

Network Analysis of Social Problems of Iran

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1- Introduction

No society is needless of pathology. Special conditions of Iranian society in terms of density and diversity of social problems on the one hand and the need of the political institution for problem-oriented research with the aim of increasing efficiency, on the other hand, necessitates such a thing. Identifying the focal problems and measuring their relationship with each other is the main goal of this research. Social problems are not unique to a specific society, and Iran is no exception. The country faces a wide range of social issues, making it crucial for political institutions to conduct research to address these problems systematically. To develop effective solutions, it is necessary to identify the focal social problems and measure their relationships.

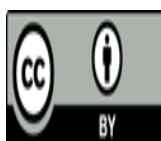
2- Method and Theoretical Framework

This research aims to achieve this through network analysis, using cross-effect analysis techniques and multi-criteria cluster techniques. The study utilized the Gephi software tool to visualize and analyze the network of interconnected social problems in Iran. The data sources included 650 academic and organizational research documents on social problems in Iran. A focus group of experts was formed to identify, clarify, and categorize various social problems by abstracting the 421 initially identified issues into 78 distinct "intermediate problems."

3- Discussion

The results revealed a complex web of interconnected issues, with governance disorders, injustices, poverty, extremism in its various forms, and educational problems emerging as the most influential variables exerting impacts across the network. Conversely, the fading discourse around the Islamic Revolution, depletion of social capital, disruptions to national cohesion, issues with the family institution, state-nation gaps, developmental lags, disrupted socialization processes for the new generation, social

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cleavages, strengthening of protest movements, and amplified social divergences were identified as the most affected variables bearing the brunt of impacts from other problems in the network.

Governance disorders, encompassing issues such as corruption, inefficiency, and lack of accountability in governing bodies, were found to be a root cause amplifying many other social problems. Injustices, including economic inequalities, discrimination, and a lack of equal opportunities, perpetuated a cycle of disadvantage and disillusionment among certain segments of society.

Disruptions to national cohesion, manifested in the form of polarization, tensions between various social groups, and the breakdown of shared values and norms, posed significant challenges to societal stability and progress. Notably, the weakening of the family institution, as a cornerstone of Iranian society, was identified as both a consequence and a contributing factor to many other social problems, with far-reaching implications for individual well-being and societal dynamics.

Examination of the strongest relationships in the network revealed that in 17 out of the top 20 prioritized connections, the family institution occupied the affected role, except for one case where it was linked to religion as an influencing factor.

This suggests that the family unit has been the most vulnerable to threats and it is affected from the major driving forces within the network of issues. The strongest link was between religion and the family institution, indicating the significant influence of religious factors, both quantitative and qualitative aspects of religiosity, on the family domain. This finding underscores the pivotal role of addressing religious dimensions in efforts to support and strengthen family structures.

According to the Betweenness Centrality measure, which assesses the degree to which a node acts as a bridge or connector within the network, the issues of family, poverty/deprivation, governance approaches, and injustice/discrimination had the highest scores. This implies that managing and controlling these four key issues is crucial to addressing the complex web of interconnected social problems in Iran.

The study findings indicate that governance disorders, injustices, poverty, extremism, and educational problems are the most influential variables impacting the network of social issues in Iran. These issues are interrelated and perpetuate a cycle of disadvantage and disillusionment among certain segments of society. To address these problems effectively, it is necessary to identify and measure their relationships and understand the root causes that amplify them.

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Governance disorders, such as corruption and inefficiency, are the root causes of many other social ills. Addressing these issues would require significant reforms in the governing bodies, including greater accountability, transparency, and efficiency. Injustices, including economic inequalities, discrimination, and a lack of equal opportunities, would require policies that promote social inclusion, equal access to resources and opportunities, and greater transparency in decision-making processes.

Poverty, with its multidimensional facets of income poverty, deprivation of basic needs, and lack of access to resources and opportunities, would require policies that promote economic growth, job creation, and social protection measures for the most vulnerable groups.

Extremism, in its various forms, would require a multi-pronged approach that addresses the root causes of marginalization, lack of economic opportunities, and the erosion of moderate discourse. Educational problems, including inadequate access to quality education, outdated curricula, and insufficient investment in human capital development, require policies that prioritize education as a key driver of social progress and mobility. This would include measures to improve access to quality education, modernize curricula, and invest in human capital development.

4- Conclusion and Suggestions

In conclusion, the study findings highlight the complex web of interconnected social problems in Iran and the need for a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to address them effectively. It is necessary to identify and measure the relationships between these issues, understand their root causes, and prioritize policies that promote social inclusion, economic growth, and human capital development. Addressing these issues would require significant reforms in the governing bodies, greater accountability and transparency, and policies that promote social inclusion and equal access to resources and opportunities.

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