

Investigating the Factors Affecting the Women's Political Participation (aged 20-40 years) in 2015 (Case Study: City of Sanandaj)

**Seyed Voria Shaikhzakariaee^{* 1}
Omid Mohammadi²**

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Abstract

The subject matter of this paper is an investigation of factors affecting the women's presence in politics (aged 20-40 years) in 2015 (Case study: City of Sanandaj). Political participation is regarded as one of the major development indices. If the political development is considered as meaning "expansion of participation and competition of social groups in the political life", one of its prerequisites will be undoubtedly political participation. The significance of the women's presence in political arena for reaching an all-out development is emphasized by policy makers. It is for this reason that examining factors that could be effective on the women's political participation looks necessary so that level and degree of political participation of the women can be promoted and developmental goals can be obtained. The sample size of this research involving age group (20-40 years) consists of 377 people in the city of Sanandaj. The methodology is survey based and tools for gathering data is a questionnaire and via SPSS software. Findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between political trust, political awareness, families' inclination, voluntary organizations and political participation.

Keywords: Political participation, Political trust, Political awareness, Voluntary organizations.

1. *Department of Political Science, Payam Noor University, Tehran, Iran, Voria2010@yahoo.com (Corresponding author)

2. Department of social sciences, Allameh Tabatabaei University, Tehran, Iran

1. Introduction

Discussion of the women in Iran is generated by critical political-social and cultural eras, era which disrupt generations' organic links. In recent decades, in Iran, the women have exposed themselves independently. Widespread changes in various political, social and cultural levels have linked modern generations to a different world; a dynamic link which has challenged lifestyle and previous values. Evolution of values followed by understanding the women is one of the most significant dimensions of gender proportionality in Iran and one of the most important issues in cultural policy making processes. Improvement of situation in any society is linked with improvement of various groups' situation and structural improvement in which people are located. Improved situation of the women and the society as a consequence, beside structural factors will help their participation, particularly their decision making from the lowest ranking to the highest ranks. Expansion and development in any society involve a series of basics, criteria and factors and in this regard, peoples' active presence in various scenes of the society and so to speak their political and social participation are considered major and vital factors of the political development. In the current society, peoples' presence in all scenes and their participation in political and structural dimensions as a major factor in development and progress is focused attention and participation of all groups in the society, including men and the women people, particularly political and social participation of the women must be examined fully so that fundamental grounds for active participation of half of the society in various cases is provided. The current paper is an investigation of the role of factors affecting the women's political presence (aged 20-40 years) in 2015 (Case study, City of Sanandaj).

2. Statement of the Problem

The issue of participation and the way it is accomplished, though originates from late history of nations and various facets of economic, social, cultural and political issues of our country is based on people's' participation during history, this notion is now assuming a doubled importance and has been discussed as one of the historic necessities in various arena by numerous scholars and practitioners in different economic, social, political and cultural arenas. If the political development is considered as meaning "expansion of participation and competition of social groups in the political life", one of its prerequisites will be undoubtedly political participation (Bashirye, 2004, p. 46), meaning that political development will once be accomplished when one seeks to attract popular participation as main constituents of the social and

political life. Participation is meant as people's direct involvement in decision making through formal mechanisms; participation also means gradual interaction of citizens who have up to now distanced from decision making (Panahi, 2004, p. 86). Participation means voluntary activities through which a society participates in the affairs of a neighborhood, city or village and directly or indirectly contributes to forming its own social life (Mohamadi, 2005, p. 103). Steven and Shatzu refer to participation as direct engagement of people. Milbrath and Guel state that political participation means the activity of liberal citizens whose aim is supporting or influencing politics and government (Lipst and Dues, 2005, p. 114). In fact, thinking of political participation is meant as engagement of masses within political activities and determination of their own destiny and it is only through this channel that grounds for stability and sustainability of the political system will be accomplished. Political participation can be find meaning in two masses (e.g. participation in elections, membership in parties, assemblies, and social experiences), and elite levels (presence in the parliament, board of government, and possessing higher positions) (Lahsae zade, and Yousef, 2010, p. 160); however, in any case, it has also been raised among various groups of society, including men and women. Efforts for increasing the females' participation and reducing obstacles to participation in cultural and social arenas will form a system of empowerment of the women. Unfortunately, the issue of politics of the females' people has been lately dealt with in Iran and in case of attention to this category, it has been raised in a general form of social politics and this issue has caused the property and usefulness of the women to be neglected. Meantime, a general definition of the females' needs such as participation, healthy, welfare and sources has been offered, such that the females have also been considered as passive and reactive generation that cannot choose and make decisions. On this basis, Iran, in terms of the females' participation is not in a favorable situation. It is for this reason that examining factors that could be effective on the Females' political participation looks necessary so that level and degree of political participation of the females can be promoted and attain developmental goals. What was said indicated that in case the females of the society enjoy social self-awareness, understanding of the roles and responsibilities, and other conditions being necessary as well as by adopting the political sociability process of the females, training of necessary awareness and social and political basics to them, attention to their personality strengthening their general identity and increasing their interest in the society and sociability and creating necessary facilities an conditions, one can expect that the level of the females' social and political participation will rise. The current paper is an investigation of the role of factors

affecting the females' political presence (aged 20-40 years) in the year 1394 (Case study: City of Sanandaj).

3. Research Objectives

The goals sought in this paper are:

- Examining the impacts of the individual's political awareness on the level of political participation
- Examining the impacts of the individual's presence in NGOs on the level of political participation
- Examining the impacts of families' inclination of the individual on political participation level
- Examining the impacts of individual's political trust on political participation
- Examining the impacts of the individual's marriage status, age, and education on the degree of political participation
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4. Literature Review

- Vosughi and Yusefi (2005) have addressed factors affecting social participation of the rural females and its impacts on development process and concluded that the average participation by the females was at a low rate and only 40% of the respondents had a high rate of participation. According to data of this research, there is a significant relationship between the females' social participation and variables of the females' attitudes towards selves (internal factors), (age and education (contextual factors).

- In a research with the heading of Obstacles to political participation of the females in Iran, Mohamadi (2003) has referred to existing gaps in the Iranian society, including gender gap and raised it as a kind of cognitive gap and maintains that based on this gap: firstly, in a traditional society where the females are obedient to their own husbands and have no political roles, this gap is not active; secondly, in the modern society expanded social developments result in activation of this gap against the request for the right of vote and representation in parliamentary centers and such cases like this and thirdly, in societies in transition, this gap is half active; meaning often based on presence and efforts of other gaps, like active political faction orientation, this gap will accumulate and stop working at times.

- Researches by Lilly and Mc Clark (2001) illustrate that having an active family and active friends in political affairs result in increasing the likelihood of peoples' participation. He concludes that since discussing with friends who are

interested in politics or address political activities could help personal learning with regard to political affairs, social interaction will subject people to information and help them to learn the languages of political functions and participation in political activities and that this will boost their political participation.

- Kettler and Brkowitz' researches (2009) show that participation in non-political voluntary associations has a major role in this regard. Verb a et al. have pointed out that participation in non-political voluntary associations will facilitate political participation in three ways. Firstly, participation in non-political voluntary associations will provide opportunities for people in order to expand organizational skills as well as political discussions. Secondly, participation in such associations will expose people to political messages and political discussions that would lead to political participation. Therefore, the role played by such non-political voluntary associations aims to reveal political messages and attract them within political activities.

5. Research Theoretical Framework

Englehart has explained participation with three factors of promotion of education level and political information, changing norms prevailing on participation and changing in value priorities which has less emphasis on natural instant needs and emphasize more on expression of views. Variables of formal education, socioeconomic situation, level of skills and information, communications skills, professional experiences, organizational networks reducing gender differences in social and political duties have all affected political participation (Englehart, 1996: 378). Martin Lipst maintains that have higher middle class along with economic growth is more democratic than other countries. In this regard, he refers to the characteristics of the middle class as positive components for the democratic expansion. Lipst and Roberts Dues, while analyzing political behavior and popular participation lay emphasis on factors and variables for whom, they are effective in political participation, however, intensity and pattern of this influence have not been stable. The most important of these factors are: religious beliefs, gender, age, race, peoples being rural or urban, social class and regional links. Olsen argues the rational personal benefits will coerce the person to measure participation costs in the group or collective practice agents benefit of the member of the group and mentions that the benefits and privileges which yield from the practice of the group are not necessarily accessible by the group. Also, whether people will address such social and political issues so purposefully is a matter of discussions. Participation could also meet some

other needs, where in this regard, mental needs are clearer, including people who look at political participation from the angle of learning values, attitudes, and behaviors. Hess and Tourney argue that necessary mental inclinations and preparations are stabilized in people, for political learning at the age of 12-13. They have offered four models for political sociability: accumulation model, assimilation model, role transfer, and growth-cognitive model. These four models indicate processes which affect the acquisition of political knowledge and civil attitude in family, environment and school conditions (Khalili, 2007, p. 79). Almond states that essentially, political sociability process determines stability of political culture and societal structure in the passage of time. For Almond, political sociability will never end and persist throughout the individual's life. Milbrath and Guel, while explaining political participation name seven major factors which are: motive (political motive), social situation, personal characteristics, political environment, skills, sources and commitment. They argue that the more man is exposed to political motifs, the more he will participate in politics and the more his belonging to the organization will be. However, political participation differs based on individual's personal features. More sociable, dominant and extrovert personalities will be highly likely to be active from a political point of view (Rosh, 1996:138). For Huntington, political and social participation is a function of the socioeconomic participation. Huntington argues that the individual's education level and organizational channel, i.e. membership of the person in all groups and social institutions like grade unions and groups advocating participation in political activities will provide democratic participation at a local level and societal participation. For Hurst, voluntary associations could create necessary opportunities for social participation and participation at the social level. They are necessary for the survival of their own public area and in terms of services being offered, they can provide welfare programs which are sensitive to the needs of local people. Policy makers and academics contribute to this insight. Voluntary institutes have this potential to be the major constituents via providing public welfare and basic needs of democratic governance. In fact, if the government is truly regarded a part of the problem, thus, the Hurst's recommendation must be supported due to the fact that its major goal is to reduce level and range of affairs under state management. Power to make decisions should be acquired through the process of ceding duties, power and budgeting from the state to a network of voluntary associations.

6. Research Model

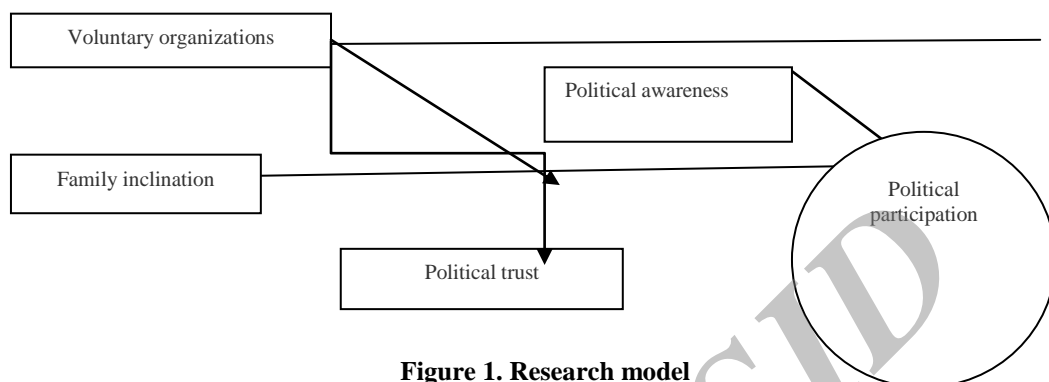


Figure 1. Research model

7. Research Hypotheses

- It seems there is a relationship between individual's political awareness and political participation
- It seems there is a relationship between individual's presence in NGOs and political participation
- It seems there is a relationship between individual's family inclination to political participation and political participation
- It seems there is a relationship between individual's political trust and political participation
- It seems there is a relationship between marriage status, age and education of the individual and political participation.

8. Methodology

This research is a survey based form which is one of the most common methods of quantitative researches and in terms of applied nature and time, this research is cross-sectional. The statistical population of this research consists of all people aged 20-40 residing in the city of Sanandaj and hence for sampling, multi stage cluster method was applied. The sample volume in this research was estimated by using the Cochran formula and then number of 377 people was obtained. Data was analyzed through SPSS software.

9. Research Instrument

In this research, a researcher made questionnaire was used for gathering the data. The process of designing the questionnaire was this: first by using previous researches

experiences, independent and dependent variables were indexed and the researcher made questionnaire was designed. Items for the measurement of the main variables of the research were designed and scored based on the Likert scale. After finishing this stage, the said items were presented to professors and experts so that their views are considered for modification and correction of items and hence, the reliability of the questionnaire was established. Therefore, the questionnaire was distributed among 30 people of the statistical population and were completed so that reliability level measurement of then questionnaire was made possible.

9.1. Questionnaire's Reliability

To establish reliability, Cronbach's alpha was used, where the analysis results indicated that some items had better be eliminated or replaced. Then, the corrected questionnaire was completed by another 30 people and this time, data suggested an accept able accuracy of the questionnaire in measuring the research variables.

Table 1. Analysis results of items with the Cronbach's alpha

Variable	Coefficient
Political participation	.825
Political trust	.710
Political family	.730
Political awareness	.912
NGOs	.780

10. Findings

10.1. Descriptive Findings

Distribution of statistical sample indicates that 73.4% of the people under study (282 people) are single, around 25.5% (98) people married, 1.0% without spouse or divorced (4 people). Average, mean and age profile of the respondents were 28.6, 28 and 3 respectively; i.e. respondents were 28.6 years in average; half of them were higher and half of them were less than 28 years and the highest number of people were placed in the 30 year age group. Additionally, the minimum age of respondents was 20 while the maximum rate was 30 years; respondents' education include .3% (1 people), were illiterate, .8% (8 people) holding junior high school degrees, 31.5% (148) holding high school students, 8.6% (33 people), diploma, 9.6% (37 people) were associates' degrees, 29.9% (115 people) were B.As., 8.1% (31 people) were M.As., 1.8% (7 people) were doctorate and 1.0% (4 people) had ministerial education. Job of respondents under study consisted of 38.8% (149 people), housekeeping, 29.2% (112 people), students, 19.0% (73 people) state jobs, 13.0% (50 people) were free jobs.

10.2. Analytical Findings

Testing research hypotheses was conducted by using statistical method off correlation coefficient and comparing averages. Table number 2 suggests Pearson correlation coefficient between independent variables and political participation.

Table 2. Pearson correlation coefficient between independent variables and political participation

Correlation	Correlation coefficient	Significance
Political awareness	0.000	0.603
Presence in political scenes	0.000	0.632
Family's inclination	0.000	0.377
Political trust	0.001	0.431

Given the table, the number of samples entered in the analysis was 377 people; given the results obtained from the correlation matrix table, significance level was 0.001 and is less than 0.05 ($0.001 < 0.05$), thus the H_0 stating non-existence of relation is rejected and H_1 hypothesis is affirmed stat in significance. One can state with 95% confidence and error level of less than 0.05 that there is a relationship between political trust, family inclination, political awareness, presence in scenes and political participation.

Table 3. Results of test of average difference of political participation in terms of job, education and age of the sample people (n=377)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Average	F value	Sig.
Job	Housekeeping	149	34.16	24.367	0.000
	Free jobs	50	35.40		
	Students	112	35.56		
	State jobs	73	45.33		
Education	Associate's	37	16.3475	12.779	0.000
	Doctorate	7	18.4000		
	Diploma	33	28.7561		
	B.A.	115	29.1333		
	Illiterate	1	31.7500		
	M.A.	31	32.5000		
	Junior high school	8	32.5047		
	High school	148	34.2759		
Age	Ministerial	4	37.6000	420.529	0.000
	20-24	93	15.9231		
	25-29	125	20.645		
	30-34	93	24.8571		
	35-40	73	45.3960		

Given the comparison of averages in Table 3, housekeeping (34.16) had the least political participation and stat job (45.83) had the highest political participation. Respondents whose education level was associate's (16.3475) had the least political participation and those having ministerial degrees (37.6000) contributed most to political participation, Age group 20-24 (15.9231) had the lowest rate of participation in political affairs while age group of 35-40 (45.3960) contributed most to political participation.

Table 4. Results relating to regression impacts coefficients

Model	Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	Statistic	Sig. level	Inflation factor
	Non-standardized coefficients	Standard error	Standardized coefficients			
Political trust	1.226	0.055	.832	22.485	.000	8.7
Political awareness	0.087	0.075	0.025	1.162	.000	2.9
Family's inclination	.408	0.062	.169	6.545	.000	4.2
Voluntary organizations	.653	.128	.158	5.086	.000	6.1

In the current paper, step by step multivariate regression statistics were used. In this method, various variables were entered into the regression equation in terms of significance they have in explaining the dependent variable. The highest effects in then dependent variable (political participation) relate to the variable political trust with the Beta coefficient of .832, i.e. Beta coefficient indicates that change of standard deviation in the political trust will result in change of standard deviation for as much as .832 in then dependent variable (political participation). Variables political awareness, family's inclination, and voluntary organizations after political trust did have the highest impacts on political participation.

11. Conclusion

Political participation means engagement of masses within political activities and determination of their own destiny and it is only through this channel that grounds for stability and sustainability of the political system will be accomplished. Results indicate that there is a significant relationship between females' political participation and variables of political awareness (0/603), presence in voluntary organizations (0/632), the inclination by the individual's family to participate (0/377) and political trust (0/461). In the current paper, step by step multivariate regression statistics

suggested that variables of political trust, political awareness, family inclination and presence in voluntary institutions did have the highest effects in political participation.

12. Research recommendations

- Given the effective role of NGOs in strengthening the female's political participation, it is recommended that the said organizations, via purposeful organization and arrangement of offering the license for the establishment of non-state institutions to take step in the direction of participation of the females and via monitoring over the execution of these institutions' plans, to pave the way for coercing the active citizens.

- Given the role of political skills and awareness in expanding political participation, the relevant organizations like Standardization Organization or Standard women Association can, via establishing political studies centers promote the ever increasing presence of the interested people in political activities and raise their skills.

- In order to increase the female's political trust, some relation must be crested between tradition and modernity and new sources have to be replaced for the sources already lost

- Given the role of the family in political activities and the impacts of this factor in creating participation morale in political activities, it is necessary to hold family education classes in various organizations. Role of the family in social education has to be focused attention.

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