

T.C.
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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
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İNGİLİZCE TEZLİ YÜKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMI

**CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION IN SYRIA, COMPARISON OF
BEFORE AND AFTER 2011**

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

HAZIRLAYAN
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GAZİANTEP – 2021

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TEZ ETİK VE BİLDİRİM SAYFASI

Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak sunduğum “**CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION IN SYRIA, COMPARISON OF BEFORE AND AFTER 2011**” başlıklı çalışmanın tarafımda, bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin kaynakçada gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu ve bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanmış olduğumu belirtir ve onurumla doğrularım.

Ahmed Alshab

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ABSTRACT

One of the most important debates taking place in recent decades is: How local councils or local government authorities govern, and in this regard, we can see two methods of administration, centralization and decentralization administration. Where the centralization is based on maintaining decision-making authority in the hands of the central government in the capital and all cities or villages councils are subordinate to it and cannot take any decision independently. While decentralization is based on the transfer of authorities to local government bodies, which govern independently of the central government.

The aim of this study is to discuss the laws that organize the administration of the local government councils in Syria before and after 2011, either in the Assad regime areas (ARA) or in the areas out of regime control (AORC) after 2011, and which type it takes, is it centralization administrative or decentralization administrative? Then, to achieve the aim of the study, we present a conceptualization explanation of centralization and decentralization and its types and level of governate, then discuss the advantages and disadvantages of both administrative centralization and administrative decentralization.

This study relied on qualitative methodologies such as academic research, articles, official legal and political reports, personal interviews with chairmen, members of local councils, and members of the Syrian Interim Government (decision-makers). Also, personal interviews with a member of local councils in Syria before 2011. to understand how local councils are formed, the relationship with the central government and the services they provide, in addition to the financial resources they obtain.

Finally, this thesis is discussed the variables in terms of reality and law, whether in the areas of the Assad regime era before and after 2011 or either in the areas outside the control of the Assad regime era after 2011, then analyzed the information which is obtained from the interviews and content analysis of the laws regulating local administration in Syria. The study ended with the following results:

1. The Assad regime's approach to dealing with administrative units in the manner of administrative centralization has not changed, whether before or after 2011.

2. The experience of forming local councils in areas outside the control of the Assad regime can be considered a successful decentralization experiment to some extent.

Key words:

Centralization, Decentralization, Local councils, Central Government, Local administration.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LCs	Local Councils
SIG	Syrian Interim Government
ARA	Assad's Regime Areas
AORC	Areas Out of Regime's Control
MoLA	Ministry of Local Administration
LA	Liberated Areas
SCoLA	Supreme Council of local administration
BP	Baath Party
LAU	Local Administration Unit

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Syria lived for decades within the framework of administrative centralization, as law "No. 15 of 1971 and its subsequent amendments" regulating the work of local administrations enshrined and strengthened administrative centralization and the authority of the central government over local administrations in reality. Where the authority to make fateful decisions was in the hands of the competent minister and the governor, while no chairman of local councils could violate these orders or decisions, so the management of the regions was concentrated in the hands of the minister and the governor, so there is not a transfer of authorities or even a mandate to decisions- making.

Until the year 2000 came, and the head of the ruling regime in Syria changed when Bashar Al-Assad came to power, the newly opened young man from the West, specifically Britain, where he spent his school years. But the regime's performance in Syria did not change because of the Ba'ath party's controlled of the rule, and his continuation on the same policy that was in the era of his father, Hafez Al-Assad.

Moreover, due to regional and international pressures, and the regime gradually following the open market policy, the policy change stage began to promote local development, which was part of the reform and development program that the regime followed at that time. Indeed, joint committees have been formed from the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Local Administration and the State Planning Commission to review the Local Administration Law, this committee also cooperated with the European Commission in Syria in order to benefit from their experiences in developing local administration laws that aim to transfer the country from administrative centralization to administrative decentralization, which Democratizing practices is strengthened in terms of selection of local government councils or city council members. The committee worked on issuing a draft of the developed local administration Law, which carries administrative decentralization of local development and local governance in 2008, but it did not see the light at that time.

Until the waves of the Arab Spring started, which was one of its stations, Syria, the ruling regime in 2011 issued the Local Administration Law No. 107 of 2011, that strengthens

administrative decentralization, which is to be a pressure card in the hands of the ruling regime if it is forced to negotiate the form of governance in Syria, the mechanisms of democracy, and the administrative, political and economic development in Syria, and indeed that was. However, due to the conflict in Syria and the regime's lack of financial and economic resources, it continued to administer the areas under its control in the manner of administrative centralization, while claiming that the management of the areas is carried out through administrative decentralization in accordance with Law 107 of 2011.

On the other hand, in the opposition areas outside the control of the Assad regime, some activists in these areas were able to administer the area in order to provide services that were suspended due to the Assad regime's withdrawal of local council employees. Then, when the Syrian Interim Government (SIG) was formed, it worked to legally frame the work of the local councils and set the internal regulations of the local administration, for which Law 107 of 2011 was adopted as the basis, and indeed it was applied in the formation of local councils.

This study argues centralization and decentralization in general in terms of types and definitions and then specializes more in centralization and decentralization administrative, especially in the work of local councils before and after 2011 in areas controlled by the Assad regime and areas under the control of the Syrian opposition. And determining whether these local councils are currently more effective, even though there are deficiencies due to the transition era of the revolution.

1.1. Research background

Local councils play a prominent and important role in providing basic services to the community in which they are present, especially if these councils are directly elected by the people, they represent them and are close to them, and thus they can know more about the needs and requirements of the community. With the increase in the requirements of societies in recent times, the councils needed to bear this burden in securing these needs. But in Syria, before 2011, local councils could not play this role because they were directly subordinate to the central authority in the capital and were interfering in their work and decisions due to the nature of the central administration at that time.

But after the Syrian revolution and the extension of the protest movements to all Syrian lands, the Syrian regime withdrew the employees of the local councils from these towns and cities that went out of its control in order to create chaos and did not provide services to the population in those areas. Several activists took the initiative to form local councils concerned with securing the basic needs of the population, but due to the lack of financial resources and administrative experience and the lack of legal reference governing the councils' work, these councils could not continue to function as desired. After the formation of the Syrian Interim Government and the establishment of the legal framework governing the work of local councils by the Ministry of Local Administration in the Syrian Interim Government, which adopted Law 107 of 2011, promotes administrative decentralization, and provides logistical, financial and legal support to councils, local councils began to form legally and correctly, whether through election directly from the population or by compatibility. Indeed, local councils have taken an effective role in managing their areas in terms of providing basic services (electricity - water - education) to the residents of those areas.

With the passage of time and the change of the map of control over regions and the intervention of regional and international bodies in Syria, it was necessary to study the governance reality of the local councils and what is the nature of the administrative system followed in the work of these councils, especially in areas outside the control of the Assad regime, and whether local councils strengthen the system of administrative decentralization in its work and could it be an example for the councils' work in the future of Syria.

1.2. Problem Statement

‘The conflict (in Syria) has brought to the fore the role of local organizations, diaspora groups, local councils, and others. These groups have almost inadvertently filled the gap left by the limited international presence, providing both assistance and protection’ (Svoboda & Pantuliano, 2015).

The local unit councils were not able to play the role assigned to them in Syria under the rule of the Assad regime in the pre-post 2011 era, due to the central government’s dominance over the work of these councils through governors or ministers in the government, especially during the

conflict in Syria and because of the war's circumstances and the lack of financial resource. On the other hand, in the areas outside the control of the Assad regime after 2011, the local councils played a major role in providing services to the residents by communicating with international donors and providing support in various service sectors, but without having a unified legal framework regulating their work in all areas. And even they were not fully aware of their role in developing society through popular participation in determining its needs and democratically electing its representatives, until 2014, when the Syrian Interim Government was formed and established the legal framework regulating the work of local councils in areas outside the control of the Assad regime.

In this sense, the problem this study attempt to solve is to determine the administrative system in Syria before and after 2011, then examines the laws regulating this. The research deals with a comparison between the methodology of work of local councils in areas under the control of the Assad regime and areas under the control of the Syrian opposition, and determining the administrative system applied by local councils by researching the method of forming local councils, the nature of the relationship with the central government, the services it provides, in addition to the financial resources they obtain. Does it apply the administrative centralization system or the administrative decentralization system in the managing of those regions?

1.3. Research Questions

The research questions were developed based on the research problem in order to determine the administrative system in which the local councils operate, in terms of the mechanism of forming the council, the relationship of the councils with the central government, and to examines the legal system that regulates the work of these councils before and after 2011. That is why we focused our questions to serve the research path.

Main Question:

This research will attempt to fill the gap and search for a change in the role of the work of these local councils then answer the question: Are the local councils in Syria more influential in the post-2011 era due to the application of decentralization administration by researching the

nature of the formation of these councils, the relationship with the central government, the services they provide, and the financial resources they obtain?

Sub Questions:

The sub-questions to be scrutinized in the chapters of this study are:

1. What are the definitions and types of centralization and decentralization? Then focusing on the centralization and decentralization administration, its advantages, and disadvantages in the Syrian case.
2. How is the Syrian regime deal with local councils before and after 2011?
3. Was the performance of local councils more effective in areas outside the control of the Assad regime, according to the different methods of formation, the relationship between the councils and the central government, the service role they played, and the financial resources they obtained?

1.4. Research Objectives

This study aims to conduct an academic framework of the Syrian local councils by measuring whether these local councils applied the administrative decentralization system in the era after 2011 by examining how these councils were formed and their relationship with the central government, and whether these councils were able to provide the required services to the residents in the areas where they live and secure sufficient financial resources for that. Thus, it can be an example that can be applied in Syria after the end of the conflict.

1.5. Research Hypotheses

This study mainly examines the role of the local councils during the conflict, and according to the research variables, which are: The Independent variables: The implementation of administrative decentralization through (The method of forming local councils - The possibility of securing services for citizens - Securing financial support for councils - The relationship between the councils and the central government). On the other hand, the dependent variable is applying administrative decentralization in the future of Syria after the conflict finish.

Reading the elements aforementioned above then re-reviewing the study questions, the problem of the study, and literature review, this thesis can extract two hypotheses which are:

H1: Local councils within the regions of the Syrian regime did not implement administrative decentralization either according to Law 15 of 1971 or to Law 107 of 2011.

H2: Local councils in areas outside the control of the regime " opposition held areas " after 2011 applied administrative decentralization during their work.

1.6. Significance of the Study

The application of administrative decentralization to the work of local units and following of a specific legal framework leads to a clear definition of the tasks and responsibilities of these councils, thus they can perform their tasks in developing the administrative unit and setting development plans for the local community efficiently and effectively and implementing these plans to provide the services needed by the community, this enhances the developmental role of these administrative units, in addition to making the people accustomed to the practice of popular democracy through the election of its representatives in the local units.

In this scene, the importance of this study comes from analyzing and comparing the work of local councils in areas controlled by the Assad regime and areas outside its control before and after 2011 and determining the administrative system used in the work of these councils, whether these councils succeeded in developing the local community through developing plans, securing the necessary services for the local community. Then answer the question of whether administrative decentralization can be applied in the work of local councils in the future of Syria after the end of the conflict.

Researching the mechanism of work of the local units was forbidden in the era before 2011 due to the control of the Baath Party and the intelligence "Mukhabarat" over all the local councils in Syria. Therefore, we were unable to obtain previous studies talking about centralization and decentralization in Syria. Until the revolution began, and local councils were forming in areas outside the control of the Assad regime. The research centers outside Syria that are concerned with Syrian affairs starts talking about the importance of the formation and working of local units and the legal administrative system that governs the work of those councils.

But this study is considered one of the first academic studies talks about centralization and decentralization administration in Syria. Therefore, this research contributes to the academic studies lies in the fact that this study combines legal and political studies as it examines the laws governing local administration in Syria whether the Law 15 of 1971 or the Law 107 of 2011, and presents actual practices on the ground for administrative authorities in Syria after 2011 in the areas outside of Assad regime control. Also discusses the matter from a societal-political point of view whereas, the transition to local administration and the promotion of decentralized administration can strengthen democracy. Furthermore, it will be a useful reference for researchers in the legal or political field in general and especially in the Syrian context.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

This research aims to study local councils in Syria before and after 2011, in terms of formation, relationship with the central government, financial resources, and the work of those councils in the areas it administers to securing services to the population. To comparison this between the areas controlled by Assad's regime and the areas outside of its control. Through the questions that the study seeks to answer and the hypotheses that wants to verify and measure.

Due to the conditions of the conflict in Syria and the inability to reach members of local councils in areas under the control of the Assad regime at present. The researcher resorted to interviewing the members of the Assad regime's local councils before 2011 and experts in the work of local administration councils, in addition to relying on the secondary source such as official newspapers and websites which researching the role of local councils, and research papers produced by researchers and editors, whether they are affiliated to the Syrian regime, or opposed to it.

On the other hand, for the researcher to obtain information and compare the work of local councils in areas outside the control of the Assad's regime, that is, in opposition areas beyond its control. The researcher resorted to conducting individual interviews with heads and members of local councils in the liberated cities in addition to some members of the Syrian Interim Government (SIG) especially the members of the Ministry of Local Administration (MoLA), which supervises the work of these councils, and set the legal framework of the working of these councils. Then, analyze the information collected in the interviews to reach comparable results, answer the main and subsidiary research questions, moreover, finally conclude and recommend the results achieved of the study.

2.1. Scope of the Study

This study includes in chapter 3rd an examination of centralization and decentralization in terms of definition and types and literature review. Then in chapter 4th, interviews are conducting with members of local councils in the areas under Assad regime control to understand the mechanism of work of local councils, how the regime deals with these councils in terms of the method of formation, the relationship of those councils with the central government and governors, and the administrative system used by the regime's management of local units. As for the 5th chapter, the study deals with the local councils are formed in the opposition areas after 2011, examines the administrative system those councils followed, the formation methodology of those councils, and the relationship with the central government.

2.2. Research Design

This study depends on a qualitative methodology, including primary and secondary data sources. The researcher starts to present secondary data sources such as academic studies, articles, and books talking about centralization, decentralization, and local administration and development. That aims to establish the theoretical framework of the study. On the other hand, for the Syrian case study, this research also relies mainly on primary data sources as it is in-depth interviews with members of local councils, even if they were members of the Assad regime's LCs before 2011 or were members of LCs in areas outside the control of the Assad regime. And secondary data sources talking about the experience of the local councils such as journals, research centers studies, and laws issued from the Assad regime and SIG.

The interviews aim to collect accurate information about these local councils, in which we learn about the mechanism of forming these councils, the nature of the relationship with the central government, the services these councils provide, the financial resources they obtain, and what is the assessment of the interviewees of the administrative experience through which they work. The interviews questions are preparing according to the basic definitions of the research, the problem of the study, research questions, and hypotheses, to gather the information that is not present in previous studies. Then determine the research results and extract appropriate recommendations to implement administrative decentralization in future Syria After the conflict is over.

2.3. Instrument

This thesis has two different types of the research samples, one of them is the local councils working in the Assad regime areas, and the other is the local councils working outside of the Assad regime control areas. As mentioned above, to get accurate information from the research sample of LCs in the opposition areas, the researcher is going to conduct personal interviews with the chairman, Vice-chairman, and members of LCs, in addition to some members of the Ministry of Local Administration who is working closely with LCs. On the other side, for the LCs in the areas under the control of the Assad Regime, the researcher is going to conduct personal interviews with three interviewees defectors from the Assad regime who were working with LCs, which could fulfill the aim of the study.

The scope of personal interviews with chairmen, members, and the defectors. will consider the following parts:

1st Part: How the Local council formed.

2nd Part: What is the type of relationship between the LCs and the central government.

3rd Part: What is the law regulating the work of LCs.

4th Part: How the LCs provides service for the population under their control.

5th Part: What are the financial resources of LCs.

2.4. Population & Sampling

The study population consists of all the local councils in the areas outside the control of the Assad regime after the 2011 era and the LCs in the areas of the Assad regime before 2011, but due to the large study population, a sample of 12 local councils are choosing that varies by geographical distribution over all Syrian regions. The scope of the research will focus on LCs, which:

- It was established before or after 2011.
- Formed by the method of election or compatibility.
- Have an office that provides services to the population.
- Have a secure financial resource.

Then interviews are conducting with the council chairman, vice-chairman, member of LCs, and members of the executive offices of those councils. Also, the interviews are doing with members of the Syrian interim government SIG, the Ministry of Local Administration (MoLA), who are in close relationship with these local councils.

2.5. Research Period

Before and after 2011, considering the LCs formed in the Syrian regime areas and that are formed outside of the Syrian regime areas.

2.6. Research Limits

Temporal limits: The study period extended from the beginning of December 2020 to the end of July 2021. as the research scope is a long-term period, I have considered the significant variables before and after 2011.

Spatial limits: The sample included LCs based inside Syria. They all work to provide services to the local population, and are formed in the areas they are governs, in addition to being able to obtain financial resources. Therefore, research results may change due to differences in the fields in which the study is applied.

2.7. Data Analysis

This study relies on qualitative research methods, using a structured and unstructured questionnaire to collecting data through conducting interviews with the key-information persons. The questionnaire has two main parts, general information is the first one, and the second one is the study variables and their measurements, which including four categories which are the local council formation, the relationship with the higher administrative authorities, the services provided to the local council and financial resources that obtain.

Each category has opened and closed types of questions, multiple-choice or ranking are used for the closed questions, analyzing it through an Excel program. As for the opened questions, after transcribing the recorded interviews, applying deductive coding over the categories we mentioned above, using an Excel program to analyze it.

The secondary data sources for the Syrian case study are law, books, and articles. The researcher is using content data analysis, for the information is obtained linked to the category mentioned above. A comparison of data between the Assad regime local council and the opposition local councils is happened to extract the conclusions and recommendations.



CHAPTER III

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION, LITERATURE REVIEW

Some thinkers have sought to explore a set of concepts when they looked at how to satisfy the general needs of individuals, through the administration's executive function, as they view the administrative organization as a means for public administration to use certain methods, to achieve its specific purposes efficiently and effectively, that is, with less Possible time, effort, and cost. Accordingly, the administrative organization is necessary for the administration authority to carry out its functions and realize its competencies to achieve its goals, foremost of which is economic and social development. Here the administrative organization emerged to clarify the classification of the various administrative bodies in the state, what they are formed, the distribution of administration competencies among them, and how they exercise this competence.

As a result of technological, political, economic, and social changes taking place in the entire world and the spread of globalization, the burdens of the governments of these countries have increased, and it has become necessary to provide the requirements of their populations in all respects. Either the central governments of these countries directly secure these requirements, or the government delegates or transfer some of its tasks to some bodies that represent the city, village, or region to manage its resources and make fateful decisions.

The states' adoption of the administration system by which they manage the regions according to the political, social, and economic conditions in society differed between the administrative centralization system that strengthens the authority of the central government and weakens the powers of local administration councils; therefore, the authorities are concentrating in the hands of the central government in the capital or its representatives in the provinces. And between the decentralization administration system, which means sharing the authorities of administration governance between the central government and independent bodies in cities, villages, and governorates, and thus transferring or delegating authority to local councils elected locally by its residents, which administers the region and manages the resources.

In what follows, this study discusses the two systems of centralization and decentralization through definition, types, advantages and disadvantages.

3.1. Centralization

This method was sought by the countries of the third world at the beginning of their inception one of them is Syria, as an option to organize their administration in a manner that suits their social, economic, and political conditions. This organization helped these countries to ensure the unity of their territory and the application of the law.

Due to scholars (Hollingsworth & Hanneman, 1984) Centralization means, “The concentration of decision-making power in one main hand, which is the top of the functional hierarchy in the state, whether it is a body or a person”. So that there is only one authority in the state that takes over the jobs by itself, which is president or ministers or through its employees who derive their authority from it and have no power or consideration in decision-making.

In this sense, several scholars categorizing the centralization into three types: The first is Political centralization, which is defined due to (Gledhill, Bender, & Larsen, 1995) “The grouping of political power in the state into one main body”. Thus, the legislative, judicial, and executive function is concentrated in the hands of the central bodies in the capital and does not share its authority with any other body in the state. This is what is happening in Syria at present, where the legislative function is concentrated in the hands of the House of Representatives, and the judicial and executive function is in the hands of the Council of Ministers.

The second type of centralization is Economic centralization, which is “The government supervises all aspects of economic activities and directs it according to drawn-out plans”. (Diaz-Cayeros, 2006). In Syria, for example, economic plans are drawn up by the Council of Ministers and the approval of the President of the Republic must be obtained, whereas the implementation of the plan is supervised through the relevant ministries.

While the third type of centralization is Administrative centralization, which is one basis of this study, the researchers agree in their various discussions that it is a concentration of administrative authorities in the state in the hands of the central government and its representatives in the governorates. Then, according to the definition of (ROSENBLOOM & McCURDY, 2006), “The central government in the capital manages all public services and utilities in the state, and

heads of units operate under its direct authority”. Due to another researcher's discussion, the administrative centralization is limiting the administration functions in the state to the central government representatives in the capital, who are ministers without the participation of other bodies, it is based on unifying the administration and making it emanate from one source based in the capital. (Lawoti, 2007).

The researcher agrees with the definitions of previous literature. Hafez al-Assad’s regime before 2000 highly practiced the system of administrative centralization, where all the administrative functions of the state were concentrating in the hands of the central government in Damascus and its representatives in the provinces. and there was no authority on the hand of local units, which were restricted in carrying out their work with the approval of the Governor and the Minister (expert, 2021).

From these definitions of administrative centralization, the central system can be described in two basic terms due to the researchers (ROSENBLOOM & McCURDY, 2006). The first is the concentration of the authority to make the final decision is in the hands of the central government employees in the capital and all offices in the regions or cities do not come out of this framework from the centralization and they do not have the right to decide from themselves without referring to the center. Whereas the second is the administrative hierarchy of employees, the employees in the lower ranks belong to the higher employees in the administrative pyramid, and they have an obligation to obey.

The concept of centralization as a concept and a practice has developed according to the political, social, and economic conditions experienced by some countries that adopt the central administrative system resorted to change their administration system, which previously relied on the administration focus system. Hence the government administration literature has known two forms of centralization. The first is concentration administrative which it is the oldest manifestation, and is represented in the concentration of all administrative authorities in the hands of the government in the capital, and its representatives in the provinces do not have any authority or independence in decisions-making, but they always return to the central authority (Lawoti, 2007). But in general, this image is called strict administrative or ministerial centralization, which was prevalent when countries were characterized by a small population, non-interference in the

lives of individuals, a small number of administrative bodies, and the spread of the individual rule system (Alshatnawi, 2007, p. 33)¹.

However, with the emergence of the concept of the interfering state, which examines the increase in the state's administrative activity, the multiplicity of its tasks, and the expansion of the scope of its work and duties, thinking has become in another form, which is De-concentration administrative which is based on the distribution of executive powers among the branches of ministries in cities and towns, but with direct supervision from the competent minister and within a specific range and limits defined by the delegation (Hollingsworth & Hanneman, 1984).

It should be noted that moderate centralization in the administration of modern states began in Europe, especially in France, when Napoleon adopted it to reorganize France administratively into provinces held by government officials with expanding the powers enabling them to maintain the loyalty of these provinces to the united French state (Schmidit, 2007, p. 14).

In this system, it appears that the influence of the central government is stronger than the influence of the local branches and that employees in the field do not feel the safety and security required. On this basis, (Heeger, May 1, 1974) sees that the administrative de-concentration system is a method through which the central government tries to increase its power and control, in addition to being an effective tool for curbing and restricting freedoms. And if the administrative de-concentration model seeks to contribute to bringing the administration closer to the local people, and to increase the response to their requests and needs, by representing them in the administrative process, but it did not go far and could not achieve this because of the dominance of the central view on the nature of individuals' needs and requirements.

In this form, from the point view of researcher, the central government retains the right of presidential authority through a hierarchy, and the resulting power to review, amend or cancel the decisions of branches of government as it deems appropriate, in other words, the branches of the various ministries within this concept are considered subordinate units that do not have the right to make crucial decisions. Its duties are limited to the actual implementation of the Center's

¹ علي الشطناوي، الإدارة المحلية، عمان 2007، دار وائل للنشر، ص 33.

decisions while maintaining a small margin of freedom of action. This is what happened in the era from 2000 to 2011, due to the openness of Bashar al-Assad's regime to European countries.

Due to above, in general, administrative centralization as a form of administrative organization has several advantages recorded in the constitutional, political, social, economic, and administrative life of the state, and this is reflected in the following points: The administrative system confirms and supports the national and constitutional unity in the state by limiting and concentrating the administrative authority in the state, particularly in the hands of the government, and tightening control over the executive function by controlling it by the central government, which is why most third world countries adopt it (Lawoti, 2007).

The application of the administration centralization system leads to achieving the unity of the style and pattern of the administrative function in the state and leads to the stability of administration procedures, clarity, and accuracy, which increases their acceptance and respect by citizens (Singh, What is Centralization and De-Centralization of the Authority? | Total MBA Guide., 2011). While (Sørensen, 1990) argues that the central administrative system is one of the reasons for eliminating bureaucracy, so it could be the optimum by which the state can manage and finance the most important sovereign public administrative institutions and facilities (the national defense facility, the foreign affairs facility, the national education facility, major economic facilities, the planning function, and the justice facility), these facilities can only be managed by the central administrative system, as well as achieves the provision of state funds and resources, where extravagance and waste are reduced, not to mention that the central administration system plays a major role in the management of the state to achieve the unity of application and implementation of national plans and general policy prevailing in the state.

While the unity of administration and the management of the administrative apparatus and the huge administration function in the modern state is considered insufficient according to this method, (Sørensen, 1990) discusses the disadvantages of the administration centralization system according to the following, Slow transactions and the delivering of the main services due to the increased burdens of the central government. And the concentration of major projects and public facilities in the major cities of the country due to the achievement of high administrative supervision there. In addition to the non-participation of the population in the decision-making of

their regions and choosing the members of the local councils, and consequently the lack of democratic transformation and the failure to achieve basic human rights and freedoms.

3.2. Decentralization

The interest in decentralization has coincided with the interest in the local development issue since the end of World War II. The administrative method is not seen with the simplicity that is based on centralization and which countries adopted it in carrying out the administration function. As some aspects must be used in another method, especially after it has become difficult, if not impossible, for the central government to carry out the administrative function in all parts of the state on its own, rather, it must have assistance from other bodies that fulfill part of the public needs, by exercising part of the administrative activity independently of the central authority. On this basis, the administration function is divided between the central government and other local bodies, and this method of administrative organization is known as decentralization (Agnew, 1990).

In this context, the decentralized administration took a global trend as a corrective measure for the excessive centralization that accompanied the building of the modern state from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. So, the various countries of the world began to expand in this direction, in the early nineties of the last century when they realized that managing resources and providing services is difficult to enumerate in central management (Agnew, 1990).

While (Pike, Rodriguez-Pose, & Tomaney, 2017) discussed the decentralization from the community development point of view. It is not just a system for distributing jobs between the central authority and local administrative units, but rather it has become a means to achieve local development, which is defined as “a process of reconfiguring all structures of society to allow the use of local economic and human resources to build the economic, political, social and cultural base of society”.

Despite the many differences and differing views on the concept of local development, it requires the availability of two basic conditions, the first one is the broad participation of the local community, the second one is the provision of material and human resources to manage local development, which means that development programs must stem from the reality of the

community, not from the central authority, based on self-reliance (development programs) and not central funding, that it should be comprehensive and integrated, and that development be democratic by involving everyone in its management. These are the pillars on which local development is based (Helmsing, 2001).

UNDP defined decentralization from another point of view, which is good governance, “Decentralization, or decentralizing governance, refers to the restructuring or reorganization of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional and local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity, thus increasing the overall quality and effectiveness of the system of governance, while increasing the authority and capacities of sub-national levels. ... Decentralization could also be expected to contribute to key elements of good governance, such as increasing people's opportunities for participation in economic, social and political decisions; assisting in developing people's capacities; and enhancing government responsiveness, transparency and accountability” (UNDP, 1997).

This is in terms of definition, but in terms of types, some researchers have pointed out that decentralization has three main types. The first one is, Political and Democratic decentralization, which is based on the distribution of the basic functions of the state (legislative - judicial - executive) between the federal government in the capital and local governments in the states, and this relationship is regulated by the federal constitution as in the United States of America and Switzerland (Kleibrink, 2015).

The aim of political decentralization is to give citizens or their representatives more powers in public decision-making in the state. The broad participation of citizens or their representatives in decision-making will be more related to the diverse interests in society than those taken individually by the central government. Also, political decentralization aims to give citizens the right and freedom to choose their representatives by election, and this is considered a consolidation of democracy in society (UNITED NATIONS, 23-27 September 1996).

From the researcher point of view. Political decentralization can be applied in countries that adopt the federal system, such as the United States of America, Germany, and Iraq as an example in the Middle East. But Syria as a united and simple territorial cannot be applied in political decentralization, especially after the conflict, to maintain the territorial integrity of the

state and not encourage secession requests from some forces on the ground such as PKK in the north-east Syria.

The second type of decentralization is, Financial decentralization which defined in the UN global forum (UNITED NATIONS, 23-27 September 1996) as, “Where governments or local councils have the right to collect taxes or set local spending policies”.

In addition, (Litvack, 1998) also defined the financial decentralization system from the way of how the local council can obtain the resources, that allows these bodies to obtain financing from the central government, whether by borrowing or by participating in a percentage of the taxes that it imposes and is collected through projects or individual citizens.

In Syria, before 2000, local councils did not have the right to collect taxes from individuals or even contract with private companies in order to finance a specific project that would benefit the community. As for the period between 2000 and 2011, the councils were allowed to collect some taxes from citizens or to contract with vendors to implement certain projects, but all this was done with the approval of the central authority (Masri, 2021).

Administrative decentralization is the third type of decentralization, which is the most important element of this study. Because of the subordination of the local councils in Syria before and after 2011 in the Assad’s regime areas to the authority of the central government and its absolute control over the decisions of those councils, these administrative units were not allowed to exercise their developmental role in society, consequently, these councils became bodies that have no practical work in real terms. While in the period after 2011 and in the Syrian opposition areas, the local councils became more effective due to the central government’s lack of control over its decisions, and therefore they have absolute freedom to provide services to citizens and activate the developmental role in society by raising awareness of the importance of selecting members of local councils from the residents of the regions in a democratic manner. The work of these representatives shall be in the local councils to secure the best services required by the community, which is one of the most important objectives of implementing the administrative decentralization system.

This study will begin with the definition of administrative decentralization, then move on to its types and finally the advantages and disadvantages of administrative decentralization.

The UNDP defined administrative decentralization in terms of sharing and transferring powers between the central government and elected local council, and the nature of subordination to the central government as follows. It means transferring administrative authorities from the central government in the capital to elected bodies in the regions, to plan and manage the affairs of the regions under their administration, whereas the central government reserves the right to control and direct the work of those bodies, and the law of the state regulates this type of administrative decentralization (Flaman, October 1999). These independent administrative bodies, originally, do not follow the central authority as its presidential authority, but they are subject to a kind of control and supervision by it, through what is known as administrative guardianship, in order to preserve the political, constitutional, and administrative unity of the state.

It should be noted, that if the de-concentration is also based on the idea of distributing competencies and that decision-making is local, yet each of the de-concentration and administrative decentralization has different connotations from the political and practical point of view, as the de-concentration focus is a method of leadership and management without any democratic importance because this method of administration places the entire administration in the hands of the central authority or its workers. While, administrative decentralization has democratic importance, as it leads to the people involved in managing the maximum of their affairs, either directly or through their representatives (AlAzawi, 2000, p. 77)².

According to the point of view of thinkers, there have been many definitions of administrative decentralization, and this may be because each thinker approaches local administration from a different perspective based on the political and legal intellectual philosophy of the state to which he belongs. As a result, we may identify some of these definitions that are connected to the idea of administrative decentralization. It is defined by British scholar Moodie Graeme as "an elected council that represents the local unit and is subject to political accountability before the voters who are the local unit's citizens, and it is regarded a complement to the state apparatus". (Graeme, January 1, 1961).

² محمد سليم العزوي. (2000). نظرات حول الديمقراطية، ط1. عمان: دار وائل للنشر والتوزيع.

While the researcher (Angell, 2001, p. 139) defined it from the point of view of delegation and transfer of powers to local councils as follows: a set of operations that aim to transfer or delegate responsibilities or authority from the highest levels of the central government to the lower levels of the region. Close to this view, the researcher (Kaelin, 2002, p. 11) also defined it as the central government's assignment of decision-making rights regarding resources and powers to the authorities and institutions at the lower administrative levels in the region. While the World Bank (WBI, 2013) defined decentralization as the transfer of power and responsibility from the central government to sub-governments, which includes the private sector, local government, and the civil society.

Because the idea and philosophy of the decentralized system arose from the significance of the population's participation in various administrative issues, the democratic component of the decentralized system contributes to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of governmental administration. From this point of view, administrative decentralization differs from political decentralization in that it is limited to the distribution of administrative functions and can be used in both complex and simple countries, whereas political decentralization is limited to the allocation of political functions and can only be used in complex countries.

There is no debate among legal experts that administrative decentralization is built on a set of essential pillars connected to the administrative decentralization system, which are, the first pillar is, **Having distinct self-interests** is the essential pillar of the decentralization system because the idea of decentralization stems from the necessity of the participation of local administrative units in managing special interests in a particular region, considering them to be more efficient, effective, and responsive to the needs and priorities of citizens.

The multiplicity of requirements that the state serves are known as national interests, and they are broad demands that apply to all sections of the state's territory, as well as all individuals in various cities and states (such as national-defense and security). However, some special needs or self-interests are unique to a part of the state's territory or residents of a specific area, and they are referred to as self-interests to distinguish them from national interests (such as water, electricity, waste collection, and internal roads), so it is necessary to have local interests that are distinct from national interests. As a result, it is well organized to leave the provision of national public needs to central authorities, as this leads to equality and justice, while leaving the provision

of local needs to bodies representing the population of regions, due to considerations related to their good understanding of these needs and their sense of importance (Alshatnawi, 2007, p. 100)³.

Hence, it was necessary to search for a criterion by which self-interests are defined and distinguished from national interests. In this regard, two criteria are presented, First Criterion is defining the functions of the decentralized bodies exclusively (known as the English style), Where the legislator enumerates and mentions the competencies of the local decentralized bodies exclusively, within a list that he lists in the body of the local administration laws, and in return, the interests not mentioned within the list of competencies stipulated in the law are considered among the list of national interests (Altahrawi, 2004, p. 144)⁴. While the second criterion is defining the powers of local authorities according to a general rule (known as the French style), the legislator establishes a basic standard that indicates what is regarded to be within the local council's competence and leaves the decision of what constitutes local interests to the local units themselves, who operate under the supervision and control of the central authority (Altammawi, 1979)⁵.

In this regard, the British system, according to the study, is superior to the French system since it clearly defines the authority of local councils and ensures that there is no overlap in capabilities between them and the government.

The second pillar of administrative decentralization systems is **The independence of decentralized bodies from the central authority**, it must have a moral personality distinct from the central authority and be independent in terms of administrative and financial aspects from the central authorities. In terms of administrative independence, decentralized bodies have their own legal personality, which implies they are self-governing and not subject to central authority. Administrative and financial independence are both a product of the legal personality, which allows it to carry out different legal acts independently of the central authority and its agents.

The administrative independence of decentralized institutions is accomplished by the powers granted to them by legislation to issue administrative decisions and make final judgments without consulting the central authority; these bodies' decisions are final and executory. The

³ علي الشطناوي، مرجع سابق.

⁴ هاني الطهراوي، عمان 2004، قانون الإدارة المحلية، الحكومة المحلية في الأردن والمملكة المتحدة، بيت الثقافة للنشر والتوزيع.

⁵ سليمان الطماوي، القاهرة 1979، دليل القانون الإداري، دراسة جزئية، دار الفكر العربي.

availability of administrative systems for these entities that differ from those used by central authorities, such as personnel systems that allow these bodies to hire competent human resources capable of carrying out their tasks and obligations, is one indication of their autonomy (Altammawi, 1979)⁶.

In order for administrative independence to be successful, the members of the councils that administer the decentralized entities must be appointed in a way that ensures their independence from the central authority's administration. It is important for the legislator to strive to define a specific process for selecting members of the municipal council that is in line with the desires of the local community via the laws regulating local councils. The following are some of the techniques that nations use to pick municipal council members based on their unique circumstances: election, selection, appointment, and the method that combines election and appointment. From the point view of the researcher, the election method is thought to be the origin of municipal council formation; it is more democratic than other methods and more expressive of the will of the residents of the local unit; however, it has the drawback of producing people who lack administrative competence for membership in the local council.

While financial independence from the central government means that if decentralized bodies rely on the central government for funding, they lose their independence and become subject to the central authority, which is able to exert tight control over the decentralized bodies' decisions and activities. Financial independence can be manifested in several points, including the following; The importance of having a budget for the decentralized authority that is separate from the general state budget and is based on the decentralized authority's revenues and expenditures, because this allows it to make decisions and begin work that it is convinced is important and necessary, especially in the field of local development, even if it does not obtain the approval of the central authority, as long as it works in accordance with the laws and regulations applicable.

The fact that the decentralized authority has a budget does not guarantee its financial independence. When these decentralized bodies have the financial resources to implement their projects at the local level in their legitimate ways, they are freed from the mercy of the funding central authorities, which is the confiscation of their decision-making power. As a result, financial

⁶ سليمان الطماوي، مرجع سابق.

systems for decentralized organizations, such as the municipal financial system and the municipal works and supply system, were required, separate from the financial systems of central authorities.

The third and final pillar is the **Supervision and control of the central authority**, one of the fundamental cornerstones of administrative decentralization is the independence of local governments and their lack of subordination to the national government. Complete independence, on the other hand, does not exist since it generates numerous issues for the state, such as the development of political entities that want separation from the state, endangering the state's unity and territorial integrity. Although the central authority has delegated certain local power to local units, it retains the right to monitor and supervise them to ensure that they are acting in accordance with state policy and the public good. Local bodies were put under specific monitoring and control by the central authority within the limitations specified by law in order to maintain independence and minimize its flaws, as well as to meet the criteria of effective administration (Barbar, 1996)⁷.

Following the components of administrative decentralization, local governments enjoy independence from the central government, with each local authority having its own legal identity, financial disclosure separate from the central governments, and personnel distinct from government employees. Although this is not total independence, it is relative autonomy exerted by local governments within the confines of the law and under the supervision and control of the central government (administrative guardianship system), on this basis, administrative guardianship aims to preserve the political unity of the state, and does not allow the absolute independence of local bodies, because it threatens the entity of the state and leads to heterogeneity and harmony between the central authority and local bodies. Administrative guardianship aims to preserve the state's political unity and does not allow total independence of local bodies since it jeopardizes the state's entity and leads to heterogeneity and discord between the central and local authorities.

When the central administration discovered that controlling resources and services from a single central administration was impossible, it began to extend toward decentralized administration across the world, resulting in two types of administrative decentralization. **Territorial decentralization** is the first type, which is based on distributing the state's

⁷ كامل بربر، أنظمة الإدارة المحلية: دراسة مقارنة، بيروت 1996، المؤسسة الجامعية للدراسات والنشر والتوزيع.

administrative functions between the central government and elected local organizations that operate under the supervision and authority of the central government in a specific geographical area (Cohen, 1999). As a result, territorial decentralization has become synonymous with the concept of local administration, which is an administrative organization based on the presence of local interests distinct from national interests, which it seeks to achieve within the local area and within the limits of legal competencies, as well as under special supervision from the central authority. The implementation of territorial decentralization has a number of benefits for both the state and the person, as it leads to the citizen's knowledge of self-management, carrying responsibilities, taking initiative to act, and not relying on the central authority. It also contributes to tax fairness, as the revenue area is concerned with expenditure, which helps to promote population-state cohesion via general satisfaction (Almaghribi, 1984)⁸.

Functional decentralization is the second type, which means the transfer of central responsibilities to either non-governmental entities under the control of the government or to units outside governmental control, such as private firms (Cohen, 1999). From another perspective, it is described as an economic project owned by the government, which provides it legal personality, delegated management to units subject to it, and managed it in ways that differ from typical government administration, with the goal of meeting the public's requirements, that known as public institution (Alfarhan, 2001)⁹.

The method of public institutions is one of the most widely used methods in managing public utilities; it is a type of administrative decentralization in which public utilities are given legal personality to operate independently and achieve their goals and tasks, but this independence is not absolute and is subject to central authority control. The goal of establishing functional decentralized bodies is to free them from bureaucracy and complex procedures that constrain and limit the effectiveness of the central administrative apparatus, as well as to enable them to attract qualified people with the experience and qualifications to manage a specific activity with a good amount of freedom and independence (Alfarhan, 2001)¹⁰.

⁸ محمود المغربي، مدخل إلى القانون الإداري 1984، طرابلس – بيروت، دار البلاد للنشر.

⁹ أمل الفرحان، أيمن المعاني، محمود أبو فارس، إدارة المؤسسات العامة، عمان 2001، الجامعة الأردنية.

¹⁰ أمل الفرحان، أيمن المعاني، محمود أبو فارس، مرجع سابق.

On the other hand, despite the benefits that public institutions accomplish in administering public utilities in the state in principle, they were, in terms of bureaucracy and complexity of processes, extremely comparable to entities connected with the central government, as in Syria. Furthermore, the differential in salary received by workers of public institutions, which are regarded high, versus employees of government institutions, which are considered low. creates a level of sensitivity among state employees.

When comparing administrative decentralization in terms of territorial and functional types, it becomes clear that there are several distinctions to be made, which may be described as follows. In terms of jurisdiction (Alshatnawi, 2007)¹¹, the functional decentralized bodies (public institutions) practice a specific activity, such as facility management, and their competencies and activities are limited to that activity, whereas the territorial decentralized bodies (local councils) practice a wide range of activities in a part of the state's territory. In terms of the legal system (Alshatnawi, 2007)¹², the functional decentralized entities¹² are not governed by a single legal system; instead, the terms of their own legislation apply to each of them, depending on the nature of the activity they conduct, whereas the territorial decentralization units, they are governed by a single legislation, such as the local administration law, that applies to all of them. In terms of the goal (Alfarhan, 2001)¹³, territorial decentralization bodies are established in principle for political considerations related to the consolidation of the democratic approach and citizens' participation in local governance, whereas functional public institutions are established for specialized technical considerations aimed at providing better service.

According to the amount of the authorities granted by the central government to local administration councils, administrative decentralization can be classified into levels (UNDP M. D., Sept. 1997), which are, the first stage of administration decentralization is **de-concentration**, which is the weakest type of decentralization, it involves the distribution of decision-making power, financial, and administrative duties among the various levels of the central government and their workers in the regions. While the second stage is **delegation**, which includes the transfer of some decision-making authority from the central government to semi-autonomous entities or councils with considerable decision-making autonomy. These bodies do not have full authority

¹¹ علي الشطناوي، مرجع سابق.

¹² علي الشطناوي، مرجع سابق.

¹³ أمل الفرحان، أيمن المعاني، محمود أبو فارس، مرجع سابق.

over the central government, but they are ultimately responsible for carrying out their responsibilities in front of it. This means that the central government retains the right to monitor these organizations and to revoke the powers granted to them at any time. **Devolution** is also the third step, in which all decision-making, management, and financial powers are given to independent bodies or local councils that are elected by citizens in the regions, collect their own revenues, and make their own spending and investment decisions. The fourth step is **privatization**, which means that economic activity in the state is carried out by private or non-governmental bodies rather than the government, and the scope of this activity can be either a complete withdrawal of the government from the supply of services and goods, leaving the private bodies to operate the activity, or in a partnership between the government and the private sector.

Because it is affected by the opinions, criticism, and evaluation of the local population, and requires rapid response to the needs of citizens in local communities, the local administration system is considered one of the most effective means to ensure the efficiency of performance and the provision of local services. Therefore, due to the researcher (Flaman, October 1999), the advantages of administrative decentralization may be outlined, local councils are more responsive than the central government to local demands, due to their knowledge of the local community and its conditions, and their sense of direct responsibility towards the voters. And local governments may also streamline administrative procedures and reduce bureaucracy by eliminating communication, and the need to get approval from the capital's central authorities on every subject, big or little. In addition to the speed with which work is completed, subordinates are given the authority to make essential and critical judgments. Also, the administrative decentralization is decreasing the ministers' workload and allowing them to focus on strategic planning for the future of the state and the institutions they oversee. Finally, local councils or public institutions are rapidly expanding and profiting from their own resources.

On the other hand, according to the study (Singh, MBA Official, 2017), the disadvantages of administrative decentralization are as follows, Due to the rise of territorial entities with the same powers as the state's central government, the state's administrative unity is being harmed. And given the diverse orientations of the entities that oversee the areas, different decisions are made in different regions and governorates. In addition to the competition between decentralized entities, which might have an affected on the state's public interest.

As a result, the complete transition to a decentralized system, particularly in the Arab countries, is fraught with risks, especially after the waves of the Arab Spring and the country's entry into ethnic and sectarian conflicts, which weakens the opportunity to move to an administrative decentralization system immediately after the end of the conflict, but this can be done by transferring authorities to local councils which administers the regions, while the central government works on strategic planning at the country level.

Finally, it is crucial to remember that decentralization is not an alternative to centralization. Both are required. The complementary roles of national and sub-national actors should be determined by analyzing the most effective ways and means of achieving a desired objective. For example, a national road system should be designed with both local input and national coordination. Foreign policy should be a national function based on the views of the citizenry. Solid waste management should primarily be dealt with through local mechanisms. (Flaman, October 1999)

3.3. Literature Review

The application of administrative decentralization to local government councils is a new experience in Syria, and it arose in response to protest movements across the country and the Assad regime's withdrawal of local employees from areas it lost control of, leading opposition activists to form councils that attempt to provide basic services to the population in those areas. As a result, the researcher is unable to access previous studies in the field of decentralization and local administration in Syria and has to rely on similar studies of non-Arab or Arab countries that tried to apply the administrative decentralization system to the work of local administration councils.

3.3.1. Non-Arabs Studies

(Falleti, July 2004) a sequential theory of decentralization and its effects on the intergovernmental balance of power: Latin American cases in comparative perspective is the title of her published article.

The researcher started from the statement, that decentralization steadily increases the power of governments in regions or states, but by precisely revealing this argument, the impact of decentralization can range between substantial to insignificant. To explain this statement, the researcher made a new assumption, which is the " sequential theory of decentralization ", which is built on three foundations, the first is, defining decentralization as a process, the second is taking into account the territorial interests of actors, and the last one is the effect of feedback on analysing the status of territorial actors.

The researcher argued the impact of the types of decentralization (political, fiscal, and administrative) on specific dates and considered it to be the key to the evolution of government power in regions and states, and thus measuring the change in the size of decentralization's application in those countries.

The article relied on a comparative approach that assessed the adoption of decentralization over time in four Latin American nations (Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, and Colombia). Also, provide two basic research questions, the first, is decentralization always transferring authority to the regional governor? And, if true, what determinants influence the degree of change in sub-regional governments' power?

She answered these questions by defining decentralization and distinguishing between its several kinds (political, fiscal, and administrative). She then measured the evolution of the sequential change in the forms of decentralization and its influence on regional government authorities and governors' authorities, with a focus on the governors' authorities (Argentina - Colombia).

The study concluded with the following findings, the first is that decentralization does not necessarily transfer authority to state governors. Unfunded administrative decentralization, for example, increases governors' reliance on the central authority for funding to provide services to residents in those states, and therefore the authority does not fully pass to the governors. While the second result is the degree of change in the powers of regional governments and state governors largely depends on the sequence in which decentralization reforms of various political, administrative, and financial types are carried out. For example, decentralization in Argentina did not increase the powers of the governors compared to the president. While the sequential decentralization reforms in Colombia have led to a higher degree of autonomy for governors and mayors than the president.

(Alinio, 2008) Philippine local government officials' perceptions of decentralization and its effects on local governments' administrative capabilities is the title of her dissertation. The purpose of this study is to find out how appointive local government officials feel about decentralization and how it affects administrative capacity. Leadership, organizational structure, financial resources, and personnel resources are only a few examples. Also, gain a better knowledge of the implications of administrative capacity changes on local governments' ability to adopt decentralization.

The opinions of local appointive officials on the four aspects of administrative competence which are leadership, organizational structure, financial resources, and personnel, that are regarded key components in a meaningful decentralization project were investigated in this study. The consequences of decentralization on these issues are shown by the attitudes of appointive officials as decentralization implementers.

The researcher relied on conducting interviews with members of local government councils in the Philippine provinces, moreover the number of interviews reached 56 in all provinces. Then the researcher analysed th

e qualitative data according to a method called “Spiral Data Analysis”. The researcher then came up with the following conclusions: the first is that there are ways to improve the use of administrative decentralization through the presence of local leaders and a clear organizational structure, as well as the creation of skilled local government employees. And the difficulties faced in usage from the perspective of county authorities in local government converge. The second result is that financial resources make administrative decentralization easier to execute.

(Gómez, 2008) a temporal analytical approach to decentralization: lessons from Brazil’s health sector is the title of his published article.

The study examines three points to understand how the policy dynamism (which is a new concept of the study of decentralization processes) affected the nature and functioning of municipal health administration which are, the conflict between municipal and federal or state government, because of the absence of sufficient financial and technical capacity from government to the municipalities, which push some municipalities to overcome these problems outside the federal and state government.

The researcher conducted a comparison study of how municipalities manage the state's health sector, the total amount of expenditures for each municipality, and their dependence on the federal or state government in securing financial support to cover expenses, as well as how some municipalities resort to securing support from international organizations.

The article stated that in order to describe the idea of decentralization in the Brazilian health sector, a particular and explicit conceptual framework must be given. In addition, from the fact that decentralization has a considerable impact on the nature of the interaction between Brazilian government entities.

Administrative decentralization in Bangladesh: Theory and practice is the title of published article of (Mollah, 2007).

The study's goal was to examine and evaluate administrative decentralization attempts in Bangladesh since the country's independence in 1971, using a general decentralization theoretical framework. Then, in addition to examining the main challenges and problems associated with the implementation of decentralization policies in Bangladesh, such as reliance on the central government, a lack of political and administrative support, and the weakness of local organization institutions were also examined with solutions proposed which are for example, building local government capacity, civil service reform, accountability, and transparency.

The study concluded that the most important reasons for the failure of decentralization in Bangladesh is that successive governments did not adhere to a unified long-term plan for decentralization. The researcher recommends shifting to full political decentralization and not just administrative decentralization based on the following foundations, preserving the political democratic process, constitutional guarantee, national consensus, and building local governmental capacities.

In conclusion, these studies discussed mechanisms to improve the application of decentralization, which is the prevailing system in those countries. They dealt with decentralization in terms of theoretical, then discussed different experiences of applying decentralization, whether in the health sector. Or the relationship between the central government and local regional governments, by comparing that with the countries that Follow the same method to know the sequential development of the application of decentralization in those countries. Or discuss the administrative capabilities of local governments by presenting the perceptions of local government officials. On another point of view, these studies did not discuss the central system prevailing in most third-world countries, including Syria.

3.3.2. Arabs Studies

(Altaher, 2011) Mechanisms for activating the role of the municipality in managing local development in Algeria is the title of his published study.

The researcher began by classifying the legal and administrative activity of a country as falling into two classifications, the centralized system, and the decentralized system. He pointed out that Algeria, after independence from the French occupation, followed the approach of the decentralized system through the laws and constitutions that protect this system in Algeria. Then he mentioned out that one of the concepts of decentralization is local development, which means the presence of local facilities that serve the citizen, and that the citizen also participates in making local decisions independently of the central authority.

Local development, he claimed, is based on the idea of developing a grassroots society from the ground up in order to achieve complete development in all areas. This can only be accomplished in the presence of a grassroots authority, such as a municipality, which is closer to the local community and can effectively manage local development because it is aware of the local population's real needs.

The significance of this study lies in examining the reality of municipalities in Algeria, which is reflected in many municipalities' failure to support local development and their inability to carry out their basic functions, as well as their satisfaction with their traditional role as a state administrative body. As a result, this research examines the legislative framework that governs municipal activity as well as the reasons for the ineffectiveness of the powers provided to municipal councils.

The researcher relied on the descriptive analytical method in studying the roles of the municipality through Law 08/1990, which is the basis of the study, in addition to some complementary laws and the election law. And he conducted a comparative study with some provisions and texts of the comparative law to reach the most important disadvantages and advantages of texts applied to municipalities in Algeria.

The researcher's findings can be summarized in the following way, the first is the absence of a significant fundamental difference between current municipal law and the 1967 law in the field of local development management, which was developed with socialist mentalities and

techniques, represented in the central government's control over the municipality's work and decisions, which are prepared and implemented by local community representatives. The second is overlapping of authorities between municipalities and central bodies, which led to the withdrawal of many powers from the elected councils and placed in the hands of the central government.

(Atika, 2011) The administrative decentralization in the North Africa counties (Algeria – Morocco – Tunisia) the title of her published article.

The study aimed to make a comparison of the experience of administrative decentralization in three North African countries: Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, in terms of the emergence and development of administrative decentralization, local levels, local financing and the relationships of local units. The study also attempts to present a future vision of administrative decentralization systems in these countries, through organizational structures, as well as to build a model in local administration that is compatible with environmental factors and the conditions facing local administration in those countries.

This study relied on the descriptive approach to clarify the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of administrative decentralization, especially its components, perceptions, and objectives, to be distinguished from administrative centralization. And the content analysis approach in order to reveal the issues of defects in the laws of the municipality and the state and other related texts regulated by them. In addition to the comparative approach to analyse and compare the applied models of decentralization in those countries.

The study concluded that the three countries have adopted decentralization in theory, but in practice they have suffered from many challenges and negatives, the most important of which are: that the problem of administrative decentralization is not only related to the legal and legislative aspects but is related to the political system of the state. And ensuring the implementation of administrative decentralization depends on achieving a balance between local authorities and the powers delegated to them. Finally, giving more freedom to local councils to exercise their powers away from the dominance of the central authority leads to the success of administrative decentralization.

(Alkhafaji, 2017) The reality of the use of administrative decentralization and its contribution to improving job performance in Al-Diwaniyah Governorate. A case study for the application of Article (45) of Law No. (21) of 2008 amended is the title of his published study.

The study aims to identify the reality of the practice of the concept of administrative decentralization in Al-Diwaniyah Governorate, and to know the attitudes of officials and directors of the departments covered by article 45 of Law No. 21 of 2008 amended, and their orientation towards the application of administrative decentralization, and what are the problems and obstacles facing its application? What are the levels of delegation given to them, and the extent to which this contributes to improving job performance?

The study used a case study approach, with in-depth personal interviews conducted with members of the study sample, which included officials and concerned in the governorate council, the governorate office, and directors of the departments covered by article 45 of Law No. 21 of 2008 amended, for a total of 33 individuals.

The following are the study's most important findings, The first is that most ministries are not taking article 45 of Law 21 of 2008 amended, seriously enough since they believe in the central structure of state management. The second is a lack of strategic planning at the appropriate level in the job transfer process, which resulted in certain powers being confused and overlapped.

Finally, the Arab countries' ruling regime is a dictatorial system, which means that it has complete authority over all state institutions and agencies, whether they are using the central system or attempting to execute the decentralized system.

Previous Arab studies examined the administrative system adopted by the state in the management of localities and discussed the laws that organized the work of those local councils. This is because these legislations were new in their issuance and needed a lot of discussion and comparison with the laws in developed countries that practiced the decentralized system since previous decades. This is the main difference between non-Arab studies and Arab studies, as the first seeks to develop the application of the decentralized system, but the second aims to study the mechanism of application or success of the administrative decentralization system if it is applied in Arab countries.

3.3.3. What distinguishes the current study from previous studies?

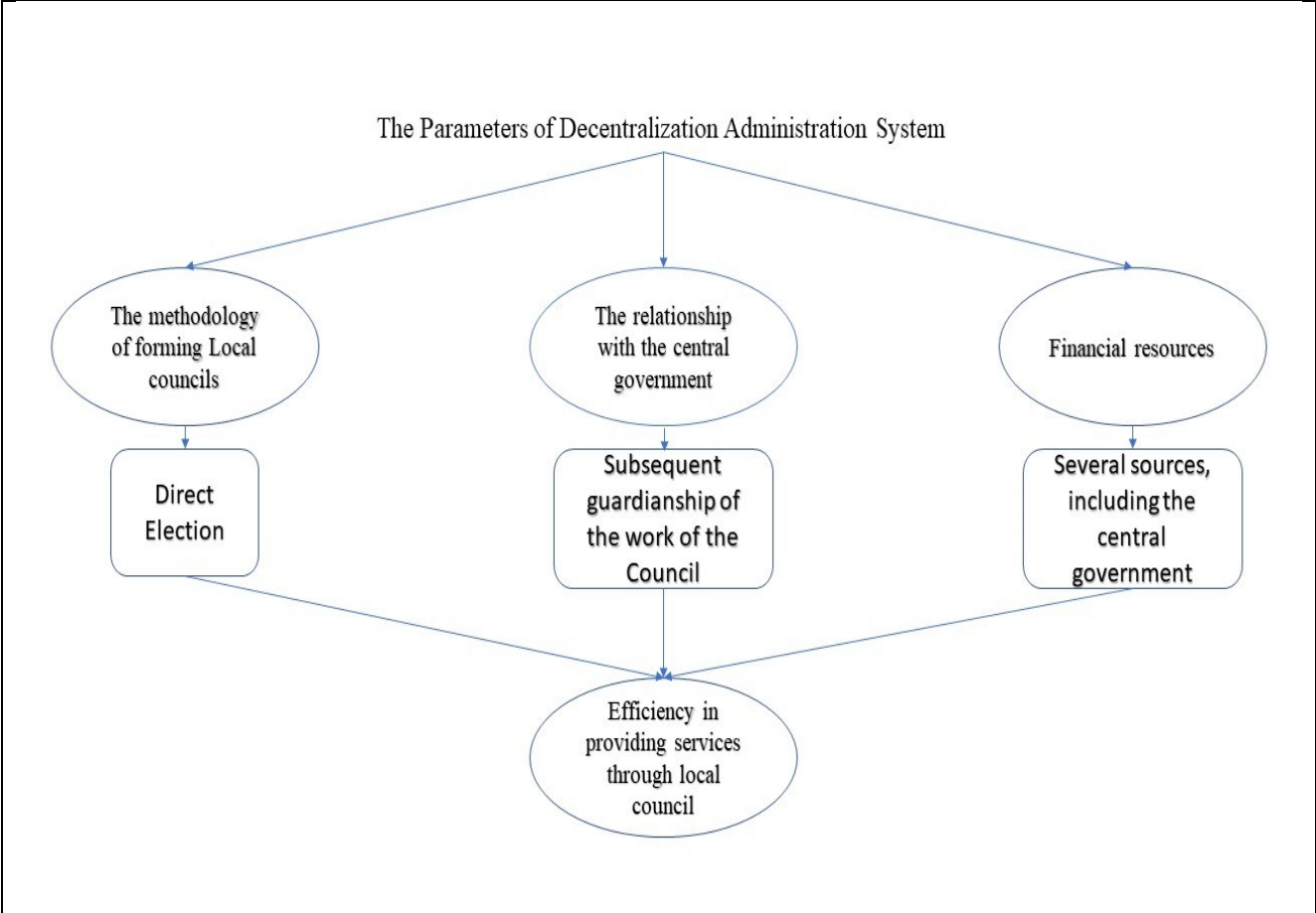
Previous research is being used to develop a theoretical framework for the current research. Identifying the methodology adopted in this research, as well as the instruments used to collect and analyze data.

This study is like some previous studies dealing with some topics such as centralization and decentralization. But the current study differs from literature studies in several respects, which are the topic and problem of the study. This study argues with the work of local councils in Syria, whether regime or opposition areas, the extent to which these councils apply the laws regulating their work, and are any successful experiences that could be applied in Syria after the end of the crisis? This is not directly addressed by any of the previous studies.

Previous studies discussed the mechanisms of applying the administrative decentralization system to the work of local units, through several points, the most important of which are the nature of the relationship between these local councils and the central government. In addition, several previous studies referred to the financial resources of local councils. It also specified the methodology of forming the local units, which is the method of direct election by citizens in the region, because this method leads to the citizens being directly oversighted over the work of the councils over the work of their representatives in the local council.

Since administrative decentralization was not applied to the work of local councils in Syria before 2011, during the era of the Assad regime. However, administrative decentralization system began after 2011 in areas outside the control of the Assad regime on the work of local units, and these local councils become more efficient.

This thesis is based on four parameters set by the researcher in which the next chapters are going to discuss, first parameter is the methodology of forming the local councils. The second one is the relationship with the central government. Also, the third is the services provided through the local council. In addition, the financial resources obtained by the local councils. These parameters attempt to measure the efficiency of these local councils in providing services to the citizens.



CHAPTER IV

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION IN ASSAD'S REGIME AREAS BEFORE AND AFTER

2011

4.1. Assad's Regime Era before 2011

4.1.1. History and Origin

The study of the historical development of the local administrative organization in Syria extends from the Byzantine era in the fourth century AD, which divided Syria into two parts, Antakya and Aphameya. Then, came the Islamic conquest of the Levant and divided Syria into five regions (Ajnad) and each region includes several towns (Qasabat) which are Damascus region, Homs region, Aleppo region (Qasreen), Jordan region, Palestine region.

As an extension of the Ottoman era, which divided Syria into three states: the state of Damascus, the state of Aleppo, the state of Tripoli, and each state includes states, the states include districts, the districts include sub-districts, and the sub-districts include villages. The Ottoman law established two councils for each state: the Board of Directors, consisting of elected members and appointed members, and the House of Commons, which is elected from an electoral body specified by law. Unfortunately, there was no type of administration at that time, but the feudal lords and some elites continued to control the states in terms of money and power.

Until the French occupation of Syria came, which divided Syria into 4 states on sectarian bases: the state of Aleppo - the state of the Alawites - the state of Jabal al-Druze - the state of Damascus. With the aim of facilitating its mission and purpose in exploiting and managing the Syrian country. Then, on 10.01.1936, the High Commissioner in Syria issued resolution 5/LR, and here was the beginning of the modern administrative organization in Syria from a legislative point of view. The French resolution included the creation of local councils in the governorates, districts, and sub-districts, whose mission is to express opinion and inform about the conditions and aspirations of the population, and to distribute taxes on them. (Article 141) (Esmail, 2018)¹⁴.

¹⁴ أحمد إسماعيل، قانون الإدارة المحلية، الجامعة الافتراضية السورية 2018.

Then the Administrative Organizations Law No. 496 of 1957 was issued, which cancelled the French resolution 5/LR and all its amendments. This law adopted the dual method, that is, local councils alongside municipal councils (appointed governors). This modern legislation included the creation of provincial, district, and sub-district councils.

This was from the legislative point of view, but from the practical point of view, the administrative organization of the state was a realistic reflection of the philosophy of power. In addition to the strict conditions that required for who could be nominated for membership in local councils, the central authority did not resort, under Law 496, to the method of election in choosing the members of local councils, it was appointing them directly in violation of the legislative articles, and thus decentralization emptied of its content and the administrative bodies became sub-branches working in the name of the central authority in the “provinces” (Esmail, 2018)¹⁵.

After that, the Local Administration Law No. 15 was issued on 11.05.1971. According to it, Syria was divided administratively into five levels of administrative units: Governorate, City, Town, Village, and the rural unit, according to the population (Article 3/1-2). All of these units enjoy legal personality, except for the village, which has a population of less than five thousand people, and each of these administrative units has a local council, which assumes the deciding authority in it, and each council has an executive office that implements its decisions. The law emphasized the principle of selecting council members by all voters in the administrative unit by direct secret election (Article 7). As for the formation of executive offices, the law adopted the principle of proportional election (Talaba, 2003)¹⁶.

The aim of this law is to transfer the competencies related to the economy, culture and local public services, within the scope of general planning, to the local authorities that represent the citizens who elected these councils, thus achieving popular democracy. On the other hand, the law defines the tasks of the central authorities with planning, legislation, regulation, introduction of modern technology methods, control, qualification, training, coordination, follow-up of implementation, and implementation of major projects that administrative units are unable to implement (Article 2). The law includes detailed provisions, whether in terms of how the local councils and their offices are formed, or in terms of their competencies and mutual relations on

¹⁵ أحمد إسماعيل، مرجع سابق.

¹⁶ عبد الله طلبة، الإدارة المحلية، جامعة دمشق 2003.

the one hand, and their relations with the central authority on the other, and how the central and popular administrative control of local authorities is concerned (Talaba, 2003)¹⁷.

Unfortunately, the law was not implemented in practice in terms of distributing the competencies to the local authorities or in terms of giving freedom of work and decision-making to local authorities. However, the legal reference for the non-implementation of its provisions is that: the legislator considered it appropriate to implement this experiment gradually, Where it stipulates (Article 108) that the various administrative units and their heads will continue to apply the laws and regulations in force before its issuance, until the termination of the provisions of these laws is announced successively, in accordance with the stages of implementation of this law by decisions issued by the Council of Ministers.

Consequently, the struggle over the management of central public money continued between the appointed governors who insist that the local administration councils belong to them on the one hand, and on the other hand, the heads of the local administration councils who considered themselves elected from the citizen and therefore independent of the governors, with their conviction that the governors is the representative of the President and the executive authority, but they may not be subordinate to the governors administratively.

The main resource for the local administration is central and therefore the municipalities do not have their own resource and cannot have independent funding, and then the municipalities began to turn to the governors to secure funding and here they became fully affiliated with the governor and seek to satisfy the governor and obtain funding (expert, 2021).

In Law 15 of 1971, the legislator did not clearly separate the powers of governors and heads of councils of administrative units (expert, 2021)

Consequently, the responsibility is in the hands of the central authority and not for the residents of the administrative unit they represent, and the people have no authority to monitor or hold the council accountable for its work.

¹⁷ عبد الله طلبية، مرجع سابق.

4.1.2. Forming Local Councils before 2011

After that, Article 8 of the Syrian Constitution of 1973 came to the fore, which states that the Baath Party is the leader of the state and society, and therefore it is in his hands the central authority, as well as the local unit councils must be affiliated with the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party. The local council no longer represents the residents of the administrative unit, but rather its members must be from the Baath Party or from independents affiliated with the party or candidates from it.

The proportion of the number of seats for the Baath Party and parties close to it in the LCs ranges from 70% to 90%, and the rest is for independents who are satisfied with the intelligence, or the Baath party, or who represent a tribe, or have money in which they can buy a seat.

About two months before the elections, the President of Syrian Republic issues a decree or decision setting the date of the elections, then it is announced only in the three official newspapers in Syria. The decision to announce is issued by the Minister of Information and under the direction of the country's leadership. The process of electing members of LCs is based on Legislative Decree No. 91 of 1971, whose Article 52 stipulates that the Minister of Local Administration shall issue the necessary decisions and instructions to implement its provisions, and the Minister of Local Administration issues executive instructions in each round of local administration members' elections.

According to the Local Administration Law No. 15 of 1971 (Article 10/3), which required that the representation of farmers, workers, craftsmen and small earners in LCs should not be less than 60% of council members. But in reality, the percentage is much more than that: for example, in the Aleppo City Council, according to the interview that was conducted with a member of the Aleppo City Council for two terms, he said: The number of members of the Aleppo City Council is 50, 32 of them are members of the National Progressive Front, which includes the Arab Socialist Baath Party (BP) and political parties close to the government, such as the Communist and Socialist Party, and 18 members of the independents, but these independents are also candidates from the Baath Party (BP), intelligence or the governor, but secretly and on the list of independents. That means, 90% of the members are from the BP or the intelligence (Masri, 2021).

This was confirmed by the head of the Darya City Council by saying that the independent members are candidates from either the governors, the BP, the intelligence in the administrative unit, or through tribes and large families, and most importantly, they do not have a security problem (Sharbaji, 2021).

The general population in Syria is not aware of the LCs elections, for several reasons, which are, not announcing the date of the LCs elections in a public and huge way, but it is limited to the announcement in three official newspapers only, and most people do not read this announcement, and the citizens know that the elections are closed in advance with the names of the Baath Party and its affiliated parties, while the fraud that occurs in the elections prevents the arrival of independents who are not from the Baath Party or candidates from the intelligence. In addition, the people elect the candidate for their tribes or family, and those elected are essentially obliged to elect members of the National Progressive Front, since the electoral list includes their names first and then the names of the independent. Consequently, the Baath Party and the intelligence control most council membership seats in administrative units. (expert, 2021) (Masri, 2021) (Sharbaji, 2021)

At the election Day, an electoral committee is formed to supervise the conduct of the election process, and this committee is made exclusively of members of the Baath Party in the province or city in which the election takes place. For example: the election takes place without the presence of the elected person himself, so the delegates of the candidates and their agents bring the electoral identities of people, and they vote on their behalf. Also, intelligence agents are present in all electoral districts with the aim of monitoring and following up on the conduct of the elections and they encourage fraud for their candidates in order to obtain the largest number of votes. (Sharbaji, 2021) (Masri, 2021).

After this electoral play, the governor announces the election results in the administrative units of his governorate, and then sends the names of the winners to the Baath Party branch in the city, which sends the names of the successful people to the regional leadership of the Baath Party in Damascus in order to nominate the president of the council and members of the executive office from among the successful people in the elections. Finally, the list is submitted to the President, who announces by a republican decree the appointment of the heads of local councils in Syria.

As for the election of members of the executive office in the governorate, city, or smaller administrative units, after the regional leadership of the Baath Party nominates the names of the members of the executive offices from among the successful in the administrative unit elections, and after the President issues a decree naming the head of the administrative units. These members meet for their first meeting, to elect the members of the executive office in the administrative unit, for example: the number of members of Daraya city council is 25, while the number of members of the executive office is 8. As well as for Aleppo city council: the number of members of the council is 50 while the number of members of the executive office is 10. All members of the executive office are From the Baath Party or the intelligence, whose names placed by the regional leadership, however. one of the members of the Executive Office can be independent, but this is an exception because the Baath Party controls most of the members of the Council (Masri, 2021) (Sharbaji, 2021).

4.1.3. The relationship between the Central Authority and LCs

Decisions in the councils of administrative units are in the hands of the governor or the intelligence apparatus (Sharbaji, 2021). The governor is the supreme authority in the governorate. He is appointed by a decree from the President and is considered the representative of the central authority in the governorate. A decisions can only be taken in the executive office of the administrative units after it is presented to the governor and the security intelligence that approve or reject it, for example: the council's budget can only be ratified after the approval of governor's and the signature of the Minister of Local Administration, as well as the ratification of the organizational charts of the administrative unit can only be done after the approval of the governor. (Masri, 2021)

The intelligence also interferes in the work and decisions of the administrative units in order to pass the employment of some people, for example. Or to establish a building violation, and whoever does not respond from the members of the administrative units receives his punishment directly either by obstructing the service work or even by excluding him from the administrative unit council, even if he is a Baath party member. (Sharbaji, 2021)

4.1.4. The service role of the LCs

The annual plan of the council, which includes services, can only be approved after obtaining approval from the governor, and the proceeds of any service can only be spent after the approval of the governor (Sharbaji, 2021).

Where the governorate comes at the top of the administrative organization pyramid, the governor heads the governorate council, and all the councils of the sub-local administrative units are affiliated to the governorate, so that cities and regions are linked to the governorate and sub-districts to the regions and thus all local administrative units are linked to the governorate. However, those units cannot raise the annual plan that it sets, which includes the services provided, except after the governor's approval of the plan. (Masri, 2021)

The services are programmed within a specific list, which are: paving of roads - issuance of organizational plans - supervision of gardens - road lighting - firefighting service - maintenance of mechanisms - cleaning department - Building licenses - environment and health. (Sharbaji, 2021)

4.1.5. Financial Resources of LCs

The first source is support from the Central Government, for example, by looking at Syria's 2010 budget, which amounted to 17 billion Syrian pounds, we find that the budget of the local unit councils in Syria is allocated only half a billion Syrian pounds, which is a very small amount for the work of the administrative units, and this is evidence of the need for the administrative unit to the governors in order to obtain sources of funding to assist in the performance of the work (expert, 2021).

Collection is the second resource for the local councils such as the cleaning fee and part of the electricity tax imposed by the state on the citizen, and this happened in the city of Aleppo by agreement between the Aleppo City Council and its Electricity Directorate. (Masri, 2021). While the third is Investment, some public properties affiliated to the LCs, but this can only be done with the approval of the governor, and investment returns may not be spent without the approval of the central authority. (Sharbaji, 2021)

4.2. Assad's Regime Era after 2011

After Bashar al-Assad came to power, he worked on a reform and development program, one of which was the establishment of a new local administration law. A committee was formed from the Ministry of Local Administration and a committee from the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, in cooperation with the European Commission delegation in Syria, within a program to modernize municipal administration (MAM). (expert, 2021)

A draft of the Local Administration Law was drawn up in 2008, and it was not issued until after the protest movements and the start of the Syrian revolution in 2011. The Local Administration Law was issued by Legislative Decree No. 107 of 2011. This was distinguished from the previous Local Administration Law No. 15 of 1971 in several things, Such as objectives, administrative divisions, and functional positions.

Among the objectives of the law according to Article Two of the law (Article 2), the first is, decentralizing powers and responsibilities and concentrating them in the hands of groups of the people in application of the principle of democracy, which makes the people the source of all authority, through the expansion and clear and non-dual definition of the powers and authorities of the administrative unit councils to enable them to perform their competencies in developing the administrative unit economically, socially, culturally and urbanely. And the second is, finding administrative units capable of planning, implementing and setting development plans for the local community and implementing their own projects efficiently and effectively by modifying the levels of administrative units and defining their local structure in line with their basic function and making the administrative units directly responsible for services, economy, culture and all matters of concern citizens, so that the task of the central authorities is limited to planning, legislation, organization, introduction of modern technology methods and implementation of major projects that administrative units are unable to achieve. While the third is, enhancing the financial revenues of the administrative units to enable them to exercise the developmental role in the local community in addition to the service role, and making this community responsible for preserving its resources and developing these resources, improving the living standard of citizens, providing better services, and developing economic and development opportunities within the administrative units. And the fourth one is, the advancement of society in the local framework and help balanced growth and equal opportunities between regions to devote joint cooperation between the

administrative units through the creation of joint departments to help major programs and projects efficiently and effectively implemented. Finally, simplifying the procedures to secure services to citizens by establishing service centres for citizens that are directly concerned with granting licenses, services and care.

The law stipulates the creation of the Supreme Council of local administration (SCoLA), headed by the Prime Minister and Minister of Local Administration as his deputy. Its members are, Chairman of the Planning and International Cooperation Authority, and Governors, heads of local councils for the governorates, chairman of the Regional Planning Authority, associate Minister of Local Administration. And it stipulates in its (article 4) that the Supreme Council of Local Administration (SCoLA) shall undertake the development of the national decentralization plan, which is the plan according to which the powers and competencies are transferred from the central authority to the local authority, (Article 4/1).

The law imposed in its (Article 6/1), that the SCoLA, within a period of time not exceeding six months from the date of the law's issuance, issue the national decentralization plan, but that plan has not been developed to this day. (Article 6/2) stipulates that the SCoLA shall issue the necessary decisions to clarify the work mechanisms of local units, and in (Article 6/3) approving the executive regulations and annual amendments to the fees, resources and compensation regulations.

Syria divided according to Article 7/1 and Article 73 of Law 107 of 2011 into administrative units, a governorate, divided into regions, and regions into sub-districts. As for the city, town, and municipality, they are divided into neighbourhoods. In addition, regarding the article 29/1, the governor heads the Executive Office of the Provincial Council. And the governor is appointed to his position by decree of the President of the Republic and is considered a member of the central executive authority (Article 39).

The governor represents the central authority in the governorate and is an agent for all ministries according to (Article 41). (Article 42) stipulates that the governor, in his capacity as a representative of the central authority, supervises the work of local authorities and all local and central agencies in the governorate and their implementation of laws and regulations. He is considered a contracting officer of alimony and ordering the liquidation and disbursement of the governorate's budget (Article 44). The governor submits to the Minister of Local Administration

a report every three months regarding the governorate's conditions in general, and copies of the report are sent to the relevant ministries (Article 48). In the absence of the governor, the police chief deputizes for him in his capacity as a representative of the executive authority, as well as the deputy head of the executive office in all competencies related to the work of the executive office, and he is considered an alimony contractor and an order of disbursement until the replacement is appointed (Article 55/1). A new position has been created, the Secretary-General of the governorate, and he is appointed by a decision of the Prime Minister upon the proposal of the Minister of Local Administration (Article 58/2) and has a specific task in (Article 59).

In each region, there is a director representing the executive authority in his area and is linked to the Minister of Interior in terms of appointment and to the governor as a representative of the executive authority (Article 77). Also, in each district there is a director who represents the executive authority in his area and is directly linked to the region manager, implements his instructions and submits reports to him (Article 82). The law also created a new job position, which is the director of cities and towns, and he is appointed by a decision of the Minister of Local Administration (Article 70).

According to these divisions and functional positions established by law, the law strengthened the local administration system that is centralized administered, controlled by the President of the Republic, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Local Administration and the Ministry of Interior, by appointing governors, general secretaries in governorates, district and sub-district managers, and city or municipal managers.

The local councils elected according to the law cannot conduct their tasks without referring to the governor or the concerned ministries and their various directorates in the administrative unit. For example, Article 114/1 stipulates the necessity of sending the decisions of the governorate council and the decisions of city councils of the provincial centres setting plans, programs and regulations to the Minister of Local Administration and the competent minister Within seven days from the date of their issuance. as stipulated in the article 114/2 that city, town and municipal councils send decisions setting plans, programs and regulations to the governor within three days of the decisions being issued.

In practical application, nothing has changed from the previous control of the central government over the councils of local units. Rather, the central intervention in the formation and work of administrative units increased, and the justification for this was the war against terrorism, as the Syrian regime claimed.

As for the formation of the councils of the administrative units of the Syrian regime, local elections were held on 16.09.2018, and it was far from democracy and popular participation, it reinforced the return of the Baath Party's control in the provincial and city councils and even subsidiary councils such as towns and municipalities, some of which are formed by acclamation because the number of candidates is less from the number of membership seats in the local council (expert, 2021).

Because of the internal and external migration conditions, nearly 11 million people were denied the right to vote in the local council elections. According to the head of the Supreme Judicial Committee for Elections, the popular participation in the elections was 4.342 million people, which is 26.50% of the Syrian people who are entitled to vote (Hmejo, 2018)¹⁸.

The number of accepted candidates applying for membership of local councils in all of Syria reached 41,482 who fulfilled the legal requirements stipulated in the laws and regulations that organized the elections (Al Dassouky, 2018)¹⁹.

The rate of candidates for each seat was relatively low in all Syrian governorates, with competition reaching the most intense in Latakia (with an average of 7.3 candidates for each seat) and Tartous (3.8 candidates for each seat), while in Aleppo and Damascus countryside, the average was (2.1 candidates per seat), and the weakest competition was in Daraa (1.004 candidates for each seat) and Idlib (0.78 candidates for each seat). In many districts, the number of local seats exceeded the number of candidates who applied, and therefore the council was elected without competition in it (Al Dassouky, 2018)²⁰.

In these elections, the Assad regime announced for it well, in order to ensure popular participation, but as usual, the people know that the election is a play, and only those from the BP,

¹⁸ محمد حميجو، جريدة الوطن 03.09.2018، آخر زيارة بتاريخ 24.07.2021، تم الاسترداد من <https://alwatan.sy/archives/167135>

¹⁹ الدسوقي، أيمن. إدارة النظام للمحليات.. بماذا تخبرنا نتائج انتخابات الإدارة المحلية؟ مركز عمران للدراسات 2018.

²⁰ الدسوقي، أيمن. مرجع سابق.

intelligence or government loyalists who participated in suppressing the popular movement after 2011 can succeed in the elections as members of local councils. In an opinion poll conducted by Enab Baladi newspaper on its website, it asked the following question: "Have you ever participated in the local administration elections in Syria?" About 450 people participated in it, and the response rate was "no" 83%, and the rate of answering "yes" was 17% (Diaa, 2018)²¹.

Assad's regime has forced employees and university students to vote and go to the polling stations in order to portray it that things are back to normal, and in exchange for non-participation is the threat to deduct the salary or security prosecution, that which is not involved, he is not "a friend of the homeland" as happened in the provinces of Deir Al-Zour, As-Suwayda, Al-Hasakah and Daraa (Favier & Kostrz, 2018).

At the end of the local unit council elections in 2018, the Baath party returned to control the local councils again after decades of marginalization after Bashar al-Assad came to power in 2000 (expert, 2021), but after the start of the popular movement in Syria and the return of the Baath party and its members to stand with the regime and suppress these popular protests through the party's auxiliary forces called the National Defence Forces, the ruling regime rewarded them by returning them to control again, and they had many memberships in the local councils in Syria through the lists of the National Front that were prepared by the party's supreme leadership and by specifying the number of Baath Party candidates in The National Front, and these lists obtained 70% of the number of local council membership seats (Diaa, 2018)²². And 30% of the seats belong to independents or technocrats who supported the Assad regime, whether by supporting the fighting forces with money and weapons or by offering economic deals to the regime, as happened with the parliament member and businessman Hussam al-Qaterji, who oversaw oil deals with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, they supported some independent candidates for membership in local councils, as in Aleppo, Deir ez-Zor and Raqqa (Favier & Kostrz, 2018).

²¹ ضياء عودة، نور عبد النور، محمد حمص، حلا إبراهيم. اللامركزية من وجهة نظر البعث. جريدة عنب بلدي 2018. آخر زيارة بتاريخ 25.07.2021، تم الاسترداد من <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/249544#ixzz7492PpRB2>

²² جريدة عنب بلدي، مرجع سابق.

However, the regime's performance in managing local councils in the areas under its controls has not changed, and it has continued to manage these councils in an administrative centralization way that has become more invasive due to the poor economic conditions and financial scarcity that the regime has reached due to the war in Syria, and consequently increased the authority and administrative centralization in order to control all the capabilities of the regions under his rule.



CHAPTER V

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION IN THE AREAS OUTSIDE OF ASSAD'S REGIME CONTROL AFTER 2011 (LIBERATED AREAS)

5.1. Historical Perspective:

The experience of forming local councils in the Syrian opposition areas outside the control of the Assad regime has gone through several stages historically. Civil activists and some revolutionary civil actors (they are called civil movement coordinators) work to form civilian bodies that are somewhat similar to the local councils that previously existed in the area, relying on the experience of some people who worked as members of the local councils previously and refused to remain under the control of The Assad regime and they preferred to work in their areas to provide services to the people of their city or towns (Alhousain, 2021). (Interview with the head of the local council in Saraqib). By relying on legally competent persons in order to prepare a legal reference on which to base the formation of the local council in the region, the matter is not random without legal regulation, even if it is by adopting internal regulations specific to each region separately, or by transferring the experience of some regions that formed local councils to other regions to form the local council in which.

5.1.1. The First Period:

The first period of the formation of local councils in areas outside of the Assad regime control was between 2012-2013, and most of the formation of councils took place in coordination between the civil revolutionary bodies in the region and the professional organizations or groups such as the group of lawyers, doctors, engineers (Narbone, Favier, & Collombier, 2016).

For example: the local council in Maarat al-Numan city and its countryside - the local council of Saraqib city - the revolutionary council of the city of Aleppo (the name was later modified to Aleppo city council)

5.1.2. The Second Period:

It started with the formation of the Syrian Interim Government, which included the Ministry of Local Administration, where the ministry adopted Law 107 of 2011 for several considerations that can be summarized as follows: (Nerbani, 2021) interview with employee in the Ministry of Local Council in SIG, the first is preserves the administrative divisions of Syria, which the opposition also maintained by adopting this law so that it would not be accused of division. While the second is, it contains a good division of tasks between the central government and the councils of administrative units. And it enhances administrative decentralization in the work of administrative units.

Where the Ministry of Local Administration in SIG met with the existing local councils, and a workshop was organized to discuss the law on the one hand and the reality on the other hand. After that, the Ministry of Local Administration came up with some amendments to Law 107 of 2011 that correspond to the administrative reality of the areas outside the control of the Assad regime, and one of the most prominent of these amendments are (Nerbani, 2021) (Mazhar, 2021), cancelling the position of the governor, who is appointed by a decree of the President of the Republic who considered a representative of the central authority and transferred his duties to the elected provincial council chairman. And adopting the formation of local councils by election through miniature electoral committee chosen from neighbourhood committees and civil bodies in the area in which the council is to be formed, due to the regime's repeated bombing of areas outside its control, and thus the impossibility of holding popular elections. Not assigning the councils to submit budgets to the central government (SIG) for approval, due to the lack of central support from the central Government (SIG) and the councils' reliance on the support of international organizations. In most cases.

The Ministry issued the implementing regulations for the local administration, one of its objectives according to (Article 2), the first is, implementing the decentralization of powers and responsibilities through a clear and non-dual expansion of the powers and authorities of the councils of administrative units to enable them to perform their competencies and tasks in developing the administrative unit economically, socially, culturally and urbanly. While the second is finding administrative units capable of planning, implementing and setting development plans for the local community and implementing their own projects efficiently and effectively by

modifying the levels of administrative units and defining their local structure in line with their basic function, adding a number of qualitative jobs in it, and making administrative units at all levels responsible directly from services, economy, culture and all matters of interest to citizens in these units, so that the central authorities' task is limited to planning, legislation, organization, introducing modern technology methods and implementing major projects that administrative units are unable to implement. And the third one is enhancing the financial revenues of the administrative units to enable it to exercise the developmental role in the local community in addition to the service role, and making this community responsible for preserving its resources and developing these resources to improve the living standard of citizens, in order to provide better services and develop economic and development opportunities within the administrative units that help create job opportunities and create a state of integration between the service role and the developmental role. The fourth is advancing the society within its local framework and assisting in balanced growth and equal opportunities between regions by dedicating joint cooperation between administrative units through the creation of joint departments that can implement major programs and projects in an efficient and effective manner. Finally, simplifying the procedures to secure services to citizens by establishing service centres for citizens that are specialized in granting licenses, services and care directly, in accordance with the regulations and conditions established by the councils of administrative units, ministries and relevant departments in order to obtain it through e-government services in a way that saves effort, time and money.

After that, the Syrian Interim Government became supervising provincial council elections through the Ministry of Local Administration and gave the authority to supervise the formation of lower sub-councils to the Provincial Council. As well, 11 provincial councils out of 14 governorates in Syria were formed under the supervision of the Ministry of Local Administration in 2014. The SIG supervised the actual formation of local councils, and the number of local councils at that time reached nearly 800 councils distributed over all Syrian governorates, until the end of 2015, when funding and support for the Syrian Interim Government stopped (Nerbani, 2021).

5.1.3. The Third Period:

It is the stage of losing control over the land, due to the Russian intervention on the side of the Assad regime, and with the help of Iranian forces on the ground, the Assad regime was able to regain control over many of the Syrian lands that were under the control of the Free Syrian Army, and this was the main reason for the decline in the number of local councils formed in the areas outside of the Assad regime control.

Another influencing reason is the lack of funding for some councils, which led to the suspension of their work. Also, the different forms of control in the liberated areas, thus the reluctance of people to work in local councils due to the formation of either de-facto government (such as the Syrian Salvation Government in Idlib) or direct supervision of formation of local councils, whether existing ones or those formed after that, as happened in the area in northern Aleppo (Nerbani, 2021) (Mazhar, 2021).

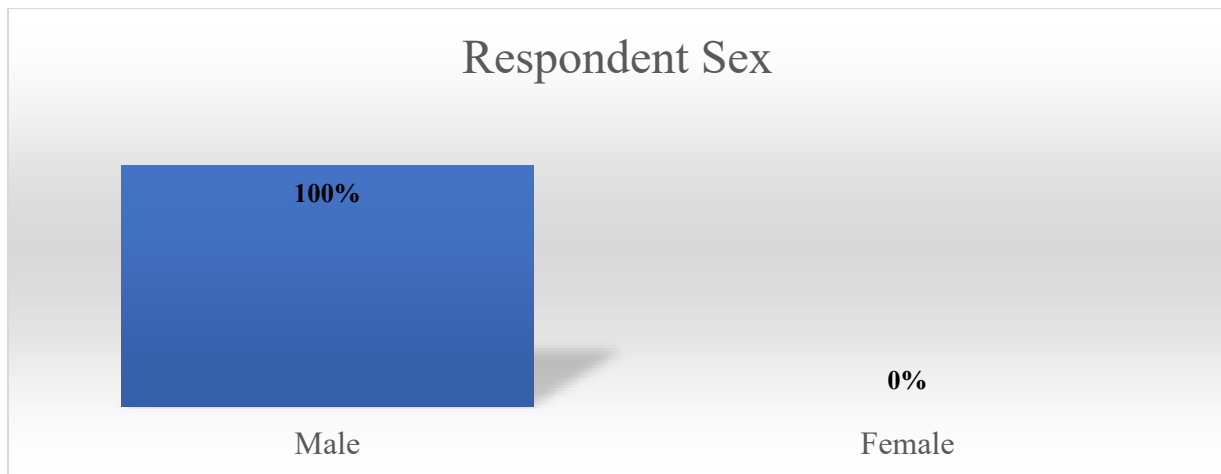
Consequently, the number of local councils affiliated with the SIG began to decline until it reached 315 local councils at the beginning of 2018, until we reached a stage where there is no relationship between the SIG and the LCs on the ground except in terms of official protocols while providing some services from LCs to citizens. As happened at the opening of the central hospital in Al-Rai, Azaz and Al-Bab (Mazhar, 2021) (Nerbani, 2021).

5.2. Analysing the study questions and measuring their variables:

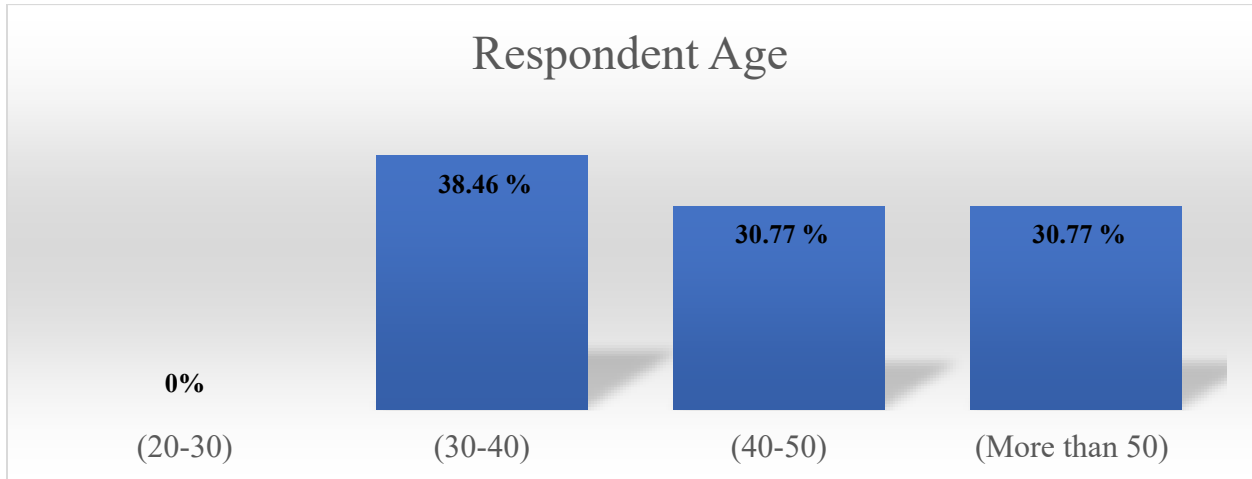
14 interviews were conducted with heads or members of local councils in areas outside the control of the Assad regime. The number of the interviewed councils reached 10 councils geographically distributed over the entire Syrian area, and the number of people examined was 13 because one person was interviewed for one council twice (a different period of time). Interviews were also conducted with some of these councils, whose work moved from one place to another, due to the Assad regime's control over the area of this council, and the council moved to provide services to the internally displaced people who were displaced from their areas to other areas outside the control of the Assad regime (such as the Aleppo City Council and the Aleppo Governorate Council). Or an interview with the council itself, but according to the time period in which it operates (Aleppo City Council - Jarablus City Council). On the other hand, interviews were conducted with members of the Syrian Interim Government and those responsible for the elections file or the opposition's local councils in areas outside the control of the Assad regime.

First, we asked for basic personal information and information about the council in which the interviewee works, and the results are as shown in the following:

By asking about the gender of the respondents, we found that 100% of them were males, and we could not conduct interviews with any female member of the LCs, although some of the female members of some councils were contacted, but due to the security conditions surrounding them, they were not interviewed.

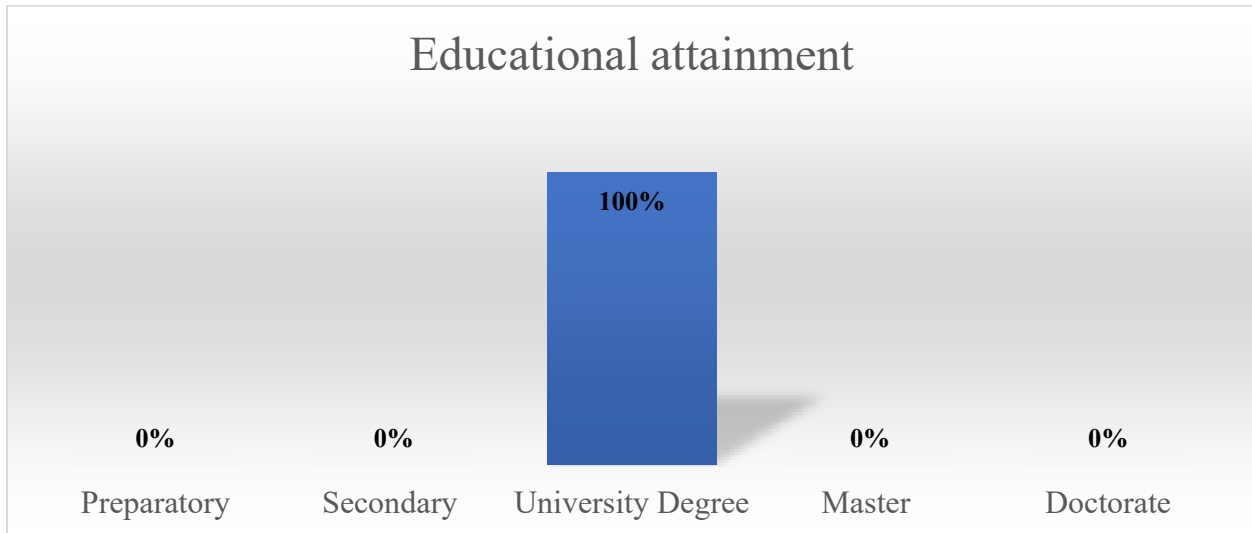


By asking about the age of the respondents, we found that 38.46% between 30-40 years old, 30.77% are in the 40-50 age group, and 30.77% are over 50 years old. One of the conditions required in the executive regulations of the local administration is that the council chairman, his deputy, or members of the executive office must be over 30 years old.



When the respondents were asked about their educational attainment, we found that 100% of them had a university degree by the date of their work in the council.

The educational attainment of the respondent indicates that the chairmen of the councils, their deputies, or even the members of the council must have at least a university degree as a condition for filling this position.



When the respondents were asked about the job position, they held in the council, the answers were as follows:

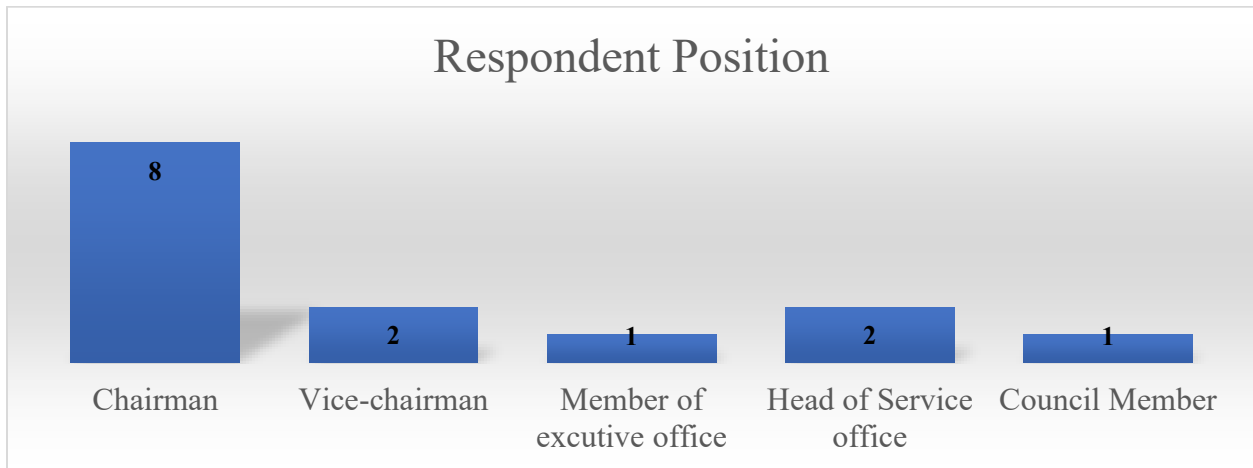
8 examined are the chairmen of the council.

2 examined are vice-chairman of the council.

1 Examined member of an executive office in the Council.

2 of the examinees are heads of a service office affiliated to the council.

1 board member.



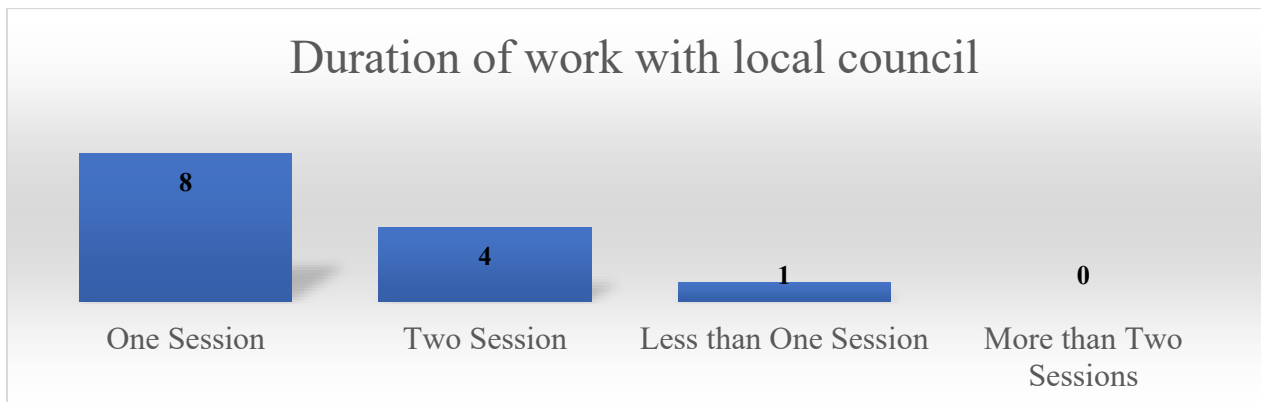
When the respondent was asked about his tenure in the council, the answers were as follows:

8 respondents indicated that their work period is for one session only.

4 respondents indicated that their work period is two sessions.

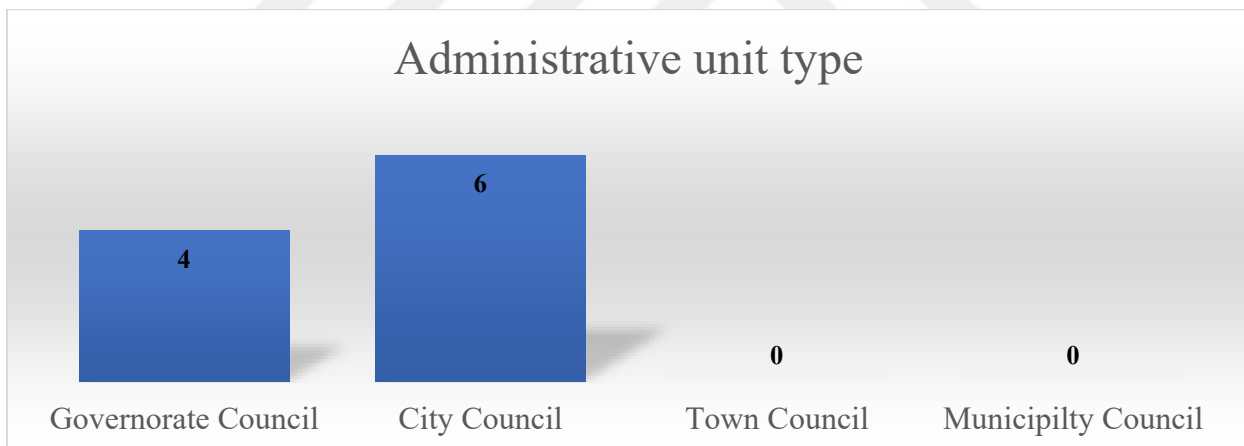
1 Respondent The duration of his work as Chairman of the Council is less than one term, after which he moved to be the head of Projects office.

None of the respondents lasted more than two sessions in one council.



Turning to the type of administrative unit, we find the following results, four different governorate councils were interviewed, which are, Aleppo Provincial Council - Idlib Provincial Council - Daraa Provincial Council - Deir ez-Zor Provincial Council. And six different city councils were interviewed, which are, Aleppo City Council - Maarat al-Numan City Council in Idlib Countryside - Saraqib City Council in Idlib Countryside - Douma City Council in Damascus Countryside - Jarablus City Council in Aleppo Countryside.

Some councils were interviewed more than once, for specific reasons, if the local council moving the workplace (Aleppo City Council) due to the Assad regime's control over the council's work area. And due to the different time period of the council (Jarablus City Council), the city remained outside the control of the Assad regime, but the different stages that the council's formation passed through, beginning with the compatibility, and then ISIS occupied the city, so the council was dissolved, then after the area was liberated from ISIS with the help of the Turkish army forces, a new local council was formed.



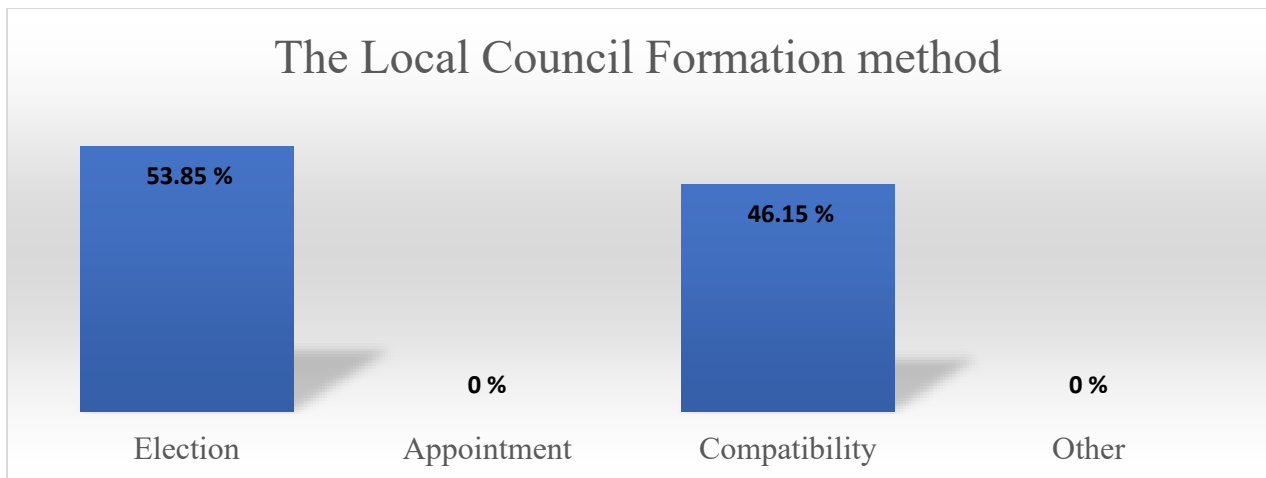
By analysing the information collected from the respondents through open questions, using the method of qualitative analysis of this information, also using secondary sources. We discuss the reality and experience of these local councils in terms of formation, the relationship with the higher central administrative authorities, the services that these councils provided, and the financial resources obtained by these councils in order to provide services to the population.

5.2.1. Formation of local councils and legal reference:

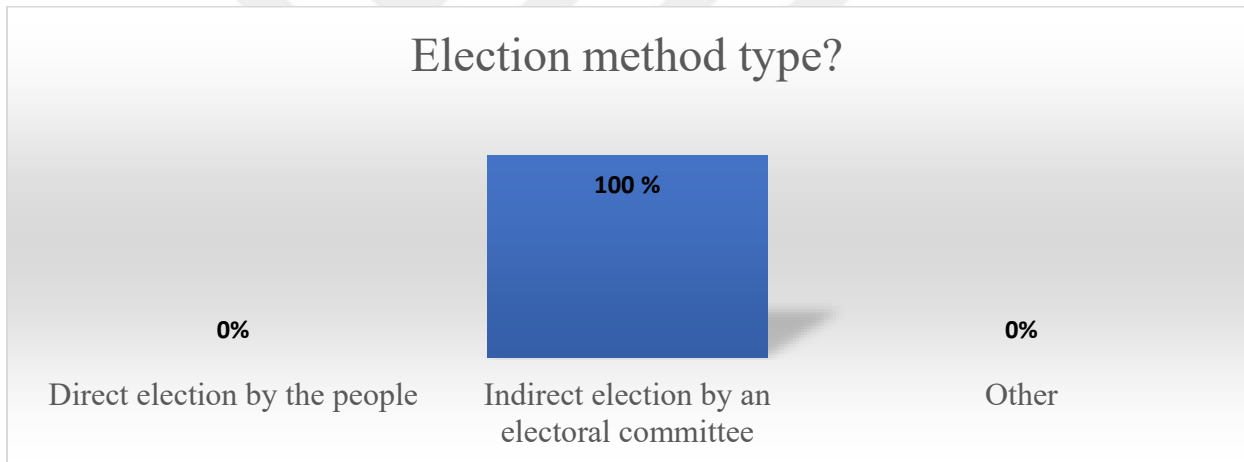
According to Articles 12-13 of the Executive Regulations for Local Administration issued by the Syrian Interim Government, which stipulated the structure of local councils, Article 12 specified the number of local council members as follows, the governorate Council, one representative for every 40,000 citizens, with no less than 30 members and no more than 50 members. The city council represents 3,500 citizens, with no less than 20 members and no more than 25 members. The town council has 15 members. At last, Municipal Council 10 members.

As for Article 13 of the same regulation, it specified the members of the executive office, except for the head of the office and the vice president, as follows, ten members in the governorate. And eight members in the city centre of the governorate and the city whose population exceeds 100,000 people. While six members in a city whose population is less than 100,000. Four members in the town and municipality. Civil status records or the data available in the Ministry shall be used as a basis for determining the population.

As for talking about the mechanism of forming the council, according to the interviews that were conducted with the examined sample, the answers to the council formation mechanism ranged between election and compatibility, where 53.85% of the sample answered that the formation of the local council in their area was done through elections, and 46.15% said that the formation of the local council was done by compatibility between civic actors, sub-councils, and neighbourhood committees in cities.



Members of local councils are elected by indirect election through a renewable electoral committee in each election period, which consists of (according to Article 14 of the executive regulations of the local administration) from all citizens registered in the civil status records of the local council and they are represented by neighbourhood councils that nominate candidates' names for the electoral committee. However the electorate committee may be limited to representatives of the revolutionary civil actors, subsidiary councils and professional bodies in the region (such as the Free Engineers Association - Lawyers Association - Free Doctors Association and other specialized professional bodies) and the number of members of the electoral committee varies from one region to another according to The number of residents in that area, and the role of the committee is limited to electing the local council members, and the role of people's monitoring over the work of the local council. Interviews with local council members.



The members of the local council are elected by secret ballot from the members of the electoral committee, and then the members of the local council elect the council's chairman, the vice-chairman and members of the executive office by secret ballot as well (Article 14/4). This was confirmed by the members of the examined sample who are members of the local councils elected in this way.

There have been some cases in which the process of electing local council members was done through direct election by the people, as happened in the Harasta City Council in the Damascus Countryside Governorate (Administrative Development, 2017)²³.

²³ مركز التطوير الإداري، تقرير مركز التطوير الإداري حول انتخابات المجلس المحلي في حرستا لدورة 2017، تم الاسترداد من (5) مركز التطوير الإداري Facebook .

All the respondents confirmed that: The elections process is supervised by an election commission formed by the Ministry of Local Administration, which opens the door for candidacy to elect members of local councils, then elects the chairman, vice-chairman and members of the executive office of the local council, and the electoral process takes place in the presence of the appeal committee it also forms from Ministry of Local Administration, which receives objections to the elections of the members of local council and the executive office, and decides on them within a specified period of time, (this is consistent with Article 15/2-3).

Most of the respondents confirmed that: The date of the elections is announced in local and social media. Representatives of the Ministry of Local Administration in the Syrian Interim Government for the governorate council elections, and representatives of the governorate council for the sub-council elections, in addition to the candidates or their agents, and the revolutionary civic activities in the region attend the elections in addition to the representatives of local media, as well as the election is documented according to minutes dedicated to this process. After the secret voting process ends, the vote counting process begins and the names of the winners of the local council membership are announced on the local and social media so that the general population knows the names of the local council members.

Local councils were formed in opposition areas before the formation of the National Coalition for Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, as well as the Syrian Interim Government, and this prompted them to rely on various legal references, some of whom prepared their own internal regulations prepared by a legal committee of specialized jurists in the area, as happened with the Saraqib City Council (An interview with the chairman of the council), Daret Izza city council (An interview with the vice-chairman of the council), Maarat al-Numan city council (An interview with the chairman of the council), and Duma city council (An interview with the chairman of the council).

But then, when the Syrian Interim Government was formed and the Ministry of Local Administration put in place the executive regulations for local administration, this regulation was approved by most of the local councils that were formed after that. The legal reference on which this regulation relied was Law 107 of 2011, and some amendments were introduced to the law to suit the nature of the liberated areas and the security and military situation (Nerbani, 2021) (Mazhar, 2021).

5.2.2. Relationship with the Higher Administrative Authorities or SIG:

The nature of the relationship between the local councils and the governorate councils on the one hand, and the local councils and the Syrian Interim Government on the other hand, differed according to the period of forming the local councils.

In the first period between 2012-2013, the Syrian Interim Government did not exist, but firstly there was communication between the local councils and the Syrian National Council, and then with the National Coalition of Opposition Revolutionary Forces as they represented the Syrian opposition, and the nature of the relationship between them at that time can be described as a communicate relationship and connecting with friends of the Syrian people who were providing support through the National Council or the National Coalition.

At this period also, some governorate councils were formed according to the meeting of the sub-councils and their agreement to form a governorate council that would be the supreme administrative body to which the sub-councils belong (as happened in the countryside of Damascus - an interview with the chairman of Duma city council) and a coordination relationship was only exist, as well as the rest of the respondent indicated that the coordination relationship was exist between the sub-councils and the governorate council, at the beginning of its existence, whether in Aleppo governorate or Idlib governorate.

As for the second period, which is after 2014, the Syrian Interim Government was formed and began to supervise the elections of the administrative unit councils in the governorates and cities, and the nature of this relationship differed accordingly. The respondents' answers described the relationship as one of administrative subordination, and some of them also described the relationship as not worthy of being formal (an interview with the chairman of Saraqib Council) due to the inability of the government to secure actual support or even support projects in order to provide services through sub-councils to the residents of the regions.

As for the respondents' question about their description of the nature of the relationship with the provincial councils, the answer was a coordination and administrative hierarchy relationship. Some of the governorate councils were seeking to secure support for the sub-councils in the governorate, so the relationship was one of administrative dependency and coordination for the implementation of these projects (interview with the chairman of the Aleppo City Council - an

interview with the vice-chairman of the Darat Azza city council - an interview with the chairman of the Maarrat al-Numan city council).

As for the third period, which is the stage of losing land to the regime because of the military force that was mainly supporting it. At this stage also, there is no longer any support for the Syrian Interim Government from the friends of the Syrian people, which led to its weakness and its inability to continue paying salaries to the local councils, at least. Based on, there is no longer a relationship between the sub-local councils and the Syrian Interim Government except for a limited relationship, as it is with the northern Aleppo councils (Azaz, Alrai, Jarablus) due to the limited Turkish logistical support for the Syrian Interim Government and considering it to be present on the ground, but in fact it is just a weak presence.

When is a question asked, do you have an education office in the council? What is the difference from the Directorate of Education of the central government?

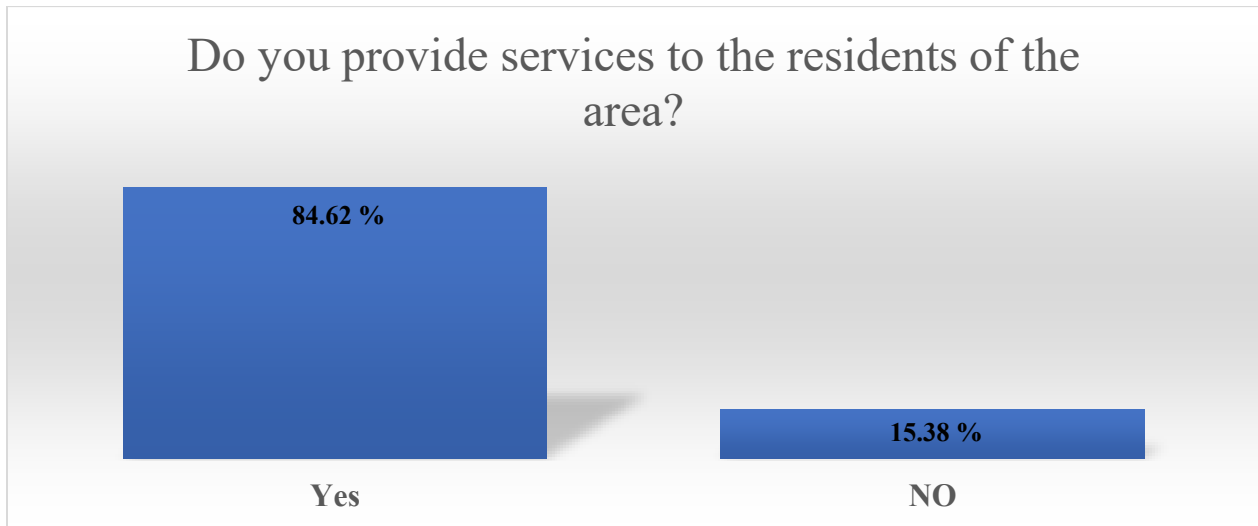
The aim of directing this question to the sample examined is to ascertain the nature of the relationship between the sub-local councils and the higher administrative authorities, whether the provincial council or the Syrian Interim Government. The answers were as follows.

100% of the answers were yes. We have an educational office. But the difference between it and the directorate of the Syrian Interim Government: that the office in our council coordinates with the directorate in order to conduct the central examinations for the intermediate certificate or higher school education. However, the office has another function, which is that we are supervising the educational process in our region in terms of securing teachers in the schools in our region, conducting a need assessment of the schools and implementing projects that come to support education in the region.

With exception of Jarablus city council and its countryside, he said: Previously, there was coordination with the directorate of Education of the Syrian Interim Government, but now, after direct Turkish supervision of the educational process through the Turkish Education Directorates, we are no longer coordinating with the Education directorate of the Syrian Interim Government. Exams and even support for teachers with salaries and students with stationery have become through the Turkish government, and this is what happening in the north of Aleppo governorate (An Interview with Jarablus Council Chairman).

5.2.3. The service role of local councils:

84.62% of the respondents said that their councils provided services to the residents of the area, while 15.38% said that they do not provide services and justified this by the lack of direct support for the Provincial Council (Idlib Provincial Council). While The Aleppo city council after 2018, in which the head of the council said in the interview that the council members are volunteers and do not receive any salary and they do not have the necessary equipment that they previously had due to the displacement and the control of the Assad forces over the city of Aleppo.



The lack of services in areas outside the control of the Assad regime, due to the regime's withdrawal of employees from the service directorates in those areas, is the main reason for the presence of local councils in the liberated areas. This role of councils is related to managing the affairs of the local population and providing them with basic services, such as education and infrastructure (water, electricity, Cleaning, removing the rubble of demolished buildings, sanitation) and others.

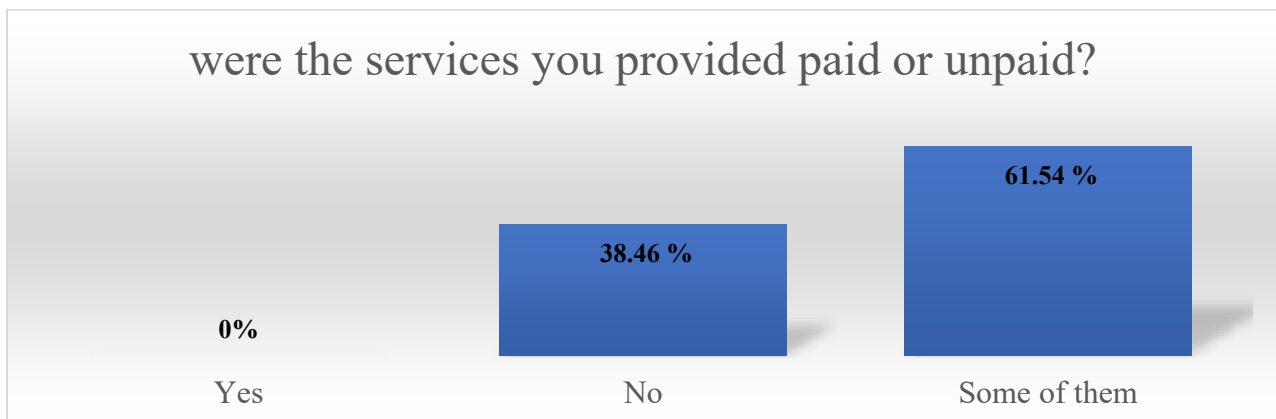
The councils work to secure services (some of which may be outside the council's competence and fall within the competence of the central government to secure them), according to priorities, ability and support, however with sufficient support the councils can work and deliver the service to those who deserve it. As for the scarcity and interruption of support, the councils cannot work. The councils exercise this role through their affiliated offices, or in cooperation with civil bodies, and even through pledges or investments made by companies for the benefit of the council (An interview with Jarablus council chairman).

According to the analysis of the respondents' answers, it is clear to us that the great progress made by the councils in providing services over time and with different priorities, especially with the state of security stability and the stability of financial support resources (Interview with chairman of local councils in the northern Aleppo before 2018 and after 2018).

Services were provided through the council's offices, which are mostly headed by a specialized person who is a member of an executive office. Each office includes from 75 administrative employees who are affiliated with the council and receive salaries directly from it. To the largest number of employees was 600 employees in the Aleppo City Council in the 2014-2015 session (An interview with Aleppo City Chairman).

By asking the respondents, were the services you provided paid or unpaid? The answer was 61.54% some of them were paid. With the aim of securing resources for the council to continue providing the service (for example, adding pennies to the price of a bag of bread in order to secure the salaries of workers in the bakery). Or by Tax of an allowance for the provision of electricity, water and cleaning services from citizens, at very low amounts and for the continuation of the service only. Some of the respondents indicated that the possibility of collection came through licenses that the council provides to citizens or civil society organizations that wish to work in the region.

And 38.46% said that they did not receive a fee for the services they provide, for several reasons: 1. The absence of an executive force affiliated with the council to protect the collectors. 2. The services come due to projects provided by donors, and the project often covers the expenses of the workers on the project. 3. The local community refused to pay the service fee because the financial situation is awfully bad in times of war.



Arranging the service sectors according to the priority of the council's work and securing support, the respondents' answers were as follows, the most priority, cleaning, and waste removal sector - bakery and flour sector - water and sanitation sector - relief sector - education sector and finally the health sector. While the medium priority, electricity sector - civil registry - agriculture - licenses and maintenance of public buildings and schools. Finally, least priority, real estate registry - social services - postal and internet services. The order of priority of the services also varies according to the stages of forming the council, the security stability and the stability of the financial resources and support that the council relies on.

5.2.4. Council's Financial Resources:

The issue of securing the financial resources of the councils is a great importance to the councils as it relates mainly to the continuity of providing services and the continuity of their work, as well as the independence they can obtain due to self-sufficiency.

For de facto reasons which are, the councils' lack of expertise in the financial field. And the absence of a financial and legislative system that regulates the process of preparing budgets. In addition to the absence of a central authority that supervises this. We may see most councils work according to project budgets that they obtain from donors, and they do not actually have an annual budget that controls the subject of the expected resources and expenses within the council's fiscal year.

The results of our interviews with the heads and deputies of local councils showed the most important financial resources obtained by these councils, according to priority, which are, most priority, support from local or international organizations. Medium priority, licenses allowance - cost recovery and fees – rent of public property. Least priority, support from the SIG - Investments - Support from individuals. Some of the respondents confirmed that the land cross boarding in the northern Aleppo regions, their commercial resources are shared between the councils in the region, and this is a great resource for the Council's fund.

This was confirmed by a study conducted by the Omran Center for Strategic Studies on the reality and challenges of the financial management of local councils (Al dassouky, 2017)²⁴.

As for the most important expenditures of financial resources obtained by the councils, according to the respondents, they were as follows, the first is maintenance of equipment and machinery belonging to the Council. While the second is operational cost of bakeries, Water supply stations and cleaning mechanisms. And the last one is salaries of the employees in the council.

Finally, we find in the opposition areas, how was the application of administrative decentralization to its reality in some areas out the control of the ruling regime in Damascus, in which the features of local government began to appear in that the inhabitants of those areas managed their local resources in the manner of administrative decentralization, in addition to the procedures for electing these councils were it is carried out in a democratic way, which was based on a legal basis by subordination to the Syrian interim government that worked on the development of Law No. 107 and established the regulations and internal system for the management of these areas through local councils in an administrative decentralization manner, and thus the advancement of the societies it administers and the achievement of local development.

²⁴ الدسوقي، أيمن. قراءة تحليلية لاستطلاع واقع وتحديات الإدارة المالية للمجالس المحلية، مركز عمران للدراسات 2017. تم الاسترداد من مركز عمران للدراسات الاستراتيجية - قراءة تحليلية لاستطلاع واقع وتحديات الإدارة المالية للمجالس المحلية (omrandirasat.org)

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The administrative organization in Syria has gone through two main phases over the past decades. In the period of the Assad regime's complete control over Syria before 2011, the administrative organization in Syria was characterized by administrative centralization, although Law 15 of 1971 called for administrative decentralization, people's rule, and democracy, in practical application it was not implemented because of the control of the Arab Socialist Baath Party and the intelligence apparatus on the local councils and their decisions through the governor who represents the central government in the province and appointed by the President of the Syria Republic, whose role was to monitor the work of the local councils and affect them both in terms of decisions taken by the executive offices of the council or in terms of budgets and annual plans that the councils raise it for approval.

As for the post-2011 period, when peaceful protests took place against the ruling regime, it exercised force to silence the people and end the protests that extended over the entire Syrian territory. After that, the regime began to gradually lose some areas to the forces of the revolution and the opposition. Which began to think about managing the areas outside the control of the Assad regime administratively because of the vacuum left by the Assad regime's withdrawal of administrative staff in the service directorates. And consequently, this affected the services provided to the people, so local councils were formed in the areas outside of Assad's control by providing essential services to citizens, this stage was characterized by the image of local governance and administrative decentralization.

After the formation of the Syrian Interim Government in 2014 and its adoption of Law 107 of 2011, which is the Local Administration Law in Syria issued by the Assad regime to curb peaceful protests in Syria. The Syrian Interim Government SIG began organizing local council elections in areas outside the control of the Assad regime, and here was the stage of prosperity for local councils, For local councils, this stage can be considered the stage of administrative decentralization in its semi-typical form, as the presence of a central government distributes administrative competencies between it and the local councils and does not interfere in the decisions of local councils, but only supervises their work.

As for the regime's areas, the regime continued to practice administrative centralization in its severe form, because of its need for support and its fear that more areas would get out of its control, although it issued Law 107 of 2011, which aimed at transferring powers and authorities to local councils and holding elections following the principle of popular democracy that calls for in Law 107, the law stipulates that the transition to administrative decentralization will take place within five years from the date of drawing up the transition plan through the Supreme Council of Local Administration, which was tasked with developing the plan, but so far the plan for the transition to administrative decentralization has not been developed, and in practice, nothing has changed and it has increased The Ba'ath Party's control of the local councils, and the aim was to reward the Baath party for its active participation in the suppression of popular demonstrations.

Accordingly, we can conclude the following after researching and collecting information and analyzing it logically:

1. The Assad regime's approach to dealing with administrative units in the manner of administrative centralization has not changed, whether before or after 2011.
2. The areas outside the control of the Assad regime:
 - The first stage of the formation of local councils in opposition areas was characterized by the image of local governance and the method of extreme administrative decentralization.
 - The second period after the formation of the interim government was characterized by the application of the method of administrative decentralization, but not in its integrated image due to the weak funding of the interim government and its inability to secure adequate support for local councils, and the local councils' endeavor to secure support by communicating with international organizations in order to secure support for them and thus the direction to local severe.
 - The support for the Syrian Interim Government stopped, and consequently, the lack of supervision by it over the formation of local councils. In fact, the supervision of the formation of the councils became in the hand of the forces on the ground (Syrian Salvation Government in Idlib - north of Aleppo under the supervision of the Turkish government), and thus this stage became characterized by administrative decentralization but

undemocratic, (according to interviews with the chairman of local councils in northern Syria).

3. The experience of forming local councils in areas outside the control of the Assad regime can be considered a successful decentralization experiment to some extent. But it needs a legal reference and a clear distribution of authorities between the central government and local councils so that they can play their role in developing society and strengthening popular democracy.

Accordingly, we believe that the following recommendations can be benefited from in order to move to real administrative decentralization:

1. There can be no administrative decentralization without the presence of a strong central body that supervises the work of administrative units and regulates the relationship between it and the local councils according to clear powers and a fixed legal reference.
2. Activating the mechanism of direct election by the people to local councils in order to be truly representative of them.
3. Activating the role of popular control over the work of the administrative units, which increases their performance of their role, and striving to reach the people's needs and satisfaction with their work.

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ANNEXES

Annex A

Interviews Questions with Members of Local Council in Syria after 2011

<p>Introduction: Dear Respondent, We are conducting a research study prepared by the student Ahmed Hassan Al-Shab with a title (Centralization and Decentralization in Syria comparison before and after 2011) with the aim of obtaining a master's degree in Political Science and International Relations, in which we study the application of decentralization in the local councils in Syria before and after 2011, through measuring The following variables (how the councils are formed - the relationship with the central government - the provided services - the financial resources) and whether this can be applied in Syria after the end of the conflict. The sample will be intentional due to the nature of the study problem and the objective of the research. Please be sure that the interview with you will remain completely confidential and you will not be mentioned in it personally, but your job position could be indicated. The only reason to do the recording is for quality control. Please answer honestly the questions. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Thank you in advanced</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">مقدمة:</p> <p>عزيزي المجيب، نحن الآن نقوم بدراسة بحثية يعدها الطالب أحمد حسن الشب بعنوان (المركزية واللامركزية في سوريا قبل وبعد 2011) بهدف نيل درجة الماجستير في العلوم السياسية والعلاقات الدولية، نلاحظ فيها تطبيق اللامركزية على عمل المجالس المحلية في سوريا قبل وبعد 2011، من خلال قياس المتغيرات الآتية (كيفية تشكيل المجالس - العلاقة مع الحكومة المركزية - الخدمات التي يتم تقديمها - الموارد المالية) وهل يمكن تطبيق ذلك في سوريا بعد انتهاء النزاع. ستكون العينية قصدية بسبب طبيعة مشكلة الدراسة وهدف البحث. من فضلك تأكد أن المقابلة التي سنجريها معك ستبقى سرية بشكل كامل ولن يتم الإشارة إليك فيها بشكلٍ شخصي وإنما يمكن الإشارة إلى منصبك الوظيفي. والسبب الوحيد للقيام بتسجيل التفاصيل هو لضبط الجودة. الرجاء الإجابة بصراحة على كل سؤال. ليس هناك من أجوبة "صحيحة" أو "أجوبة خاطئة" شكراً لكم مقدماً.</p>
Part One: Responder Personal Information and LCs information	القسم الأول: معلومات شخصية عن المجيب والمجلس المحلي:
Sex:	جنس المجيب:
Male / Female	ذكر / أنثى
Age:	العمر:
20 – 30	30 – 20
30 – 40	40 – 30
40 – 50	50 – 40
More than 50	أكثر من 50
Educational attainment:	التحصيل العلمي:
Preparatory	شهادة إعدادية
Secondary	شهادة ثانوية

University Degree	شهادة جامعية
Master	ماجستير
Doctorate	دكتوراه
Position:	المنصب الوظيفي:
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Name of the Local council:	اسم المجلس:
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Duration of work with local council?	مدة العمل في المجلس:
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Did your position changed while working with the local council?	هل تغير المنصب الوظيفي خلال العمل مع المجلس:
Yes / No	نعم / لا
If Yes? What does the new position?	إذا نعم، ما هو المنصب الجديد؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Administrative unit type:	نوع الوحدة الإدارية:
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Number of local council members:	عدد أعضاء المجلس المحلي:
Number	رقم
Number of members of the executive office:	عدد أعضاء المكتب التنفيذي:
Number	رقم
Part Two: Study variables and their measurement	القسم الثاني: متغيرات الدراسة وقياسها
First principle: the Local Council Formation	المبدأ الأول: الطريقة التي تم بها تشكيل المجلس
The Local Council Formation method:	طريقة تشكيل المجلس:
Election	الانتخاب
Appointment	التعيين
Compatibility	التوافق
Other (what was)	غير ذلك (ما هو)
If the answer election: what was the Election method type?	إذا كان الجواب انتخاب: ما نوع طريقة الانتخاب:
Direct election by the people	انتخاب مباشر من الشعب
Indirect election by an electoral committee	انتخاب غير مباشر عن طريق هيئة ناخبة متجددة
Other	غير ذلك (ما هو)
If the answer appointment: what is Appointing party?	إذا كان الجواب تعيين: ما هي جهة التعيين
SIG	الحكومة السورية المؤقتة
The actual civilian authority that controls the area	السلطة المدنية الفعلية التي تسيطر على المنطقة
Military	العسكر
Other	غير ذلك (ما هي)
If the answer compatibility: (between whom)?	إذا كان الجواب بالتوافق (بين من)؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
If the answer Other: (the formation method)	إذا كان الجواب غير ذلك (الطريقة)

Narrative	نص مفتوح
Tell us about the experience of forming your local council?	حدثنا عن تجربة تشكيل المجلس المحلي عندكم؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Tell us about the legal reference that was adopted when forming the council?	حدثنا عن المرجعية القانونية التي اعتمدت عند تشكيل المجلس؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Second principle: the relationship with the higher administrative authorities	المبدأ الثاني: العلاقة مع الجهات الإدارية الأعلى
How would you describe the relationship with the provincial council? (For City, Town, and Municipality councils)	كيف تصف العلاقة مع مجلس المحافظة؟ (بالنسبة لمجالس المدن أو البلدة أو البلدية)
Narrative	نص مفتوح
What is the relationship with the government (central or de facto)? Especially SIG	ما هي العلاقة مع الحكومة (المركزية أو الفعلية)؟ وخاصة الحكومة السورية المؤقتة
Narrative	نص مفتوح
For example: Do you have an education office in the council?	على سبيل المثال: هل لديكم مكتب للتربية والتعليم في المجلس؟
Yes / No	نعم / لا
If Yes: what is the difference from the Directorate of Education in the central government?	إذا كان الجواب نعم: ما فرقه عن مديرية التربية والتعليم التابعة للحكومة المؤقتة؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Third principle: Services	المبدأ الثالث: الخدمات المقدمة للقاطنين في المنطقة
Do you provide services to the residents of the area?	هل تقدمون الخدمات لسكان المنطقة؟
Yes / No	نعم / لا
If the answer No: why?	إذا كان الجواب لا: لماذا؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Ranking the priority of the most important services provided by the council 1-3? 1 Highest priority - 2 Medium priority - 3 Lowest priority	ترتيب أولوية أهم الخدمات المقدمة من المجلس 1-3؟ 1 أكثر أولوية - 2 متوسطة الأولوية - 3 الأقل أولوية
Waste Management Bakeries and flour Electricity Water Real estate registry Maintenance of public buildings and schools Civil Registry Relief Education Health Social Services	قطاع النظافة والنفايات قطاع المخابز والطحين قطاع الكهرباء قطاع المياه السجل العقاري صيانة الأبنية العامة والمدارس السجل المدني الإغاثة التعليم الصحة الخدمات الاجتماعية

Licenses	التراخيص
Other Services What are they?	خدمات أخرى/ما هي؟
Is it paid or unpaid?	هل هي مأجورة أو غير مأجورة؟
Yes / No / Some of them	نعم / لا / البعض منها
If the answer Yes / Some of them? What was the method of paid?	إذا كان الجواب نعم / البعض منها؟ فما هي الطريقة؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
What is the method of providing services?	ما هي طريقة تقديم الخدمات؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Fourth principle: Financial resources	المبدأ الرابع: الموارد المالية
What financial resources does the council depend on? What is its source?	ما هي الموارد المالية التي يعتمد عليها المجلس؟ ما هو مصدرها؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Where are they spent?	أين تم صرفها؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Ranking the priority of the most important resources? 1 Highest priority - 2 Medium priority - 3 Lowest priority	ترتيب أولويات المصادر؟ 1 أكثر أولوية - 2 متوسطة الأولوية - 3 الأقل أولوية
Cost Recovery Licenses allowance Central Government support Investment Sale and rent of public property INGOs Support	الجبابة بدل التراخيص دعم الحكومة المركزية الاستثمار البيع والإيجار للأماكن العامة دعم منظمات محلية أو دولية
Thank you, any other information would like to add?	تمت المقابلة، شكراً لكم. هل ترغبون بإضافة أي معلومة؟

Annex B

Interview Questions with Regime LCs members before 2011

<p>Introduction:</p> <p>Dear Respondent, We are conducting a research study prepared by the student Ahmed Hassan Al-Shab with a title (Centralization and Decentralization in Syria comparison before and after 2011) with the aim of obtaining a master's degree in Political Science and International Relations, in which we study the application of decentralization in the local councils in Syria before and after 2011, through measuring The following variables (how the councils are formed - the relationship with the central government - the provided services - the financial resources) and whether this can be applied in Syria after the end of the conflict.</p> <p>The sample will be intentional due to the nature of the study problem and the objective of the research.</p> <p>Please be sure that the interview with you will remain completely confidential and you will not be mentioned in it personally, but your job position could be indicated. The only reason to do the recording is for quality control. Please answer honestly the questions. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers.</p> <p>Thank you in advanced</p>	<p>مقدمة:</p> <p>عزيزي المجيب، نحن الآن نقوم بدراسة بحثية يعدها الطالب أحمد حسن الشب بعنوان (المركزية واللامركزية في سوريا قبل وبعد 2011) بهدف نيل درجة الماجستير في العلوم السياسية والعلاقات الدولية، نلاحظ فيها تطبيق اللامركزية على عمل المجالس المحلية في سوريا قبل وبعد 2011، من خلال قياس المتغيرات الأتية (كيفية تشكيل المجالس - العلاقة مع الحكومة المركزية - الخدمات التي يتم تقديمها - الموارد المالية) وهل يمكن تطبيق ذلك في سوريا بعد انتهاء النزاع. ستكون العينية قسدية بسبب طبيعة مشكلة الدراسة وهدف البحث.</p> <p>من فضلك تأكد أن المقابلة التي سنجرها معك ستبقى سرية بشكل كامل ولن يتم الإشارة إليك فيها بشكلٍ شخصي وإنما يمكن الإشارة إلى منصبك الوظيفي. والسبب الوحيد للقيام بتسجيل التفاصيل هو لضبط الجودة.</p> <p>الرجاء الإجابة بصراحة على كل سؤال. ليس هناك من أجوبة "صحيحة" أو "أجوبة خاطئة"</p> <p>شكراً لكم مقدماً.</p>
<p>Part One: Responder Personal Information and LCs information</p>	<p>القسم الأول: معلومات شخصية عن المجيب والمجلس المحلي:</p>
<p>Sex:</p>	<p>جنس المجيب:</p>
<p>Male / Female</p>	<p>ذكر / أنثى</p>
<p>Age:</p>	<p>العمر:</p>
<p>20 – 30</p>	<p>30 – 20</p>
<p>30 – 40</p>	<p>40 – 30</p>
<p>40 – 50</p>	<p>50 – 40</p>
<p>More than 50</p>	<p>أكثر من 50</p>
<p>Educational attainment:</p>	<p>التحصيل العلمي:</p>
<p>Preparatory</p>	<p>شهادة إعدادية</p>
<p>Secondary</p>	<p>شهادة ثانوية</p>
<p>University Degree</p>	<p>شهادة جامعية</p>

Master Doctorate	ماجستير دكتوراه
Position:	المنصب الوظيفي:
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Name of the Local council:	اسم المجلس:
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Duration of work with local council?	مدة العمل في المجلس:
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Part Two: Study variables and their measurement	القسم الثاني: متغيرات الدراسة وقياسها
The nature of local council's elections? How is it advertised? How are the elections?	طبيعة انتخابات مجالس الإدارة المحلية؟ كيف يتم الإعلان عنها؟ وكيف تتم الانتخابات؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
The nature of the relationship with the central government? What is the role of the governor or minister in local council decisions?	طبيعة العلاقة مع السلطة المركزية؟ وما دور المحافظ أو الوزير في اتخاذ قرارات المجالس المحلية؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
What are the services provided by the local councils? How are services provided?	ما هي الخدمات المقدمة من المجالس المحلية؟ وكيف يتم تقديم الخدمات؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Sources of funding of local councils?	مصادر تمويل مجالس الإدارة المحلية؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح

Annex C

Interview Questions with SIG Employees after 2011

<p>Introduction:</p> <p>Dear Respondent, We are conducting a research study prepared by the student Ahmed Hassan Al-Shab with a title (Centralization and Decentralization in Syria comparison before and after 2011) with the aim of obtaining a master's degree in Political Science and International Relations, in which we study the application of decentralization in the local councils in Syria before and after 2011, through measuring The following variables (how the councils are formed - the relationship with the central government - the provided services - the financial resources) and whether this can be applied in Syria after the end of the conflict.</p> <p>The sample will be intentional due to the nature of the study problem and the objective of the research.</p> <p>Please be sure that the interview with you will remain completely confidential and you will not be mentioned in it personally, but your job position could be indicated. The only reason to do the recording is for quality control. Please answer honestly the questions. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers.</p> <p>Thank you in advanced</p>	<p>مقدمة:</p> <p>عزيزي المجيب، نحن الآن نقوم بدراسة بحثية يعدها الطالب أحمد حسن الشب بعنوان (المركزية واللامركزية في سوريا قبل وبعد 2011) بهدف نيل درجة الماجستير في العلوم السياسية والعلاقات الدولية، نلاحظ فيها تطبيق اللامركزية على عمل المجالس المحلية في سوريا قبل وبعد 2011، من خلال قياس المتغيرات الآتية (كيفية تشكيل المجالس - العلاقة مع الحكومة المركزية - الخدمات التي يتم تقديمها - الموارد المالية) وهل يمكن تطبيق ذلك في سوريا بعد انتهاء النزاع. ستكون العينية قسدية بسبب طبيعة مشكلة الدراسة وهدف البحث.</p> <p>من فضلك تأكد أن المقابلة التي سنجريها معك ستبقى سرية بشكل كامل ولن يتم الإشارة إليك فيها بشكل شخصي وإنما يمكن الإشارة إلى منصبك الوظيفي. والسبب الوحيد للقيام بتسجيل التفاصيل هو لضبط الجودة.</p> <p>الرجاء الإجابة بصراحة على كل سؤال. ليس هناك من أجوبة "صحيحة" أو "أجوبة خاطئة"</p> <p>شكراً لكم مقدماً.</p>
<p>Part One: Responder Personal Information</p>	<p>القسم الأول: معلومات شخصية عن المجيب</p>
<p>Sex:</p>	<p>جنس المجيب:</p>
<p>Male / Female</p>	<p>ذكر / أنثى</p>
<p>Age:</p>	<p>العمر:</p>
<p>20 – 30</p>	<p>30 – 20</p>
<p>30 – 40</p>	<p>40 – 30</p>
<p>40 – 50</p>	<p>50 – 40</p>
<p>More than 50</p>	<p>أكثر من 50</p>
<p>Educational attainment:</p>	<p>التحصيل العلمي:</p>
<p>Preparatory</p>	<p>شهادة إعدادية</p>
<p>Secondary</p>	<p>شهادة ثانوية</p>
<p>University Degree</p>	<p>شهادة جامعية</p>
<p>Master</p>	<p>ماجستير</p>
<p>Doctorate</p>	<p>دكتوراه</p>

Position:	المنصب الوظيفي:
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Duration of work with SIG:	مدة العمل مع الحكومة السورية المؤقتة
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Why did MoLA in SIG adopt Law 107 of 2011?	لماذا اعتمدت وزارة الإدارة المحلية في الحكومة السورية المؤقتة القانون 107 لعام 2011؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
What are the most important amendments that MoLA added to Law 107 of 2011?	ما هي أهم التعديلات التي أضافتها وزارة الإدارة المحلية على القانون 107 لعام 2011؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
How were local councils formed in the outside regime's control areas? Is it under the supervision of SIG?	كيف كان يتم تشكيل المجالس المحلية في المناطق الخارجة عن سيطرة نظام الأسد؟ وهل هي تحت إشراف الحكومة المؤقتة؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
How do you describe the relationship of MoLA with the local councils?	كيف تصف علاقة وزارة الإدارة المحلية مع المجالس المحلية؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
Are the provided services by the local councils (with their differences) within their competence? Or is the lack of a strong central government enforced on the local councils to provide services outside their competence?	هل الخدمات المقدمة من المجالس المحلية (على اختلافها) هي من اختصاصها؟ أم أن عدم وجود الحكومة المركزية القوية هو الذي دفع المجالس لتقديم خدمات خارج اختصاصها؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
May you mention the most important funding sources of local councils? What is the role of SIG in obtaining funding sources for the local councils?	هل يمكن أن تذكر لي أهم مصادر تمويل المجالس المحلية؟ وما هو دور الحكومة السورية المؤقتة في الحصول على مصادر تمويل للمجالس؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
What is the number of local councils in the liberated areas in Syria between 2014-2016?	ما هو عدد المجالس المحلية في سوريا المحررة عام 2014 – 2016؟
Number	عدد
What is the number of local councils in the liberated areas in Syria between 2018-2020?	ما هو عدد المجالس المحلية في سوريا المحررة عام 2018 – 2020؟
Number	عدد
In your opinion, what are the five main reasons for the change in the number of local councils in the liberated areas?	من وجهة نظركم، ما هي أهم 5 أسباب أساسية لتغير عدد المجالس المحلية المعارضة في سوريا؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
What are the reasons of the failure of some local councils?	ما هي برأيكم أسباب فشل بعض المجالس؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح
How do you describe the relationship between MoLA and the local councils now?	كيف تصف علاقة وزارة الإدارة المحلية في الحكومة المؤقتة بالمجالس المحلية الآن؟
Narrative	نص مفتوح

