

Youth Electoral Participation and the Role of Feeling of Social Justice on it in Mazandaran

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Abstract

Electoral participation is one of the important pillars of any country's development. Therefore, the study was conducted with the aim of the effect of social justice on electoral participation. For this purpose, Inglehart and Milbrath theories were used as a theoretical framework. The research method was survey and data were collected using a questionnaire. The statistical population included young people aged 15 to 40 in the cities of Mazandaran province. Multi-stage cluster sampling method and sample size based on Cochran's formula is 384 people. The measuring instrument has formal validity and the Cronbach's alpha value of the independent variable is 0.82 and the dependent variable is 0.77, indicating that the correlation and internal alignment between the items related to the variables is appropriate and acceptable. The results show that the average turnout is above average, equal to 2.34. There is a positive and direct relationship between social justice and the level of electoral participation with a correlation of 0.522. Electoral participation will increase if social justice is increased. We can also see a positive relationship between the components of social justice and electoral participation. Among the dimensions of social justice, the dimension of distributive justice has the highest correlation with electoral participation. Regression analysis shows that 27.4% of changes in political participation depend on social justice. In order to increase electoral participation in society, more attention should be paid to social justice and raising its indicators and components, especially distributive justice.

Keywords: Electoral participation, Social justice, Distributive justice, Procedural justice, Interactive justice, Youth.

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1. Introduction

The subject of this article is a sociological explanation of electoral participation based on social justice. Lack of research on the relationship between literacy and electoral behavior in the country is a necessity and importance of this research. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the study of electoral behavior is a relatively new field of research. Electoral participation refers to the free and voluntary action of citizens in electing rulers on Election Day, which in turn influences political processes. Some believe that people's electoral participation may be positivist or critical. These two types of readings of electoral participation can be based on two types of epistemological approaches, including non-critical rationality and critical rationality (Saei, 2009, p. 3). Political participation is the voluntary activity of members of society in electing leaders and participating directly and indirectly in public policy (Musafa, 1996, p. 84).

Electoral participation as one of the important types of political participation, it has a special place in the topics of political sociology in general and sociology of elections in particular. Analysis of electoral behavior is one of the special tasks of electoral sociology that researchers have been able to provide various models in the analysis of electoral behavior by studying various elections. Every year, we see various and numerous elections in different parts of the world, but in comparison with the phenomenon of revolution, which rarely occurs, it has major theoretical weaknesses and macro studies (Heiderabadi and Salehabadi, 2014, p. 82). Social and political justice is one of the central issues in the participation of individuals in the micro and macro policies of any society. According to political philosophers, the two main factors involved in the judgments of individuals in society against political justice are distributive and procedural justice. These two main approaches to social justice have always played an important role in various forms in the decisions of individuals in society about the usefulness or otherwise of government policies in order to attract people's participation to accompany and cooperate in the implementation of programs (Orizi Samani and Golparvar, 2005).

The most capable place for the realization of justice as the highest ideal of man on earth is politics and the political system. The importance of this issue is to the extent that the realization of justice in various dimensions is possible in the shadow of justice policy and by its rulers (Jamshidi, 2013, p. 131). The feeling of justice is one of the main indicators of social welfare in today's world. The sense of justice is considered in the form of welfare from two dimensions. From one angle, it is divided into individual, social and political form (performance of officials and organizations) and from the other dimension, it is divided into distributive and procedural justice. (HazarJaribi, 2011, p. 41). Current approaches to distributive social justice (need for equality, fairness, individual economist) have been studied in many societies by researchers in the fields of sociology and psychology. Social justice can turn into serious political and social problems. Therefore, due to the lack of equal distribution of facilities and services among the youth of Mazandaran province, the tendency to participate in elections may decrease and be considered as a social issue. Among the youth of Mazandaran, according to studies, the level of participation is low. It remains to be seen why electoral and political participation is low among young people and what is the role of social justice and its dimensions on electoral participation?

2. Theoretical Literature

Scientists have used various patterns to explain selective behavior. Researchers have categorized these patterns in a variety of ways. The architect presents theories in four approaches: in the social approach, theories of resources (base model, resources and volunteerism) and modernization, in the economic approach, public choice, representation and institution, in the political approach, mobilization model and in the cultural approach, the theory of culture. Are political (Salehabadi, 2017, p. 306). Thinkers have used various models to explain selective behavior. Classification of these patterns has been done by researchers in various ways. Rabiee has categorized the approaches and theories related to participation and voting into five groups; which are: 1). Instrumental motivation theory; 2). Theory of individual and social situations; 3). Ideal or traditional approach; 4).

Sociological approach, and 5). Psycho-political approach (Rabiee, 2001, pp. 59-35).

According to political philosophers, the two main factors involved in the judgments of individuals in society against political justice are distributive and procedural justice. These two main approaches to social justice have always played an important role in various forms in the decisions of individuals in society about the usefulness or not of government policies in order to attract people's participation to accompany and cooperate in the implementation of programs. Current approaches to distributive social justice have been studied in many societies by researchers in the fields of sociology and psychology. In relation to social justice, it can become a serious political and social problem. According to thinkers such as Coleman (1990), the main elements in political justice are equality of elements and tools of political development, which have three basic components of national citizenship, totalitarian legal order and norms of success. These components generally manifest themselves in one of the four components (political equality), distributive, and opportunity, legal and participatory equality.

There are different interpretations of social justice. Some see social justice as equality. This type of perception has become more common in modern times. According to this view, all human beings are equal and have no criteria for superiority over each other. Others see social justice as fairness, impartiality, and equal opportunity. This type of conception was proposed in the twentieth century and theorized by John Rawls. John Rawls calls for fundamental freedoms and equal opportunities for all. The social inequalities that are observed must be arranged in such a way that they benefit the most the least. There are various theories in this regard. Sociological theories, theories of social psychology and theories of composition and the theory of rational action pay attention to electoral behavior (Ghazian, 2001, pp. 32-50).

Political and electoral participation expresses how citizens with different participatory attitudes take advantage of the opportunities provided by the political system and social institutions. Citizens with good information (political awareness, sense of effectiveness, civic commitment) are more likely to participate in politics; but the most basic psychological orientation is

related to one's political interest. In comparative research, interest in politics is seen as having a positive relationship with political participation - the foundation on which other political attitudes are based. These attitudes include political effectiveness and political trust. The special emphasis of political culture theory on the attitudes, motivations and mental orientations of citizens towards political activity, links it to micro-analyses of psychological and social psychological theories about electoral participation (Memar, 2012, pp. 114-115). According to Huntington, the most important factor in political development is political participation. Political participation is a function of the process of economic and social development and the decisions of the ruling elites and their policies; In other words, the elites facilitate and encourage the participation of sections of society in politics in order to strengthen their power, strengthen national independence, social reforms and reduce socio-economic inequalities, and so on. According to Huntington, organizational channels, i.e. individual membership in groups in social organizations, increase the likelihood of participation in social and political activities (Smith, 1979, pp. 20-60). In analyzing the actions of individuals, George Herbert Mead places special emphasis on his own concept and perception of facts. Find. These ideas are formed through interaction with others and are a variable and dynamic thing, so that it can be interpreted according to each situation (Abdollahi, 1999, p. 24). Almond and Verba used the theory of political socialization to examine political participation in five countries: Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States, Mexico, and Germany. "The argument of Almond and Verba is ultimately that the stronger the above-mentioned three socializing institutions have established a model of participation, and the more participation one has within these three socializing institutions, the more political participation there will be in later life. The view of political culture will be closer to participatory culture" (Erfani, 2004, p. 76).

Very little research has been done on the relationship between the feeling of social justice and the level of electoral and political participation in Iran. Zia and Al Ghafoor (2019), Shafi'i and Maddloo (2019), Ahmadlou (2019), ZayerKaaba and others (2017), Taleban and Mir Hosseini (2016),

HakimiHeidranlu (2016), Mohammadifar and others (2015, Ibrahim Poor et al. (2015), Heiderabadi and Salehabadi (2014), Saeedifar (2011), Memar (2009),Kirbis(2013),Albansi et al. (2012), Flavin and Kane (2012), Gerber and Rogers (2009) They have examined social justice or electoral participation. Salehabadi (2020) showed that there is a fundamental difference between electoral participation and political participation and contrary to the theory of modernization; there is no linear relationship between literacy (education) and electoral participation (not political participation). With the increase of education up to the diploma level, electoral participation increases and with the increase of university education, the rate of electoral participation decreases. At the theoretical level, too, political culture explains the impact of literacy and education on electoral participation. Yousefi (2002) studied the reflection on the concept of political legitimacy, examining the model of the theory of legitimacy. In the analysis of political legitimacy, the effect of two categories of factors (characteristics of the political system and characteristics of citizenship) on political legitimacy has been emphasized. Citizenship characteristics include the variables of "political trust, political participation, sense of political justice and value bias" and characteristics of the political system include "accountability, performance, procedural fairness and distributive fairness of the political system".

Arizi Samani and Golparvar (2005) conducted a study entitled the relationship between social justice approaches and the components of political equality. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between economic individualism and opportunity equality and participation in political justice. There was also a negative relationship between fairness in social justice and equality of opportunity and participation. There was a significant positive relationship between equality in social justice and distributive equality, legal equality and participatory equality, respectively. There was a significant negative and positive relationship between the need for social justice and distributive equality and participatory equality and between the need for social justice and legal equality. Conventional correlations also showed that the four approaches of social justice through

general social justice are able to predict the degree of equality of political justice.

3. Research hypothesis

There is a significant relationship between the feeling of social justice and its dimensions and the level of electoral participation of Mazandaran youth. This means that the higher the level of social justice, the higher the level of electoral participation.

4. Research Method

The research method is survey and the data collection tool is a questionnaire. The statistical population of this study includes all young people aged 15 to 40 living in the cities of Mazandaran province. According to the 2016 census, their number is equal to 1897238 people. 384 people were selected as the sample size. After determining the statistical sample, multi-stage cluster sampling method was used to select the sample from the statistical population. SPSS software was used for data analysis method and Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis were used for the relationship between social justice and electoral participation. The measuring instrument has formal validity and the Cronbach's alpha value of the independent variable is 0.82 and the dependent variable is 0.77, indicating that the correlation and internal alignment between the items related to the variables is appropriate and acceptable.

4. Definition of concepts

Social justice: Social justice is the existence of equal social opportunities to acquire education and skills and access to financial and physical capital. In fact, social justice is focused on procedural and distributive or executive policies that ultimately lead society to a kind of balance between classes with and deprived of natural gifts (Bagheri, 2005, p. 46). Three dimensions of procedural justice, interactive justice and distributive justice were used to measure the sense of justice.

Electoral participation: Electoral participation means any kind of voluntary political activity in relation to achieving, electing and being elected to political positions in society, influencing the formation and public programs and institutions and political system of society (Panahi, 2007, p. 88). Lester Milbrath also sees electoral participation as a set of activities and actions of citizens to influence government and support the political system. In this definition, the scope of action of the people in the matter of political participation includes: exerting pressure, competition and influence on the one hand and support on the other hand (Vosoughi, 2004, p: 110). Therefore, the definition used in the present study is in the framework of the definition of Millbrath and Panahi. Electoral participation; Any voluntary action taken by members of society in order to support and influence the political system within a specified and determined framework, which is done formally and planned by the official organizations and institutions of the country.

5. Research Findings

The findings showed that about 13.8% consider the turnout to be very high. About 20.3% consider it as high, about 28.7% as moderate, about 21.6% as low and about 15.6% as very low. The average electoral turnout is high and the average of 5 is 2.34. The level of social justice was evaluated in three dimensions of distributive justice, procedural justice and interactive justice. About 22.9% consider the level of distributive justice to be very low. About 19% consider it as low, about 23.8% as moderate, about 25.7% as high and about 8.6% as distributive justice.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to the level of social justice and electoral participation

| Degree | distributive justice | Procedural justice | Interactive justice | Social justice | Electoral participation |
|-----------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Very low | 22.9 | 8.6 | 19 | 18.1 | 15.6 |
| low | 19 | 19 | 22.9 | 23.8 | 21.6 |
| Average | 23.8 | 22.9 | 22.9 | 22.9 | 28.7 |
| High | 25.7 | 28.6 | 21.9 | 18.1 | 20.3 |
| Very High | 8.6 | 21 | 13.3 | 17.1 | 13.8 |
| sum | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

About 8.6% consider the level of procedural justice to be very low. About 19% consider it low, about 22.9% moderate, about 28.6% high, and about 21% consider the amount of procedural justice to be very high. About 19% consider interactive justice to be very low. About 22.9% consider it as low, about 22.9% as moderate, about 21.9% as high and about 13.3% as interactive justice as very high.

Finally, the independent variable of social justice was measured using twenty-one items. In total, about 18.1% consider the level of social justice to be very low. About 23.8% consider it as low, about 22.9% as moderate, about 18.1% as high and about 17.1% as very high. It can be said that the level of social justice among the subjects is moderate to low.

The result of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test can be seen in the table below. In Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the significance level for the variables of electoral participation and social justice was more than 0.05. Therefore, their normality is confirmed in terms of this test. Therefore, parametric tests such as regression and Pearson correlation coefficient can be used to test the hypotheses.

Table 2: Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K.S) test of variables

| Statistical variables and indicators | Electoral participation | Social justice |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Statistics value | 0.949 | 1.124 |
| Significance level | 0.324 | 0.091 |

Considering the normality and level of measurement of social justice and electoral participation variables, Pearson correlation coefficient was used. There is a positive and direct relationship between social justice and electoral participation. Electoral participation will increase if social justice is increased. Electoral participation will decrease if social justice is decreased. This positive correlation is significant with a probability of more than 99%. Pearson correlation coefficient between social justice and youth participation is equal to 0.522 and its level of significance is zero.

Table 3: Pearson correlation coefficient between social justice and youth electoral participation

| Variables | Pearson correlation coefficient | Significance level |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| social justice and electoral participation | 0.522 | 0.000 |

Pearson correlation coefficient was used according to the level of measurement of the variables of procedural justice and the rate of electoral participation, which was small, as well as the normality of the variables. The correlation coefficient between the level of procedural justice and the level of electoral participation is equal to 0.472 and its level of significance is zero. Due to the fact that the level of significance in the correlation coefficient is less than 5%, so there is a positive and significant relationship between the two variables of procedural justice and electoral participation. The higher the level of procedural justice, the electoral participation is high, and conversely, the lower the level of procedural justice, the lower the level of electoral participation among them. There is a positive and direct relationship between the level of electoral participation and other dimensions of social justice and their level of correlation is relatively moderate.

Table 4: Pearson correlation coefficient between the dimensions of social justice and youth electoral participation

| variables | Pearson correlation coefficient | Significance | result |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| distributive justice | 0.599 | 0.000 | Positive and significant correlation |
| Procedural justice | 0.472 | 0.000 | Positive and significant correlation |
| Interactive justice | 0.502 | 0.000 | Positive and significant correlation |

The results of social justice regression and the rate of youth electoral participation show that the value of multiple correlation coefficients is equal to 0.522 which shows the moderate relationship between the variable of social justice and the rate of youth electoral participation.

Table 5: Regression coefficients of social justice and youth electoral participation

| Sig | T | Beta | B | variables |
|----------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|-----------------------|
| 0.000 | 4.411 | | 23.34 | constant |
| 0.000 | 9.256 | 0.522 | 0.225 | social justice |
| AdjR square | | R square | R | Model summery |
| 0.270 | | 0.274 | 0.522 | |
| Durbin Watson | | Sig | F | ANOVA |
| 2.28 | | 0.000 | 85.67 | |

The value of the coefficient of determination is equal to 0.274. This number tells us that 27.4% of changes in voter turnout depend on social justice. The values of regression coefficients show that social justice is significant at the level of more than 99%. For every unit of change in the level of social justice, there is about 0.522 units in the rate of youth electoral participation.

6. Conclusion

The level of electoral participation indicates the importance and availability of the participation of members of society in political affairs. Many factors can affect the political participation of individuals in a society. Citizens' political participation is of particular importance for the political stability and dynamism of society. Therefore, it is necessary to achieve the political attitude of the citizens and pay more attention to the social factors that contribute to their electoral participation. One of the main results of the article is that there is a significant relationship between social justice and electoral participation. The issue of elections and the analysis of the electoral behavior of the people in a country or a geographical area, as a political behavior, is in fact one of the most complex issues that has attracted the attention of thinkers in various fields of political science, sociology and psychology.

Findings showed that social justice is directly related to electoral participation. Pearson correlation coefficient between social justice and electoral participation is equal to 0.522. Among the dimensions of social justice, the dimension of distributive justice has the highest correlation with electoral participation. In this study, it was found that social justice affects

electoral participation. Findings with the results of Memar (2009), Shafiee and Maddloo (2019), Ahmadlou (2019), Taleban and Mir Hosseini (2016), OriziSamani and Golparvar (2005), Yousefi (2002), Mohammadifar and others (2015), Ebrahimpour et al. (2015), ZayerKaabe et al. (2015) and Zia and Al-Ghafoor (2015) are coordinated. Therefore, it can be concluded that in order to increase electoral participation among the youth of Mazandaran, special attention should be paid to social justice and its dimensions and, most importantly, distributive justice, and provide conditions for increasing distributive justice in society.

In analyzing the actions of individuals, George Herbert Mead places special emphasis on his own concept and perception of facts. These perceptions are formed through interaction with others and are a variable and dynamic thing, so that it can be interpreted according to each situation (Abdollahi, 1999, p. 24). According to this view, the political and social participation of individuals and their cooperation with civic and political institutions is a function of the perception that they acquire in the process of socialization of themselves and other matters and is an interpretation that individuals according to each situation of civil and political institutions and issues They find the participation and expectations of others and their own plans.

Ahmadlou (2019) showed that initial development and individual social benefit are usually necessary conditions for electoral participation. Initial development, socio-economic status, and receipt of economic resources are in only half of the cases necessary for electoral participation. In the study of individual causes, it was also found that social benefit is the strongest causal condition for electoral participation. Also Shafiee and Maddloo (2019) believe that social justice has many effects on the way of interaction in the field of politics and the type, method and example of political participation can be explained, interpreted or changed by perceiving social justice in the collective mentality of a society. Memar (2009) showed that none of these theories of electoral participation, ie resources, modernization, representation and cultural theory alone, have been able to have a relatively strong explanation of electoral participation. Of all the theoretical constructs, the

resource redistribution structure had the strongest path coefficient. This finding shows that distributive justice is the most important explanatory factor to explain the inter-city differences in the amount of voting in the study period. As a result, social justice and the three dimensions have a significant effect on the electoral participation of Mazandaran youth.

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