Study about Distribution of Seats of Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis) in Iran

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

An election is a formal decision-making process by which a population chooses an individual to hold elected status. Elections have been the usual mechanism by which modern representative democracy has operated since the 17th century. Elections may fill offices in the legislature, sometimes in the executive and judiciary, and for regional and local governments. This process is also used in many other private and business organizations, from clubs to voluntary associations and corporations. The universal use of elections as a tool for selecting representatives in modern democracies is in contrast with the practice in the democratic archetype, ancient Athens. The elections were considered as an oligarchic institution and most of the political offices were filled using sortation, also known as allotment by which officeholders were chosen by lot. In many countries, with weak rule of law, the most common reason why elections do not meet international standards of being "free and fair" is interference from the incumbent government.

In democratic systems, the citizens can influence the governmental decisions, legislations, their own destiny, and the actions performed in their community by selected institutions. This can be done through direct and indirect methods such as election, electoral process, and decision-making. Legislative assembly is one of the basic institutes to reach these goals that are established in almost all countries. The representatives are elected by the people to advance the goals of their community by attending legislation. The main task of this institute that its representatives specified by direct vote of the citizens is to approve fair social, political, economic, and cultural legislation in the state.

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Election, electoral process, decision making and decision reasoning by selected institution are the principles of development and evolution. In countries with diverse religious, ethnics, and linguistics, like Iran, electoral process should gain a high interest. In Iran, Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis) is known as symbol of presence of all trends and sites. Therefore, this research is going to answer to these questions: 1- Is there equal opportunities to succeed the seats of Majlis for all people according to population distribution and the extent of their territories? 2- If not, what are the main causes?

Methodology
This study has been conducted based on descriptive – analytic method and in order to achieve the research objectives. It has used different methods of library, attributive and ArcGIS 9.2 and Excel software with emphasis on 2006 census data and statistics of Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis) of Iran. To answer the research questions, we have used qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis, individually or in combination. In order to analyze the seats distribution of Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis) of Iran at the provincial level, we have used the factors of population, the number of constituencies, the number of representative, extent, the representative to population ratio, the extent of territory to representative ratio, and the average distance (Statistics of the ninth parliament elections in 2011 have been reviewed). In order to illustrate the clear gap between provinces and how close or far away from the desired position they are, the constituencies are categorized in the five spectra as very good, good, average, poor and very poor access to seats of assembly according to its population and extent.

Results and discussion
The results of this research show that seats distribution of Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis) in Iran doesn't have a balanced distribution. Thus, some provinces have more representatives than others. The results show that the justice has not been met between the provinces. Semnan province has 147,435 people, Sistan and Baluchestan province 300,717 people, Tehran province has 318,085 people, Alborz province 763,125 people have representatives in Majlis of Iran and other provinces have a distance from law. This problem has a negative impact on the Integration and national Solidarity of Iran in long term. The main causes of inequality in access to the seats of Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis) in Iran, are: Pattern of government of Iran; administrative divisions; Political consideration in the number of representatives for each province; Lack of scientific processes to determine the election area and the number of representatives; Human and natural cohesion or disconnection and its impact on the delimitation of electoral area; amount of proximity and active connection with capital and center of country and located on active transport links; Lack of awareness of citizens, especially the citizens of more deprived area from the number of representatives in the assembly than other provinces and its average level in the national level; the lack of clear rules and criteria about the election and the number of representatives.

Conclusion
The results show that the citizens who vote to the assembly of representatives have not had equal access to seats of assembly and values of votes were different among provinces in this election. Therefore, there is a representative in the assembly for every 147435, 300717, 318085, 763125 people in the provinces of Semnan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Tehran, and Alborz, respectively. The other provinces have also a low to high distance to the optimal rate. The distributions of seats of Majlis do not follow any order or pattern; so that the value of each vote for the Semnan province is twice of Sistan and Baluchistan province and fivefold of Alborz

province. Actually, the results indicate that there is no equal opportunity in access to the seats of Majlis according to the extent and distribution of population and there is a high distinction among provinces. Values of votes were different among provinces and finally we have recognized that the agent of administrative divisions is the most important and intensive factor in the biased distribution of the seats of Majlis.