

Origin of Youth Movements in Iran : Generation Gap or Democracy

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Received: 30/8/2005

Accept: 28/2/2006

Abstract

The present paper aims to highlight the origin of the youth movements in Iran during the intervening years of 1971 and 2002. During these three decades, youth movement was one of the important social movements in the political arena of the country. While explaining the origin of the movement, two changes i.e. 'generation gap' and 'democracy' have been studied and it was found that the origin of the youth movements in Iran was due to the contradictions between authoritarianism and democracy. Apart from various official statistics and figures, some results of some opinion surveys have also been utilized to analyze this paper.

Keywords: Iran, Youth Movements, Generation Gap, Democracy.

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Introduction

During the last few decades, Iranian society has been revolving around the new phenomena called 'youth population'. This phenomenon has been of utmost importance due to the sensitiveness of the place and role of the young in various social, cultural, economic and political domains, with reference to employment, marriage, individuality, training and partnership. According to the graph presented by World Bank, Iran with 32% population ranks only after Jordan in appropriating highest number of young (World Bank Development Indicators, 2001).

Youth population in Iran generally grew up from

1970s by the effect of the modernization programs, carried out by the Shah as well as the developmental process of 1980s. According to the existing data and figures, the youth population (15-29 years) in the country increased from 4.5 million in 1966 to 21.3 million in 2002 (National Youth Report, Youth Population, 2003:14). In other words, during this intervening period, the growth was four times, with the increase of nearly 16 million people. In the same period, young population, proportionately, increased from 21% to 32% and it is expected that the same pace of growth will increase the figure to 35% in the year 2007.

Table 1 Country's Young Population (Figure in Million)

Year	Total Population	Young	Percentage	Yearly Growth (%)
1966	25.7	5.4	21	2.4
1976	33.7	8.5	25	3.4
1987	49.4	13	26	4.3
1997	60	17.9	30	2.7
2002	60	21.3	32	4.5

Sources: National Youth Report, Youth Population, 2003: 1415

Coincidentally, with the proportional growth of the young population in the country, their movement also become one of the important social movements in the country during these decades. Effective participation of the youths in the victory of Islamic Revolution in 1970s, for defense of sovereignty and territorial integrity during 1980s, praiseful role in the socio-political transition during 1990s (especially from the 1995 elections onwards), are some of the major contributions, which need to be focused. However, question arises as how the youth movements originated

between 1971-2002? In response to this query two hypotheses can be put forward:

First Hypothesis: Origin of the youth movement in Iran during 1971-2002 has been the generation gap.

Second Hypothesis: Origin of the youth movement in Iran during 1971-2002 has been the contradictions between authoritarianism and democracy.

First hypothesis in this article is null and void while second hypothesis is valid.

Theoretical Framework and Significance

A: Significance

Youth Movement: It is considered a kind of general social movements Blumer divides social movements into three groups: General, Specific and Expressive. According to him, social movement is the outcomes of inharmonious efforts, which has a gradual and slow process and therefore the period of this movement is lengthy and continuous. Usually, these movements do not have renowned and firm leaderships and with utopian existence, are manifested in protest or drawings, which is highlighted in various literatures but lacks actual definition (Blumer, 1955: 101). With respect to the cognitive population, the youths of the society are placed between the age group of 15 and 29 years. Usually, the scholars and students have pivotal role in the youth movements who with plenty of time in their hands, perform diligently in this process. With wider networking with the intellectuals and resource of powerful national thought, they enjoy not only greater credibility among the youths but also among the different section of the society. It is because of these facts that the existing political system does not have strength to speed up prosecution for their aggression (Frye Hold, 2001: 161-62).

Generation Gap: Oxford dictionary has defined this term as the breakage or weakness of the young and adult generations in understanding each other (Wehmeier and Ashbly, 2000: 535). In reference to this definition, the idea of generation gap in current article shows a kind of social gap, present in a specific time between young and adult

with regard to their culture, outlook, values, awareness and behaviors.

Democracy: Democracy, briefly, can be defined as the rule of the people on the people with the mechanism of law. This kind of political system is contrary to the authoritarianism and common aspect of both is non-existence of freedom and rights in determining peoples' destiny in the political arena. However, between democracy and authoritarianism, there exist a system, which has diverse intensity and weakness. Theorists have employed minimal and maximal indicators in defining and testing the democracy. Schumpeter, through political and mechanized process, has limited the democracy for selecting political leadership (Schumpeter, 1974: 269). However, scholars like David Held has presented a comprehensive concept of democracy and extended it from freedom and indirect participation to the world democracy, national civil law, international human rights and protection of the rights of citizens (Held, 1995: 267). Robert Dahl has further included the frequent free and fair elections, freedom of speech and access to the resources as measures for democracy (Dahl, 2000: 106).

With due attention to the important point, necessarily the maximum indicators of the democracy and stability of the developed countries can not be applied particularly to the new and shaky democracies of the developing countries (Klark and Foweraker, 2001: 214). The current paper applies the two minimal indicators of 'participation' and 'competition' to examine the democracy in Iran.

B: Theoretical Framework

The theory of Daniel Lerner, particularly the conditions and backgrounds of social transformation from traditional to modern, formed the theoretical framework of this article. With due attention to the connections between modernization and democratization in the political thought and also important place of political participation according to Lerner, have been used to explain the youth movements in the transitional phase. In 1950s, during his study of Middle Eastern countries like Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Iran, Lerner sketched and proposed this theory. Before him, theorists like Lipset, Cutright and Sampson in the interconnected frame work, inspired by sociological observation, theorized and considered the changes like national income, industry, education, urbanization, economy, mean of distribution of work force and communication have relationship with unstable political systems (Bashiryeh, 2002: 14-16). Shortcoming of this theory is its vagueness towards invalid and casual changes in the course of political development, which was settled by Lerner through his study. He has described this original matter as modernization but has believed this as a pattern based on the western experiments. According to him, modernization does not recognize east and west and apply to every country because fundamentally, the problem of this society does not have much difference with the problems, prevalent in the west. Every society follows modernization, in a manner by which they could change their life style. Lerner showed this pattern with four stages:

- 1- Expansion of Urbanization;
- 2- Increase in Literacy;

3- Application of mass media, and

4- Political Participations

Lerner believes that the growth of urbanization lead to increase in literacy and both are linked to the application of mass media, which finally lead to increase in political participation (Lerner, 1958: 46).

In the course of his research, Lerner propounded important question and designed its response, equally. The question he raised is that which country under study, is in the process of transformation and in which direction, by what speed? In response he has notified that most of the people in these countries have the sense of participation with respect to three indicators of urbanization, literacy and increasing application of mass media where usually the transitional leadership are young literate and non-agricultural. He considers the change from traditional to modern life and its intensity as a change in the population figure, which presently are in transition (Lerner, Ibid: 83). By this way, Lerner referred youth movement also to the transitional phase.

Review on the Youth Movements in Iran (1971-2002)

During the period of 1971 and 2002, youth movement was one of the important and effective social movements in the political transformation of Iran. In the decade of 1970s, three factors led to the youth movements: first, increase in the number of university and school students in the country; second, disillusioned youths with arms and guerillas tactics against ruling political system, and; third, political opportunity resulting out of the

proclamation of Carter's Human Rights doctrine and its propagation in the countries, under the shadow of authoritarian regimes such as Iran. Under the effect of these three factors, youth movement intensified in mid 1970s and especially the year 1978 and afterwards. During these years, they put effective pressure in the country's transition through processions and agitations. Nearly 150 agitations were held only in the campus of the University of Tehran under the students' guilds and political groups, during 1976-79 (Ghasemi, 2000: 99). At that juncture, school students too, played greater role in transition through suspending classes and holding agitations and processions. Available reports narrate the story of thousands of gatherings, comprising university and school students in 1979. Six thousands young scholars and students gathered and protested in the University of Jandi Shapour (28/10/1978), gathering of ten thousands youth in University of Tehran (30/10/1978), gathering of four thousands young students at National University (31/10/1978), gathering of ten thousands young and university students at the University of Tehran (31/10/1978) and a combined procession of university and school students and other group at Mashhad (01/11/1978) are some of the examples of youth movements in the middle 1970s¹. These agitations and protests reached to its peak in October in the same year when scores

of students killed and injured. This incident played important role for the youth to facilitate and accelerate revolutionary process.

Followed by the revolutionary triumph and establishment of Islamic Republic and particularly the Iraqi imposed war, the youth movement in 1980s lost its earlier splendor and charm whose struggle now became limited only to the defense of the country's freedom and its territorial integrity. Although, it can be claimed that youths had formed the real backbone in the eight years war, but, the movements of 1980s had lost its vigor of 1970s.

Gradually in 1990s, with the criticism of the government performances, youth movement found the fertile ground for its revival from the stagnation. In the middle of this decade, it once again culminated and performed effectively in the country's transition. During this stage, with their extensive participation in the presidential election of 1998 and by encouraging others to take part in the electoral process, could brought serious impact on the election results. The year after the election, youth movement became one important movement, which by holding processions, meetings, guild and non-guilds gathering brought major impact on the country's transformation. Incidents in the month of July 2000 in the hostel premise of University of Tehran and later happenings, especially in the initial days to the year 2002 show effective presence of youth in the socio-political arena of the country.

1. For more information on the gatherings, see: Islamic Republic Documentation Center, Archive Section, code 12009/1, no. 96, entitled "Islamic Revolution and Student Movements" nos. 12, 21, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, and 39.

Whether Generation Gap was the Source of Origin of Youth Movement in Iran?

With the culmination of the youth movement of 1980s, many European and American socio-political thinkers propounded that whether there existed any generation gap among youth and adult and if there was gap in the behavior of protest? In response to this question, scholars and theorists presented spectral arguments. Margaret Meed believed that there existed generation gap between young and adults and defended that the phenomenal presence of this gap and origin of the youth movement are linked to each other. Further, he said that modern cultural pattern was shaped through the prevailing cultural differences between youth and adult. Second group of theorists such as Adelinen, Lispet, and Lobel, however considered that young and adults do not have severe value differences. According to them the differences between the generations are merely related to the useful tools of similarity rather than the differences in values. Third theory is based on the presented visions, which argued that there existed some gap between the generations but must be noted that similar values may possibly form different action (Bengston, 1975: 366).

Among above-mentioned three viewpoints, first, analyze the youth movements from the perspective of generation gap. According to this theory, youth movement, with the emphasis on manifested contrast between young and adults has placed generations equal to our expectations. They consider youth movements as manifestation of divergence in generations (Cheferz, 2004: 40).

But, to what extent the youth movements had generation gap during the last three decades? Before taking up this question, it must be inquired that fundamentally, whether there existed any generation gap in Iran, on which youth movement came into being? In Iran too, there are spectral views regarding the presence of generation gap. One group believes in the generation gap whereas others reject them. These views can be divided into three groups:

The first group consists with the experts who have started the debate of generation gap. Referring to generation gap H. Qadri see gap between tradition and modernity, Islamic Revolution and inefficient government as three factors for the cultural gap and generation split in Iran (Qadri, 2004: 81-82). With regards to Iran confronting with modernity, H. Aghazari has also assessed that the society exposed to a generation separation (Aghazari, 2004; 161). Referring to the historicity of generation gap before the revolution, G. A. Tavassoli, considered the unexpected and quick changes and political transformation as a cause of expansion and split between generations (Tavassoli, 2004: 243).

Second group of scholars are believers of the generation gap in the country. Pointing to the growth of young population and cultural changes, Abdollahian acknowledged that Iran is encountered with the generation gaps, not generation separation (Abdollahian, 2004: 258). Through his study of the values between fathers and sons, K. Taimuri has also concluded that generation gap is evident in the society as a general phenomena (Taimuri, 1998: 63).

Third group of researchers consider the non-existence of generation gap in the country. In his

research, Jalili found that fundamentally, there existed no gap between the generations; however, the presence of some insignificant differences is nucleolus of every society (Jalili, 2000: 71). Furthermore, by studying the collective values between mothers and daughters, Tavakkoli elaborated that differences are virtually insignificant and worthless (Tavakkoli, 2004: 376).

Thus, the above viewpoints discuss the existence and non-existence of the generation gap in Iran. Secondary analyses of the opinion survey at the national level show that third viewpoint was very near to the actuality and in the course of three decades (1971-2002) despite some differences, there has been no generation gap in Iranian society

with regard to values, views, culture, thoughts and actions. To prove the idea, we have been highlighting some of the national opinions.

1- National Opinion Survey of 1974: National opinion survey of 1974 was used to examine the generation gap in 1970s. As the indexes in the table show, there existed some instances of the differences between young generation (16-34 years) and adults (35-54 years) although, this disparity is not to the extent that can be applied for the gap. According to the Table 2, 88% young and 93% adult have alike and mutual understanding (i.e. young with adult and adult with young), which is being presented below:

Table 2 Comparative study of the information, views and acts of young and adult in 1974*

Serial	Subjects	Young (%)	Adult (%)	Differences
1	Permanent offering of obligatory prayers	74	92	18
2	Fasting in Ramadhan	73	85	12
3	Agreement of opinion on the non-existence of force for the education of children	93	93	0
4	Agreement on share from life	90	87	3
5	Agreement on working of women out side the house (married)	20	21	1
6	Preference to marry in the family	35	46	11
7	Preference to veiled women over unveiled	69	80	11
8	Scale of alikeness and differences with other generation	88	93	5
Average differences in the opinion				7.7

* Above views have been taken from the pages 110, 157, 159, 160, 163, 164, 179 and 180 of the National Opinion Survey of the year 1974.

Sources: Asadi, 1978 (different pages).

2- National Opinion Survey of 1996: Result of the opinion survey of the year 1996 also refers

to the non-existence of the generation gap in the country. According to the opinion survey of

Origin of Youth Movements in Iran: Generation Gap or Democracy

1974, the differences in opinion was 7.7%, which was increased to 4.1% in the opinion survey. Not only these but in the most of the

indicators used during the survey, no virtual connections were found between various ages and views.

Table 3 Comparative study of information; views and action of young and adult in 1996*

Serial	Subjects	Young (%)	Adult (%)	Differences
1	Against the physical punishment to child	93	92	1
2	Agreement on the association of son and daughter before marriage	73	67	6
3	Agreement on executing program for family arrangement	97	97	0
4	Agreement on the importance of honesty in life	94	94	0
5	Agreement on the importance of wealth in life	91	90	1
6	Rate of agreement on share from life	91	90	0
7	Agreement on the concept that without party politics, no work can be done	80	82	2
8	Agreement on the concept of force against force	43	49	6
9	Agreement on prior-destiny	65	70	5
10	Agreement on working of women out side the house	55	53	2
11	Priority to the family marriage	26	33	7
12	Pilgrimage to the holy places (too much or occasional)	64	73	9
13	Offering and ablution (too much or occasional)	72	78	6
14	Giving alms (Fitriyeh)	90	95	5
15	Information that distance of America is more or England	82	70	12
Average differences in the opinion				4.1

* Views are based on the Opinion Survey conducted in 1996 Figures taken from the pages 110, 113, 122, 128, 241, 271, 351, 357, 378, 380, 397, 398, 400, 417 and 478.
Sources: Mohseni, 2001 (different pages)

3- National Opinion Survey of 2001: Result of the national survey conducted in 2001 also shows that there has been no generation gap in the

country. It claims even that generation gap, comparatively has lessened in the post-revolutionary years.

Table 4 comparative study of values and views of the young and adult in 2001

Serial	Subjects	Young	Adult	Difference
1	Agreement on increasing oppression and discrimination in the country	60	57	3
2	Agreement of on increasing party politics in the country	88	86	2
3	Agreement on increasing insecurity in the country	53	51	2
4	Agreement on limited political freedom in the country	47	42	5
5	Agreement on increased illegitimate relations in the country	66	63	3
6	Rate of consent for charitable possibilities in the family	64	52	12
7	Participation in Friday's sermon (usual or occasional)	21	34	13
8	Accomplishment of religious duties (prayers, fasting)	75	86	11
9	Belief in secularism (de-linking religion & politics)	37	35	2
10	Belief in the reform of existing political system or changes in its fundamentals	63	69	6
11	Belief that government has similar view for all nationalities	63	69	6
12	Rate of consultation with the family figures (average or more)	86	91	5
Average differences between young and adults				5.8

Sources: National Planning Book, 2002 (different pages)

As has been showed from the above results, the generation gap was not present in the period under study and therefore that was not the origin of youth movements.

Contradictions between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Origin of Youth Movement

If generation gap was not the source of the origin in Iran then can we declare the contradictions between authoritarianism and democracy as the origin of this movement? If it affirms that the youth movement appeared between the two fronts of authoritarianism and democracy, we can conclude that its origin was the oppositeness of those fronts, not the generation gap. To show the oppositeness, we will first study the background of

political participation in the country and then on the basis of two indicators of democratic setting i.e. participation and competition, origin of youth movement will be fixed.

Background of Political Participation

In the section of theoretical framework, three factors of urbanization, literacy and application of mass media were considered as the backgrounds for political participations. Here will study the same backgrounds again, with regard to Iran.

a) Urbanization: On the basis of figures and available statistics, urban population during the last three decades, has increased to nearly 4.5 fold, and reached from 9.7 million people in 1965 to 42 million in 2001 which means it increased from

Origin of Youth Movements in Iran: Generation Gap or Democracy

38% in 1965 to 64% in 2001. In this way, the rural population of the country declined to 26% from 62% in 1965 to 36% in 2001. According to the

data presented by World Bank, Iran in 2001, ranked 63rd among the urbanized country in the world.

Table 5 Urban Transition in Iran (Figure in Million)

Year	Total population	Number of cities	Urban population	%	Rural population	%
1966	25.7	271	9.7	38	15.9	62
1976	33.7	373	15.8	47	17.8	53
1986	49.4	496	16.8	56	22.6	56
1992	55.8	612	31.8	57	24	43
1997	60	747	36.8	61	23.2	39
2002	65	803	41.8	64	23	36

Sources: Annual Statistical Report, 2003: 50; Second economic, social and cultural development plan, 1994, pp. 28-68

b) Literacy: Briefly, literate is as a person who can at least read and write one language. Literacy in Iran, particularly in the last three decades has seen amazing growth. According to the available figure and statistics, from 5.5 million literate in 1966 to 41.5 million people in 1997, and increase from 28.6% in

1966 to 47.4, 61.7, 74 and 79.5 in the years 1976, 1986, 1992 and 1997 respectively and further, it is believed that this figure might reached to above 90% in 2007. The literacy in the cities, during 1966-2002 increased from 50% to 90% whereas the villages seen this increase from 15% to 75%.

Table 6 Rate of Literacy level in the Country (figure in million)

Year	Population (6 years or more)	Literate population	% Literacy	% Urban literacy	% Rural literacy
1966	19.3	5.5	28.6	50.4	15.1
1976	27.1	12.8	47.4	65.4	30.5
1986	38.7	23.9	61.7	73.1	48
1996	52.2	41.5	79.5	85.7	69.3
2002	56	47	85	91	76

Sources: National Youth Report-Education and Literacy level, pp. 27-28.

c) Cumulative application of media: From the second half of the 20th century, there was enormous growth and expansion of mass media in the country. According to the available figures and statistics:

I. Number of publication in the country increased from 203 in 1971 to 1280 in 2002. In other words, during these three decades, the publication grew to six folds.

Table 7 Growth in the Country's Publications

Year	1971	1976	1986	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Number	203	82	320	662	799	803	983	1019	1280

Sources: Rabiee, 2002 p. 140; Annual Statistical Report, 2003: 637.

By this way, the number of national dailies grew from 600 thousands in 1970 to 1.650 thousands in 1996, which further grew to 3300 thousands in 2000 (8 fold growth). Thus, for every one thousand population in 1970, fourteen newspapers were published and circulated. This figure reached to 26 in 1996 and 53 in 2001 (UNESCO Annual Report, 1999: 194; Behrampur, 2002: 89).

II. On an average, in 1971, 29 thousand hours radio and television programs were produced, which grew to 44.5 thousand hours in 1992 and further reached to 201 thousand hours in 2002. In other words, the production rate of programs for radio and television in the last three decades increased six folds.

Table 8 Programs production in radio and Television (Figure in 1000 hrs)

Year	1971	1976	1986	1991	1996	1999	2002
Radio	25	32	29	39	95	140	165
Television	4	4	4	5.5	19	24	36
Total	29	36	33	44.5	114	164	201

Sources: Annual Statistical Report, 2003: 620-628.

III. Number of cinemas in the country also grew from 55 in 1953 to 311 in 2002. In other words, Cinemas increased six fold (Mehrabi, 1985: 492; Annual Statistical Report, 2003: 635).

IV. Use of publications, radio and television increased extensively during those years. According to one of the opinion survey of 1974, 32% people had access to the publications; 66% families in cities and 8% in the villages owned television sets in which 85% viewed programs on daily basis (Asadi, 1978: 38). In other words, 36% Iranian families owned television and nearly 30% of the total population enjoyed televised programs. According to the survey conducted in 1996, the

figure of people using television grew to 80% while the use of publication increased to nearly 43% (Mohseni, 2001: 150, 220). On the result of a 2003 survey, the figure of people using television and publications have increased further to 90% and 62% respectively. Thus during 1971 and 2003, television viewers grew from 30% to 90%, with 60% increase whereas publication in the same period increased from 32% to 62%, with 30% increase. In sum, the figures show that in every three areas of urbanization, literacy and mass media, country has seen extensive progress during the last three decades and this process is still continues.

Contradictions between Authoritarianism and Democracy

This section of the paper will be dealing with the contradictions between the fronts of authoritarianism and democracy on the basis of the two indicators i.e. participation and competition, in 1970s and 1990s.

i. Participation in 1970s: In this decade (before the Islamic Revolution), extent of political participation was very few. Result of the national opinion of 1974 shows that rate of the peoples' participation in the parliamentary election was nearly 30% (Asadi, 1978: 216). Before the coup d'etat of August 1953, the authoritarian Pahlavi regime had marginalized the political parties, a channel of political participation, to the extent that only two parties were left in the political arena in 1970s. Years later, these two party units were also resurrected under government pressure, in which people membership became compulsory (Modirshanehchi, 2002: 269). Further, most of the free publication as the fourth estate of democracy and important channel for peoples' participations were banned. According to the figure, the number of publications declined from 1497 in 1940s to 1150 and 341 during 1950s and 1960s, respectively. It further decline in 1970s to 227 (Berzin, 1992: 31).

ii. Participation in 1990s: In this decade (before the election of June 1998), peoples' participation in the election declined, comparatively from the earlier years of Islamic Revolution. According to the available data, nearly 67.4% people had participated in the earlier phase of Presidential elections (1980). This figure declined in the 6th Presidential election (1994) to 50.6%.

iii. Competition in 1970s: In this decade (before the revolution), political competition was less splendidous. For example, in the 24th Majlis elections (1975), 1349 persons contested the political competition (Keyhan Newspaper, August 1975: 5). If we compare this figure with the country's population, it will be found that on every one million 3.6 person became candidate for Majlis.

iv. Competition in 1990s: In this decade (before the election of June 1998), political competition decline, in comparison to the previous years. The number of contesting candidates in Majlis, declined from 9 on every one million population in the first Majlis election to 5.5 persons in the 5th Majlis election (1996). Similarly, rejection of the candidature in the Majlis election increased from 12% in the first election to 36.6% in the 5th Majlis elections.

Table 9 Peoples' Participation in Majlis and Presidential Elections

Elections	Year	Possessing qualifications	Votes polled	Percentage of participation
President	1980	20.9	14.1	67.4
Majlis	1980	20.8	10.8	52
President	1982	22.6	14.5	64.2
Majlis	1985	24.1	15.6	64
President	1986	25.9	14.2	54.7
Majlis	1989	27.9	16.7	59.7
President	1990	30.1	16.4	54.5
Majlis	1992	32.4	18.7	57.8
President	1994	33.1	16.7	50.6
Majlis	1996	34.7	24.6	71.1
President	1998	26.4	29.1	79.9
Majlis	1999	38.7	26	67
President	2000	42.1	28.1	66.7
Majlis	2002	46.3	23	51

Sources: www.moi.ir

Table 10 Political Competition in Majlis Elections

Phase	Year	Candidates	Rejected candidature	% Accepted candidates	% Rejected candidates	No. of candidate per million
Pre-Revolution	1975	1349	N.A	N.A	N.A	3.6
1 st	1980	3694	447	88	12	9
2 nd	1985	1592	266	83.3	16.7	2.8
3 rd	1989	1999	333	83.4	16.6	3.3
4 th	1993	3233	827	74.5	25.5	6.5
5 th	1996	5366	1885	65.4	34.6	5.5
6 th	2000	6853	571	91.7	8.3	9.7
7 th	2004	8172	2185	73.3	26.7	8.9

Sources: www.moi.ir

Origin of Youth Movements in Iran: Generation Gap or Democracy

As the figures and statistics related to the two indicators of participation and competitions have showed, with the growth of urbanization, literacy and mass media, political participation of the people expanded in 1970s and 1990s. During these years, democratic forces stood before the authoritarian front, as political sphere of the country revolved around the oppositeness of these two fronts. These oppositeness, in 1970s manifested in the revolutionary forces under the leadership of Khomeini against the Shah's regime, whereas in 1990s, it manifested in the forces of reformation under the leadership of Mohammad Khatami against the conservatives.

If we consider Islamic Revolution and election of June 1998 opposite to these two fronts, we can said origin of the youth movement has been this front because revolutionary process and also in the election of June 1998, youth movements found equally against the authoritarianism. Activities of those movements in the decade of 1970s were to turn down the authoritarian Pahlavi regime. Following are the steps, taken by the youth movements:

a. Reproduction of revolutionary thoughts of A. Shariati, among the masses: Youths found Shariati as important channel. They reproduced his revolutionary thoughts and propagated them through records, cassettes of his speeches among the families, classmates, prayer gatherings and other public places, which played very effective role in awakening people to participate in the revolutionary activities.

b. Reproduction of Khomeini's thought: Under the literary effect of Shariati's concept of Islam

and Shiism, gradually they accepted Imam Khomeini as the leader in their combat against regime. Through distributing pamphlets, prospectus, manifestoes and his speech cassettes, they played effectively in turning peoples' opinion too.

c. Expansion of combats: Youth movements during 1976-79 and especially from the month of October 1979, along with the cancellation of institutions and universities moved to the streets and played effective role in expanding combats against the regime.

Youth movement, thus, in the election of June 1998 had played major role in the victory of Khatami as a candidate of reformation, civil society and rights of citizen. Researches show that university and school students played effective part in Khatami's victory, by rendering people to participate in the election and vote for him (Abdi, 2000: 85). Other surveys also show that large participation of youth in this election increase the vote ratio of Khatami. On the basis of the result of the opinion survey, scale of youth participation in the election (87%), was almost 7%, more than the average peoples' participation (80%). Therefore, 83.7% youths voted for Khatami, as the holder of democracy and only 8.1% of them voted in favour of Nateq Nuri, as a holder of conservatism (Sheikh, 1998: 30,65), and in this way, the average vote polled for Khatami and Nateq Nuri was 69% and 24%, respectively.

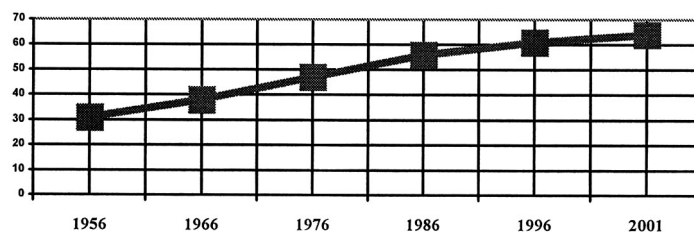
As has been seen, thus, the intervening decades of 1970s and 1990s, as the years of rise of youth movements in Iran, country's sphere was encountering with the two fronts of authoritarian

and democratic and youth movement placed besides the forces of the democratic front, against the authoritarianism. Therefore, it can be said that origin of the youth movement in Iran, basically was the oppositeness of those two fronts, rather than the generation gap. The relationship of that movement with 80 years old Khomeini and 50 years old Khatami are the edifice, drawn by youths as abortive line, which further shows the origin,

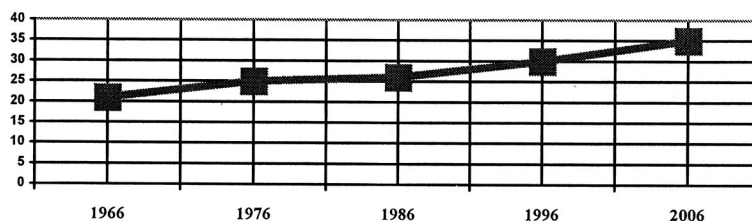
they searched out in the political oppositeness of the two fronts of authoritarian and democracy.

Following graphs in Appendix show the growth in urbanization, literacy, mass media and their relations with the youth population in the last three decades. These changes are due to the growing inclination of peoples' political participations and even the youth maneuvering as well as oppositeness of authoritarian and democratic systems.

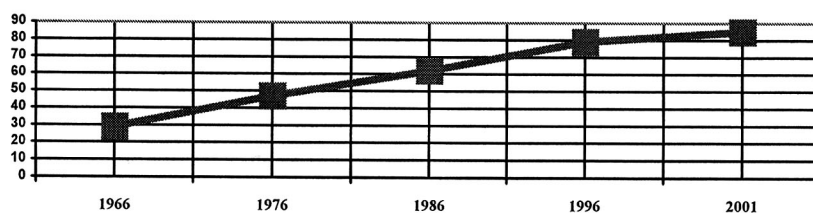
Appendix



Percentage of Urbanization

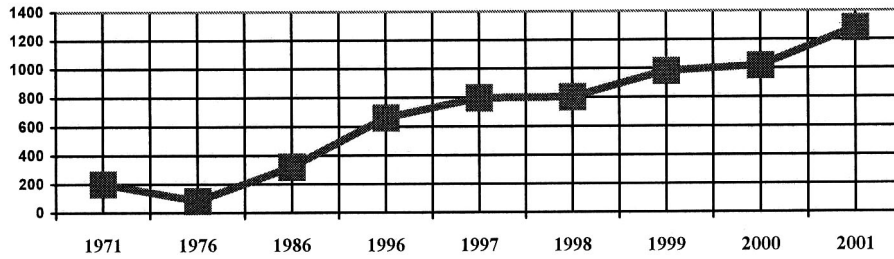


Percentage of Youth Population

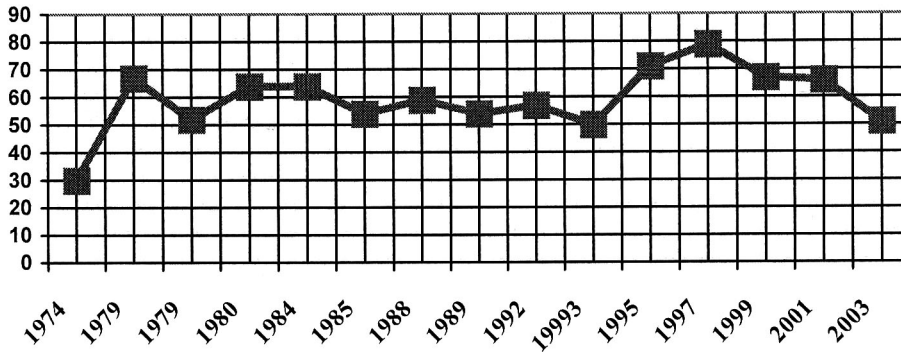


Percentage of Literacy

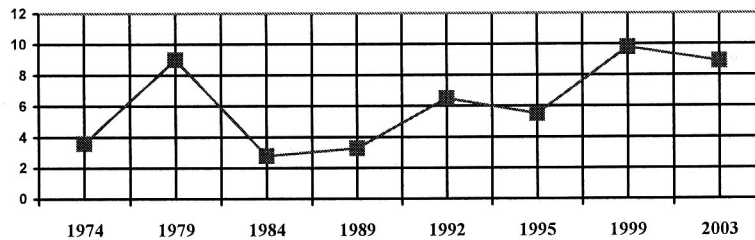
Origin of Youth Movements in Iran: Generation Gap or Democracy



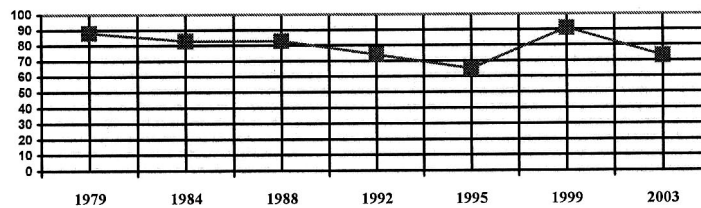
Application of Mass Media (No. of publications)



Percentage of People's Participation in Majlis and Presidential Elections



Political Competition in Majlis Elections (No. of candidates/million)



Percentage of the Accepted Candidature in Majlis Elections

Conclusion

Pointing to the phenomenal growth of young population in Iran and the emergence of youth movements, this article has highlighted the origin

of this movement in the decades of 1970-2000. First, it attempted to clarify various theories regarding the generation gap in Iran and the west as well as the origin of the movement in generation

gap, and then followed by the secondary analysis of the national surveys of 1974, 1998 and 2001, it showed that despite some of the differences between young and adult, fundamentally, there was no generation gap existed in this period in Iran and therefore it can not be the source of the origin of youth movements. Hypothetically, two fronts of authoritarianism and democracy as origin of the youth movements were studied and it was concluded that the growth of the background of the political participation in Iran (urbanization, literacy and mass media) in the decades of 1970s and 1990s gave rise to the democratic indicators, leading to the widening horizon of the youth movement.

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خاستگاه جنبش جوانان در ایران

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دریافت: ۱۳۸۴/۶/۸

پذیرش: ۱۳۸۴/۱۲/۹

هدف این مقاله تبیین خاستگاه جنبش جوانان ایران در مقطع زمانی ۱۳۵۰-۱۳۸۰ می باشد. در این سه دهه با افزایش جمعیت جوان کشور از ۷ میلیون نفر (۲۱ درصد جمعیت کشور) به بیش از ۲۱ میلیون نفر (۳۲ درصد جمعیت)، جنبش جوانان به یکی از جنبشهای مهم در عرصه سیاسی اجتماعی کشور مبدل شده است. برای تبیین خاستگاه این جنبش در متغیر «شکاف نسلی» و «دموکراسی» بررسی شده و نتایج حاصله نشان می دهد خاستگاه جنبش جوانان در ایران تقابل دموکراسی و اقتدارگرایی بوده است نه شکاف نسلی. در تحلیلهای این مقاله علاوه بر آمارهای رسمی از نتایج برخی نظرسنجیها نیز استفاده شده است.

واژگان کلیدی: ایران، جنبش جوانان، شکاف نسلی، دموکراسی

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