

## **Probing Urban Graphics with Social and Economic Disputes and its Effect on Citizens' Political Indifference**

### **Abstract**

Urban graphics is one of the important categories in shaping the social and political environment. Governments and societies attempt to acquire maximum political participation of their citizens. Contrariwise, it is political indifference that can lead to weakening or even discontinuing the process of national development. The aim of the current research is to investigate the factors affecting the political indifference of the citizens of Ahvaz city in ۲۰۱۸. The research method of the current study is descriptive-correlation, and considering the purpose, it also follows an applied research basis. The statistical population of Ahvaz city includes ۸۰۰ (thousand) citizens aged ۱۸ and over. The sample size was determined based on Cochran's formula and ۳۸۵ people were selected by random sampling. The research tool included a research questionnaire whose validity was checked by experts (face validity) and its reliability was also obtained with Cronbach's alpha test (۰,۸۴). Correlation and multiple regression statistical tests were used in SPSS ۲۴ software to analyze the data. The findings indicated gender, religiosity (belief, consequential, ritual, emotional, experiential), striving for national identity, social trust, sense of social justice and satisfaction with the quality of life with have a significant relationship with political indifferences and merely the variable of age had no significant relationship. The regression results also showed that the set of investigated variables could explain the variance of the political inequality variable to the extent of  $R^2 = ۰.۳۸$ .

### **Research aims:**

۱. Understanding the impact of urban graphics on social and economic conditions.
۲. Investigation of political indifference and religiosity among citizens.

### **Research questions:**

۱. What is the position of urban graphics in creating the social, economic and political environment of society?

۲. What factors influence citizens' political indifference?

**Keywords:** political indifference, urban graphics, national identity, social justice.

## **Introduction**

Urban graphics is one of the important categories of proposers and managers of political structures. The attention of the governments to the life and bio-economic, social, cultural and security of the citizens and the attention and importance of the citizens to the affairs of the country have been a serious debate in the relationship between citizens and societies. Citizens' attention to the fate of their society is a representative of a developed society and a manifestation of a civil society. In fact, people's sensitivity to various issues of the society, such as progress, justice, education, politics and in one word, development is in the concept of participation. In exchange for participation, there is indifference. Indifference is defined as a type of passive and indifferent behavior of citizens who show a state of silence or a kind of indifference in relation to the affairs and fate of their society. Political indifference refers to a kind of passive and neutral behavior and actions in relation to the political and social reality that a person lacks to show serious attention. Briefly, indifference is the lack of feeling and emotion in relation to the living environment and absence of involvement in political and social phenomena. Indifference is one of the undesirable elements of modern culture, which is manifested in contemporary urban life with too much emphasis on personal preferences and individual benefits, thus, it can lead to weakening or even stopping the process of national development. With the acceleration of social changes and the increasing complexity of political systems and the accumulative expectations of citizens from the political apparatus under the shadow of the mass media, the increase in the level of attention and political activities of the citizens has fluctuated; even developed societies such as Europe have faced a kind of increase in political indifference among citizens.

The effects and appearance of political indifference can be different forms of non-participation in elections, insensitivity to the fate of society, indifference to national interests, indifference to the decisions of rulers among other features. Therefore, political indifference covers a wide range of political and social issues. One of the most obvious aspects of the participation of community members can be found in polling and holding general elections (Tavasoli, ۲۰۰۳). Citizens are

considered political. Participation requires effective intervention in different parts of the society, locally, comprehensively and deeply by the citizens in the administration of their society. (Kitaniva, ۲۰۱۹) Political participation is also any kind of voluntary action, successful or unsuccessful. Organized or unorganized, intermittent or continuous for influencing the choice of public policies, public affairs management or the selection of political leaders at different levels of local or national government, use legal or illegal methods. Countries where active participation and leadership of citizens have different aspects of the country's political administration, they are more responsive, egalitarian and democratic. According to Huntington (۱۹۹۶), the level of attention of citizens and the level of political participation is the difference between traditional and modern societies as it is dissimilar from other societies. Studies show that religiosity and religion is an important factor in political participation. The results of studies show that people, even if they do not belong to any religion, still try to identify themselves with religious organizations and institutions. Social justice is also a factor that a number of studies show that if people have a sense of social justice, they are more active in the affairs of their society and play a greater role. Social trust is also related to the two-way relationship between citizens and society. Researches show that if the social trust of individuals is more in relation to their own society, the increase in social participation can be imagined. Identity, as a fluid and complex concept, can be influential in the participation or passivity of people's behaviors. Some researchers believe that if people have a strong national identity and are more patriotic and generally have a greater sense of their identity, they participate more in various social and political affairs of the society. The quality of life is also related to people's living together with well-being in its different dimensions. Studies show that people with a high quality of life are more sensitive and more involved in the affairs of their civil society. Age and gender are other variables that have been the subject of researchers' attention.

A number of studies show that age and gender are related to the level of political behavior and participation. (Elmi, ۲۰۰۸ & Mohebi et al, ۲۰۰۵). A degree of political indifference can also be felt in Iran. According to the last session of the Islamic Shura Council (۱۱th session), the level of political participation of Iranians was less than half, that is, ۴۲ percent, which was the lowest level of participation compared to the last session (Hamshahri Online, ۲۰۲۰). The city of Ahvaz as the center of the Khuzestan province, it is one of the most important cities of Iran and one of the most strategic regions of Iran concerning political and social terms. In this city, people of various religions and different political attitudes reside and this situation has created various identities.

From older times, the political role and participation of this city has increased. Thus, in the early decades of the Islamic revolution, the highest participation-political behavior was observed, nonetheless, in recent years, the participation in political behavior has fluctuated and political indifference is by some means witnessed among Iranian citizens. As the participation rate in the 11th election period of the Islamic Parliament was approximately 42 percent (Asre Iran, 1391), a topic worthy of scientific study.

Reviewing the background of the topic displays that although there have been relatively many researches on social inequality in Iran, there are very few studies on political inequality and it is considered a research gap. Few existing researches have considered the relationship between a limited number of variables mainly sociological variables. Nevertheless, the innovation of the current research is that, as far as possible, with the study of previous studies and theoretical literature, more variables have been observed in relation to political inequality, which are not consistently found in previous researches. Therefore, the main goal is to investigate the factors affecting the political indifference of the citizens of Ahvaz in 1391. The hypotheses of the present research are: 1. It seems that there is a relationship between religiosity and political indifference of citizens over 18 in Ahvaz city; 2. It seems that there is a relationship between national identity and political indifference of citizens over 18 in Ahvaz city; 3. It seems that there is a relationship between social trust and political indifference of citizens over 18 in Ahvaz city; 4. It seems that there is a relationship between the sense of social justice and political indifference of citizens over 18 in Ahvaz city; 5. It seems that there is a relationship between satisfaction with the quality of life and political indifference of citizens over 18 in Ahvaz city; 6. It seems that there is a relationship between the age and political indifference of Ahvaz citizens over 18 years old; 7. It seems that there is a difference between gender and political indifference of the citizens of Ahvaz city over 18 years old.

The review of his research background indicates that so far no independent research with this title has been published. However, investigations have been conducted on political indifference. Rezapour (1391) in their research concluded that there is a significant inverse relationship between social inequality (emotional social inequality) and the social context of political inequality. There is a significant inverse relationship between political disparity (political disparity from emotional and cognitive dimensions) and the economic context of political disparity. There is a significant

inverse relationship between social inequality (emotional and behavioral social inequality) and the cultural context of political inequality. Also, there is a significant inverse relationship between social inequality (political inequality from the emotional and behavioral dimension) and the political context of political inequality. Mohammadi & Jahangiri (۲۰۱۸) found that among the components of political hope, the belief in the desired receipt of civil rights, the belief in the legitimacy of the government and optimism about the policies, in total ۱۰ percent of difference changes. Students explain the relationship between political and social activities. There is a significant relationship between social capital and its dimensions with the political participation of the citizens of Qom. Also, in the social and political arenas, the element of awareness is higher quality, more timely and effective, it can increase the political participation of citizens at a higher level. Keshavarz & Negin Taji (۲۰۱۰) in a research titled the relationship between social, individual and cultural factors affecting the political participation of young people, taking the result between mass media, religious commitment, social trust, politics, the presence of friends and the political nature of the family have a positive relationship with the political participation of young people. Also, there is a significant difference between the political participation of young people according to their marital status and place of residence.

The current research method is descriptive-correlational and in terms of purpose, it is an applied research and in terms of time it is also a cross-sectional research. The statistical community of this include citizens of Ahvaz city in ۲۰۱۸ over ۱۸ years old, according to the latest official census, their number was approximately ۸۰۰ thousand people. Based on Cochran's formula, the sample size was ۳۸۰ people by cluster sampling method (first, the whole city was divided into four districts, then one district was randomly selected and all the target respondents were asked). It is worth mentioning that in order to reduce the possible dropout, a sample of ۴۰۰ questionnaires was distributed, which was finally analyzed with ۲۰ items out of ۳۸۰ intact questionnaires. The research tools include: ۱- political indifference questionnaire; this questionnaire has ۲۸ items and is based on a ۰-point Likert scale (extremely ۰, very much ۴, moderate ۳, less than ۲, and very little (۱)) and an attempt was made to combine the questions in a positive and negative way. The range of scores is between ۲۸ and ۱۴۰; the score range is between ۲۸ and ۰۸ for low political disparity, ۰۸ and ۸۸ for moderate and between ۱۱۸ and ۱۴۰ for high political disparity. ۲- Glock and Stark standard religiosity questionnaire: (۱۹۶۰) This questionnaire has ۲۶ items and assesses people's religiosity from ۰ dimensions (ritual, experiential, belief, intellectual and consequential).

Its scoring method is between ۰ and ۴. Scores from ۰ to ۲ indicate weak religiosity, ۲ to ۴ indicate moderate religiosity, and the range from ۴ to ۶ indicates high religiosity. This questionnaire has been used by researchers in Iran. Sarajzadeh (۱۹۹۹) reported its reliability as ۰.۸۰ for the whole questionnaire. Abdi and Rezaei (۲۰۱۴) also reported its level of reliability; Social Justice Questionnaire: This questionnaire has ۳ procedural and distributive justice dimensions and ۱۰ items and is measured based on the Likert scale. The validity of these statements has been confirmed in Hazarjiribi's research (۲۰۱۰). The variable of national identity was taken to measure. The dimensions of national identity included historical, political and cultural identity. Social trust: (with two indicators of informal trust and official trust with ۸ items) and to measure satisfaction with the quality of life, the index of satisfaction with health, satisfaction with friends and family and gratification with financial situation with ۸ items) They were measured in the form of a Likert scale. For the validity of the questionnaire, face validity and introduction distribution were used, and Cronbach's alpha test was also used for the reliability of the tool. (Table No. ۱). Descriptive (mean, standard deviation) and inferential (correlation and regression tests) statistical tests were used to analyze the data using SPSS version ۲۰ software.

## Conclusion

The active participation and involvement of the citizens of a country in the political system can provide the basis for its development. On the other hand, the political indifference of the citizens can also hinder the development of the society. The main goal of the current research was also to investigate the factors affecting the political indifference of citizens over ۱۸ in Ahvaz city. The findings indicated that there is a difference between gender and political indifference of the citizens, meaning that there is more political indifference among women than men. This finding is similar with studies such as Mohabi and colleagues (۲۰۱۶); Farahmand and colleagues (۲۰۱۶); Sidamami (۲۰۰۸) and Iman and Moqdes (۲۰۰۹) who concluded that there is a significant relationship between the two variables. In explaining this relationship, it should be said that women are generally more at home and less involved in political activities. One reason could be that the presence of illiterate women in the research sample was relatively high (۰.۲۱). This could be one of the main reasons that they participated less in political activities. It should also be pointed out that in Arab culture women are less expected to participate in political and social affairs; although

the present study was a combination of women from different ethnicities, including the Arab city of Ahvaz, so it can be concluded that there is more political indifference among them. As a result, the hypothesis of the relationship between age and political indifference was not confirmed. In other words, no significant relationship was observed between the two variables. This result is in contrast with the findings of Mahabi et al. (۲۰۱۵) and Farahmand et al. (۲۰۱۶) who found a significant relationship between age and political inequality. In this case, it can be said that the study sample consisted of citizens over ۱۸ from different age groups, mostly within the age group of ۳۰ and ۴۰. It can be determined that middle-aged groups are less willing to participate due to less excitement and more conflict with daily life. In addition, for a more accurate judgment concerning the relationship or lack of relationship, a more diverse statistical community sample is needed in different places. However, the result of the current research shows that there is no significant relationship between age and political inequality, and it seems that there is political inequality among all age groups. Another hypothesis of the research based on the level between religiosity and political indifference was also confirmed. All dimensions of the religiosity variable have a negative and significant relationship with political indifference. The findings of the present research are consistent with the researches of Nagin Taji and Keshavarz (۲۰۱۵), Iman and Moqdas (۲۰۰۲), Mohabi and colleagues (۲۰۱۶), Bagharian and Khushfar (۲۰۱۷), and Driskill and colleagues (۲۰۰۸). Regarding the relationship between religiosity and political indifference, it can be said that religion is a powerful factor in creating people's beliefs and it is necessary to follow this set of teachings. According to Durkheim, religion can act as a cohesive force. Functionalists were also convinced of this harmonious function. A large part of this harmony is formed in political and social partnerships. People act according to their religious beliefs and a part of religious beliefs in most religions is participation and activity in life in the individual and collective dimension. Therefore, the company is in the same category in political and social affairs. In short, religiosity drives people to participate in political and social activities in order to perform a part of the religious (ritual) dimension, which is performed or not in accordance with religious teachings with the satisfaction or blame of the individual. For example, in our country, participation in political affairs, especially elections, is considered a religious and religious duty by the elders of religion, so it can be concluded that religiosity is a force to participate in political activities. It creates a community and the more religiosity there is, the more participation is expected. The result of the hypothesis of the relationship between national identity and political inequality among the citizens

of Ahvaz city was also a sign of a meaningful relationship. The findings of the present research are consistent with the findings of Qazizadeh and Kianpour (۲۰۱۴) and Hassani (۲۰۱۳). In explaining this finding, it can be said that national identity is the feeling of belonging to one's country, land and history. Whenever this feeling is more in people, the feeling of pride and prejudice towards their identity increases; this can lead to more involvement and activity of the individual in political and social affairs. An example of this can be seen in the defense of the country during the eight-year war with Iraq. In fact, the sense of patriotism and defense of the national identity led to the motivation of people to defend the country's identity, which can be considered in the form of political participation in the defense and military dimension. Therefore, it can be concluded that national identity can make people more sensitive and active towards the affairs and destiny of their country.

The result of the hypothesis of the relationship between social trust and political difference among citizens was also confirmed. The findings of the current research based on the relationship between social trust and political inequality with the findings of Papstofanova (۲۰۱۹), Tin (۲۰۱۸), Dahl et al. (۲۰۱۸), Liu et al. (۲۰۰۷), Man Lim (۲۰۰۶), Habib Pourg Tabi and colleagues (۲۰۱۶), Nagin Taji and Keshavarz (۲۰۱۴) and Rafatjah and Rahimi (۲۰۱۴) are consistent. In explaining this finding, it can be said that social trust is one of the most fundamental axis of social bond that brings people together through mutual needs. It can be said that if the trust of the citizens in the government is high, the level of participation will increase and vice versa. Trust requires the belief that the statesmen are trustworthy and pay attention to the needs of the citizens. In such conditions, we can expect more political participation, but if the citizens feel that the trust is one-sided and there is no reciprocal response, it is possible that the level of attention to political affairs and participants will gradually decrease. The result of the next hypothesis based on the existence of a relationship between the sense of social justice and political indifference among the citizens of Ahvaz city was also confirmed. This finding is consistent with the results of the researches of Papstofanova (۲۰۱۹), Tin (۲۰۱۸), Dahl et al. (۲۰۱۸), Liew et al. Huntington believed that with the reduction of social injustice and the increase of social welfare (satisfaction with life), people's political involvement will also increase, and the increase of injustice will lead to the decrease of citizens' participation. (Huntington, ۲۰۱۰) Therefore, justice provides a time that allows its people to share in the power. And they should know how to make decisions and participate politically in order to preserve their share of power.



Finally, the result of the hypothesis of the existence of a relationship between satisfaction with the quality of life and political indifference among the citizens of Ahvaz city was also confirmed. Similar findings are also observed in the researches of Papstofanova (۲۰۱۹), Tin (۲۰۱۸), Dahl et al. (۲۰۱۸), Liu et al. (۲۰۰۷), Man Lim (۲۰۰۶), Rafatjah and Rahimi (۲۰۱۴). The results of the current research also confirm them. In the analysis of this finding, it should be said that the quality of life is related to a person's attitude on how to live, in general, the quality of life can be a relative thing and it can be different from one society to another. Lipst believed that by increasing the level of economic development (increasing the quality of life), the majority will be improved; Universal access to health and education will increase and the level of equality in consumption (social justice) will increase, education and urbanization have differences with each other that affect their quality of life and the existing correlation between political and economic development is related to this. Therefore, it can be concluded that if the quality of life of the citizens is evaluated positively, in order to preserve and improve this level of life, the citizens will make more efforts in relation to political affairs and participation. The progress of the current research has focused on examining some of the most important factors affecting the political indifference of the citizens of Ahvaz city. All research hypotheses, except for age, have a significant relationship with political indifference. Although the results of the current research were conducted in one city due to the time and financial limitations of the researcher, and from this point of view, it faces limitations, but the results of the research can be considered. First of all, it is suggested that future researchers conduct a combined research with a qualitative-quantitative approach. His research showed that there is a relationship between religiosity and political indifference; Therefore, drafting cultural and advertising policies and creating coordination between the related agencies are two basic steps in discussing the organization of the country's advertising system, which requires coordination measures. The next suggestion is to try to increase the level of social trust in the society. For this purpose, one of the appropriate ways at this time is for the officials to act as much as possible on the promises they make to the people, which will improve the level of social trust in the society. High social trust has beneficial results for society. It increases people's motivation to participate in voluntary organizations and associations, as well as political events, moreover, to develop and strengthen social relationships and bonds, which have a positive role in reducing the political indifference of people. The next suggestion in the direction of social justice is that the revenue sources of each city should be spent on construction works in that city and among the citizens of that region. This

action can lead to the fair distribution of justice and, as a result, increase the sense of justice, which can lead to an increase in the participation of citizens.

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