



Investigating the effect of virtual social networks on political activity and the type of attitude towards the political system (case study: Students of Kermanshah Azad University)

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Original Research

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Abstract:

Researchers agree on the ability of the Internet and virtual social networks to provide a favorable platform for the participation of as many people as possible in the process of political activities. The present study was also conducted to investigate the impact of virtual social networks on political activity and the type of attitude toward the political system among the students of Kermanshah Azad University. The current research is a descriptive-analytical quantitative survey. The method of collecting information was the library and field method. The researcher made a questionnaire as the tool used to collect the required data. After determining the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the questionnaire was distributed and collected. The questionnaire was sent as an online link via virtual channels and groups at the university. The statistical population is about 13,000 people, and considering Cochran's formula, the sample size was determined to be 380 people. The data analysis tool was SPSS software. The results of the research show that the use of social networks has a coefficient of 0.477 on the determination of political orientation, the form of political participation, the context of information exchange and political discussion, the context for freedom of expression, the context for political communication and the context for political participation. Also, the level of use of social network has a significant effect on the political activity of users.

Keywords: Virtual social networks; Political activity; Political attitude; Political system; Kermanshah Azad University

Introduction

The expansion of cyberspace has created profound transformations in the landscape of political participation and public attitudes toward political systems. As digital platforms are increasingly embedded in social structures, their impact on citizens' political engagement requires critical examination. Firstly, cyberspace acts as a catalyst for increasing political participation. Social media platforms, blogs, and websites provide citizens with unprecedented access to information and facilitate discourse on political issues. This communication enables individuals to express their opinions, mobilize for their causes, and participate in social activities. For example, movements like the Arab Spring show how social media can be mobilized to stimulate public opinion and initiate political change. As a result, the barriers to entry

for political participation have been reduced, allowing citizens to participate in the democratic process (Vaccari and Valeriani, 2021).

However, while cyberspace democratizes access to political discourse, it also creates challenges in the form of misinformation and polarization. The rapid spread of unreliable information can distort public understanding of political realities and lead to citizens' misguided awareness. Furthermore, online echo chambers reinforce existing beliefs and create divisions between different political factions. Such fragmentation can complicate the nature of political interaction, as citizens may become entrenched in their views instead of embracing constructive dialogue. Moreover, attitudes toward political systems are also significantly shaped by the information and narratives dissemi-

nated in cyberspace. For many individuals, the digital realm offers a platform to criticize and challenge established political norms (Weber et al., 2022). This environment fosters a culture of skepticism toward traditional institutions, as citizens demand greater transparency and accountability. Consequently, the relationship between the people and the government may be redefined with an increased expectation of responding to public concerns (Zhong and Li, 2022).

As a result, the impact of cyberspace on political participation and perceptions of political systems is multifaceted. While it opens up pathways for increased engagement and activism, it also carries the risks of misinformation and division. As society navigates this digital landscape, it will be essential to strengthen a critical approach to consuming information and to encourage inclusive dialogue in order to harness the positive potential of cyberspace in reinforcing democratic processes. Unlike traditional media, which often presents a single narrative, the internet offers diverse viewpoints, allowing users to encounter many ideologies and arguments. This access can result in more informed citizens, as individuals have the opportunity to examine various perspectives that may challenge their preconceived notions. Consequently, cyberspace can enhance critical thinking and encourage a more accurate understanding of political systems (Vaccari and Valeriani, 2021).

However, the impact of cyberspace is not solely positive. The very features that enable the dissemination of diverse viewpoints can also contribute to the polarization of public opinion. Algorithms used by social media platforms often tailor content based on user preferences, leading to echo chambers in which individuals are only exposed to opinions that reinforce their existing beliefs. This phenomenon can deepen political divides and hinder constructive dialogue, as participants become entrenched in their views and resistant to alternative perspectives (Alodat, 2023). Additionally, the immediacy and anonymity of online interactions can foster a culture of rigidity and hostility in political discourse. It is not uncommon for discussions to turn into personal attacks and a lack of civility, which can stifle rational debates and lead to public distrust in political institutions. Such toxic environments can further alienate individuals from the political process, reduce civic participation, and complicate efforts to address social issues (Ahmad Said, 2019).

In conclusion, cyberspace has a profound impact on how individuals perceive and engage with political systems. While it has the potential to increase access to information and empower citizens, it also creates challenges regarding polarization and the quality of discourse. Acknowledging these dual aspects of cyberspace's impact is critical for nurturing a political culture that values diversity of thought and constructive engagement. As society continues to navigate the complexities of digital communication, it is essential to cultivate online environments that encourage respectful dialogue and broad understanding. Considering the aforementioned points, the present research seeks to investigate the impact of cyberspace on political participation and attitudes toward the political system among students of Islamic Azad University of Kermanshah.

The necessity and importance of the research

Political participation is an important topic in political sociology and is considered one of the important indicators of the political development of countries. This aspect includes various dimensions and aspects that can help the political system in achieving a desirable status in terms of proximity to democracy. In fact, the level and type of political participation function as an appropriate criterion for evaluating the legitimacy of governance. Political participation is very important in democratic countries because it allows people to hold their elected representatives accountable and to play a role in governing their country. Traditionally, political participation takes the form of voting, joining political parties, participating in political rallies, and contacting elected officials (Ahmad Said, 2019). These forms of political participation are considered essential for the functioning of democratic systems because they ensure that citizens participate in vital decision-making (Kaskazi and Kitzie, 2023).

Political participation is considered one of the important indicators of political development in governments. This is especially evident in developing countries that are transitioning from traditional to modern societies. Governments are forced to encourage political participation in order to gain legitimacy. Furthermore, the high level of public political participation in decision-making processes and policies indicates a developed political culture and the political development of a society. The impact of the decline in political participation on the legitimacy and authority of the government is an important problem for any social system. Political participation and legitimacy are inherently linked, as political participation is essential for the legitimacy and legal authority of a government. When political participation declines and people become distanced from the government, it undermines the legitimacy and authority of the state (Bagheri et al., 2018).

In the contemporary world, cyberspace has emerged as a powerful medium that shapes various aspects of society, especially political attitudes. The necessity and importance of research on the impact of cyberspace on perceptions of political systems cannot be overlooked, as it has significant implications for governance, social cohesion, and democratic processes. Cyberspace functions as a dynamic platform for the dissemination of information and public discourse. Understanding how online interactions influence political opinions is very important for policymakers and political institutions. This research can reveal trends in public sentiment and enable leaders to address citizens' concerns more effectively, thereby increasing political stability.

On the other hand, access to information in cyberspace has changed the way citizens interact with their political systems. Individuals are no longer passive consumers of state-sponsored narratives. They actively participate in discussions and mobilize for change through digital tools. Examining this change provides insights into levels of civic participation and the potential of grassroots movements, which are vital for vibrant democracies. As a result, examining the impact of cyberspace on political attitudes is not merely an academic exercise; it is an urgent concern for the future of governments. As individuals increasingly rely on

digital platforms for political participation, understanding these dynamics is essential for nurturing informed citizenship and resilient political systems. Therefore, continuous research in this area is necessary to effectively navigate the complexities of modern political life.

Theoretical foundations

Social media

Social media are now adapted to mobile devices to enable people to share information about their lives with a wide audience, and millions actively embrace this new form of communication. It has changed the way information is received and transmitted globally. Users on social media sites generate content, share it, and comment on what other users produce (Swigger, 2013; Anderson, 2022). Since social media has become a norm in society, young people use it every day. Most individuals aged 18 to 24 report using these media extensively. This indicates that the content shown on these sites is targeted at this specific age group. Since young people are constantly exposed to new information through these sites, it becomes more difficult not to be influenced by the information they receive. It also indicates a major shift in social norms that affects fundamental values and perceptions (Auxier and Anderson, 2021).

The use of social media by young people has benefits. It allows them to create online identities, connect with others, and build social networks that they do not have access to in the real world. Young people also use social media for entertainment and self-expression. These platforms can expose young people to current events, allow them to interact across geographic barriers, and educate them on various topics. This relationship with social media is significant, indicating that online socialization may play a key role in intellectual growth and maturity (Mayo Clinic Staff., 2022).

Popular trends seen on these sites may influence young people to follow them, especially political trends. Social media can be a vital space for the civic development of youth. It provides a range of ways to create and consume media and creates opportunities for young people to engage with social and political issues (Anderson, 2022). It opens a door for young people to be able to share and discuss what they want about issues. Increased use of social media may be accompanied by greater exposure to political information that reinforces existing partisan biases and leads to greater polarization between individuals with different partisan attitudes (Klein and Robison, 2020). This suggests that young people may develop strong feelings toward political viewpoints due to the intense polarization of the information disseminated.

Political participation

Political participation is a fundamental aspect of democratic governance and civic engagement. It encompasses various ways in which individuals participate in the political process and influence policymaking and decision-making. Researchers have developed several theories to explain the dynamics of political participation, each illuminating different aspects of this complex phenomenon. One prominent theory is the “socioeconomic model,” which states that an

individual’s socioeconomic status significantly affects their level of political participation. According to this model, factors such as education, income, and social class are associated with political participation, and higher socioeconomic status facilitates greater participation. This theory emphasizes the importance of addressing inequalities in education and economic opportunities to create a more inclusive political landscape (Quintelier and Hooghe, 2013).

Another critical perspective is the “civic voluntarism model,” which emphasizes the role of civic skills, social networks, and motivation in promoting political participation. This theory suggests that individuals with strong civic skills — such as organizing, advocacy, or communication — and those embedded in supportive social networks are more likely to become politically engaged. This model highlights the importance of grassroots movements and social organizations in increasing civic participation. Additionally, the “rational choice theory” addresses political participation from an economic perspective, arguing that individuals make calculated decisions to participate based on the relative costs and benefits. According to this theory, if the perceived benefits of political participation — such as influencing decision-making or achieving policy goals — outweigh the costs — such as time and effort — individuals are more likely to participate. This perspective encourages the exploration of strategies to enhance perceived benefits and minimize costs in order to increase civic engagement (Janowski, 2010).

In contrast, the “identity theory” focuses on the role of social identity in shaping political behavior. It suggests that individuals are more likely to participate when they strongly identify with particular political groups or movements. This theory emphasizes the importance of collective identity in mobilizing marginalized groups and strengthening solidarity in pursuit of shared political goals. As a result, theories of political participation provide valuable insights into the factors influencing civic engagement. By understanding the interplay of socioeconomic status, civic skills, rational decision-making, and social identity, policymakers and activists can design more effective strategies to encourage broad political participation and ultimately strengthen the democratic process. Addressing the barriers to participation highlighted by these theories is essential for creating a vibrant and inclusive political environment (Hornung et al., 2019).

Research background

Hamzeh et al. (2023) in “Investigating the Impact of Social Networks on Users’ Political Demands (Comparative Study of Telegram and Instagram Networks)” concluded that there is a meaningful relationship between the level of activity on social networks and users’ political demands, and the Spearman statistic at a 95% significance level is 0.59, which indicates a direct and moderate relationship. Based on the nature of the modern era, users are reflecting on their political demands and expected levels, and in order to maintain political balance, it is necessary for the political system to monitor these demands and provide appropriate responses to them.

Gholami et al. (2022) in a study titled “Sociological Explanation of the Impact of (Virtual) Social Networks on the Security of Political Participation in the Islamic Republic of Iran (Case Study: Tehran Citizens)” showed that there is a meaningful and positive relationship between virtual social networks and the security of political participation. There is a meaningful and positive relationship between social networks and social awareness and demand-making. There is a meaningful and positive relationship between social awareness and demand-making with the security of political participation. The conclusion is that social networks, due to their functions in information dissemination, spreading various news and the speed of dissemination, as well as capabilities such as influencing public opinion, guiding public currents in society, and sensitizing society to various issues, play an important role in political social awareness, security in the area of political participation, and social demands.

Raisi et al. (2024) in “Investigating the Relationship between the Use of Cyberspace and the Political Participation of Citizens in Bandar Abbas City” showed that the outcomes of this study highlight the need for policymakers and political actors to adapt to the changing landscape of political participation in the digital age. It is very important to ensure that virtual spaces are accessible, inclusive, and provide opportunities for diverse voices to be heard. Addressing political dissatisfaction and concerns expressed in virtual spaces can help strengthen democratic processes and promote greater citizen participation.

Anderson (2022) in a study titled “Social Media Platforms and Political Participation: A Study on the Political Participation of Jordanian Youth” write: This research investigates the moderating effect of some factors on the impact of social media on political participation among Jordanian youth. The findings show that social media has a desirable and significant effect on political participation. It was also found that gender has a strong moderating effect on the relationship between the use of social media and political participation. Based on this analysis, gender positively moderates the intensity of social media use on political participation, while gender negatively moderates the purpose of social media use on political participation.

Zhong and Li (2022) in the research “A Survey on Online Political Participation, Social Capital, and Well-being among Social Media Users — Based on the Second Phase of the TCS Taiwan Communication Survey Database” focused on the frequency of social media use. Through examining and confirming the correlations between social media usage frequency, online political participation, and social capital, they extracted two socialization models that affect citizens’ well-being and, on this basis, offered strategic suggestions for building a democratic society and managing networks. This study used the Taiwan Communication Survey database and employed structural equation modeling (SEM) as a statistical method to examine the causal relationship between these four variables (social media use, online political participation, social capital, and well-being). The data analysis achieved good overall fit with the general fit indices.

Popova and Negrov (2020) in the research “Youth Po-

litical Communication in Internet Space: The Impact on Political Awareness and Behavior” analyze data from two collective surveys of youth conducted by the authors in 2018 and 2019. The sample size in both studies was 1,000 respondents. This research was conducted with funding from the Russian Foundation for Basic Research. The data presented in the article are consistent with the understanding of the close relationship between forms of political participation, resources, and the level of interest in political information and political behavior as a condition for the significant impact of participation on actual political processes.

Research method

The present study is a quantitative survey of the descriptive-analytical type. In general, information collection methods fall into two categories: library methods and field methods. The library study section includes reviewing existing sources in the field of virtual social networks, political participation, as well as in the field of statistical methods. The tool used to collect the required data is also a researcher-made questionnaire. After determining the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the distribution and collection of the questionnaire were carried out. The questionnaire was sent as an online link to the virtual channels and groups of the university. The statistical population of this research consists of the students of the Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah Branch. The statistical population size is about 13,000 people, and considering Cochran’s formula, the sample size was determined to be 380 people. The data analysis tool is the SPSS software. The data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using statistical tests.

Research findings

The general characteristics of the respondents, such as gender, education level, and age, include the following: 160 of the respondents were female (42%) and 220 were male (58%). Seven percent of the respondents had an associate degree, 45% had a bachelor’s degree, 32% were master’s students, and 16% were doctoral students. Fifty-six percent were between 20 and 30 years old, 36% were between 30 and 40 years old, and 8% were between 40 and 50 years old (Table ??).

Social media usage

According to the table below, the most used social media platforms are Telegram, WhatsApp, and Instagram. The least used is Twitter. Internal networks are also used moderately (Table 2).

Uses of social networks

According to the table below, the most common uses of social networks are related to exchanging news, social content, and political content. The least common uses are related to religious content and dating. Scientific content is also used or shared on social networks on average (Table 3).

Type of attitude towards the political system

The type of attitude towards the political system was determined using items in the questionnaire. These items

Table 1. Frequency of general characteristics of respondents.

Education Level	Abundance	Percentage	Age	Abundance	Percentage	Gender	Abundance	Percentage
High School Diploma	27	7	20-30	213	56	Man	220	58
Bachelor's Degree	172	45	30-40	137	36	Woman	160	42
Master's Degree	121	32	40-50	30	8	Total	380	100
PhD	60	16	Total	380	100	-	-	-
Total	380	100	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2. Percentage of social media usage.

	Instagram	Telegram	WhatsApp	Twitter	Internal networks
Not at all	8	0	0	76	0
Very little	8	8	8	8	18
A little	18	18	18	0	24
Average	24	16	16	16	26
A lot	34	34	34	0	16
Very much	8	24	24	0	16
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

include matters in which a political system should play a role. According to the table below, the mode ratio shows that most people agreed with the option "high". That is, social networks have a high impact on determining political orientation, the form of political participation, the context for exchanging information and political discussion, the context for freedom of expression, the context for political communication, and the context for political participation. The average impact of social networks on freedom of expression, political communication, and political participation is higher than the other options with an average of 3.86, 3.83, and 3.70 (Table 4).

Political activity

According to the table below, the mode indicates that most individuals have selected the "not at all" option. For the items regarding willingness to engage in political organizations, willingness to participate in protest political activities, willingness to join or like pages supporting political issues, willingness to attend informal online political meetings, and willingness to manage a political website, the majority of individuals agreed with the "not at all" option. The highest average pertains to peaceful political activity, with an aver-

age score of 3.22. Other political activities fall below the average level. This means that students show little willingness to engage in political organizations, encourage others to participate in political activities, change someone's political views through conversation or comments on social networks, engage in protest political activities, join or like pages supporting political issues, attend informal online political meetings, or manage a political website (Table 5).

- Investigating the effect of the use of social networks on the attitude towards the political system

According to the table below and the obtained significance level which is less than 0.05, the use of social networks has a significant effect on the attitude of users. That is, the use of social networks has an impact of 0.477 on determining political orientation, the form of political participation, the context of information exchange and political discussion, the context for freedom of expression, the context for political communication and the context for political participation (Table 6).

Table 3. Percentage of social media usage.

	Dating	News exchange	Scientific content	Political content	Social content	Religious content
Not at all	40	0	0	10	0	26
Very little	8	8	8	16	8	24
A little	26	10	44	10	10	8
Average	16	16	48	16	26	22
A lot	10	50	0	48	56	20
Very much	10	16	0	0	0	0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4. Final chemical composition of each fertilizer.

Item	Statistic		
	Average	Mode	Standard deviation
Determining political orientation	2.04	4	1.50
Form of political participation	2.93	4	1.18
Context for citizens' exchange of information and political discussion	3.04	4	1.74
Context for freedom of expression	3.86	4	1.42
Context for citizens' political communication	3.83	4	0.84
Context for citizens' political participation	3.70	4	1.39

Table 5. Final chemical composition of each fertilizer.

Item	Statistic		
	Average	Mode	Standard deviation
How willing are you to engage in political organizations?	2.08	0	1.88
How willing are you to encourage others to engage in political activities?	2.22	4	1.59
How willing are you to change someone's political views through conversation or comments on social networks?	1.74	3	1.37
Are you willing to engage in protest political activities?	2.10	0	1.80
To what extent is your political activity peaceful?	3.22	4	1.46
How willing are you to join or like pages supporting political issues?	1.82	0	1.52
How willing are you to participate in informal online political meetings?	2.00	0	1.65
How willing are you to manage a political website?	0.96	0	1.15

- Examining the impact of social media usage on political activity

Based on the table below and the obtained significance level ($\text{sig} < 0.05$) and Pearson's coefficient (0.536), the amount of social media usage has a significant impact on users' political activity. That is, as the level of social media usage increases, the level of political participation and activity also increases (Table 7).

Conclusion

The high level of use of mobile phones and their social networks in Iranian society is such that no political action or reaction can be understood and "measured" without it.

In this research, while considering the status of social networks in Iran, four social networks — Telegram, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp — which have a determining role in political actions and reactions and especially in individuals' political participation, have been examined. The case study of this research was the students of the Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah Branch, and the main issue discussed was: What is the impact of virtual social networks on political participation and the type of attitude toward the political system among the students of the Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah Branch?

In the analysis regarding the level of users of non-Iranian virtual networks, it must be said that a large portion of re-

Table 6. Significance test of the relationship between the use of social networks and attitude towards the political system.

		Usage rate
Attitude towards the political system	Pearson coefficient	.477
	sig	.000

Table 7. Significance test of the relationship between the use of social networks and political activity.

		Usage rate
Political activity	Pearson coefficient	.536
	sig	.000

spondents use these networks a lot or very much, and only Twitter is the network that does not have much appeal for the respondents. The reason for this may be the particularity of this network and its inability to establish visual communications or to have the features that networks like Telegram or WhatsApp have — although this network carries a more “political” weight compared to other social networks, and an important part of political stance declarations, not just in Iran but globally, happens on this network.

At the same time, everyone, even at low levels, uses these networks for exchanging and acquiring news, and this indicates the importance these networks have for such exchanges. Therefore, currently in Iran’s media space, and especially in news production and distribution, of which political news is one of the most important, these networks hold a kind of “news authority,” and this shows that the past monopolies that existed in the production and distribution of news no longer exist, and this very matter can serve as an important variable or parameter in understanding the subject of this research.

For a better understanding and approach to the topic, we mention here the percentage of those who turn to these networks for “political news,” so that the topic analysis can be done somewhat more accurately and correctly. Ten percent of respondents do not use virtual space for political content at all. Twenty-six percent use it at a low or very low level, sixteen percent at a moderate level, and forty-eight percent use virtual space for political content at a high level. Nearly half of the respondents in this research answered that they use this space to obtain political news, which, along with those who do this at a moderate level, reaches nearly sixty-five percent, which can be considered a significant statistic.

Of course, it must be kept in mind that a large portion of the respondents are young students for whom politics is probably not a main priority, and if the research space had been conducted in previous years or elsewhere, some differences in these statistics could have emerged. At the same time, these very statistics also indicate a kind of political avoidance in nearly forty percent of the individuals, which itself can be considered a kind of political behavior — a behavior that is mostly a kind of indifference. Now, which direction this indifference may take at times when political participation or other political behaviors occur, should be assessed in parallel studies and in times such as elections or during the height of some social and political movements and protests.

On the other hand, over eighty percent of students in this research use these networks at a moderate or high and very high level to receive social information. This indicates that social behavior and social information prevail over political behavior and political information for these students. Based on this, it must be said that social networks have made an important part of the students under study more society-oriented than politics-oriented. Now, considering these important statistical preliminaries, which were also analyzed, we must address the main subject under study in the research to see what the status of the surveyed students is regarding their type of attitude toward the political sys-

tem and its components. In discussing the “type of attitude toward the political system,” which constitutes an important part of the foundations of political culture, it must be noted in this research that new social networks and modern media have had a significant impact on determining political orientation, the form and type of political participation, the context for information exchange and political debate, the context for freedom of expression, the context for political communications, and the context for political participation.

In this context, one can see in this research that new media and social networks play an important role in guiding this attitude as well, and in this regard, the averages obtained from the questions related to this proposition confirm that the average impact of social networks on freedom of expression, political communications, and political participation is higher than other options. This means that students, by using social networks, direct their political attitude, and it has had a direct impact on it to a large extent. One of the reasons for this can be obtaining information and news through these networks, which leads to the stimulation of some individuals’ activities to determine the type and level of political attitude.

In the area of “having political activity,” however, the research results are different and noteworthy. In this regard, it must be considered that political activity here is not only activity in the form of presence in political organizations or positive participation, but protest and negative activities have also been considered. Nonetheless, we must note that most individuals agreed with the “not at all” option — meaning they have no political activity, and this shows that political activity as a specific and defined activity is no longer of interest to youth and students. In the options of willingness to participate in political organizations, willingness for protest political activity, willingness to join or like a page supporting political issues, willingness to attend an informal political online meeting, and willingness to manage a political website, most individuals agreed with the “not at all” option. The highest average relates to peaceful political activity. Other political activities are below the average. This means students have little inclination to participate in political organizations, to encourage others toward political activities, to change someone’s political views through conversation or commenting on social networks, to engage in protest political activity, to join or like a page supporting political issues, to attend an informal political online meeting, or to manage a political website.

This matter can be attributed to two factors: one is political indifference, and the other is the absence of official political activity. Especially considering that after the events of recent years and the presence of protests in society and among youth and students, as well as the generational gaps that Generation Z has developed with other generations, a kind of despair, hopelessness, and indifference toward political organizations has emerged in society, which is less seen among previous generations. In a place where even negative political activities were very much considered by previous generations of students, now one cannot see much impact among them, and the political culture in this generation is mostly tending toward a kind of culture of indifference or a

culture of protest toward politics — which is neither submissive, following someone or some people, nor is it limited, as these limits have been broken with mass media, nor is it participatory, as it is fundamentally anti-organizational and anti-structured participation. The results of this can be seen in the low statistics of political participation in the past several election cycles, indicating the existence of a new political culture whose basis is indifference toward political matters or at least toward the political matters prevalent in society.

Therefore, membership in organizations or organized political activity holds the least importance for this generation, and it can be said that by utilizing these networks, they pursue a new type of political activity — one not related to affirming government policies but to make their voice and message heard in society. They consciously avoid participating in political organizations, and at the same time, presence in virtual space and liking or commenting is considered a political activity, which aligns and corresponds with the theoretical foundations of the discussion — namely, network society and the transformation of political culture as a result of it — and shows that political culture in Iranian society has undergone significant changes due to the presence of the waves of media globalization and the creation of a network society.

Authors contributions

Authors have contributed equally in preparing and writing the manuscript.

Availability of data and materials

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, upon reasonable request.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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