The investigation of intellectuals' social and cultural activities in virtual social networks and its impact on student political culture

La investigación de las actividades sociales y culturales de los intelectuales en las redes sociales virtuales y su impacto en la cultura política de los estudiantes

A investigação das atividades sociais e culturais dos intelectuais em redes sociais virtuais e seu impacto na cultura política estudantil

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Abstract

The present research is an applied one in terms of goals and in terms of the nature and type of study as a qualitative research and is an interpretative study that uses phenomenological research strategy to explain and interpret the essence of experience from the phenomenon of intellectuals' social and cultural activities in virtual social networks and deep knowledge of this phenomenon on students' political culture. The results show that the role of intellectuals as conscious people and awakened conscience of society, whether in civil institutions and non-political social organizations, or in the state of belonging to political parties and political organizations, generally as individuals belonging to a social stratum, in some form it affects the political culture of the community, and contributes in the dynamics and awakening of the students' social and political consciousness, ultimately to the formation of national thought and feelings.

Resumen

La presente investigación es aplicada en términos de objetivos y en términos de la naturaleza y tipo de estudio como una investigación cualitativa y es un estudio interpretativo que utiliza una estrategia de investigación fenomenológica para explicar e interpretar la esencia de la experiencia del fenómeno de los intelectuales. y actividades culturales en redes sociales virtuales y conocimiento profundo de este fenómeno en la cultura política de los estudiantes. Los resultados muestran que el papel de los intelectuales como personas conscientes y conciencia despierta de la sociedad, ya sea en instituciones civiles y organizaciones sociales no políticas, o en el estado de pertenencia a partidos políticos y organizaciones políticas, generalmente como individuos pertenecientes a un estrato social, de alguna forma afecta la cultura política de la comunidad y contribuye en la dinámica y el despertar de la conciencia social y política de los estudiantes, en última instancia, a la formación del pensamiento y los sentimientos nacionales.

Resumo

Esta pesquisa é aplicada em termos de objetivos e em termos da natureza e tipo de estudo como uma pesquisa qualitativa e é um estudo interpretativo que utiliza uma estratégia de pesquisa fenomenológica para explicar e interpretar a essência da experiência do fenômeno de intelectuais e atividades culturais em redes sociais virtuais e profundo conhecimento desse fenômeno na cultura política dos alunos. Os resultados mostram que o papel dos intelectuais como pessoas conscientes e conscientes da sociedade, seja em instituições civis e organizações sociais não-políticas, seja no estado de pertencer a partidos políticos e organizações políticas, geralmente como indivíduos pertencentes a um estrato social, de alguma forma afeta a cultura política da comunidade e contribui para a dinâmica e o despertar da consciência social e política dos estudantes, em última instância, para a formação do pensamento e sentimentos nacionais.

Palavras-chave: intelectuais, redes sociais virtuais, cultura política, estudantes de ciências e pesquisa em Teerã

Introduction

The society consists of different groups, each of which has a different role in the course of social-political movement. Among the major social strata, which have always played a fundamental role, especially in recent decades, in the world as well as in our country (Iran), have been students creating political movements and basic social-political movements. The status and role of the university and students in developing political consciousness and the tendency of democratic values and liberating functions have been emphasized by various thinkers such as Habermas (1971), Marcuse (1969), Thorne (1971) and Delanty (2001). Habermas argues in this regard that students, because of the lack of direct influence of economic beneficiary groups on them, can play an important role in countering the suppression of critical opinions by the press, political parties and government. (Shiri, 2014; Boroujerdi, 2008; Giddens, 2002; Hahn, 2006; Haywood, 1997; Howard, 2010; Ikeda, K., Boase, J., 2011). Habermas also posits a communicative action or an act of agreement; this is the activity through which humans attempt to contact and collaborate, and Habermas refers to it as communicative action (Inglehart, R., Welzel, C., 2010; Jothi, Sri.P., Neelamalar, M., 2010; Kaposi, 2014; Kasmania, et al, 2014; Marefat, 2014; Momoc, 2013). On the other hand, in this regard, he raises the issue of the public sphere. Indeed, he considers freeing from domination subjected to making possible the communicative action, and considers the public sphere or the public area or, in other words, the broader scope of the universe is the basis for this action, which, in the event of the expansion and escape from any limitation, can provide a forum for communication and conversation (Ritzer, 2009; Almond, G., Sidney, v., 1972; Amirpour, M., Grivani, M., 2013; Beckford, 2009; Beemen, 2002; Bogdanor, 1992).

The university can be drawn as a space in which students can negotiate free from any boundaries- a dialogue that is essentially based on a cultural process, including political culture(Afrasiabi, 2011; Akbari Tabar, 2011; Akhtar Shahr, 2009; Ahmadi, 2014; Alex, 2012). And the influence of these networks is to the point where it seems determine and directs the mentality and even the behavioral preferences of the individuals, including the students, and despite they do not teach us how to think, teach people what to think about. Intellectuals can be mentioned among the groups that are active in these networks and advance their social and political opinions. In today's world, intellectuals, by facilitating cyber-relations and promoting their political views, take various measures in this regard, issuing statements and articles in various political and social fields and, in some other areas, are busy shaping the intellectual flow of individuals, especially the younger generation, including students. In this occasion, it is not a question the extent to which these intellectual processes in virtual social networks are based on facts and their right or wrong isn't considered; but the main issue here is how much of the current trends can influence the political

culture of students. This effect, whether positive or negative, can be a serious and important issue to be addressed. Therefore, based on what has been said, the main question of the present research is that what social and cultural activities of intellectuals in virtual social networks and what its impact on the political culture of students at Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch of Tehran?

Research questions

- The main question. What are the social and cultural activities of intellectuals in social networks and what impact do they have on the political culture of students of Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch of Tehran?

- Sub-questions

1.   What is the impact of intellectuals' social activities (social communication and interaction) in virtual social networks on the political culture of the students of Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch of Tehran?

2.   What is the impact of intellectuals' social activities (publication of articles, statements, speeches and announcements) in virtual social networks on the political culture of the students of Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch of Tehran?

Research method

The present research is an applied one in terms of goals and in terms of the nature and type of study as a qualitative research and is an interpretative study that uses phenomenological research strategy to explain and interpret the essence of experience from the phenomenon of intellectuals' social and cultural activities in virtual social networks and deep knowledge of this phenomenon on students' political culture. A significant feature of the phenomenological strategy is that it refers to the root of phenomena and not theories, and in order to achieve this, resorting to a philosophy without a presupposition with the scheme of Epoche's method. Epoche or suspension means refraining from any judgment about the existence of a world beyond consciousness. In the epoche or suspension, the universe (world) becomes a private individual's world without any predetermination or assumptions that others impose upon a person. In Husserl's view, after the epoche (or suspension) what remains is my

awareness and the phenomenological task is to examine its content. In this research, the task of the researcher is to examine the student's political culture and to be aware of the social and cultural activities of the intellectuals in virtual social networks, regardless of the prior assumptions. Hence, one should use immediate intuitions without any assumptions. The first presupposition, which in the meantime should be dismissed, is the "naturalistic view". The naturalistic view, in short is the conventional assumption that the outside world, independent of my consciousness, is the same as in there. The same sentence applies to the existence of the outside world, which in the beginning should be placed in doubt parenthesis and suspended because if this view is suspended, what remains is the breakdown and consciousness of "me"; first, the fact is not the subject of discussion, but the consciousness and experience finds their subject. Secondly, the "I" (me) is reduced to a natural approach to pure psychic life, that is, in the realm of phenomenological delivery, "I" (me) is no longer regarded as a real, external entity, but "I" (me) is the center of intentional activity (Omidvar, 2002; Pourafkari, 2012; Qavam, 2009; Ramsey, 2016; Ross, A.S., Damian J.R., 2017; Yadegari, 2005).

In this research, considering that the researcher intends to conduct in-depth interviews with students of Islamic Azad University of Science and Research Branch of Tehran and intends to examine the political culture influenced by the social and cultural activities of intellectuals in virtual social networks, the methodology of this research is qualitative research of phenomenological type.

Population, sample and research sampling method

In the qualitative method, there is no formula for calculating the sample size, and the interview is continued until it reaches to theoretical competence level. Sampling in qualitative research is very different from quantitative research because its goal is to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon rather than generalizations. In the present study, the participants (all students of Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch of Tehran) were selected on the basis of purposeful sampling, which is a type of judgment sampling; in other words, individuals were selected who provided the best conditions for providing the needed information and

personally, they had tried the intended processes and issues. The commonalities of all selected individuals were students who studied intellectual and cultural activities of intellectuals in virtual networks, but other features of the samples were that, firstly, all these students had a membership in the channels and the pages more than a year. Secondly, all of these students were active in political affairs. Another point was that all of these students expressed their willingness to participate in the research and stated that they would take advantage of their experiences as sources of information to the fullest. The number of interviews continued until information saturation. Information saturation arises from repetition, meaning that new data from interviews will no longer be obtained and data will be duplicated. In the present study, considering the qualitative nature, there was no need to specify the number of samples by default, and the replication of the collected data before, indicates the number of samples. In fact, information saturation is an end to sampling. In the present study, 21 people were interviewed because the collected data was repeated. The important point is that, due to the limited number of samples and the non-randomness of samples (which are qualitative research features), the present study, and so on, there is no generalizability claim.

Data collection tool

The data collection tool is a semi-structured interview to allow participants to freely describe their experience. According to Van Menen, the interview is the best way to get into the world of human experiences. The duration of the interviews was between 35 and 90 minutes, which allowed the interviewees to determine the time and place of the interview as they wished.

In order to collect data, students' demographic questions and the first four questions were asked. Then, five fundamental questions were raised:
1.   What is the meaning and concept of political culture in your opinion?
2.   Explain your experiences in cyberspace (virtual space).
3.   What is the effect of intellectuals' social activities in virtual social networks on your political culture?
4.   What is the effect of intellectuals' social activities in virtual social networks (publication of articles, statements, speeches and announcements) on your political culture?
5.   What are your solutions to this phenomenon?

Of course, when it was necessary to clarify the information in a particular field, more precise questions were used. All conversations were recorded and then written. During the interviews, non-verbal messages were also taken into account by the interviewees and recorded by the researcher.

Research findings

Table 1. Topics related to the impact of intellectuals' activity on students' political culture

Main topics	Subtopics
Meaning and Concept of Political Culture	The insight and attitude toward the way people work in the political and governmental space
	Beliefs, understanding and understanding of people in politics
	Participation in political affairs
	Observance of ethics and social interactions in policy implementation
	A conscious, voluntary or non-voluntary action in the field of politics
	The rights of individuals and law enforcement
	Social, political and cultural behaviors
Awareness of their duties and rights	Understanding the nature of power in Iran, and comparing it with other political systems
	Political participation
	Act by law
	Promote political information and awareness
	Sensitivity to political issues

Political trust	Trust in Velayat-e Faqih [The Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist]
	Distrust of the state
	Conditional trust
Feeling free regarding political duty and rights	Feeling of freedom
	Feel the fear of government and state
	Not feeling afraid of citizenship duties
	Feeling obligation
	Relative feelings of freedom
Participation in the political process (council elections, parliament, presidential)	Active participation
	Relative and conditional participation
	Disaffiliation (lack of participation)
The effectiveness of intellectuals' social activities on political participation	The absolute effectiveness of interactions and communications of intellectuals
	The relative effectiveness of interactions and communications depending on the circumstances
Political articles, lectures and statements of social elites and political decisions	The absolute effectiveness of articles and statements and speeches provided by intellectuals
	Relative effectiveness of articles and statements and speeches provided by intellectuals
	The ineffectiveness of papers and statements and speeches by intellectuals
Satisfaction with the persuasion and stimulation of intellectuals in the elections	Relative satisfaction of the persuasion and agitation of intellectuals in the election
	Dissatisfaction with the persuasion and agitation of intellectuals in the election
Effectiveness of the guidance and direction of intellectuals in the future	The positive influence of intellectuals
	Relative effectiveness of intellectuals and uncertainty
	The lack of influence of intellectuals
Expectations from the social-political activities of intellectuals in cyberspace	Valuing democracy and traditional and religious beliefs of the people
	Informing and realizing
	Avoid the rumor and thrill of public opinion
	Punctiliousness and honesty
	Accompany and empathy with the general public
	Avoiding bias and partiality
Effectiveness of the social-cultural activities of intellectuals on political culture	Effectiveness of the social-cultural activities of intellectuals on political culture
	Relative effectiveness of the social-cultural activities of intellectuals on political culture
	Lack of effectiveness of the social-cultural activities of intellectuals on political culture

Conclusion

Concerning the findings of the present research, the studied samples have described different definitions of political culture, because political culture has undoubtedly been one of the controversial concepts in political science. Definitions in this regard are called "attitude toward politics." In general, the samples have defined this category as "political culture", in fact, is citizens' expectations of government policies.

- Awareness of [their] duties and rights. This topic is divided into several categories. The sub-topic -social, political and cultural behaviors that have been identified by the samples described in this way that each individual has a range of social, political, and cultural behaviors and should have an achievement in society that can play a role in political culture. Understanding the nature of power in Iran and comparing it with other political systems is another sub-topic that includes the understanding the nature of power in Iran and compares it with other political systems and examines its weaknesses,

studying and researching on political and international events and transforming it to ideas that have the ability to make decisions. People with membership in social networks can refer to intellectuals' opinions and ideas whenever they need it. By working in this space and using social networks, they are well aware of their duties and rights and can be the decision makers in the field of political culture. In other words, using social networks and virtual pages of intellectuals, individuals achieve a variety of information about their political duties and their rights in different fields.

- Political trust. Sample responses were divided into three categories. The first category was trust in Velayat-e Faqih [The Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist]. According to the responses of this group of students, it is only Velayat-e Faqih [The Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist] reliable in society. According to the group, political trust has been achieved with the insight and authority of Imam Khomeini, after which the just and informed leadership of the Supreme Leader has come to the fore. The second is the distrust of the state. According to this group, most of the statesmen speak and they are not acting. This group of students believed that there was no place for trust and that the political community did not have a corrective (reform) capacity. In recent years, the state officials have not been able to prove their rationality to the people in the current state of affairs in the country and there is no trust. In fact, this distrust is the result of their own actions, which have created this problem with incompetence and filling the seats. Trust does not come up with lectures, and it is certain that the government has not been able to function properly in many of its realms and even a lot of values and deviations were distracted, it has very little confidence. The third category is the conditional trust. Political trust for this group will come when government officials are not lying and will resolve issues such as unemployment, poverty and inflation and economic issues. The expansion of political space, respect for opposing votes and opinions, but within the framework of the law can also increase trust, and these conditions are necessary to narrow the political climate.

- Feeling free regarding political duty and rights. In this regard, the responses were three categories. The first group felt freedom about their political duties and rights. The group believed that the feeling of freedom was due to having confidence in the existing political system. The other group acknowledged that they felt fear of state and government, and therefore did not feel freedom on their political duties and rights. According to this group, free talk creates a problem for people. The group believed that we live in a society where there is no freedom, especially freedom of speech. There is a sense of fear because the expression of opposition causes trouble for people. The third group has expressed a lack of fear of citizenship duties and, according to the group, there is no sense of fear, but according to the form of the political system of Iran, which is a political system based on Velayat-e Faqih, entering into its different areas requires comprehensive knowledge and expertise.

- Participation in the political process (elections of councils, parliament, presidency). A group of samples are in the active partnership. The group believed that they participate in all the elections and expressed this partnership for the sake of citizenship duty and respect to themselves. This group acknowledged that are actively participating because the future of the country is important to them. Another group is also in the category of relative and conditional participation. Accordingly, this group has stated that they have political participation when they feel fear and need. It should be noted that the political participation of this group is similar to that of the previous one is limited to elections. Another group was in the category of non-participation. The participation and its role in political systems have always been of great important in sociology literature and political participation in political sociology. In the meantime, the lack of political participation in different societies is of more importance, because in the absence of community participation, in political affairs, if acute, becomes a crisis in society and the result of that crisis of legitimacy of the political system. On the other hand, political participation is seen as one of the main indicators of political development. Therefore, among the most important conditions for the realization of the people's demands in society, is a content of the richness of public culture, in which escape from passivity and indifference, especially political indifference, has become participation and being involved in their own destiny as a socio-political value. Therefore, it is possible to say that nothing worse than non-participation, for any reason, for the people of a society. The characteristic of participatory political culture is that in this

culture, individuals have a clear understanding of the components of the political system of the system (government), process, policy or, in other words, the process of inputs and outputs, they are aware of the flow of affairs and tend to show an active role in affairs.

- The effectiveness of social activities of intellectuals on political participation. A group of investigated samples was absolutely influenced by the thoughts of the intellectuals and believed that intellectuals informed people of a lot of issues, and this shows the high impact of these people. The intellectual expresses the realities and is a fan of culture of culture and must have social tolerance and discourse, and intellectuals have always been using the weapon of knowledge to confront the ill-gotten and tyrannical ones and put all their intellectual power in the service of society, not to sacrifice society for their political games. In fact, the intellectuals are the one who lives for thought and contemplation, and in the resolution of issues, has a precise measurement and critical thinking, and as a pioneer of the community, he carries out the role in matters relating to the interests and expedience of society and reacts in a way. According to the scholar, intellectual prerequisites are free and enlightened judgments, and this is when intellectuals, not from narrow-minded positions and ideological biases, but in the light of a broad and comprehensive view of the issues, look at issues and problems and he / she knows about himself, his environment, and his characteristics of his / her time, and should be obliged and move his/her society from what is towards what should be, that is, towards progress and excellence. This issue is considered by another group of samples in the present study that intellectuals in Iran's society follow a certain group or factions in biased and prejudiced way.

- Political articles, lectures and statements of social elites and political decisions. In this regard, there have been three categories of response, in which the first category is referred to as the absolute effectiveness of papers and speeches and speeches of intellectuals. According to this group, cyberspace during the election period is an arena for the conflict between the right and left, and in this period, the only thing that is not considered is that both factions are within a community. At this time, local social networks are the place for the publication of papers and statements by intellectuals that greatly affects

thoughts and opinions. In many political times and events, people expect community intellectuals to take seriously guidance and direction through the publication of statements and articles, and it should bear in mind that they have a particular opinion on the nature and attitude of many political events that these events must be somewhat consistent with their look and character. The other group of students believed in the relativity of this influence. According to this group, the articles and statements are somewhat influential, although students acknowledge that they read these articles and statements, but ultimately, they will study and decide on themselves. The other group of students does not listen much to the intellectuals. But intellectuals also identify people with the impression they have from books and political articles, and they are less likely afraid of who are their listeners. Apparently, the ears of this group of students were not so prepared to hear the words of the intellectuals. In the group's view, their eyes and ears are accustomed to these statements and repeated speeches, and these articles and lectures are no longer effective.

- Satisfaction with the persuasion and stimulation of intellectuals in the elections. Two response categories were also observed in this regard, so that some were in the category of relative satisfaction of the persuasion and stimulation of intellectuals in the elections. The group believed that guidance and persuasion of intellectuals had been somewhat influential in the election. According to this group, intellectuals are the driver of social movements, but given the fact that intellectuals in Iran have different definitions and move according to different purposes, their views on intellectuals with regard to informing, has been evaluated positive even with the opposite opinion. The group believes that they have taken the right decision according to the time requirements and more information, and acknowledged that the intellectuals are not free of errors and do not have all the process and effects of information. But the other category was placed in satisfaction with the persuasion and stimulation of intellectuals in the elections. According to this group of students, intellectuals are currently unaware of the influential trends in the relationships of influential layers in society. They also believed that this satisfaction in the pre-election and post-election stages has two different aspects, which before the election has been satisfying, which had taken place in the

coalition and the selection and recognition of the elites and intellectuals, but after the election, it has been dissatisfied with the state of beliefs that has come about. Some also believed that the situation was always tense. According to this group, intellectuals are struggling against each other during this period, declaring devilish pedantry. They talk about things that they do not know anything about, and they are only engaged in panache and creating seizures.

- ***Effectiveness of the guidance and direction of intellectuals in the future.*** Most of the important intellectuals in the past or today have pages that are a place for intellectual exchange, in which there is consultation and cooperation between hundreds of thousands and sometimes millions of people. Social networks, social action and international civil activities are influencing the realities of life in the political, social and cultural spheres. In fact, intellectuals, educators and academics are who must build up a society's conscious conscience and protect society from temptations, stupidity and damages, but this is also classified into three categories, like all other topics. According to some respondents, this effect has been positive. But this effect is limited to the presidential election, especially the presidential election. It seems that during the presidential election students are interested in political issues and discussion, and in this regard, they are affected by political intellectuals. But other categories of examples can be classified as relative interactions between intellectuals and uncertainty. Because the group believed that the future of the Iranian society is unknown and it is not known whether the intellectuals who will come in the future can act effectively. For this reason, these people will consider the influence of intellectuals in the future depended on future conditions. The other category is also in the category of ineffectiveness of intellectuals. This group believed that although the activities of the intellectuals could in part guide the minds and thoughts of the audience and made them aware of some issues, it should be noted that intellectuals would not have much influence in the future, and the samples (subjects) in this group believed that they are contemplative, wise and thoughtful, and preferred to decide on future political issues on their own, including elections.

- ***Expectations from the social-political activities of intellectuals in cyberspace***. The expansion of the new media and the emergence of virtual networks made it possible for intellectuals to communicate directly with their audiences. This direct connection and confrontation, while providing the opportunity for the fast and immediate transfer of the latest efforts of intellectuals to the audience, has made it possible for intellectuals to react to the issues of the day and the latest events and happenings.

- ***Effectiveness of the social-cultural activities of intellectuals on political culture.*** Intellectual groups and elements have always been considered as reference groups throughout history, and the young and educated generation has always had a special interest in them. They have been able to streamline in various historical, political, cultural, social and economic spheres, and act as a self-ripe institution of the people, and even sometimes as institutions supported by some currents outside the country to do extensive works. These activities have played an effective role in the decisions and even the laws and the fate of our society, and in this regard, no one can ignore the intellectual role from the angle of research, study and decision-makers. Meanwhile, the role of the intellectual, especially the elites who have left the circle of power, is also very effective. They take advantage of the opportunity to magnify the defects of established political culture and the privileges of their culture. But regarding the impact of this group, responses are divided into several categories. Based on the views of the samples (subjects), political cultures, such as scientific opinions, their predictions are sometimes mistaken and can't give a satisfactory answer to the dilemmas. Like the presidential election, samples (subjects) of which, with the being influenced of intellectuals from certain groups, expect the victory of a particular person to happen, but this does not actually happen. Therefore, doubts arise about the ability of intellectuals in social networks. Social networks creating new forms of human interaction, providing background and space for individuals, overcome the boundaries of time and place, promote free and democratic dialogue in Internet spaces, strengthen collective action, and, in fact, there is a renewal and rebuilding of social life on its agenda. From this point of view, social networks provide the opportunity to contact intellectuals at a very low cost.

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