

EXPLORING THE FACTORS AFFECTING POLITICAL EDUCATION IN IRAN

EXPLORANDO OS FATORES QUE AFETAM A EDUCAÇÃO POLÍTICA NO IRÃ

EXPLORANDO LOS FACTORES QUE AFECTAN LA EDUCACIÓN POLÍTICA EN IRÁN



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ABSTRACT: The transmission of political values and norms through education is crucial for global political systems. It enhances citizens' engagement in politics and society. This paper explores influential factors in the political education of Iranian citizens within an Islamic community society. Focusing on Islamic political education values and objectives, it elaborates on principles impacting Iranian citizens' education. It examines the conceptual framework, nature, goals, applications, and dimensions, while scrutinizing components' role in educating committed citizens. This article employs the qualitative document analysis method. The findings highlight the crucial role of Iranian political culture in developing political education. The political culture of Iranians is a combination of participant and subject cultures. Iranian political culture significantly influences political education, driven by factors like family, media, education institutions, government, political and religious rituals, and religion. These factors play a critical role in shaping the perspectives, values, and political identities of individuals.

KEYWORDS: Political Education. Iran. Religion. Government. Islam.

RESUMO: *A transmissão de valores e normas políticas através da educação é crucial para os sistemas políticos globais. Aumenta o envolvimento dos cidadãos na política e na sociedade. Este artigo explora fatores influentes na educação política dos cidadãos iranianos em uma sociedade comunitária islâmica. Centrando-se nos valores e objetivos da educação política islâmica, elabora princípios que afetam a educação dos cidadãos iranianos. Examina a estrutura conceitual, a natureza, os objetivos, as aplicações e as dimensões, ao mesmo tempo que examina o papel dos componentes na educação de cidadãos comprometidos. Este artigo emprega método qualitativo de análise documental. As conclusões destacam o papel crucial da cultura política iraniana no desenvolvimento da educação política. A cultura política dos iranianos caracteriza-se por uma combinação de culturas políticas participativas e submissas. Essa cultura política exerce uma influência significativa sobre a educação política no Irã, sendo moldada por fatores como a família, os meios de comunicação, as instituições educacionais, o governo, os rituais políticos e religiosos, e a religião. Esses fatores desempenham um papel crítico na formação das perspectivas, valores e identidades políticas dos indivíduos.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação Política. Irã. Religião. Governo. Islamismo.

RESUMEN: *La transmisión de valores y normas políticas a través de la educación es crucial para los sistemas políticos globales. Mejora la participación de los ciudadanos en la política y la sociedad. Este artículo explora factores influyentes en la educación política de los ciudadanos iraníes dentro de una sociedad comunitaria islámica. Centrándose en los valores y objetivos de la educación política islámica, detalla los principios que afectan la educación de los ciudadanos iraníes. Examina el marco conceptual, la naturaleza, los objetivos, las aplicaciones y las dimensiones, al tiempo que examina el papel de los componentes en la educación de ciudadanos comprometidos. Este artículo emplea un método de análisis de documentos cualitativo. Los hallazgos resaltan el papel crucial de la cultura política iraní en el desarrollo de la educación política. La cultura política de los iraníes es una combinación de culturas políticas participantes y sometidas. La cultura política iraní influye significativamente en la educación política, impulsada por factores como la familia, los medios de comunicación, las instituciones educativas, el gobierno, los rituales políticos y religiosos y la religión. Estos factores desempeñan un papel fundamental en la configuración de las perspectivas, los valores y las identidades políticas de los individuos.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación Política. Irán. Religión. Gobierno. Islam.

Introduction

The relationship between educational institutions and political systems constitutes an area of significant concern for scholars. These scholars argue that the nature of political education is deeply intertwined with the ideologies and intellectual foundations of societies. Each political ideology sets specific goals based on its theoretical principles. Therefore, the model of political education should provide a coherent framework within the educational system, applying principles and methods aligned with the objectives of political education (Mousavi, 2008, p. 23).

The importance of political education has been recognized since antiquity, as evidenced by philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. Plato viewed education as essential for rulers to form a harmonious state, while Aristotle emphasized the indispensable link between educational institutions and political entities. Aristotle maintained that the effectiveness of educational institutions is fundamental for social and political stability, as well as for the preservation of governance. He advocated that education should not only develop the intellect but also prepare individuals for active political participation, with the purpose of cultivating virtuous citizens capable of making ethical decisions and sustaining the government. Aristotle's perspective underscores the interconnection between education and politics in constructing an ideal society (Smith, 1954, p. 30).

During the medieval and modern periods, thinkers such as Saint Augustine, Hobbes, John Locke, and Kant also recognized the importance of political education in enlightening and forming citizens committed to their interactions with society (Naderi; Pirani, 2021, p. 2641).

In the field of political education, numerous studies have been conducted. Some of these studies emphasize the intersection between political education and citizenship (Fournier-Sylvester, 2014, p. 3; Crittenden; Levine, 2007), while others highlight the significance of political studies in educational institutions (Pacho, 2014, p. 10). Additionally, some works underline the positive impact of political education in schools and on students' political and social participation (Pasek *et al.*, 2008, p. 26). Further investigations have emphasized the development of political, social, and civic education in higher education (Tormey, 2006, p. 311). Colin Wringer's book, "Democracy, Schooling, and Political Education" explores themes such as the growth of private education, the role of education in suppression, the democratization of educational institutions, and the evolution of a distinct form of political education, particularly in schools. The book stresses the importance of understanding political

and social issues for educational effectiveness, both at the school level and in the classroom (Wringe, 2012).

The empirical literature on political participation generally presents a positive correlation between education and political participation. However, Kam and Palmer (2008) question this relationship, suggesting that the idea that higher education directly leads to an increase in political participation is debatable. Their study assesses the impact of higher education on political participation, using propensity score matching to address the non-random assignment process associated with obtaining higher education. The results suggest that after considering pre-adult experiences and influences in the last year of high school, the direct impact of higher education on political participation significantly diminishes. This requires a reassessment of the relationship between higher education and political participation, demonstrating that higher education may be more an indicator of pre-adult experiences and influences than a direct cause of political participation (Kam; Palmer, 2008, p. 612).

In contrast, works like that of Mayer (2011, p. 633) suggest that an increase in education has a positive impact on political participation, while other studies examine both the positive and negative effects of education on political participation (Cross, 2004).

Some studies highlight how educational elements of ideological and political formation can be integrated into the content of subjects such as mathematics, literature, and science (Li *et al.*, 2024, p. 1; Chen; Zhai, 2024, p. 101). Other research emphasizes how political and ideological education is institutionalized in educational institutions (Liu; Xiantong; Starkey, 2023, p. 586). Additionally, some works focus on the role of new media in political and ideological education (Hou, 2024, p. 45), while others examine the function of film and television productions in this area (Liu; Yuan, 2024, p. 12).

In Islamic teachings, political education is conceived as a conscious and voluntary activity, rejecting blind imitation and coercion. According to Quranic principles, teaching flourishes in an environment that fosters free thought and autonomous will. Its goal is to shape individual identity, which is essential for social involvement and political engagement. The Holy Quran underscores individuality within social contexts, recognizing citizens as active members who engage voluntarily through social contracts, rather than in a passive or isolated manner. This approach promotes a balance between personal autonomy and social integration, addressing cultural, social, and political issues within the framework of Islamic political education (Mousavi Oligodarzi, 2008, p. 71).

Political education in Islam aims to develop a society based on ethical values, nurture political talents, and foster religious values. The ultimate purpose is to form citizens who are responsible before God and society (Yusufzadeh Chausari; Shah Moradi, 2019, p. 173). According to the Quranic view, political teaching is seen as a collective responsibility across society. In Islamic communities, various factors contribute to citizens' political education. In Iran, governed by an Islamic system, certain factors are crucial in the political formation of its citizens.

Method

This study explores the influential factors in political education within Iranian society. Iran, located in Western Asia, has a predominantly Muslim population (99.4%), with 95% of its inhabitants adherents of Shi'ism. The methodology adopted was qualitative document analysis, which involves the examination of written or visual materials to extract meaningful insights and understandings of political phenomena. This method focuses on the analysis of texts, documents, speeches, policies, laws, historical records, and other sources to interpret political processes, ideologies, power dynamics, and decisions.

Qualitative document analysis is used to identify patterns, themes, contradictions, and nuances in the texts, providing a deeper understanding of events, structures, and political actors. This approach allows researchers to uncover hidden meanings, ideologies, and perspectives, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of political systems and behaviors (Wesley, 2010, p. 9).

Initially, relevant keywords for the research were identified. These keywords were used to conduct searches on platforms such as Google Scholar and Iran's internal search engines. The Google Scholar search was limited to studies in English published from 2000 onwards and cited at least five times. A total of 101 articles were reviewed, and data and reports pertinent to this research were extracted. Additionally, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran and other relevant documents in the areas of education, family, and media were examined. The findings of this research are presented based on the synthesis and qualitative analysis of the collected data.

Theoretical Framework

Nature of Political Education

Political education is defined in various ways. Some definitions view it as the acquisition of specific political knowledge, occurring both in contexts of formal and informal education (Thomas, 2005, p. 175). From other perspectives, political education is described as the process of cultivating the virtues, knowledge, and skills necessary for political participation, preparing individuals for conscious and informed involvement in the reconstruction of society. Moreover, certain definitions highlight the interrelation between democracy and citizen participation (Merelman; Foster, 1978, p. 443), while others emphasize the formation of responsible citizens aware of their duties, aiming to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that enable active and critical participation at national and international levels (Dabiri; Padidar, 2021, p. 1).

Considering that humans are influenced by three force, intellect, heart, and body, political education is structured around three main axes:

- Education in the field of political perceptions.
- Education in the realm of political values and attitudes.
- Education concerning political and social skills and behaviors.

Thus, political education encompasses the development of knowledge, attitudes, and skills essential for active citizen participation in the political landscape, both nationally and globally (Mousavi, 2008, p. 71).

From a Quranic perspective, education is viewed as a platform for the flourishing of human capacities. Therefore, it should be aligned with individuals' nature, potential, needs, and inner capacities, avoiding coercion or imposition. According to the Quran, humans are endowed with free will. The goal of political education is to cultivate human talents to achieve perfection, accompanied by the development of individual consciousness, fostering religious and innate values, and acquiring the skills necessary for active participation in various political and social arenas. Education is promoted not through force, but by creating an environment that favors free thought and volition. Thus, political education should foster the formation of individual identity, which is crucial for engagement in social movements and political participation (Mousavi Oligodarzi, 2008, p. 71).

A citizen in an Islamic society, as guided by the teachings of the Quran, exhibits a series of distinct qualities. These include free and rational thinking, the ability for foresight and critical analysis, as well as a commitment to knowledge acquisition and a rejection of unthinking imitation. Additionally, faith, piety, and trust in God are seen as central pillars of their conduct. Such an individual is also characterized by a constant pursuit of justice, sincerity, and kindness, along with self-awareness and a robust identity. Humility, perseverance, and strict adherence to laws are equally valued. Leadership abilities, the maintenance of dignity, and the promotion of social harmony are considered essential.

Other important characteristics include the ability to offer constructive criticism, independence, and responsibility. Collaboration, prudent judgment, and awareness of the efficient use of time and resources are also fundamental. This citizen values consultations and is open to criticism, showing generosity and a willingness to sacrifice. Forgiveness and readiness to respond and defend correct actions complete the profile of an ideal citizen in an Islamic society, according to Quranic teachings.

Such individuals refrain from egocentrism and exclusivity, exercise the power of choice and decision-making, observe reliability, avoid betrayal, demonstrate benevolence towards others, maintain commitments and agreements, preserve order, and avoid scattered and intermittent thoughts. They do not fear failure, practice dignified governance, and utilize the capacities of others.

They are future-oriented and fair in their judgments, abstain from superficial thoughts, possess self-confidence, and maintain personal balance. The Quran recognizes these attributes as fundamental to establishing the originality of the individual in contrast with external structures. Additionally, it identifies humans as active members of a society, embedded in specific cultural, social, and political contexts. Thus, the citizen is neither passive nor isolated from society, acting not out of coercion or mere social contracts, but as an integral and active part of their context (Mousavi Oligodarzi, 2008, p. 71)

Importance of Political Education

Political education is considered the most crucial form of education for achieving the material and spiritual objectives of a society. The relevance of this issue in societies is particularly significant in Iran, where the diversity of ethnicities, races, and religions makes up the social fabric. Without effective political education, the likelihood of conflicts and disorders

substantially increases. Consequently, from ancient times to the present, Iranian statesmen and political intellectuals have emphasized the need for political education as a means to prevent such destabilizations (Barzegar *et al.*, 2018, p. 10).

Function and Objectives of Political Education

The objectives of political education include regulating the relationship between the government and citizens, based on laws and legitimacy, enhancing the quality of life of citizens, familiarizing individuals with their personal and social rights, and ensuring social order and stability (Barzegar *et al.*, 2018, p. 10). Additionally, it aims to form citizens who are aware of their political and social roles, committed to the effective fulfillment of their political and social responsibilities. Political education encompasses activities such as citizen training, selection of political leaders, promotion of political solidarity, maintenance of political power, socialization of individuals to the political system, criticism of the current political system, and the global education of citizens.

Political education is a process that develops a rational, critical, and capable personality in political discourse, leading to responsible and reflective participation in political and social scenes. This process results in the growth and expansion of evolving political perspectives, values, and sentiments (Elias, 1995). It aims to cultivate human talents to achieve excellence, develop individual consciousness, promote religious and innate values, and provide the skills necessary for active participation in various political and social arenas in a religious society.

The objectives of political education in the Iranian community, characterized by its religious state, are comprehensive and aim for a deep integration between faith and civic politics:

- **Formation of Responsible Citizens:** Political education in Iran seeks to promote responsible and active citizens who are aware of their rights and duties in political processes and actively participate in them. Political and social responsibility empowers citizens to handle crises and significant events effectively.
- **Promotion of Religious and Revolutionary Values:** Political education in Iran focuses on instilling religious and innovative values among teenagers and young adults, reinforcing the ideological foundations of the nation.

- **Development of Skills and Organization of Talents for Political Participation:** The Iranian political education system seeks to promote active public participation in political processes and decision-making through enhancing the capabilities and organizing the talents of its citizens.
- **Teaching the Principles of Religious Democracy:** Political education in Iran is dedicated to instructing teenagers and young people about the principles of religious democracy and civil rights, aligning democratic values with religious precepts.
- **Strengthening the Connection with National Values:** Political education in Iran aims to strengthen the younger generation's connection to national values, fostering a renaissance of dignity and power among citizens (Salehi, 2003, p. 10).
- **Increasing Political Awareness and Developing Attitudes and Beliefs Concerning the Political System:** An essential component of political education is to promote unity, providing the foundation for the cohesion of the Islamic society based on faith (Eftekhari; Mehjoor, 2016, p. 77).

The aforementioned objectives are essential to strengthen the active role of citizens in society and political processes, thereby ensuring a sustainable future for the country.

Political Culture of Iranians as an Educational Framework

The concept of "political culture" was first introduced into political science by Gabriel Almond. According to Almond, each governmental system has a specific pattern of orientations and official activities, which he refers to as political culture. Almond suggests that the political culture of any governmental system encompasses a particular set of orientations related to political actions among members of that system. This implies the presence, within each political system, of an organized mental structure that spans politics, the composition of society, and the interdependence of society in relation to individual actions. Broadly speaking, political culture is part of the general culture of societies that are dedicated to politics and the official system, shaping the political inclinations and behaviors of individuals, as well as their attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts.

Almond and Verba, in 2015, identified three types of political culture when examining cultural characteristics in the United States, England, Germany, Italy, and Mexico: Parochial

Political Culture, Participatory Political Culture, and Subject Political Culture (Almond; Verba, 2015):

- **Parochial Political Culture:** This culture forms in societies where there are no specialized and clearly defined political roles. In these societies, expectations for changes from the governmental system are virtually nonexistent, and individuals' orientation towards political objectives is extremely weak.
- **Participatory Political Culture:** Established in societies where citizens play an active role in setting agendas, formulating strategies, determining laws, and prioritizing social needs. In this culture, individuals believe in their ability to influence decisions and act as a supportive force within the political system. In this context, individuals actively participate in society, volunteer in social and political organizations, engage in debates, enthusiastically participate in elections, combat unfair practices, and contribute to establishing justice and improving social affairs.
- **Subject Political Culture:** In this type of culture, individuals are passive or subordinate to the political system. Even though citizens are aware of this system and its operations, due to the absence of structures that collect demands and desires, they do not play an active role in politics, and the elites speak on behalf of the people. Their participation in political affairs is passive, and they have minimal commitment to the government. In such a context, establishing democracy is challenging.

It is important to note that these three types of political culture described by Almond and Verba are theoretical patterns and do not manifest in pure forms in reality. Instead, societies often experience a combination of different types of culture, such as Constrained-Dependent Political Culture, Dependent-Participatory Political Culture, and Restricted-Participatory Political Culture. In Constrained-Dependent Political Culture, individuals distance themselves from local political affiliations and extend their loyalty to more specialized governmental institutions. In this system, subjects appear relatively weak as a political force, with political parties and groups having little significant influence or efficiency.

In Dependent-Participatory Political Culture, individuals are politically categorized into groups that are conscious and active, and groups that are passive. The active groups are attentive to all governmental objectives and can influence the behavior of elites in various instances regarding political decisions. In a Restricted-Participatory Political Culture, the subsystems

exhibit more restricted, tribal, and local characteristics in defining desires and demands. However, they have relatively well-developed strategies, laws, and prioritization of needs. In this type of culture, individuals are encouraged to participate politically through mass movements, nationalist activities, local elections, and similar channels.

To explain the prevailing political culture in Iran, it is essential to initially mention the various influential sources that shape the culture of Iranian society. These sources include Iran's history, geographical location, economic conditions, population structure, religion, family, and a unique worldview. Some aspects of Iran's general culture have deep historical roots, whose continuity over time has contributed to their persistence in the political system.

Each of these histories has played a significant role in shaping and maintaining the Iranian political culture. Research shows that Iranian history and society, along with psychological and patrimonial factors, have had a considerable influence on the country's political culture, where power relations have historically been characterized by a unilateral dynamic between the apex and the base of the power hierarchy. However, this relationship has undergone changes in contemporary Iran, although some aspects of the historical political culture have been preserved.

On the other hand, throughout its contemporary history, Iranian society has experienced a clash between the culture of subordination and the culture of participation, exemplified by the occurrence of two revolutions in the last century. Therefore, the current Iranian political culture is a combination of the Submissive and Participatory political cultures.

Components of Political Education in Iran

The components governing political education in Iran include the following cultural elements:

- **Revolutionary Values:** Political education in Iran conveys Islamic revolutionary values, emphasizing the principles and values of the Islamic Revolution.
- **Humanistic Values:** Political education in Iran highlights humanistic values such as freedom, human rights, and justice, which are essential goals of the Islamic government.

- **Education for Civic Participation:** Political education in Iran is focused on teaching citizens about concepts of civic participation, active engagement in society, political processes, and public administration.
- **Education in Religious Principles:** Political education in Iran is grounded on religious principles. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, this political education is based on Islam, providing religious and ethical instruction to teenagers and young people.
- **Emphasis on Independence and Self-Sufficiency:** Political education in Iran emphasizes national independence and economic and political self-sufficiency. This independence establishes a direct relationship between political education and political action, promoting the development of autonomous individuals and communities. Returning to identity and self-confidence were some of the main objectives of the Islamic Revolution. After the Revolution, the aim was to cultivate a generation with greater self-assurance, as emphasized by the leaders of the Iranian Revolution (Salehi, 2003, p. 10).
- **Education of Citizens in Awareness of Individual and Social Rights, Law, Social Order, and General Improvement of Human Life and Development of the Population's Talents.**

In addition to the mentioned components, historical elements rooted in the Iranian political culture, such as tribal culture, centralization, absolutism, fatalistic thinking, resilience and resistance, reformism and idealism, messianism and emphasis on supernatural forces, pursuit of martyrdom, and aversion to foreign influences, also influence political education. It is essential to highlight that these elements may change over time, depending on social conditions.

Factors Influencing Political Education

From the perspective of the Quran, political education is a collective responsibility that involves all aspects of society. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, according to Article 110 of the Constitution, determining the general policies of the Republic, following consultation with the Expediency Discernment Council, is among the management's responsibilities and powers. Moreover, the team is responsible for monitoring the proper implementation of these policies.

Political strategies within the family, educational institutions, media, and other entities are established by the Supreme Leader and have a significant impact, being legally binding.

The status of these comprehensive policies is superior to the constitution and ordinary laws in the country. These general policies cannot contradict the constitution, and ordinary laws must not conflict with the general policies of the system.

Family

In every country, the constitution of the family is based on its customs, traditions, and laws. In Iran, according to social norms and the laws of the Islamic Republic, which are based on religion, marriage is considered essential for forming a family. Within this context, the family provides the child with their first theoretical and practical experiences regarding society and politics. Family experiences contribute significantly to the development of the child's political competence and foster their political skills in adulthood (Mousavi Oligodarzi, 2008, p. 71).

From an Islamic perspective, both general and political education are extremely important, with parents bearing the responsibility for educating within the family scope (Sorkhhesary; Azimzadeh Ardebili, 2017, p. 57). The family institution is considered sacred in Iranian society, and initiatives are aimed at preserving family integrity, both through customs and legal measures (Mohajeri; Javid, 2019, p. 7).

In many Iranian families, great value is placed on respect for age and experience. Iranian culture and religion emphasize deep respect for parents and the importance of their opinions, which also influences the political education of citizens. Research conducted in Iran indicates that family discussions about politics, interactions with peer groups, and the influence of media play crucial roles in political education (Husseini; Mirzaee Malekian; Tavakoli, 2010, p. 67).

The Iranian Constitution, grounded in religious principles, gives special attention to the family. Article 110 recognizes the family as the fundamental unit of Islamic society. Additionally, other political documents, including the General Family Policies (2017), the Family Transformation Document (2005), Vision 2025, and the Development Plans from the Third to the Seventh, highlight that all laws, regulations, and planning should promote the formation of families, as well as protect the sanctity and stability of familial relationships, based on Islamic rights and ethics. The emphasis on kinship, combined with the reduction of governmental burden in caregiving matters, reinforces the commitment of both Iranian society and government to preserving the family structure, opposing its dissolution.

In Iranian civil law, the leadership of the family is conferred upon the man, who is responsible for providing sustenance, deciding on residence, custody of children, and aspects related to employment, education, and divorce, which depend on his consent (Moosavi Viae; Sohrabzade; Niazi, 2020, p. 221). Family policy in Iran emphasizes not only religious values but also the proper upbringing of children. Moreover, it aims for sustainable development, promoting increased employment and social participation of women, which is facilitated by the political education of the children. Therefore, the political education of children is directly influenced by this model of the Iranian family.

Iranian families are diverse and follow a variety of principles and traditions. In the realm of political education, many emphasize the adoption of values such as respect for human rights, justice, and support for freedom for all individuals. Furthermore, many Iranian parents are committed to encouraging their teenagers and children to participate in society and the political process actively. The participation of families in national events, such as marches, demonstrations, and religious ceremonies, also proves effective in the political education of children in Iran. Although these aspects may vary among families, the concept of respect and social participation is firmly embedded in many of them political education.

Educational System

In the contemporary world, educational institutions receive significant attention due to their diverse functions and the substantial impact they have on the comprehensive development of nations. However, these institutions do not possess an independent nature, as each educational system is shaped by its structure, values, and approaches, which are derived from the economic, social, political, historical, and cultural context of the society (Lynch, 1994).

The success of political education in society is influenced by the family, media, friends, and, most importantly, by the educational system. Educational institutions have access to citizens during their childhood, adolescence, and youth, providing a significant opportunity to contribute to the political education of individuals. One of their most important missions is to assist in the preservation of the political system (Jafarifar; Torabi, 2021, p. 95).

The role of education in political formation involves preparing individuals to understand, participate in, and actively engage in the political life of their societies. This encompasses the provision of knowledge, skills, and essential values for participation in

political processes, decision-making, and contributing to enhanced governance. The goal of political education is to develop an understanding of political systems, institutions, and processes, as well as to foster critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and civic virtues in individuals. It also aims to instill a sense of responsibility, promote active citizenship, and a commitment to the public good. In summary, a fundamental mission of every educational system is to familiarize students with political goals for the future, encouraging active social and political participation (Jafarifar; Torabi, 2021, p. 95).

Political leaders and activists from various social movements in different eras in Iran have emerged from educational institutions. The Vision 20-Year Document of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the specialized document on the fundamental transformation of education underscore the universality and public nature of education in Iran, presenting students as socio-political forces capable of playing roles aligned with religious and social policies.

Political education and learning shape a specific type of citizenship known as religious citizenship. Therefore, public institutions, religious sites, cultural institutions, and educational and religious establishments are formed with the aim of improving the quality of political and social life, strengthening social and religious capital, and consequently reducing the costs of social control and increasing acceptance in society (Kamalpourkhoob; Hashemi; Nejati Hosseini, 2020, p. 89).

Furthermore, the Iranian educational system emphasizes that educators' thoughts and actions should foster students' national and international self-confidence. Beyond the content of textbooks, educational content aims to strengthen the sense of self-confidence and cultivate the talents of Iranian youth and adolescents (Salehi, 2003, p. 10).

Government

The political education of citizens is a primary function of the government, which develops conscious, committed, and responsible individuals, encouraging their participation and active role in making social and political decisions. An Islamic government is characterized as populist, based on the will and desire of the people. In it, people play an active and influential role, and their participation ensures the execution of management and the application of Islamic laws. The Quran recognizes believers as having authority over one another, promoting a

peaceful social life based on brotherhood and divine piety, with each citizen having duties and responsibilities towards others (Mousavi Oligodarzi, 2008, p. 71).

From an Islamic perspective, management is seen as having an educational dimension (Alamolhoda, 2012), with one of the functions of government being to educate the population. Political education, within the context of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is based on religious populism, is especially prioritized. According to the teachings of the Quran, the primary responsibilities of the government include assisting in the self-purification of citizens, transmitting wisdom and knowledge, promoting and implementing religious and rational teachings, and guiding citizens toward goodness and virtue. This is due to the fact that, in every society, people follow their leader (Mousavi Oligodarzi, 2008, p. 71).

According to official documents in Iran, including the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, political education focuses on Islamic values, emphasizing the support and preservation of identity. The ideal citizen, as outlined in these documents, displays characteristics shaped by religious and social aspects, such as monotheism, practical commitment, observance of religious duties, strengthening of ethical virtues, adherence to Islamic-revolutionary values, development of entrepreneurial skills and competencies, engagement in social and political activities, and the performance of social roles, considered crucial elements of civic education (Kamalpourkhoob; Hashemi; Nejadi Hosseini, 2020, p. 89).

The functions of the Islamic government include guiding and ensuring both the earthly and transcendental lives, as well as the happiness of individuals and society, within Islamic values. Therefore, the Constitution highlights principles such as human dignity, belief in God, freedom associated with responsibility before God, rejection of any form of domination or submission, justice, political independence, people's participation in determining their destiny, and the mutual responsibilities between the government and society (Marzouqi, 2005, p. 93).

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, a fundamental basis of governance is the participation of the people in various fields, reflecting the social capital and legitimacy of the political system. In the view of Iran's leaders, participation is a factor of solidarity and provides immunity to the system. Participating in all matters is seen as a right of the people and a religious premise, demonstrating authority and trust in the population. Limiting people's participation based on specific positions or political movements is not accepted.

The importance of this issue in the ideology of Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, is clear. In 2002, he declared the year "National Solidarity and Public Participation," and in the declaration of the Second Step of the Revolution

in 1397, he emphasized the importance of increasing participation. A significant manifestation of participation occurs through elections, which generally create emotional and rational connections between the citizens and the government in the system of religious populism (Abdullahnasab; Keikha , 2020, p. 107).

Media

In the information age, political education's speed, intensity, reach, and depth have transformed political strategies globally. The media, both directly and indirectly, exerts a significant influence on political education in Iran.

Domestic media in the country is capable of transmitting values, perspectives, and political ideologies to society through the dissemination of news, television and radio programs, and print media. These communication channels play a crucial role in shaping the political attitudes and beliefs of the population. In Iran, the national media, which includes television, radio, print media, and other mass communication means, often acts as tools to disseminate the messages, values, and perspectives of the government and the political system. The highest political echelons of the Islamic Republic of Iran expect that the national media will develop into a public university.

The organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting and its functions are detailed in Chapter Twelve, and its activities must comply with Islamic standards. This media played a significant role in preserving the territorial integrity of the country throughout the post-revolution period and during various crises, such as the Iran-Iraq war, ensuring the security of the system and providing moral support to the active forces in the war, thus elevating the spirit of the people. In different periods, the national media has served as a platform for various parties and organizations to transmit their voices to society, thereby legitimizing the system, enhancing national trust, and increasing political participation (Eyvazi; Mansoorzadeh, 2011, p. 63).

In Iran, the national media has a profound impact on political education. This media conveys government values, ideologies, and policies to the public, playing a crucial role in shaping people's political attitudes and beliefs. It presents news and analytical programs that critique and analyze political and social issues, which can broadly influence public opinion. Therefore, the national media in Iran plays a crucial role as an effective tool in the political education of individuals and in shaping society's political attitudes and perspectives.

Mosques

In Iranian society, mosques and religious institutions play a role in political education similar to that of political parties in Western countries. In addition to being the origin of many social and political movements in contemporary Iranian society, mosques, and hussainiyas, in the post-Islamic Revolution era, have served not only religious functions but also as centers of political and social activities. This includes duties such as the enlistment and dispatch of volunteers for the war during the Iran-Iraq conflict.

In the years following the revolution, mosques in Iran, along with schools, began to function as polling centers in various post-revolutionary elections. The daily congregational prayers at mosques, often accompanied by brief religious and political sermons delivered by the prayer leaders, play an essential role in the political education and awareness of Muslim citizens in Iranian society (Nazari; Hasanpour, 2015, p. 87).

Religious and National Rituals

Contemporary Iranian society is diverse and pluralistic, but certain religious and national rituals, organized by different social strata and groups, have profoundly influenced the political education of citizens throughout history. Events such as the celebration of Nowruz or the commemoration ceremonies of Imam Hussein, the third Shiite Imam, have facilitated a form of education. The belief and practice of national and religious rituals, whether mourning or celebratory, both in the spiritual and national spheres, have deep roots in Iranian culture and are not necessarily orchestrated by the government.

Governments seek to legitimize themselves, engage, and gain public acceptance by encouraging people's participation in political arenas, such as elections, processions, political activism, and national celebrations. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, processions hold a central position in the broader spectrum of political participation. In addition to acting in elections, scheduled thematic processions have a significant impact on popular acceptance and the legitimacy of the system. Through these processions, the Islamic Republic of Iran manifests its support for the oppressed nationally and internationally (Naderi;, Shirali; Kashanipour, 2017, p. 71).

National Rituals

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, political participation is not limited to the electoral sphere alone. There is significant participation from the population, exceeding 40% of Iranian citizens, in various processions, particularly during critical events. Such events include the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Student Day, and the anniversary of the takeover of the US embassy, known as the 13th of Aban, as well as Student Day, celebrated on the 16th of Azar. The student demonstrations and the Quds Day procession are also notable examples. These activities reflect a political formation that values independence and resistance to oppression.

These processions, which have been held annually since the success of the Islamic Revolution, attract various segments of society, unlike revolutionary anniversaries in other countries, which generally only include the presence of official authorities. This practice underscores the fundamental objectives of political education in Iran, which are deeply rooted in religious and national teachings, emphasizing ideals such as independence, just governance, prevention of dependency, and commitment to defending the oppressed.

Religious Rituals

Among these rituals, the commemorations of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, the third Shiite Imam, are especially revered during the Arbaeen pilgrimage, on the fortieth day after his martyrdom. Additionally, the celebration of Ghadir, which marks the appointment of Imam Ali as the successor of Imam Hussein, is another significant event.

Arbaeen Pilgrimage

The Arbaeen pilgrimage attracts Shiite Muslims from around the world and creates one of the most unique religious gatherings globally. Some of the essential functions of Arbaeen include:

- Defining the collective identity of Shiites and reinforcing their religious self-awareness.

- Providing political power and action from a political perspective.
- Contributing to political, social, and financial mobilization through the religious procession.
 - The promotion of national and religious unity and solidarity among Shiite Muslims in Iran and Iraq aims to repair communication gaps resulting from the war between the two countries and enhance their political relations. This initiative contributes significantly to the preservation of the Islamic community (Mirzadeh, 2018, p. 51).
 - The Arbaeen pilgrimage teaches social cohesion and respect for collective rights, as the twenty-six million participants are encouraged to adopt principles of community life, cooperation, solidarity, and the renunciation of individual rights during the journey.
 - It promotes and strengthens the spirit of reformism and the pursuit of justice and emphasizes the search for justice as the most important Shiite ideal and the legacy of Imam Hussein.
 - Social ethics is another significant function of the Arbaeen pilgrimage, with charity and donation being considered some of its most visible expressions (Samani, 2018, p. 37; Sharifi, 2021, p. 7).

Ghadir Celebration

The celebration of Ghadir is a pivotal event in the history of Islam, recognized by both Shiite and Sunni communities, which defines the leadership and management of Islamic society after Prophet Muhammad. The public's involvement and enduring influence on society and the determination of its destiny are emphasized at the event of Ghadir Khum.

Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, highlights the crucial role of the people, rejecting indifference to the fate of society and emphasizing maximum responsibility and participation. He declares: "The greatest manifestation of the people's involvement in governance is Ghadir. Ghadir has taught us this; therefore, Ghadir is the festival of guardianship, the festival of politics, the festival of the people's involvement in governance" (Khamenei, 2016).

The celebration of Ghadir symbolizes governance from the perspective of Shiite Muslims, where the "Imam" assumes responsibilities for political, intellectual, and moral leadership. Responsibilities include managing social affairs, guiding intellectual and religious education, and leading moral purification.

During the period of the Imam's occultation, who assumes the role of leader of the Islamic community, the responsibility for implementing Islamic laws and maintaining the principles of Islam is assigned to a person who meets the criteria of knowledge and justice, among others (Khamenei, 1996). The celebration of Eid al-Ghadir is highlighted by a 10 km march, which sees the participation of approximately four million people, including citizens from Tehran and other provincial centers.

During the Ghadir celebration, the presence of various authorities, both political and urban, was notable. Approximately 50,000 public servants, including 4,000 educators, such as university professors, were involved in providing services to the population in amusement parks. The event also featured the participation of 350 processions organized by religious institutions, mosques, and volunteer groups, offering cultural, social, and assistance services to those in need.

Furthermore, stands representing both Sunnis and Shiites were set up side by side, symbolizing unity among the followers of Islam. This joint representation played a significant role in constructing an identity that is simultaneously political, religious, and national. This initiative contributed to reinforcing the inclusive and unifying character of the event.

Shi'ite Islam

Every political system relies on capable, efficient, and committed individuals to establish a prosperous structure for achieving its ideals. Islam, in turn, presents an autonomous political system, founded on religious teachings, with educational programs and principles of political conduct aimed at promoting its objectives and guiding individuals. According to the Quran, humans are capable of learning, free, and autonomous (Quran, Surah Ra'd, verse 11), and the welfare or misery of a nation depends on its members' desire for blessings and prosperity or misfortune.

Therefore, in a religious government, the formulation of a model for appropriate political education must be based on epistemological, ontological, and humanistic principles derived from religious writings. In this way, the process of political education grounded in religious texts presents distinct requirements from a non-religious government, configuring it as a form of religious education in the political dimension.

Shiite Islam, in turn, plays a significant role in the political education of Iranians. This branch, crucial to Iran's cultural and historical identity, exerts a profound influence on the political and social thinking of the Iranian people. Shiite values and principles, such as justice, social participation, and support for the vulnerable, are fundamental in the political and ethical education of citizens, acting as spiritual and moral guides for political and social behaviors in society.

Shiite Islam has played a crucial role in shaping the political culture and educational system of Iran. Shiite religious teachings have significantly influenced the development of thoughts, institutions, and political movements in the country. Moreover, religious education has played an important role in forming the political consciousness of Iranian citizens, while the government's use of religion to legitimize its power has also been significant.

Religious Leaders and Jurists

The Shiite clerical organization has had a significant impact throughout Iran's political history and subsequent political reforms. Shiite clerics, enjoying certain privileges compared to leaders of other religions and sects, are known for Shiite culture's dynamic and revolutionary character and resistance against the rule of oppressive commanders. Consequently, the Shiite clergy acted independently from governmental authorities. In the contemporary context, the Shiite clergy utilizes modern mass communication means to address challenges and rival ideologies, playing a significant role in Islamic education through the creation of personalized content.

These leaders can serve as interpreters of religious and ethical concepts in political and social realms, playing a central role in the development of community political thought. In a Shiite society, political education emphasizes servitude to God, as many political deviations are seen as stemming from neglect of this servitude. In this context, individual responsibility, interpreted as servitude, is considered essential in political education. It is understood that an individual who does not act responsibly is seen as someone with no responsibilities towards anyone, including God.

Among Shiite scholars and jurists, there is a diversity of perspectives on the interaction between politics and religion. Some view religion as a strictly personal matter, without practical repercussions in the social context. On the other hand, others argue that politics and religion are

inseparable, viewing religious leaders as true executors of politics based on the principles of faith.

The leaders of the Islamic Revolution in Iran are identified as proponents of the perspective that considers politics and religion inseparable. They advocate the idea that the "Guardianship of the Jurist" represents a continuous link leading to the "Guardianship of God." They argue that God, attentive to the needs of His servants, has established a clear mandate for everyone. In this context, the "Guardianship of the Jurist" is seen as the foundation for the manifestation and emergence of divine wisdom in the realms of education and guidance of the people.

Within the ideology of Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Revolution, politics is considered an integral part of the Islamic worldview. He conceives of politics as a means of educating, forming, and guiding individuals in society, promoting both material and spiritual well-being. According to Khomeini, politics aims to guide society, care for community interests, and direct people towards good. Therefore, he values politics as a noble and virtuous activity, considering it essential for the management and organization of human life (Khomeini, 2008).

In Shiite thought, the concept of "Guardianship of the Jurist" is considered an essential component of political education. This guardianship is an extension of the guardianship exercised by the prophets and divine Imams. Thus, attention to this principle is fundamental to political education within Shiism. Acceptance of this principle induces loyalty to the Shiite political system, playing a crucial role in the stability of this system. According to Shiite political education, such loyalty constitutes one of its less visible aspects. In the Islamic view, the loyalty relationship between the people and the "Wali of the Muslims" (guardian of the Muslims) is considered bidirectional and interactive.

The political system itself, whether in the position of ruler or ruled, is seen as inherently loyal to society and the Islamic community. This loyalty to the political system contributes to the formation and strengthening of a soft disciplinary power in society, whose primary function is education. Therefore, Shiism, as a cultural and political element, continues to exert significant influences on the political education of the Iranian people (Maleki; Torabi; Shirkhani, 2020, p. 125).

In Shiite thought, governance encompasses fundamental responsibilities such as ensuring security, maintaining order, providing welfare and education, and resolving conflicts. These obligations fall to the government, whether it is of a religious nature or not. However, if

the regime is an Islamic government led by a Supreme Leader, one of its primary responsibilities, in addition to those already mentioned, is to guide society towards divine and moral values.

Adherence to this principle fosters a type of loyalty vital for the political system's stability. Additionally, the role of religious scholars and jurists is also perceived as a form of spiritual and moral education aimed at the realization of divine values. This function is in line with their responsibilities in the area of political education (Farsian; Poormanuchehri, 2020, p. 45).

Culture of Wait

The culture of waiting instills in citizens a form of readiness that acts as a catalyst for cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and performance transformations. In the Shiite context, this waiting is directed towards obtaining divine blessings, whose importance is recognized when individuals actively strive to achieve them. Without this effort, the desired objectives remain unattainable. Thus, the culture of waiting promotes internal changes and transformations, as well as the development of patience, resilience, commitment, and initiative in people. This waiting also serves as a source of continuous awareness and intelligence among Shiite citizens, leading to proactive planning and engagement.

This culture is oriented towards the establishment of divine justice, which materializes when people actively strive for it. Therefore, the realization of an Islamic government depends on the will and desire of the people. Consequently, the establishment of a global government of justice requires human effort, which is the result of social and political education (Mousavi, 2008, p. 71).

Final considerations

Based on the analysis presented, it is concluded that political education significantly influences the political and social structures of Iranian society. This education contributes to the formation of responsible and participative personalities in society, providing the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for accountable and informed political participation. Furthermore, it fosters self-confidence, develops critical thinking and ethical reasoning, nurtures religious and innate values, and enhances the skills necessary for active engagement in political and

social domains. This instruction promotes the development of an individual identity that actively engages in social movements and political participation, playing a significant role in the stability and development of political systems.

Considering the influential factors in Iranian political education, including national and religious rituals, Shiite religion, family, national media, and educational institutions, it can be inferred that these elements play a crucial role in shaping individuals' perspectives, values, and political identities. Rituals, religious and cultural teachings, family cultural heritage, the impact of national media, and educational institutions contribute significantly to political education, strengthening it.

Therefore, a deep understanding of these factors and their alignment with the goals of political education can help strengthen political participation and form responsible and active personalities in society. The limitations of this study include the lack of access to articles presented at national and international conferences, the classification of certain information as confidential and unavailable for research, and the scarce literature and research available on the topic.

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