

Conceptual Problems of Political Participation

مشکلات مفهومی از مشارکت های سیاسی

Dr. Ahmad Asadi

دکتر احمد اسدی

**Dr. Seyed Mahmoud
Alizadeh Tabatabaei**

دکتر سید محمود علیزاده طباطبایی

2016

۱۴۲۳۹۸۸

اسدی، احمد، ۱۳۳۷ - Asadi, Ahmad
Ahmad Conceptual problems of political participation
Asadi, Seyed Mahmoud Alizadeh Tabatabaei.

تهران: علمی فرهنگی شعبانی، ۱۳۹۵ = ۲۰۱۶ م.

۱۲۵ ص.

978-600-95625-2-7

فیبا

انگلیسی.

ص.ع. به فارسی: احمد اسدی، سید محمود علیزاد

طباطبایی. مشکلات مفهومی از مشارکت های سیاسی.

کانسیجوال....

مشارکت سیاسی

Political participation

علیزاده طباطبایی، سید محمود، ۱۳۳۰

Seyed mahmud, Alizadeh tabatabaei

۷۹۹ ف/الف ۲۵ک ۱۳۹۵

۳/۳۳۳

۳۱۸، ۳۱

۰۰۰۰

۹۵ ول ۱

۰۰۰

سرشناسه

عنوان و نام پدیدآور

مشخصات نشر

مشخصات ظاهری

شابک

وضعیت فهرست نویسی

یادداشت

یادداشت

آوانویس عنوان

موضوع

موضوع

شناسه افزوده

شناسه افزوده

رده بندی کنگره

رده بندی دیویی

شماره کتابشناسی ملی

قیمت

نوبت چاپ

تیراژ



Tel: 665732۰۴ - ۰۲۱21459681

انتشارات علمی فرهنگی شعبانی

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Conceptual Problems of Political Participation.....	3
1.1.1 Decisions about Participations	4
1.2 The Active-Inactive Dimension	7
1.3 Overt Versus Convert.....	8
1.3.1 Autonomous versus Avoiding.....	8
1.3.2 E1.3.2Approaching versus Avoiding	8
1.3.3 Episodic Versus Continuous	9
1.3.4 Inputs versus Outtakes.....	9
1.3.5 Expressive versus Instrumental.....	9
1.3.6 Verbal versus Non-Verbal.....	10
1.3.7 Social versus Non-Social.....	10
1.4 Summarizing Behavior Dimensions.....	11
1.5 The General Dimension of Involvement.....	13
1.6 Characteristics of Pacific Political Acts	18
1.6.1 Exposure to Stimuli Perceived As Political	18
1.6.2 Voting.....	19
1.6.3 Discussion and Opinion Leadership.....	19
1.7 A Conceptual Diagram of Political Behaviour Variables.....	23

4 ■ CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

CHAPTER 2: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AS A FUNCTION OF STIMULI

2.1 Exposure to Stimuli as a Function of Their Presence in the Environment	34
2.2 Exposure to Stimuli as a Function of a Person's Perceptual Screen	37

CHAPTER 3: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AS A FUNCTION OF PERSONAL FACTORS

3.1 Participation as a Function of Attitude and Attitude Intensity	43
3.2 Participation as a Function of Cognitions and Beliefs.....	56
3.3 Participation as a Function of Personality	63
3.3.1 Sociability	65
3.3.2 Ego- Strength.....	66
3.3.3 Anomie, Alienation, Cynicism	67
3.3.4 Dominance, Manipuliveness.....	70
3.4 Intellectuality	75
3.4.1 Expressive-Instrumental	76
3.4.2 Conclusions.....	77

CHAPTER 4: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AS A FUNCTION OF POLITICAL SETTING

4.1 Rules of the Game	80
4.2 The Party System.....	84
4.3 Personal Contact	87
4.4 Characteristics of Specific Elections	89
4.4.1 Closeness of the Vote	90

4.4.2 Importance of Elections.....	91
4.4.3 Clear Differences within a Political System.....	92
4.4.4 Flow of Propaganda.....	93
4.5 Regional Differences Within A Political System.....	94
4.6 Non-Electoral and Non-Party Factors in Political Setting	94

CHAPTER 5: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AS A FUNCTION OF SOCIAL POSITION

5.1 Social Position toward the Center or Periphery of Society.....	97
5.2 Socio-Economic Statue (Sec) or Class.....	101
5.2.1 Income.....	106
5.2.2 Education.....	107
5.2.3 Occupation.....	109
5.2.4 Urban-Rural.....	112
5.3 Membership and Activity in Group.....	114
5.4 Community Identification.....	116
5.5 Life Cycle and Age.....	117
5.5.1 Variations by Sex.....	118
5.5.2 Religion	120
5.6 Racial and Ethnic Minorities.....	121

CHAPTER 6: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY.....

130

SAMMURY.....	141
--------------	-----

BIBILIOGRAPHY.....	143
--------------------	-----

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

POLITICS COULD BE defined very broadly as the adjustment efforts of humans attempting to coexist in an inter-dependent relationship. This could mean that every form of human society would have some form of politics, and in a certain sense this is true. We recognize this when we talk about politics in private associations such as churches, businesses, pressure groups, social clubs, and so forth. Although it is undoubtedly valid to say that politics enters into the governance of private groups, such a broad definition dulls rather than sharpens our analysis. When "politics" becomes ubiquitous or universal it begins to lose its meaning. We need a definition that will distinguish political from nonpolitical behavior. This distinction can most readily be made in the context of defining a political system. We shall adopt Dahl's definition: "A political system is any persistent pattern of human relationships that involves, to a significant extent, power, rule, or authority" (1963, p.6). In everyday life, we think of a political system as including not only formal government but also the pattern of human relationships that affect the decisions of that government. Thus, a political system includes certain organizations like political parties and pressure groups and also behaviors directed toward governmental decisions such as discussions about governmental policies and voting. Political behavior, then, is behavior which affects or is intended to affect the decisional outcomes of government. The politics of nongovernmental organizations are excluded from this definition. Behavior which affects the decisional outcomes of a church or a corporation, for example, even if it were typically political in form and content, would not be considered political behavior by this definition. Politics now can be defined as the process by which decisions about governmental outcomes are made.

Even by this narrower definition, it is fair to say that every human life is touched by politics. As the world becomes ever more populated and crowded, requiring human relationships to become ever more complex and

8 ■ CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

interdependent, the impact of politics on human lives will become increasingly determinative. The adequacy of functioning of a political system may well be decisive for the happiness and well-being of the members of that society.

Since the manner in which citizens participate in their political process is integral to the manner in which the system functions, the question of how and why persons become involved in politics is germane to the concerns of every man, as well as to the curious probings of social scientists.

People relate to their political system in a variety of ways. Some persons take the system for granted and are concerned only to adjust their behavior to its demands; others want to improve or transform it. Some have only a passive relationship to the system, while others are very actively involved. To some, the system is frightening and confusing; to others, it is an object to be explored and conquered. Some focus their attention on what the system demands from them, while others focus on the benefits they derive from the system. Social scientists now have a sizable body of evidence that helps to explain differences in the ways persons relate to the system. This book is an attempt to summarize the state of our knowledge about political participation. A summary, to be really serviceable, must integrate discrete facts into a somewhat comprehensive whole; thus, some sort of theory is required. Two initial steps toward such a theory are taken in the book. An inductive approach has been adopted: findings are examined and then sorted into propositions which, at least in some cases, form "islands of theory." Secondly, while the author has not attempted to build a grant over-all theory, he has set forth in Chapter I a model or sketch which suggests a way in which the variables associated with political participation may be related to one another. This sketch provides a common basis for thinking about political participation and also serves as a plan for presenting the empirical findings to follow. This model was not arrived at deductively from a set of assumptions and then imposed upon the data; rather, it was built up inductively from careful examination of the findings.

Although some attention is given to the functioning of the political system, the major concern of the book is to explain individual human behavior as it related to the political system. Therefore, the human organism, rather than groups or the political system, usually is taken as the unit of analysis. Political system and political culture are important influences on individual political behavior, and we naturally expect differences in political behavior patterns from culture to culture (see Almond & Verba, 1963). At the same time, most social scientists assume that, at a basic level, human beings follow the same

behavioral laws no matter what kind of culture they live in. We shall seek such behavioral laws holding across cultures as the analysis proceeds.

The available research evidence on political participation is not as complete as we would like to achieve.

The greatest amount of evidence is about the political behavior of Americans. Most of the other data comes from Western Europe, leaving only scatterings from the rest of the world. Further-more, most of the evidence has been gathered in the last thirty years. These limitations require the caution that the generalizations set forth in the book may only apply in Western democracies in the mid-twentieth century. We can speculate that the generalizations will hold in other cultures and at other times, but certainty will have to await much more comprehensive investigations.

This book is primarily addressed to college students of political science, although research scholars and general readers may also find it interesting. It has deliberately been kept short so that it can be used as supplementary reading in college courses. The book presents an overview and synthesis of the findings on political participation, and concentration on this objective means that other considerations must be slighted. Exhaustive evaluations of methods and of the quality of evidence are not possible in the text. Rather than report the findings of any given study in full details and in a single location in the text, findings are brought in to support points in the natural progression of discussion. Since studies are cited many times, only author and date of publication are given in the text and footnotes, but full citations can be found in the bibliography. The book is not a bibliographic essay on political participation, and the author makes no pretense that every relevant citation is given for each propositions. He has attempted, however, to be comprehensive in reporting empirically supported propositions about political participation. In the text, propositions are distinguished by level of confidence. Those in italics are propositions for which there is some evidence, but of which the author is not as confident as he is of those propositions in bold-face type. In the latter case, there is generally more than one study in support of the proposition.

1.1 CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

THE FIRST TASK is to find a way to think about political participation. Participation must be defined; variables relating to it must be specified; and the subject must be bounded so that it is kept to manageable size. A model to facilitate thinking about participation is sketched later in the chapter.

10 ■ CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Clarity in social science research is facilitated by specifying a level of analysis. The distinction is usually made between macro and micro levels. In social science, the macro level refers to large social unit such as a nation, or political system, or organization. The micro level refers to individuals and their behavior.

“Micro” and “macro” are comparative rather than absolute terms, however, and in other sciences may have a different specific meaning. In biology, for example, “macro” means unusually large and “micro” mean unusually small.

Although the emphasis in this book is on micro political behavior, some attention is given to Macro characteristics as well. The behavior of the two systems is often interrelated; individual (micro) political behavior affects the behavior of the larger political system (macro); macro characteristics in turn, affect micro behavior. The level of inquiry adopted by the analyst is determined partially by the kinds of questions he wishes to ask. The question, “How does a system of political parties affect the stability of a political regime?” requires a macro level of analysis. The major question for this book, “How and why do people get involved in politics?” requires emphasis on the micro level. Certain questions require a bridging of the two levels. Two such questions for this book are: “How do the characteristics of the political system affect the manner and extent of citizen participation in politics?” and “How do the participation patterns of citizens affect the functioning of the political system?”

1.1.1 DECISIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Taking any political action generally requires two decisions: one must decide to act or not to act; and one must also decide the direction of his action. For example, a person not only decides to vote or not to vote, but also decides whom to vote for. Usually, the decision to perform an action like voting precedes the decision about the direction of the action, but the time sequence could be reversed. Sometimes, a person decides that he likes a candidate or a party before he makes up his mind to cast a vote. Certain actions do not involve a directional choice; for example, one cannot choose the government to which one wishes to pay taxes (without changing one's residence).

Decisions to act in a particular way often are accompanied by a third decision about the intensity, duration, and/or extremity of the action. Persons may lend political support mildly or vigorously, in a single instance or repeatedly. This third choice is intimately related to the other two. A person

who takes vigorous and sustained political action very probably is strongly attracted in a certain direction.

The very fact that he feels intensely makes it more likely that he will participate. This book focuses mainly on decisions to act or not to act and on decisions about the intensity and duration of the action.

Decisions about the direction of political action are properly another topic, and the book would be unduly expanded and complicated if an attempt were made to cover them here. Research findings about directional political choices are quite voluminous; furthermore, they are difficult to summarize, since the directions are specific as to setting and time. Generalizations applicable in one setting very likely are not applicable in other settings. For example, explanation of the factors leading some persons to prefer Eisenhower and others to prefer Stevenson in the 1956 presidential election in the United States³ has little generalizability to the choice the voters made between candidates in the 1960 or 1964 presidential elections.

Settings have one thing in common, however — the concept of status quo. Persons can defend or try to change the status quo. Its defenders often are called conservatives, and those trying to change it often are called liberals. Liberal-conservative contention about what should be done with the status quo is a familiar theme through many centuries of political writing. Unfortunately, many directional choices cannot be fitted to this general liberal-conservative dimension; they are even more specific as to setting and time and, therefore, are even more difficult to summarize.

We have learned to be very cautious in generalizing about liberal-conservative directional choices. Although rational deliberation plays some role in a person's choosing a liberal or conservative direction, the rational aspect of such a choice should not be overemphasized. We shall see that relatively few people have sufficient information or sufficient understanding of the political system to be able to make a completely rational political choice. Furthermore, personality predispositions incline a person to screen out uncongenial stimuli from the mass that impinge on his sensory system.

Research evidence suggests that at least some persons have personalities which are inclined either liberally or conservatively (McClosky, 1958; Milbrath, 1962). Presumably, persons inclined liberally or conservatively would adopt a corresponding position with respect to the status quo no matter what setting or

³ For a very sophisticated analysis of these factors, see Campbell, et al. (1960).

12 ■ CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

era they lived in. For lack of empirical evidence, this assumption must remain purely speculative.

But one can ask, in turn, where liberal or conservative personalities come from. In part, a liberal or conservative inclination comes from environment: certain environments tend to produce liberals, and other environments tend to produce conservatives. It is a well-known generalization, for example, that lower-class environments tend to produce status-changers (liberals), and that upper-class environments tend to produce status-defenders (conservatives). But environment does not seem to account for all the variance in political personality; persons coming from very similar environments may have quite different personalities. This suggests that heredity also is a factor inclining some persons liberally and other conservatively. It is likely that there is a very complex interaction between heredity and environment which produces a personality inclined in a certain political direction. Social scientists, at this point, have only a very dim understanding of that interaction.

Many other factors can intervene between personality inclination and choice of political direction. Pressures from family or peer groups are very important. Predominant community beliefs tend to structure the way a person sees his political world. The presence of a certain configuration of information about a current political choice (in contrast to an alternative configuration of information) can strongly influence that choice.

The complex interaction of these multiple factors influencing direction of political choice produces decisions that may seem rather inconsistent to the political analyst. Studies of the American electorate show, for example, that a "liberal" position on foreign policy (internationalism in contrast to isolationism) is not related to a "liberal" position on domestic economic policy (welfare state in contrast to *laissez faire*). These two positions, in turn, seem to show no correlation with a "liberal" posture favoring integration in contrast to segregation (Campbell, et al. 1960). In the United States, the issue of the welfare state versus *laissez faire* most clearly and consistently distinguishes the Democratic (liberal) party from the Republican (conservative) party.

It is only in this very limited way that the two American parties can be characterized as liberal or conservative. If the political setting should change, one could anticipate that labels about the political direction of a party might also change.

The point of this short digression concerning the factors involved in making choices about political direction is to suggest to the reader the complexity and

magnitude of the problem of trying to explain such choices. It would take us too far afield to attempt a full explanation here.

The reader need only be aware that a choice to take action nearly always requires a second choice about direction. Most of the findings to be discussed in this book are valid, no matter what directional choice the political actor makes.

1.2 THE ACTIVE-INACTIVE DIMENSION

Acting politically seems to have two types of contrasts: inactive and passive. Most citizens have both active and passive postures toward politics. Every person participates at least passively in the political system in which he lives. Mere compliance gives support to the existing regime and, therefore, is a type of political behavior.¹ There are other essentially passive responses to the political system: obeying laws, paying taxes, experiencing order and security. These passive behaviors are to be distinguished from the inactive counterparts to political action: nonvoting versus voting, noncontributing versus contributing, nonattending versus attending, and so forth.

Activity generally can be graded into quantities: some persons do more of a given thing than other persons. They may engage in an activity with greater frequency or regularity; they may give more hours or money at a time; they may participate in a wider repertoire of activities. Some persons are almost totally inactive; some are active in one type of behavior but passive in others; some are active in a wide variety of behaviors. Inactivity may be thought of as a zero or base point from which quantities of action be measured.

Some additional characteristics of these general active-inactive dimensions are discussed later in the chapter, but it might be helpful first to discuss several sub-dimensions of political action. Certain of these sub-dimensional characteristics may make the prospect of taking an action attractive or unattractive to a potential participant. Learning theory tells us that if the costs of the action outweigh the anticipated rewards, the person is unlikely to perform the action.

¹ Almond & Verba (1963) have distinguished three roles: "participant," "subject," and "parochial." They have made the valuable point that each citizen plays all three roles at one time or another. "Participant" and "subject" roles (similar to the active-passive distinction made here) are both essential to a viable political regime. The "parochials" are similar to the inactives or those we later call the "apathetics."