



Assessment of Social Justice Based on the City Prosperity Indexes in the Ten Districts of Tabriz

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Abstract

Background and Objective: The contemporary world, marked by rapid transformations, requires dynamic indicators to promote justice-particularly in the fair distribution of urban services and facilities. Due to ongoing inequalities in developing cities, recent academic and institutional efforts have focused on urban models that integrate social justice to achieve sustainable development and improve the quality of life. Within this framework, the City Prosperity Index (CPI) has emerged as a key tool for evaluating justice across various urban dimensions. This study aims to assess the ten municipal districts of Tabriz in terms of their social justice performance, as one of the five main dimensions of urban prosperity.

Methodology: To achieve the research objectives, five criteria and indicators were employed, considering data limitations and the lack of official statistics. The spatial scope covers the ten municipal districts of Tabriz. The PROMETHEE and GAIA models were applied for ranking and analysis, while the ANP model was used for weighting the indicators. Geographic Information System (GIS) tools were also employed to visualize spatial patterns and disparities among districts.

Results and findings: The results of analyzing the social justice index across the five sub-criteria in the ten districts of Tabriz indicate that District 6, with a net Phi value of 0.400 and a score of 100, ranks first in terms of social justice performance. It is followed by District 2 ($\Phi = 0.178$, score = 61.39). Districts 1, 5, and 9 fall within the medium level of social justice, with corresponding Phi values of 0.156, 0.133, and 0.044. In the low-performance range are Districts 8, 4, 3, and 7, with Phi values of -0.044 , -0.067 , -0.178 , and -0.200 , respectively. The lowest rank belongs to District 10, which demonstrates a highly unfavorable condition in terms of access to social justice-related services and facilities. Among the ten districts of Tabriz, only Districts 6 and 2 occupy high or very high positions in terms of social justice, whereas Districts 8, 4, 3, and 7 exhibit poor conditions, and District 10 shows a very poor status. Therefore, promoting balanced urban growth and reinforcing the driving factors of social justice should be prioritized by urban planners and decision-makers in Tabriz.

Keywords: Social Justice, Urban Prosperity, Tabriz, PROMETHEE, GIS.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

Since the second half of the 20th century, high urban density has emerged as a prominent feature of urban development. This trend, particularly in developing countries where urban population growth has outpaced infrastructural capacities, has led to severe challenges such as housing congestion, traffic, environmental degradation, and pollution. These conditions impose significant psychological pressure on citizens and create fundamental dilemmas for urban management in service provision.

To address these issues, novel approaches have been introduced in urban planning, most notably the concept of "Urban Prosperity," which serves as a comprehensive framework for achieving sustainable development. The Urban Prosperity Index is an ideal metric for assessing the holistic progress of cities across economic, social, environmental, and physical dimensions. However, in developing nations, the shortage and inequitable spatial distribution of urban services have become major challenges. From a geographical perspective, social justice in a city implies the equitable spatial distribution of facilities and equal citizen access to them; any imbalance in this distribution inevitably leads to social crises and complex spatial problems.

Tabriz Metropolis, as a vital economic and cultural hub in Iran, faces significant challenges regarding the unbalanced distribution of services and the over-centralization of resources in specific areas. This disparity has created substantial gaps in the enjoyment of key urban life indicators across different districts. The continuation of this trajectory will exacerbate socio-economic and environmental issues, necessitating the revision of macro-management strategies and the adoption of modern planning tools.

Therefore, to bridge the existing research gap, this study employs a novel approach to evaluate and rank urban prosperity with a specific emphasis on the "social justice" component across the ten districts of Tabriz Metropolis, utilizing the PROMETHEE multi-criteria decision-making model. This research aims to provide a comprehensive quantitative analytical framework, offering a clear picture of the social justice status in various districts of Tabriz. Ultimately, it seeks to establish a scientific foundation for formulating effective strategies and interventions to promote social equity and achieve sustainable urban development.

Methodology

Methodologically, this research is applied in purpose and descriptive-analytical in nature. It evaluates urban prosperity in Tabriz through the lens of social justice, utilizing five specific sub-criteria derived from United Nations annual reports and relevant domestic and international studies. The required data were collected from the Tabriz Statistical Yearbook and available open-source materials using the Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) extraction method. Spatially, the study focuses on the ten municipal districts of Tabriz, and temporally, it utilizes data from the Iranian calendar year 1395 (2016–2017). Due to the unavailability of granular statistical data at the neighborhood level, the assessment of urban prosperity was conducted at the scale of these ten districts.

For data processing and spatial analysis, various analytical tools were employed. Specifically, ArcGIS 10.1 was utilized to visualize and map the spatial distribution of the selected indicators

and the levels of access across the urban districts. Furthermore, the PROMETHEE (Preference Ranking Organization Method for Enrichment of Evaluations) model, a robust Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) method, was applied to identify and rank alternatives based on decision-makers' values and preferences, facilitating a systematic and objective selection among the defined options.

Results and Findings

The results of analyzing the social justice index, evaluated through five sub-criteria across the ten municipal districts of Tabriz, indicate that District 6 ranks first in terms of access to social justice sub-indices, achieving a net Phi value of 0.400 and a score of 100. District 2 follows in second place with a net Phi of 0.178 and a score of 61.39. Districts 1, 5, and 9 fall into the "moderate access" category, with net Phi values of 0.156, 0.133, and 0.044, and corresponding scores of 58.65, 56.04, and 46.84, respectively. In the "low access" category, Districts 8, 4, 3, and 7 are ranked with net Phi values of 0.044, 0.067, 0.178, and 0.200, and scores of 39.21, 37.50, 29.92, and 28.57, respectively. Finally, District 10 ranks last, falling into the "very low access" category, indicating highly undesirable conditions regarding social justice indicators.

The ranking results of the ten municipal districts of Tabriz in terms of social justice indicators reveal that District 6, securing the first rank and demonstrating full access to the social justice sub-indices, enjoys an ideal status. District 2 ranks second, falling into the "high access" category. Districts 1, 5, and 9 are ranked third, fourth, and fifth, respectively, placing them in the "moderate access" category. Districts 8, 4, 3, and 7, demonstrating low access to social justice indicators, are ranked sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth, respectively. Finally, District 10 ranks last, falling into the "very low access" category regarding social justice indicators.

Conclusion

The findings of the study show that the distribution of urban and social services among urban areas in Tabriz is not fair and balanced, and in the analytical model used in the study, the highest frequency of areas with low social justice index. According to the findings of the study, Tabriz urban areas have an inappropriate situation in the social justice dimension of the urban prosperity index. By comparing the present study with studies conducted on urban prosperity in recent years, we conclude that most Iranian cities do not have a high score in the urban prosperity index, most Iranian cities are not prosperous, and urban areas in different cities do not have a good situation in terms of urban prosperity indices. In more detail, in most studies, among the five urban prosperity indicators, only one or two of the indicators are in the medium to high position, and these indicators have not obtained high scores in all urban areas, but in some areas of the cities; in the present study, the urban prosperity index in the city of Tabriz shows a similar situation to the studies conducted in this field. It is important to note that the areas that have obtained relatively good scores in the urban prosperity index are often considered prosperous and wealthy urban areas and, in a way, the northern part of the cities.

Declarations

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Authors' Contribution

Authors contributed equally to the conceptualization and writing of the article. All of the authors approved the content of the manuscript and agreed on all aspects of the work declaration of competing interest none.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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