

## **AN INVESTIGATION ON RELATIONSHIP OF RELATIVE DEPRIVATION AND POLITICAL OBJECTION (PROTEST)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Political protest is a real phenomenon, and choosing confronting approach is the only choice state have. It is some societies' success to guide interior struggles toward peaceful approaches, which causes their development; in contrary with societies always challenging insurgency, coup d'etat, and other unstable political events whose political governing systems has been unable to resolve their serious struggles. It is the very evident differences between countries which require theoretical eliciting and scientific researches. Accordingly, this research has expressed the relationship between political protest potential and relative deprivation rate among students as one of the most irritable political groups of the society. According to the research findings 69.8% of the students as statistics universe have high tendency toward political protest, while 23.8% and 6.5% have respectively middle and low tendency. Accordingly, only 7.5% of the students in this research's statistical universe, have less than middle feeling of relative deprivation, while 73% have high feeling of relative deprivation. The interesting point is that there's a better feeling about individual items rather than international ones, meaning that they feel worse about sense of deprivation about Iran's position in international arena, economics, etc.

**Keywords:** *Deprivation, Political Objection, Protest*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Considering their interests, governments try to save themselves. Sometimes people share interests with their governments which results in a simple and trouble less turn in affairs. However, sometimes an obvious or surreptitious conflict of interests or different perspectives of interest which may be the result of various factors, cause an encounter between governments and nations. Realities of history seem to indicate continual presence of political conflicts, contests, and encounter. Social and political life has always mixed with encounters and conflicts on resources and values. Incompatibility and conflict has always been the undeniable reality of socio-political life and even manifested itself in plenty of intellectual systems and religions, and continually shown the contradictions, conflicts, and contests. Popular protestations, in some developing countries, transform to political riot and uproar, and, although these events have become a natural phenomenon in these countries, are uncommon in developed countries, even though not rare. According to Inglehart, the fact is that economic development and commonwealth in advanced industrial countries, opened the way to other kinds of political protests, especially in new social movements (Inglehart, 1994). Blumer believes that, one can see social movements as proceedings whose aim is establishment of a new life order. Their root are in unrest circumstances, and reach the power of their motivation from dissatisfaction of current life style on one hand, and their hopes and desires to a new pattern or order of life on the other (Blumer, 1955; quoted from Moshirzade). Socio-political protests should not be only considered as disadvantageous and destructive phenomena. Many of socio-political transformations through these conflicts became possible, and their constructive role, especially in the recent centuries, has expressed itself. These affronts can either be eliminated through a bilateral agreement or lead to protest, instability, struggle, violence, and even revolution. With their effective functions, the protests can help the growth of democracy, although growth of democracy needs abandoning brawl and achieving the scope of understanding and satisfaction and abstinence of violence. Therefore, recognizing the protest potential, points of arising protests, and the factors influencing that are capable to study. The Student Movement in Iran, in fact, backs to history of

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universities in academic sense, in Iran. Iranian student has always had a political action in the political scene of Iran, either in agreement or against politicians. Perhaps, one can consider this student class as one of the most effective classes in Islamic Revolution of Iran, who transferred revolutionary ideology from elites to masses, and served as legitimizers. Nowadays, students, as for their population and their acceptance thorough all classes of society, seem to have a very high social influence, and studying them has a specific value. Circumstances of the country as well as accomplished studies emphasize the presence of relative deprivation in Iranian mind, and this phenomenon seems to be effective on students' political protests. The aim of this study is to research the student society tendency towards political protests and influence of relative deprivation on it.

### **Political Protest**

Like many other social concepts, true or false, political protests have disputed synonyms. Several expressions including: political protest, political instability, political dissatisfaction, social movement, political struggles, political conflicts, political acts, social behavior, political violence, etc. exist that may be considered as different levels of a same problem. In various periods of history, collective behaviors have observed differently. One can consider collective behaviors as reaction of some parts of people to one problem. According to various standards such as measure of organizing, leadership, mass of population, and measure of usage of violence, the reaction can be grouped. Therefore, in these collective behaviors, depending on the standards, from simple popular excitements to revolutions is seen. Political contest is one of these collective behaviors which laid in the spectrum. Another point is choosing classic or modern perspective. Subject of political protests has had several turns. In newer views, usually the expression social movement is used and movements divide to classic and modern movements. The new social movements are related to post-modern societies and the classic one to moderns. Movements' approach during transformation from classic to modern alters from political to social. The expression new social movements were used for movements whose importance in social field has been recognized since 1960s. These movements are student movement of the time, movement of civil rights, women movement, peace movement, and recently, anti-racism movement, movement of indigenous people right, East-European anti-politics movement, etc. these movements have been considered new from two points of view, and have been discussed extensively: first, they have some characteristics which distinguish them from previous movements, and, second, novelty of these movements is the result of their manifestation in the heart of a newly formed social framework. In the other words, they are called new because they are samples and symbols of new social and political relations (Nash, 1382). Classic social movement is an expression juxtaposing modern social movement. Classic social movements have appeared in industrial societies and modern social movements in post-industrial ones. They believe that, considering shape and content, new social movements in post-industrial societies are different from classic. Some believe definition of social movements in western social sciences, more than any other source, is based on Turner and Killian' definition. In their noteworthy classic work, collective behavior, the two sociologist consider social movement as "a collective action which is performed by members of society who mobilize and act to propagate, promote, and finally, make a change possible or prevent against a change throughout the society or in a part of that, that is a group of society members" (Piran, 1384). Castel believes that social movements have several shapes and forms. "They are not necessarily advanced," he says "although it depends on our definition of advanced and personal system as well." Social movements are not manifestations of good versus evil, but a key mechanism though which societies alter and go towards different goals and institutions. We see social movements whose aims, beliefs, and campaigns are origin of social changes though an unpredictable process (Castles, 1384). Castle believes that understanding social movements is necessary an important because they are creators of society, culture, and environment. Movements improve quality of life (Castles, 2005). Delaporta and Diani define protest as bohemian act in which indirect penetration channels are opened through actions of a group of collective players. In an introductory book on Social Movements, these two scholars defined protest and indicated its dimensions by utilizing the case of the acts of anti-nucleus groups in France who protested against nuclear tests. They believe that protests are, in the first level, bohemian manners in interference in

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political decisions of a government. Wilson notes that social movements use persuasive and violent methods which are in the most cases, exquisite, nontraditional, and spectacular, and have dubious legitimacy (Wilson, 1973). Especially since 1970s, increasing numbers of citizens have accepted the legitimacy of other methods of exerting pressure on governments. When citizens face laws and decisions which are false in their point of view, do actions out of ordinary manners. Especially since 1960s, a new collection of political actions entered the political source of citizens (Barnes *et al.*, 1979). A long list of new and unconventional forms of political participation including singing petitions, taking part in legal demonstrations, boycotting, avoiding paying tax and rent, occupying places, participating in refuges, barrier crossing, and establishing unauthorized strike are added to more traditional forms of participation such as following the political affairs in newspapers, taking part in political discussions, cooperating with parties and their Candida, participating in political meetings, contacting with government authorities, and persuading friends and Acquaintances to vote for special parties. These newer forms of participation have increasingly achieved legitimation. In fact, in advanced industrial societies, direct political acts do not bear detour brand, and are not considered anti-regime orientation (Barnes *et al.*, 1979; Delaporta and Diani 1384).

### **Relative Deprivation**

In general, all the theories that argue if governments wish to be safe of instability should keep people satisfied and content in order to dissuade them from any act of group protest are included within the following theoretical approach. Theoretic such as Davis, Moore and Gurr are in this movement. The basic hypothesis of these approaches are that some forms of fiasco and dissatisfaction which are caused by a variety of structural and functional imbalances in society will show themselves in the form of political violence or destabilization of collective action. In this system, social change, especially quick and expediently, will lead to distortion and imbalance and subsequently some specified social psychological mechanisms that are named “relative deprivation” or frustration and disillusionment. People’s violent political behavior is the result of the dissatisfaction, and dissatisfaction is the product of their frustration or relative deprivation, which means there is a gap and also a disturbance between what they want and what they think they can achieve (expectation values against capability values). Any kind of social change, which causes a growth in people’s expectations for a better life, if not accompanied with the meeting of those expectations, will lead to political instability and protests. In the book (why do people riot?) Gurr tries to define the reasons for the appearance of violence, especially political violence, with a psychological political approach. He states: in reality, political violence implies the dissatisfaction with the resource allocation in the political system which was responsible for allocating rare resources and the political subjects have gained knowledge of this inequity. Based on this fact, he puts the main premise of his book on the concept of “relative deprivation” (Gurr, 1972). In general, based on the “relative deprivation” theory, relative deprivation is a reflection of the difference between people’s needs and expectations and their capabilities for achieving their demands.

This kind of inner paradox spreads the epidemic dissatisfaction in society and increases the probability of the appearance of violence. Of-course from this point of view, the channelizing of violence also requires other catalysts. First, if this satisfaction has political roots or the political directors and political organizations were deprived of basic things and needs, and second, the vastness and intensity of opposition to the regime, for instance, the balance of power between supporters and oppositions play a decisive role in the amount of appearance of violence (Gurr, 1972). In Gurr’s opinion, the appearance of violence has a clear evolution process. The major sequence in political violence begins first with the appearance of dissatisfaction; second, it becomes political dissatisfaction and finally leads to the violent action against the political issues or activists. Discontentment resulting from perceived relative deprivation is the major motivator of participants in group violence (Gurr, 1972). The connection that the two approaches of psychological and social anthropological create, is in fact the same point that the social variables such as personal satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the economic status, amount of security assurances in obvious aggression, amount and rate of success in precious political violence, the rate of definition and prevalence of vindicating iconic attractions, the legitimacy of the political system and the

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types of responses given to the relative deprivation cause the focus of aggression to move from a personal aspect to political aspects.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Research Method**

This research has used quantitative method for fulfilling its purposes. Documents investigation technique in library studies section and survey technique in field studies have been applied.

**Table 1: Research sample population distribution according to tendency to political protest**

| Items   | Very Low |      | Low |      | Middle |      | High |      | Very High |      | Total |
|---|----------|------|-----|------|--------|------|------|------|-----------|------|-------|
|   | F        | V. P | F   | V. P | F      | V. P | F    | V. P | F         | V. P |       |
| Resolving High Expenses   | 14       | 3/5  | 19  | 4/8  | 80     | 20/1 | 117  | 29/3 | 169       | 42/4 | 399   |
| Resolving Joblessness   | 5        | 1/3  | 14  | 3/5  | 47     | 11/8 | 115  | 28/9 | 217       | 54/5 | 398   |
| Improving country's executive management operation                  | 9        | 2/3  | 15  | 3/8  | 53     | 13/3 | 111  | 27/8 | 211       | 52/8 | 399   |
| Reducing damages to environment                                     | 17       | 4/3  | 37  | 9/3  | 91     | 22/9 | 119  | 29/9 | 134       | 33/7 | 398   |
| Guild demands   | 20       | 5    | 23  | 5/8  | 113    | 28/3 | 116  | 29   | 126       | 31/5 | 398   |
| Expression freedom  | 21       | 5/3  | 15  | 3/8  | 50     | 12/6 | 74   | 18/6 | 238       | 59/8 | 398   |
| Choosing or changing some authorities                               | 15       | 3/8  | 22  | 5/5  | 76     | 19/1 | 65   | 16/4 | 219       | 55/2 | 397   |
| Press Freedom   | 17       | 4/3  | 26  | 6/5  | 58     | 14/5 | 65   | 16/3 | 233       | 58/4 | 399   |
| Parties freedom   | 35       | 8/9  | 44  | 11/2 | 93     | 23/6 | 62   | 15/7 | 160       | 40/6 | 394   |
| Political Prisoners freedom   | 34       | 8/6  | 42  | 10/7 | 66     | 16/8 | 67   | 17   | 185       | 47   | 394   |
| Resolving discrimination against religions                          | 31       | 7/9  | 38  | 9/7  | 61     | 15/6 | 71   | 18/1 | 191       | 48/7 | 392   |
| Resolving discrimination against tribes                             | 30       | 7/6  | 33  | 8/4  | 59     | 15   | 85   | 21/6 | 187       | 47/5 | 394   |
| Resolving discrimination against women                              | 29       | 7/4  | 36  | 9/2  | 50     | 12/7 | 74   | 18/8 | 204       | 51/9 | 393   |
| Human rights observance   | 27       | 7    | 27  | 7    | 40     | 10/3 | 67   | 17/3 | 227       | 58/5 | 388   |
| Crimes and insecurity of the country                                | 25       | 6/3  | 21  | 5/3  | 50     | 12/6 | 100  | 25/3 | 200       | 50/2 | 396   |
| Police and disciplinary forces actions; society's policy atmosphere | 29       | 7/3  | 30  | 7/5  | 86     | 21/5 | 67   | 16/8 | 181       | 45/3 | 393   |
| Political governance system   | 33       | 8/3  | 39  | 9/8  | 65     | 16/4 | 54   | 13/6 | 206       | 51/9 | 397   |

F: Frequency

V. P: Valid Percent

**Statistical Population and Sample Size**

Considered statistical universe were 251034 Tehran state universities students who have studied during 1388-89. The sample population was calculated 384 people, using the Kukran formula. Regarding the upcoming events for a social research, the gained sample size with 16 people increased, were considered 400 people. In order to choose the research sample, we have rationed the whole population as university, gender, Degree, and education group.

**Research Scientific Achievements**

Investigated research sample includes 400 students of Tehran University, Sharif Industrial University, Science and Technology University, Shahid Beheshti University, Allameh Tabatabaei University, and Amirkabir Industrial University. Students are in an age range of 19 to 45 with an average of 23.6 years; as

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67% of responders are younger than 24 and a majority of 86.5% of them are single. According to the rationed sample 49.3% of the population is women while 50.7% are men. Rations for degree and education group are as well presented as 56% Bachelor, 29% M. A. or M. S., and 15.3% PhD. Human science includes 35.5% as the major education group, and second comes the technical and engineering with 33% of the sample universe. The majority of 44% were burn and a majority of 63% lived in Tehran. The major tribe in this research is Fars with 64% percent of the sample. Turks and Kurds include 15% and 8% of the sample respectively. 91% of the sample was Shi Muslim, and the other 9% following other religions; while 16% belong to tribes, owning other religions rather than Shi Islam.

**Tendency to Political Protests**

An investigation of political protests tendency depicts a high ratio of students' political protests. Political protest index was created with alpha( $\alpha=0.954$ ) using 17 items. This index stands in adapted theoretic and practical space of 17-85; has an average of 67, and a median of 72. It should be considered that this research's statistical universe is in fact the most objecting group of the society. Obviously protest is not this high in townships, and in other social groups. These two points should be considered in analysis. Different reagents were considered to measure protest ratio. In all reagents including political, cultural, social, economic, safety, and management related, a high rate of protest is observed. In other words, an incorporation of a classic protest with modern protest can be observed in this movement.

Political protest index was created from the complex of 17 presented items.

**Table 2: Political Protest Tendency Index**

| Political Protest | Frequency | Percentage | Cumulative Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------|
| Very low          | 12        | 3          | 3                     |
| Low               | 27        | 6/8        | 9/8                   |
| Middle            | 47        | 11/8       | 21/5                  |
| High              | 21        | 5/3        | 26/8                  |
| Very High         | 293       | 73/3       | 100                   |
| Total             | 400       | 100        |                       |

As observed, there's a very high political protest potential between responders; 73% and 5% have respectively depicted very high and high tendency for political protest. 11.8% have depicted middle tendency for political protest, and almost 10% have depicted tendency below the middle.

**Table 3: Research Sample Population Distribution According To Relative Deprivation feeling**

| Items  | Very Low |      | Low |      | Middle |      | High |      | Very High |      |
|--|----------|------|-----|------|--------|------|------|------|-----------|------|
|  | F        | V. P | F   | V. P | F      | V. P | F    | V. P | F         | V. P |
| Do you feel you have gained what you deserve in your life?   | 32       | 8    | 102 | 25/5 | 198    | 49/5 | 56   | 14   | 12        | 3    |
| Do you feel you can gain what you deserve if you try in your country and not fall behind the others? | 71       | 17/8 | 81  | 20/3 | 150    | 37/5 | 69   | 17/3 | 29        | 7/3  |
| How you describe the gap between your present welfare facilities and what you think you deserve?     | 12       | 3/3  | 76  | 19   | 127    | 31/8 | 118  | 29/6 | 65        | 16/3 |
| Do you feel deprived from what you think you deserve?  | 22       | 5/5  | 95  | 23/8 | 132    | 33   | 94   | 23/5 | 57        | 14/3 |
| Do you think Iran Have   | 238      | 59/5 | 84  | 21   | 55     | 13/8 | 15   | 3/8  | 4         | 1    |

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|   |     |      |    |      |    |      |    |     |   |     |
|---|-----|------|----|------|----|------|----|-----|---|-----|
| been able to achieve its civilization's suitable position in international arena?                                     |     |      |    |      |    |      |    |     |   |     |
| Do you feel we have achieved what Iran deserves in international arena, considering political relations and position? | 238 | 59/5 | 82 | 20/5 | 53 | 13/3 | 18 | 4/5 | 5 | 1/3 |
| Have we been able to economically earn the position we deserve considering our country's natural resources?           | 253 | 63/9 | 91 | 23   | 42 | 10/6 | 7  | 1/8 | 3 | 0/8 |

*F: Frequency*

*V. P: Valid Percent*

Achieved information depicts a very high level of relative deprivation among responders. The first four questions considers the person's relative deprivation, while the last three questions to the country's status in terms of civilization position, political relations in international arena, and economical position. As observed, relative deprivation feeling against the three national variables is higher than individual ones. As in all three, 80% of responders do not accept Iran's position in its competent situation. In case of relative deprivation responders do not have positive feelings about their present situation and considering the second item have no hope for future.

**Relative Deprivation Feeling Index**

In order to build index for relative deprivation variable, items 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7 were reversed, then the index was built. This index is located in a space of 13 to 35, has an average and median of 26, and therefore has a normal distribution. Standard deviation equals 4.6, and the variable variance equals 21.6. The alpha Krumbach calculated for the index depicts the inner compatibility of  $\alpha=0.783$ . The index is once again defined in Likert spectrum format.

**Table 4: Relative deprivation feeling index**

| Relative deprivation | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Very Low             | 0         | 0          |
| Low                  | 30        | 7/5        |
| Middle               | 77        | 19/3       |
| High                 | 163       | 40/8       |
| Very High            | 130       | 32/5       |
| Total                | 400       | 100        |

As observed none of the responders possess very low relative deprivation, and only 7.5% feel low relative deprivation. A majority of 73% possess high relative deprivation, which in terms of social indexes, indicates a terrible sign.

**Relation of Tendency to Political Protest and Relative Deprivation Feeling**

Relative deprivation feeling variable is Robert Tedgar's variable from relative deprivation theory, which has rather a psychological background. In this research it has been evaluated in Pierson test by distance evaluation level. This variable with a meaning limit of  $\text{sig}=0.0001$  has depicted a meaningful relation with tendency to political protests. The positive relation level indicates the direct relation of two variables, and the Pierson Test ( $P=0.45$ ) depicts an intermediate relation between the two variable. Tedgar theory and as a result the hypothesis are as mentioned proved.

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**Table 5: Relationship between tendency to political protests and relative deprivation feeling**

| Variable   | Tendency to political protests |     |
|------------|--------------------------------|-----|
| Advantages | 0/001                          | Sig |
|            | + 0/48                         | P   |
| Total      | 400                            |     |

In order to display the connections better the below table is used:

**Table 6: Relationship between political protests and relative deprivation feeling**

| Relative Deprivation |                   | Low  | Middle | High | Total |
|----------------------|-------------------|------|--------|------|-------|
| Political Protest    |                   |      |        |      |       |
| Low                  | Frequency         | 5    | 11     | 10   | 26    |
|                      | Row Percentage    | 19/2 | 42/3   | 38/5 | 100   |
|                      | Column Percentage | 38/5 | 7/4    | 4/2  | 6/5   |
|                      | Total Percentage  | 1/3  | 2/8    | 2/5  | 6/5   |
| Middle               | Frequency         | 5    | 64     | 26   | 95    |
|                      | Row Percentage    | 5/3  | 67/4   | 27/4 | 100   |
|                      | Column Percentage | 38/5 | 43     | 10/9 | 23/8  |
|                      | Total Percentage  | 1/3  | 16     | 6/5  | 23/8  |
| High                 | Frequency         | 3    | 74     | 202  | 279   |
|                      | Row Percentage    | 1/1  | 26/5   | 72/4 | 100   |
|                      | Column Percentage | 23/1 | 49/7   | 84/9 | 69/8  |
| Total                | Total Percentage  | 0/8  | 18/5   | 50/5 | 69/8  |
|                      | Frequency         | 13   | 149    | 238  | 400   |
|                      | Row Percentage    | 3/3  | 37/3   | 59/5 | 100   |
|                      | Column Percentage | 100  | 100    | 100  | 100   |
|                      | Total Percentage  | 3/3  | 37/3   | 59/5 | 100   |

$\chi^2 = 83/8$        $Df = 4$        $Sig = 0/001$        $V \text{ Crummer} = 0/32$

Performed Q-Square test also proves the relationship between the two variables of tendency to political protest and relative deprivation feeling; Relation intensity was also calculated by V-Crummer ( $V=0.32$ ).

**Conclusion**

Protest is generally defined as an unusual act, which in indirect penetration channels through actors' successive activities takes place. Social protests tactics consume their own resources. Recent alterations in power distribution in national and international level, and in social communications structure, indicates new power sources. Each source for a plural action (political protest) has its own logic. Quantity logic which tries to depict support power behind a movement; material destruction logic, which is based on disorder capabilities in routine affairs; or a logic trying to present objectors sense of commitment. On the other hand protest leaders encounter strategic hazards in choosing shape of action, as each action shape, transfer messages to different sections with different requests. The sections are as follows: protests ordinary members, trying to enrich the inner solidarity; media, which are after news; potential allies who prefer the softer action shapes, and at last decision makers who are looking after trustworthy partners. In addition, historic traditions enhanced through organizations and socialization narrows the actions options spectrum. A chain of circular scans causes successive ups and downs in protest, radicalization, and characterizing action shapes chosen by movements. But beside these circular swings, two more stable attitudes, expansion of protest source and excessive rejection of political violence, have risen up (Delaporta and Diani, 1384).

As observed, all these protests are found inside the Iran's present society, concerning researchers to investigate. Accordingly, this research tries to prove the relationship between political protest potential and relative deprivation rate amongst university students. Research's most significant variable is attitude

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to political protest, which depicts the high rate of university students' political protest. 69.8% of the sample population have high attitude to political protest, 23.8% have middle, and 6.5% have low attitude. Of course, it should be noticed that this research's sample population is in fact the most objecting group in a society. Obviously protest rate is not this high in townships and also in other society groups. These two parameters should be considered in further analysis. One of research's main indexes is relative deprivation feeling. Only 7.5% have less relative deprivation than middle, while 73% have high relative deprivation feeling. The interesting point is that people have better feeling in conjunction with individual items rather than national ones, meaning that they feel so bad about Iran's position in international arena, economy, and etc. life satisfaction index is a supplement to relative deprivation index which presents a middle life satisfaction, as 46% are in middle range, 20% low, and 34% have high satisfaction. In this section main lack of satisfaction refers to the state. As considered through performed exam, attitude to political protest and relative deprivation have a meaningful relationship.

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