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**Political Participation, Ethnicity, and Media Space: A
Look at Online and Offline Participation in Fars
Province**

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

Participation in elections, as one of the main pillars of democracy, increases the social capital of governments and strengthens the foundations of rule of law in society. The types of political participation arise from the social and cultural conditions in which people live, and therefore ethnicity should be considered as a cultural variable affecting their electoral participation. It should be noted that in Fars province, the experience of recent decades has shown the fact that highlighting ethnic demands in the form of election campaigns has always been used as a tool to achieve political power. In this context, "participation based on ethnicism" and "ethnic demands" are two aspects of the participation of members of these communities in election campaigns. Therefore, paying attention to such aspects in today's media society, where online media and political activism as an effective factor on electoral behavior is accepted by all analytical and theoretical approaches, has a special place as a research topic. The results of this research can determine the challenges and opportunities affected by this situation in the election process as the most important guarantor of democracy.

METHODOLOGY

This article is done with social survey method using questionnaire as data collection tool. The statistical population of the research was Fars province, where three cities of Shiraz, Noorabad and Firozabad (representing the three tribes of Fars, Lor and Turk) were selected from the provinces. In this research, online political participation (19 items) and offline (22 items) using standard scales and media consumption using a researcher-made scale in three dimensions: internal media (7 items), international media (5 items) and Social networks (9 items) have been measured.

FINDINGS

The results of the research indicated that in both types of offline and online political activism, men were significantly more than women; In the variable

of ethnicity, the Lors had more political activism than the Turks, and they had more political activism than the Persians. In terms of job status, government employees and students have been more active in the field of political activism than other job groups. Another interesting point is that with the increase in education, activism has increased in both offline and online areas. Finally, the results of the Pearson correlation test also indicate the existence of a significant positive relationship between media consumption (internal, international and social networks) with political participation in offline and online form. It should be noted that in media consumption, active presence in social networks has had the greatest impact on people's offline and online political activism.

CONCLUSION

In societies that are transitioning from mechanical to organic cohesion, the voting pattern based on ethnic identity can be explained, which is in conflict with the concept of citizenship. The extension of such an attitude to the macro level of society, in line with international studies such as Baccini & et al (2021), Goyanes & et al (2021), Kim and Chen (2016), Peterson (2021), emphasizes the importance that the instrumental abuse of ethnic identity in against the national identity, especially with the use of contemporary media technologies, it should be considered as a threat to democracy. In support of this conclusion, we can refer to the findings of Chen (2020), which highlights the power of activists in the purposeful filtering of different and opposing views in the online space, especially social networks, as a serious threat to democracy in the contemporary world.

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