The Role of Social Networks in the Political Participation of Young Women: Using Fundamental Theory Approach

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Abstract

  Virtual social network is a new generation of social media space that, although not very old, have been able to open their place in people's lives. Many people of different ages and from different social groups come together in virtual social networks and communicate from a far in the real world. The present study examines the political and managerial participation of young women compared to men in Gilan. This research is based on grounded theory method and with in-depth interviews of 30 male and female political and managerial activists in Guilan province. The results of the research show that social networks, especially Telegram, have played an effective role in political consultation of young women compared to other media in Iran. The difference between national media and social networks in presenting images of political participation of men and women as a condition for intervention in the paradigm of research has been investigated. The results showed that social networks have an effect on the political participation of young women. The findings of the present study can be used to moderate phenomena such as lack of equal organizational growth and its irreparable consequences on sustainable development, women's progress and self-confidence, as well as changing men's beliefs, and the loss of human capital and avoid exorbitant training costs.

Keywords: Political participation, Virtual networks, Gillan, Telegram, Grounded Theory.

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1. Introduction

Participation means valuing the role and opinion of the people in political decisions and their access to sources of power (Oakley-Marsden 1991, p. 86). One of the defining components of a participatory society is the existence of individual freedoms and the provision of the necessary grounds for citizen participation in political management and active participation in party and trade unions to determine the macro-political policies of a country.Thus, political participation is a kind of public demonstration of citizens to determine their collective destiny. Many factors affect the level of political participation of citizens. Factors such as: social and economic status, level of education, occupation, age, religion, ethnicity, district, place of residence, personality, environment in which he lives and gender play a role in the life and sustainability of citizens' political participation (Milbrath, 2007, p. 189). Also, the degree of empathy and loyalty of citizens to each other, in the process of formation and growth of participation in the political community, have a very fundamental role, the opposite is also true(Seifzadeh1993, p. 157).

Political participation is explained in the framework of several theories that in some of these theories explain the concept of political participation and its examples, others explain the factors that affect it and some of the consequences. They emphasize political participation. (Parchami, 2007, pp. 40-49) However, the idea of participation is an ancient and long-standing concept that has been used for a long time, especially in the field of politics.According to research, women have less political awareness than men and are more politically insignificant than men. In criteria such as the percentage of parliamentary seats held by women, the percentage of women managers in the country's managers, the percentage of professional women in the country's specialized staff and the percentage of women's share of income, women are not in a good position. And in terms of their access to power building, they are very weak (Naji Rad, 2003, p. 29; Agility, 2004, p. 259).

The main issue of the research is the weak situation of political participation among women, especially young women in Gillan province. There has been little research on the effective role of social media, especially the role of the Telegram social network in political participation, especially women, and this study and its study in Gilan province, compared the role of official media with

the social network is unprecedented. However, various researches have been done in the discussion of barriers to women's political participation as well as the necessity of people's political participation and the role of the official media.Research questions are:

Do some images of the role of men and women in society that are created through mass media affect political participation and non-participation?Is there a difference between portraying formal and virtual networks of women and does it affect their political participation? What is the role of social networks in the political participation of young women in Gillan province?

2. Review of Literature

Various researches show the relationship between the components of social

The role of the media in informing about the activities of political parties and groups and creating social enthusiasm is very important and decisive. For people's political participation, the media must create a new perspective and atmosphere with emotional literature. At the same time, politicians also use the media to involve people in certain political behavior (participation in elections, voting for a particular party, etc.). Through their actions, the media inform the people about government policies and, as a result, attract their participation in the political arena. In this way, people are informed about the news and political events of their country through the media, and they comment and judge on various political issues. In this regard, the provincial networks of the national media, the only effective provincial media, should prepare the people for the adoption of new policies by informing and informing the government policies in a timely manner, as well as explaining why, and by speeding up decisions and policies. Government initiatives arouse popular support (Demirchi et al., 2015).

Zumrodbakhsh Azad et al., (2016) have shown that two factors in the structure of patriarchal political culture or, more generally, the dominance of patriarchal culture in society along with informal political barriers, a negative impact on three factors related to the participation of personality traits, political motivations and social status of women. In society in order to achieve political participation of women in parties. Keshavarzi and Arabi (2020) showed that the idea of political openness and consequently the idea of effective

participation, as well as the media and membership in associations and organizations have been the most important factors in increasing the normal political participation of citizens (voting behavior), while the fateful and sentimental approach. Powerlessness has reduced this kind of political participation.

Parizad and Taghipour Taher (2015) showed that social networks in the current era have significant effects on political issues, especially political participation. Which will be positive or negative depending on the characteristics of the audience and how it is used. Mohammadi Kakroudi and Hakaran (2020) showed that in Gilan province, in the elections of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth terms, virtual networks had a significant effect on the electoral behavior of voters.Abdollahi et al. (2012) in an article entitled The role of new media in social movements state that social movements need mainstream mass media to continue their activities and achieve protest movements. Because the media covers a large number of people in different classes. The impact of the Occupy Wall Street movement and the expansion of the networked society should be considered a line of invalidity on some theories, including the spiral of silence, multifaceted ignorance, media silence, calendar theory. Media and Media Highlights Magazine.

A study on women's political participation has been conducted by Mohammad Abdollahi (2005: 8) entitled "Factors, Barriers and Strategies of Iranian Women's Civil Participation". The results showed that women with families with higher socio-economic background (education and occupation) have more civic participation.Ghazi Tabatabai et al. (2005) carried out a national plan to study women's political participation in 28 provincial centers of the country, commissioned by the Women's Affairs Office of the Ministry of Interior and in cooperation with the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology in 2004-2005. The aim is to study the scope and dimensions of women's political participation in Iran and the factors affecting it. In discussing the factors affecting women's political participation, five general dimensions including: political, cultural, social, family factors and evaluation of the characteristics of government and socio-political groups have been studied.

This study also deals with internal and individual factors and stimuli affecting women's political participation.

In qualitative research, theoretical and experimental concepts are used to add background data, compare and generalize findings.

2.1. Representation Theory

The concept of representation is central to media studies. This concept is closely related to the efforts made to depict reality. Representation is defined as "the production of meaning through conceptual and linguistic frameworks." The constant flow of media representations of the real world strongly influences the perceptions and actions of the audience because it is assumed that these representations are the same reality (Mehdizadeh, 2005, 127-126). Plato argues that he creates a universal representation of illusions that are far removed from the "real." Unlike Plato, Aristotle views representation as an intermediary or channel through which man approaches the "real" (Van Zonen, 1998, p. 172).

Stuart Hall discusses the relationship between politics and representation with a similar view, arguing that subjects do not have fixed meanings but that meanings are made by humans in any way, especially those who work in the realm of culture and are in fact Which make things important or meaningful. Regarding the media representation of the real world, the following can be mentioned:

a. According to cultural and media studies, representation is not the same as reality, even though readers and audiences may sometimes be tempted to judge and judge based on media representations of reality. Representation is the result of a selection process that always highlights certain aspects of reality and ignores other aspects (Ibid).

b. The efforts of the media do not engage in the reflection of the "real" world. The media inherently represent the world of reality, because without a gap between reality and media perception, the "media genre" would be meaningless.

c. In an age where sociologists believe in the "social construction of reality" and are postmodernists challenging the claim to objective knowledge and the principle of reality, the concept of "reality" is in question. Social structuralists

claim that the representation of reality is not the same as reality and truth; Because representation frames a subject and event and selects elements from a multidimensional and multifaceted reality and lends elements (Ibid). According to the definition of news, which is synonymous with a narrative of reality, news based on the values and norms of the news organization and the ideological and power-oriented components governing the news organization, transforms reality and presents a narrative of reality to the audience (Van Zonen, 1998 , p. 172).

2.2. Civil Society Theory

Civil society approach: Includes theories of theorists such as Ellen Thorne, Jürgen Habermas, Manuel Castells and Alberto Mellucci. Social networks have created a new social form of communication which, while being a mass, is produced and received individually and affects and becomes a tool in the service of social movements (Castells, 2001). Castells' "network community" has the following characteristics:

1**. Information economy**: Productivity and competition between companies and enterprises, regions and economic areas and countries rely more than ever on the knowledge, knowledge, information and technology necessary to process this information.

2. **Global economy:** Dominant strategic activities that are able to implement a variety of economic mechanisms at the global level as an interconnected unit.

3. **Network economy**: a new type of organization like multinational corporations.

4. Transformation in the structure of employment and work performance.

5. Emergence of confrontation poles based on the amount of information access.

6. The emergence of virtual reality culture.

7. Highlighting the role of the media in political interaction and action.

8. Changing the meanings of time and space.

9. Weakening of the state-nations (Ibid).

2.3. The School of Rational Selection

In the school of rational choice, of which James Coleman is the founder and most important theorist, any political behavior is the result of the actor's individual decision to wisely choose from among the various options before him in a particular situation. It best serves his goals. In the context of the school of rational choice, Anthony Downs offers a theoretical explanation of people's voting behavior that can be extended to some other types of political participation. Every potential voter acts on the basis of rational calculation and during the election campaign by evaluating the government in power and comparing it with the claims and plans of the opposition parties and taking into account the benefits that are expected from the victory of this Or that party becomes his personal income and chooses. Voters are wise voters who consider participating in elections as a means to secure their personal interests (SeyedEmami, 2007, p. 63). Olson argues that a rational self-interest compels one to weigh the costs of group participation or collective action against its own. He sees rationality as a strong factor for political participation. Downs and Olson both emphasize rationality in political participation (Rush, 1998, p. 136).

2.4. Samuel Huntington's perspective

Huntington and Nelson consider political participation to be a key factor in political development. They consider political participation as a function of the two factors of attitudes and priorities of political elites and the position of mediating groups, associations and social institutions in the society itself and believe that the process of economic and social development through two channels can ultimately lead to Expand political and social participation:

   a. The channel of social mobility means that the acquisition of higher social status in turn creates in the individual a sense of ability and attitudes focused on ability and influencing the decisions of public institutions. These mental factors can encourage participation in politics and social activities. In this case, higher social status and a sense of ability and political effectiveness as intermediate variables encourage social and political participation. Among the variables of status, the level of literacy or education of the individual has the greatest impact on political participation.

B. Organizational channel means active membership and participation in various groups and social organizations (trade unions, advocacy groups, etc.) that increase the likelihood of participation in social and political activities. Slowly These factors are even more important in societies where individual mobility opportunities are more limited. Because the individual to work in social organizations or political parties as a last resort to achieve a better social and economic status. In general, interfering in the activities of organizations in explaining the differences in levels of political participation is more important than socio-economic status (Rezaei, 1996, 54-56).

3. Methodology

The present study has been done with a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand the phenomenon under study in the same context and specific environment as the real world environment. Theory theory is also used to analyze the data. Contextual theory is a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of qualitative methods to achieve a theory in the field of inductive phenomena(Mansoorian, 2002, p.153). The main difference between grounded theory and other approaches to qualitative research is its emphasis on shaping or formulating theory.The three main elements of data foundation theory are: concepts, categories, and propositions. Concepts form the main units of analysis. Achieving the theory is the result of conceptualizing data. The second element of data theory is the foundation of categories. Categories are in fact the result of grouping concepts. The third element is the fundamental theory of propositions.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the present study. Author with 15 men and 15 women from high-ranking officials of Gillan province, including several governors, director general, representative; A member of the city council and the secretaries and chairmen of the parties conducted the interview and took notes of the conversations during the interview. Theoretical sampling was also used to collect data. At the beginning of the first interview, concepts and categories were extracted and after 15

interviews with men and 15 interviews with women, theoretical saturation was obtained.

4. Findings

Based on the interviews conducted, several categories have been obtained. In the following, each of these categories in the field of the role of social networks on the political participation of young women in Gilan province will be examined:

Table 1: The most important categories extracted from interviews

categories	categories	categories
Individualism	Citizen Reporter	De-identification
easy access	The difference between presenting sexual stereotypes	being fast
Freedom and non-restriction	Influencing public opinion	Virtual social movements
Citizenship media	Loss of time and place	Supergroups and a peaceful community

4.1. Presenting a Stereotypical Image of Men and Women in Educational Books and Media and its Difference with Social Networks

Television programs, whether overt or covert, are full of gender discourses. Who we are as men or women and how we should behave in different spaces is part of the gender culture that is reproduced by institutions such as the media. Representation flow cannot be considered a neutral process. Any kind of representation can be the result of an ideology or discourse. Although the form and image of a discourse and ideology may change during the representation process, it is important that the root and principle be somehow conveyed to the audience. A discourse can be introduced as an epistemological system that is applied through language. Discourse can be a combination of knowledge and power. What matters, however, is how part of a discourse or ideology is reproduced during representation.

In research conducted in preschool books in Gillan (Mohammad Dos, 2014), women were represented in the form of passive gender stereotypes and active men.

Fortunately, with the change in the approach of the Radio and Television and the use of young female presenters, the male-dominated atmosphere of the

media has been slightly softened or there are strong and courageous female journalists in the news, who cannot be said to be male-dominated. However, the role of mass media, especially the telegram, should be considered effective in creating an equal atmosphere. (male respondent)

Even if the TV shows Arji women in the image of a loving mother or a mature grandmother and knows that even satellite TV series do not present the right image of women, it shows all the women involved feeling and betrayed. But Telegram could replace these media, of course. In the same telegram, women also have groups that are not suitable, but it is so wide that a better image can be presented and it can be seen. (female respondent)

4.2. The Effectiveness of Social Networks on Political Participation (Telegram)

Most respondents, especially female respondents, emphasized the effective role of social networks. Most of them stated that there is a clear difference between the images presented of women and their political participation in the official media and virtual networks.

Radio and Television does not provide equal images of men and women, and instead compensates for the lack and weakness of this inequality in social networks, especially the telegram. (female respondent)

Women do not watch TV as long as they have a phone and are in Telegram groups and channels. (male respondent)

In my opinion, when important and political conversations occur, even the most carefree person tries to be a member of a group or channel with political and social content. (male respondent)

4.3. Citizenship Media

Citizenship media is a term used to refer to electronic media such as radio and television and communication and information technologies such as SMS and the Internet (Alvandi, 2009).

Today, social networks have become the main media of citizens due to their availability and being faster than other mass media. And this issue has caused most news networks to have channels and virtual networks. (male respondent)

Virtual media has given an opportunity to all intellectual and political groups to have their own news networks at the lowest cost and to attract their own audience (Female Response).

4.4. Citizen Reporter

Ordinary citizens are a community that plays an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information in the community. On the Internet and social networks, it created a new culture of citizen journalism in recent years. The term emerged during the aftermath of the Wall Street protests and during the Occupy Wall Street movement, and was later institutionalized in neighboring countries and the Middle East during the Islamic Awakening.

In social networks, they often try to be newsworthy and provide breaking news. (male respondent)

Mobiles are the most accessible media that anyone can use as a reporter, a photo, a short video of a socio-political event and its publication in groups and channels can be the fastest news broadcaster and not necessarily for everyone. Important. (female respondent)

In the field of women, these citizens are journalists who have given a more realistic picture of women. (female respondent)

4.5. Supergroups and Peaceful Community

Most of the respondents mentioned the role of groups as a daily conference and stated that this ease has led to more information.

Telegram groups and especially super groups are a daily conference without payment and a peaceful community of more than 1000 people without the slightest security problem. (male respondent)

We are justified in holding a speech with various issues, such as getting a permit, reception, coordination for the hall, calling and inviting, which we usually do not expect, and usually a certain group, but in the telegram groups, none of the We do not have these issues and conversations remain a source in the long run. (female respondent)

The groups that I have as a person in charge cause me to hear and respond very quickly, and different opinions cause me to examine different angles of an issue. (Male respondent)

4.6. The Disappearance of the Boundaries of Place and Time

Today, social networks have removed the boundaries of time and space, and of course, it should be noted the disappearance of social boundaries. Officials do not give such an opportunity to citizens and act very selectively.

A telegram group from all walks of life is sometimes present, from a simple worker to a minister in the form of a specific subject, and communication with a minister or officials of different ranks is no longer as difficult and taboo as before. (Female respondent)

In groups, time does not matter anymore and people communicate with each other at different times and talk about different topics. (Male respondent)

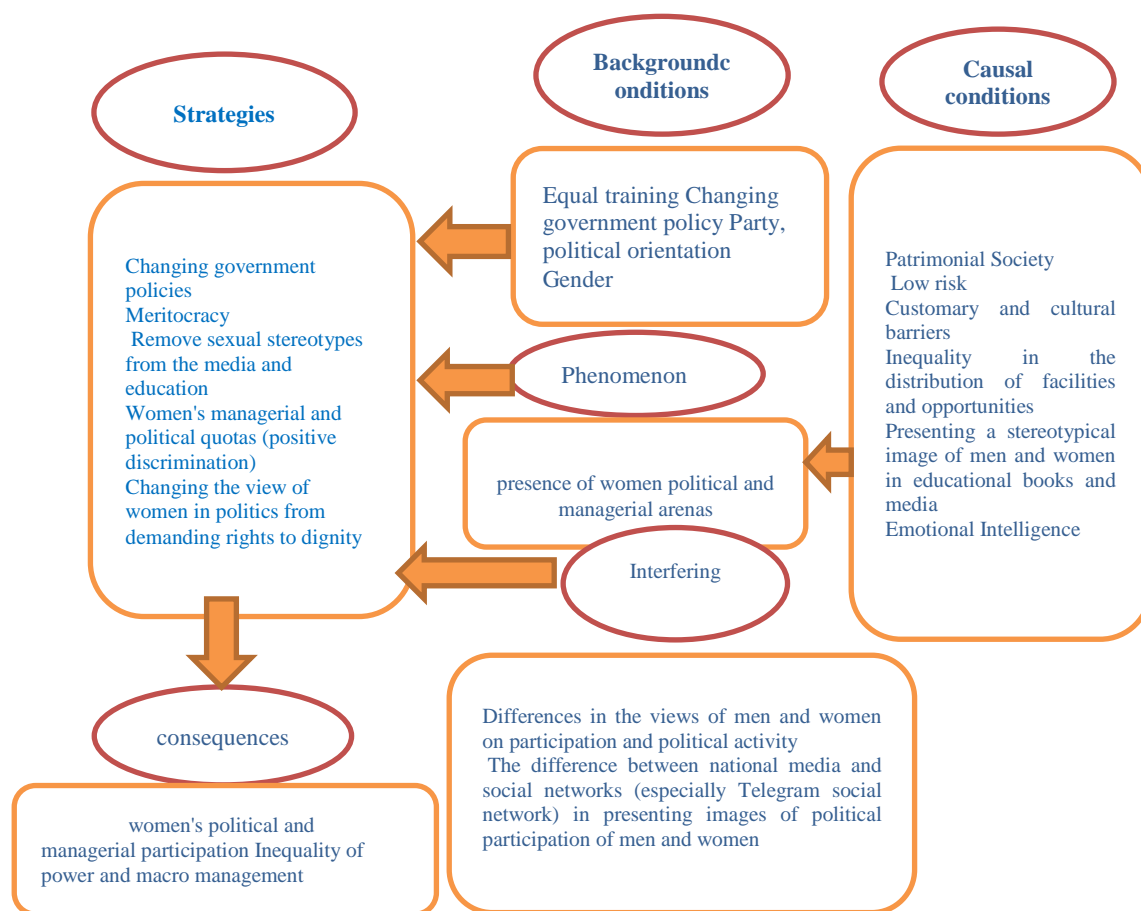## 4.7. Influencing Public Opinion

Public opinion is the evaluation, method, and common opinion of a social group on an issue that everyone is interested in and at a given moment, becomes relatively common among a large number of people and different segments of society and the general public (Mehrara, 1994). Public opinion is manifested in the form of approval or opposition to an action, opinion, person and event or in the form of submitting a request, demand, proposal and recommendation.

Virtual networks have taken over the monopoly of shaping public opinion by the ruling media (male respondent).

The image of women presented in the official media is different from that of social media, and activists in various fields no longer need to express their voice through the official media by creating their own audience (female respondent).

It should be said that now social networks give direction to the official media in various issues of these social networks being the vanguard of information (Female respondent).

The paradigm model of the present study has outlined the role of social media as an intervening condition in political participation.

Strategies

Changing government policies
Meritocracy
Remove sexual stereotypes from the media and education
Women's managerial and political quotas (positive discrimination)
Changing the view of women in politics from demanding rights to dignity

Backgroundc onditions

Equal training Changing government policy Party, political orientation Gender

Phenomenon

presence of women political and managerial arenas

Interfering

Causal conditions

Patrimonial Society
Low risk
Customary and cultural barriers
Inequality in the distribution of facilities and opportunities
Presenting a stereotypical image of men and women in educational books and media
Emotional Intelligence

consequences

women's political and managerial participation Inequality of power and macro management

Differences in the views of men and women on participation and political activity
The difference between national media and social networks (especially Telegram social network) in presenting images of political participation of men and women

Figure 1. Paradigm model of the present study, the role of social media as an intervening condition in political participation

5. Conclusion

The media is referred to as the fourth pillar of democracy, a pillar that is linked to the people on the one hand and to the government on the other. The role of the media in participation makes sense in the meantime. A variety of tools are needed to create a partnership. Among these tools are, first, a specific subject or vehicle for participation, and second, the agents and trustees of the

partnership, i.e. those who plan and organize for the partnership.Third is the citizens, and finally the channels of connection between agents and citizens, which are the interface of the media in the wide and modern partnerships. From this perspective, the media are not in power by themselves; what empowers the media is their ability to shape public opinion for or against the government.Thus, the interpretation that the media is the main mediator between policymakers and the masses can also be used. That is, the media mobilize the masses to embrace new ideas and modern techniques, and on the other hand to build a stable political structure in which a homogeneous and decent social environment emerges.One of the tasks of the media is to properly portray political and social realities. Playing the role of collective conscience requires that the media be able to critique the entire executive system, because constructive criticism is constructive by correcting mistakes and doing the right thing. Under such circumstances, the role of the media is to guide and influence public opinion, to build mass ideology and culture, to cultivate critical citizens, and to create social solidarity in open and pluralistic societies (Amir Entekhabi,Heirannia, 2011).

Today, despite the existence of social networks, the monopoly of the media in the hands of the powers has been challenged and the free access to information as well as the existence of the citizen-journalist phenomenon has played the role of outspoken critic. In the contemporary period, communication , Includes cultural and economic, and in the meantime, with the complexity and expansion of societies, the importance of communication in the political dimension is increasing to the extent that in the current situation, communication is the main theme of political life and without the use of means of communication And the mass media of political systems are not able to regulate society and involve people in political life. Members of society also need mass media to play an active role, participate in elections, and interact with politicians.In political communication, what is important is the effect on behavior. Build its own plans and ideas, and by gaining influence and attracting the opinions and votes of the general public, consolidate its position and expand its sphere of power.

What needs to be addressed in the end is that social media is a medium that never sleeps, the news is broadcast every hour and every second and is widely shared. Social networks at a cost Social networks have been able to play a very important role in women's political participation and awareness, and have been able to use the open space in it to inform and present images of women today. And present it in accordance with today's society and act stronger and more dynamic than the official media, and the existence of these media and social networks should be considered as the cause of ethnic and gender solidarity.

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