

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The literature review shows that measures of decentralization adopted by previous studies capture different dimensions of decentralization. Most previous studies have focused on a single dimension of decentralization. Each group of measures reflects a particular dimension of decentralization: economic, political, or administrative. The existence of one dimension does not necessarily mean the establishment of all dimensions of decentralization. For example, high proportions of grants provided by the State to local governments imply a low level of fiscal decentralization as a result of the reliance of local units on State funding. However, these grants do not indicate that localities are not autonomous in decision-making for using these grants. Conditions accompanying State grants are major determinants to whether the extent of local autonomy over decision-making is reduced under grant conditions. In addition, adopted measures deal with local governments as aggregated units. These measures are appropriate to indicate degrees of decentralization at the state or national level, but do not show the variation of these degrees across local units within a country or a state. Therefore, for purposes of policy analyses and development planning, other measures of decentralization are needed to capture all dimensions of decentralization and demonstrate the variation of their levels among local governments.

This research proposes local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning as a concept capturing all the dimensions of governmental decentralization. Decentralization involves the dispersion of power (Sherwood, 1969), which implies the autonomy of local units to manage, control, and generate resources, and build capacity to make planning decisions independently without any intervention from upper level governmental agencies. The research develops a set of empirical measures of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning in Florida, the United States of America (USA). The planning system of the State of Florida represents an approach in which devolution is adopted as a form of decentralization. In this system of governance, local planning agencies have persuasive and/or utilitarian power to manage growth. Levels of decentralization of decision-making for comprehensive planning have fluctuated in Florida since the adoption of its growth management program in the 1970s. The experience of Florida shows that growth management programs influence the magnitude of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning and could produce various levels of decentralization in states adopting devolution as a form of governance.

### **3.1 Research Goals and Questions**

This research aims to: 1) develop a set of empirical measures of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning, that captures all the dimensions of decentralization, 2) investigate the extent of local planning agency power over decision-making in Florida with the adoption of the growth management program,

and 3) show the variation of levels of power across Florida's municipalities. The major questions of the research are: how to measure local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning? and to what extent do proposed measures of local agency power succeed in reflecting governmental decentralization at the local level? These questions are addressed in the context of the growth management program of Florida.

### **3.2 The Unit of Analysis and Research Methods**

Florida is selected as the focus for this research to investigate the extent of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning. The unit of analysis is a governmental planning agency in municipalities of Florida with 10,000 inhabitants or more, which represents about 38% of municipalities of Florida. A local planning agency, as defined in section 163.3174 of the Florida Statutes, "may be a local planning commission, the planning department of the local government, or other instrumentality."

A Delphi study was conducted to operationalize local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning (see Chapter Four). Then, the proposed set of measures of power was examined empirically through investigating the extent of local agency power over decision-making in Florida, as demonstrated by Chapter Five. Because of time and resources limitations, planning agencies at the state and regional levels were not included in the survey. Municipal planning agencies were surveyed to investigate the extent of their power over decision-making for comprehensive planning. To ensure the validity of the survey, the questionnaire was designed to reflect facts related to planning practices not a respondent's personal opinion. In addition, respondents

to the survey questionnaire were asked to report how many years of experience in planning they have to ensure their competence to participate in the survey. The findings using the proposed measures were then compared to findings using measures of decentralization adopted by previous studies to demonstrate its ability to capture the various dimensions of decentralization (see Chapter Six). Figure 3.1 summarizes research procedures and their major goals.

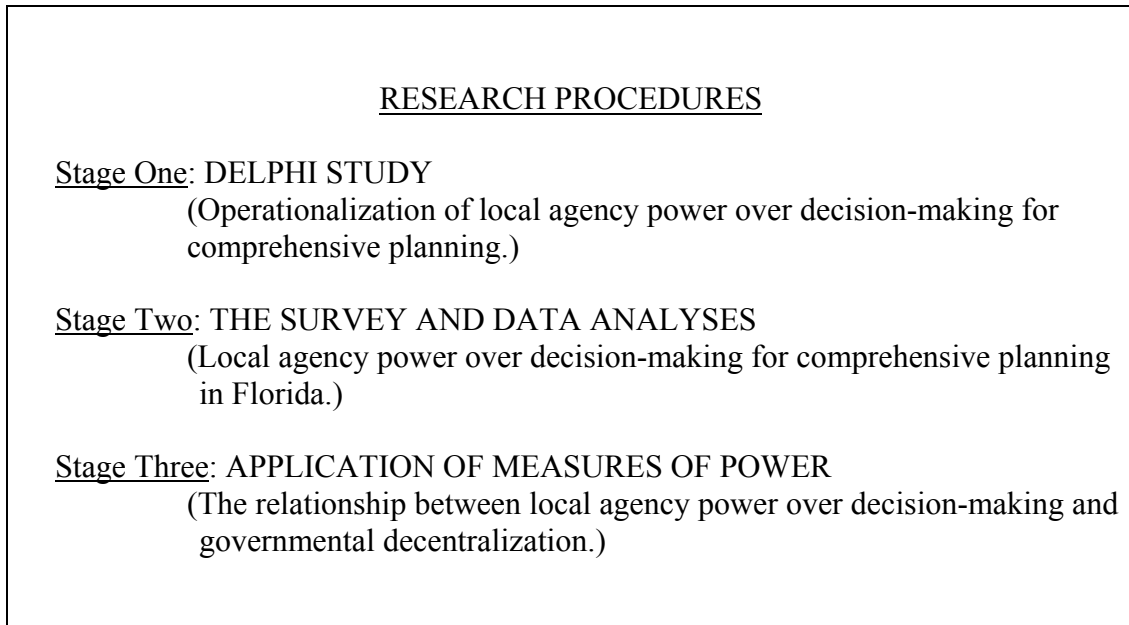


Figure (3.1) Research Procedures.

### **3.3 The Delphi Study**

#### **Measures of Local Agency Power over Decision-Making for**

#### **Comprehensive Planning**

A Delphi study was conducted to answer a principal question: what are measures of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning? The Delphi technique was originally developed as a tool for forecasting and problem solving of complex topics at the Rand Corporation by Helmer and Dalkey (Ley and Anderson, 1975, Riggs, 1983, Benarie, 1988, Woudenberg, 1991, and Miller, 1993). It is a qualitative methodology seeking to produce a consensus of a group of experts on an issue of concern (McClave and Benson, 1988, Waissbluth and DeGortari, 1990, Cho et. al, 1991, and Miller, 1993) through a survey consisting of a series of rounds (Cicarelli, 1984, and Fontana and Frey, 1994). The goal of these rounds is to reach consensus among participants concerning a certain issue (Sackman, 1975) by aggregating judgments of people knowledgeable about ill-defined topics (Delbecq et. al, 1975, and RuBino, 2000). Experts respond to a series of questionnaires and are given feedback for responses to each round questionnaire (Cicarelli, 1984).

The Delphi methodology has been applied in many fields such as public administration, economics, business, resource and environmental management, education, health care, energy policy, and urban and regional analysis (Miller, 1993). The wide application of the Delphi technique is due to its advantages as an inexpensive research methodology that involves experts without bringing them together (Masser and Foley, 1987). The combination of expert judgments contributes to the reliability and

validity of findings of Delphi studies (Bardecki, 1984, and Parente et.al., 1984). In addition, the anonymity of participants allows them to interact, rethink, and compare their thoughts in a “non-threatening forum” and without being influenced by each other’s opinion (Miller, 1993). However, this anonymity may exclude group interaction processes, which may reduce the accuracy of group judgments (Woudenberg, 1991). The application of the Delphi methodology varies from one research project to another (Riggs, 1983) according to its purposes and field of study. A typical Delphi survey has three major components: creating a panel of anonymous experts on an issue of concern, conducting a series of rounds by using questionnaires to get expert opinions, and sharing respondent feedback with all participants (Bardecki, 1984, and Masser and Foley, 1987).

This Delphi Study operationalizes local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning. The unit of analysis of the study is a governmental agency responsible for comprehensive planning within municipalities of Florida. To address the study question, a Delphi survey consisting of three rounds was conducted and content analysis methodology was used to analyze responses to the questionnaire of each round. Content analysis is an effective methodology to analyze contents of communication or documents and make inferences objectively and systematically through identifying categories within a text (Krippendorff, 1980 and Babbie, 1998).

Local power over decision-making was conceptualized before starting the Delphi survey. Then, a procedure consisting of three stages was followed: 1) selecting survey participants who are knowledgeable about planning practices and growth management in Florida, 2) designing and analyzing survey rounds and questionnaires until reaching a consensus about measures of local agency power over decision-making, and 3) validating

findings of the Delphi survey through interviewing experts in planning practices in Florida. Procedures of the Delphi study are explained as follows:

### **3.3.1 Selecting Participants in the Delphi Survey**

The goal of the Delphi survey is to operationalize empirical measures of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning in Florida. Participants in the Delphi survey are professional planners having a high degree of expertise and knowledge about growth management and planning practices in Florida. They were selected based on suggestions of four experts<sup>17</sup> in growth management in Florida. Experts provide lists including names, affiliations, and e-mail addresses of professional planners working in municipal, county, regional, and state planning agencies. Based on these lists, electronic mails were sent to invite professional planners to participate in the Delphi survey. Invitation e-mails include purposes and goals of the research, and schedule of survey rounds. Twenty-eight planners agreed to participate in the Delphi survey, but sixteen of them participated in survey rounds.

Scholars suggested different numbers of participants in a Delphi study. De Leo (1995) emphasized that the number of participants should be less than fifty, while; Miller (1993) refers to the economies of scale in large groups of Delphi surveys. He assumed that beyond the first thirty responses, additional responses do not generate much new information. In this research, it was not possible to involve large number of participants in the Delphi survey because of time constraints and conflicting schedules of professional

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<sup>17</sup> Experts are Bob Cambric, Growth Management Administrator, Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Tallahassee, and Chairperson, Capital Area, Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association (FAPA); Lincoln Walther, AICP, Continental Shelf Association Inc., Jupiter, and Vice President, FAPA Section Affairs; Richard RuBino, Professor Emeritues, Florida State University; and Wayne Daltry, Executive Director, Southwest Florida Planning Council, North Fort Myers.

planners. Therefore, sixteen participants who are knowledgeable about Florida's planning system and were interested in the research were determined to be a sufficient number of participants in the Delphi survey to operationalize local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning. Contributors to the Delphi survey include four participants from municipal planning agencies, two from county planning agencies, three from Regional Planning Councils (RPCs), and three participants from state agencies, and four from the private sector. Participants in the Delphi survey were the same at all rounds. (See Appendix A: Contributors to the Delphi Survey.)

While conducting the Delphi survey, none of the participants knew who else was involved in the survey. This information was withheld in order to guarantee anonymity of participants. However, permission is given by participants to list their names and affiliations in the dissertation as contributors to the Delphi survey.

### **3.3.2 Designing and Analyzing Survey Rounds**

A series of questionnaire rounds are used to obtain iterative responses to certain issues in a typical Delphi study (Masser and Foley, 1987). Woudenberg (1991) suggests two to ten as an appropriate number of rounds. Accuracy is expected to increase over rounds, because of the repetition of judgment and group pressures for conformity. This Delphi survey consists of three rounds. In average, each round took three weeks to be completed. A questionnaire was designed for each round based on responses to the previous one. The content analysis methodology is adopted to analyze responses to questionnaires to "minimize redundancy" (Rubin et. al., 1998, 6). Survey questions are classified under four categories representing major dimensions of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning. These categories are: 1) the legal

authority of a local planning agency to make planning decisions, 2) the relative autonomy of the agency over planning decision-making, 3) the control of the agency over local planning actions, and 4) the capacity of the agency to make planning decisions. The category agency capacity was divided into four sub-categories: technical, fiscal, institutional, and enforcement. The Delphi survey was conducted via electronic mail and follow-up e-mails were used to encourage prompt responses to the questionnaires. Using the e-mail provides a free and fast means of communication. Rounds of the Delphi survey are explained as follows:

- Round One

This round was intended as brainstorming to produce a list of empirical measures of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning in Florida. Open-ended questions were used in this round. Participants were asked to: 1) review provided concepts of major dimensions of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning, and 2) identify measures for determining the degree of each dimension at the municipal level in Florida.

- Round Two

The purpose of this round was to allow participants to review and comment on measures of dimensions of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning, which were proposed by participants in Round One. Closed questions were used in this round to investigate participant comments expressing agreement, disagreement, or clarification concerning proposed measures of power dimensions. The specific nature of closed questions stimulated participant reactions. Frequencies were obtained to measure the degree of consensus reached among participants regarding proposed measures of

local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning in Florida.

- Round Three

This round of the Delphi survey aims to: 1) inform participants of the findings of the analysis of responses to the questionnaire of Round Two and 2) request their final affirmation/comments on measures receiving no consensus in Round Two. The questionnaire of Round Three was prepared based on the findings of content analyses of responses to the questionnaire of Round Two. Closed questions were used and frequencies were obtained to indicate consensus reached among participants regarding measures of dimensions of municipal planning agency power over decision-making.

Over survey rounds, consensus was reached regarding most proposed measures of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning in Florida. Based on the findings of the analyses of responses to the Delphi rounds, a list of measures of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning was prepared (see Chapter Four). Then, proposed measures were validated through interviewing three experts in planning practices in Florida.

### **3.3.3 Validating Findings of the Delphi Survey**

To validate the findings of the Delphi survey, three scholars/professionals<sup>18</sup> with high expertise in planning practices within Florida were interviewed. They were asked to suggest empirical measures for each major dimension of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning. Power dimensions include: 1) the legal authority of a local planning agency to make planning decisions, 2) the relative autonomy

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<sup>18</sup> Interviewees are Sam Casella, FAICP, President, Paul DiGuseppe, Senior Planner, Tallahassee/ Leon County Department of Planning, and Harrison T. Higgins, AICP, Planner-in-Residence, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Florida State University.

of the agency over planning decision-making, 3) the control of the agency over local planning actions, and 4) the capacity of the agency to make planning decisions. Agency capacity has four sub-dimensions: technical, fiscal, institutional, and enforcement. Examples of proposed measures by respondents to the Delphi survey were presented to interviewees if it was needed to clarify questions.

Information gathered from the interviewees regarding measures of local agency power over decision-making was classified. Then, measures suggested by the interviewees and participants in the Delphi survey were compared. A final list of measures of major dimensions of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning in Florida was prepared based on the findings of the Delphi survey and suggestions of the interviewees. The final list of proposed measures was used to design a survey questionnaire examining these measures empirically and investigating the extent of municipal agency power over decision-making in Florida. (See Chapter Four).

### **3.4 Survey and Data Analyses**

#### **Local Agency Power over Decision-Making for Comprehensive Planning across Municipalities of Florida**

This section explains the survey procedures used in the second stage of the research. The major purposes of conducting the survey are to: 1) examine empirically measures of local agency power over decision-making proposed by the Delphi Study and 2) investigate the extent of this power in Florida. The survey was conducted by mail and

a self-administered questionnaire was prepared based on measures proposed by the Delphi study. Procedures to conduct the survey include selecting survey cases, designing the survey questionnaire, and analyzing data collected.

### **3.4.1 Selecting Survey Cases**

The unit of analysis of the research is a governmental planning agency within municipalities of Florida. The survey questionnaire was mailed to 142 municipal planning agencies, which were selected through the following process:

First: Planning departments are more likely to be established in communities with more than 25,000 people, as stated by Hollander and others (1987). The analysis shows that approximately 76 out of the 402 municipalities in Florida have 25,000 or more people, which does not provide a sufficient number of cases to run statistical analyses. Therefore, the research adopts 10,000 as a population threshold to survey municipal planning agencies. Planning departments within 147 municipalities having 10,000 or more people are included in a preliminary survey list.

Second: From the list of 147 municipalities, five municipalities are dropped. These municipalities are Lakeland, Orlando, Palm Beach Gardens, Sunrise, and Jacksonville. The first four municipalities are excluded from the survey, because their planning directors/staff participated in the Delphi survey, which may bias survey findings in case of their participation. In addition, Jacksonville is excluded from the survey, because it represents a special case. Jacksonville has a consolidated government with Duval County.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, it is not possible to separate agencies of the city of Jacksonville from those of the county to measure municipal planning agency power over decision-

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<sup>19</sup> Consolidation is to combine the city and county governments.

making for comprehensive planning. In addition, the large population size of Jacksonville (735,617 inhabitants) in comparison to other municipalities makes it an outlier. For example, Miami, the second largest city in Florida, has 362,470 inhabitants, which is less than half of the population of Jacksonville. Consequently, 142 planning agencies within municipalities were surveyed to investigate local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning in Florida.

Municipalities surveyed are distributed among the 11 regional planning councils (RPCs) making-up the State of Florida. However, 34 out of the 67 counties of Florida do not have representative municipalities in the survey, because they include small communities, i.e., less than 10,000 inhabitants. That does not bias the findings of the research since the survey focuses on municipalities with 10,000 populations or more and all RPCs have representatives in the survey. In addition, it is decided to survey all the 142 municipalities in order to have sufficient cases to run statistical analyses (see Appendix (C): Municipalities Participated in the Survey).

### **3.4.2. Designing Survey Questionnaires**

The survey questionnaire was prepared based on measures of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning in Florida, which are proposed by the Delphi study. It includes questions to investigate the extent of each major dimension of local power over decision-making. These dimensions are agency legal authority, relative autonomy, control over local planning actions, and capacity to make planning decisions. Closed questions with multiple choices are used to facilitate response analyses. In addition, open-ended questions are adopted for questions expected to receive comprehensive and broad responses. Questions are designed to be simple and clear to

avoid any misunderstanding. A statement of the research purposes and goals is enclosed with the questionnaire and a cover letter accompanying it to demonstrate the significance and scope of the study.

The preliminary questionnaire was pre-tested by asking seven planners/ staff to comment on and/or respond to its questions (see Appendix (F): the Survey Pre-Test Questionnaire). Participants in the questionnaire pre-test provided useful comments improving the clarity of the questionnaire. Based on pre-test findings, the questionnaire was revised. The final questionnaire was mailed to directors of planning agencies within municipalities of Florida to investigate the extent of agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning (see Appendix (G): the Survey Questionnaire). A cover letter outlining the purpose, scope, and significance of the research to Florida's planning practices was enclosed with the questionnaire (see Appendix (E) the Informed Consent Letter). This letter stimulated planning director interests in the study and contributed to prompt responses to the survey questionnaire. Before starting the survey, an approval letter was obtained from the Human Subjects Committee regarding the contents of the questionnaire (see Appendix (D): Human Subjects Committee Approval Letter). Follow-ups of the survey questionnaire were conducted by mail.

### **3.4.3 Analyzing Data Collected**

This research develops and tests empirical measures of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning. The measures deal with municipalities as disaggregated units, which permits the comparison of the extent of local power across Florida's municipalities. Therefore, the major objectives of analyzing data collected by surveying municipal planning agencies in Florida are to: 1) construct indices

summarizing major dimensions of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning and 2) examine the extent of this power across Florida's municipalities. Measures proposed by the Delphi study for each dimension of power were analyzed. Power dimensions include agency legal authority, relative autonomy, control over local actions, and capacity to make decisions for comprehensive planning. The analyses compare two groups of municipal planning agencies, which are:

Group (A): includes 71 planning agencies in municipalities having population from 10,000 to less than 25,000.

Group (B): refers to 71 Planning agencies within municipalities with 25,000 or more inhabitants.

The purpose of analyzing these groups of municipalities is to investigate whether planning agencies within small and large municipalities have different levels of local power over decision-making for comprehensive planning. Indices summarizing major dimensions of power are constructed based on variables varying across Florida's municipalities. Frequencies were obtained for measures of each dimension of power proposed by the Delphi study. Measures having no variation across planning agencies are excluded from the indices. One of two methods was followed to construct an index summarizing a dimension of power.

- Method One: Indices Including Variables Measuring a Same Dimension.

Items measuring the same dimension are expected to be statistically associated (Babbie, 1998). Bivariate associations were examined for variables varying across municipalities of Florida and expected to reflect the same dimension of power. Indices were constructed based on the findings of the statistical analysis. A variable was dropped from an index if:

1) its association with other variables was not statistically significant at .05 alpha levels, 2) it was very strongly associated with another variable (association is more than .85), and/ or 3) it had a high rate of missing values. Types of statistical analyses are adopted based on variable types of measurement, as shown by table (3.1).

Table (3.1) Types of Statistical Analyses

Variable Types of Measurement	Types of Statistical Analysis*
Nominal & Nominal	Chi <sup>2</sup>
Nominal & Ordinal	Gamma
Ordinal & Ordinal	Gamma
Scale & Scale	Pearson Correlation
Nominal & Scale	Mean & ANOVA
Ordinal & Scale	Mean & ANOVA

\* Agresti, Alan and Barbara Finlay, 1997. Statistical Methods for the Social Science, New Jersey, Prentice Hall.

Findings of the analyses provide statistical evidence that variables reflect the same dimension of power over decision-making. This method was used to construct indices summarizing technical, fiscal, institutional, and enforcement capacity (see Chapter Five).

- Method Two: Indices Including Variables Measuring Different Sub-Dimensions of a Major Dimension.

Some of the major dimensions of power have various sub-dimensions. Since variables measure different sub-dimensions, they are not expected to be statistically associated.

Therefore, theoretical evidence from previous research is the main determinant of which variables should be included in an index to capture its multiple sub-dimensions. Table (3.2) demonstrates indices constructed based on theoretical evidence provided by previous studies.

Table (3.2) Indices Constructed based on Theoretical Evidence

Major Dimensions of Power	Sub-Dimensions Captured by an Index
Agency Relative Autonomy	Lack of state intervention in local affairs Lack of intervention by regional and/or county planning agencies.
Control over Local Actions	Lack of control by the governing body. Absence of control by the planning board Agency control of local planning processes
Overall Capacity	Technical, Fiscal, Institutional, and Enforcement Capacity
Agency Power	Autonomy, Authority, Control, and Overall Capacity

Variables measure different sub-dimensions are dropped from an index if they 1) have high rates of missing values and/ or 2) do not vary across planning agencies within Florida’s municipalities. Indices were recoded to reflect three levels of each major dimension of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning in Florida. Levels of an index are low, moderate, and high. These levels are determined based on the formula shown in figure (3.2).

The previous procedures were followed to construct indices measuring: agency legal authorities, relative autonomy, control over local planning actions, and capacity to make planning decisions. Then, an overall index of local agency power over decision-

making for comprehensive planning was constructed based on the four indices.

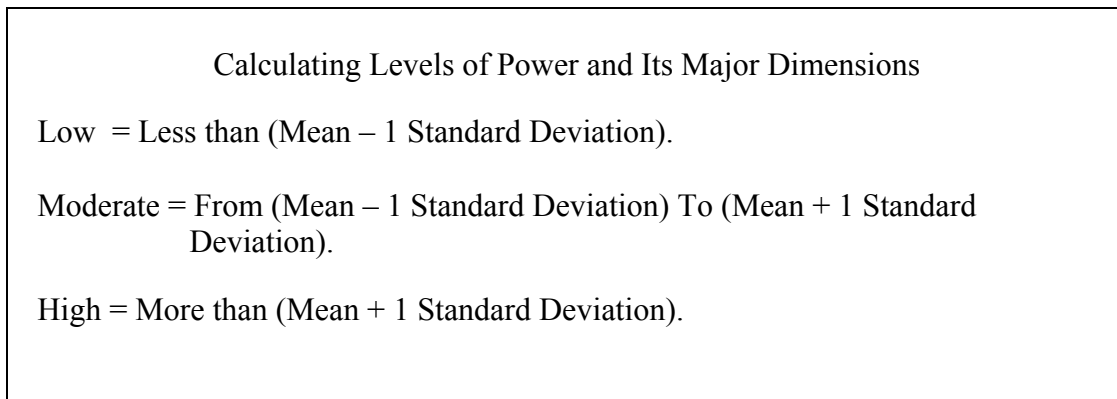


Figure (3.2) Calculating Levels of Power and Its Major Dimensions

Regression analysis was used to analyze the structure of the overall power index by using Beta Weight to investigate how much each dimension of power contributes to the overall power index. The proposed power index summarizes the extent of agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning across municipalities of Florida in the context of the adopted growth management program (see Chapter Five).

### **3.5 Application of Measures of Power:**

#### **Associations between Local Power and Decentralization**

By following the previous research stages, the proposed measures of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning were developed and tested empirically in Florida. Findings using these measures were then contrasted with findings using these decentralization indicators adopted by previous studies. These included local reliance on state funds (Stonecash 1985), state involvement in local affairs (Stonecash

1981), and distribution of public employment (Stephens 1979 and Kim 1989). (See figure 3.3). These indicators were selected because they: 1) are adopted by previous research, 2) can be used in analyzing municipalities as disaggregated units, 3) reflect different dimensions of decentralization, and 4) data reflecting their measures is available.<sup>20</sup>

SELECTED DECENTRALIZATION INDICATORS AND MEASURES	
INDICATOR: Local Reliance on State Funds (Stonecash 1985).	MEASURE: Proportion of local general revenues provided by the state government
INDICATOR: State Involvement in Local Affairs (Stonecash 1981).	MEASURE: Proportion of the state budget transferred to local governments.
INDICATOR: Public Employment (Stephens 1979 and Kim 1989).	MEASURE: Proportion of local public employment in total government employees.

Figure (3.3) Indicators and Measures Selected to Examine the Applicability of the Measures of Power as Indicators of Decentralization.

Selected indicators, shown in figure (3.3) reflect two different dimensions of decentralization: fiscal and administrative. Like other measures proposed by previous studies, selected measures were used to analyze decentralization from above. They deal with local governments as aggregated units. In this study, they are used at the municipal level to allow them to be compared to the proposed empirical measures of local power over decision-making in Florida. They were then converted to decentralization levels based on a formula similar to that adopted to estimate power levels, which is:

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<sup>20</sup> Data analyzed is related to local public employment (1990), local general revenues provided by the State and the state budget transferred to local governments (1998).

*Low Decentralization = Less than (Mean – 1 Standard Deviation).*

*Moderate Decentralization = From (Mean – 1 Standard Deviation) to  
(Mean + 1 Standard Deviation)*

*High Decentralization = More than (Mean + 1 Standard Deviation).*

Pearson Correlations were used to investigate how measures of decentralization adopted by previous studies are related to each other in the case of Florida. Levels of power measures were then correlated with decentralization indicators adopted by previous studies. The above analysis illustrates the extent to which levels of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning are associated with levels of decentralization as measured in previous studies.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This study develops and tests a set of empirical measures of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning. This chapter explains the research methodology to 1) propose empirical measures of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning, 2) investigate the extent of this power in Florida, and 3) demonstrate the association between these measures and ones used previously in studies of governmental decentralization. The unit of analysis of the research is a governmental planning agency within municipalities of Florida with 10,000 populations or more. The research consists of three stages: 1) a Delphi study proposing a set of empirical measures of local agency power over decision-making for comprehensive planning, 2) a survey examining the proposed set of measures empirically and

investigating the variation of agency power over decision-making across municipalities of Florida, and 3) a comparative analysis to provide evidence of the applicability of the proposed set of empirical measures of power as an indicator of decentralization. The following chapters present findings of each stage of the analyses and demonstrate the contribution of the research to the fields of international development planning and growth management. The proposed set of measures of power represents a tool to analyze local power over decision-making, which reflects the various dimensions of governmental decentralization.