

**Analyzing the Level of Access to Public Services at Neighborhood Scale
(Case Study: Neighborhoods of Isfahan)**

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Urban man has a direct relationship with the space and environment of his neighborhood which, in turn, provides the most basic requirements of humans in a daily manner. Lack of equal distribution of such basic needs across the entire neighborhoods within a city is considered as the main factor on spatial inequity, dissimilarity of urban space quality, and contexts for numerous other consequences. As a result, investigating these needs at a neighborhood scale would demonstrate a correct understanding of a balanced urban space.

2. Review of Literature

The subject of spatial equity has been expanded significantly during the past two decades, however, planners and scholars have failed to offer a comprehensive and all-inclusive assessment of the topic since equity cannot easily be put into action. Through the outlook of geographers, the notion of social equity involves contributing to the benefit of all, income distribution in areas, equal allocation of resources, and meeting people's basic needs. Equality in space is the same as the environmental/geographical equality which seeks to equally meet the humans' complex set of needs within the social environments by identifying spatial inequities as well as their causes. Achieving sustainability, balance, and equity within the urban atmosphere requires an analytical understanding of the status quo by analyzing the balance or spatial equality in cities.

3. Method

The present inquiry is an applied descriptive-analytical study. Data collection was carried out using library studies and questionnaires. The required data were collected according to the literature; then, the field investigations were done so as

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to update the information on the status quo. A set of questionnaires were also distributed among the experts¹ in order to extract the relative weights of the indices. The Human Development Index (HDI) model integrated with GIS spatial analytics tools were employed to analyze the data. Furthermore, the spatial statistical tests including the average neighbor and the spatial autocorrelation were used in order to apply the scientific results for the interpretation of the results obtained from the HDI model.

What distinguishes the method in the present study from the similar research is the combined use of models with the spatial analysis tools in GIS software along with a step-by-step use of various spatial analyses while integrating them with the spatial statistics models that can consequently increase the precision of analyses and conclusion.

4. Results and Discussion

Since 1960s, Isfahan has been witnessing a rapid surge in population. The growth rate of urban population and the service provision as well as the changes in need during the past fifty years have not been coordinated. In this regard, certain parts of the city have received higher shares of public services opposed to others. Consequently, it appears that a duality and a spatial polarization has occurred in Isfahan. Public services at the neighborhood scale accounts for a portion of individuals' daily needs the unequal distribution of which during the development process of Isfahan has led to the imbalance.

According to the accessible spatial, regional, and descriptive information as well as the present statistics, there are 169 neighborhoods in Isfahan municipality. Taking into account the basic needs and the public services in this study, spatial equity was investigated in Isfahan. The results show the absence of equity with regards to the indices of neighborhood-related functions. Indices and activities at the neighborhood scale which are supposed to meet the citizens' basic and daily needs are distributed unequally across the neighborhoods of Isfahan. Throughout this city, only 2.14% of the entire neighborhoods are at an advantaged level while 24.19, 47.97, and 25.69% are at semi-advantaged, disadvantaged, and completely disadvantaged levels, respectively. What is of importance in this analysis is that overall, 73% of neighborhoods in Isfahan are at disadvantaged and completely disadvantaged levels according to the neighborhood indices

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The equity indices are distributed across Isfahan neighborhoods in a clustered, heterogeneous, and unbalanced manner. The actions taken by Isfahan urban management in providing public services have also been clustered. In order to enhance the status of equity across various neighborhoods in Isfahan, those at a disadvantaged or completely disadvantaged level require special planning so as to have a fair competition in line with the progress and development. Public services

1. A number of 30 questionnaires were distributed among experts and instructors in the area of urban management and urbanism based on an investigation of literature, in line with evaluating the value and importance of neighborhood equity indices.

and equality in their distribution should be prioritized in both short and long-term strategic planning of Isfahan. Furthermore, a committee should be formed to monitor changes and developments regarding the level of access to public services in Isfahan municipality.

Keywords: Isfahan, Neighborhood, Social Justice, Spatial Justice

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