

The Futures of Productivity in Iran's Administrative System after Establishing the Administrative Complexes

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Abstract

Objective: The study aims to provide a clear picture of the futures that will emerge as a result of the establishment of administrative complexes in a ten-year period for Iran's Administrative System.

Method: This qualitative study can be classified in the group of exploratory future researches which is structured with a developmental nature and a survey orientation in a ten-year time horizon. The central tool in this research is the future wheel, and with its help the findings obtained from interviews with nine experts of the country's administrative system have been analyzed.


Results: Analyzing the data collected in the research, the most important positive effects and adverse consequences of the establishment of county administrative complexes on administrative system's productivity in four main areas (including political-administrative; economic-financial; social-cultural; technical-technological) has counted; In addition to that, it introduces the series of consequences expected from this phenomenon in five levels which will lead to two main scenarios including "crowdsourcing of government" and "government based on artificial intelligence".

Conclusion: The contribution of the study is to focus on the introduction of positive and negative trends that determine the status of administrative system productivity, which none of the previous researches have provided an analysis of its effectiveness on the policy of building administrative complexes. Based on the results, it is recommended to the relevant authorities to compile an appendix on the productivity of the regulations for the establishment of administrative complexes, as well as to plan for the establishment of a security unit in complexes.

Keywords: Administrative Complex, Productivity, Administrative System's Productivity, Civil Service Management Law, Future Wheel

Cite this article Kargar-Shouroki, Hedayat. Zare-Banadkouki, Abas (2025) The Futures of Productivity in Iran's Administrative System after Establishing the Administrative Complexes, Volume9, NO.2 fall & winter 2025, 115-152
DOI10.30479/JFS.2025.20983.1579

Received on: 26 August 2024 **Accepted on:** 19 January 2025

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Publisher: Imam Khomeini International University

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Introduction

Productivity, which is considered an engine of economic growth (OECD, 2015: 3) and a strategic goal for all organizations in today's competitive era (Adesina et al., 2024), is a multidimensional concept that is defined by terms such as "the relationship between the quantity of output and the amount of input" or "the sum of efficiency and effectiveness" (APO., 2015). According to reliable study reports, the productivity of the administrative system can be considered one of the most key requirements for the progress and development of the country (Jafari, 1402); which is influenced by numerous factors, including the physical space of employee deployment (Chatterjee and Üрге-Vorsatz, 2021). The government's new policy of establishing a single administrative complex in each city and eliminating scattered and numerous government buildings can be a clear example of such technical and physical developments that will transform the future of the productivity in administrative system. In accordance with the Civil Service Management Law, the country's executive agencies are required to transfer their employees to the administrative complexes in cities with a population of more than seventy thousands people to operate under the supervision of the governor.

The key issue analyzed in this study is that it cannot be clearly stated that pursuing the policy of transferring county offices to a complex building (instead of scattered and numerous buildings) will increase or decrease the productivity of the administrative system; because there are signs of both positive and negative effects of this policy on the aforementioned variable. In other words, the present study aims to clarify what the future of the productivity of the administrative system will be in the long term if the regulations governing the construction of county office complexes in our country are fully implemented.

In order to pursue the above objectives, the main question of the present study is formulated as follows: "What futures will the implementation of the policy of consolidating government buildings in county administrative complexes make possible for the phenomenon of the country's administrative system's productivity in a ten-year time horizon?" Accordingly, the sub-questions of the study can also be mentioned as follows:

- What are the main areas of impact of the policy of constructing county administrative complexes on the productivity of the administrative system?

- What positive and negative effects can be predicted in each of these main areas?
- What are the conceivable futures resulting from the identified positive and negative effects, and what are their characteristics?

Methodology

The present study is a qualitative study with a descriptive approach, conducted with an exploratory futures research approach over a ten-year time horizon. The technique used in this study is the “Future Wheel,” which is used to structure the brainstorming process in order to analyze the effects of phenomena at various levels and layers (Nielsen et al., 2023). The stages of implementing the study were designed in such a way that first, through interviews with nine administrative system experts who had experience and expertise in the field of constructing administrative complexes, a list of positive and negative consequences of implementing this new administrative policy over a ten-year time horizon was compiled. Subsequently, by forming an expert panel, the potential impacts of these developments on the productivity of the administrative system have been consolidated and integrated through the Future Wheel tool. The members of this expert panel are six administrative system specialists. To receive the analytical opinions of these individuals, two approximately ninety-minute sessions were held in cyberspace to extract the ideas and thoughts of these thinkers on the subject of study. In the end, the final image extracted from the Future Wheel was also provided to each of the experts, and all of these experts were able to identify and track their opinions in it; therefore, the final output of the research was confirmed in the verification stage.

Results and Discussion

After holding two meetings with the presence of experts and facilitated by the research group, the group's set of mental perceptions about the future of the administrative system's productivity due to the establishment of administrative complexes in the cities and districts of the country, as well as the connection between these concepts, has been depicted in Figure (1).

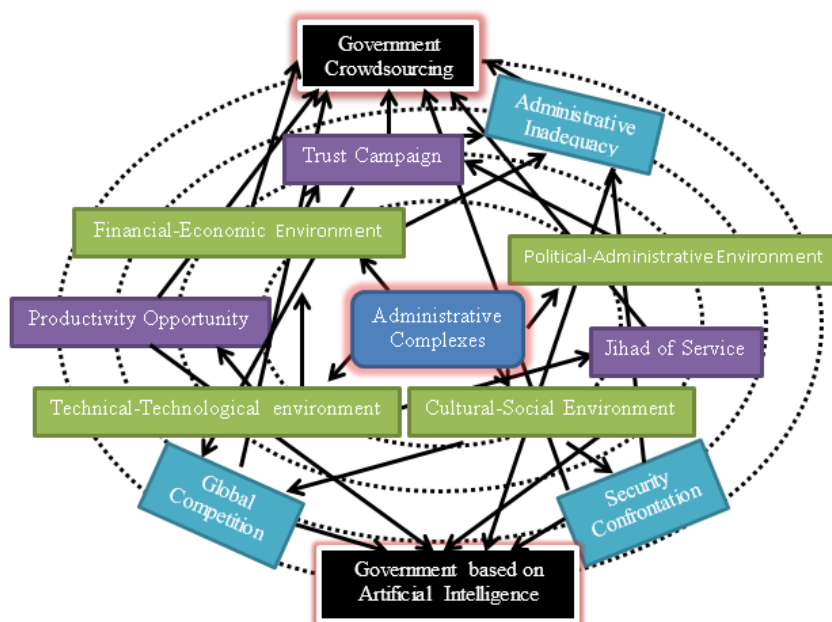


Figure 1. The future wheel of administrative system productivity after the activation of administrative complexes

The conceptual elements of this picture can be separated and described at five levels as follows:

- At the first level, the phenomenon of administrative complexes as a new governance policy to strengthen regions and expand the powers of local authorities is located, which forms the central core of the present futures research model;
- The second level of this diagram includes the four environments that will bear the positive and negative effects of implementing this policy, including: the political-administrative environment, the financial-economic environment, the cultural-social environment, and the technical-technological environment;
- At this level, the interaction of positive effects such as increasing the speed and efficiency and facilitating the public services will lead to the result of the "jihad of service"; in addition, the "productivity opportunity" will be created due to the synergy between effects such as reducing costs, enhancing experiences, and increasing unity of command; while the interaction of effects such as the possibility of managers abusing the concentration of power, reducing specialization,

and weakening the public accountability system will result in the emergence of the result of the "trust campaign".

- The fourth level of the future wheel in the present study is related to three long-term consequences that are expected to arise from the interaction between the results obtained in the previous level. The explanation is that the government's use of the productivity opportunity resulting from savings in administrative costs along with the arena that is obtained to prove the Jihad of service in this space will lead to the enhancement of the government's ability in "global competition". On the other hand, the concentration of public requests and inquiries at the administrative complex level along with the inherent inefficiency of our country's administrative system will increase the likelihood of "security confrontation" between service recipients and service providers in the form of protests and group tensions; while due to the sharp decline in public trust in the administrative apparatus, it will cause a situation of "administrative inadequacy" in the country or the bankruptcy of the administrative system.
- In the last layer of the future wheel model, two final consequences of activating administrative complexes can be predicted, which are named with titles such as "government crowdsourcing" and "government based on artificial intelligence", and show that on the one hand, the country's governance system, due to the inefficiency of the administrative system, will be forced to delegate its functions and components to the people based on crowdfunding methods and minimize its share in this process, and on the other hand, it will employ artificial intelligence to reduce human interaction and confrontation in service delivery processes. A more complete description of these two scenarios can be provided as follows:
 - o Government Crowdsourcing: In this image of the future that narrates the year 2034, the inefficiency of managers and employees of the administrative system in meeting the expectations of citizens and also in pursuing major missions in laying the groundwork for creating welfare and providing services to the society has been proven, and for this reason, a large part of public services are provided by non-governmental and public organizations instead of government institutions.

The body of the government has become very small in such a scenario, and although the number of government employees was expected to reach about eight millions this year based on a growth rate of 8.3 percent, their number is less than two millions, and most of the tasks expected from public organizations have been delegated to the people themselves through crowdsourcing. Service centers are also scattered throughout the cities and villages of the country; in such a way that citizens can physically access public service providers quickly and easily.

- Government based on artificial intelligence: In this future narrative, the year 2034 represents a special time period in which many interactions between the government and citizens will be established through new technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics, sensors, the Internet of Things, etc., and the decision-making system of the administrative structure will be managed through a combination of human intelligence and advanced artificial intelligence. Unlike the previous scenario, in this image of the future, we cannot see a multitude of scattered and widespread service centers in cities and villages; because services based on new technologies are provided through advanced communication tools that are available to all citizens, and to receive such services, there is no need to visit physical locations such as government buildings or administrative complexes.

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Conclusions

The present study was conducted with the aim of presenting a clear picture of the futures that are predicted to emerge as a result of the establishment of county administrative complexes over a ten-year period for the productivity of the country's administrative system. This macro-goal was achieved by identifying and visualizing two scenarios (including "government crowdsourcing" and "government based on artificial intelligence"). Also, in response to the sub-question of the research that "What are the main areas of

impact of the policy of establishing county administrative complexes on the productivity of the administrative system?", four macro-areas were identified, which are: political and administrative; economic and financial; social and cultural; technical and technological.

The findings of this study are consistent with research such as Mojtavavi and Izadpanah (2024), Jahanyar et al. (2022), Amirjamshidi and Kamran Kasmaei (2021), and Zakerian et al. (2016), which confirm the impact of the design and deployment pattern of the office space on the productivity variable. On the other hand, the reason for the substantial difference between the scenarios designed in this study and the scenarios proposed by Nasserri and Abbasi (2019) or Nasserri and Kianfar (2019) should be considered the focus of the two aforementioned studies on water and energy efficiency in agriculture (wheat production) and not on the administrative system. Accordingly, the contribution of the present study to knowledge can be considered to be in focusing on introducing positive and negative trends determining the variable status of the administrative system's productivity, which none of the previous studies have analyzed regarding its impact on the policy of constructing county administrative complexes and have failed to outline conceivable futures for this phenomenon.

It is recommended that the "National Productivity Organization of Iran" analyze the existing legal and administrative documents in the field of establishing administrative complexes, formulate the productivity annex of this governance system decision, and present it to the country's macro-policymaking institutions, so that the foreseeable requirements for maximum use of the "productivity opportunity" resulting from the establishment of administrative complexes can be understood and prepared. It is also suggested to the "Iranian Administrative and Employment Organization" to prepare a special transformation plan in accordance with the working conditions of administrative complexes in order to prevent the emergence of "administrative incompetence" or delay its occurrence, and after approval by authorities such as the Supreme Administrative Council and the Council of Ministers, to notify it to the Ministry of Interior.

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