

MODEL OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT FOR MUNICIPALITIES BASED ON RESISTANCE ECONOMY (CASE STUDY OF TEHRAN MUNICIPALITY)

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays the main obstacles hindering the solution of urban problems and causing inefficiencies in providing services are first and foremost a lack of stable and consistent financial resources, and inefficient management of expenses, which are particularly evident in the case of Tehran municipality. Hence the need for further research on the topic is of great importance in providing stable sources of income for the city and improving the citizens' standards of living. In this regard, if Tehran municipality chooses a new approach to tackle the issue of acquiring stable financial resources, it will be an important step for this city in its development and in its path towards becoming an ideal city (Utopia) (Ziari *et al.* 2013).

The concept of resistance economy which was first used by Ayatullah Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, in 2011, is a long-term solution for the problem of unstable financial resources, faced by Tehran municipality. The resistance economy model emphasizes the financial independence of municipalities, and it also promotes entrepreneurship¹ and provides financial opportunities for organizations and welfare for the citizens.

This study was conducted on a model for providing financial resources for Tehran municipality in 2017 based on resistance economy, and aims to study and provide an understanding of financial resources and strategies for obtaining stable sources of income for Tehran municipality. This is a practical, developmental study and the method used is descriptive-analytical with a mixed method approach.

The statistical population for the qualitative research for this study consists of university professors, universities, and experts with a total of 25 individuals which were chosen using the Delphi method. Content analysis was completed and data was collected and analyzed. In the quantitative research for the study, the statistical population consists of the entire body of employees, financial managers, and executive officers working for Tehran municipality, with a total of 227 individuals who were selected for the study through sampling, and data was collected using a survey designed by the author.

The goals of this study include:

- 1- Reducing and abandoning the sale of plot ratio (complying with the rules and regulations of urban construction)
- 2- Enhancing the management of Tehran municipality using the elements of resistance economy
- 3- Achieving stable financial resources for Tehran municipality using a comprehensive approach that draws on elements from strategic management, urban management, and resistance economy, while taking the local necessities into consideration.
- 4- Strengthening Tehran's economy using strategic management, and expanding it through implementation of the elements of resistance economy.

Keywords: *Resistance Economy, Urban Management, Urban Economy, Stable Financial Resources.*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays the main obstacles hindering the solution of urban problems and causing inefficiencies in providing services are first and foremost a lack of stable and consistent financial resources, and inefficient management of expenses, which are particularly evident in megacities such as Tehran.

¹ economic activity that creates employment for other people.

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Hence the need for further research on the topic is of great importance in providing stable sources of income for the cities and improving the citizens' standards of living. In this regard, if the municipalities choose a new approach to tackle the issue of acquiring stable financial resources, it will be an important step for the cities in their development and in their paths towards becoming ideal cities (Utopia) (Ziari *et al.* 2013).

In the matter of the expansion and development of urban management plans, in particular in the case of construction projects, One of the important problems faced by Tehran municipality is the organization's limited sources of income in spite of its increasing expenses, both of which seem to be caused by the increase in the price level in recent years, or in other words the inflation (Mehrgan *et al.* 2013).

The goal of this study is to show how the principles of resistance economy can be used to address the issue of acquisition of consistent and sufficient sources of income for Tehran municipality, so that these financial resources can be used to enhance and optimize public utilities, upgrading urban infrastructures, implement related construction projects, and improve the citizens' standards of living.

Resistance economy

"Resistance economy" is a term first used by Iran's supreme leader Ayatullah Khamenei in 2011 in a meeting with a group of Iranian entrepreneurs and has been repeatedly emphasized by him ever since. Resistance economy is an economy that has the ability to sustain the blows inflicted upon it, can be flexible in demanding situations, and can handle crises with minimal damage. In other words, "resistance economy", while having a tendency to collaborate with foreign partners and benefit from the advantages of free trade, also maintains the economic security of the country so that the threats and changes of the international economic atmosphere affects the country's important economic indexes only as slightly as possible in the long term. A resistance economy must obviously make use of every potential to move on the production-possibility frontier (Taari *et al.* 2013).

Resistance economy in the speeches of Ayatullah Khamenei

"Resistance economy" is a new term that is currently being discussed in Iran, which is not surprising considering the current condition of Iran's economy, and is still evolving as with the growth of the literature on the topic.

As mentioned above, "resistance economy" is a term coined by Ayatullah Khamenei, who regards it as an important strategy for changing the path of Iran's economic evolution, and as an extremely effective defense against the economic sanctions of the west against Iran. He has elaborated on the concept in various ways, introducing resistance economy as an aspect of entrepreneurship, and has also explained Iran's need for the latter considering "the country's capacity for rapid growth" and "the economic sanctions of the enemy" (secretariat of Iran's Expediency Discernment Council 2014).

Definition of resistance economy by the Supreme leader

Resistance economy is an economy that lays the foundations for the growth and development of a nation's economy, neutralizing the effects of foreign sanctions.

Definition of resistance economy by scholars

Various definitions have been proposed in the short period since the term's recognition, each focusing on a certain aspect of the concept.

In scientific literature, the concept of resistance economy has not yet been fully recognized. However, a definition can be deduced from the speeches of Ayatullah Khamenei, as well as comments made by economics, executive officers, and management experts (Mombeyni 2013).

Resistance economy is an economy in which the points of pressure are identified and brought under control, or ideally, are fully neutralized. Such an economy reduces dependencies and emphasizes the advantages of domestic production and strives to be self-sufficient (Qasemi 2013).

In other words, "resistance economy", while having a tendency to collaborate with foreign partners and benefit from the advantages of free trade, also maintains the economic security of the country so that the threats and changes of the international economic atmosphere affects the country's important economic indexes only as slightly as possible in the long term. In a resistance economy, the country does not rely

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solely on one or a few of its economic sectors or capacities; it strives to make use of the full potential of all of its assets (Taari *et al.* 2013).

Types of resistance economy

There are four types of resistance economy based on the goals that are set by the economy:

1. Parallel economy
2. Restorative economy
3. Defensive economy
4. Model economy (Jafari, Aahangari 2013)

Parallel economy

Immediately after the 1979 revolution, it was decided that the ministry of Construction Jihad must be established alongside the ministry of agriculture. While the revolution had contributed greatly to the free expression of different political, social, and economic views, the new government also needed to provide the citizens with public utilities, but at the time the ministries were not capable of providing electricity, water, constructing roads, and creating public networks. Some claim that in this situation could be classified as one of parallel administrative power, but they fail to acknowledge the fact that the condition of the revolution required it to seek assistance from brand-new management-and-planning-organizations with more capabilities.

As a country in which the uncontrolled use of energy, the excessive consumption of resources in government projects and tenders, the decrease in the amount of reserve currency, the growth of the population, etc. are evident, Iran needs to have a resistance economy to prevent an economic crisis. It needs a layered economy because neither the public sector, nor the emerging private sector has been capable of meeting its economic demands, which has been the cause of several problems faced by the country both currently and in the past.

Restorative economy

Another interpretation of resistance economy is arrived at if we focus on its aspect of restoring the economic structure. There is obviously a practical inconsistency in Iran's overly governmental economy. There is little integrity among the factors of production, and there are structural gaps in the economy. Therefore to prevent the collapse of this economy, which is neither governmental, nor private, nor public, nor capitalist, nor socialist, nor Islamic, a resistance economy model needs to be implemented. In Iran's economy, the minister for economy and the governor of the central bank, having the financial and monetary privileges and authorities, blame other management-and-planning-organizations or other individuals involved, turning the problem into a psychological one. A Resistance economy can detect and fill such structural gaps to some extent.

Defensive economy

A third interpretation of the concept is resistance economy as an economy which emphasizes an awareness of economic threats manifesting themselves in both foreign sanctions, and in malicious actions by domestic entities. In the resistance economy discourse, although threats and sanctions have their sources in foreign countries, there are also individuals and organizations inside the country who attempt to falsely present the economic condition of the country as if it were on the brink of collapse. We must therefore maintain awareness of both the foreign threats, and the lack of legal supervision on certain domestic organs, which could lead to illegal actions in the process of setting the price of products, or to illicit activities such as producing goods using governmental reserve currency and selling them in the black market with the same price as goods that are produced using non-governmental reserve currency. It is currently not legally possible to supervise these organs.

Defensive economy seeks to maintain an awareness of economic sanctions imposed by the west (US), and also control the re-emerging domestic problems, regarding the infusion of reserve currency into the market, and the lack of clarity as to which treasury provides the infused currency.

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Model economy

Resistance economy can in fact be regarded as a type of model economy, and it is in compliance with the views of Ayatullah Khamenei. In general, model economies tend to have a generous prediction of the results they would achieve, emphasizing on goals such as:

- entrepreneurial economy
- risk taking
- innovation

Therefore now that the country is under the pressure of sanctions, a national economy must be brought to life, analogous to the first years of the revolution, during which a national defense force was brought to life with the establishment of independence, liberty, and Islamic republic, to protect the country in the eight years war; and a national economy is only possible with the collaboration of the entire nation (Musavii 2013).

Aspects of resistance economy

For six consecutive years, from 2009 to 2015, the slogan which is chosen by the supreme leader at the beginning of each year has been related to economy. In 2017 (at the time of this writing), “resistance economy, implemented in practice” was chosen as the slogan of the year. The slogan for 2013, namely “domestic production, supporting domestic work and capital”, is also related to economy. Choosing such slogans cannot be without good reason. The reason for the emphasis on economy in recent years is better understood by observing the recent “changes in the country” as well as “global changes”. The slogans chosen for these years each emphasize a different aspect of resistance economy: “innovation and growth”, “modification of consumption pattern”, “extra endeavour and extra work”, “economic Jihad”, “domestic production, supporting domestic work and capital”. The following aspects can be deduced from these slogans (secretariat of Iran’s Expediency Discernment Council, 2014):

Modification of consumption pattern

In 2010 “Modification of consumption pattern” was chosen as the year’s slogan, and considering the definition of resistance economy mentioned above, it must be considered one of the important aspects of such an economy. This can be explained by the fact that one of the most fundamental principles of economics is “the scarcity of resources”; that is, the goal of economics is to find solutions to fulfill man’s limitless wants using limited resources. An increase in consumption results in an increase in the use of limited resources, thus reducing investment in the society.

In other words, if we have a certain amount of resources, and we modify the consumption pattern of the society by preventing wastage of the resources, we can invest what we saved from the resources in other areas. Investment will thus increase, which in turn increases production. Therefore, as implied by the definition of resistance economy, modification of consumption pattern contributes to economic growth. Ayatullah Khamenei, in a speech given on the first day of 2010, explained modification of consumption pattern with the following words: “please note that conservation does not mean not consuming. It means careful, opportune consumption. It means not wasting resources and making efficient and productive of them.

It must be noted that there are two main groups of consumers in a country, the government as a major consumer, and the citizens. In the case the former, legal measures must be taken to modify its consumption patterns through compulsory orders, while in the case of the latter, such measures would not be effective and cultural measures are required.

Work as Jihad

The slogan for the years 2011 and 2012 was chosen to encourage efficient work. The slogan “extra endeavour and extra work” for 2011 and the slogan “economic Jihad” for 2012 can also be considered related to resistance economy as evident from the above-mentioned definition. Enhancing the skill and efficiency of factors of production and employing them as efficiently as possible to further the goals of the country is one of the important aspects of resistance economy. To ensure the country’s economic improvement at a higher pace, a more serious and Jihad-like determination among factors of production is required. The most important factor of production is labour force, which has a crucial role in economic

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growth. With a certain amount of resources, one can increase production by increasing the efficiency of the labour force or increasing the production capacity. For example, to increase the production capacity of a factory that runs one shift per day, one can add to the number of shifts per day, reduce the amount of time wasted, or increase efficiency. Considering the current condition of foreign pressures and sanctions, if we can promote the mentality of Jihad and devotion and thus enhance the efficiency of our labour force and increase our production capacity, the foundations for economic growth will be laid, and this is another aspect of resistance economy.

Supporting domestic products

There is a commonly stated fact in economics literature which states that imports mean employment for foreign labour force, while exports mean employment for domestic labour force. This fact, while fundamentally different from the three aspects of resistance economy previously mentioned, is also equally related to the concept. One of the differences is that this aspect of resistance economy directly impacts the growth of production, as opposed to having only an implicit or indirect effect. Another difference is that supporting domestic products (especially in cases where there is a capacity for such support), reduces dependency to foreign products. Reduction in dependency, especially to the west, which is the enforcer of economic sanctions on Iran, results in a reduction in the effects of the sanctions, which in turn contributes to economic growth.

Supporting domestic factors of production

The second part of the slogan for 2013, namely “Supporting Iranian work and capital”, means supporting domestic factors of production which include labour force, land, work, human capital, financial capital etc. Factors of production other than labour force are usually collectively regarded as capital. Hence the second part of the slogan for 2013 is in consistence with the concept of resistance economy, since growth of production requires supporting factors of production. Increased support for factors of production has two consequences: first that since these factors are directly involved in production, production increases, and secondly that support for factors of production is similar to investment, which also contributes to production growth. Therefore, support for domestic factors of production results in long term economic growth. This matter is also implied by the definition of resistance economy, since foreign economic sanctions and threats would have little impact on our support for domestic factors of production, provided that the constraints of Islamic economy are satisfied and the performance in the management section is optimal.

Properties of resistance economy

Resistance economy, with its emphasis on Jihad-like endeavour and conservation of resources, and its support for domestic products, is in reality a means to turning threats and sanctions into opportunities. In order to achieve the objectives defined for a resistance economy, foreign dependency must be decreased and domestic production and efforts for attaining self-sufficiency must be strengthened. Such policies have been developed in other countries both currently and in the past; although they may be described using different terms in different countries. Resistance economy has the following general properties:

- It is domestically active and dynamic, not a passive, closed system that awaits collapse.
- It is mostly intended for handling economic pressure, and has its differences and similarities with other economies such as aggressive, preservative, austerity, equitability, and Jihadi economies and other types of economies.
- It requires making use of all capacities of both the governmental and private sectors, serious efforts to solve problems related to the livelihood of citizens, combating financial corruption, supporting domestic products and preventing wastage of resources.
- The consumption patterns and the social, cultural and religious lifestyle of citizens must be shaped in accordance with the concept of resistance economy.
- It seeks to control consumption, reduce expenses, enhance social capital and eliminate financial corruption, and puts more emphasis on the role of the private sector.

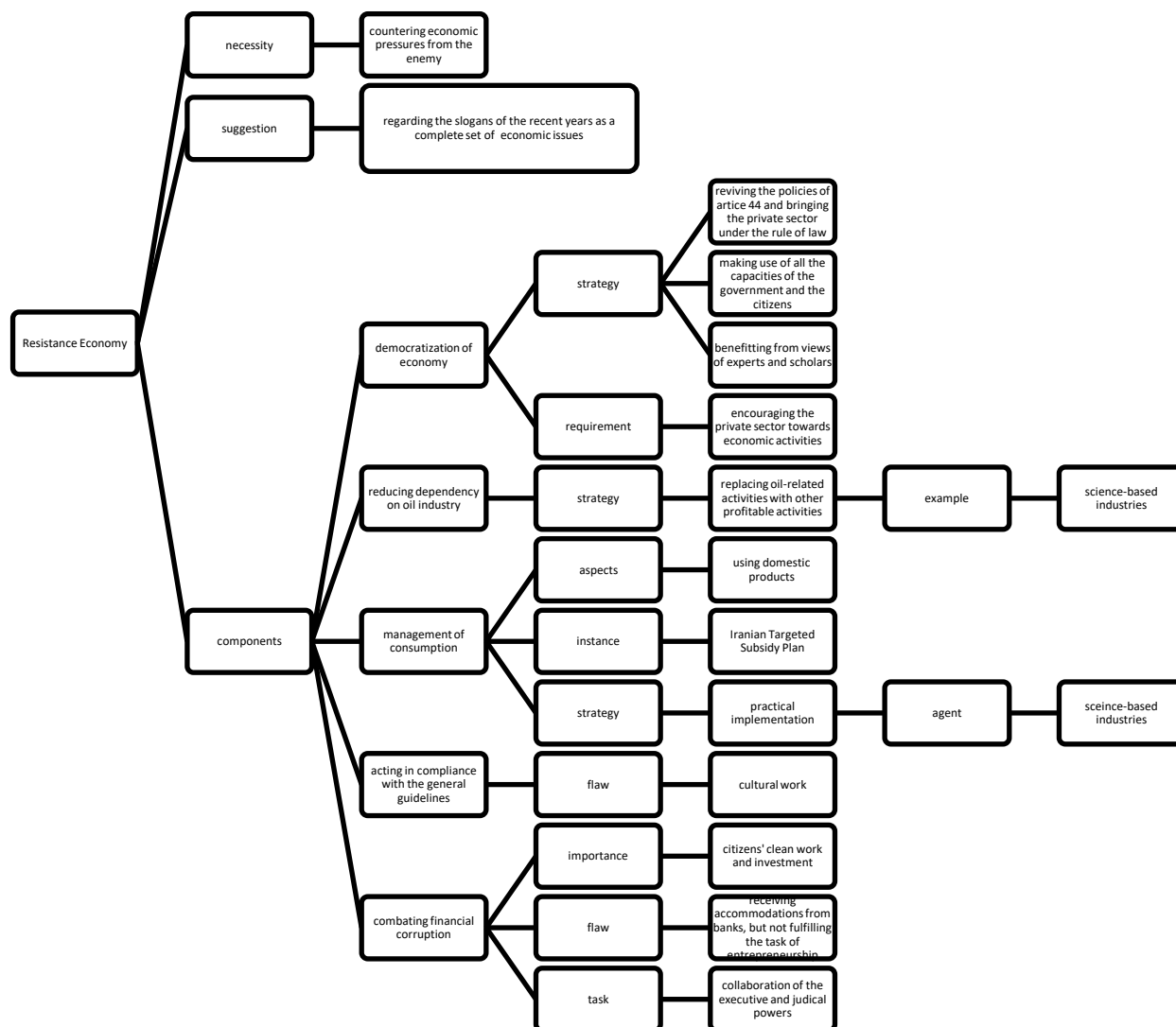


Figure 1: factors involved in achieving the elements of resistance economy and its necessity

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- It has its origins in a monotheistic world-view and pursues its material and spiritual goals and its goals concerning the livelihoods of the citizens in its own particular context different from that of socialist or capitalist economies.
- It consists of two main elements: first confronting foreign opponents and enemies (employing numerous sanctions and devices of pressure), and secondly countering the enemies inside the country, who damage the economy by promoting despair, hoarding , abuse of privileges, money laundering, contributing to poverty, and committing discrimination.
- Resistance economy is essentially a democratic project (Sheykhi 2013).

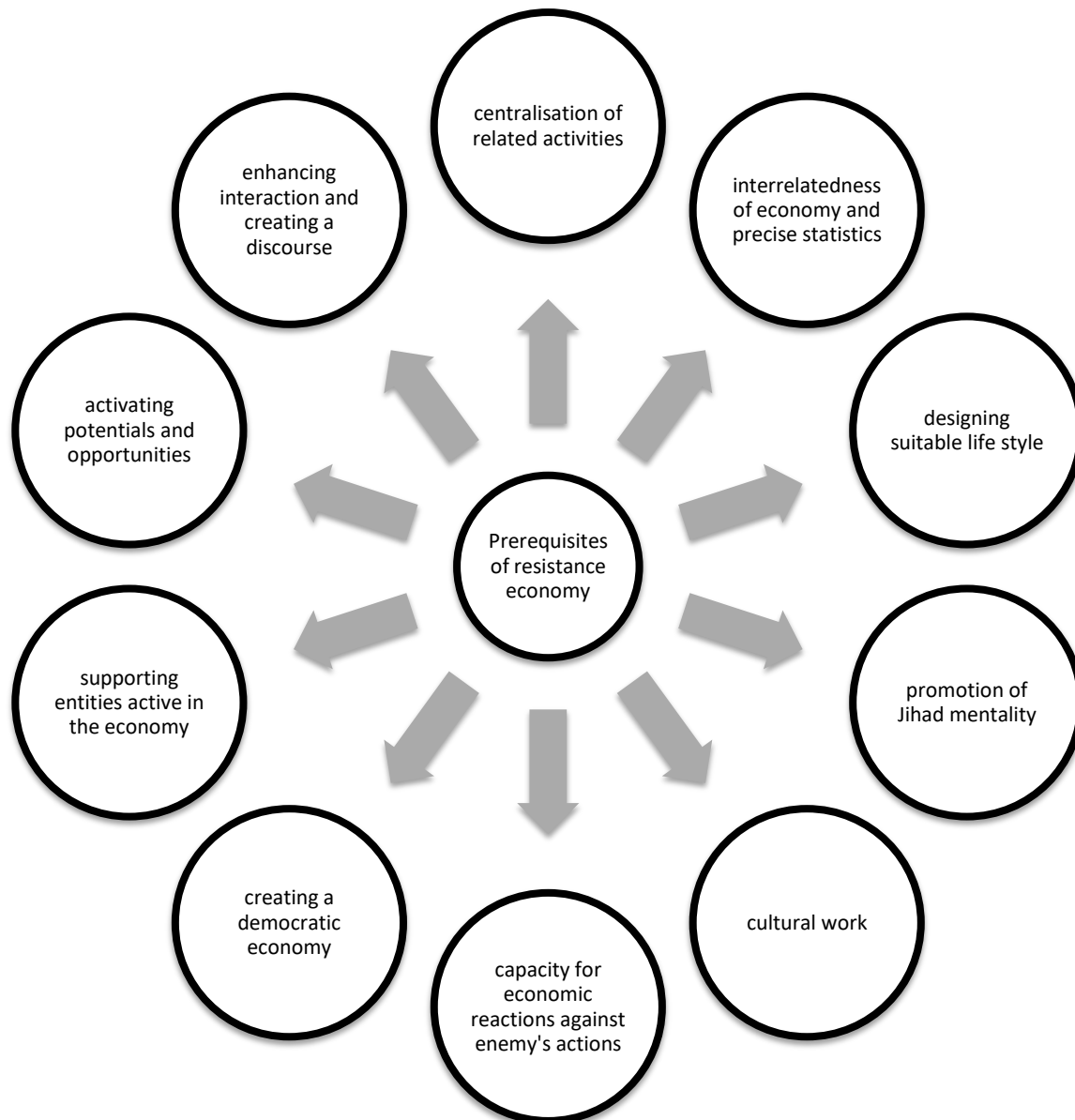


Figure 2: Prerequisites of resistance economy

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Elements of resistance economy

As a concept, resistance economy consists of certain elements, the implementation of which guaranties the fulfillment of its goal, which is countering economic threats and sanctions imposed by enemies, as well as ensuring the preservation and dynamism of the country's economy. In order to achieve these elements, one must take into consideration factors such as strategies, necessities, aspects, instances and the duties of different organs.

Prerequisites of resistance economy

In order to understand the foundations necessary accomplishing resistance economy, one must first determine the prerequisites of such an economy (Peyghaami 2013) which are as follows (Figure 2):

- A center for the activities related to resistance economy, which leads all such activities with awareness and focus.
- Designing a certain lifestyle for all citizens which is in compliance with the principles of resistance economy
- Strengthening national determination
- The capacity of the country's economic system to immediately react against possible foreign economic threats
- Substantial participation of the citizens in the implementation of resistance economy
- Attention and support of the government for active individuals and organizations in the economy
- Constant efforts by the diplomats of the country to use potential global opportunities by securing strategic agreements to serve the resistance economy
- Promotion of resistance economy as a discourse in universities, scientific institutions, and various conferences (Qiaasi, Malihi 2013)

Resistance economy in the long and short term

Resistance economy consists of measures taken by executive officers and decisions made by authorities, which include long and short term plans and actions (Figure 3).

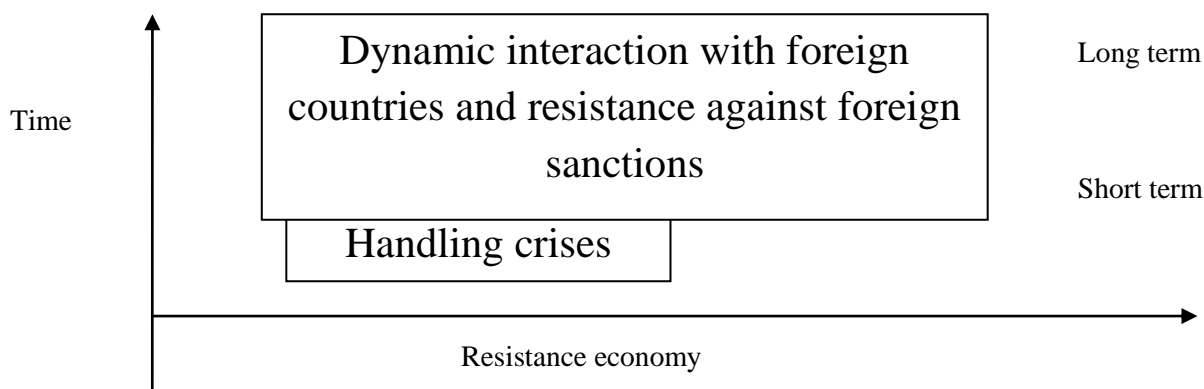


Figure 3: Resistance economy in the long and short term

Cornerstones of resistance economy

According to the views of economics experts and executive officers, the concept of resistance economy has certain foundations and cornerstones, of which 10 are mentioned in Figure 4.

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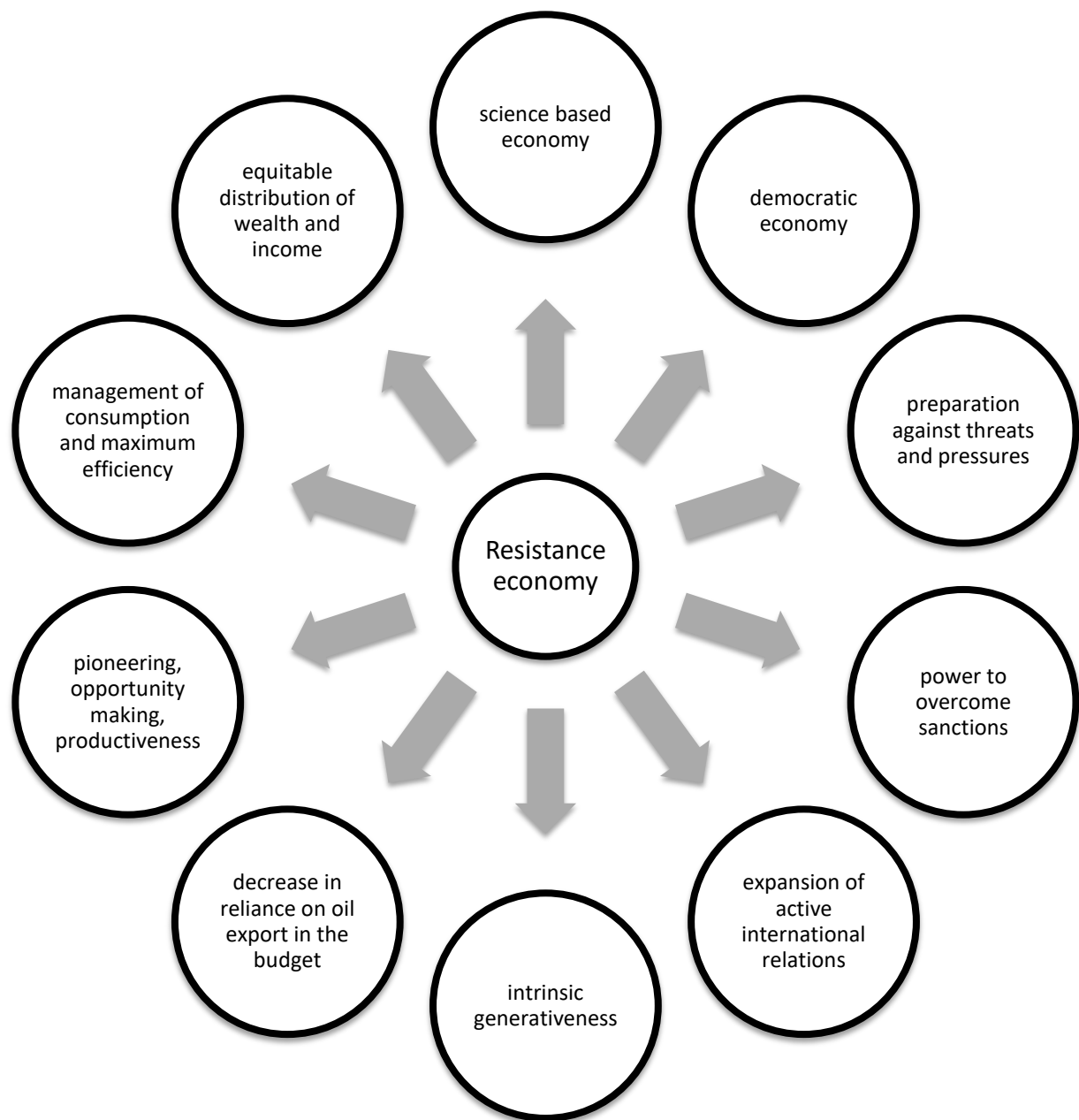


Figure 4: Foundations and cornerstones of resistance economy

Strategies for accomplishing the goals of resistance economy

The following guidelines for achieving the goals of resistance economy can be deduced from the speeches of Ayatullah Khamenei and the views of experts.

- making policies for the modification of consumption pattern
- Increasing the efficiency of production
- Decreasing the price of products

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- Superior quality and more after-sale services in comparison with foreign products, and decreasing imports.
- Supporting domestic products, especially strategic products
- Managing and controlling imports and supporting domestic products so as to minimize the country's need for reserve currency
- Conducting the current rush of market liquidity towards creating a productive economy, while eliminating mercantilist influences in the economy
- Supervising the distribution of goods, especially necessity goods, as well as employing the strategy of contractionary budgeting and, managing expenses according to their priorities
- Reducing consumerism and postponing unfinished projects of less importance
- Positive attitude towards business in general, and towards productive, innovative businesses in particular, so as to improve the atmosphere of commercial activity in the country and creating a general feeling of competition to encourage participation by the citizens and minimize exclusivity.
- Devising a system for supporting domestic producers with insurance and financial and monetary assistance, to encourage their activity in the domestic economy, while also supporting non-oil exports
- Increasing the import of “technical knowledge”, “production lines”, and “machinery”, while decreasing the import of consumables (considering the importance of the purchase of such commodities in the age of information), while simultaneously emphasizing “production of science” and production of “technical knowledge” and supporting “science-based companies”.
- Persistence in the implementation of policies related to self-sufficiency in necessity goods, or at least laying the foundations for a “mixed resistance economy”
- Regarding “threats” as “opportunities” to provide needed products.
- Reducing reliance on oil through “decreasing imports” and “increasing non-oil exports” or strategic oil-based goods such as petro chemistry products.
- Creating specific economic relations with ally countries, expanding economic relations with regional countries and blocs, and breaking down larger economic partnerships into multiple smaller partnerships
- Promoting the mentality of “economic Jihad”, “domestic production”, and “national determination”
- Preventing extravagance and wasting of goods and reserving necessity goods in extensive amounts
- Readiness for taking counter-measures against opponents in certain cases

Study results for Tehran municipality

The following table lists a set of recommendations regarding the acquiring of stable financial resources for Tehran municipality, which are in compliance with the elements of resistance economy and hence, are different from those of previous studies on the subject.

Element	Suggestions
Centralization of activities related to resistance economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing stable sources of income, ensuring the compliance of the municipality's regular plans, construction projects, cultural projects, and all of its other projects, with the elements of resistance economy - Creating a unified urban management and making a consistent system for the execution of all urban projects by different organizations, which significantly increases the chance of success of urban managers in accomplishing the resistance economy model in practice - Establishing a unified and consistent urban management, considering the particular condition of Tehran municipality (ideal urban rule) - Implementation of the elements of resistance economy in all levels of management - Improving the supervisory system in all areas, particularly

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	<p>supervising the expenses of projects and construction plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modifying the municipalities' management systems to enhance urban management
Cultural measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combating financial and administrative corruption on all levels, through creating specific and precise supervisory and rewarding systems - Internalizing professional morality among personnel using supervisory, disciplinary, and reward systems, to accomplish "extra endeavour and extra work" - Participation of citizens (urban cultural measures, expansive promotion of public knowledge of urban management and activities related to it) - Facilitating the payment of duty charges through the participation of the public in the process. - In recent years, the financial reliance of municipalities on the government has significantly decreased and most of their incomes have been acquired by selling plot ratio in the cities. Such sources of income are unstable, inconsistent, and unreliable and even the change of seasons affects their amount. In order to enhance the performance and efficiency of urban management and ensure the availability of consistent, stable sources of income, and in order to be able to provide the citizens with services of superior quality and greater quantity, urban managers must seek ways of providing their financial resources in the cities through creating Islamic-Iranian models including resistance economy, to make progress in the improvement of urban life. Obtaining consistent financial resources and stable sources of income requires a new approach to problems, which the resistance economy model provides.
Promoting entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing financial resources through foreign investment, while giving priority to efficient domestic labour force - Decreasing dependency on unstable and inconsistent financial resources while increasing reliance on stable sources of income must be regarded as one of the most important goals of municipalities, and in particular Tehran municipality. As public institutions responsible for the management of cities, municipalities need to strive to achieve this goal, so that optimal and efficient management of cities is ensured and goods and services required by the citizens are supplied to them - Collaboration with the private sector in the execution of construction and public utility plans and managing expenses and consumption
Supporting domestic work and capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employing domestic products in construction and urban infrastructure projects and giving priority to domestic labour force and emphasis on national advantages - Providing financial resources through foreign investment, while giving priority to efficient domestic labour force

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Democratic economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration with the private sector in the execution of construction and public utility plans and managing expenses and consumption Enhancing the taxing system (laying the groundwork for the smooth payment of duty, devising a reward system for regular payment of duty, and providing transparency of other payments to reassure the citizens) - Providing transparency as to the details of the calculation of duty charges, the details of duty payments, and the details of the municipality's income and expenses (provided to the public) - Leniency towards citizens (demanding payments from citizen based on their income; vertical and horizontal equitability) - Decentralization of projects (assignment of tasks to extra-organizational sources and dividing labour to facilitate work and reduce bureaucratic complications) - Flexibility in responding to legal requests from citizens regarding benefits such as partial payment of duty, legal respite, etc. - Facilitating the payment of duty charges through the participation of the citizens in the process.
Optimal management of available financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing the percentage of tax on added value relative to the aggregate amount of taxes particularly in Tehran - Making optimal use of estates and land, and managing estates which have no known owners - Effective, timely, and flexible reconsideration in the calculation of duty charges and modifying the system of incomes - Modifying the budgeting system and upgrading it to operational budgeting - Comprehensiveness of duty payments and participation of the government in funding part of the costs of establishments such as ministries, embassies, etc. in Tehran, which serve national and international functions - Managing expenses (reasonable conservation in resources, reduction and/or elimination of unnecessary expenses) - Management of consumption (modification of consumption patterns) - Timely and unconditional financial aids by the government to the entities in charge of implementing projects with national and/or international aspects, with consideration of the expenses and the financial performance of such entities. - Modification of the income payment system by creating a data-base and a synchronized calendar for real estates.

CONCLUSION

One of the challenges faced by municipalities, especially Tehran municipality, is acquisition of stable sources of income and providing sufficient financial resources, which are used to accomplish their goals, perform their duties, and meet their emerging demands. How can we obtain sources of income that are

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based upon the principles of economics, do not cause inflation, result in economic dynamism, and do not contradict equitability (Eqbaalpur, Nasiri 2010).

Up to this point, investigations of the matter have indicated that in Iran research and inquiry in the field of economics are very limited and do not follow a long-term program. Hence there is desperate need for general directions and guidelines to show the path for future research in the field of urban economics. Moreover, the majority of studies related to urban economics, have set their focus on stable sources of income for municipalities and economic evaluation of projects. Perhaps one of the causes of this reluctance towards urban economy in Iran lies in the lack of a unified, consistent urban management and the lack of centralization in related activities.

In order to achieve the goal of this study, which is the acquisition of stable and legally valid sources of income, I decided to bring under scrutiny the issue of acquisition of stable financial resources for Tehran municipality, as an issue constantly faced by the organ. With an approach which has its focus on domestic capacities and problems, and employing the most advanced scientific methods for tackling economic problems of cities, this study will hopefully contribute in calling attention to urban economics by focusing on domestic potentials and problems and employing the most advanced scientific methods for tackling economic problems of cities and improving the welfare of citizens.

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