

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT DEVELOPMENT IN FRAMEWORK OF CITY COUNCILS' FORMATION IN IRAN A
CASE STUDY: ISLAMSHAHR CITY

Ebrahim mohammadiyan roshan¹, parichehr shahsavand baghdadi²

1 . MA in political science, Faculty of law and political science, islamic azad university of karaj, iran

2 . Assisstant professors, Faculty of law and political science, islamic azad university of karaj, iran
(Corresponding author), Email: parichehr.baghdadi.it@gmail.com.

ABSTRACT: The goal of the present study was to investigate the effect of city councils in community involvement of Islamshahr city. The research population was Islamshahr citizens. Research sampling was stage cluster sampling. To do the sampling Islamshahr city was divided into five regions, and questionnaire was given to 50 individuals in every region. Research tool was researcher-devised and its reliability and validity has been confirmed. Questionnaires were distributed among individuals and collected when completed. For data analysis one-sample T-test was used. After data analysis, the obtained results confirmed that city councils effect on four of five aspects of community involvement. This means that councils were effective in economical, political, cultural and social development of Islamshahr citizens, but there wasn't a significant effect in the field of human development.

Key words: Community Involvement, City Council, Aspects of Community Involvement, Citizens of Islamshahr

INTRODUCTION

Cooperation and participation among people is one of the important factors which helped human life to continue. According to sociology participation is a multi-directional interactive process which will result in supervision and inference of people and social-political reliability of system to achieve development accompanied with justice. The most fundamental basic thought of participation is accepting the principle of equality among people; and its goal is consultation, cooperation and effortful participation of individuals to improve life quantitatively and qualitatively in all aspects of community involvement including social, economical, political, cultural and humanistic development. Participating in the process of empowering individuals of society emphasizes on three basic values of sharing power with people, permitting people to supervise on their own fortune, and giving progress opportunities to them (Mousiayi and Shiani, 2010).

From two hundred years ago community involvement could be found in social and political systems of Western societies. But further attention was given to this phenomenon, and its role as one of the development factors of societies in transition was emphasized after the failure of strategies and development plans of 1950s and 1960s entered from West. Investigation and

evaluation of these plans show that being unable to use public participation is the main failure reason of development plans. Accordingly since then in development strategies it is emphasized on public participation as one of the basic needs of human being (Vahida and Niazi, 2004).

Informal participation with a long history and considering the changes of the recent 100 years is still observable in Iran society and has always had priority to formal and institutionalized participations. Holding religious ceremonies in special months and days, building mosques and Hussainias, mutual aids in weddings, parties, and public participations in the form of Bone and Vare (traditional cooperation forms) are some examples of informal participation in Iran. Studying participation experiences among nomads, the villagers and even citizens of old Iran shows that participation of individuals has been mostly in the fields of economics and due to geographical determinism and living conditions. In the new era, first patterns of participation which were inspirations from European countries changes, especially France and were used in Iran, was founded by National Assembly. In the continuation of this process, Constitutional Revolution, Nationalization of Oil Industry, Municipality Associations Formation, Islamic Revolution of 1979 and elections, were a number of formal participation evidences in Iran (Vosougi, 2004).

In the present era because Iran is in transition state from a traditional society to a modern one, due problems of non- participation or limited participation in social and political fields show off more than ever as basic and important issue. Therefore after victory of Islamic Revolution it became possible to transfer affairs to local rulers with the aim of developing political participation and forming various institutions such city and village councils. And finally in the end 1370s institutionalization of political participation in a local level was realized by counsels' formation, as a result of which unprecedented participation of citizens could be seen (quoted by Rajabi, 2013).

At present time one of the effective strategies of comprehensive and self-sustaining development of rural and urban areas is using participation and public abilities for construction and development of rural and urban regions in all aspects. The most important aspects of achieving this goal is formation of non-governmental organized institutions which are created based on different requirements and abilities of rural and urban citizens, and in diverse and essential subjects of local area with the aim of executing city and village development programs. In recent years city councils are defined as novel management of cities and villages; and city councils as local and public institutions which are responsible for cities and villages management are able to play a main role in city development by policy making, management and execution of different training programs, developing required infrastructures and assist attract funds (Hashemi and et al, 2009). Urban management has a fundamental role in urban development.

Urban management is in fact the process of organizing and leading society and urban environment by forming organizations and institutions. Urban development management is a process that includes three pillars of people, government and public institutions. At this process by public participation and through urban organizations and institutions, urban development plans and designs are developed and executed and also supervised and evaluated (Rezvani, 2004). Councils function as a connector bridge between people and government. Councils are coherent management institutions which are responsible to lead the management structure of country to democratization, make easier the participation of people in decision-making about different issues related to their living location, and finally be a factor to upgrade urban life standard (Ahmadipoor and et al, 2009).

Existence and survival of cities depend on actualization and durability of all their developing components and mechanisms. One of the approaches of urban development is "bottom-up" planning in which local people participation and their effective interference in planning process is considered as the axis of urban development activities.

According to basic strategy of national five-year economic, social and cultural development plan, Islamic Republic is looking for further popularization of municipalities and controlling required support by government. The fields of citizens' participation of various career and ethnic groups in directing affairs must be provided and further attention must be paid to their active role of participation. In this way by transferring a part of urban management to public institutions, administrating city affairs will take a dynamic and alive form and required fields for complete participation of people in different affairs will be provided. In this regard urban management and citizens mutually have effective role in developing and inducing city facilities and services quantitatively and qualitatively. Growth of urbanization culture which leads to comprehensive participation of citizens in city affairs management is accompanied with healthy and optimum utilization of city facilities. Citizens can participate in various aspects of urban management such as housing and green space, transportation, urban planning and tax payment (Mohseni, 2004). City councils in Iran are participation axis of people in local development. Therefore recognition of Islamic Councils' role in growth and development of quintet aspects of community involvement including social, political, cultural, humanistic and economic development of citizens (Islamshahr citizens in the present research), has been the main motivation of writing the present paper.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the present research the statistical population was all citizens of Islamshahr city. According to municipality report Islamshahr is divided into five regions; citizens of all were considered in the present study. Sampling method was cluster. This means that this city has 5 regions and based on cluster sampling method 50 individuals were chosen from each region which formed a total sample of 250 persons. To measure community involvement a research-devised questionnaire was used. The questionnaire contained 30

questions and was designed to include five aspects of community involvement. Following are the questions related to each one of aspects. Reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was reported to be 0.89 and content validity of it is confirmed by three professors of Political Sciences Group of Islamic Azad University of Karaj. The questionnaire includes 30 questions; the participants' top score is equal to 150 and lowest community involvement score is equal to 30. It should be mentioned that every individual will respond to any question which is completely unrelated to his situation with the option of "totally disagree". Answer sheet includes quintet Likret range which is designed from "totally agree" to "totally disagree". Participants read each

sentence and choose one of the options according to their level of difficulty they have in that specific field. Apparently higher scores show more community involvement of the individual.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first research hypothesis was as following: "City councils formation in Islamshahr developed political participation of citizens". To investigate the effect of councils in development of political participation of Islamshahr citizens, mean information, one-variable t-test and significance level are placed in Tables 1 and 2. Further explanation is given under the tables.

Table 1: Descriptive Indexes of Councils' Effect on Development of Islamshahr Citizens' Political Participation

Mean Standard Error	Standard Deviation	Mean
0.05	0.79	3.37

Table 2: One-Variable T-test to Investigate Councils' Effect on Development of Islamshahr Citizens' Political Participation

Mean Difference	Significance Level	Degree of Freedom	t statistics
0/372	0/01	249	7.46

According to Table 2, t statistics of councils in development of Islamshahr citizens' political participation (7.46) with level of 0.001 is positive and significant. In other words, according to participants' outlook, councils are effective in Islamshahr citizens' political participation. So the null hypothesis is rejected and research hypothesis is confirmed. In other words with 99% level of assurance it can be said that in participants' idea councils are effective in

development of Islamshahr citizens' political participation. The second research hypothesis is as following: "councils' formation in Islamshahr caused social development of citizens". To investigate the effect of councils in caused social development of Islamshahr citizens, mean information, one-variable t-test and significance level are placed in Tables 3 and 4. Further explanation is given under the tables.

Table 3: Descriptive Indexes of Councils' Effect on social development of Islamshahr citizens

Mean Standard Error	Standard Deviation	Mean
0.05	0.77	3.74

Table 4: One-variable T-test of Councils' effect on social development of Islamshahr citizens

Mean Difference	Significance Level	Degree of Freedom	t statistics
0/74	0/001	248	15.16

According to table 4 t statistics of councils' effect on social development of Islamshahr citizens

(15.16) with level of 0.001, is positive and significant. Therefore according to participants,

councils are effective in social development of Islamshahr citizens. Or in other words according to participants, councils affect social development of Islamshahr citizens. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and research hypothesis is confirmed. In other words with 95% certainty it can be said that according to participants' idea, councils are effective in social development of Islamshahr citizens.

The third hypothesis of research is as following: "City councils formation in Islamshahr caused human development of citizens".

To investigate the effect of councils' formation in human development of Islamshahr citizens, mean information, one-variable t-test and significance level are placed in Tables 5 and 6. Further information is given under the table.

Table 5: Descriptive Indexes of Councils' Formation in Human Development of Islamshahr Citizens

Mean Standard Error	Standard Deviation	Mean
0.03	0.47	2.98

Table 6: One-variable t-test to investigate the effect of Councils' Formation in Human Development of Islamshahr Citizens

Mean Difference	Significance Level	Degree of Freedom	t statistics
-0.02	0/581	248	- 0.552

According to table 6, t statistics of the effect of councils' formation in human development of Islamshahr citizens (- 0.552) is not significant. Therefore according to participants, councils' formation is not effective in human development of Islamshahr citizens. In other words according to participants' ideas councils' formation does not affect human development of Islamshahr citizens. Therefore the null hypothesis is confirmed and research hypothesis is rejected.

The fourth hypothesis of the research is as following: "City councils' formation in Islamshahr caused development of economic participation of the citizens."

To investigate the effect of councils' formation in economic participation development of citizens, mean information, one-variable t-test and significance level are placed in Tables 7 and 8. Further information is given under the tables.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of the effect of councils' formation in economic participation development of citizens

Mean Standard Error	Standard Deviation	Mean
0.06	0.89	3.26

Table 8: One-variable t-test for investigation of the effect of councils' formation in economic participation development of citizens

Mean Difference	Significance Level	Degree of Freedom	t statistics
0.27	0/001	249	4.72

According to table 8, t statistics of the effect of councils' formation in economic participation development of citizens (4.72) with level of 0.05 is significant. Therefore according to participants, councils are effective in economic participation development of Islamshahr citizens. Or in other words according to participants' idea councils affect economic participation development. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and research hypothesis is confirmed. In other words

with 95% of certainty it can be said that according to participants, councils' formation is effective in economic participation development of Islamshahr citizens.

The fifth hypothesis of research is as following: "City councils' formation in Islamshahr caused cultural participation development of Islamshahr citizens".

To investigate the effect of councils' formation in cultural development of Islamshahr citizens, mean

information, one-variable t-test and significance level are given in tables 9 and 10. Further

information is given under tables.

Table 9: Descriptive Indexes of the effect of councils' formation in cultural development of Islamshahr citizens

Mean	Standard Error	Standard Deviation	Mean
0.05		0.82	4.04

Table 10: One-variable t-test to investigate the effect of councils' formation in cultural development of Islamshahr citizens

Mean Difference	Significance Level	Degree of Freedom	t statistics
1.04	0/001	249	20.07

According to table 10, t statistics of the effect of councils' formation in cultural development of Islamshahr citizens (20.07) with level of 0.001 is positive and significant. This means that the participants believe councils' formation is effective in cultural participation development of Islamshahr citizens. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and research hypothesis is confirmed. In other words with 95% certainty it can be said that according to participants' idea councils' formation is effective in cultural development of Islamshahr citizens.

significantly. Also this research finding is in accordance with findings of Abbaszadeh and et al (1387), and Tasicata (2010).

Second hypothesis: Councils' formation in Islamshahr has caused development of citizens' cultural participation.

According to the mentioned finding of research it can be said that councils of Islamshahr has increased citizens' cultural and religious activities. This means that citizens became interested and deeply involved in cultural field activities through councils' executive programs. Activities such as cleanness, urban beautification can be categorized under cultural activities that according to the findings of the present research Islamshahr citizens are involved with. The findings are very important in explaining the presence and effect of councils. Also confirmation of this finding shows the effect of councils' activities in involving people and increasing their community involvement in religious activities; this means that confirmation of this research shows citizens' welcoming of religious ceremonies and programs of city councils. It also shows that councils' activities has been able to involve citizens in aspects such as physical health and family training which can secure citizens in front of social, physical and mental vulnerabilities, and reduce social costs. The result of this finding is in accordance with research findings of Benifatemeh and et al (1384), and Karimi (2004).

Third hypothesis: Councils' formation in Islamshahr has caused development of citizens' economic participation.

According to this finding councils role in Islamshahr citizens' economic participation is vast. Councils' activities to eliminate economic hardship of citizens and assist and stimulate the spirit of cooperation in citizens to eradicate financial dilemma of families, have been

DISCUSSION

The first research hypothesis: Councils' formation in Islamshahr has caused development of political participation.

According to this research finding it can be said that councils' existence makes citizens to be sensitive in roles such as choosing the qualified person; this act by itself is a very vivid criterion to assess citizens' political maturity. Also detailed study of candidates and making people cognizant of characteristics of the individual who is candidate to take a responsibility is a concern of all governments. Almost all governments spend a lot of money to make people aware of chosen candidates, and want to act very coherently and perfectly in this field. Furthermore, trying to get information from councils' activities by people, being sensitive online advertising their activities, and people's role and function in choosing the member of councils and their relation with council's function, gives this feedback directly or indirectly to people that proper choice of individuals can be effective. According to statistical findings of the present research it can be inferred that Islamshahr city council was able to increase citizens' political maturity

successful. City council has been able to involve people with these activities, although economic problems may still exist at this city. Also citizens of Islamshahr significantly participated in activities such as fixing unemployment and taking part in economic speeches made by city councils and shows their sensitivity to these activities. Over time this issue can create empathy and conformity among Islamshahr citizens and find a solution for economic problems which are one of the most important and effective barriers of country. Result of this finding is in conformity with findings of Abbaszadeh (1387), and Mohseni (2004).

Fourth hypothesis: Councils' formation in Islamshahr has caused human development of citizens.

To explain this hypothesis it can be said that city councils' function was not able to suitably create complete and mutual relations with people, and there are weaknesses in this regard. According to this hypothesis it can be inferred that although Islamshahr citizens have been involved with in activities related to city councils' programs and plans, and participated in them but had no information that trustee of these programs have been city councils; this is due to lack of information from city council. Also Islamshahr city council has been significantly weak in attracting ideas and opinions of people and couldn't act comprehensively in this regard.

Fifth hypothesis: Councils' formation in Islamshahr has caused social development of citizens.

According to the last finding of this research it can be said that Islamshahr city council has been able to involve citizens successfully in social activities such as sports, studying, and informing of various social vulnerabilities; and citizens significantly got involved in these activities. Because a big part of citizens are young, city council, being aware of this, has been able to organize social programs and involve citizens and specifically youngsters in them.

Conclusions

The present research investigated the effect of Islamshahr city councils on community involvement of citizens. In the beginning of research a number of research questions and hypotheses were proposed; and a test was done to respond and confirm the claim that what effect councils may have on citizens' community involvement (Islamshahr citizens). Finally after test, according to the data collected by questionnaire it was concluded that councils have

a big role in citizens' community involvement in different aspects. A detailed investigation shows that all five aspects of community involvement deeply influence a country's progress and improvement. At the present time all governments desire to use every strategy to increase their people's community involvement. Therefore, it can be concluded that by enriching councils' activities, community involvement will improve. As mentioned, councils have significant effect on five aspects of community involvement and based on this it can be said that existence and presence of councils deeply influence all aspects of social, political, cultural and economic life of citizens. Governments can pay more attention to Islamic City Councils in their future planning.

REFERENCES

- Benifateme H. Urban Periphery. Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty of Tabriz University, Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies of Social Science Portal. 2006:pp.59-76
- Rejebi H. The Effect of Tehran City Council on Citizens' view regarding Political Participation. Journal of Urban Planning and Research, Fourth Year, 2013: No. 13, Summer.
- Abbaszadeh M, Robani Khorasgani R, Ghasemi V. Investigating Effective Factors on Citizens' Participation in Urban Affairs (A Case Study: Isfahan City). MA Thesis of Sociology, Isfahan Human Science University.2009.
- Ahmadipoor Z, et al. Evaluating the role of Islamic Council in Rural Development. Quarterly of Spatial Planning, 2010: No 3, pp. 1-20
- Mohseni R. Social Aspects of Urban Macro Management with Emphasis on Citizens' Participation. Quarterly of Information, Train and Research. Fall and Winter, 2005: Year 2, Nos 7 and 8, pp. 83-89
- Hashemi, et al. Explanation of Sherifdom and Islamic Councils' Role in Rural Entrepreneurship Development. Quarterly of Rural Researches, 2012: No 1, pp. 93-114
- Vousogi M. Villagers and Political Participation in Iran. Social Sciences Quarterly, 2005: No 26
- Vahida F, Niazi M. A Reflection on the Relation between Structure and Community Involvement in Kashan City. Social Sciences Quarterly, 200: No 23
- Moosayi M, Shiani M. Participation in Urban Affairs and its Necessities in Tehran. Social

Roshan and Baghdadi

Welfare Scientific Quarterly, 2011: Year 10,
No 38, pp. 245-268
Karimi S.1382. Media and Strategies of
Strengthening Public Participation in
Political and Social Fields, Boostan Ketab,
First Edition, 2004.

Tasikata prosper Y. the cyber dimension of citizen
participation on ghanaweb: An analysis of
Ghana's 2008 presidential campaign, this
open access ETD is published by Ohio
university Ohio LINK.2010.