

Comparison of Cultural Components with an Emphasis on Political Culture among the Youths in Tehran, Iran

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Abstract

INTRODUCTION: The present study aimed to compare the cultural components among the youth in Tehran, Iran with an emphasis on political culture.

METHODS: In this quantitative research, a total of 382 youths aged 18 to 35 were selected using Cochran's sample size formula. Simple cluster and random sampling methods were used in this study. The data of the participants were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire. The reliability of the test was calculated with Cronbach's alpha (0.78).

FINDINGS: The components of political culture, political value, political knowledge, and political attitude were expressed by the respondents as the most important items with a mean of 3.26, 3.35, 3.21, and 3.24, respectively.

CONCLUSION: The results of the research revealed a significant difference between the level of the political culture of youths in each urban area. In addition, a significant difference was observed in the components of political culture (value, knowledge, and political attitude) according to the urban area (north, south, east, west, and center) of Tehran.

Keywords: Political Attitude; Political Culture; Political Knowledge; Political Value; Tehran; Youth.

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Introduction

Political culture is a special aspect of public culture and a set of values, attitudes, and political knowledge that gives meaning to the political process of society. Political culture includes attitude towards politics, belief in a political hierarchy or political equality, level of political skill, sense of political competence, level of political information and awareness, sense of security or insecurity, national, ethnic, or group loyalty, and belief in political participation. In addition, political culture seems to be very influential in shaping the structure of political systems and individuals' attitudes toward government policies, the basis of legitimacy, freedom, and citizenship rights.

A conflict between the ruling political culture in the society may lead to the formation of street riots, lack of solidarity between the people and the ruling system, intensification of subcultures of heterogeneous political groups, reduction of social trust, the spread of negative individualistic culture which threatens political and social health and sustainable development in metropolises among young people, especially in Tehran, Iran. The issue of political culture and its dimensions should be addressed considering the high rate of young population in Tehran and the dominance of new political values through online media. The political culture of the society and its dimensions should be known to enlighten the nature of many political-

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social developments of the society and help a lot in policies, planning, and actions. Therefore, the undeniable influence of the political culture on this issue can be considered due to the characteristics of the city of Tehran. The present study aimed to compare the cultural components among the youths in five districts of Tehran with an emphasis on political culture.

Asadi Afshar (2021) also investigated the relationship between fulfilling the duties of citizens with political culture (a study among citizens of Tehran) and a significant relationship (positive/ direct and strong) was observed between participatory political culture and fulfilling citizenship duties (.76) and (negative/ inverse and strong) one between authoritarian political culture and fulfilling citizenship duties (-.70) in the studied society. The results of regression indicate that political culture as an independent variable (participatory /democratic political culture and authoritarian political culture) has been able to explain 23% of the changes related to the dependent variable (fulfilling citizenship duties). Components such as social participation, political participation, and the involvement of citizens in administrative decisions realize the role and rights of citizens in society which requires the establishment of participatory and democratic political culture (1).

Jahangardi (2020) sociologically analyzed political culture in Iran using the case study of citizens in Tehran. Based on the findings of this research, observational propositions satisfactorily confirm the validity of the theoretical solutions proposed for the issue of political culture liberalization in Iran. A proportion of the variance of the liberalization of the political culture is equal to 34%, which is explained through the linear combination of the independent research variables, the experience of new education, the consumption of new media, and inter-community interactions. Finally, the experimental data of this research indicated the liberalization of a part of the political culture of Iranian society (2).

Mafi Forotan, (2020) investigated the political culture using Holy Quran which acknowledges that the political system should create the necessary platforms for political participation and people should have maximum political participation with all kinds of supervision from the political system. The pattern of political activities in the political system of Islam is based on the active and

committed political participation of people knowing their religious duty. In addition, the existence of values and compliance with the Quranic criteria can create strong orientations towards the political system and acceptance of the politicized system and strengthen participation, which leads to a political culture of committed participation of individuals (3).

Ali Mohammad and Qaderzadeh (2019) have investigated the discursive formation of political culture in the political parties of the Kurdistan Region. The analyzed data were party statutes as well as speeches and quotes of party leaders, which were analyzed using Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory. The analyzed data led to four political discourses, independence of Kurdistan (Kurdistan Democratic Party), democratic Kurdistan (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan), legal Kurdistan (Change Movement), and the national-religious discourse (Islamic Union of Kurdistan). The results of the study indicated that each political party in the Kurdistan Region has its political culture discourse. The political culture discourse of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, Patriotic Union, Change Movement, and Islamic Union is based on tribal and party, party, civil, and civil and peaceful participation, respectively (4).

Vienna (2019) questioned citizenship policy and the process of politicization of countries during the wave of democratization in Central Europe, Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa. This wave provides a unique opportunity to question identity formation, the creation of political culture (probably how to change cultural heritage), and the formation of individuals' participation in elections. The relationship between political norms and behaviors represents some research topics during the present era. In addition, respondents better respond to this wave of democratization and help us understand the basic principles of the role of citizens in the political process (5).

The literature review of the subject indicated that the majority of the studies have separately investigated the political culture. No independent research, to the best of our knowledge, has been conducted to investigate the cultural components with an emphasis on the political culture among the youths in Tehran, Iran.

Political culture is measured with dimensions, values, attitudes, and political knowledge on the

Likert scale.

Political values are measured with components such as tolerance, attachment and loyalty, and justice. In addition, political attitudes are measured with components such as political beliefs and political feelings towards the ruling political system. Furthermore, political knowledge was evaluated with components such as knowledge of structures, elites, and political concepts.

Research hypotheses

1. The political culture seems to be significantly different among the youths of the five districts of Tehran.

2. Political values as one of the dimensions of political culture seem to be significantly different among the youths of the five districts of Tehran.

3. Political knowledge as one of the dimensions of political culture seems to be significantly different among the youths of the five districts of Tehran.

4. Political attitudes as one of the dimensions of political culture seem to be significantly different among the youths of the five districts of Tehran.

Methods

The present study is an applied, extensive, micro-study, and cross-sectional quantitative survey. Data were collected through library and documentary studies and then by field method. A total of 3,378,207 individuals aged 18 to 35 participated in the present study. The sample size was obtained at 382 using Cochran's sample size formula. The cluster and simple random sampling were considered in the north, south, east, west, and center of Tehran. In the next cluster, a few regions were randomly selected in each district. The main data collection tool is the researcher-made questionnaire and the supplementary tool is

interview and observation. The validity of the prepared questionnaire was approved by expert professors. In addition, the reliability of the questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. In the pre-test, the initial research questionnaire was distributed among a sample of 30 people individuals who were randomly selected. Then Cronbach's alpha was analyzed using SPSS software. The reliability of designed items was confirmed since the alpha coefficient of the indicators of this research was over 70%.

Table 1. Reliability of the studied variables

Variables	Alpha Value
Political values	0.79
Political knowledge	0.82
Political attitudes	0.69
Total alpha	0.78

Findings

Out of the 382 individuals, 54.5% were men and 45.5% were women. The average age of the respondents is 29.3 years. In addition, 19.2%, 50.1%, 26.6%, and 4.1% of the respondents had a high school diploma or diploma, bachelor's degree, master's degree, and Ph.D., respectively. Besides, 54.7% of respondents are single and 30.1% are married; 36.9% are employed and the average household income of respondents is 8,949,152 Tomans per month. Furthermore, 22%, 16.5%, 18.3%, 22.3%, and 20.9% of respondents live in the north, south, east, west, and center of Tehran, respectively.

Descriptive findings

In the description of the Table 2, it can be said that among the indicators of political culture, the index of political value with 51% agreement, the index of political knowledge with 59% to a great extent, the index of political attitudes (toward to the political system) with 66.7% pessimism were raised by the respondents.

Table 2. Distribution of frequency and percentage of respondents to items related to political culture

Indicators of Political Culture			Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
	Political values	N	198	93	91	382
		%	51	25	24	100
	Political knowledge	High	Medium	Low	Total	
		N	225	118	39	382
	Political attitudes (toward the political system)	%	59	30.1	10.9	100
		Optimist	Neutral	Pessimist	Total	
		N	59	68	255	382
		%	15.5	17.8	66.7	100

Table 3. The mean of the research variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Lowest Value	Highest Value
Political Values	3.35	0.922	1	5
Political Knowledge	3.21	1.03	1	5
Political Attitudes	3.24	0.975	1	5
Political Culture	3.26	0.839	1	5

Examination of the mean of the research variables

The mean of political values, political knowledge, political attitudes, and political culture are 3.35, 3.21, 3.24, and 3.26, respectively. According to the coding (very high = 5, high = 4, medium = 3, low = 2, very low = 1), the closer the mean is to 5 indicates the higher the level, and the closer to 1 indicates a low level in the desired variables (Table 3).

Inferential findings

Estimation of the normality test of variables (KS)

As can be seen in the Table 4, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is not significant for the independent and dependent variables as their value is more than the significance level of 0.05, it has a normal distribution, and parametric tests can be used for it. Therefore, the analysis of variance

Table 4. Estimation of the normality test of the variables (KS)

	Variables	Value	Significance Level
1	Political Values	0.896	0.104
2	Political Knowledge	1.524	0.075
3	Political Attitudes	1.322	0.214

test is used according to the measurement level of the variables and the type of hypotheses.

Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Hypothesis 1: The political culture seems to be significantly different among the youths of the five districts of Tehran.

According to the Table 5, the mean political culture for youths living in the north, south, east, west, and center are 3.28, 3.41, 3.01, 3.58, and 3/31, respectively. According to the Table 6, the test statistic is equal to 2.736 in the variance analysis test. The significance level of the test is 0.029. The null hypothesis is rejected considering that the significance level is less than 0.05 and a significant difference was observed between the level of political culture by districts with 95% confidence. LSD test was used to closely determine the categories that differ from each other.

According to the Table 7, the significance level of the test between the two categories (South and East) and (East and West) is less than 0.05, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and the mean political culture is significantly different in the mentioned levels. The level of political culture is not different in other categories as the significance level is higher than 0.05.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of the variable of political culture by districts

Variable	District	Mean	Standard Deviation	Deviation from the Mean
Political Culture	North	3.28	0.883	0.094
	South	3.41	0.723	0.081
	East	3.01	0.853	0.098
	West	3.58	0.839	0.095
	Center	3.31	0.877	0.111

Table 6. Examination of the variance analysis test of the political culture by districts

	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F Statistic	Significance Level
Between the groups	8.421	4	2.105		
Within the groups	290.122	378	0.77	2.736	0.029
Total	298.543	383			

Table 7. Table of LSD test of political culture

Category i	Category j	Significance Level	%95 Confidence Interval	
			Upper limit	Lower limit
North	South	0.24	0.098	-0.393
	East	0.115	0.517	-0.056
	West	0.075	0.025	-0.519
	Center	0.697	0.229	-0.343
South	East	*0.009	0.661	0.093
	West	0.4670	0.169	-0.369
	Center	0.5330	0.374	-0.193
East	West	*0.002	-0.17	-0.784
	Center	0.078	0.032	-0.607
West	Center	0.225	0.497	-0.117

Table 8. Variable descriptive statistics of political values by districts

Variable	District	Mean	Standard Deviation	Deviation from the Mean
political values	North	3.35	1.05	0.128
	South	3.75	0.798	0.108
	East	3.08	0.923	0.082
	West	3.67	0.755	0.091
	Center	3.34	0.891	0.108

The confidence interval due to the positiveness of both ends:

$$\mu_{\text{South}} - \mu_{\text{East}} > 0 \rightarrow \mu_{\text{South}} > \mu_{\text{East}}$$

As a result, the mean political culture among youths living in the southern district is higher than that of those living in the eastern district.

The confidence interval due to the negativeness of both ends:

$$\mu_{\text{East}} - \mu_{\text{West}} < 0 \rightarrow \mu_{\text{East}} < \mu_{\text{West}}$$

As a result, the mean political culture among youths living in the western district is higher than that of those living in the eastern district.

Hypothesis 2: Political values as one of the dimensions of political culture seem to be significantly different among the youths of the five districts of Tehran.

According to the Table 8, the mean political values for youths living in the north, south, east, west, and center are 3.35, 3.57, 3.08, 3.67, and 3.34, respectively. According to table 9, the variance analysis testis equal to 5.893. The significance level of the test is 0.000. The null hypothesis is rejected considering that the significance level is less than 0.05 and a significant difference is observed between the level of political values by district with 95% confidence. LSD test was used to closely determine the categories that differ from each other. As a result, the mean of political values among youths living in the western district is higher than that of those living in the central district.

Table 9. Variance analysis test of political values by districts

	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F Statistic	Significance Level
Between the groups					
Within the groups	305.31	377	0.81		
Total	324.399	381			

Table 10. Descriptive statistics of political knowledge by districts

Variable	Districts	Mean	Standard Deviation	Deviation from the Mean
Political Knowledge	North	2.93	1.097	0.113
	South	3.26	1.005	0.128
	East	3.11	1.07	0.121
	West	3.55	0.916	0.109
	Center	3.3	0.926	0.105

Table 11. Descriptive statistics of political attitudes by districts

Variable	Districts	Mean	Standard Deviation	Deviation from the Mean
Political Attitudes	North	3.56	1.03	0.134
	South	3.4	0.859	0.119
	East	2.85	1.007	0.087
	West	3.52	0.86	0.103
	Center	3.3	0.78	0.096

Hypothesis 3: Political knowledge as one of the dimensions of political culture seems to be significantly different among the youths of the five districts of Tehran. According to the table 10, the mean of political knowledge for youths living in the north, south, east, west, and center are 2.93, 3.26, 3.11, 3.55, and 3.3, respectively. As a result, the mean of political knowledge among youths living in the western district is higher than that of those living in the east district.

Hypothesis 4: Political attitudes as one of the dimensions of political culture seem to be significantly different among the youths of the five districts of Tehran. According to the table 11, the mean of political attitudes for youths living in the north, south, east, west, and center are 3.56, 3.4, 2.85, 3.52, and 3.3, respectively.

The variance analysis test is equal to 9.581. The significance level of the test is 0.000. The null hypothesis is rejected considering that the significance level is less than 0.05 and a significant difference is observed between the level of political attitudes by district with 95% confidence.

LSD test was used to closely determine the categories that differ from each other. As a result, the mean of political attitudes among youths living in the central district is higher than that of those living in the eastern district.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to sociologically investigate the place of political culture and its dimensions among the youths of Tehran; therefore, the results indicate that among the indicators of political culture, the political values with 51% agreement, the political knowledge with 59% to a great extent, the political attitudes (towards the political system) with 66.7% pessimism was raised by the respondents.

The mean political culture for youths living in the north, south, east, west, and center are 3.28, 3.41, 3.01, 3.58, and 3.31, respectively. The test statistic is equal to 2.736 in the variance analysis test. The significance level of the test is 0.029.

The null hypothesis is rejected considering that the significance level is less than 0.05 and a significant difference was observed between the level of political culture by districts with 95% confidence. The results are in line with the theories of Almond and Sidney, Pye and Sidney, Rosenbaum (1975) and those of Jahangardi (2020), Bodaghi (2020), Khaniki and Sarshar (2012), and Vienna (2019).

The mean of political values for youths living in the north, south, east, west, and center are 3.35, 3.57, 3.08, 3.67, and 3.34, respectively. The variance analysis test is equal to 5.893. The significance level of the test is 0.000. The null hypothesis is rejected considering that the significance level is less than 0.05 and a significant difference is observed between the level of political values by district with 95% confidence. The results are consistent with the theories of Lucian Pye, Almond, and Powell (1995) also those of Jahangardi (2020), Jabarnejad and Karimi Firouzjaji (2018), Ahmadi, Mohammadzadeh, and Majidi (2018).

The mean of political knowledge for youths living in the north, south, east, west, and center are 2.93, 3.26, 3.11, 3.55, and 3.3, respectively. The test statistic is equal to 4.119 in the variance analysis test. The significance level of the test is 0.003. The null hypothesis is rejected considering that the significance level is less than 0.05 and a significant difference was observed between the level of political knowledge by districts with 95% confidence. The findings are in agreement with the theories of Almond and Sidney, Pye, Almond and Powell (1995), Feiner and those of Jahangardi (2020), Jabarnejad and Karimi Firouzjaji (2018), and Ahmadi, Mohammadzadeh and Majidi (2018).

The mean of political attitudes for youths living in the north, south, east, west, and center are 3.56, 3.4, 2.85, 3.52, and 3.3, respectively. The variance analysis test is equal to 9.581. The significance level of the test is 0.000. The null hypothesis is rejected considering that the significance level is less than 0.05 and a

significant difference is observed between the level of political attitudes by district with 95% confidence. The results are in line with the theories of Lucian Pye, Almond, and Paul and those of Mafi Foroutan (2020), Bodaghi (2020), Jabarnejad and Karimi Firouzjani (2018), and Mohammadi and Jahangiri (2015).

The present study explained that political culture consists of political values, attitudes, and knowledge, which determine political behavior in any society. The regular components of political culture are interconnected patterns that coexist and mutually reinforce each other. Political culture is a part of the whole culture that determines the way a person, especially a youth, looks at politics, the political structure, and the extent of their role in the political process. Freethinking is necessary for the development of political culture. The development of the individual and society depends on the realization of freethinking, and without it, one fails to be successful in society.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this study.

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