

Examination of effects of Direct Election of Mayors in Improving Iran's Urban Governance Indicators

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ABSTRACT

In Iran's urban management, the mayor or city manager is appointed by members of city council. Although it is not specified anywhere; this model is very similar to the general Council-City manager model. Due to problems in application of this model in Iran, the Iran urban management system faces problems such as instability of city-manager position, inseparability of political leadership from expertise-based and executive management, weak political leadership, and insufficient attention to sectoral check and balance in council/manager relations which in turn gives rise to consequences such as lack of efficiency, transparency, responsibility and accountability. The present paper seeks to explore and review deficiencies and problems in the dominant urban management model (council/manager form) and tries to find out whether it is possible to improve it through direct election of mayors. To enhance mayors' authority, reinforce political leadership, increase responsibility and accountability of city managers, and boost public participation, an increasing number of countries are substituting indirect selection of mayors with direct elections. The evaluation in the research, which forms the basis of the present paper, suggests that direct election of mayors in Iran improves urban governance indicators.

Key Words: mayor, council, direct election