Education, Political Culture and Electoral Participation

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Introduction
Election participation, as one of the most important forms of political participation, has a special place in the discussions of political sociology, in general, and election sociology in particular. While we are witnessing various elections in Iran every year, but in contrast to other political phenomena such as the revolution that rarely happens and we are dealing with rich literature in this field, the election process has major theoretical and experimental weaknesses. The lack of compatibility of research findings on the relationship between education and electoral participation over the past four decades in Iran shows that there is no consensus on this issue, because there was no critical analysis in this regard.

Material & Methods
This paper tries to explain the electoral participation on the basis of education and literacy from the point of view of explanation and causation, not commentary or explanation. The research method in this study is an in-country comparative (longitudinal) method. In this way, the social units (here, the city and the province) are to be compared. In collecting data, a library survey technique including books, articles, research papers, dissertations, etc., and secondary documentary evidence from the holding of the presidential election in the twelfth year (2017) and other documentary data from relevant websites have been used. The statistical population included all of the documentary data in 31 provinces of the country and 429 counties in the 12th presidential election. The "year-province" analysis unit and the year-city are the political-social units with a well-defined geopolitical definition and characteristics of a political entity (i.e., political, provincial, or social). The statistical population of this study is all the cities and provinces of the country in the studied sections. In this paper, election participation is limited to the 12th presidential election. The elections to the Islamic Consultative Assembly cannot be seen at this level due to the interference of ethnic, cultural, and regional trends.

Discussion of Results & Conclusions
The initial analysis showed that the correlation between literacy rate and electoral participation in the provinces of the country (31 provinces) show that there is a direct relationship between electoral participation and literacy rate and there is no relation between gender and urban and rural variables. In the next statistical analysis, with the entry of the educational levels as an effective factor, the previous relationship is destroyed; in this way, the correlation was obtained in the relationship between electoral participation and the literacy rate which was not linear, but there was a nonlinear relation between the levels of education and the participation of the electorate. There are positive coefficients between electoral participation and percentage of total students, and the percentage of MS students and the negative coefficient between the number of undergraduate students in the province and the participation of the electorates. The relationship between the level of students at different levels shows that there is a positive relationship between the number of undergraduate students in a province and the participation in the election and the number of students in a province and electoral participation. Other relationships are weak and non-significant.

The research showed that the relationship between literacy rate and direct election participation is the best predictor of urban literacy rate. Also, the research showed that the relationship between electoral participation and lower levels of diploma and diploma level is higher than direct, but in the regression equation, none of these variables (percent of people with different educational levels) do not have the power to predict the level of electoral participation. In order to solve this contradiction, we try to provide consistent results by changing the level of analysis to the level of the city, by obtaining the conflicting results of the above-mentioned analysis presented at the systemic level (province).

In a separate statistical analysis of the educational levels, the county level shows that the relationship between electoral participation and the percentage of people to direct educational level is direct, with the
percentage of people with a higher educational level than the secondary school level.

The overall results of the equation show that the level of electoral participation is influenced by the level of education of the city and this variable alone can explain the participation of the electorate. The effect on the electoral participation is negative. The research showed that there is a fundamental difference between electoral participation and political participation, and contrary to the modernization theory between education, education and electoral participation (not political participation), there is no linear relationship. With increasing education to the level of diplomas, election participation increases. And with the increase in university education, the level of electoral participation decreases. Also, at the theoretical level, the research has shown that political culture can explain the impact of education and literacy on electoral participation.

**Keywords:** Electoral Participation, Literacy, Action Space, Political Culture, Iran.

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