

Urban Management Institutions in Sana'a City: Structure and Problems

الإدارة الحضرية لمدينة صنعاء: الهياكل والمشاكل

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المخلص:

بالرغم من استحداث اللامركزية كنظام للإدارة المحلية في اليمن و منها مدينة صنعاء إلا أن عدم استجابة هذا النظام لرؤى وحاجات وتطلعات كل فئات المجتمع أدت إلى عدم الرضاء مما أدى - بالإضافة إلى عدة عوامل سياسية اقتصادية اجتماعية أخرى- إلى احتجاجات مناوئة للنظام ليس في مدينة صنعاء فحسب ولكن في اليمن بشكل عام. يهدف هذا البحث أولا إلى رفد المعرفة في مجال إدارة المستوطنات الحضرية حيث أن الأبحاث في هذا المجال في اليمن تنحصر في الدراسات التي تقوم بها المنظمات الدولية مثل (USAID and UNDP) وثانيا دراسة الهيكل التنظيمي للإدارة الحضرية لمدينة صنعاء وعرض أهم المشاكل الناجمة عن هذا الهيكل في لحظة حرجة من تاريخ هذا البلد من خلال المنهج الوصفي الذي تم أتباعه في هذا البحث. بالرغم من سياسة اللامركزية لإدارة مدينة صنعاء إلا أن هذا البحث يبين أن الإدارة الحضرية للمدينة أصبحت تركز للسلطات مع تداخل الاختصاصات بين الجهات المختلفة لإدارة المدينة.

Abstract

In spite of introducing decentralization model of urban management in Sana'a city, dissatisfaction with the ability of existing political system to respond to the views and needs of all social groups is nowadays well publicized by the demonstrations and anti-government movements not only in Sana'a city but in Yemen as a whole. Formal existing mock democracy in which power is actually concentrated in the hands of a few leads to the emergence of broad social movements calling for this authoritarian political system to leave (*erha'al*).

This research could potentially make a much-needed contribution to the understanding of Yemen's urban management institutions and consequently local government system at a critical moment in the country's history. Making such a contribution was the first objective of this study. Scholarly studies of decentralization or the local governance are uncommon. The second objective of this study is to present the situation of local government in a country like Yemen (Sana'a as a case study) faces political conflict and crisis environments. These two objectives have been achieved through the descriptive mode.

Even though decentralization is being carried out, the main findings of this research are that Sana'a city government remains a mix of decentralized and de-concentrated entities, with duplication common. There is conflict of responsibilities among the governorate office, mayor office and the 10 independent Districts or (*moderiates*) offices.

Key words: Urban Management, Government, Governance, Sana'a , Yemen

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1. Introduction

The urbanization process in Sana'a has been intense and so has urban administration to manage it. Over the fifty years, Sana'a has grown from small walled gated capital to one of the country's largest cities. No other city has experienced such as rapid and condensed transformation in the country. Sana'a's population increased from 40 thousand citizens in 1963 to 2 million citizens in 2011.

In addition, Sana'a experienced extensive suburbanization and sprawl. Sana'a was no longer an independent city but was rather the central city of a rapidly expanding metropolitan region of millions of inhabitants living neighboring cities and provinces. The abrupt and phenomenal growth and fragmentation has resulted in pressing urban problems such as transportation, environment, housing, infrastructure, social welfare, and other public services. Facing diverse urban problems at varying stages of urbanization, Sana'a struggled to manage urban problems, resulting in few successful stories and many lamentable mistakes [1].

Sana'a City consists of two-tier fragmented local government bodies: Sana'a Governorate and Sana'a Municipality or main mayor office at the upper level, and 10 independent Districts or (*moderiates*) at the lower level. Both mayor of Sana'a municipality and Sana'a governor are appointed by the President, and District heads were appointed by the Prime Minister in consultation with the minister of Local Administration. Since local election was introduced in 1995, mayors and district heads are elected by popular vote every four years. Thus, hierarchical relationship between the main office and district offices was changed to equal relationship, and conflicts often arises about cross-jurisdictional public administration.

In spite of introducing decentralization model of urban management in the city, dissatisfaction with the ability of existing political system to respond to the views and needs of all social groups is nowadays well publicized by the demonstrations and anti-government movements not only in Sana'a city but in Yemen as a whole. Formal existing mock democracy in which power is actually concentrated in the hands of a few leads to the emergence of broad social movements calling for this authoritarian political system to leave (*erha'al*). That is well evident in the proliferation of new forms of political parties, social organizations and demands for political

system to be changed. It advocates refocusing of attention from formal political structures and governments as the locus of decision making authority to the role of civil society in exercising democratic rights and functions.

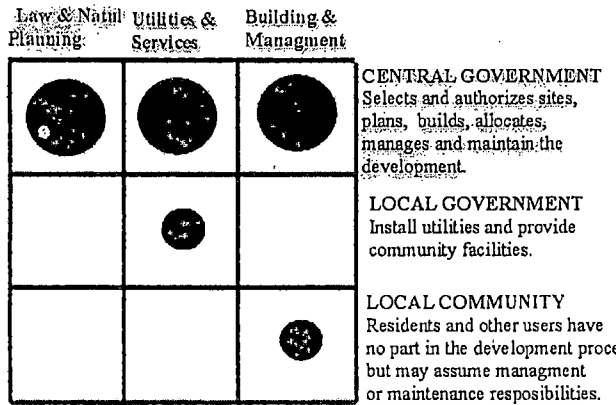
This political concept is supported by the urban management literature which advocates 'urban governance'. Williams[2] describes how the word 'management' was extended in the 16th century from its original Italian meaning of 'to handle and train men' (or in its first guise, horses) to 'a general sense of taking control, taking charge, directing'. It is this sense of the term management that has been lost in the urban context. In their institutionalist review of the contemporary urban challenge, Healey et al. [3] state that urban management cannot be understood these days in terms of 'top down' or 'command and control' models.

The transition of regimes, in most Third World Countries from colonial institutions towards formal state institutions, often resulted in strongly centralized, authoritarian and corrupt governments with limited local capacity, resources and power [4]. Therefore, city governments are no longer able, or not as able as they thought they were previously, to direct events. The formal government structures reach only one-quarter of the inhabitants of Third world cities. The rest do not conform to formal processes in order to survive. These communities are driven by poverty and lack of access to minimal amenities and live in the fringe of suburban areas. Across most of third world cities, political exclusion processes have lead to social exclusion which have produced concentrations of excluded people in particular neighborhoods. There is an "inherent and re-emerging spatiality" to social exclusion. The governance response to these circumstances must include new combinations of people-based (bottom-up) and government-based (top-down) urban management processes [5].

These two processes are the exact opposites of each other and differ on the basis of whether governments/implementing agencies or the communities have the overall control of the process. John Turner [6] elaborates the top-down and bottom-up approaches by comparing them with the 'heteronomous system' and the 'autarchic system' respectively. As shown in Fig.(1) heteronomous system characterized by a concentration of power, non community control and very low level of flexibility. Autarchic system characterized by community control and use of resources which is far from optimal.

Figure (1): Top-Down and Bottom-Up Urban Management Approaches

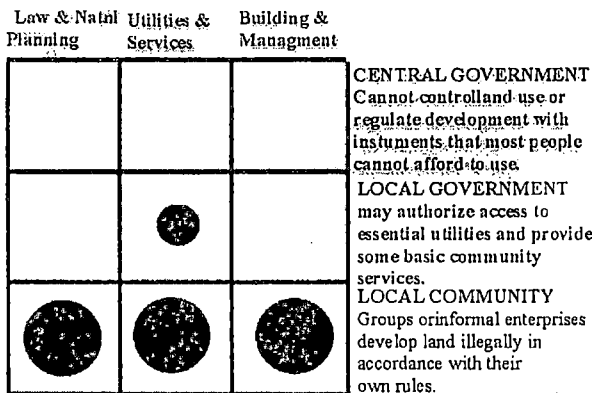
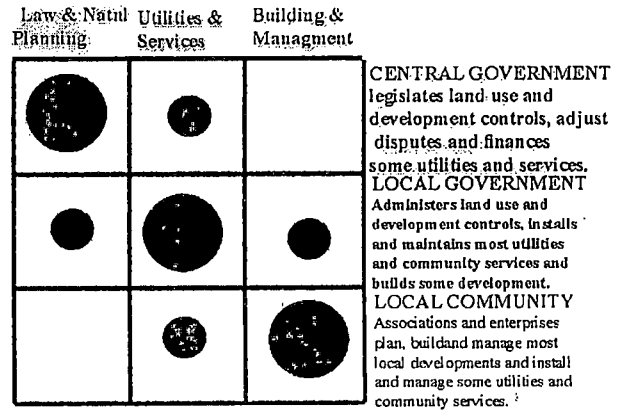
Heteronomous system



actors, namely civil society, local government and central government institutions [6].

Figure (2): Optimal Urban Management Approach (Autonomous system)

Autarchic system



Source: [6]

The difference between the two systems is in the decision-making power of different actors at different stages of the development process. In the case of the heteronomous system, John F.C. Turner [6] explains that the government decides and provides development for the people in a top-down process while the autarchic system follows a bottom-up approach and has different networks of actors working alongside in different relationships.

The autonomous system or "Triangle of Solidarity" (ToS) is an optimal distribution in which central government's role is to guarantee equal access to basic resources (see Fig.2). Municipal government's role is to provide infrastructure, and high level of local community control and optimal use of resources. By definition, the (ToS) combined the efforts of three

Source: [6]

Recently, it is increasingly recognized that participation, citizenship and development is not only about voice in policies, but also about politics, power and influence. Citizen rights as 'users, voters and choosers' do not make a major difference in outcome without being supplemented by strategies to gain influence, power and legitimacy. The normative agenda of the 'deepening democracy' literature has to be struggled for in practice. Consequently, the debate on government and democracy is extended from government at the level of policy making and implementation to governance at the level of politics and decision-making [4].

In this context this paper presents the case of Sana'a city urban management institutions. It argues that urban context has changed to challenge urban management and has helped to give rise to urban governance.

1.1. Research objectives

This research could potentially make a much-needed contribution to the understanding of Yemen's (Sana'a as a case study) urban management institutions and consequently local government system at a critical moment in the country's history. Making such a contribution was the first objective of this study. Scholarly studies of decentralization or the local governance are uncommon. International agents such as UNDP and USAID appear to be slowly re-engaging on service delivery, primarily producing valuable reports, albeit of limited scope. In short, it is difficult to find any current, thorough analysis of local governance in Yemen. With this study, it is

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hoped to close some of the informational and analytical gaps, help national and local officials overcome the difficulties the country faces today, and ultimately support a successful democratic transition for the future.

The second objective of this study is to present the situation of local government in a country like Yemen faces political conflict and crisis environments.

It is found that focusing on improved governance and development at the local level is one way to demonstrate in post-conflict settings that government is working again. Local governances provide proximity to citizens, allowing for participatory approaches and a reconnection of government and civil society around local concerns. Working locally allows for a diversity of representation (politically, economically, socially etc.) and responses tailored to local circumstances. Perhaps most important, local governances can more effectively provide public goods and services that have been sorely lacking. A quick return of services can be central to the restoration of state legitimacy as citizen expectations for change tend to be high.

1.2. Research methodology and methods

With these two goals in mind, the researcher embarked on this study in February, 2011. It was motivated by the existing anti-government slogan (*people wants to step-down the system*). It is a nation-wide demand to change the political system in the country and by the desire to better understand urban management practice in Sana'a city.

The present research is descriptive in nature. It was decided right from the beginning that both secondary and primary data were best suited for the purpose. Primary data obtained from field work and through personal interviews with concerned personnel of public and private officials and individuals that are involved with urban management policies in Yemen. This will be utilized to deploy urban management system in Sana'a city. The second approach is based on utilizing Turner's Model as methodological urban management tool.

This paper has been organized in five sections as follows:

- From government to governance.
- What is good and bad governance?
- Sana'a urban management institutions.

- Decentralization and government at national level.
- City government.
- Local government.
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

- Problems facing urban management institutions in Sana'a city.
- Restructuring the Local Government.

Some conclusions are drawn in the last section of this research.

2. From government to governance

To govern is to steer, guide, direct, control, regulate, influence or determine. In particular, it is to rule with or exercise authority and to administer the affairs of a state. Government, therefore, refers "to the formal institutional structure and location of authoritative decision making" [7], embracing the legislative and executive branches of the state apparatus and those who control them [8].

Governance, in contrast, refers to "the action, manner or system of governing in which the boundary between organizations and public and private sectors has become permeable. The essence of governance is the interactive relationship between and within government and non-governmental forces" [7]. It implies, Stoker[7] asserts, joint action and thus a common purpose, a shared framework of values and rules, continuous interaction, and the desire to achieve a collective benefit which cannot be achieved by either acting separately. It is about relationships between the state and 'civil society', rulers and the ruled, government and the governed. It implies interdependence but does not prejudge the locus or character of real decisional authority, instead being concerned to disentangle the relationships and practices involved in governing [9].

Governance is about the way the power structures of the day and 'civil society' inter-relate to produce a civic public realm [10]. In many discussions of governance there is, however, considerable ambivalence over how 'civil society' is constituted, in particular where the private sector, powerful individuals or informal associational life fit in a conceptualization of governance as the relationships between the state and civil society.

Until the 1980s, the predominant assumption was that governments had the authority and capacity to govern: to formulate and implement policy, and to realize development goals.

Translated into an urban context, the state-led approach to development implied that public sector organizations could plan and manage urban

development and the debate focused on an appropriate allocation of roles and responsibilities between central and local government and between the administrative departments of government and semi-autonomous public sector agencies. The tasks urban government is expected to perform are similar everywhere [11]:

- provide infrastructure for the efficient operation of cities
- provide services which develop human resources, improve productivity and raise the standard of living of residents
- regulate private activities that affect community welfare and the health and safety of the urban population.
- provide services and facilities that support productive activities and allow private enterprise to operate efficiently.

However, the organizational structure of urban government, the precise allocation of power and responsibility between organizations and the capacity of public sector agencies to perform these functions effectively vary.

Frequently, the effectiveness of urban government, judged in terms of its technical competence, efficiency in the use of resources, financial viability, responsiveness to the needs of urban growth, sensitivity to the needs of the urban poor and concern for environmental protection was very limited.

By the middle of the 1980s, the inefficiency of traditional approaches to urban planning, under-performance by local government and failures of service provision had in many places given rise to advocacy of a managerial rather than blueprint planning or administrative approach to urban demands [12]. Although the deficiencies of earlier approaches were explained in terms of the structure of public agencies, the distribution of functions between them and problems in central-local relations, as well as deficiencies in the internal organization and management approaches of government agencies and shortages of human and financial resources, the newer approaches were still state-centred.

However, two changes were increasingly challenging the state-led view of urban management. The first was the influence of neo-liberal economic thinking, expressed in the macro-economic policies associated with structural adjustment and a desire to reduce the role of the state to the minimum enabling functions necessary to support the operation of markets. These ideas have strongly influenced thinking about appropriate approaches to urban infrastructure and service provision.

The second was rooted in dissatisfaction with the ability of existing political systems to respond to

the views and needs of all social groups, whether in well-established systems of representative democracy; formal democracies in which power is actually concentrated in the hands of a few; or authoritarian, bureaucratic and one-party states. The emergence of broad social movements, the proliferation of new forms of social organization and demands for increased political participation led to the dramatic (re-democratization) of many authoritarian regimes in the late 1980s and early 1990s, attempts to revitalize surviving democracies (such as India), and a refocusing of attention from formal political structures and governments as the locus of decision making authority to the role of civil society in exercising democratic rights and functions [7]. Increasingly, the need for forms of government that were less heavy-handed, inflexible and unsubtle than traditional forms were recognized, underpinned by shifts in political ideology both on the right (freedom and individual choice) and left (recognition of limitations to state capacity).

Greater attention had to be paid to civil society organizations and social movements, both because of the role they had played in challenging undemocratic regimes and also because of the status many won for themselves as a result in the new constitutions drawn up to accompany the restoration of multi-party democracy, for example in Brazil, South Africa and the Philippines.

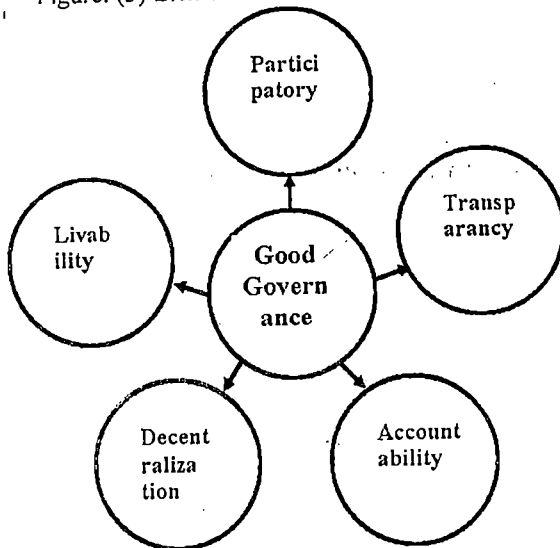
Closely associated with formal democratization at the national level were calls for decentralization, based on the assumption that decentralized government is able to coordinate sectoral activities, more knowledgeable about local conditions, more accountable to local populations and so better able to match resources to local needs and priorities. In towns and cities, recognition of the important role of non-state actors and civil society organizations in the production and management of the urban built environment, filling gaps in state provision of services, and holding formal democratic structures to account was coupled with renewed attention to democratic decentralization [13].

These challenges to traditional public sector approaches to urban government have had an impact on various aspects of governance and management in the 1990s, including political arrangements, decision making processes, ways of ensuring accountability, the allocation of roles and responsibilities between public sector agencies and other potential service providers and between different levels of government, and the mobilization and allocation of financial resources for urban development.

3. What is Good and Bad Governance?

Different people and organizations will define "good governance" according to their own experience and interests. As shown in Fig. (3) the emphasis of all organizations is on participatory, transparency, accountability, livability and decentralization.

Figure: (3) Elements of Good Governance



Sources: [14] [15] [16]

To facilitate the debate, definitions of good governance, from the perspective of three organizations, namely, the UNDP [14], World Bank [15] and UNCHS [16], are given below.

For the UNDP, "...good governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable. And it promotes the rule of law. The World Bank states "...good governance implies inclusion and representation of all groups in the urban society... and accountability, integrity and transparency of local government actions ... in defining and pursuing shared goals [15]. There are some important consistencies between the World Bank's definition and that of UNDP, specifically the shared references to participation, transparency and accountability, and an emphasis on process.

To be properly understood, the Bank's definition must be seen in the context of its vision for the sustainable city [17]. Good governance is but one of four characteristics shared by sustainable cities; the other three are:

- livability: "...ensuring a decent quality of life and equitable opportunity for all residents, including the poorest;"
- competitiveness: which seeks to ensure that "...approaches to urban equity and social safety nets [are] consistent with

incentive systems that foster productive and competitive firms of all sizes;"

- bankability: which "...implies financial soundness in the treatment of revenue sources and expenditures."

Equity, competitiveness and financial sustainability are introduced in a way that suggests that governance is responsible for balancing social and economic interests.

Habitat's own understanding of good urban governance is based on its operational experience and the Habitat Agenda... the global plan of action adopted during the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements UNCHS [16]. Habitat's operational experience suggests the emergence of a new approach to good urban governance based on a shift from direct provision of goods and services by government to an enabling approach. Habitat II embraced this approach as the best available strategy for achieving sustainable human settlements. It is characterized by three principle strategies, namely:

- decentralizing responsibilities and resources to local authorities;
- encouraging the participation of civil society.
- using partnerships to achieve common objectives.

Three aspects of the various definitions are relevant for the campaign:

- First, governance is a neutral concept; it can come in many forms, dictatorial or compassionate, effective or incompetent.
- Second, governance is not government. As a concept, it recognizes that power exists inside and outside the formal authority of government. In many formulations, governance includes government, the private sector and civil society.
- Third, governance emphasizes "process". It recognizes that decisions are made based on complex relationships among many actors with different priorities.

On this general basis, 'bad' governance came to be defined in the 1980s (by the World Bank and related institutions) as both unrepresentative government and inefficient non-market economic systems. Poor countries were castigated for 'personalization of power, endemic corruption, and un-elected and unaccountable governments' [18] and Yemen is not an exception. Next section therefore presents urban management institutions in Sana'a city.

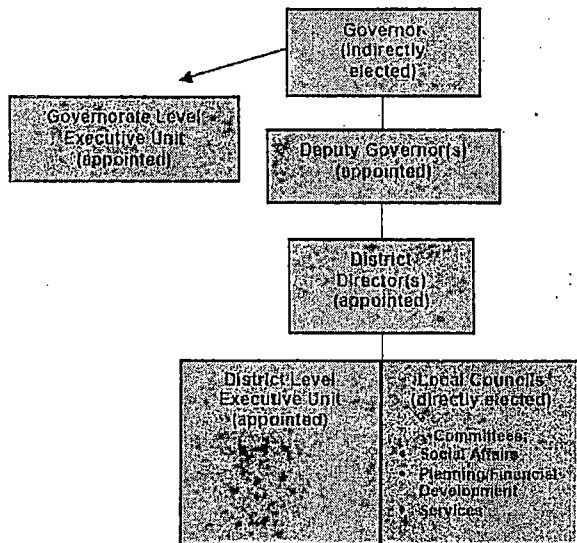
4. Urban management institutions in Sana'a city

4.1. Decentralization and Government at National Level

Yemen after unification officially underwent process of decentralization, but remains incomplete. The Law No. 4, 2000 of Local Authorities has decentralized administrative and physical responsibilities, including urban planning and management activities from the central to the governorate and municipal/district levels. The intention of the legislation was to bring about effective decentralization of government functions by integrating the dualistic system of district administration with local government [19].

The law transferred decision-making from the central level to elected local councils at the governorate and municipal levels, which were given the competencies of formulating development strategies and programs, budgeting capital investment plans, supervising the implementation of the different strategies and programs, and monitoring the activities of the executive local authorities. The different line ministries' local branches (e.g. public works, education, health, etc) were transformed into local executive authorities operating under local councils' guidance and whose mandate includes the implementation of the strategies and programs proposed under the annual developmental plan and budget and the delivery and management of the different services [20,21].

Figure (4): Government Chart at National Level



Source: [21]

To mobilize the decentralization programme as illustrated in Fig. (4) and Table(1) the current system of local governance therefore, is comprised of an appointed executive unit at the

governorate level, and an appointed executive unit and an elected local council in each district.

Table (1): Government Bodies at National Scale

Government Body	No.
Governorates (Excluding Capital Sana'a)	22
Local Districts	333
Local Councilors	5,600
Local Councilors/district if population is below 35,000	18
Local Councilors/district if population is below 35,000-75000	20
Local Councilors/district if population is below 7,000-150000	26
Local Councilors/district if population if population exceeds 150,000	30

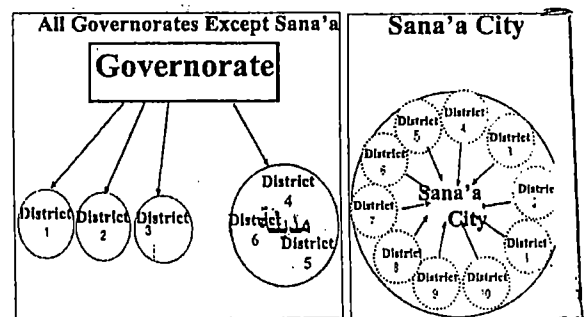
Source: [22]

The decentralization programme is a very promising initiative for both empowering people at the grass roots and attacking the vicious cycle of centralization.

4.2 Capital Sana'a City Government

As illustrated in Fig. (5) the Municipality of Sana'a is treated as an autonomous entity equal to the Governorate. Consequently, the Municipality is following the same law of local authorities. In other areas of the country there is a simple two tiered administrative system of governorates (*muhafadhat*) and districts (*mudiriyat*), with no distinction between urban and rural areas.

Figure (5): Districts in Sana'a city and the Governorates



Source: [19]

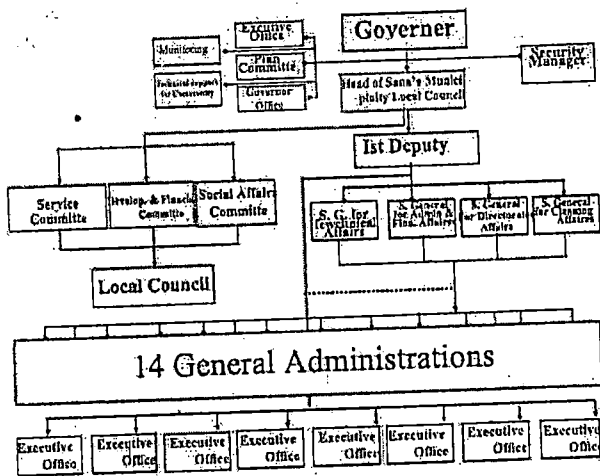
Given the special status of the municipality as being the Capital of Yemen and the political, administrative and financial center; a new law is currently under preparation for the municipality in order to improve its autonomy and urban management and development.

The Municipality Under-Secretary (*Amin Al-Asemah*) is the chief executive at the Municipality level and represents the highest

political authority, presiding over the (elected) Municipality Local Council (MLC). The position is appointed by the President as a *State Minister*. The State Minister is mandated to oversee planning and development activities throughout the Municipality according to the annual development plan. Sana'a Municipality Under-Secretary (SMUS) appoints the heads of the executive offices in the municipality in coordination with the related Ministers (e.g. public works, education, etc). The SMUS is assisted by a Deputy Under Secretary, appointed by Presidential decree, in addition to 4 Secretary General (*Wakeel*) for; financial and administrative affairs, technical affairs, Environmental and Cleaning affairs, and Directorates affairs. In addition, the main executive office includes several departments dealing with municipalities, local councils, planning, accounting, human resources, etc.

As presented in Fig.(6) the present structure of the Municipality is based on the general organizational structure of governorates,10 but with a number of modifications and additions. There are two kinds of organizational units: (1) those tied directly to the Governor, that is, the governor's office, the executive office, and the executive agencies, and (2) those tied to the Governor through an administrative pyramid. The latter include 14 general administrations (*idarat aama*) over which the first deputy governor (who as also the general secretary or (*amin aam al majlis al mahali*) presides.

Figure (6): Sana'a Municipality Structure Chart

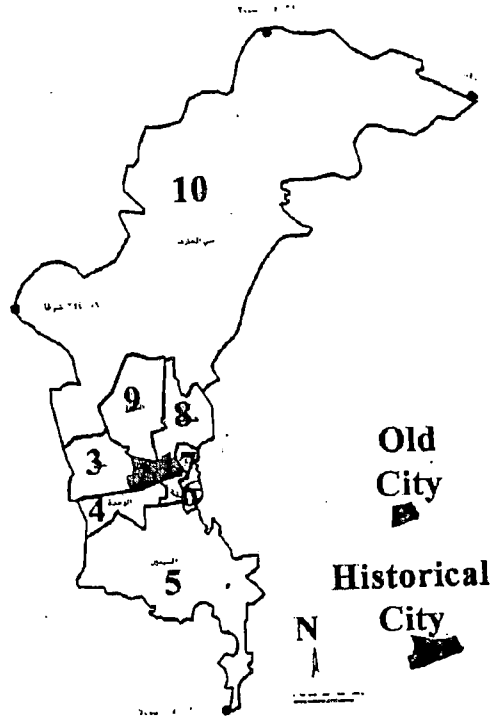


Source: [23]

4.3 Capital Sana'a Local Government

Sana'a Municipality is divided into ten municipalities or districts. Each municipality is headed by a Municipal Director, who is chief executive at district level and reports to the State Minister (see Fig. 7).

Figure (7): Sana'a Directorates



Source: [24]

Municipalities collect local taxes and charges for building permits and occupational licenses and are responsible for inspecting building construction sites and food and catering establishments. Municipalities have several departments dealing with building permits, occupational licenses, environmental health, financial management and accounting, etc.

In 2006, trying to overcome the lack of coordination between several governmental bodies involved in urban management functions (i.e., urban planning, land management and surveying), a Presidential Decree No. 35 establishing the General Authority for Lands, Survey and Urban Planning (GALSUP) has been issued. The proposed authority consolidates functions formerly fulfilled by three entities:

- (i) Land survey, mapping and land registration under the Survey Authority

- and Land Registry (affiliated with the Presidency of the Council of Ministers);
- (ii) Management of State land and real estate, under the State Land and Real Estate Authority (affiliated with the Ministry of Public Works and Highways MOPHW).
- (iii) Urban planning, under the Urban Planning Sector (also affiliated with MOPHW).

According to the new presidential decree, GALSUP is mandated among other duties to:

- Defining, registering, protecting, managing and allocating all State land and real estates.
- Defining all informal settlements and preparing the required upgrading schemes for them.
- Preparing the required researches and studies in order to define the most proper uses for State lands.
- Allocating the required land for public and investment projects.
- Preparing all topographical maps, supervising the aerial photography and issuing the permits for any surveying works to be carried out by any international or national entity.
- Setting the criteria, special conditions and parameters for the urban planning process according to local circumstances of each governorate.
- Preparing and approving all structure plans, regional plans and master plans in addition to preparing detailed plans within governorates through its de-concentrated arms.
- Preparing all detailed maps for real estate areas for the purpose of real estate registry and urban planning and resolving all anticipated conflicts due to those activities
- Carrying out all surveying, technical, legal, administrative and financial works related to real estate registry, preparing their required maps

4.4 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Capital Sana'a Local Government

There is a well-established and documented tradition of civic organization in Sana'a city, ranging from charities, non-governmental organizations, religious groups, associations and trade unions, social movements, business organizations, coalitions and advocacy groups all fall under the umbrella of civil society as it is generally defined. CSOs may organize and advocate for development or service projects;

research and work to raise awareness of an important issue; monitor service delivery and government performance; and/or provide humanitarian services directly to the community.

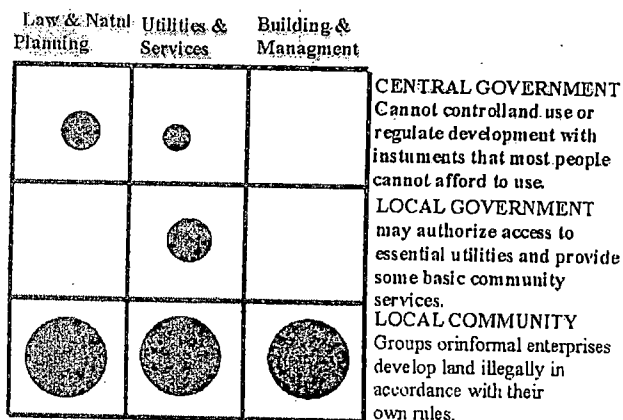
Local appointed officials and civil society organizations in Sana'a city often view one another as opponents. Sana'a local governments feel that CSOs only concentrate on the failures of authorities to provide for their citizens, and CSOs may often view local governments as unapproachable and therefore ineffective.

CSOs often frustrated and complain that they do not know who is responsible for addressing an issue of interest to them or that they do not have access to decision makers. The ability of CSOs to improve their position and to secure improved services has much to do with the strength and nature of civil society locally, which in the case of Sana'a city is incompatible. That is because "official" community organizations are highly manipulated by central government and closely linked to ruling political party.

Communities have been increasingly unwilling to passively accept the decisions of politicians and technocrats that impact on their living environments. In turn, planners have come to recognize that planning implementation is more likely to be effective if it can secure 'community support', or at least passive agreement.

Public participation in planning in Yemen is not part of the planning system at all. In Sana'a city, societal divisions have been increasing partly because of the new direction of social segregation. That is because of growing income and employment inequalities, which have intersected with kinship and identity in various ways, and possibly as well due to rural -urban migration streams and the growth of minority groups in the city [25].

Figure (8): Capital Sana'a Urban Management Approach



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When Turner's Model utilized, the result is an "Autarchic" urban management model which is characterized by CSO's self-sufficiency and central and local government use of resources is far from optimal.

Social resistance networks which extend beyond kinship and ethnicity remain largely casual and unstructured. Resistance tends to take the form here of 'quiet encroachment', rather than forming community organizations. In developing world, civic society is being inspired more by political reconciliation, not to exclude the ruling political power, than by organized demands for better infrastructure or shelter, given that efforts to secure the latter have so often failed.

5. Problems facing urban planning and management institutions

There are several problems facing management institutions in Sana'a. Although those problems might be typical for all Yemeni Governorates, the research highlights their facets in Capital Sana'a as follows:

The problem of planning in Sana'a can be described in a simple statement; *"A city without a comprehensive plan or a vision for its future growth"*. The Master Plan of Louis Berger of 1978 has become obsolete by early 1990s.

The urban planning efforts concentrate on short-term problem solving rather than long-term strategic planning. Today, the Municipality, in order to promote investment and cope with the fast informal development taking place on the peripheries, is forced to prepare detailed plans for candidate areas for urban development. The municipality lacks a sustainable development strategy for its main environmental assets (whether natural or man-made) such as water resources, agricultural areas and the unique heritage which would highlight the environmentally sensitive areas that should be preserved and the appropriate balance between the socially desirable public services by common citizens versus the economically-driven privatization by investors. In effect, the only constraint in front of land allocation and development is not the municipality sustainable development rather the military's objection for security or other reasons.

Till 2006, urban planning works was the mandate of the Ministry of Public Works and Roads through the Department of Housing and Urban Planning or through its executive office in the municipality, with hardly any respect to local

needs and priorities. Although urban planning was meant to be one of the functions to be decentralized under the Local Authorities Law, the lack of local capacity has retained the planning functions in the Ministry. With the Presidential decree 35, 2006 establishing (GALSUP), the planning role is kept centrally in contrary to the Local Authorities Law. As such, the Municipality urban planning office, previously affiliated to Ministry of Public Works and currently become under GALSUP, continued with its former limited mandate of:

- Designing detailed neighborhood plans, which are sent to GALSUP for approval;
- Amending detailed plans to reflect the situation on the ground, which are also sent to GALSUP for approval; and
- Monitoring the implementation of the master plan and detailed subdivision plans, especially in ensuring the alignment of main roads.

However, the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of plans is questionable as the responsibility of inspection and issuing the building permits is retained under the ministry of public works while the planning has become the responsibility of GALSUP and its de-concentrated offices with hardly any coordination. In addition the weak capacity; in terms of staff, equipment and vehicles; do not enable the urban planning office in Sana'a municipality to assume this task efficiently

In addition to planning problems, problems of coordination are equally important. In particular, there is poor coordination in Sana'a between the Public Works directorate, urban planning directorate and the municipality itself. This creates a negative impact on all disciplines. No institutionalized mechanism exists to coordinate planning and implementation activities between these entities. Coordination efforts, when they occur, are the result of personal relationships between managers, although they typically fail at the engineer or technician level because there are no allowances or bonuses attached to coordination activities.

GALSUP is to be the main responsible body for preparing and approving any master plan for the municipality as well as any other city, however, the local authority law also gives the mandate of the municipality to assume this role. In the case of Sana'a the municipality is taking the lead especially with its success in allocating the required financial resources for this purpose.

Future tension between the two entities is expected unless certain institutional measures are to be adopted to overcome this situation.

As summarized in Table (2), the same coordination problem emerges between Sana'a municipality and Sana'a governorate, especially in the southern part of the urban built-up area of the municipality today is administratively falls within the Governorate's boundaries.

Table (2): Duplication of Urban Institutional Efforts and Tasks

Urban Institutional Structures	Duplication of efforts and tasks
Decentralization Vs. Concentration	Even though decentralization and other reform measures are being carried out nationally, the Sana'a municipal government remains a mix of decentralized and de-concentrated entities, with duplication common.
Sana'a Governorate vs. City Municipality	There are no definite borders or coordinates separate between the municipality and the governorate; several informal developments have taken place making use of this confusing issue.
City Municipality vs. District	The two levels of local authorities (City Municipality and District) are given equal weight in decentralization legislation without clear hierarchical distribution of powers. Duplication of tasks is common. There is no differentiation of local authorities as to size or location or urban/rural nature.
District vs. official administrative subdivisions.	The districts have a difficult time meeting the expectations and responsibilities conferred upon them in the Local Authorities Law, mainly because of a lack of qualified staff and an inability to undertake the planning, programming, licensing, supervision, and control functions envisioned in the law in parallel with the day-to-day functions of service delivery. Below the district level, there are no official administrative subdivisions. For example there are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66 traffic analysis zones were created as part of the Comprehensive Traffic Management Study (2006). • 1600 Census tracts within the Municipality. • Service zones for electricity and water. • Planning authorities have created detailed planning neighborhoods (the current number is not precisely known).

(GALSUP) vs. (MPWH)	<p>Up until 2006, urban planning was the mandate of the Ministry of Public Works and Highways (MPWH) through the department of housing and urban planning or through its executive offices in the Municipality, with hardly any respect to local needs and priorities.</p> <p>With the establishment of the General Authority for Lands and Urban Planning (GALSUP), the planning role has been placed centrally in contrary to the Local Authorities Law.</p> <p>As such, the municipal urban planning office, previously affiliated to Ministry of Public Works and currently under GALSUP, has continued with its former limited mandate of designing detailed neighborhood plans.</p> <p>The responsibility of monitoring the implementation of plans is questionable as the responsibility of inspection and issuing the building permits has been retained under the de-concentrated arms of the Ministry of Public Works and Highways, while planning has become the responsibility of GALSUP and its de-concentrated offices with hardly any coordination.</p> <p>There is a race between the urban planning and informal development, where urban planning has been always the loser.</p>
City Municipality (CM) vs. (GOPHCY)	<p>CM granting building permits and sees the historic center as an area under the jurisdiction of a competing body. While General Office Preservation and Historic Cities (GOPHCY) was demoted to an agency with in the Ministry of Culture in 1990, the CM retained the special status that EOPOCS had had.</p>
Awqaf GOPHCY vs.	<p>Numerous conflicts have been reported between Awqaf and GOPHCY, Awqaf presents it self as an advocate and sponsor of conservation, although there continue to many differences between its staff and GOPHCY in the field.</p>
GOPHCY vs. SFD	<p>Having little power, GOPHCY appeals for assistance to UNESCO. GOPHCY's director Dr. Abdullah Zayd, challenged the panel in Rome: "GOPHCY is weak in Yemen, under the Ministry of Culture, because we are part of the government we are not receiving international assets they go to Social Fund Development (SFD). We are treated like any other customer. SFD is taking ground from the government. Initially they only funded projects but now they are implementing too. My employees go to SFD. It is stronger than GOPHCY, it has the money to bring consultants and make contracts..... We are not proposing that the SFD to be dissolved... but what is the role of GOPHCY?" [26].</p>

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Due to the fast informal development of the municipality especially in the southern direction, the municipality has exceeded its boundaries; consequently any envisioned economic development projects or even residential expansion would not be under the authority of the municipality. Given the fact that there are no definite borders or coordinates separate between the municipality and the governorate, several informal developments have taken place making use of this confusing issue. Consequently, one of the key objectives that the new proposed master plan should come with is new administrative boundaries for the municipality that would enable it to control and manage the urban development till the target year and accommodate the expected increase of the population. The charge of inefficient fragmented institutional capacity is echoed in the city's existing urban problems.

6. Restructuring the Capital Sana'a Local Government

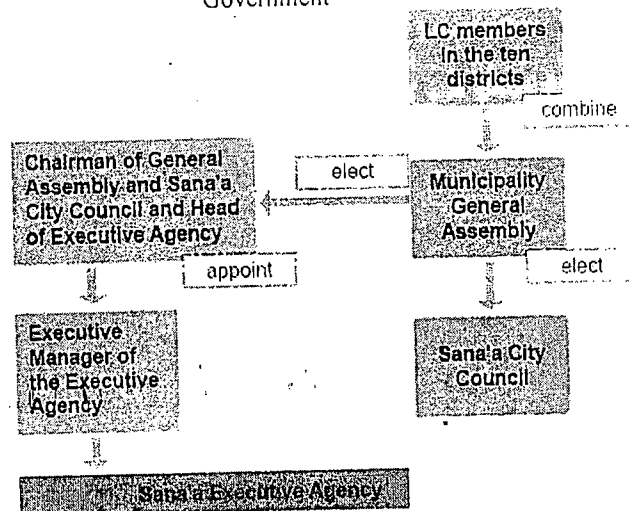
Improving and restructuring the local government is an essential if the local government is to begin fulfilling its role as an institution that can provide services to its citizens efficiently and respond effectively to development pressures. Three structural alternatives are available. These are as follows:

- Unified Decentralized Municipality (one unified administration).
- Divided Decentralized Municipality (partly decentralized and partly de-concentrated).
- Decentralized Municipality with Two Levels (decentralized to Municipality and district levels).

Through discussions with the Municipality leadership and urban planning professionals it has become clear that the first option—a unified, completely decentralized Municipality—would best guarantee the kinds of outcomes needed. A unified single administration for Sana'a Municipality has been popular with the Municipality's leadership and was the intent of an early draft of the special law that is needed for the Municipality (see Fig. 9).

The aim is to unify the city into one single administration, and this intention of a unified city is found in the draft law for the Municipality. This means that the 10 district administrations should not be isolated from the City entity. The institutional setup for the unified city would have the following elements:

Figure (9): Restructuring the Capital Sana'a Local Government

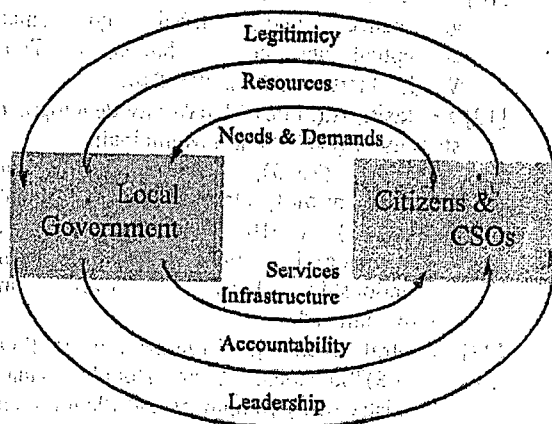


- General assembly: This is the elected authority from which legitimacy for the Municipality devolves, with powers which are equivalent to those of the present Local Councils in Yemen.
- City council: This is made up from internal elections from the general assembly, and authority is delegated from it. (There is a parallel with shareholder general assemblies and management councils in large companies).
- Chairman of the Local Authority (*amin al asama*): He would be elected by the general assembly and is the head of the administrative pyramid. This person chairs the city council and also heads the Executive Authority.
- Executive Authority: This is made up of all executive units in one structure, and is run by an appointed Executive Manager who runs the Executive Authority on a day to-day basis. This manager must have high qualifications that might not be found among State employees and thus second appointment from the private sector should be possible. He remains accountable to the Chairman of the Local Authority who delegates most tasks to him. He would be similar to a "city manager" found in some municipalities in the West.

To fill that gap between the local government and civil society organizations (CSOs), information availability is the currency of all linkages between CSOs and local government. It permits the public to judge the effectiveness of those in power and their bureaucracies. The public's ability to

participate and to hold those in power accountable depends on the availability of information about laws, procedures, and results. In fact, there is a mutually reinforcing nature to building good local governance, described in Fig. (10).

Figure (10): Concentric Circles of Local Government and CSOs



It is as a series of expanding concentric circles. Opportunities must be provided to citizens to express their preferences for the quality and nature of services they desire. Management effectiveness and behavior determine how well elected officials and staff provide services that respond to those needs. As local government actions are perceived to be useful and responsive, citizens are increasingly willing to provide resources for services and infrastructure. Again, through transparent decision making and management practices, local government demonstrates how it is accountable to citizens in the use of public resources.

Central government, local government and civil society organizations (i.e. "Triangle of Solidarity") could come together and work toward common goals. The result can be a more effective system of local governance, better service delivery and improved citizen perception of government and CSOs.

6. Conclusion

This paper illustrates the structure of urban management institutions in Sana'a city. Much of the urban management literature advocates urban governance. This paper adds to this existing literature by indicating how the formal state urban management institutions in Sana'a city resulted in strongly centralized, authoritarian government with limited local capacity, resources and power. It has not faced the reality of the changing political scene, including the assumption that local government will mean better governance. The result is the emergence of broad

social movements calling for this authoritarian political system to leave.

The attempt to apply decentralization in Sana'a city through the Local Government Law 2000 has not faced the reality of weak institutions, the changing socio-economic context nor the changing political scene. With respect to the first two aspects, the approach has not been adequate to confront the massive human resource implications of institutional capacity-building that the city requires and has seriously underestimated the tendency towards new levels of structurally induced poverty, with declining affordability.

Most of the critiques mentioned in Section (6) on urban planning and management institutions are valid when applied to the recent attempts to promote improved urban land management in Sana'a.

Even though decentralization and other reform measures are being carried out nationally, the Sana'a municipal government remains a mix of decentralized and de-concentrated entities, with duplication common. It also suffers from the ambiguity of having 10 elected district councils within its boundaries, in addition to the municipal elected local council. The Sana'a Municipality's human resources lack the necessary skills and are poorly motivated.

An obvious but important conclusion of this paper is the advocating of unified decentralized municipality (one unified administration) in addition to Triangle of Solidarity (ToS) initiatives. It is believed that good democratic local governance enables local people to elect the most competent politicians. Applied to urban governance, democratic local governance would enable urbanites to elect the best politicians to manage the city. The premise for the latter conclusion - electorates elect competent candidates/ the most able candidates - may be flawed in the Third World; where electorates are still politically illiterate and poor; and hence do not vote necessarily on issues.

In the case of Yemen, the majority of electorates vote along tribal and party lines; and based on how "empowered" a politician is or how much the politician can pay for the electorates' votes.

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