategy with regard to publicly-orientated and grass-roots institutions. Iran's governance machinery appears to suffer from a lack of vision and in-depth objectives. Despite the existence of a reasonably clear vision for the city in terms of development and planning, there is no vision or route map for "how the city is going to be governed". Considering, for example, the Urban Development Vision and the fifth Development Scheme, public meaning and participation (in terms of both functions and practice) are entirely overlooked. A lack of clear consideration of urban governance priorities, citizen participation and collective decision-making are evident within the Vision, which is meant to encompass the next 20 years. It is hard therefore to distinguish a persistent and convincing strategy and vision meant for governance. In fact, the key uncertainty here is: 'where do we want to be' or 'where are we going'. Following the city governance shift in 1997, it was expected that the decentralization trend would progress towards further practical devolution, citizen participation and the empowerment of grass-root institutions. However, the momentum has not been decisive. The findings show that since the shift, state attitudes towards grass-root institutions (i.e. civic associations and forums) have been unsteady, and have not been followed through by consistent operational actions. The impetus for reform has been determined by the configurations of different administrations and interests, rather than by consistency with a precisely designated direction of change. Over the course of a decade this has resulted in the institutions having inherited a controversial and agonistic decision-making process and set of policies with regards to governance. For example, in terms of the selection of mayor, two entirely antagonistic proposals came into view over the same

period of time. One view consisted of enhancing existing participatory governance by shifting the responsibility for selecting the mayor from the ICC to the citizens. The second view reflected a persuasive intention to reverse the method for selecting the mayor from the ICC to the Ministry of State, a system that recalls the pre-shift approach of the past. In terms of the research findings this can be considered a “backward shift”.

Furthermore, while the establishment of the Neighbourhood Council (Public Forums) can be likened to a new step towards more participatory governance, the parliament’s recent efforts to demolish and scrap the Local Councils as the bottom-most sphere of participatory city governance can be considered as an example that confirms the continuing thrust in an opposing direction. Khadem, a councillor and head of the Planning and Budgetary Commission in the ICC, considered the proposal to be controversial and likely to halt any progress towards participatory city governance (Hamshahri, 2010b). Despite the proposal being rejected later on, such examples highlight the doubt, confusion and lack of consistency that exists within the governance system and its lack of genuine and concrete direction. This overall vision is further echoed in the words of an interviewee, who mentioned the “lack of conviction” and “uncertainty” among decision-makers in dealing with these institutions. The aforementioned examples relate to the importance of the ‘direction’ and ‘strategy’ that should exist in governance, as considered in Chapter 2.

Governance studies express the distinctiveness between governance trends, approaches, manner and pace in various parts of the world (see Painter and Goodwin, 2000). Parallel to strategic deficits, the findings of this study show that the Iranian response to the need for participatory governance lacks solid methodological approaches. The lessons from over three decades of urban policy-making in Iran often demonstrate inconsistency on exactly ‘how’ to respond to matters of governance. Therefore, another key question that may be raised is: “how do we get there” The key idea that a variety of macro political and executive factors appear to be linked with local governance and issues of participation, but participation tends to not be a part of the mainstream agenda in governance. Lacking sufficient significance, it has become something that is accomplished erratically in an *ad hoc* and partial manner. What emerged from the data relating to perceptions about the

context of participation, revealed a meaning of participation that was not inclusive. The majority of the respondents, including decision-makers, viewed participation merely in terms of representative democracy and citizen involvement in elections. According to the researcher's viewpoint, this is largely due to the lack of 'contextualisation' of governance and of issues of participation in Iran. Throughout the interviews, when the participants (mostly executive interviewees) were asked about the degree of success of the Neighbourhood Councils as a participatory governance mechanism, they simply referred to the election results as evidence of successful participation. Equally, there is an overemphasis on adopting 'representative' governance approaches, rather than on 'participatory' governance initiatives. As discussed in Chapter 7, there is a strong desire to change the body which selects the mayor from the ICC to the citizens.

#### **9.2.4 Technocratic rationality or democratic principles?**

Technocratic governance comprises technical influence in decision-making (Ward, 1998). Based on the research findings, there is an overwhelming emphasis on technocratic functions, which undermines the democratic and political meaning of the ICC. Thus, urban management and the ICC are seen merely as technocratic functions and institutions, where a technocratic rationality overrides democratic governance. The members of the ICC are expected to be experts rather than politicians. This partly reflects Article 28 of the ICC Act that prevents governmental, legislative and juridical actors from participating as candidates in the ICC elections. According to this article, the individuals who are employed in any state organisation, including media, city and provincial governors and military heads are not permitted to be ICC representatives. A large number of interviewees referred to this and argued that the purpose behind this article is to prevent the ICC from being converted into a political space. Thus, there was a controversial debate on excluding political actors from participating in the ICC as nominees. This technocratic power may initially arise from the need to exercise more effective local government in a context of complex issues and challenges in the city; and the existence of technical shifts in society. However, the key argument here is that urban governance embraces two key dimensions: the political/democratic aspect and the technical aspect. Since the ICC is a product of an

electoral and political process, its existence is not justified without politics; thus, without taking politics into account, the ICC's position would be reduced to that of an advisory board. The political aspects of governance ensure the involvement and contribution of a range of individuals and groups in decision-making.

While the technical aspect of governance focuses on the all-round competence of actors involved in governance, what has been revealed mainly from the interview data is a narrow emphasis on the level and area of education among councillors instead of an inclusive insight into matters of competency. As asserted by an interviewee, "In terms of quality and value some representatives are unfit for this level of decision-making duty and the task is heavy for some of them." The implementation of a standard measurement and tool based on technical factors to apply throughout the scrutinizing process for selecting capable potential candidates was suggested. However, this raises questions about the area of technical expertise the ICC candidate should have. According to the interview findings, since the ICC is delivering a wide range of technical functions and issues, including transportation, planning, environment and health, there is a need to put in place a detailed set of criteria stipulating the range of professional actors that should make up the composition of the council. However, this would be in contrast with the value of governance and would undermine the inclusiveness and significance of the ICC because it is in tension with the principle of electoral competition and pluralism. Furthermore, even if such criteria were designed, how could these ensure that all the required expertise are actually covered? It can be concluded that the critiques on the issues of the ICC representatives' competence mainly appeared to be linked with misapprehensions about the ICC being a technical institution. This false impression negatively affected the level of participation in ICC elections. As was discussed through the interviews, some people did not participate in the ICC elections because they were unconvinced about the technical competence of the candidates.

Technocratic governance commonly produces some effective results; however, it does not necessarily lead to good governance (Ward, 1998). Of course using experts within the make-up of the ICC can be considered positive; but it should not challenge the democratic value of the ICC. In addition, the research has revealed that the nature of key issues in the city is associated with political rather than technical matters. Therefore, most existing

challenges in the city require political solutions rather than technocratic ones, and a necessity to focus less on executive and technical matters and more on issues of politics. Centeno (1994) suggests that the key responsibility of local politicians is to go beyond the various experts and consultants; and to give a tangible and solid political response to the challenges that citizens are facing. From the researcher's viewpoint, the most appropriate way to tackle the knowledge and skill deficiency within the ICC is through employing in the ICC committees consultants and advisors with relevant awareness of different service area, rather than opting to expand the number of councillors or impose educational criteria upon ICC candidates.

In the same way, the selection of the mayor was considered to be a technical task, instead of a democratic and political exercise. Once again due to this misconception, the selection of mayor through direct participation was believed by many to be unable to guarantee a suitable choice of candidates for the mayoral position. Given that it is a specialised task, some interviewees argued that ordinary citizens' knowledge and understanding about the competency of potential nominees is limited, thus direct election may result in an inappropriate outcome. Therefore, it was suggested by many that the selection of a mayor by the ICC is the most appropriate method. Once again this is a clear sign of the domination of a technocratic view of urban governance, in which the ICC is estimated to be a pure technical entity with expert knowledge across a wide range of issues, including the selection of a mayor. Similarly, some participants argued that there is a need for the neighbourhood council members to possess a certain level of knowledge and awareness with regard to urban issues. However, from the researcher's viewpoint, since neighbourhood councils are not handling any executive, administrative or technocratic exercises in neighbourhoods, there is no requirement to prescribe the level of education needed for neighbourhood council representatives. These issues largely reflect the lack of awareness about the role and meaning of the ICC and of the municipality among ordinary citizens and among some professional actors.

### 9.3 Competition or collaboration?

This section presents findings about the quality of interactions between key stakeholders and decision-makers in the city. The nature and scope of the investigation was incapable of providing the information needed for a comprehensive analysis into all relationships, but remarks derived from the participants' interviews and the literature yield some insights. The section is divided into two parts: the relationship between central and local government; and the relationship between the ICC and Municipality.

#### 9.3.1 The relationship between central and local government

Undoubtedly, the manner of interactions and communications between and among state and local bodies is a crucial factor in shaping governance and once the relationships have been cemented, the exercise of governance appears to become easier. However, what was revealed through the research is that the absence of adequate interactions and correlations between different organisations affects “how” governance is implemented in the city. It was argued through the interviews that the design and structural limitations of the governance machinery impose contested relationships, instead of interaction and synergy. The co-existence of elected and appointed institutions in the governance landscape, combined with the lack of clarification about roles and interactions between organisations, leads to poor quality exchange. Furthermore, the organisational relationships between central government on the one hand and local governments and civic associations on the other, is viewed in terms of influence and control, instead of support. Akhouni *et al.*'s (2008a) review of governance indicates that these organisations do not have efficient horizontal interactions with each other and that their functions were formed and defined mainly through vertical organisational interactions (Akhouni *et al.* 2008a). Supporting this, Pejman, the mayor of the Mashhad<sup>1</sup> Metropolitan municipality, criticised the existing governance system by stating that cities are governed through multiple headquarters which, instead of correlating effectively, subsist with interference and conflict (Hamshahri, 2010a). To some degree, considering the discrepancies between central government and local government in complex cities such as Tehran, conflict is natural and inescapable. However, one key challenge for governance are the tensions between the central and local

government. To understand this issue, the research has explored some of the most recent contentious cases, mainly arising through the accounts of the interviewees. Such cases critically threaten the ecology of interactions.

*Case one:* Partial financial decentralization severely limits practical devolution, as well as producing tensions. This becomes a challenge for local government, because they are not entirely autonomous in financial issues and unable to accomplish key projects through taxes and levies. It is the central government's responsibility to fiscally support the municipality in key areas such as public transportation (e.g. the Metro). However, in many situations these fiscal relationships have a negative effect on cooperation and service provision. The municipality tends to be blamed for failing to manage its resources; and central government is guilty of a lack of effective financial assistance. Shakeeb, a councillor, describes the role of the municipality in managing the Metro system as 'appropriate'; and considered finance as a key challenge for the development of the Metro (Islamic City Council, 2009b). Furthermore, Moghimi, MP and head of the construction commission, argued that central government's resistance to provide financial support for the Metro has continued despite the efforts of parliament and of the ICC (Sama, 2010). By contrast, the head of the Traffic Supreme Council, an organisation at the national level, blames the municipality for the misconduct of financial resources and claims that the central government's fiscal support was sufficient and consistent with its codes and schedules (Borna, 2010a).

*Case two:* Similarly, central government's lack of persistence on delegation and of co-operation with the decentralization process may lead to friction between the central and the local government. Government at national level may try to enforce its control, but a severe tension exists between the desire for top-down actions and agreement at the local level (Rhodes, 1996).

Following the shift, urban transport management was reassigned from central to local government; however, a recent intention to revert this responsibility to central government resulted in some inconsistency. The proposal was largely rejected by the ICC, municipality and parliament collectively. Talaie, a representative of the ICC, criticizes the proposal

because it is in contrast with the principle of decentralization and code 44 of the constitution (Jam-e-Jam, 2010a). Similarly, Ghalibaf, the mayor of Tehran, states that the disagreement of the municipality with the scheme is because the key issue for Metro is finance, not administration and management (Shahr, 2010). Furthermore, Hosseinnejad, MP and head of the Urban Committee in parliament, argued that the central government's plan goes against the codes and bylaws that were approved by parliament in 2005, whereby responsibility for public transportation was devolved from central government to local government (Iraneconomist, 2010).

*Case three:* Central government's interference in local issues could create friction between central and local government. Another controversial proposal made by the central government was that it should introduce 22 or 11 governors for Tehran, directed by the national vice president. According to the existing pattern, the 22 district mayors are undertaking an executive local government role in the districts, so the new proposal was considered contradictory. Olia and Nariman, MP and member of the Urban Management commission in parliament, suggests that the proposal would lead to the interference of government in local affairs and create chaos and disorder in governance (Tehran-Emrooz, 2010). However, Tamodon, the provincial governor of Tehran argues that the proposal does not contrast with municipality functions and would not undermine local government and local decision-making. On the contrary, the proposal would facilitate services (Fars, 2010).

*Case four:* Segregation between the executive and political structures of urban management results in tensions and contrasts. Although aware that the proposal for the partition of Tehran was unsuccessful with negative social and physical effects, central government came up with an attempt to separate Shahre-Ray (district 20) from Tehran. The proposal was criticised by the local government. The mayor of Tehran argued that the plan is in contrast with the goals of the Tehran Master Plan and that it would undermine the vision for the development of the city (Donya-e-Eqtasad, 2010). In the same way, Bayadi, deputy of the ICC in Tehran, stated that the plan has spatial and physical consequences for the city and would negatively affect the neighbouring districts 15, 16 and 19 (ibid., 2010). In addition to these technical views, Masjedjamei, another member of the ICC, considered the

proposal from a political perspective, believing it was intended to undermine local government and bottom-up decision-making (Ilna, 2010a).

*Case five:* The central government's drive to impose its technical and procedural ideas may lead to conflict. This can be illustrated in the central government's plan for operating a 'monorail' in Tehran, in place of developing a 'Metro' system. The scheme, which was operationalised in some neighbourhoods of Tehran such as *Sadeghiye*, was faced with local government resistance and confrontation. Central government argues that the scheme has technically been given consent through the Supreme Council of Traffic, as the most advanced policy-maker in transport for the country. However, if the Transport Master Plan for Tehran is considered, there is no evidence of a plan to operate monorail in the city. Shakeeb, the ICC representative, suggests that any plan that regards the city needs to be certificated by the ICC and that the first priority in transport for local government is developing the Metro (Donya-e-Eqtasad, 2007b). In addition, Najafi, a councillor, argued that the plan has been formulated based on political motivations instead of expertise (Etemad-e-Melli, 2007). Ghalibif, the mayor of Tehran, suggests that based on the Transport Master Plan that has received parliamentary consent, the local government is held responsible for the management of transportation; therefore, any plan should be considered through the municipality and the ICC (Traffic-Tehran, 2007).

What emerged from the interviews was the emphasis on 'political factors and circumstances' in shaping the features of these relationships, more than any systematic interactions and organic relations. Indeed, each organisation has dealt with the issues in the city according to their own interests and considerations. As was argued by the participants, the quality of the relationships between governance stakeholders (central government, the ICC and the municipality) depended on their respective political interests. The key issue here is that in recent decades the city was led in opposition to, or in divergence from, those in office at the national level. In terms of governance this should enhance the distribution of power; however, in practice this resulted in political tensions which strongly constrained the scope of these entities to make a beneficial contribution to governance.

### 9.3.2 Relationships between the ICC and the Municipality

City management in Iran is established through the “Council-Manager” model (see Mouritzen and Svara: 2002). Based on this model, the mayor is selected by the council and has executive power in the city; thus the relationship between the ICC and the municipality is crucial for governance (ibid. 2002). It is possible that a key role exercised by the ICC is the oversight role, delivered through hearings and questions. This mechanism allows the ICC to consider cases of municipal misfeasance and obliges the municipality to be accountable for its actions. Based on the findings, the existing approach to ‘accountability’ appears to be the result of an acceptable interaction between the ICC and the Municipality. In line with this, the Head of the Social and Cultural Commission in the province’s supreme councils believes that despite some of these challenges, the cities have benefited from interactions between the councils and the municipalities (Fars, 2008). This supports Lapuente (2010) who argued that the Council-Manager model leads to a distinction in powers between the council and the municipality, which can facilitate an effective working relationship.

However, some evidence in the research shows that institutional and design barriers have an effect on delivering the existing role of the ICC in relation to the municipality. Such a view is indeed a point worthy of consideration and reflects the views expressed by Biadi, the ICC deputy. He criticized the municipality because of its disregard of several regulations authorised by the council, stating that ignoring the council’s guidelines and policies is endemic to the actions of the municipality (Irib, 2010; and Borna 2010b). Kashani, another representative of the ICC, expresses the view that the state of accountability in the municipality with regard to regulations approved by the ICC is insufficient (Iran Network, 2010). He considers the municipality’s response to these regulations to be reluctant and inadequate (ibid., 2010). Furthermore, Ahmadinejad, a councillor in the ICC argued that the monitoring role of the ICC has not been taken into account seriously by the municipality (Zaman, 2011).

As revealed through the interviews, fiscal disagreement is an issue that has undermined the interaction between the ICC and the Municipality. As an example, Daneshjo, the ICC spokesman, criticizes the municipality for overspending on some projects: in some cases, the municipality spent three times more than the approved financial plan (Jam-e-Jam, 2010b). He argues that due to this issue, there is a significant delay in accomplishing other key projects (ibid., 2010). Supporting this, Shakeeb, the ICC representative, claims that “within the ICC, no-one wants to blame the municipality. However, Ghaalibaf [the Mayor of Tehran] should be aware that the municipality’s financial procedures in the pecuniary and capital sectors have not been transparent” (ILNA, 2010: 4b). Contrasting with this view, Poorzarandi, the financial and administrative deputy of the municipality, claims that the municipality’s financial affairs are entirely transparent (Communications and International Affairs of Tehran Municipality, 2010).

What has emerged from the empirical and theoretical evidence suggests that the ICC is not fully equipped to play its monitoring role, as somehow regulations authorised by the ICC tend to be disrespected by the municipality. This affects interactions between the ICC and the municipality. These inconsistencies are linked mainly with issues of process rather than the structural features of the institutions in question; and relate to the regulations and criteria set to systematise the relations between the ICC and municipality. For instance, there are no specified procedures for conducting inquiries and hearings. In the same way, there is no clear-cut process through which the municipality can technically challenge the regulations approved by the ICC; thus these processes and mechanisms are not clear for either organisation. To support this, Azarbayjani *et al.* (2007) and Beheshti (2001) argued that the interactions between the two institutions required greater definition and the establishment of a more joined-up and balanced relationship. Clearly, one key issue is the relationship between the ICC and the municipality; here, it is worth noting that based on the ICC Act, the ICC can suspend the mayor for any abuse of office. However, since the ICC has no such power over the district mayors (22 districts) and the senior executives in the municipality, this results in poor working relationships and in an accountability deficit between the chief executives and the ICC. In some interviews it was suggested that the ICC should be given the power to terminate the employment of these senior municipality

executives. Contrasting with this position, Akhouni *et al.* (2008b) argued that such a proposal can lead the ICC to impinge on the executive responsibility of the municipality.

Furthermore, the technical limitations of the ICC are counted as a barrier to the effective implementation of its role. As was heard throughout the interviews, the ICC is ill-equipped financially, affecting the extent to which it can oversee the work of executives. Thus, the ICC's investigative capacities with regards to gaining information on the municipal executive agencies are considerably restricted. Apart from such institutional and technical issues, once again the role of political factors in shaping these interactions was revealed through the research. One of the expert interviewees from an academic institution mentioned the following with regard to the issue of interaction between the ICC and the municipality:

Where governance stakeholders have somewhat comparable political interests and have originated from identical political tendencies, the interactions and relationships have been strong.

This remark also relates to what is observed within the literature. For example, Akhouni *et al.* (2008) argued that it seems that the relationships between the council and the municipality have not been institutionalized in Iran (Akhouni *et al.*, 2008b).

## 9.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the main issues that emerged from the research. It begins with a discussion of the *UN-Habitat Urban Governance Index (UGI)* assessment method and its features. The assessment provides a broad outline of governance in Tehran. However, the research identified a number of issues which cannot be covered by such an assessment method. One general critique is that this method is unable to narrate the full story of governance in Tehran because it was unable to analyse key aspects and factors involved in governance. Furthermore, while the UGI laid its emphasis on the outcome indicators, the ‘input’ and ‘process’ indicators were missing from the assessment. This has led to an overemphasis on the result aspect. In fact the main divergence between the result from the UN-Index on the one hand and the interview findings on the other hand is that the UN-approach failed to capture and cover complex dimensions and variations in Tehran, which largely materialised through the interview findings.

The research findings show widespread central government involvement in the running of the city. In the central government ministries, departments are profoundly involved in city management, crowding out the involvement of the local government authority. Research shows that because these central government branches are directly involved in the management of urban affairs, the role of local government is strictly limited, thus reducing the input of local democracy. Basically the matter of the legislative and institutional limitations of the ICC differentiates the actual Council from its original and intended position in the constitution, as has been widely articulated throughout the study. This has an effect on public input and trust. The research shows that in order to realise decentralisation, local entities want to be offered further space and autonomy, for the purposes of which devolution is required, to bring about an appropriate transfer of authority and resources from the state to the local government.

This chapter has stated that the strategy for governance has not been translated into a meaningful reality on the ground. The lack of integrated urban management and the existence of multiple stakeholders lacking any kind of homogeneity in the city are considered to be a serious issue. This has a negative effect on accountability and

responsiveness of the local government. The discussion of the quality of relationships between governance stakeholders has shown that since these actors and stakeholders are mainly lacking in horizontally-compatible and focused relationships and objectives, poor interactions between them result. Institutional and design-related issues, fiscal disagreements, central government interference and political contests are considered to be major grounds for tensions between the stakeholders, undermining the capacity for good urban governance.

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<sup>1</sup>Mashhad is the second largest Metropolitan city in Iran.

## **Chapter 10 Research Conclusions and Recommendations**

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## **10.0 Introduction**

This chapter brings together the overall outcomes of this study on governance and participation in Tehran and addresses the central research aim of exploring the dynamic nature of and the interrelationships between, the factors that influence urban governance and local participation in Tehran. Based on the findings, it recommends ways through which the existing barriers and hindrances could be minimised and therefore the principles and meanings of governance achieved in a more effective manner. Furthermore, the chapter will discuss the limitations of the research, its contribution to knowledge and topics and recommendations for further research within the field of urban governance, and how these findings can help governance in practice.

### **10.1 Achievement of the Research Aims**

As discussed in the section 1.1, it is apparent that decision-makers have attempted to establish the new urban machinery of governance via a transformative process that has been referred to as ‘the shift’. The shift has influenced the city in many ways, including its strategies, policy-making, and governance. In terms of enhancing governance principles, the shift has affected accountability, transparency and participation. As discussed in Chapter 1, the research aimed to assess governance and participation in Iran. The data evaluated in this study underlines the general trend and course that key decision-makers are taking and their attitudes towards participation.

Based on the data triangulated and analysed, the findings of this research have shown that a number of the issues and circumstances that affect urban governance and participation in Iran’s cities appear to be linked with the general features revealed in the research literature, while others have emerged in explicit association with the Iranian context. The research considered the hindrances and barriers that affect the implementation of governance mechanisms to be dynamic in nature, as the issues continued to be active, even unsteady,

through all phases of the research. The next section sets out a debate on the independent response to each research question.

## 10.2 Responses to the Research Questions

As mentioned in Chapter One, the central aim of this research was “to explore the dynamic nature of and the interrelationships between, the factors that influence urban governance and local participation in Tehran”.

Three questions were established in order to achieve the central aim of this research, as follows:

1. How can urban governance be evaluated?
2. Which of the basics of good urban governance in Tehran are currently adequate or failing?
3. What measures can be taken to improve governance in Tehran?

To deal with the first query, the research considered the preceding investigations existing in recent literature on the subject of governance, its factors and values, as discussed in Chapter 2. Furthermore, taking the features and elements within the literature into account allowed the foundation of the selection of a well-established method for assessing governance, which was required to address the second research question. What has been achieved from this literature review is an understanding of governance with an emphasis on four general values and principles: participation, accountability, equity and effectiveness. Governance should aim to take on these values practically and inclusively in order to realise “**good governance**”.

Chapter 4 assessed urban governance in Tehran using the UN-Habitat Urban Governance Index. The assessment sets out four governance principles identified through the literature. These are detailed in Tables 4-9 and 4-10. The assessment identified **accountability** as the

most enhanced and **participation** as the weakest area of governance in Tehran. Based on these primary results and drives from implementation of the UN-assessment, the following four subsidiary questions were also addressed.

SQ1: How is the Islamic City Council (ICC) functioning in Tehran?

SQ2: Why is the voter turnout in local elections insufficient?

SQ3: Based on existing governance circumstances, what is the most appropriate method for mayoral selection in Tehran?

SQ4: How are public forums and civic associations functioning in Tehran?

To answer these complementary questions and to investigate and assess the dynamic nature of urban governance and participation in Tehran five indicators of participation, which were identified by the UN Index, were selected for the study: **elected council, voter turnout, selection of mayor, public forum and civic association**. Exploring these areas also inclusively and explicitly identified the governance gaps in the Iranian context; and the measures which needed to be taken into account to enhance urban governance in Tehran.

#### *Islamic City Council (ICC)*

Most of the participants considered the elected council as the major outcome of the local governance shift in 1997. The new decentralising mechanisms introduced by the shift (i.e. the electoral process and selection of mayor) contrasts with the centralised mode of decision-making in Iran. As shown by the data, the interviewees have argued for the enhancement of **devolution** at the local level through the establishment of the elected council. The Elected Council brings the decision-makers closer to the citizens and improves the responsiveness and transparency of decision-making processes. According to Matani (2003) the formation of the ICC upholds the decentralization and transfer of power. In general most interviewees supported the role of the ICC in improving accountability through its monitoring role with regards to the municipality (as discussed in Table 5.1).

Many highlighted that prior to the establishment of the ICC, city management tasks had been faced with serious deficiencies with regards to **transparency**. As a consequence of the newly achieved accountability, trust and confidence have to some extent been enhanced through the establishment of the ICC.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the UN's Millennium Project (2004) sets out a scheme of proposals and suggestions towards gender equality in decision-making and to give greater power to women. Based on this study's findings, the ICC provides innovative pathways and means to further gender-equity and women's engagement in city governance. It is evident from the data that the ICC offered a higher proportion of the available capacity to women. Women representatives' performance in the City Council demonstrate their "capability and aptitude confidently", as they play a key role in decision-making in the city. However, due to both social and technical factors, the municipality's capacity to allocate its key decision-making posts (e.g. the district mayor or deputy mayor) to women has not been realised.

Based on the data analysis, none of the stakeholders interviewed argued that the ICC is an **ideal** elected council. As noted in section 5.2 which analysed the ICC, there are various limitations and barriers that need to be addressed within the Councils. The analysis identified three major obstacles to the process of implementing good urban governance: institutional and legislative, structural and technical, and political limitations. With reference to the ICC's limitations, a large number of stakeholders emphasised institutional constraints, rather than technical and political hindrances. As is evident from the data, the legislative and institutional limitations of the ICC distance the ICC from its original position in the constitution. As noted in the analysis according to Code 103 of the constitutional law, central government executives, including governors and managers in cities and at the provincial scale, are obliged to respect the Council's decisions. However, by referring to the latest regulations, governmental organisations or administrators can waive their obligations to respect the council's decisions and orders. Thus according to existing circumstances the experts believed that the ICC is far from functioning as an "urban parliament" or a "city council". It was suggested by the experts that the

“municipality’s council” is a more realistic label for the present ICC system in Iran. This is due to the **partial** nature of devolution, as many responsibilities and roles have not been transferred from central government and its departments to the local bodies. This notion is in line with what Akhoundi *et al.* (2008a) noted with regard to the devolution of power and tasks of Iranian central government to local authorities being considered as deficient in its realisation.

#### *Voter turnout*

As discussed in Chapter 2, elections are considered as the core characteristic of democratic politics (Dulani, 2005). Based on the interview findings, the ICC’s elections are considered to be a key feature for enhancing urban public participation. Most interviewees suggested that the ICC elections uphold general democratic principles at the city level as every citizen is offered equal rights to participate in city affairs. However, some stakeholders were sceptical with regard to ICC elections. According to this vision, while the achievement of **good governance** should be associated with the understanding and implementation of both **representative** and **participatory** governance, the ICC elections merely focus on the representative kind.

As discussed in Chapter 6, while generally in Iran the level of voter turnout in the general elections (i.e. presidential elections) is high; at the city level (i.e. council elections) the level of participation is low. In the same way, the level of participation in the ICC elections in Tehran appeared to be even lower than the voter turnout at the national level, meaning that the level of participation in Tehran is even lower than the country’s average in the ICC elections. This is due to several factors (as presented in table 6.1). One of these is that local governance is in its early phases of evolution in Iran, as it was only in 1997 that policy-makers came to a decision about the implementation of local democracy. Its achievement therefore needs to be “gradual” and “timely”. This also resonates with what is argued by Wilde *et al.* (2008: 5): “Decentralized governance and building its processes is not a quick fix”. Another barrier mentioned by the stakeholders is the manner in which the organisation and its decision-makers have dealt with the ICC elections. The lack of a “collective mode

of determination” with regard to the ICC elections existed, in contrast to the general elections. Various associations, including “governmental” and “non-governmental” organisations, are “besieged” to get involved in general election procedures, thus society is fully equipped for the election processes. However, this sort of “willpower and driving-force” has not existed in the ICC elections. To enhance voter turnout in the ICC elections the following recommendations are put forward by various stakeholders:

**a) Combined Elections:** This view is based on the suggestion that the combination of the ICC elections with national elections, particularly presidential elections, will result in an increase in the level of voter participation (see Table 6.2). This combination supports the electoral enthusiasm that already exists in society during the presidential elections. This is likely to lead to a more consistent voter turnout in the ICC elections. This resonates with the view of Chamran, the head of the ICC in Tehran, who suggests that the level of participation in councils can be enhanced by a combination of local elections (council elections) and general elections (parliamentary and presidential elections) (Islamic Republic News Agency, 2010c).

**b) Enhancing Public Trust and Awareness:** As discussed throughout the interviews, trust is considered as a pivotal point for the level of voter turnout. This reflects Franklin’s (2004) claim that turnout is lower when the results of elections make little difference. What surfaced from the data about public awareness supported the view that public understanding of the ICC and of its elections are insufficient. There is a need to focus on building citizens’ awareness, knowledge and experience with regard to local democracy and participation in the city

**c) Inclusive and fair selection:** Based on the interview findings, inclusiveness in the selection of the ICC candidates appeared not to be fully achieved through the ICC electoral procedures. Thus, the way in which the monitoring bureau screens potential candidates is implicated. Interviewees observed the need for an impartial selection of individuals without discrimination and favouritism. It was suggested that an appropriate mechanism would be based on guidelines and codes instead of narrowed politicised interests, and be designed to

recruit a variety of individuals and disciplines for the purpose of election. The research confirms Franklin's (2004) view that there is a reduction in voter turnout when an election is not seen as competitive and inclusive.

**d) Enhancing the ICC's institutional position:** Findings in this section mainly reflect the institutional, technical and structural limitations of the ICC, which were discussed broadly in chapter 5. This is based on the suggestion that citizens are not convinced about the competence and capability of the ICC because of the ICC's insufficient political power in the overall governance of the city. The findings are in line with Boddy and Parkinson (2005: 121) that the "process of participation is sustainable where power is devolved". This also resonates with what is argued by Pateman (1970). As well as the quantity of participation, the quality of participation and how much of an effect citizens had on the outcome of the policy process is key for voter turnout (Pateman, 1970).

#### *Selection of Mayor*

Based on the interview findings, the direct participation model appears to be the most appropriate method for the selection of the mayor. The data indicates that this method would lead to promoting democratic principles and devolution in the city; and could offer more weight, credit and influence to the municipality. The stakeholders' view is based on the suggestion that subsequent to the shift in 1997, mayoral election would be the second major practical action towards decentralisation and devolution at city level. They argued that the public's direct contribution could enhance "accountability" and "responsiveness" in the municipality, in contrast to the existing system where the municipality is accountable to the ICC. According to this vision, in the existing method (selection of mayor through the ICC) lobbies and outsiders play a major role in appointing the mayor. They go on to suggest that the existing method may play a role in hindering trust in the process of mayoral selection, arguing that, "The processes and circumstances of selection of the mayor are ambiguous and unclear for the general public." According to interviewees, the fear of being sacked by the ICC made the mayoral position "unsteady" and "shaky" thus

making mayors less effective and efficient actors in the existing format. In many cases it appears that mayors can be sacked on the basis of “political” and “tactical” dissimilarities instead of “practical” and “technical” bases. Through the implementation of the direct election proposal, the mayor could not be sacked without any convincing reason. However, as Lapuente (2010) suggests, this method is not without its limitations. For example, according to the council-manager model (the existing model in Iran), the distribution and separation of powers between the elected legislator and the independently elected executive in the city has been achieved. Nevertheless, in the direct participation model (mayor-council) a high degree of concentration of power exists in the municipality (ibid., 2010). Supporting this point, a number of participants mentioned that the proposed direct participation method would lead to a decrease in the degree to which ICC voices and decisions are heard and respected. As discussed in Chapter 4 and 7, constitutionally the selection of the mayor is not the key duty of the ICC; but it nevertheless plays a significant role in shaping and forming the other ICC functions. As a result, if the ICC were to lose this role, it is likely that its monitoring role would be undermined as well, leading to failures in accountability and responsiveness in the municipality. They viewed the scheme as a gradual expunging of the ICC. This also resonates with what is argued by Falaschetti and Miller (2001) about the council-manager model of urban management, based on which the city executive is appointed by the council board. They believe that in such a model, the efficiencies of the corporation are better sustained in comparison with the mayor-council model in which both the executive and legislative organisation are elected separately by the direct participation method.

The previous method of selection of the mayor (through the Ministry of State) was considered as overly-bureaucratic, centrally managed and politicised. Thus, it was rejected by 55 interviewees representing all groups. However, a limited number of interviewees supported the previous method, on the grounds of the existing tensions between the municipality and the ICC. They defined the previous method as a “solid, integrated and steady” form of urban management. According to their view the conflict between the municipality and the ICC largely affected the municipality’s performance. “In the existing

method, the average time that each mayor is in municipal office is only one year and a few months”, as one of the respondents put it.

### *Neighbourhood Councils (public forums)*

As noted in Chapter 8, the neighbourhood councils were established following the shift in 1999 aiming to form a mechanism for participation at the lowest level of urban decision-making. Most participants, spread across the different stakeholder groups, demonstrated an overwhelming interest in the establishment of neighbourhood councils. Indeed, it is emphasised that the “good” neighbourhood council should support the “good governance code” and “standards”, and aim to strengthen the values and ideals of good urban governance. The neighbourhood councils are expected to operate as a mechanism for the public to express robust opinions and communicate with decision-makers in a legitimated manner. The neighbourhood councils in principle aim to offer every citizen equal rights to get involved and everyone’s voice should be heard in neighbourhood councils. Based on the research findings, the neighbourhood councils have constructive effects on two issues: 1) enhancement of governance values and principles; and 2) enhancement of policy-making and services (see Table 8.1).

The findings confirmed the inclusiveness and possibility of being selected as a nominee in the neighbourhood councils, as well as the openness and availability of the neighbourhood council meetings to all local residents. One crucial advantage of neighbourhood councils is the fact that their representatives are elected through direct participation. According to most participants the method of selection is devoid of any discrimination and partiality towards women, the disabled, the disadvantaged and ethnic minority groups. In the same way, it was suggested that trust had been affected positively throughout the Neighbourhood Council implementation. “The approval and recognition of decisions in neighbourhoods made by the urban machinery is enhanced among local residents” as one of the respondents put it. The participants argued that in their capacity as members of the neighbourhood council, neighbourhood representatives can affect the way in which information is

disseminated among local citizens. The point about strengthening social capital was also recognised by interviewees. Their view is based on the suggestion that through the neighbourhood council democracy can be practiced; and ordinary citizens can learn how to elect and be elected.

The neighbourhood councils' effect and influence on the city are linked more with the level of "local servicing" and "local basics", rather than with policy-making. It was noted that the delivery and quality of neighbourhood services has been to some extent enhanced through the neighbourhood councils. According to this vision, the key function of neighbourhood councils is first to "identify" and "monitor" neighbourhood issues, and second to bring about "consultation" and "collaboration" with the local authority ( i.e. the ICC and the Municipality) to address these issues.

However, the implementation of the neighbourhood councils is not without its impediments (see Table 8.2). The lack of efficient coordination and correlation between various spheres of urban decision-making with regard to the neighbourhood council was remarked upon by participants. Based on the research findings the neighbourhood councils have been faced with the "lack of a convinced attitude"; "uncertainty" and "unwillingness" among decision-makers. Despite their achievements in the "identification" of neighbourhood concerns and partly in the "consultation" with decision-makers, the neighbourhood councils were unable to constructively collaborate and associate with local authorities. This view is in line with what Kazemian and Shadmanfar (2008) noted, saying that this is mainly due to the fact that neighbourhood councils are not considered collectively by decision-makers as an orthodox and legitimated consultative body and therefore rarely have a significant influence on policy-making.

As evident from the data, citizens' awareness about neighbourhood councils was summarized in their knowledge of the existence of councils in their neighbourhoods. A common state of affairs was captured by the words of one participant in the study:

“personally I am not fully aware about what is going on in my Neighbourhood Council and I am uninformed of the agendas and programmes that are scheduled at my local council.”

### *Civic Associations*

It has been emphasised that the full operation of civic associations could lead to the realisation of participatory governance and enhance social capital. According to the participants there are significant relationships between civic associations and social capital. The enhancement of civic associations results from the building of social capital. Similarly, civic associations with capacities of knowledge and experience can be considered as motivators and foundations for building social capital. Civic associations are deep-rooted in their respective fields in terms of their make-up and connections; they can collectively “facilitate”, “accelerate” and “simplify” public inputs into urban matters.

The key strength of civic associations in Iran was mainly summarised in their tradition and history. Thus, the “traditional associative spaces” such as charitable foundations, communal companies and cooperatives (*Ta'avoniha*); charitable trust banks (*Sandooghe Gharzolhasaneh*); donor institutions and religious communities (*Hey'athaye mazhabi*); play a key role in forming and shaping existing civic associations in Iran. However, concerns over the independence and autonomy of these associations were raised. One reason for this is that they are largely reliant upon government financial supports.

As evident from the data, most stakeholders argue that the influence of civic associations on city governance procedures is “negligible” and that their position in the urban machinery has been “ignored”. Based on the interview findings, this “segregation” is caused by two issues: 1) central government attitudes towards civic associations; and 2) internal and technical hindrances (see Table 8.3). According to interviewees, the dominant top-down attitudes towards these associations are ones of “suspicion” and “doubt” rather than “promotion” and “endorsement”. This also resonates with what is argued by Khrestin (2006) and Unerman and O'Dwyer (2006). Recently central governments have emphasized the scrutiny of the autonomy of civic associations through examining their financial

procedures and their political behaviours, due to the suspicion that they were in effect overseas agents (ibid, 2006).

Furthermore in terms of technical hindrances, the issue of transparency was considered as one of major concern for civic associations. This reflects the views made clear by Raynard (2000) and Naidoo (2004) that a dearth of transparency in civic associations is both destroying the reputation of the sector, and opposing to its values and principles. All civic association interviewees emphasised the complexity of procedures along with “bureaucratic” and “institutional” barriers. According to the civic associations interviewed, the process of registration, as required by the central government scrutiny process, is time-consuming, fussy, ambiguous and without precise milestones. Financial matters are considered as a significant limitation for civic associations. Due to this issue, a lack of facilities and a place and location in which to carry out their meetings are widespread among civic associations.

### **10.3 Recommendations**

The following sections consider recommendations emerging from the analysis of data and research findings.

The deficit in institutional weight has been considered a crucial challenge for local associations in general and the ICC in particular. The insufficient legal capacity of local government and local government’s existence under conditions of insufficient autonomy still serve as basis for lack of ‘good urban governance’. As discussed in chapter 9, local government responsibilities are mainly limited to servicing and providing urban infrastructures in the city. The data (as highlighted in section 5.2.3) also indicate that local government voices are not heard on many key issues in the city. Because central government has not transferred sufficient competencies to local government, a centralised dominance and unbalanced interaction of levels of governance is noticeable. In order to address the matter, central government needs to transfer the tasks and responsibilities projected in ‘Act 44’ and articles 136 and 137 of the country’s third and fourth

Development Schemes, into local government. Since facing delays and resistances (as highlighted in Chapter 9), the Acts are not consistently implemented and law enforcement remains inefficient. To accelerate and ensure the processes of devolution, these processes need to be supported and monitored by parliament in a more effective way. The empowering of local government should not be limited to transferring insignificant responsibilities from central to local government, rather a certain level of power at the local level needs to be assured. For instance, the limited fiscal capacity and autonomy of the municipality commonly results in significant hindrances to the city-making and managing competence of local government. There is a need to offer autonomy in designing and implementing long-term economic programmes, strategies and development plans on financial matters.

The effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Council (forums) with reference to public participation would be practicable if two conditions were met. Firstly, the forums must be fully staffed through the neighbourhoods; thus they must not draw from a pool of personnel that reaches beyond local actors and stakeholders. Secondly, the state and urban executives' attitudes toward the Neighbourhood Council need to be improved. This view is based on the suggestion that to act dynamically, the Neighbourhood Council must be continually interacting and communicating with its stakeholders in both directions. On the one hand it should be fully conversant with the bottom tiers (citizens and community based organisations). Their interactions with these kinds of grassroots institutions, community based organisations and NGOs at the local level can considerably enhance their efficiency. On the other hand it is necessary for forums to be entirely supported from the higher level of state and urban headquarters; consequently an appropriate level of institutional voices and weight and long-term strategies need to be offered to the forums.

The issue of a lack of well-established and structured formation of political parties was highlighted through the interviews. Thus, without a systematic and fair party system, it is hard to believe that fairness, trust, inclusion and collegiality will be ensured in the electoral processes. Furthermore, this affects the level of voter turnout in elections. According to

Franklin (2004), when the political system is seen as markedly segregated, the level of participation reduces. He suggests that the existence of main parties or coalitions which present consistency and integration to the system can emerge as crucial (ibid. 2004).

According to research findings, the major strengths of local participation in Iran are reflected in their traditions and history. Prior to the establishment of the existing initiatives (i.e. public forums, ICC) in 1997, neighbourhood foundations (i.e. *Anjomanhaye mahalat*) were in operation throughout Iran's established history, whereby the bulk of issues at the neighbourhood level were tackled through the traditional mechanisms of participation. Thus, local participation in Iran could be considered as both very old and very new. Therefore, instead of launching governance initiatives through simply adopting a model, the necessity of evolving initiatives according to local circumstances and the needs of citizens are clear.

#### **10.4 Research Contribution**

There has been a substantial increase in the amount of literature on the issues in question, as detailed in section 2.1. This research has added to that body of work by researching a city that has been overlooked and neglected in the literature. This research makes an original contribution to the literature by evaluating urban governance in Tehran (as depicted in figures 4.9 and 4.10). This evaluation has emerged and developed from the initial deployment of the UN-Habitat UGI assessment method to present the position of urban governance in Tehran. In fact, there is no pre-existing research in Iran pertaining to the assessment of urban governance. This study helps to fill the gap. The study also promotes a greater understanding of using the UN-UGI assessment, revealing to policy-makers and researchers some of the deficiencies and limitations associated with it that prevent its outcomes from being comprehensive (see section 9.1). Thus, this assessment method was unable to narrate the full story of urban governance in Tehran and it became clear that there is a need to observe a certain level of caution in using it. This study then continued to develop its understanding of Tehran's urban governance through using case study research

methods mainly based on a qualitative investigation. The research adds to the field of urban and local governance through providing a dynamic view of factors that affect urban governance and citizen participation. This approach highlights institutional, legal and technical factors and interrelationships between these factors that affect quality of governance. The research presents the nature of deficiencies within various governance spheres: at the national and urban level, bottom-level institutions and citizens. There are also suggestions for some ways forward in tackling the identified governance and participation deficits. This account formulates the groundwork for offering a deeper insight into city governance and participation factors in a specifically Iranian context. As central to the entire discipline of governance, achieving citizens' participation and engagement would be a key driving force for good governance and enhancing its principles and values. The research findings that can assist key governance policy-makers and decision-makers to take into account the elements and essentials of city governance and participation, in order to augment the likelihood of success in their agenda with reference to governance. Due to the significance of the issue of participation for society, reviewing the factors and features which essentially influence and shape the formation of governance in cities would be a practical manner in which to highlight the essentials and affect the predominant attitudes among key decision-makers with regard to the concept of participation.

One issue with regards to the assessment of governance is the over-emphasis on quantitative approaches (Gissendanner, 2003). Furthermore the main existing assessments, which are mainly delivered by international agents, are drawn from data published in administrative documents and statistics, without any effort to achieve bottom-up input. This study therefore contributes to filling the gap through using qualitative methods, and the range of various stakeholders' perspectives, including ordinary citizens, involved in governance. Using a range of stakeholders' perspectives allows the study to establish a tangible and firm basis that results in exploring governance in a richer way.

## 10.5 Limitations of research

Similar to any research project, this study was not without its limitations. The following accounts address the limitations of this study. The first issue is that the outcomes of this research are symptomatic and not conclusive and comprehensive. The core results can be explored and analysed in more detail and in a more focused way through a large scale quantitative study approach. The second limitation is that as the research focused on Tehran, the results and findings of this study cannot be generalised to other places and situations without further exploration.

As discussed in Chapter 2 there is extensive amount of literature on governance assessment, indicators and sub-indicators, that has been designed by international and national bodies intending to measure governance. Nevertheless, there is currently no set of rules on how governance analysis should be designed, managed, or phased. It was therefore, tricky to distinguish which approach would be the most inclusive and exhaustive. This undoubtedly made the researcher hesitant and confused about identifying and selecting the most appropriate method of assessment. Although the approach ultimately selected was the well-established UN-UGI approach to governance measurement, its primary list of indicators can be considered inexhaustive. However, measures were taken through the qualitative interviews to reduce the deficiency of indicators and sub-indicators. These indicators and sub-indicators continued to be improved and revised following the pilot case study and data gathering phases.

Since the interviews were conducted in Persian, translating original data from Persian into English was risky, as some expressions in Persian had no specified meaning in English or some similar English words had a different meaning in Persian. The researcher had to try to discover a manner of defining a range of words and expressions accurately and precisely without losing their original meanings.

## **10.6 Future research**

There are several implications from the research findings that are of note for further research in governance. The results emerging from the five defined areas of governance assessment can be tested independently in a more focused way using a quantitative approach. For example, assessing the ‘methods’ through which the selection of a mayor should be conducted can be ascertained from a large scale quantitative research study. Similarly, the turnout deficit in local elections can be tested using a quantitative approach to achieve a wider and more numerically proportionate sample.

More study could be conducted into the role of the ICC as a legislative and monitoring body in the city, discovering the role of ICC representatives towards the policy development and monitoring agendas in the city. These issues could help the public in defining the effectiveness of the ICC for governance. Further study is needed regarding the application of devolution and decentralisation. For instance, it will be interesting to investigate and see if local government capacity is able to apply the transferral of responsibilities and tasks from central government to local government.

## **10.7 Conclusion**

This final chapter has given responses to the research questions. In addition, the urban governance features that have been established within the Iranian context have been integrated with those identified in the literature. Based on the research findings, a number of suggestions have been offered regarding how urban governance can be improved. The contribution of the research to the existing body of knowledge was viewed in terms of a number of issues, such as filling an important gap, by researching a city that has been overlooked and neglected in literature; as well as providing a research approach and methods for implementing this. This chapter has also presented some ideas for future research in urban/local governance areas deriving from this study, as well as a consideration of the limits and constraints to the research which have been faced by the

researcher. The results of the research fundamentally show that good urban governance is highly complex in nature and its implementation requires both time and vision.

**List of Abbreviations**

<b>CAs</b>	<b>Civic Associations</b>
<b>CBOs</b>	<b>Community Based Organisations</b>
<b>ICC</b>	<b>Islamic City Council</b>
<b>IDEA</b>	<b>International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance</b>
<b>GOI</b>	<b>Government of India</b>
<b>LC</b>	<b>Local Council (Neighbourhood Council)</b>
<b>LGB</b>	<b>Local Government Barometer</b>
<b>MDGs</b>	<b>Millennium Development Goals</b>
<b>NGOs</b>	<b>None Governmental Organisations</b>
<b>OMRA</b>	<b>Organization of Municipalities and Rural Administration</b>
<b>TUGI</b>	<b>The Urban Governance Initiative</b>
<b>UCIG</b>	<b>United Cities and Local Governments</b>
<b>UN-UGI</b>	<b>UN-Habitat Urban Governance Index</b>
<b>UNDP</b>	<b>United Nation Development Programme</b>
<b>UNCHS</b>	<b>United Nations Centre for Human Settlements</b>

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## Appendix 1: Information Sheet for Participants

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University of Newcastle  
School of Architecture, Planning  
and Landscape

### **Interview: Urban Governance and Participation**

I would like to invite you to take part in this original research project. You should only take part if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part<sup>7</sup> it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The purpose of this interview is to aid the researcher in developing a survey for the purpose of assessing urban governance structure and function in Iran/ Tehran. I am doing this research because I want to understand how the urban governance is functioning currently in Tehran and the research is intended to support future improvements in the urban governance system. You are being asked to review the proposed questionnaire and share your experience with the researcher. I will ask you about your opinions on urban governance practices. I am particularly interested in how you assume urban governance shift has obtained good governance features in Iran. It is expected that this will require no more than 1 hour of your time. There are minimal risks expected as a result of this study. In the unlikely event that you experience any anxiety or discomfort due to the discussion during interview, please notify researcher.

The information obtained through this interview will be kept confidential by the researcher. Your name will not be identified with any information collected during this research project, without your written permission to do so. Questions or concerns

regarding this study can be directed to the researcher: Zahed Shafiei at, zahed.shafiei@newcastle.ac.uk.

It is up to you to decide whether, or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign up a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason, if you decided that you no longer want to be part of the research project.

**Thanks for Your Cooperation**

## **Appendix 2: Themes of Interviews**

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### **Part One: General Questions on Urban Transformation**

- Defining the public participation
- Governance transformation in 1997 contributions

### **Part Two: Islamic City Council**

- Urban council as a mechanism help to progress urban governance
- Council's skeleton and structure
- Relationships and interactions between the elected councils and municipality
- The council effectiveness in offering a chance for women participation

### **Part Three: Municipality and Selection of mayor**

- Citizen awareness and inform about the municipality decisions
- The relationships between municipality and central government
- Appropriate method for selection of mayor

### **Part Four: Voter Turnout**

- Urban and local elections affect on urban governance
- Voter turnout in local elections
- The existing barriers in voter turnout in local elections

### **Part Five: Public Forum/ Neighbourhood Council**

- The effectiveness of forum towards interaction of citizens and local government
- The effectiveness of forums to address neighbourhood concerns
- Citizen experiences with of non-electoral forms of participation

### **Part Six: Civic Association and NGOs**

- Citizen awareness on and interaction with Civic Association
- The level of engagement of Civic Association in city governance

### Appendix 3: Consent Form for Participants in Research Study

---

Thank you for thinking about taking part in this research. Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet.

**Title of Study:** Contested Understanding of Urban Governance

I have read the information sheet, and I understand what it means. Yes      No

I understand that I do not have to take part in this research if I don't want to, and I can leave at any time. Yes      No

I agree to the interview being recorded (sound only). Yes      No

I understand that my real name will not be used with my words in any report and publications, and that my details will be kept private. Yes      No

Your name (please print):-----

Signed: -----

Date: -----

Please contact me at the Newcastle University if you have any more questions or no longer want to be involved in this research.

Zahed Shafiei

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## Appendix 4 Urban Governance Index: Methodology Guidelines

This document is an **addendum** to the “*Conceptual Foundation and Field Test Report*” on the Urban Governance Index (August 2004). It is designed as a reference guide to the two alternative sets of indicators proposed in the final report. It provides the description of 25 indicators short-listed, which also include the 18 core set of indicators. The indicators are grouped in sub-indices covering the core urban governance principles of Effectiveness, Equity, Participation and Accountability. The following format is followed for explaining the indicators:

**Indicator:** Indicators number and title

**Principle(s):** States the core principle(s) of Good Urban Governance monitored by the indicator.

**Definition:** The technical definition of the indicator

**Methodology:** Describes the methodology for obtaining and collection of data as well as for the calculation of results

**Reference:** The source from which the indicator was obtained



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## A. Effectiveness

<b>Indicator 1:</b>	<b>Local government revenue per capita (core set, no.1)</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	<b>Effectiveness; Accountability</b>
<b>Definition:</b>	The total local government revenue (income annually collected, both capital and recurrent for the metropolitan area, in US dollars) per capita (3 year average)
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>The indicator is measured by identifying the following data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total local government revenue (R): This includes the income annually collected, both capital and recurrent for the metropolitan area, in US dollars). A 3 years average of the values is undertaken. Please make sure to specify whether the information is for the municipal area or the metropolitan region.</li> <li>• Total population (P). Please make sure that the spatial unit (municipality/metropolitan) is standard for the local government revenue and the population size.</li> <li>• Local government revenue per capita (LGR) = <math>R/P</math></li> </ul>
<b>Reference:</b>	Global Urban Indicators Data base

<b>Indicator 2:</b>	<b>Ratio of actual recurrent and capital budget</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	<b>Effectiveness; Accountability</b>
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>The indicator is measured by identifying the following data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The total local government recurrent budget (R) : Recurrent includes income derived on a regular basis (e.g. taxes and user charges)</li> <li>• The total local government capital budget (C): Capital includes fixed income, that is derived after allocation of funds from internal or external sources (E.g. higher levels of government, private sector, donor agencies).</li> <li>• Ratio of actual recurrent and capital budget (RRC) = <math>R/C</math></li> </ul>
<b>Reference:</b>	New Indicator, adapted from Global Urban Indicators Data base

<b>Indicator 3:</b>	<b>Local government revenue transfers (core set, no.2)</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	<b>Effectiveness; Accountability, Participation</b>
<b>Definition:</b>	Percentage of local government revenue originating from higher levels of government. This includes formula driven payments (such as repatriation of income tax), other grant donations from higher government levels including national or state governments and other types of transfers.
<b>Methodology:</b>	The indicator is measured by identifying the following data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local government revenue (R) = Total local government revenue (transfers and non-transfers)</li> <li>• Transfers in local government revenue (T): Income originating from higher levels of government, which include formula driven payments (such as repatriation of income tax), other grant donations from higher government levels including national or state governments and other types of transfers</li> <li>• Percentage of local government transfer (LGT) = <math>(T / R) * 100</math></li> <li>• Scoring on the percentage of transfers: 0-25% = 1.0; 25-50% = 0.75; 50-75% = 0.50 and 75-100% = 0.25</li> </ul>
<b>Reference:</b>	UN-HABITAT Global Urban Indicators Database (GUID)

<b>Indicator 4:</b>	<b>Ratio of mandated to actual tax collection (core set, no.3)</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	<b>Effectiveness; Accountability, Participation</b>
<b>Definition:</b>	Ratio of mandated tax collected to the actual tax collected. Tax collection is one of the sources of income for the local government.
<b>Methodology:</b>	The indicator is measured by identifying the following data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actual tax collected (C)</li> <li>• Mandated (planned) tax to be collected (M)</li> <li>• Ratio of mandated to actual tax collected (TC): <math>C/M</math></li> </ul> <p><u>Taxes:</u> municipal rates and levies, any local taxes on the transfer of property and any other taxes such as entertainment or hotel taxes, motor vehicle taxes, taxes on business which do not reflect the direct provision of services</p>
<b>Reference:</b>	New Indicator, Adapted from UN-HABITAT Global Urban Indicators Database (GUID)

<b>Indicator 5:</b>	<b>Predictability of transfers in local government budget</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b>
<b>Definition:</b>	Does the local authority know well in advance (2-3 years) about the amount of budget and level of consistency/regularity in receiving transfer from higher government?
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>1. The effort is to measure whether the local authority knows well in advance (2-3 years) about the amount of budget and level of consistency/regularity in receiving transfer from higher government.</p> <p>The following queries need to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is the amount of fund transfers from higher level of govt. (national/state known in advance (approx. 2-3 years) of the local budgeting process? (Yes/No)</li> </ul> <p>2. The second important aspect to measure the “basis” of transfers. For example, the population in 1999 was 1 million and the transfer was \$1 million. In 2000, the population was 1.1 million, but the amount of transfers was \$900,000. In the absence of a strong correlation between the basis and the transfer amount, the transfers may not be predictable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is there a basis to determine the transfer amount? (Yes/No)</li> </ul> <p>The transfers include the formula driven payments (such as repatriation of income tax) and other grant donations from higher government levels including national or state governments</p>
<b>Reference:</b>	New Indicator

<b>Indicator 6:</b>	<b>Published performance delivery standards (core set, no. 4)</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	<b>Effectiveness, accountability</b>
<b>Definition:</b>	Presence or absence of a formal publication by the local government of performance standards for key services delivered by the local authority.
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>The following queries need to be addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there currently a formal publication of performance standards for key services delivered by the local authority? (<b>PPS</b>) (Yes/No)</li> <li>• If yes, what is the number of key services for which the PPS is present (<b>S</b>)</li> <li>• What is the total number of key services for which PPDS should be present (<b>T</b>)</li> <li>• Published performance delivery standards (PPDS) : <b>PPS x S/T</b></li> </ul> <p>Key services include: Water supply, electricity, sanitation, solid waste management, health, education and others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At what institutional level does the publication of performance standard takes place? (Municipality/District/State/Province)</li> </ul>
<b>Reference:</b>	New indicator

<b>Indicator: 7</b>	<b>Consumer Satisfaction Survey</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	Effectiveness, Accountability
<b>Definition:</b>	Existence and frequency of a survey on consumers' satisfaction with the local authority's services.
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>The indicator is measured by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a survey of consumer satisfaction with local government services being undertaken in the city? (Yes/No)</li> <li>• At what institutional level is the consumer satisfaction survey undertaken? (Municipality/District/State/Province)</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Data can be available at individual government departments / consumer courts, sometimes Consumer Satisfaction Surveys might be handled by a department external to government, such as a local university.</i></p>
<b>Reference:</b>	New Indicator

<b>Indicator 8:</b>	<b>Existence of a vision statement</b>
<b>Principle s):</b>	Effectiveness, Accountability, Participation
<b>Definition:</b>	The measure of local authorities commitment in articulating a vision for the city's progress. Does the local authority articulate a vision for the city's future through a participatory process?
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>The following queries need to be answered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a vision statement developed for the cities' future by the local government (VS)? (Yes/no)</li> <li>• If Yes, has the vision statement been drafted through a participatory process (involving local government, civil society and the private sector (PP))? (Yes/No)</li> <li>• Vision statement (VSE) = 0.5 (VS + PP)</li> </ul>
<b>Reference:</b>	New indicator

## B. Equity

<b>Indicator 9:</b>	<b>Citizens' Charter: right of access to basic services (core set, no. 5)</b>
<b>Principle(s)</b>	Equity, Accountability
<b>Definition</b>	Presence or absence of a signed, published statement (charter) from the local authority which acknowledges citizens' right of access to basic services.
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>The Citizen'' Charter may have been drafted by the local authority or representative people's associations. The following queries need to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a signed, published statement (charter) from the local authority which acknowledges citizens' right of access to basic services (<b>CC</b>)? (Yes/No)</li> <li>• If yes, what is the number of key services for which the CC is present (<b>S</b>)?</li> <li>• What is the total number of key services for which CC should be present (<b>T</b>)?</li> <li>• Citizen charter for basic services (<b>CCS</b>) = <math>CC \times S/T</math></li> </ul> <p>Additional information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If Yes, at what institutional level the published statement acknowledges citizens' rights for basic services?</li> <li>• Key services include: Water supply, electricity, sanitation, solid waste management, health, education and others.</li> <li>• What is the medium of publication of the Charter? (Newspaper, radio, Internet, Notice Board etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Reference:</b>	New indicator

<p><b>Indicator 10 &amp; 11</b></p> <p><b>Principle(s)</b></p> <p><b>Definition</b></p> <p><b>Methodology:</b></p> <p><b>Reference:</b></p>	<p><b>Women councilors (core set, no. 6 and 7)</b></p> <p>Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of women councilors to the total number of councilors in a local authority (in the last election).</li> <li>Percentage of women councilors in key positions.</li> </ul> <p>The following queries need to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the Number of women councilors, both elected and nominated (in the last election), as a percentage of the total number of councilors in the local authority? This can be answered by applying the simple equation:</li> </ul> $X = \frac{(We + Wn) \times 100}{T}$ <p>Where <i>X</i>=Percentage of women councilors; <i>We</i>= No. of women councilors elected; <i>Wn</i>= No. of women councilors nominated; <i>T</i>= Total no. of councilors in the last elections, <i>Wk</i>- = No. of women in key positions (Mayor, Deputy Mayor etc.), <i>Y</i> = Percentage of women in key positions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of women councilors in key positions, can be addressed by:</li> </ul> $Y = \frac{Wk \times 100}{T}$ <p>Additional information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In what year was the most recent election held (e.g. 2001)?</li> <li>What is the frequency of local elections? (e.g. every 3, 4, or 5 years)</li> <li>What is the break up of women councilors position? (Mayor, Deputy Mayor etc.)</li> </ul> <p>World Bank - "Women representation in municipal positions as % of total representation"</p>
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<b>Indicator 12:</b>	<b>Pro-poor pricing policies for water (core set, no. 8)</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	Equity
<b>Definition:</b>	Presence or absence of a pricing policy for water which takes into account the needs of the poor households, translated into lower rates for them compared to other groups and prices applied to business/industrial consumption.
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>The pro-poor policy can be evaluated in terms of its content and the actions undertaken through the policy. The following queries need to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is there a pro-poor pricing policy for water? (Yes/No)</li> <li>▪ Percentage households with access to water supply (within 200m)</li> <li>▪ Median price of water (supplied by the local authority): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Informal settlements (poor households) (Wi)</li> <li>- Other residents (Wr)</li> <li>- Difference in the median water price = <math>Wr - Wi</math></li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ In the absence of no data on water price the following information will be useful: Is the water price in informal settlements, same or cheaper than the other residential areas? (Yes/No)</li> </ul> <p>Additional information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· What is the water supply delivery mechanism?</li> <li>· If yes, please explain the policy's key features (e.g. subsidy or cross-subsidy).</li> </ul> <p><i>Average price of water is the cost per hundred liters of water in US dollars, at the time of year when water is most expensive.</i></p>
<b>Reference:</b>	New indicator

<b>Indicator 13:</b>	<b>Incentives for informal businesses</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	<b>Equity</b>
<b>Definition:</b>	Presence of particular areas in the central retail areas of the city where small scale (informal) street vending is not allowed (or submitted to particular restrictions). Also measures the existence of incentives for informal businesses e.g. street vending, informal public markets, and municipal fairs.
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>The informal nature of his activity would render it difficult to quantify in absolute terms. However, the following simple queries will determine the local governments effort to support the informal sector, thus signifying principles of equity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are there any particular areas in the central retail areas of the city where small scale (informal) street vending is <u>not allowed</u>? (Yes/No)</li> <li>- Are there any particular areas in the central retail areas of the city where small scale street vending is submitted to <u>particular restrictions</u>? (Yes/ No)</li> <li>- Are there any other incentives like <u>information pubic markets, municipal fairs</u>? (Yes/No)</li> </ul> <p>Additional information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Within the past year, approximately how many protests or confrontations have taken place involving informal street vendors and local authorities or police?</li> </ul>
<b>Reference:</b>	New indicator

### C. Participation

<b>Indicator: 14</b>	<b>Elected Council (core set, no. 9)</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	Participation; Effectiveness
<b>Definition:</b>	The indicator measures whether the local governing council is elected through a democratic process or not. An Elected Council is a body of Local Government Officials selected/chosen by the local population through organized voting with an administrative, advisory or representative function at the City Level. (Defined from Dictionary)
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>The indicator is measured by a simple ‘yes/no’ questions that should however be verified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are councilors locally elected? (Yes/No)</li> <li>- If the councilors are both elected as well as appointed, please provide the distribution (% appointed and % elected).</li> </ul>
<b>Reference:</b>	New indicator

<b>Indicator:</b> <b>15</b>	<b>Selection of Mayor (core set, no. 10)</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	Participation; Effectiveness, Accountability
<b>Definition:</b>	The indicator measures how the mayor is selected, whether directly elected, elected amongst the councilors or appointed.
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>The indicator is measured by providing a simple Yes/No:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the process of selecting the Mayor? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Directly elected</li> <li>- Elected amongst councilors</li> <li>- Appointed</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Intermediate scores have been applied towards this indicator, directly elected (1.0), elected amongst councilors (0.75) and appointed (0.50).</i></p>
<b>Reference:</b>	Devas, Nick (2000) Connections between Urban Governance and Poverty, Theme Paper 20 in the Urban Governance, Poverty and Partnerships Study, University of Birmingham, UK.

<b>Indicator:</b> <b>16</b>	<b>Voter turnout (core set, no. 11)</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	Participation, Equity, Accountability, Effectiveness
<b>Definition:</b>	Total voter turnout (both male and female) in percentage in the last election.
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>Voter turnout (both male and female) in percentage is simple indicator that measures voter participation.</p> <p><u>Additional information:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the frequency of elections?</li> <li>- Which year was the last election held?</li> </ul>
<b>Reference:</b>	UN-HABITAT Global Urban Indicators Database (GUID)

<b>Indicator:</b> <b>17</b>	<b>Public forum (core set, no. 12)</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	Participation
<b>Definition:</b>	The public forum could include people's council, city consultation, neighborhood advisory committees, town hall meetings etc.
<b>Methodology:</b>	The indicator is measured by a simple 'yes/no' question with additional open-ended information on the type of public forum.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is there any public forum for the citizens to express their views? (Yes/No)</li> <li>- If yes, please provide information on the type of public forum, frequency (how many times in a month or year) of such forums.</li> </ul>
<b>Reference:</b>	New Indicator

<b>Indicator:</b> <b>18</b>	<b>Civic Associations per 10,000 population (core set, no. 13)</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	Participation, Equity, Accountability, Effectiveness, Security
<b>Definition:</b>	Measured as the number of civic associations (registered) per 10,000 people within the local authority's jurisdiction.
<b>Methodology:</b>	The total city population is divided into clusters of 10,000. Divide the city's population first by 10,000 and then by the number of civic associations registered with the local authority.  $C = 10,000 \times \frac{N}{Y}$ <p><i>C is the Civic association per thousand populations; N is the number of Civic Associations and Y is the Total Urban Population.</i></p>
<b>Reference:</b>	New Indicator (Adapted from UN-HABITAT Global Urban Indicators Database)

## D. Accountability

<b>Indicator 19:</b>	<b>Formal Publication of contracts/tenders, budgets &amp; accounts (core set, no. 14)</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	Accountability (Transparency), Participation, Equity, Effectiveness
<b>Definition:</b>	Existence of a formal publication (to be accessible) by the local government that consists of contracts, tenders and budgets and accounts.
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>A formal publication process may be assessed through regular mass publication of contracts, tenders, budgets and accounts of the local government's activities.</p> <p>The following queries need to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is there a formal publication of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contracts and tenders? (Yes/No)</li> <li>- Budgets and accounts? (Yes/No)</li> </ul> </li> <li>- What is the medium of publication of the standards? (E.g. Newspaper, radio, Internet, notice board etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Reference:</b>	UN-HABITAT Global Urban Indicators Database (GUID)

<b>Indicator 20:</b>	<b>Control by higher levels of Government (core set, no. 15)</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	Accountability (Responsiveness), Effectiveness, Participation
<b>Definition:</b>	Measures the control of the higher levels of government (National, State /provincial) for closing the local government and removing councilors from office.
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>The indicator is measured by a simple “yes” or “no” to the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can higher levels of government (National, State /provincial): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Close the local government? (Yes/No)</li> <li>- Remove councilors from office? (Yes/No)</li> <li>- If the higher level of government can remove the councilors, what is the process?</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Can the local government, without permission from higher governments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set local tax levels?</li> <li>- Set user charges for services?</li> <li>- Borrow funds?</li> <li>- Choose contractors for projects?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Reference:</b>	UN-HABITAT Global Urban Indicators Database (GUID)

<b>Indicator 21:</b>	<b>Codes of conduct</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	Accountability (integrity), Participation, Equity
<b>Definition:</b>	Existence of a signed published statement of the standards of conduct that citizens are entitled to from their elected officials and local government staff.
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>The following queries need to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is there a signed, published statement of standards of conduct citizens are entitled to from their elected officials and local government staff? (Yes/No)</li> <li>- At what institutional level are these codes of conduct prescribed? (Municipality, State/Province)</li> <li>- If the codes of conduct are prescribed at the District/State/Province level are they applied to local councilors? (Yes/No)</li> <li>- Please submit a copy of the published code of conduct.</li> </ul>
<b>Reference:</b>	Transparency International

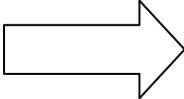
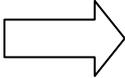
<b>Indicator 22:</b>	<b>Facility for citizen complaints</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	Accountability (Integrity, Corruption: Disincentives & Protection), Participation, Effectiveness
<b>Definition:</b>	The existence of a facility established within the local authority to respond to complaints and a local facility to receive complaints and information on corruption.
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>A simple “yes” or “no” measures the existence of the facility while “percentage of complaints addressed” measures the level of responsiveness.</p> <p>The following questions are elaborated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are there any facilities or mechanisms to receive complaints or grievances from citizens? (Yes/No)</li> <li>2. Is there any official appointed to receive and respond to complaints against public authorities (Yes/No)</li> <li>3. Percentage of complaints addressed (<b>Pc</b>)</li> </ol> $\mathbf{Pc} = (\mathbf{Ta/Tc}) \times \mathbf{100}$ <p><b>Tc</b>= Total number of registered complaints (last 1 year) and</p> <p><b>Ta</b> = Total number of cases addressed</p>
<b>Reference:</b>	New Indicator (Adapted from indicator Ombudsman’s office of Transparency International)

<b>Indicator 23:</b>	<b>Anti-corruption Commission (core set, no. 16)</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	Accountability (Corruption: Disincentives & Protection), Participation, Equity
<b>Definition:</b>	Existence of a local agency to investigate and report cases of corruption.
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>A simple “yes” or “no” can measure the indicator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is there a local agency to investigate and report cases of corruption? (Yes/ No)</li> </ul>
<b>Reference:</b>	New indicator
<b>Indicator 24:</b>	<b>Disclosure of income/ assets (core set, no. 17)</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	Accountability (Corruption: Disincentives & Protection)
<b>Definition:</b>	Are locally elected officials required to publicly disclose their income and assets (and those of their immediate family) prior to taking office?
<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>A simple “yes” or “no” can measure this indicator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prior to taking office, are locally elected officials required by law to publicly disclose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Personal income (Yes/No)</li> <li>· Personal assets (Yes/No)</li> <li>· Immediate family income (Yes/No)</li> <li>· Immediate family assets (Yes/No)</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Are local office bearers' incomes and assets regularly monitored? (Yes/No)</li> </ul>
<b>Reference:</b>	Transparency International

<b>Indicator 25:</b>	<b>Independent audit (core set, no. 18)</b>
<b>Principle(s):</b>	Accountability (Corruption: Disincentives & Protection),
<b>Definition:</b>	Is there a regular independent audit of municipal accounts, the results of which are widely disseminated?
<b>Methodology:</b>	A simple “yes” or “no” can measure this indicator.  Is there a regular independent audit of municipal accounts? (Yes/ No) Is the audit external or internal? <u>Additional information:</u> Which entity is responsible for the regular independent audit of municipal accounts?
<b>Reference:</b>	Transparency International

## Appendix 5: Initial findings and Calculation

### A: Effectivness

<b>Indicator 1: Local government revenue per capita</b>	
<p>This sub-indicator is measured by identifying the following data: The total local government revenue (income annually collected, both capital and recurrent for the metropolitan area, in US dollars) per capita (3 year average). Total local government revenue (R) which includes the income annually collected, both capital and recurrent for the metropolitan area, in US dollars (A three years average of the values is undertaken) are divided in total population d(P). So, simply local government revenue per capita (LGR) is measured by R/P.</p>	
$\frac{2,600,777,777 + 5,222,222,222 + 8,222,222,222}{3}$	
<p>P = 8000,000 <sup>(1)</sup></p>	<p>R = \$ 5,348,407,407</p>
<p>Local Government revenue per capita (LGR) = R/P</p>	
	
<p>5,348,407,407 / 8000,000 = \$ <b>668</b></p>	

<b>Indicator 2: Ratio of actual recurrent and capital budget</b>	
<p>‘Ratio of actual recurrent and capital budget’ is measured by identifying the total local government recurrent budget (R) includes income derived on a regular basis (e.g. taxes and user charges) in one hand and on the other hand the total local government capital budget (C) includes fixed income, which is derived after allocation of funds from internal or external sources (E.g. higher levels of government, private sector, and donor agencies). Therefore, ratio of actual recurrent and capital budget (RRC) is assessed through following formula:</p>	
<p>R / C</p>	
<p>R (2009-2010) = 40,060,000,000,000 Rial = 4,451,111,111 \$</p>	
<p>C (2009- 2010) = 30,000,000,000,000 Rial = 3,333,333,333 \$</p>	
<p>4,451,111,111 / 3,333,333,333 = <b>1.33</b></p>	

**Indicator 3: Local government revenue transfers**

The indicator is measured by identifying Local government revenue (R) includes Total local government revenue (transfers and non-transfers) in the one hand and on the other hand transfers in local government revenue (T) which consist of income originating from higher levels of government; grants and donations. As it can be seen despite of increasing the central government financial support and finance, for year 2009- 2010 just over 12 percent of the total local revenue was driven from the central government transfer’s distribution and finance which summarized principally in public transport supports consist of central government’s aids to develop metro networks and subsidies on public transportation ticketing. Ultimately, as the constructive point for Tehran the figure classified in the lowest category (0 – 25%) and as a result receives the highest score ‘1’ which demonstrates the financial autonomy of the local government in Tehran.

Transfers in local government revenue (T) = 7,000 + 130 + 2,300 = 9430Billion *Rial*

Local government revenue (R) = 74,000 Billion *Rial*

**Local government revenue transfers** = (T/R)\*100  $\Rightarrow$  (9430 / 74,000)\*100 = %12.7

As scoring on the percentage of transfers:

Percentage transfer	Score
0 - 25	1.00
25 - 50	0.75
50 - 75	0.50
75 - 100	0.25

**Indicator 4: Ratio of mandated to actual tax collection**

The indicator is considered by recognizing actual tax collected (C) and Mandated (planned) tax to be collected (M).

Ratio of mandated to actual tax collected (TC):  $C / M * 100$

(C) = 31, 079,746,607,386 *Rial* until Jan 2010

(M) = 40, 600,000,000,000 *Rial* planned for 2009-2010 (1388)

$31,079,746,607,386 / 40,600,000,000,000 * 100 = \% 76$

**Indicator 5: Predictability of transfers in local government budget**

The following queries need to be addressed for measuring this indicator: Is the amount of fund transfers from higher level of government (national / state known in advance for approximately for 2-3 years) of the local budgeting process? It can be seen generally in Iran and practically in Tehran there is no assurance in advance for implementation of fiscal transfers from higher level and there is minute visible enforcement of regulations. Therefore the answer ‘**No**’ selected for the issue.

**Indicator 6: Published performance delivery standards (PPS)**

To tackle the indicator the following queries need to be addressed:

Is there currently a formal publication of performance standards for key services <sup>(7)</sup> delivered by the local authority? (PPS) **Yes**

The number of key services for which the PPS is present (S) = 1

What is the total number of key services for which PPDS should be present = 5

Published performance delivery standards (PPDS):  $PPS \times S/T = 1 \times 1/5 = 0.2$

**Indicator 7: Consumer Satisfaction survey**

To some extent therefore, the municipality has been succeeding in procedure of launching consumer satisfaction mechanisms. The indicator is measured by addressing following issue: ‘has a survey of consumer satisfaction with local government services being undertaken in the city?’ **Yes**

**Indicator 8: Existence of vision statement**

In order to address this sub-indicator the following queries need to be answered:

- Is there a vision statement developed for the cities’ future by the local government (VS)? **Yes**= 1
- If yes, has the vision statement been drafted through a participatory process (involving local government, civil society and the private sector (PP)? **NO**=0
- Vision statement (VSE) = 0.5 (VS + PP)= 0.5 ( 1+0)= **0.5**

As emerged from above calculation despite the existence of a vision for the city, since its processes are not accomplished through a participatory manner no point is given to the second part of inquiry.

## B. Equity

### Indicator 9: Citizens Charter: right of access to basic services

To tackle this sub-indicator the following queries need to be addressed:

Is there a signed, published statement (charter) from the local authority which acknowledges citizens' right of access to basic services (CC)? **NO**

- If yes, what is the number of key services for which the CC is present (S)?
- What is the total number of key services for which CC should be present (T)?
- Citizen charter for basic services (CCS) =  $CC \times S/T$

### Indicator 10: Women councillors

The following queries need to be addressed: 'what is the Number of women councillors, both elected and nominated (in the last election), as a percentage of the total number of councillors in the local authority'? Where X=Percentage of women councillors; We= No. of women councillors elected; Wn= No. of women councillors nominated; T= Total no. of councillors in the last elections.

$$We = 3$$

$$Wn = 78$$

$$T = 1200$$

$$X = \frac{(We + Wn) \times 100}{T} \quad \longrightarrow \quad (3+78) \times 100 / 1200 = 6.75$$

### Indicator 11: Percentage of Women councillors in the key urban positions

The indicator addressed as follow, Where Y = Percentage of women in key positions Wk = No. of women in key positions (Mayor, Deputy Mayor etc.); T= Total no. of councillors in the last elections.

$$Y = \frac{Wk \times 100}{T} \quad \longrightarrow \quad 0 \times 100 / 1200 = 0$$

**Indicator 12: Pro-poor pricing policies for water**

Therefore, to address the indicator the following responds are offered to the queries.

- Percentage households with access to water supply (within 200m)? **100%**
- Is there a pro-poor pricing policy for water? **Ye**
- Is water price cheaper for poor settlements? (WP) **Y**

**Indicator 13: Incentives for informal businesses**

**The indicator addressed as follow:**

- Are there any particular areas in the central retail areas of the city where small scale (informal) street vending is not allowed? **Yes**
- Are there any particular areas in the central retail areas of the city where small scale street vending is submitted to particular restrictions? **Yes**
- Are there any other incentives like information pubic markets, municipal fairs? **Yes**

**C. Participation****Indicator 14 : Elected council**

This indicator considers the methods which the local council has elected or appointed. The indicator is measured by a simple 'Yes' or 'No'. Are councillors locally elected? **Yes**

**Indicator 15: Selection of mayor**

The indicator is measured by providing a simple Yes/No: *Intermediate scores have been applied towards this indicator, directly elected (1.0), elected amongst councillors (0.75) and appointed (0.50).*

What is the process of selecting the Mayor?

- Directly elected
- Elected amongst councillors
- **Appointed**

**Indicator 16: Voter turnout**

The indicator is measured by Total voter turnout (both male and female) in percentage in the last election. Based on While the total population able to vote had estimated to almost 5300,000, the voter amount was one million and eight hundred thousand (The Secretary of State, 2006).

Therefore based on the UN-index:

1800.000= Voter                      5300, 000= Constituent population

$1800, 000 / 5300000 \times 100 = 35.2\%$

**Indicator 17: Public forum**

The indicator is measured by a simple ‘yes / no’ question:

- Is there any public forum for the citizens to express their views? **Yes**
- If yes, provide information on the frequency of public forums? Minimum **two times** in a month.

**Indicator 18: Civic Association Per 10,000 populations**

The indicator assessed by following formula:  $C = 10,000 \times N/Y$  which C is the Civic association per thousand populations; N is the number of Civic Associations and Y is the Total Urban Population.

N= 510                      Y= 8.000.000                       $10,000 \times 510 / 8000, 000 = 0.63$  per 10,000

**D. Accountability**

**Indicator 19: Formal Publication of contracts /tenders budgets & accounts**

The following queries need to be addressed:

- Is there a formal publication of:
  - Contracts and tenders? **Yes**
  - Budgets and accounts? **Yes**

### Indicator 20: Control by higher levels of Government

To address the indicator following questions need to be answered :

1. Can higher levels of government (National, State /provincial):
  - Close the local government? **(No)**
  - Remove councillors from office? **(No)**
2. Can the local government, without permission from higher governments:
  - Set local tax levels? **NO**
  - Set user charges for services? **Yes**
  - Borrow funds? **Yes**
  - Choose contractors for projects? **Yes**

### Indicator 21: Codes of conduct

The following queries can be addressed:

- Is there a signed, published statement of standards of conduct citizens are entitled to from their elected officials and local government staff? **Yes**
- At what institutional level are these codes of conduct prescribed? (Municipality, State/Province)?  
In **the state** level.
- If the codes of conduct are prescribed at the District/State/Province level are they applied to local councillors? **Yes**

### Indicator 22: Facility for citizen complaints

A simple “yes” or “no” measures the existence of the facility while “percentage of complaints addressed” measures the level of responsiveness. The following questions are elaborated:

4. Are there any facilities or mechanisms to receive complaints or grievances from citizens? **Yes**
5. Is there any official appointed to receive and respond to complaints against public authorities  
**Yes**

Also, Percentage of complaints (**Pc**) can be addressed through following formula:

**Pc** =  $(\text{Ta}/\text{Tc}) \times 100$ , where **Ta** as total number of cases addressed is 700,000; and ‘Tc’ as total number of registered complaints (last one year) is 1500,000 (Information Centre and public apprising of Tehran municipality , 2009). So the calculation will be as follow:

$$700,000 / 1500,000 = .46 \times 100 = \mathbf{46\%}$$

**Indicator 23: Anti-corruption Commission**

To tackle the sub-indicator following query need to be addressed:

- Is there a local agency to investigate and report cases of corruption? **Yes**

**Indicator 24: Disclosure of income / asset**

The following queries need to be considered for this indicator.

- Prior to taking office, are locally elected officials required by law to publicly disclose:
  - Personal income : **No**
  - Personal assets : **No**
  - Immediate family income : **No**
  - Immediate family assets : **No**

**Indicator 25: Independent audit**

The indicator addressed by following query:

- Is there a regular 'independent' audit of municipal accounts? **Yes**

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<sup>1</sup> According to Statistical Centre of Iran, various census data (2006) population of Tehran was 7,797,000.

## Appendix 6: Urban Governance Index Calculation for Tehran

### A) Effectiveness sub-index

No.	Indicator	Data (X)	Formula	Result	Weight	Total
1	Local Government revenue per capita (LGR)= LGR= R/P Total local government revenue ( R) Total population ( p)	\$ 668	$LGR = (\log X - \log \min) / (\log \max - \log \min)$ min=2.3 max=1340  $(2.82 - 0.361) / (3.12 - 0.361) = 2.45 / 2.75 = 0.89$	0.89	0.25	0.223
2	Ratio of recurrent and capital budget (RRC)= R/C  Recurrent budget = R, Capita Budget = C; R = 4,451,111,111 billion \$ C = 3,333,333,333 billion \$	1.33	$RRC = (\log X - \log \min) / (\log \max - \log \min)$ min= 0.09 max=8.37 (Field test, 2003 US\$) RRC= (0.13- - 1.04) / (0.92- -1.04) = (1.17 / 1.96) = 0.59	0.59	0.10	0.059
3	Ratio of mandated to actual tax collected (TC)		TC = 76/100	0.76	0.10	0.076
	a. Mandated tax to be collected	100%				
	b. Actual tax collected	76%				
4	Local government revenue transfer (LGT)	%12.7	LGT = 1 (0 – 25%=1, 25-50%=0.75, 50-75%=0.50, 75-100%=0.25)	1.00	0.10	0.10
5	Predictability of transfers in local government budget (PoT)	No = 0	PoT = X	0.00	0.10	0.00
6	Published performance delivery standards (PPDS)		PPDS = PPS x S/T= 1 x 1 / 5= 0.2	0.2	0.15	0.03
	a. Published performance delivery standards (PPS)	Yes=1	PPS			
	b. No. of key services for which the PPDS is present (S);		S = 1			
	c. Total no. of key services for which PPDS should be present (T) <sup>2</sup>		T = 5			
7	Consumer satisfaction survey (CSS)	Yes = 1	CSS = 1	1.00	0.10	0.10
8	Vision statement effective (VSE)		VSE = 0.5 (VS + PP)= 0.5 ( 1+0)= 0.5	0.50	0.10	0.05
	a. Vision statement (VS) <sup>3</sup>	Yes = 1	VS = X	1.00		

b. Vision statement drafted through a participatory process (PP)	No = 0	PP = X	0.00	
<b>Effectiveness sub-index</b>				<b>0.638</b>

## Equity sub-index

No.	Indicator	Data (X)	Formula	Result	Weight	Total
1	Citizens charter for basic services (CCS)		$CCS = CC * S/T$	0.00	0.20	0.00
	a. Citizens' charter (CC)	No = 0	$CC = X$			
	b. No. of key services for which the CC is present (S)	S=0				
	c. Total no. of key services for which CC should be present (T)	T=5				
2	Percentage of women councilors (WC)	6.7%	$WC = X = (3+78) \times 100 / 1200 = 6.75$	0.6	0.20	0.12
3	Percentage women in key positions (WK)	0	$WK = Y = Wk \times 100/T$	0.00	0.10	0.00
4	Percentage households with water connection (HH wat)	100%	$HH \text{ wat.} = 100/100$	1.00	0.15	0.225
5	Existence of pro-poor policy (PPC)	Yes = 1	$PPC = X$	1.00	0.10	0.10
6	Is water price cheaper for poor settlements? (WP)	Yes = 1	$WP = X$	1.00	0.10	0.10
7	Incentives for informal market (IM)		$IM = 1$ (any one of a, b or c)	1.00	0.15	0.15
	a. Street vending not allowed	Yes = 1		1.00		
	b. Street vending with restrictions	Yes = 1		1.00		
	c. Public fairs, municipal market	Yes = 1		1.00		
<b>Equity sub-index</b>						<b>0.695</b>

## B) Participation sub-index

NO	Indicator	Data (X)	Formula	Result	Weight	Total
1	Elected council (EC)	Yes = 1	EC = X	1.00	0.15	0.15
2	Locally elected Mayor (LEM)	No = 0.50	LEM = 0.50	0.50	0.15	0.075
3	Voter turnout (VT)		$VT = 1800,000 / 5300000 \times 100 = 35.2\%$	0.35	0.30	0.105
4	Peoples' forum (PC)	Yes = 1	PF = X	1.00	0.15	0.15
5	Civic associations per 10,000 pop (CA)	X = 0.63 per 10000	$CA = (\text{Log } 0.63 - \text{Log } 0.49) / (\text{Log } 72.79 - \text{Log } 0.49)$ min= 0.49; max= 72.79 (Field Test 2003)	0.05	0.25	0.012
<b>Participation sub-index</b>						<b>0.492</b>

## C) Accountability sub-index

No.	Indicator	Data (X)	Formula	Result	Weight	Total
1	Formal Publication (FP)		CTBA = Average (CT + BA)	1.00	0.20	0.20
	a. Formal publication: contracts and tenders (CT)	Yes = 1	CLG = X	1.00		
	b. Formal publication: budget and accounts (BA)	Yes = 1	BA = X	1.00		
2.1	Control by higher Govt. (CG)		CG = Average (CLG+RC)	1.00	0.07	0.07
	a. Control by higher Govt.: close local government (CLG)	NO = 1	CLG = X	1.00		
	b. Control by higher Govt: removal of councilors (RC)	No = 1	RC = X	1.00		
2.2	Local government authorities (LGA)		LGA = Average (SLT+SYC+BF+CP)	0.75	0.08	0.052
	c. Local government: set local tax levels (SLT)	No = 0	SLT = X	0.00		
	d. Local government: set user charges for services (SUC)	Yes = 1	SUC = X	1.00		
	e. Local government: borrow funds (BF)	Yes=1	BF = X	1.00		

	f. Local government: choose contractors for projects (CP)	Yes = 1	CP = X	1.00		
3	Codes of conduct (CoC)	Yes = 1	CoC= X	1.00	0.10	0.10
4	Facilities to receive complaints (FRC)		FRC = Average (OA + EF)	1.00	0.10	0.10
	b. Official appointed to receive complaints on public authorities (OA)	Yes = 1		1.00		
	c. Exclusive facility to receive complaints on corruption (EF)	Yes = 1		1.00		
5	Anti-corruption commission (ACC)	Yes = 1	ACC = X	1.00	0.15	0.15
6	Personal Income and assets (PIA)	NA	PIA = (0.75* Average PIA + FIA) + 0.25* IAM	0.00	0.15	0.00
	a. Disclosure of personal income and assets (PIA)	No= 0	PIA = X	0.00		
	b. Disclosure of family's income and assets (FIA)	No = 0	FIA = X	0.00		
	c. Income and assets regularly monitored (IAM)	No= 0	IAM = X	0.00		
7	Regular independent audit (RIA)	Yes=1	IAM = X	1.00	0.15	0.225
<b>Accountability sub-index</b>						<b>0.897</b>

**Average of Urban Governance Index** = (Effectiveness sub-index + Equity sub-index + Participation sub-index + Accountability sub-index) = (0.638 + 0.695 + 0.492 + 0.897) / 4 = **0.680**

## Appendix 7 A draft of the consumer satisfaction survey accomplished by the Municipality

### پرسشنامه ارزیابی دیدگاه شهروندان در مورد خدمات شهر

پرسشنامه ارزیابی دیدگاه شهروندان در مورد خدمات شهری																			
شهروند گرامی پاسخ به کلیه پرسشها بجز مواردی که در کنار آنها) <b>اختیاری</b> (درج شده الزامی میباشد، چنانچه نظر شما مخصوص به منطقه خاصی نیست در انتخاب منطقه، تهران را برگزینید، از همکاری شما سپاسگذاریم.																			
جنسیت *		مرد <input type="radio"/> زن <input type="radio"/>		وضعیت تاهل *		مجرد <input type="radio"/> متاهل <input type="radio"/> سایر <input type="radio"/>		سن <input type="text"/> (1-99) *											
تحصیلات *		بیسواد <input type="radio"/> زیردیپلم <input type="radio"/> دیپلم <input type="radio"/> فوق دیپلم <input type="radio"/> لیسانس <input type="radio"/> فوق لیسانس <input type="radio"/> دکترا <input type="radio"/>		محلہ <input type="text"/> *		تهران <input type="text"/> *													
وضعیت موجود					نوع فعالیت					میزان اهمیت									
بسیار خوب		خوب		متوسط		بد		بسیار بد		بسیار زیاد		زیاد		تاحدودی		کم		بسیار کم	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5	4	3	2	1	* <= جمع آوری منظم زباله و پسماندهای جامد >= *					5	4	3	2	1					
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	* <= رسیدگی به کانالها، چوبها و کنترل آبهای روان >= *					5	4	3	2	1					
5	4	3	2	1	* <= توسعه و نگهداری فضای سبز شامل بوستانها، جنگل کاری، درختان، فضای سبز بلوارها و... >= *					5	4	3	2	1					
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	* <= کنترل و بهبود وضعیت ترافیک منطقه >= *					5	4	3	2	1					
5	4	3	2	1	* <= تأمین ایمنی شهروندان از طریق نصب نرده، پل هوایی، خطکشی عابر پیاده، نصب سرعت گیر و... >= *					5	4	3	2	1					
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	* <= ساماندهی صنایع آلاینده هوا، صوت و محیطی >= *					5	4	3	2	1					
5	4	3	2	1	* <= رسیدگی به چهره ظاهری منطقه از نظر زیبایی، مبلمان شهری و... >= *					5	4	3	2	1					
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	* <= مقابله با حیوانات مزاحم و موزی (سگ و موش و...) >= *					5	4	3	2	1					
5	4	3	2	1	* <= وضعیت سطح آسفالت خیابانها و معابر در منطقه >= *					5	4	3	2	1					
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	* <= امکانات فرهنگی، هنری، ورزشی و تفریحی اماکن وابسته به شهرداری منطقه (فرهنگسرا، شهر کتاب، خانه فرهنگ، خانه مطبوعات و...) >= *					5	4	3	2	1					
5	4	3	2	1	* <= نصب تابلوهای راهنما، علائم ایمنی و تابلوهای راهنمایی و رانندگی در خیابانهای مورد نیاز >= *					5	4	3	2	1					

5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	*=<سرعت و جدیت مسئولین شهرداری در رسیدگی به مشکلات شهروندان=>*	5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>
5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	*=<قاطعیت برخورد با ساخت و ساز یا عدم تخریب غیر مجاز=>*	5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>
5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	*=<مشارکت شهروندان در تصمیم‌گیریها=>*	5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>
5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	*=<ارتباط مستمر و آسان مسئولین شهرداری منطقه با مردم=>*	5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>
5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	*=<تکریم ارباب رجوع در ناحیه یا شهرداری=>*	5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>
5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	*=<وضعیت بازارچه‌ها و میادین میوه و تره‌بار عرضه مستقیم محصولات=>*	5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>
5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	*=<رسیدگی به وضعیت کفپوش پیاده‌روها=>*	5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>
5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	*=<وضعیت روشنایی خیابانها در هنگام شب=>*	5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>
5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	*=<هماهنگی با ارگانهای ذیربط در امور عمرانی منطقه=>*	5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>
5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	*=<رسیدگی به سرویس های بهداشتی در سطح منطقه و نقاط پر جمعیت=>*	5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>
5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	*=<وضعیت دسترسی به حمل و نقل هنگامی ( اتوبوس و مترو )=>*	5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>
5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	*=<حل مشکل متکدیان و دست فروشان در سطح منطقه=>*	5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>
5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	*=<وضعیت پارکینگهای عمومی شهرداری در سطح منطقه=>*	5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>
5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	*=<وضعیت کیوسک‌های مطبوعات و گل‌فروشی‌ها=>*	5 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>

امکانات رفاهی خانواده شما

<input type="text"/>	شماره تلفن (اختیاری)	<input type="text"/>	تعداد افراد خانوار	<input type="checkbox"/>						
				خودرو	فاصلاب	گاز	آب	برق	تلفن	
<input type="text"/>	مدت اقامت در محل*	<input type="text"/>	وضعیت سکونت*	<input type="text"/>	مساحت محل سکونت*	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	تعداد طبقات مسکونی*	

تحصیلات	دیپلم	وضعیت تاهل	متاهل	سن	سال
محلّه		نا > به		سابقه سکونت در شهر تهران	سال

میزان آشنایی شما با فعالیت‌های معاونت حمل و نقل و ترافیک و واحدهای تابعه آن .	<input type="radio"/>	عالی	<input type="radio"/>	خوب	<input type="radio"/>	متوسط	<input type="radio"/>	ضعیف
میزان اثر گذاری سهمیه بندی بنزین در کاهش بار ترافیک شهر تهران .	<input type="radio"/>	عالی	<input type="radio"/>	خوب	<input type="radio"/>	متوسط	<input type="radio"/>	ضعیف
میزان رضایتمندی شما از ورود ناوگان "ون" به حمل و نقل عمومی شهر تهران	<input type="radio"/>	عالی	<input type="radio"/>	خوب	<input type="radio"/>	متوسط	<input type="radio"/>	ضعیف
میزان رضایت شما از کیفیت سفر با سامانه تاکسیرانی (شامل: سرعت سفر، نظم و سطح خدمات)	<input type="radio"/>	عالی	<input type="radio"/>	خوب	<input type="radio"/>	متوسط	<input type="radio"/>	ضعیف
میزان رضایت شما از کیفیت سفر با سامانه اتوبوسرانی(شامل: سرعت سفر، نظم و سطح خدمات)	<input type="radio"/>	عالی	<input type="radio"/>	خوب	<input type="radio"/>	متوسط	<input type="radio"/>	ضعیف
میزان تمایل شما به استفاده از سامانه اتوبوسرانی در صورت افزایش سرعت سفر آن	<input type="radio"/>	عالی	<input type="radio"/>	خوب	<input type="radio"/>	متوسط	<input type="radio"/>	ضعیف
میزان رضایت شما از کیفیت سفر با سامانه مترو(شامل سرعت سفر، نظم، و سطح خدمات)	<input type="radio"/>	عالی	<input type="radio"/>	خوب	<input type="radio"/>	متوسط	<input type="radio"/>	ضعیف
میزان استفاده شما از سامانه مترو در حال حاضر	<input type="radio"/>	عالی	<input type="radio"/>	خوب	<input type="radio"/>	متوسط	<input type="radio"/>	ضعیف
میزان رضایت شما از کیفیت سفر با سامانه مترو(شامل سرعت سفر، نظم، و سطح خدمات)	<input type="radio"/>	عالی	<input type="radio"/>	خوب	<input type="radio"/>	متوسط	<input type="radio"/>	ضعیف
میزان تمایل شما به استفاده از سامانه مترو در صورت افزایش تعداد قطارها	<input type="radio"/>	عالی	<input type="radio"/>	خوب	<input type="radio"/>	متوسط	<input type="radio"/>	ضعیف
میزان استفاده شما از خدمات غیرحضوری جهت کاهش سفر درون شهری (مانند خدمات الکترونیک، بیک بادپا، پست و ...)	<input type="radio"/>	عالی	<input type="radio"/>	خوب	<input type="radio"/>	متوسط	<input type="radio"/>	ضعیف
میزان استفاده شما از حمل و نقل عمومی (اتوبوس و مترو و تاکسی) در حال حاضر	<input type="radio"/>	عالی	<input type="radio"/>	خوب	<input type="radio"/>	متوسط	<input type="radio"/>	ضعیف
میزان علاقه مندی شما به سفر با حمل و نقل و عمومی (اتوبوس، تاکسی و مترو)	<input type="radio"/>	عالی	<input type="radio"/>	خوب	<input type="radio"/>	متوسط	<input type="radio"/>	ضعیف
میزان رضایتمندی شما از وضعیت پارک خودرو در سطح شهر تهران	<input type="radio"/>	عالی	<input type="radio"/>	خوب	<input type="radio"/>	متوسط	<input type="radio"/>	ضعیف
میزان رضایتمندی شما از طرح پارکبان (کنترل پارک حاشیه ای)	<input type="radio"/>	عالی	<input type="radio"/>	خوب	<input type="radio"/>	متوسط	<input type="radio"/>	ضعیف
میزان رضایت مندی شما از فرآیند ثبت نام متقاضیان آرم طرح ترافیک در سال جاری (مختص متقاضیان آرم)	<input type="radio"/>	عالی	<input type="radio"/>	خوب	<input type="radio"/>	متوسط	<input type="radio"/>	ضعیف

چنانچه در خصوص هر يك از گزینه های فوق نیاز به ارائه توضیحات می باشد ذکر نمایید:

از نظر شما بهترین سرویس حمل و نقل عمومی چه سرویسی است و چرا؟

به نظر شما نقاط ضعف هر يك از سرويس هاي حمل و نقل عمومي زير چيست؟  
اتوبوس:

مترو:

تاكسي و مسافربرهاي شخصي:

چنانچه شما نظر ، پيشنهاد و يا طرحي در خصوص مقوله حمل و نقل و ترافيك از قبيل توسعه ناوگان حمل و نقل عمومي ، كاهش ترافيك و ... داريد مي توانيد به صورت خلاصه ذكر نمايند. در صورت اجرايي بودن قطعاً از آن استفاده مي گردد لذا لطفاً براي استفاده از نظرات و طرحهايي اجرايي شماره تماس خود را وارد نمايند.

نام :

نام خانوادگي :

شغل :

تلفن تماس:

پيشنهاد

ارسال

### Appendix 8: List of Interviews Ordinary Citizens Interviews

Code	Date	Gender
OC-01	27.02.2010	F
OC-02	21.02.2010	M
OC-03	06.03.2010	M
OC-04	04.03.2010	M
OC-05	21.02.2010	M
OC-06	26.02.2010	M
OC-07	01.03.2010	M
OC-08	10.04.2010	M
OC-09	27.02.2010	M
OC-010	03.03.2010	M
OC-011	10.04.2010	F
OC-012	13.04.2010	F
OC-013	06.03.2010	M
OC-014	11.04.2010	M
OC-015	13.04.2010	M
OC-016	22.04.2010	F
OC-017	20.04.2010	F
OC-018	11.04.2010	F
OC-019	23.04.2010	F
OC-020	21.04.2010	F
OC-021	22.04.2010	F
OC-022	20.04.2010	F
OC-023	23.04.2010	F
OC-024	21.04.2010	F
OC-025	22.04.2010	F

### Local Council Interviews

Code	Date	Gender
LC-01	17.03.2010	M
LC-02	25.02.2010	M
LC-03	10.03.2010	M
LC-04	08.03.2010	F
LC-05	17.03.2010	F

**Urban Experts Interviews**

Code	Date	Gender
UE-01	05.03.2010	M
UE-02	22.02.2010	F
UE-03	25.02.2010	M
UE-04	06.03.2010	M
UE-05	07.03.2010	M

**Private Sector Interviews**

Code	Date	Gender
PS-01	08.04.2010	M
PS-02	25.02.2010	F
PS-03	08.04.2010	M
PS-04	09.04.2010	M
PS-05	17.04.2010	M

**Civic Associations Interviews**

Code	Date	Gender
CA-01	03.03.2010	M
CA-02	25.02.2010	M
CA-03	21.02.2010	F
CA-04	10.03.2010	M
CA-05	06.03.2010	F

**Council Representatives Interviews**

Code	Date	Gender
CR-01	09.04.2010	M
CR-02	18.02.2010	M
CR-03	10.04.2010	F
CR-04	08.03.2010	M
CR-05	23.04.2010	F

**Municipality Executives Interviews**

Code	Date	Gender
ME-01	01.02.2010	M
ME-02	18.02.2010	F
ME-03	16.03.2010	M
ME-04	11.03.2010	F
ME-05	16.03.2010	M

**Government Official Interviews**

Code	Date	Gender
GO-01	04.03.2010	F
GO-02	28.02.2010	M
GO-03	29.02.2010	M
GO-04	07.04.2010	M
GO-05	17.04.2010	M

## Appendix 9 Interviews in Persian



University of Newcastle  
School of Architecture, Planning  
and Landscape

### Interview Form

Interview Code	UE-05	Department Name	University of Tehran
Date and Time	7/03/10 - 3:30pm	Interviewee's Name	
Position	Academic	Gender	M

#### بخش اول: سوالات عمومی در مورد تحول در اداره شهر

1. آنچه نظر شما مفهوم مشارکت چیست؟ مفهوم و تعریف "عموم" در مبحث مشارکت چیست؟  
 مشارکت یعنی شریک کردن افراد در روندی که در تصمیم گیری - مفهوم عمومی برای مردم شریک کردن  
 گامی افکارها، ایده ها، منظرها، نه انگریز، عمومیت برای آنها، انکار در دردها و افراد را شامل  
 می شود بدون توجه به یک طبقه خاص اجتماعی یا اقتصادی.

2 - به نظر شما تحول صورت گرفته در عرصه اداره و مدیریت شهری در سال ۱۳۷۷ کمک کرد به سهیم کردن  
 شهروندان در اداره شهر؟ چگونه؟ یا به طور معکوس اگر باعث کم کردن نقش آنها در امر اداره شهر شد؟ چرا؟

بله! به نوعی دگرگونی به خواننده های سفلی شهروندان را شریک نمود که ارتباط شهروندان با بدنه مدیریتی شهرداری  
 بشود و نمایان شود. در تصمیم جدید خواننده شهروندان به گونه ای که در تصمیم سازی شهر  
 شنیده - شود تا محدودی

پایه داده شد. باب جدیدی در ضمیمه دربار افکار جدید باز شد، که در وقت نگارش در دست بود.



۳- به نظر شما وجود شورای شهر چقدر کمک کرده به بهبود اداره شهر؟ چگونه؟  
وجود شورای شهر باعث شده است ~~شهر~~ ~~مورد~~ ~~در~~ ~~ان~~ ~~مخلوطه~~ ~~بر~~ ~~گناه~~ ~~به~~ ~~قرائین~~ ~~دولت~~ ~~در~~ ~~مناطق~~ ~~آن~~، نزدیکان  
به شورای اعضاء آن در کنترل و هدایت رفتاری آنها داشته باشد. در حقیقت شورای شهر همچون نمایندگی  
شهروندان است در کنترل و نظارت خودداران و این کمک کرد به یا گندی یا ناصرد (۵).

۴- به نظر شما آیا ساختار، ترکیب و سطح تخصص اعضای شورای اسلامی شهر مناسب است برای حل مشکلات شهر

تهران؟  
سئوال ~~سئوال~~ ~~شما~~ ~~است~~ ~~که~~ ~~شورا~~ ~~در~~ ~~عمل~~ ~~تبدیل~~ ~~شده~~ ~~است~~ ~~به~~ ~~تجهیزات~~ ~~آکادمیک~~ ~~سیاسی~~ ~~و~~ ~~اداری~~  
حکومت ولو در زمینه رده درسی و عمدتاً نواقص فنی فنی در حقیقت در حقیقت در حقیقت در حقیقت  
شهر ندانند و بعد از آنکه در حقیقت  
شورا با سطوح ششم از این جهت  
۵- به نظر شما ارتباط و مناسبات بین شورای اسلامی شهر تهران و شهرداری چگونه است؟ (رابطه بین اعضای شورای

شهر و شهرداری تهران؟)  
نظریه ~~نظریه~~ ~~شما~~ ~~است~~ ~~که~~ ~~شورا~~ ~~در~~ ~~عمل~~ ~~تبدیل~~ ~~شده~~ ~~است~~ ~~به~~ ~~تجهیزات~~ ~~آکادمیک~~ ~~سیاسی~~ ~~و~~ ~~اداری~~

به نوعی تعامل سازنده دارند. این تعامل ناصرد (۵) یا گندی (۶) در مقابل  
مرکبات و نظریه (۵) شورا دارد. هرگاه که یا گندی خوب بود، تعامل هم سازنده است.

۶- در مقایسه با سیستم قبلی، به نظر شما شورای اسلامی شهر تهران تا چه میزانی توانسته است مشکلات قبلی  
شهرداریهای را از قبیل شفافیت و پاسخگویی را مرتفع نماید؟ آیا خود شورا در قبال تصمیماتش پاسخگو هست؟ چگونه؟  
شوراها ناصرد (۵) توانسته مشکلات خود را در مقابل شفافیت و پاسخگویی را مرتفع نماید.

سایل مال و ادارات خود را در شفافیت رسانده است. شورا شتر در مقابل تقیم کردن رسانده

یا سئوال ~~سئوال~~ ~~شما~~ ~~است~~ ~~که~~ ~~شورا~~ ~~توانسته~~ ~~به~~ ~~مشکلات~~ ~~رایج~~ ~~شهر~~ ~~پایه~~ ~~داده~~  
کوشش در این راستا، مشکلات عمومی، آلودگی هوا همچنان در میان است.  
۲۱ Page  
به نظر من توان شورا بر این گندی به سائل بیان عمومی هم زمان است.

۷- به چه میزانی وجود شورای شهر توانسته فرصت را مهیا کند برای حضور پررنگ تر بانوان در عرصه مدیریت و

اداره شهر؟ چگونه؟

شهر در حقیقت یک سرانجام بود برای حضور پررنگ تر بانوان در عرصه تصمیم گیری شهری  
زنان با یک شدن ان اقبالش در خانواده بیشتر در معرض توجه مدیران شهری قرار گرفت .

بخش سوم: شهرداری و انتخاب شهردار

۸- آیا شما در قبال تصمیمات و عملکردهای شهرداری تهران آگاه و مطلع هستید؟ و چگونه؟

باصدی که جزایر در زمانه در کشور منگس می کشند و به مدیران نظامی شناخت بریده ها  
بواسطه تخصص دیگر - در واقع یعنی در سطوحی کشیده بر سر کسی که بخواهد از تمامی جزئیات تصمیمات  
شهری آن هم دانسته باشد شهرداری بیار از خالت های مالی داداری خود را به صورت گستره  
در معرض تصمیم قرار داده است.

۹- مکانیزمهای شهرداری در سهم کردن شهروندان در فرایند تصمیم گیری و اداره شهر در چه سطحی است؟ آیا موفق بوده؟ پیشنهاد شما برای مشارکت بیشتر و موثرتر چیست؟

شرایطی ها (شرایط علمی) نقش بسزای در رسیدن نمودن شهروندان هر چند در سطح بسیار  
پایین دارند.

۱۰- رابطه بین شهرداری تهران و دولت را چگونه می بینید؟

رابطه شهرداری و دولت بیشتر از آنست که بر اساس یک رویه رسمی باشد و تزیین شده باشد ، بیشتر بر اساس  
تقاضای مردمی و مردمی است تا آنکه مترادف آنها باشند - سفارشات عالی بر آنست که اصل و فعل هر دو  
در کنار هم عنوان عالی نام برد - تا نشان مردم در چوبه نشان یک حضورند این از این عدم  
تفاعل کامل کارها دست اندازنده فریب دیده اند

۱۱- به نظر شما روشی که در حال حاضر شهردار انتخاب می شود تضمین میکند شهردار مجری توانمند باشد برای سیاستگذاریها و اجرای سیاستهای کلان شهری؟ چرا؟ یا فکر میکنید پست فرما یشی هست؟

مشکل در انتخاب شهردار نیست، مشکل در اختیارات و وضوحی فعالیت است که شهردار را نمیتواند به عنوان مدیر قوی شهر دید ما در ایران در هر دو مورد مشکل داریم یعنی هم

۱۲- به نظر شما کدام شیوه روش بهتری است برای انتخاب شهردار تهران؟

۱- انتخاب شهردار با شرکت مستقیم شهروندان در انتخابات	
۲- انتخاب شهردار بوسیله شورای شهر (روش کنونی)	✓
۳- انتخاب شهردار توسط وزارت کشور (روش قدیم)	
۴- روش دیگر	

چرا؟ در شرایط حاضر به موجب انتخاب شهردار توسط شهروندان، به عنوان محدودیت شهردار یا عملکردی خوبی به احسان شهروندان خود دارند، در غیر این صورت به صورتی که در کاهش پیدا کند در این روش با توجه به کمترین افراد در شهرداری، اینها میتوانند که به مسائل شهر آشناتر باشند و بکنند.

بخش چهارم: انتخابات شورای شهر و محلات

۱۳- به نظر شما انتخابات شورای اسلامی شهر و محله در بهبود شیوه اداره شهر چه نقشی دارد؟

انتخابات شهرهاها، شرکت مردم را در اداره شهر تا حدودی تضمین کرد، اما لزوماً بهبود ادارات شهر را تضمین نمی کند. البته شرایط محلات به دلیل این جوانان می نمایند، به شکلی علم تا حدی می تواند در رساندن مشکلات رایج در محلات کمک کند.

۱۴- به نظر شما به طور معمول چرا مشارکت مردم در انتخابات شوراهای شهر و محله کمتر است از انتخابات در سطوح

ملی (ریاست جمهوری و مجلس)؟ به عنوان مثال تفاوت کافی را می بینیم نسبت به انتخابات محلی دارند اهمیت این انتخابات نسبت به دیگر انتخابات که معمولاً در انجام می پذیرد کمتر به مورد توجه قرار می گیرد است.

نظرات همگام در صورت همگامی انجام می شود. اما در صورت بروز تغییرات همگامی  
 نقش مهمتری در سرپرستی دوم و خودشان داشته باشد این نگاه کم کردیم هر یک از اینها در سطح بدنی  
 نیست. اینها به شما  
 ۱۵- به نظر شما چرا درصد مشارکت شهروندان تهرانی در انتخابات شوراهای شهر بسیار کمتر است از میانگین ملی  
 انتخابات شوراهای شهر؟

سیاسی شدن شورای اول دوم باعث شد که مردم نسبت به شوراها آدوسی بدین گونه از طرف  
 دیگر این شوراها در واقع منترا شدند به بسیاری از سوالات و نگرانیها شهروندان در عرصه محیط  
 شهری پاسخ ندهند. اختیارات این شوراها در واقع محدود برداشت برای حل بسیاری از مسائل  
 کلان شهری

۱۶- به نظر شما چگونه میتوان میزان شرکت شهروندان در انتخابات شورای شهر و محله را توسعه داد؟ به نظر شما  
 موانع فعلی کدامند و چگونه میتوانیم بر آنها غالب شویم؟

اصیبات شوراها را باید از اینجای داد بودید مکانیزم هر صفحه و نسی تا اینها ستوانند به عنوان  
 یک پارکمان شهر فعال باشند نه اینکه شورای محله داری. از بسیاری بازی و سرده بازی همانا باید  
 حلگیری کنند. تبلیغات و اهمیت این انتخابات باید برابر مردم بستر روشن شود. با اینکه  
 بودن داهمی می توانند به مردم زمان به توانند شوراها را به عنوان یک مورد با اعتبار بالا در نزد مردم

بخش پنجم: ارتباط با شهروندان

۱۷- به نظر شما آیا به طور سیستماتیک و منظم مکانیزمی برای اینکه شهروندان و مسئولین شهر گرد هم جمع شوند  
 برای برقراری ارتباط مستمر و دو سویه برای اداره و تصمیم گیری شهر وجود دارد؟

در حال حاضر این امکان به صورت نسبی وجود دارد. باید شوراها را از این  
 بمنوان تنها مرکز مردم برای برقراری ارتباط با تقسیم کردن دبیران شهری نام زد. البته ولایات در  
 مردمی و اعضای شورای اسلام شو و شورایی ها مناطق انجام می دهند می تواند تا مردم به عنوان یک مرکز  
 ارتباطی شهروندان با تقسیم کردن شورای شهر

۱۸- به عنوان یک مرکز اجتماع محله ای، به نظر شما به چه میزان و سطحی شوراهای محله نفوذ کافی دارند تا بطور  
 کارآمد و موثر مشکلات محله را حل کنند؟ آیا باید دایره اختیارات اینها را بیشتر کرد یا خیر؟

مشکل اصلی شورای محله ای است که جایگاه آنها به عنوان یک عنصر تقسیم ساز هستند در سطح محلات  
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بصورت رسمی به رسمیت شناخته شده است و بر اساس آن از سازمانهای مختلف در کوه  
شورای شهرها به عنوان یک مرکز مشاوره (فهرده محلی شناخته شده هستند) به صورت رسمی جایگاه آنها  
در سطح رادار، کوه هنر، تفریح و تفریح شده است.

۱۹- چقدر این امکان برای شما و هم محلیهاتان وجود دارد تا با همدیگر بتوانید یک مشکل مهم محله تان را به گوش  
شورای محله یا شورای شهر برسانید؟ و چقدر این امکان وجود دارد تا مشکل شما بطور عملی حل شود؟

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۲۰- آیا هیچ گونه تجربه ای در زمینه مشارکت شهری داشته اید (غیر از مشارکت در انتخابات)؟ (مثلا نوشتن نامه به یک  
سازمان شهری و یا تماس با یکی از سامانه ها؟ نتیجه آن چه بوده؟ به چه میزان وجود این سامانه ها را موثر می دانید تا  
صدای شهروندان شنیده شود؟

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۲۱- آیا شما علاقه مند هستید در مسائل مربوط به محله تان مشارکت فعال داشته باشید؟

اگر خیر را انتخاب کردید چرا؟

۱- بطور کلی علاقه ای به مشارکت ندارم	
۲- مشارکت من هیچ گونه تاثیری در بهبود شرایط ندارد	
۳- فرصتی برای مشارکت در امور محله را ندارم	
۴- غیره (لطفا مشخص کنید)	

بخش پنجم سازمانهای مردم نهاد

۲۲- آیا شما از وجود سازمانهای مردم نهاد و زمینه های فعالیتی آنها (NGOs) اطلاع و آگاهی دارید؟ به نظر شما چه نقشی دارند در اداره شهر؟

بر خاطر حوزه کاری و تخصصی تا حدی در زمینه فعالیتها و گستره نفوذ آنها در میان کودکان اطلاع دارم. به نفس این سازمانها به صورت مستقیم و غیرمستقیم در جهاد در کشور ناخوش است. از آنهایی که این نهادها بیهمین مشکل دارند در زمینه آشنایی ما تعریف سازمانها مردم نهاد را به صورت کامل در نظر میگیرند

۲۳- به نظر شما در حال حاضر چه مکانیزمهایی از طرف دولت محلی در شهر تهران وجود دارد برای حمایت از سازمانهای مردم نهاد در بحث مدیریت شهری؟

دولت محلی تا حدی نسبت به فعالیت مردم نهاد عملیاتی (نصرت عبدالرحمن در شهر بهر هیئت ما) حمایت نموده، اما این حمایت کم تر از حد ضرورت گسترده تر و عام تر گسترش شود تا اینها را بطور فعالی درگیر ساختن امور کشور کند

۲۴- تجربه شما به عنوان یک سازمانهای مردم نهاد در زمینه شهری چیست؟ و تا چه اندازه موسسات موثر هستند در شیوه اداره شهر؟

۲۵- آیا مکانیزمهایی که در حال حاضر وجود دارد تا چه اندازه به طور موثر کمک میکند تا سازمانهای مردم نهاد دخیل شوند در مشارکت شهری؟ بنظر شما چگونه سازمانهای مردم نهاد کمک میکنند به اجرای سیاستهای شهری؟

مکانیزمی در این زمینه وجود دارد اما بسیاری فعال در جهت کمک کردن این نهادها در اداره شهر و عمل و هر قدر شده این نهادها در زمینه تولید سرمایه اجتماعی بر اساس همکاری توانمند میباشوند. دادن حیطه فعالیت بیشتر، امتیازات اجرایی و بودجه می توان این نهادها را فعال تر کرد البته

۲۶- به نظر شما مشکل اساسی در ارتباط با عدم یا کمبود مشارکت موثر سازمانهای مردم نهاد در مسایل شهری چیست؟  
(لطفا سه دلیل را نام ببرید)

این مشکل هم می تواند از طرف بالا باشد هم پایین. از طرف بالا مدیران و دست اندازان  
شهری زمینه حضور این سازمانها را به حد درستی فراهم نکرده اند از طرف پایین هم توانایی آنها  
سبع در اداره این نهادها برسد به طوری که بسیاری از اعضا این نهادها کارهای غیر تخصصی  
را بر عهده دارند.

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