



Analysis of Political Factors Affecting the Occurrence of Social Dissatisfaction in the Islamic Republic of Iran

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 10.27834/CSIW.2410.1463.1.36.2Seyyed Saied Hoseynizadeh Arani¹
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Taha Ashayeri³ **Extended Abstract****1. Introduction**

The histories of nations are marked by recurring social phenomena, including protests widespread dissatisfaction, and socio-political unrest. In this study, "social dissatisfaction" refers to a pervasive condition in which a significant portion of the population expresses discontent with social conditions and governmental performance. While socio-economic factors often underpin such dissatisfaction by fostering negative public narratives, political factors play a critical role as well. These include the perceived ineffectiveness of government in addressing citizens' demands, declining levels of social participation, weakened solidarity with the political system, and disharmony among the executive, judicial, and legislative branches. Collectively, these political factors lay the foundation for social protest. Accordingly, this research focuses on analyzing the political determinants influencing the spread of social dissatisfaction in Iran, with a specific empirical focus on the citizens of Tehran.

2. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This study is applied in purpose and employs a quantitative, descriptive-analytical approach within an inductive strategy. Data were collected cross-sectionally during 2020–2021 (coinciding with Iran's 12th presidential term) using both documentary sources and field surveys. The statistical population

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included citizens aged 18 and above in Tehran. The sample size of 271 individuals was determined using Sample Power software, considering five independent variables, a 0.01 error rate, statistical power above 0.80, and an effect size of 0.10 for the coefficient of determination. Multi-stage cluster sampling was employed, and data were gathered via a structured questionnaire.

The conceptual model integrates multiple theoretical frameworks: Putnam's social capital theory, Habermas's political crisis approach, Inglehart's value change theory, Brehm's reactance theory, state-centric security approaches, and studies on inter-branch governmental disharmony. These perspectives are consolidated through Parsons' Theory of Action, which conceptualizes society as an integrated system. According to Parsons, societal integration enables members to leverage shared resources to meet needs and achieve collective goals, thereby maximizing social satisfaction. He identifies four action subsystems—personality, culture, biology, and social—each serving a distinct function in maintaining societal equilibrium. Accordingly, analyzing social dissatisfaction requires examining four key social subsystems: the economy, polity, religion, and the legal system/social norms. Proper functioning of these subsystems promotes social satisfaction, whereas dysfunction in any can trigger disorder and widespread dissatisfaction.

3. Discussion

Descriptive results indicate an above-average level of social dissatisfaction within Tehran's urban population. Inferential analysis yielded the following findings:

- An increase in state-centric social capital correlates with a decrease in social dissatisfaction.
- Higher social dissatisfaction is associated with reduced governmental effectiveness, increased perceptions of insecurity, curtailed civil liberties, diminished enjoyment of political rights, and perceived persistent disharmony among government branches.
- A decline in state-centric social capital—including trust, participation, cohesion, and integration—enhances the emergence of both civil and non-civil forms of social dissatisfaction.
- Indicators of government inefficiency, feelings of insecurity, and lack of political rights are significantly correlated only with civil manifestations of dissatisfaction and do not directly influence non-civil or violent forms.

- An increased perception of disharmony among government branches predicts both civil and non-civil forms of social dissatisfaction

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study identifies several key political factors contributing to social dissatisfaction in Iran: the decline of state-centric social capital, perceived restrictions on civil liberties and political rights, a sense of social insecurity, persistent inter-branch governmental disharmony, and government inefficiency. Among these, perceptions of government inefficiency and state-centric social capital exert the strongest direct and indirect effects.

Strategies to mitigate social dissatisfaction should prioritize enhancing governmental efficiency in social functions and strengthening state-centric social capital. Recommended measures include:

- Increase government efficiency by adhering to the principles of good governance.
- Enhance commitment to implementing social rules and norms by promoting justice and transparency within the organizational system.
- Encourage active participation in civil society by granting social groups genuine authority and a share in the political system.
- Facilitate the formation of associational and voluntary groups by removing administrative and legal obstacles to their activities.
- Foster a culture of constructive criticism within state institutions and increase governmental tolerance for dissent.

5. Keywords

Social dissatisfaction, Perception of government inefficiency, Feeling of insecurity, Government-centered social capital

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