

Iranian Women Political Participation Compared to Women in other Muslim Countries and Regions

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Abstract

Objective: The present study seeks to make a comparative study of women's political participation in the Islamic Republic compared to other Islamic countries and regions. Political participation in this study is beyond mass participation based on participation in electoral processes and voting or participating in demonstrations, but effective participation of women in managerial and executive position and decision-making processes.

Method: The method used in this research is descriptive - explanatory using statistical data from reliable domestic and international sources such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the World Economic Forum, the United Nations Development Program, as well as statistics of domestic institutions and organizations such as the Vice President for Women.

Finding: In this regard, the present study is divided into two parts. In the first part, some effective factors underpinning women's political participation, including educational and training factors, economic variables including women's gross national income, as well as women's occupational and employment status and finally security backgrounds as an important factor in women's political participation is examined. In the second part, the women's political participation status in the form of elite is examined by two indicators, the number of women parliamentary seats, and also the women's political empowerment index, which is a more complete indicator than parliamentary seats.

Conclusion: The results show that despite some appropriate contextual factors among Iranian women, including higher education, acceptable presence in the economic and productive sectors, as well as improving in their security backgrounds and the middle position of them among Muslim countries women in terms of this variable, but, the level of their political participation is less than expected and acceptable and is in the bottom ranks.


Keywords: Political Participation, Mass Political Participation, Elite Political Participation.

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1. Introduction

Women's political participation in democratic processes is one of the main requirements of the political development. Women as half of the population and an effective force cannot be neglected from the socio-political processes. Therefore, democracy is only real and complete if women's political participation is maximal. In the last two decades the presence of women in high level executive and leading positions in the world have grown significantly, and of 11.8 in 1998 has increased to 17.8 and finally 23.5 percent at the present time. According to United Nations estimates from 191 countries, the average presence of women in political positions is around 23%. Average presence of women at leadership positions is about 7.2%, in the post of prime minister 6.6%, and in the presidency 2.5%. Canada, France, Sweden, Spain, Albania, Colombia, Costa Rica, Rwanda, Nicaragua are countries where the number of women in the ministry is equal to or more than men. One of the notable progresses in women political participation is for African women which has increased from % 3 to about 17% over the past two decades (Euronews, 2010).

In this regard, despite some favorable context for the socio-political progress of Iranian women, including promotion of higher and academic education, increase in income and employment, as well as appropriate security issues, but the level of political participation of women is not commensurate with their capabilities and remains at minimum. The advent of the Islamic Revolution and its leadership emphasis , significantly increased the effective role of women in the political and social arenas and women's political participation in the masses form, and women along with men participated effectively in victory of the revolution, as well as in the aftermath and during the holy defense. In the post-war decades, we saw a strong presence of Iranian women and girls in the scientific and social fields, but despite these suitable fields, unfortunately, the level of women's political presence in the form of elite and women's role in senior management, executive and decision-making ranks is still lower than expected, so that the number of seats in women's representation as one of the women's political participation Indicators in the world are less than 6 percent in Iran. In this regard, the present study seeks to explain this issue. Therefore, it is hypothesized in this research that despite the favorable preconditions, the participation rate of women in Iran is not only lower than the global average, but even lower than the average of Islamic countries.

2. Research Method

The method used in this article is an descriptive-explanatory method and data are from reliable international sources and organizations, like the Inter-Parliamentary Union, World Economic , UN Development Program, as well as reliable domestic sources like Published statistics by the Vice President for Women's Affairs. In this regard, the level of political participation is measured by two indicators: the number of women representative seats in parliament using data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union website as well as the Women's Political

Empowerment Index from UNDP data. In terms of contextual and bedrock factors, educational and training, economic, security and cultural factors about women in Iran compared to other countries and Islamic regions. The Muslim countries studied include the countries of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, North Africa, Central Asia and East Asia.

3. Research Background

In recent years several researchers have addressed and published around the issue of women's political participation from different dimensions. For example, Pishgahi Fard and Goharpour (2010) in their article entitled "position and role of Middle Eastern women in political participation" by Focusing on the political dimension, have examined the relationship between the type of governing political systems and its degree of democracy based on international data and the level of women's political participation in the Middle Eastern countries. In the article entitled "Women's Political Participation and Influential Factors" by Dr. Homa Zanzanizadeh (2002), the political participation of female students based on their gender has been statistically studied and finally some barriers to women's political participation and some solutions for it have been pointed out. Ghasemi and Moafi (2014) in their article entitled "Factors Restricting Women's Political Participation" have conducted a field study of the level of women political participation and its obstacles among the students of Allameh Tabatabai ,Tehran,Amirkir, Isfahan and Tabriz University. Mohammadi Asl (2004) in his article "Obstacles to women's political participation after the Islamic revolution" mentioned to some female participation obstacles such as the social forces in the Iranian legislature after the revolution, gender gap, the role of education as one of the official pillars of political socialization in controlling the gender gap, and patriarchal structures in Iranian society as the most structural obstacles against women political participation.

A brief review of the above articles, while acknowledging the value of each of them that addressed the issue of women's political participation from different perspective, but show a research gap about the limited level of political participation of Iranian women in comparison with women in other Islamic countries and regions, despite some favorable precondition like educational and training, as well as income and employment and also security backgrounds, that signify the importance of such a research.

4. Theoretical Topics

Political participation means all kinds of individual and collective actions that individuals take in order to intervene in determining their own destiny and that of society and to influence political processes and decisions regarding public affairs. According to C. Wright Mills, political participation is achieved if one can change existing laws and enact new ones. Higher level of political participation of citizens means greater legitimacy of the government and the political system and support of the system in the international arena. According to another definition,

political participation is any successful or unsuccessful, organized or disorganized, continuous or periodic voluntary action, involving the use of legitimate or illegitimate methods to influence public policy choices, public administration, and the election of political leaders at any level of national or local government (Weined, 1941:115).

Various divisions of political participation have been formed from different dimensions: 1) Instrumental-expressive; 2) active-passive; 3) goal-means; 4) supportive-opposition, and 5) elite-mass. According to the level of participation, political participation is divided into two levels: mass and elite participation. Mass political participation in Iran contains items such as: 1) participation in the revolutionary process; 2) participation in periodic elections; 3) participating in demonstrations and marches; 4) participation in groups and associations; and 5) participating in mobilization activities and imposed war. Political participation at the elites level also include: 1) Membership in legislative assemblies; 2) Participation in high levels of government and private sector decision-making; 3) Participating in the activities of the judiciary (Zanjanizadeh, 2002:93). Statistics and reviews shows that there is not much difference between the participation of women and men at the mass level in Iran, but at elite's level, it is unequal and the differences are significant.

Factors influencing women's political participation contain variety range of factors, the absence of any of which can be seen as an effective barrier to women's political participation. In this regard, these factors and backgrounds can be divided as follows

- **Social factors:** The processes of political socialization through the family, structures and educational system and the media, which by gender segregation of social roles, divide politics into male domains.
- **Cultural backgrounds:** including customs, traditions, religious approaches, historical preconceptions. Cultural contexts, as an example of patriarchal culture in traditional societies, are an important barrier to women's socio-political participation.
- **Economic factors:** including the employment and income status of women. Poverty is an important barrier to women's socio-political rising and participation.
- **Educational background** and the level of education of women as an important factor in raising awareness of women's individual and social rights and thus effective in their political participation.
- **Political factors and the democratic situation of Governments,** The more advanced governments in terms of democracy, the more opportunities for women to emerge politically. Conversely, in authoritarian regimes, women's political participation faces serious obstacles.
- **Psychological and physiological factors** related to women themselves, including women's lack of interest in political activities, lack of self-confidence, preconception in women who consider political affairs to be specific to men and a masculine arena.

The study of all above factors is beyond the capacity of a research and on the other hand, some of the above factors have been studied in detail in separate studies. For example, Pishgahifard & Pourghardar, (2010) in their research, by focus on the political dimensions, studied the relationship between the democratic state of government and the level of women's political participation. Zanjanzadeh (2002) has also studied the impact of individual and social factors as well as psychological factors related to women with their level of political participation by statistical and survey method. Ghasemi and Moafi (2014) have studied the psychological factors related to women themselves, such as their level of interest and sense of empowerment in political participation, with a societal approach and a survey method. Mohammadi Asl (2004) with emphasis on structural factors and processes of political socialization, as well as effective institutions such as education and media, has examined and analyzed the barriers to women's political participation. Accordingly, the present study tries to focus on the factors and backgrounds of women political participation, which there is more research gap around them, including educational and training factors, economic factors such as women employment and income status, also security backgrounds.

In this regard, the present study is divided into two parts. In the initial part, some preconditions of political participation including education, training, income and employment, as well as security factors are mentioned comparatively by using reliable domestic and international data. In the second part, we have used some international indicators related to the level of women's political participation, including the rate of women parliamentary seats by Inter-Parliamentary Union data, as well as the Women's Political Empowerment Index (IPU) using gender gap index 2020 that, in addition to the number of parliamentary seats, it also includes women holding senior executive and managerial positions.

5. Some contextual and effective factors on women's political empowerment and participation

5-1. Educational background

High level of academic education is an important factor in women's social awareness and consequently women's political participation in different parts of the world, including Islamic countries. Women's education, especially at higher levels, can facilitate their more active involvement in social and political activities. Information about women's educational status is taken from the data of the Gender Development schedule of UN Development Plan. Based on this data, among 189 countries Norway with 13, Ireland with 12.9 and Switzerland with 12.7 average years of female education are at top. The average female education in the United States is 13.5, the United Kingdom 13.2, Russia and Germany 13.9 years. Based on Table 1, among 27 selected Islamic countries, the UAE (11.7), Uzbekistan (11.6), Qatar (11.3) and Kyrgyzstan (11.2) years are ranked first to fourth, respectively. Iran with an average of 10.3 years, is in the eighth place.

Pakistan (3.8), Yemen (2.9), and Afghanistan (1.9) years, are in the last rank in terms of women's average education (GDI 2020).

Table 1. Average Years of Women's Education (GDI, 2020)

	Country	Women Education Average	Human Development Ranking		Country	Women Education Average	Human Development Ranking
1	United Arab Emirates	11/7	31	15	Kuwait	8/0	64
2	Uzbekistan	11/6	106	16	Indonesia	7/8	107
3	Diameter	11/3	45	17	Algeria	7/7	100
4	Kyrgyzstan	11/2	120	18	Turkey	7/3	54
5	Kazakhstan	10/9	51	19	Egypt	6/8	118
6	Oman	10/6	60	20	Tunisia	6/5	95
7	Malaysia	10/3	62	21	Iraq	6/0	123
8	Islamic Republic Iran	10/3	70	22	Bangladesh	5/7	133
9	Jordan	10/3	102	23	Morocco	4/7	121
10	Azerbaijan	10/2	97	24	Syria	4/6	151
11	Tajikistan	10/2	125	25	Pakistan	3/8	157
12	Saudi Arabia	9/8	40	26	Yemen	2/9	179
13	Lebanon	8/5	92	27	Afghanistan	1/9	169
14	Libya	8/5	105				

In some Muslim countries in the region in recent years, some efforts have been made to improve the educational status of women. For example in Saudi Arabia, according to the UNICEF report, the literacy rate for men (15-24) is 99% and for women (15-25) is 97%, and in general, half of the university graduates in this country are girls. Despite the possibility of Saudi women studying in higher levels and postgraduate education and get profession such as medicine, university professors, etc. But according to Saudi social norms and the patriarchal system, women still suffer from discrimination and structural problems, and many educated women stay at home (Rahnema, 2018)

In Iran, especially in the post-revolutionary period and in recent decades, we are witnessing a significant increase in women presence at higher levels and postgraduate education, so that even in the last decade, the share of Iranian girls and women in university education reached more than 50% and more than male students. Now, the proportion of women in the country's universities at the undergraduate level is almost equal to men, and at the master's level the number of women is more than men, but in the doctoral program the presence of women is significantly lower than men. Women are at the forefront in the humanities, medical sciences, health and arts, but in the engineering fields, men outnumber women. According to the data in the Table 1, Iran ranks eighth among 27 selected Muslim countries with an average of 10.3 years, which in compare to 21st rank of Iranian female political participation shows high disproportion, So that there is no correlation between Iranian women educational abilities and their political participation.

5-2. Economic factors: The level of economic and financial empowerment and employment of women

5-2-1. Women's Gross National Income

One of the effective factors in the level of women's socio-political participation is an enjoyment of financial capabilities and benefit of income and livelihood. In other words, poverty, economic inequality and lack of subsistence and income, play role as an important obstacle against women's socio-political participation, because many areas of growth and development of women's talents do not emerge due to poverty and lack of income. In this regard, the situation of Muslim countries has been compared in terms of the gross national income of women and compared to men, as well as the percentage of women having job opportunities and income compared to men. Related data on Women's Gross National Income are taken From the Gender Development Index report of the United Nations Development Program/UNDP that is shown in the Table 2 and Chart 1.

According to table, Women in Qatar (45380 dollar), Kuwait (31698) and the UAE (28580) have the highest gross national income, and women in Afghanistan (819), Syria (989) and Yemen (186) have the lowest gross national income. Among selected Muslim countries, Iran with an average gross national income of 4084\$ for women is ranked 17th of 28 which compared to the 21st rank of women's political participation, although the correlation between the two variables can be considered to some extent, but the level of women's political participation is still lower than expected in accordance their average gross national income.

Table 2. Gross National Income (GDP) of Women in Islamic Countries (GDI)

	Country	GDP of women	GDP of men		Country	GDP of women	GDP of men
1	Diameter	45.380	107.830	16	Egypt	4.753	18.039
2	Kuwait	31.698	75.840	17	Tunisia	4.587	16.341
3	United Arab Emirates	28.580	84.720	18	Islamic Republic Iran	4.084	20.637
4	Malaysia	20.825	23.877	19	Jordan	3.324	16.234
5	Bahrain	19.060	55.570	20	Algeria	3.269	18.891
6	Turkey	17.854	37.807	21	Morocco	2.975	11.831
7	Kazakhstan	16.791	29.290	22	Kyrgyzstan	2.971	6.790
8	Saudi Arabia	16.510	70.810	23	Bangladesh	2.873	7.031
9	Turkmenistan	10.493	19.461	24	Iraq	2.427	18.975
10	Libya	9.249	21.999	25	Tajikistan	1.440	6.427
11	Azerbaijan	8.919	18.664	26	Pakistan	1.393	8.412
12	Oman	7.959	35.201	27	Afghanistan	819	3.566
13	Indonesia	7.902	14.966	28	Syria	989	6.225
14	Lebanon	6.078	23.120	29	Yemen	186	2.980
15	Uzbekistan	5.064	9.230				

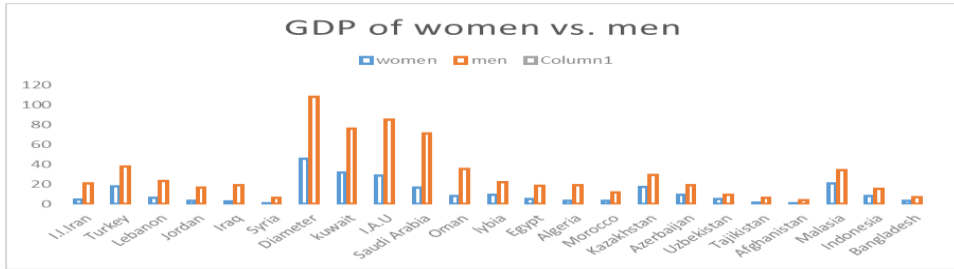


Chart 1. Average Gross National Income (GDP) of Women Compared to Men in Islamic Countries and Regions (GDI)

5-2-2. The Ratio of women's economic and employment opportunities

In term of economic variables affecting the level of women's political participation, in addition to the average gross national income index, the status of economic and employment of women has also been comparatively studied. Data in this section has been gotten from Gender Gap Index (GGI) of the United Nations Development Program/UNDP data. The closer the index is to 1, the greater the equality between men and women in terms of economic participation and employment, and conversely, the closer it is to zero, the greater the inequality between them. According to the Table 3, among Islamic countries, Azerbaijan (with 0.748), Kazakhstan (0.742), Indonesia (0.686) and Malaysia (0.639) have the best position in terms of equal opportunities, employment and economic participation, and Pakistan (0.327), Syria (0.249), Yemen (0.273) and Iraq (0.227) have the highest inequality of women compared to men in economic participation and employment. Iran with a 381% female-to-male employment rate, ranks 19 among the 24 selected Islamic countries, that compared to the 21st rank in terms of women's political participation, show more correlation among the contextual variables of political participation have been studied in this article, so that it can be said that the low rate of economic and employment of women in Iran is one of underlying causes of low political participation of Iranian women and then improving Iranian female occupational position can cause their political participation to increase (GGGR, 2020).

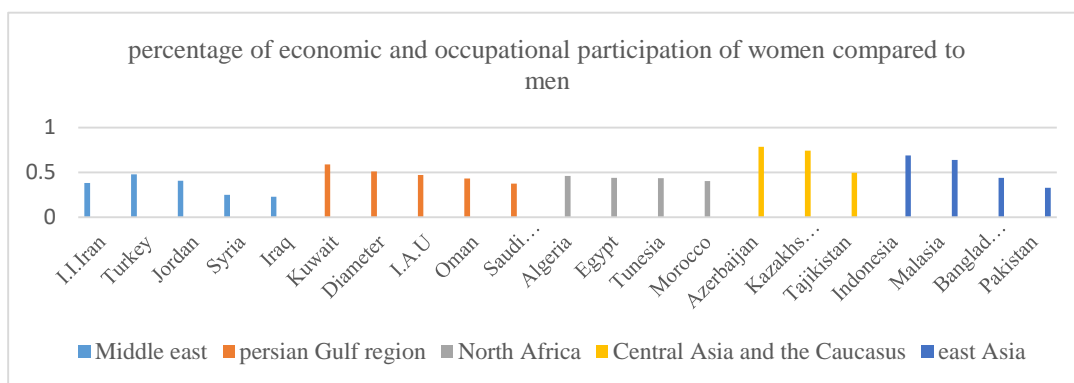
The economic participation rate in Iran in 1394 was about 62% for men and about 13% for women. Also, according to the statistics of 1396, 87% of women in the country are considered economically inactive and 60% are housewives. The unemployment rate for women has been increasing in recent years and became twice of men. This percentage has been about 10% for men and 20% for women. According to the statistics of the Vice President for Women, in 1375, the female employment rate was 86.7% and the unemployment rate was 13.3%, while in 1385, the female employment rate decreased to 78.8% and the unemployment rate increased to 24%. With the continuation of this trend in 1395, the employment rate of women has reached 77.4% and the unemployment rate has reached 22.6% (Women's Vice Presidential Institution, 1396). Of course, this is

not true among the population of women with higher education. The proportion of women with higher education to the total population of active women is 48.2%, while this rate is 16% for men. It means about half of working women have higher education, while this is about %20 for men. The percentage of female employees with higher education has increased from 5.2% in 1355 to 22% in 1375 and 46.9 in 1395. Also, the rate of economic participation of Iranian women has increased from 9.1% in 1375 to 12.1% in 1385 and 13.2% in 1395(Vice President for Women, Presidential Institution, 2016).

Table 3. Economic and occupational participation rate of women compared to men (Gender Gap Index (GGI) from UNDP)

	Country	women's economic and occupational participation to men's ratio	World ranking gender gap			women's economic and occupational participation to men's ratio	World ranking gender gap
1	Azerbaijan	0.748	33	13	Egypt	0.438	140
2	Kazakhstan	0.742	37	14	Bangladesh	0.438	141
3	Indonesia	0.688	68	15	Tunisia	0.434	142
4	Malaysia	0.639	97	16	Oman	0.431	143
5	Kuwait	0.589	120	17	Jordan	0.408	145
6	Diameter	0.512	132	18	Morocco	0.405	146
7	Bahrain	0.510	133	19	Islamic Republic of Iran	0.381	148
8	Tajikistan	0.496	134	20	Saudi Arabia	0.375	148
9	Turkey	0.478	136	21	Pakistan	0.327	150
10	United Arab Emirates	0.472	137	22	Yemen	0.273	151
11	Algeria	0.461	138	23	Syria	0.249	152
12	Lebanon	0.442	139	24	Iraq	0.227	153

Chart 2. Percentage of Economic and Occupational Participation of Women compared to Men



5-3. Security Backgrounds

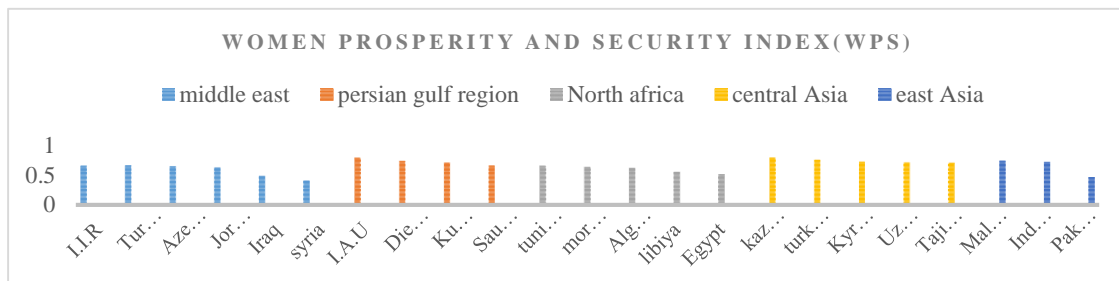
Another effective factor in women's empowerment and political participation is security factors and women's enjoyment of security. In this category structural security is considered that is not limited to the absence of obvious external, physical and military threats. In this regard, security is a multidimensional category that includes economic, military, social and cultural dimensions and contains no level of threats in any of these areas. Violence, extremism, occupation, war and the resulting insecurity are the biggest challenge that women in different parts of the world, especially in Islamic regions and countries, are facing as an important barrier to progress and development. Threats of insecurity have slowed, and in some cases even halted, the advancement of women in conflict areas. Women in war-torn areas have been deprived of their most basic rights, the right to life and the right to security, and other social, cultural, civil and political rights have been violated or taken away due to lack of security.

Women's Peace, Security and Prosperity Index (WPS) is an international indicator related to women's security issues. This index is evaluated by the Georgetown University Institute for Women's Peace and Security, as well as the Oslo Institute for Peace Research. The variables and determining factors of this index are social, economic and political variables including average education, financial income, access to mobile and communication technologies, level of parliamentary participation, legal and illegal discrimination against women, as well as security issues including Social and Organized Violence against Women. Table 4 shows the ranking of Islamic countries in terms of peace, security and prosperity.

Table 4. Women Prosperity and Security index... (WPS 2019)

	Country	Percent of WPS	World ranking		Country	Percent of WPS	World ranking
1	Kyrgyzstan	0.786	43	14	Tunisia	0.651	121
2	United Arab Emirates	0.781	44	15	Azerbaijan	0.650	123
3	Turkmenistan	0.752	60	16	Jordan	0.629	129
4	Diameter	0.730	72	17	Morocco	0.625	133
5	Malaysia	0.729	73	18	Algeria	0.612	143
6	Kazakhstan	0.721	80	19	Egypt	0.513	151
7	Uzbekistan	0.710	80	20	Libya	0.546	158
8	Indonesia	0.703	95	21	Iraq	0.490	162
9	Tajikistan	0.701	96	22	Pakistan	0.460	164
10	Kuwait	0.702	96	23	Syria	0.416	165
11	Turkey	0.661	114	24	Afghanistan	0.373	166
12	Islamic Republic of Iran	0.657	118	25	Yemen	0.351	167
13	Saudi Arabia	0.655	120				

Chart 3. Women Prosperity and Security Index (WPS)



According to the Table 4 and Chart 3, among 25 selected Muslim country, Kazakhstan (0.786), UAE (0.781) and Turkmenistan (0.752) have the highest rank in terms of security indicators, and Syria (0.416), Afghanistan (0.373) and Yemen (0.351) are in the weakest position. Iran with 0.657 is ranked 12th among 25 selected Muslim countries, almost in the middle of the Table that compared to the 21st rank of Iranian women's political participation, shows a high disproportion and conformity, so that in accordance to the middle situation of Iranian women in terms of variables forming the index of peace, security and prosperity, including economic, social, political and security variables, higher political participation of them is expected.

6. Women's political participation in Iran compared to other Islamic countries and regions

Women's political participation in the democratic process, like men's participation, is typically characterized by the right to vote, to work in parliamentary groups, and to hold political leadership roles. The Islamic Revolution facilitated the entry of large part of Iranian women, especially the religious part of society into the political and social arenas, albeit in the form of mass participation. However, women's political participation in the form of elite, despite some favorable contexts and backgrounds including educational, training, economic and security preconditions has remained lower than expected. The reason for this should be sought in some structural factors, political socialization processes, psychological factors related to women themselves, as well as cultural backgrounds, including the patriarchal culture of Iranian society.

In comparing women's political participation, we have used two indicators: the number and percentage of parliamentary seats and women's representation in parliaments, as well as the percentage of women's political empowerment and their positions in important managerial and presidential positions. Obviously, the women political participation is not limited only to these indicators but due to the limited dimensions of the article we suffice to these two most important and some additional explanations will mention appropriately.

6-1. Women's share of Representative and parliamentary seats

The first indicator to assess the status of women's political participation in this study is the ranking of countries in terms of the number of parliamentary seats allocated to women by data of Inter-Parliamentary Union according to 2020 statistics, which compares the situation of women's political participation in Iran to other Islamic countries. Although the percentage of women's representation in relation to men is not an indication of the general situation of women's political participation, but due to ease access is one of the important indicators for this evaluation. According to the latest United Nations reports, 30.4 percent of parliamentary seats in the United States, 27.7 percent in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, 23.6 percent in sub-Saharan Africa, 19.5 percent in Asian countries, 17.8% in Arab countries and 17.9% in Pacific countries are held by women, and the presence of women in the national parliaments of these countries has increased by a total of 11.3% since 1995. A look at the situation of countries separately also shows that in a significant part of the world, at least 30% of parliamentary seats belong to women MPs (Euronews, 2019). Iran with 16 Female representative from 286 MPs and 5.6% of women MPs, rank 181 out of 192 countries in the world. Also among 26 Muslim countries mentioned in Table 5, Iran is in the last and 24th ranks (IPU, 2020).

Iranian women were among the first women in the Middle East who enjoyed the right to vote and be elected in 1960s (1363/1963). Of course, in pre-revolutionary Iran, although some social and political rights and privileges were reserved for women, but many middle-class and religious women were lacked it. The Islamic Revolution increased women's political participation in the masses, especially among religious middle-class women, but did not improve women's participation in the elite, such as holding parliamentary seats.

Chart 4 shows the number of women holding parliamentary seats in different eras of the parliament in the post-revolutionary period that its general trend is upward, of course, with ups and downs, so that from less than 2 Percent in the first round, it has reached 6% in recent times and the tenth parliament, but is still less than expected and 25% global average.

Chart 4. Percentage of female parliament seat in I.R (Data of the Vice President for Women 1396)

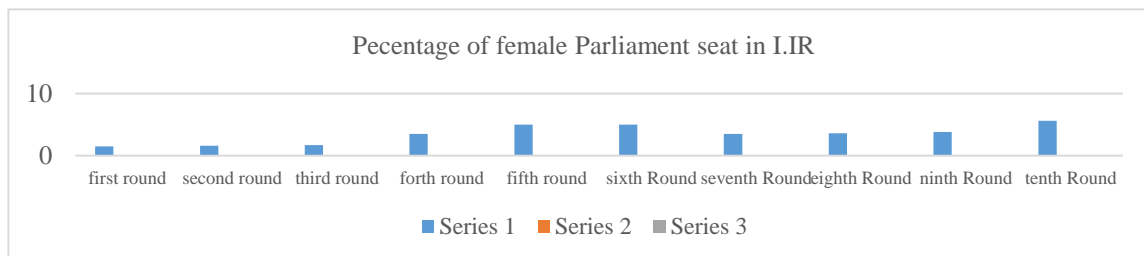


Table 5 and Chart 5 show the rank of Islamic countries in terms of holding parliamentary seats by women (according to the inter-parliamentary site data/IPU). Based on data of table UAE with 50%, Uzbekistan with 28%, Kazakhstan and Afghanistan with 27% of women parliament seats are in the upper ranks, and Oman with 2.3% and Yemen with 0.3% are in the last. Iran with 6% of women's parliamentary seats ranks 24th out of 26 Muslim-elected countries. Of course, these data are crude and are mainly due to the allocation of parliamentary quotas for women in order to gain international prestige and then do not alone indicate the status of parliamentary participation of women in Muslim countries, and always require extra explanations.

Table 5. Percentage of female representatives in Islamic countries parliaments 2020

	Country	Women parliament seat	World ranking		Country	Women parliament seat	World ranking
1	United Arab Emirates	50%	4	14	Saudi Arabia	19.9%	114
2	Uzbekistan	28%	45	15	Kyrgyzstan	19.2%	118
3	Kazakhstan	27%	68	16	Azerbaijan	17.4%	124
4	Afghanistan	27%	69	17	Turkey	17.3%	125
5	Iraq	26%	70	18	Libya	16%	133
6	Algeria	25.8%	76	19	Jordan	15.4%	136
7	Turkmenistan	25%	77	20	Egypt	15.1%	138
8	Tunisia	24.9%	81	21	Malaysia	15%	140
9	Tajikistan	23.8%	85	22	Diameter	9.8%	168
10	Bangladesh	20.9%	105	23	Kuwait	6.4%	177
11	Morocco	20.5%	107	24	Islamic Republic of Iran	5.6%	181
12	Indonesia	20.4%	108	25	Oman	2.3%	186
13	Pakistan	20.2%	110	26	Yemen	0.3%	187

(Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union/IPU)

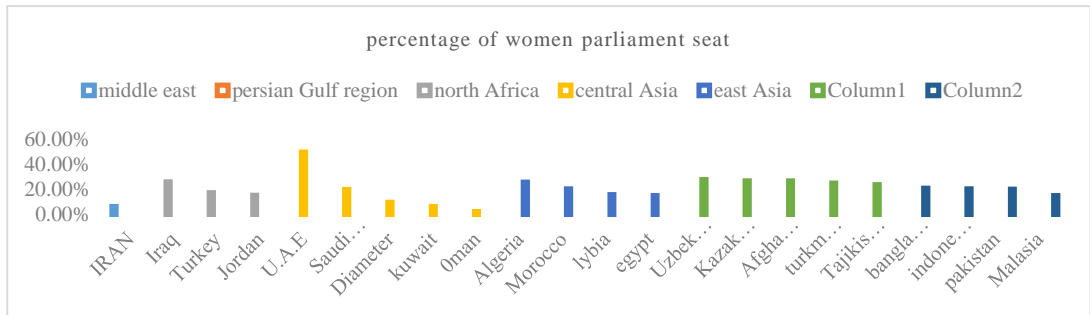


Chart 5. Percentage of Women Parliament Seat in Muslim countries

According to the above Table and Chart, the highest percentage of women's parliamentary seats in Islamic countries belong to the UAE with 50%, meaning an equal share of women and men which puts the country in the highest position in the world in this regard. And this is while it should be noted that in all countries of the Persian Gulf region and in this particular case, the UAE lacks a real electoral and democratic system and the main governmental positions and leadership are determined traditionally and by appointments. The highest political institution of the seven emirates of the UAE, centered in Abu Dhabi, which is administered federally is "The Supreme Council of Governors" consists of the governors of the seven emirates, which has been chaired by the ruler of Abu Dhabi since its inception. The rulers of each emirate are usually selected from the most virtuous tribe of that mansion and usually and of course not always the heir and son of the previous Amir. Determining the general policy of the country, electing the president and prime minister, electing the president and judges of the Supreme Court, and agreeing to international treaties and agreements are among the most important competencies of the Supreme Council of Governors. The President and the Prime Minister are elected by the High Council of Governors for a term of 5 years from among its members (Peterson, 2021).

The UAE has a Federal National Assembly with 40 members that serves as an advisory body, not a legislature, and half of its members are appointed, and only half of them are elect by Emirati citizens which makes up only about 20% of the UAE population. The UAE has not held any elections until recent years and the beginning of the 21st century. The first election in this country was held in 2006 with about 7000 people that increased to 337 thousand people in 2019 about a third of Eligible voters. In this election, it was decided that half of the members of the Consultative Assembly of the Federal National Assembly will be women, of which, of course, half of them will be appointed by appointment and from the ruling families (Peterson, 2021). However, although transitions to this extent cannot reflect the state of real democracy and are more as a means of preserving the international image and deviating from the existing realities of these countries at the international level and in international forums, but still allocation this quota for women in parliament. Consultation is a step forward in the recognition of women's socio-political rights.

Next in terms of women's political participation are the countries of the Central Asian region, which by average of 20% is close to the global average. That this due to the allocating quotas to women's parliamentary seats in recent years, which has led a significant increase in women's participation in electoral and parliamentary processes, that can pave the way for active and serious participation of women in the coming years.

For example, in Afghanistan during the Karzai a 25% quota was allocated to women. However in Afghanistan, the highly traditional fabric of society has kept women in bondage and stereotyped traditions. This situation intensified after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the country, especially during the Taliban regime. After the US invasion of Afghanistan following the attacks 11 September and fall of the Taliban government and the inauguration of a new government, then-Afghan President Hamid Karzai and his government gave women equal rights and encouraged them to enter politics and public office. Based on New Afghan law 25% of the seats allocated to women. The allocation of this quota in the parliamentary and provincial council elections increased the level of women's political participation to an acceptable level (Maghsoodi & ghaledar, 2011:195).

In this regard in the Wolesi Jirga (the People's Council), one of the two parliaments of Afghanistan, where representatives were elected by the people vote directly for 5 years, from 249 Chair, 68 seats were reserved for women, and in the Meshrano Jirga (House of Representatives) the other parliament included 102 members, one-third of whom were elected by the president, 50% of the president's 34 quota allocated to women. In the provincial council, out of 420 seats, 120 seats were reserved for women. In the first Jirga of 1501 representatives, 160 were women. And two of Lloyd Jirga's vice-presidents were also women. It also mandated at least two women lawyers from each state Jirga (Maghsoodi & ghaledar, 2011:197). Of course, due to the traditional and patriarchal culture of Afghan society, real influence of these women participation were still formal and marginal, which, of course, could pave the way for their effective participation in the coming years. However it seems that the re-emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan has ruined all these efforts and the situation of women goes back to the miserable era.

In other countries of the Central Asian region after the Soviet independence, due to the growth of Salafist and extremist currents in some countries in region, including Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, there was concern that this would reduce the position of women in the region, although after three decades the situation in these countries indicates the restoration of women's rights and status in the countries of the region. In particular, the situation of women in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, which is significantly higher than Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, in which women have been able to rise to high political positions such as speaker of parliament and prime minister (Shirmohammady,2011).

Allocation of electoral quotas for women in Central Asian countries in recent years has led to a significant increase in women's participation in electoral and parliamentary processes, which can pave the way for active and serious

participation of women in the coming years, including Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan introduced a 30 percent quota for women in parliament in 2004, which significantly increased women's political participation. Although some observers believe this is a formal matter in order to attract the attention of the international community and promote the political and democratic image of this country at the global level, and practically the social and political role of women in this country has not been promoted. Women also hold 16 percent of the seats in Turkmenistan's parliament, and even recently the speaker of parliament was a woman (Maghsoodi & ghaledar, 2011:198).

The Islamic countries of East Asia include Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan and Bangladesh are in the next rank of the number of parliamentary seats held by women. The level of political participation of women in this region is real and far from some political pretense, so that in countries of this region such as Pakistan and Bangladesh, women have reached the highest political and government positions. For example, in Bangladesh, out of 350 electoral seats, 50 are for women in the parliament, called Jatyia Sangsa (Dhaka tribune, 2011).

In Pakistan out of 342 parliamentary seats, 60 seats or about 20% dedicated to women. In the last elections in this country in 2018, the Tehreek-e-Insaf party led by Imran Khan entered the parliament with 125 members, won the majority by attracting 5 minority representatives and 28 women representatives, and with 158 representatives, Imran Khan, the leader of the party, was appointed as the prime minister of this country. In this regard the role of women's seats in his first ministry was very effective (IRNA, 1397).

Next in terms of the women's seats among Muslim countries is North African region, include Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Egypt. In Tunisia, in the first elections after the overthrow of Ben Ali, by choosing 68 women in parliament, percentage of women in parliamentary seats reached to 25%. This amount increased to 28% in the next elections. Contrary to some who saw the Islamist victory and the Ennahda party in Tunisia as reducing the participation rate of women, but this was accompanied by an increase in the number and turnout of women. In addition, before the Tunisian revolution and during the rule of Ben Ali, veiled women were barred from entering political, social, and even educational careers, which deprived many religious women of socio-political activities, but now Of the 217 members of parliament, 59 are women, 42 of whom are veiled. Furthermore 48% of the Islamist Ennahda party members are women whom play an active role in the Tunisian parliament. They play an active role in all six parliamentary commissions (Women and Family Research Institute, 2012).

Algeria along with Tunisia with about 26%, are in the next rank in terms of the highest number of female representatives among the Arab and North African countries. They are ranked 29th in the world. Algerian women won 145 seats out of 462 in the 2012 elections and 120 seats in the 2017 elections. The highest rate among Muslim countries and higher than countries like United States and Britain (IRNA, 1397).

In Egypt in 2020 elections, out of 518 parliamentary seats, 64 were allocated to women, which rates above 10%. This amount increased to 80 people and over 15% in the 2015 elections which was a significant increase. Of course in general, state of democracy in Egypt is not very acceptable. For example, in the last parliamentary elections in this country in 2020, only about 28% of eligible voters participated and 72% did not participate. The share of women in this period was also about 17%. In this regard, opponent of the government, including the Brotherhood, believe that the elections in Egypt are unhealthy and the Al-Sisi government and the military forces directly intervening in it. According to many independent observers, the allocation of quotas for women is more formal and a tool to present a democratic image of the Egyptian government in international arena (IRNA, 94).

In the Persian Gulf countries, as mentioned in the case of the UAE, despite the formation some civic and democratic institutions, in recent years, these institutions have been often formally and do not play a strong role in the hierarchy of power and are made more by government parties than by society. Most elections are showy and dictatorial, and people are not seriously influential in determining their own destiny. The parliaments of these countries are often appointed and have a consultative status rather than legislation. Although most of these countries claim democratic rule, but according to global statistics, democracy is not realistic in any of these countries, and despite some democratic mechanisms such as holding elections in recent years, the international community has shown that such actions are intended to deceive public opinion and cover up authoritarian status of these regimes , and it has no effect on the promotion of these countries in the world ranking of democracy (Pishgahifard & Poorzohdigohar,2010:42) .

This is especially true for women. In most countries of the Persian Gulf region, women have achieved the right to vote and be elected to political positions only in recent years. In Saudi Arabia, for example, women's political participation is more recent and more formal and goes back to Reforms in this country and allocation of 20% electoral quotas for women in 2015 for the first time in the council elections. Saudi women were deprived of some basic political and social rights, such as driving or traveling without a guardian and a man protector, as well as the right to vote until recently, due to Wahhabi practices. And this was one of the constant challenges of Saudi Arabia, which was often questioned in the reports and statistics of international human rights organizations. Currently, Saudi women's participation in politics has improved through the passage of a series of legal measures, the most important of which is increasing women's participation in council elections. Although democracy in the countries of the region is a formal and superficial matter to deceive the international community, but in any case, it is a positive step forward for Saudi women (Vakil & Others, 2015).

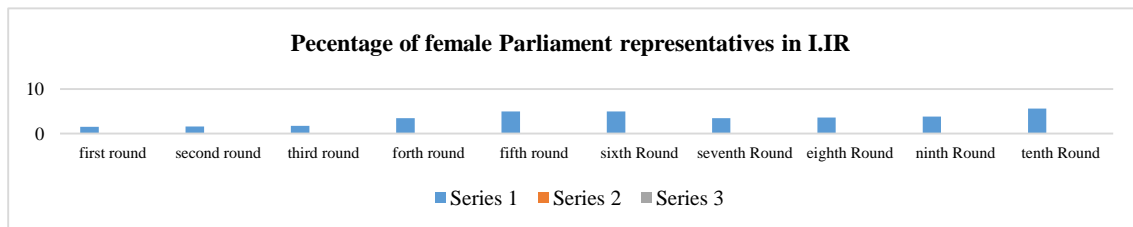
Other countries in the Persian Gulf region include Qatar, Kuwait, Oman with an average of less than 10%, are ranked low in terms of women's political participation level, for example In Kuwait, women only in 2000 have the right to

participate in elections and to be elected in the Middle East, Iraq due to the allocation of 25% quotas has a superior position in terms of female representatives. According to the latest Iraqi Independent High Electoral Commission, from 329 parliamentary seats, 82 seats were allocated to women.

In Turkey, a 20 to 25 percent quota is allocated to female representatives. However, in practice, it has increased to a maximum of 17% so far. Women in Turkey enjoyed the right to vote and be elected following the 1934 constitutional amendments under Ataturk. Until 2007, the percentage of female representatives in Turkey was between 5 and 7%. In the 2007 election it rose to 9%, in the 2011 election to 14%, and finally in the 2015 election to 17.6%. In the 27th election of the country in 2018, out of 600 seats, 104 seats, or 17%, were allocated to women which was a significant increase (Anatolian Agency, 2020).

Iran with 16 female representatives out of 290 (5.6%) ranks last among Islamic countries, and the Middle East in terms of political participation that despite some potential backgrounds, such as the high level of women's education, it is less than expected. Iranian women were among the first women in the Middle East that enjoy the right to vote and be elected in the 1960s. Of course, in pre-revolutionary Iran, although some of the social and political rights and privileges were reserved for women, due to their Western and secular orientation, they included only a part of the upper and westernized women, and the middle class women were excluded chiefly due to their religious limitations. The Islamic Revolution of Iran caused a large part of women and girls in Iranian society to enter the political and social arenas and thus significantly increased women's political participation in the mass form, but women's political participation in the elite form despite creation some effective backgrounds and opportunities like increasing in the level of higher education and presence of middle class female in social activities, is still lower than expected.

Chart 6 Percentage of Female Parliament Representative in I.R
(The Vice President for Women of the Presidential Institution, 1396)



6-2. Political empowerment and women's participation rate in high executive and managerial positions

For this review, we have used political empowerment data in the Gender Gap Index 2020. Accordingly, political capability index in addition to the percentage of parliamentary seats held by women, includes women holding leadership And senior political and governmental positions, as well as the percentage of women

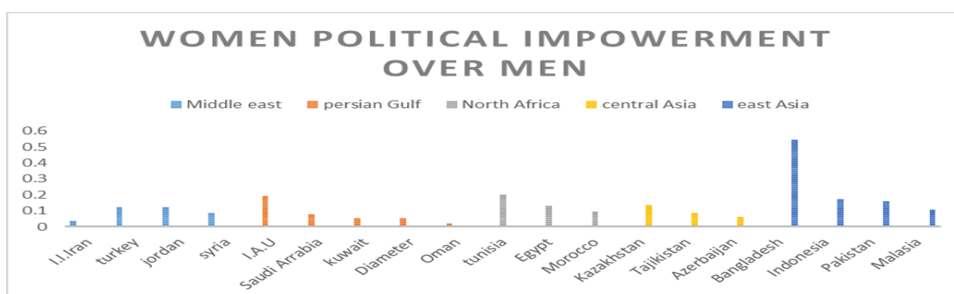
in senior management and executive positions compared to men, which is a more complete variable than the previous one, the number of female parliamentary seats. As mentioned above, the number of female parliamentary seats due to allocation quotas in some countries, especially in recent years, cannot indicate the true extent of women's social and political statute, and sometimes it distorts and covers up the facts in these countries and is an effort to enhance international prestige. In this regard, the political empowerment index can represent a more complete and real indicator in terms of women's socio-political positions.

According to the United Nations, there are currently 29 women in heads of state or autonomous regions and 13 women serves as presidents around the world. 18.3% of cabinet members worldwide are women, holding positions ranging from the Ministries of Defense, Interior, Justice to the Environment, Energy, Family, and Education. In some countries, such as Spain, there are more women in cabinet than men (Euronews, 2019).

Table 6. Empowerment and political participation of women compared to men (Gender Gap Index Ranking, 2020)

		Women political empowerment	World ranking			Women political empowerment	World ranking
1	Bangladesh	0.545	7	13	Iraq	0.105	118
2	Tunisia	0.201	67	14	Morocco	0.095	123
3	United Arab Emirate	0.191	75	15	Tajikistan	0.088	128
4	Indonesia	0.172	82	16	Syria	0.085	130
5	Pakistan	0.159	93	17	Saudi Arabia	0.077	136
6	Algeria	0.145	99	18	Azerbaijan	0.063	140
7	Egypt	0.133	103	19	Kuwait	0.053	142
8	Kyrgyzstan	0.135	105	20	Diameter	0.052	143
9	Kazakhstan	0.130	106	21	Islamic republic Iran	0.037	145
10	Turkey	0.124	109	22	Lebanon	0.024	149
11	Jordan	0.121	113	23	Oman	0.021	150
12	Malaysia	0.108	117	24	Yemen	0.015	151

Chart 7. Women Political Impowerment compare to men



According to the Table and Chart above, in terms of women's political empowerment, among the Islamic countries, the countries of the East Asian region are in the first place, Bangladesh with %55, Tunisia (20%), and UAE with 19.1% ratio of women political empowerment to men are in the highest ranks and Lebanon (0.024%), Oman (0.021%), and Yemen (0.015%) are in the lowest rank among Islamic countries. In terms of women political empowerment, East Asian region is in the first place and Bangladesh with 55% is at the forefront with a clear difference. This is mainly due to Southeast Asian favorable cultural context that is prone to democratic practices and conducive women to high level of social and political positions. The level of women's political participation in Bangladesh is significant even in the world level rankings and among 152 countries in the Table of gender empowerment, this country is ranked seventh and higher than many western countries. In Bangladesh, women have been able to hold top political and governmental positions and even state's leadership Bangladesh has two main parties, "People" and " army" which have long been led by two women, Sheikh Hosseineh and Khaleda Zia. Since the country has a federal system, each of the two women has been the leader of the ruling party for sometimes; they held the post of prime minister as the highest executive official of the country (Rolland, 2015).

Pakistan is another country in the region that presence of women at the highest level of political positions and leadership is significant and women in this country have been able to be appointed as party leaders and the prime minister, including Benazir Bhutto's prime minister in the 1990s.

Next in terms of women's political empowerment among Islamic countries are the countries of the North African region. In Tunisia during French colonial era, the emphasis on modern Western culture, and the spread of unveiling among women did not lead to improve of socio-political situation of Tunisian women as 96% of Tunisian girls and women were illiterate on the eve of independence in 1956.

During the 31-year secular presidency of Habib Bourqieh, the Tunisia's independence agent, feminist reforms were pursued, including unveiling and the granting of civil participation and women's suffrage. With the passage of the Personal Dignity Act and the declaration of equality between men and women in Tunisia after independence, women gained access to jobs such as law, medicine, engineering, and the military. Despite some efforts to improve the educational and social status of women, many sections of the religious community in Tunisia abstained from scientific, educational and social activities. This situation continued in the time of Ibn Ali, but due to the continuation of anti-religious policies, the religious body of women was still deprived of these reforms. During this period, veiled women had no right to continue their education, obtain government and public jobs, and even enter places such as book fairs.

During the 2010 Tunisian revolution, the presence of women along with men was significant, and women played a significant role in the revolution and its efforts to achieve it. The victory of the Islamist currents and the Ennahda party in

the first elections after the revolution paved the way for women from the religious sections of the society to enter the social, political and educational spheres. Although some saw the Islamists' victory as an obstacle against Tunisian women's advancement, the increasing role of women in various fields, including elections and use of women in ministry positions by Islamists, proved the opposite. In the post-revolutionary interim government, there were three women in the cabinet, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Women and the Ministry of Higher Education.

Women in Algeria, another Muslim country in the North African region, have enjoyed better rights than women in other North African countries after independence. For example, Algerian women are mainly educated. Excellent enjoyment so that 70% of lawyers, and 60% of doctors, nurses and specialists are women. Also 65% of students in Algerian universities are from women and girls, which more than 80% of them have the opportunity to have jobs. Thus, a major share of participation in providing family expenses is borne by women. There are also a large number of women in occupations such as police and security positions (Muftah, 2020).

Also in the current Algerian government headed by Ahmed Oveihi, women in the cabinet are in charge of 4 of the 27 ministries including the Ministry of Education, Posts and Communications, National Solidarity, Family and Women, and the Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energy.

Egypt and Morocco are in the last rank in terms of women's political empowerment among North African region (IRNA, 1397).

The next place of women's political empowerment among Islamic countries belongs to the countries of Central Asia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990s and the Independence of Central Asian Republics, the region witnessed a return to its originality and identity, which, of course, in some cases led to a return to traditional and stereotypical roles for women. The growth of extremist currents in the region has also fueled the issue, reducing the role of women in some parts of the region, such as Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, confined women to their homes as well as simply respecting their wives, fathers, brothers and even their sons. Of course, this is less the case in countries such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, where women work with men in economic activities, and have a stronger social presence. For example, during the rule of Asgar Akayev in Kyrgyzstan, out of his 16 ministries, 3 were dedicated to women (Maghsoodi & Ghalledar, 2011:196). Also in Kyrgyzstan, women have been able to reach the highest executive position. For example, the presidency of Roza Ota Nabayeva in Kyrgyzstan, whose policies have had wide acceptance and popularity? In Turkmenistan women have also held parliament head in this country.

In Afghanistan, another Muslim country in the region, there were three women ministers in cabinet during the reign of Zahir Shah. Until the early decade 1990s before Taliban coming to power in this country, a large number of teachers, half of government employees and 40% of the doctors were women. Gradually since the 1950s women have entered the social arena, and employed in jobs like labor

force, secretary, nurse, flight attendant, etc. Women with higher education were employed in occupations like medicine, law, engineering and journalism, which of course this was not to the acceptable to traditional Afghan leaders and scholars, and was faced by their opposition and sometimes sabotage. As the Taliban became more effective after the co liberation of country from Soviet occupation, women social and political participation was eliminated and women banned from appearing in public and any political and social activities, such as employment, the right to education, trade, driving, etc.

After the US invasion of Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks and overthrow of the Taliban, in the 2001 Bonn conference plan for new Afghan government, women's rights was intensified. Afghanistan's new constitution did not prohibit women from holding key positions, and did not even bar women from running for presidency or cabinet member. In this regard, Karzai appointed a female cabinet minister in his first administration. During the Karzai second term presidency in 2009, two women were appointed as the head of the newly established Ministry of Women's Affairs and The Ministry of Health (Maghsoodi & ghalledar, 2011: 198). In the last Afghan government before Taliban coming back to power, Ms. Masoumeh Khavari, The 35-year-old, was able to appointed as Minister of Communications by Parliament vote of confidence and the number of women ministers increased to two. During this period women were also able to work as governor, police and army force (IRNA, 1399). By Taliban returning back to power in Afghanistan, all of these advances in women's socio-political positions have been lost and a bright future for women is not on the horizon (the data in the table for Afghanistan is from the pre-Taliban era.).

In the Persian Gulf countries, despite allocating some quotas for political participation of women, in general, their share of executive and managerial jobs compared to men are very little and in average only about 7% of executive jobs in these countries are dedicated to women. (Pishgahifard & Poorzohdigohar, 2010: 33). For example in 2016, Saudi Arabia reform and modernization plan based on the 2030 vision document presented by the Crown Prince Muhammad ibn Salman, parts of which was related to women and their rights and civil and political issues.

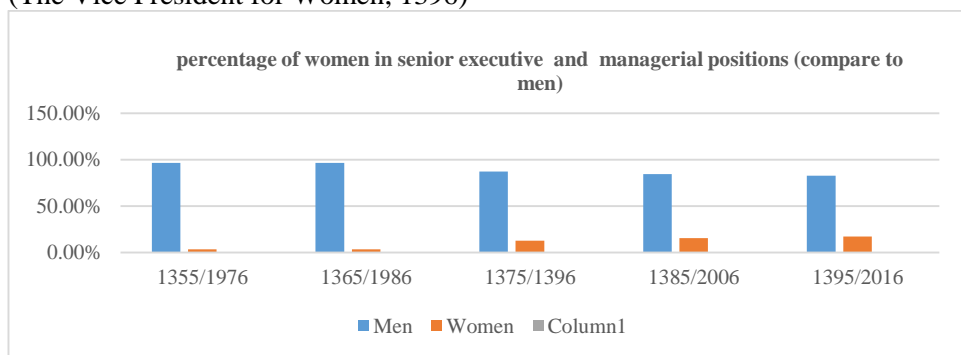
But despite some apparent reforms to women's issues, they continue to face systematic discrimination in law and enforcement that roots in the cultural and religious situation of this country. The tribal, patriarchal and closed culture of the country towards women's well as the prevailing Wahhabi ideology has been an important obstacle against women achieving socially and politically acceptable status. Despite the government's promised reforms, Saudi women and girls continue to face discrimination in law and practice. Unlike much Saudi propaganda about the emancipation of women from some of society's most common norms, such as revoking the permission of the male guardian to carry out social and economic affairs, women are still forced to register, get hired, travel or get married with the permission of a male guardian, father, husband, brother or son, and they are not always protected against all forms of sexual violence.

In the countries of the Middle East, the combined Byzantine Islamic identity of Turkey, influenced by pre-Ottoman Christian as well as Islamic identity during the Ottoman Caliphate, has led to formation a secular Islam in this country (Rolland, 2015). The influence of women during the Ottoman period was in the form of behind-the-scenes activities of the Ottoman court. After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1921 and during the reign of Ataturk, Reforms in favor of women were formed in this country for the first time. Ataturk is the leader of Turkey Westernization. Turkish women enjoyed the right to vote in local elections in 1930 and right to be elected in 1934.

Over time, Turkish women advanced in terms of political status and became ministers, party leaders, and prime ministers. The first minister woman in Turkey, Turkan Ekül, became a minister of health in the 1970s. In this country, women have also at times led parties such as the Social Democratic Party, the National Women's Party, the Left Democratic Party, the Homeland Party, Peace and Democracy, the People's Democratic Party, and the Anatolian Party. Tansuçiller was the first elected party leader and then the first female prime minister in Turkey in 1990s. In the current Turkish government, women are in charge of ministries, including the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services Of course, despite the acceptable party activities of women in Turkey, the maximum percentage of female representatives in the 2018 elections has reached 17%. Women in this country are also employed in governorships, executive and managerial positions.

In Iranian the post-revolutionary years, women have been active in most middle-level management positions, but their presence in senior executive and governmental positions is still inadequate. In general, the study of women's political participation trend in the years after the revolution shows a slowly increasing trend with ups and downs, which seems to be lower than expected according to the global average.

Chart8. Percentage of women in Senior Executive and managerial positions compare to men in IR
(The Vice President for Women, 1396)



In this regard, according to Zolghadr, member of the Women's Faction of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, about 20% of legislative and policy making positions and Executive management hold by women, and presence 817 women as women's affairs consultants in the executive organs of the country, is an example of increasing efforts to participate Educated women in decision-making process (Zolghadr,2017).

In recent years, Iranian women have held positions such as judges, vice presidents and advisers to the president. Ms. Ebtekar was the first vice president and head of the Environmental Protection Agency in the seventh, eighth and eleventh governments. In the twelfth government, she was the vice president of the women's institution. Also Mrs Vhid Dastjerdy was the first Iranian Minister after Islamic Revolution in the tenth government as Minister of Health. The presidency has a deputy for women, which is also headed by women. Women have been more prominent in city and village council elections, and many women have served as members of town and village councils, as well as mayors, and more recently in positions such as governor. In sum, the general trend of women's employment in recent decades in the executive, managerial and legislative positions especially in the middle levels has been on the rise. This rate has increased from 3.2% in 1355, to 3.8% in 1365, 12.8% in 1375, 15.4% in 1385 and 17.3% in 1395.

7. Conclusion

The present study seeks to explain the low political participation of Iranian women compared to other Islamic countries and regions, despite some effective and appropriate backgrounds, including educational, economic, occupational and income preconditions, as well as required security contexts in recent decade and after Islamic Revolution. This research is a comparative study based on some reliable international and domestic data and statistics, including United Nations Development Program, the World Economic Forum, and inter-parliamentary union, vice presidency of women affairs.

Based on hypothesis of this research, despite some favorable educational, economic and security backgrounds, the presence of women in Iran's political participation is low not only compared to global averages, but also compared to women's political participation in other Islamic countries and regions.

Accordingly, this study is divided into two parts. In the first part, some required preconditions for women political participation, including high educational and training, income and occupational status, also some effective security factors among Iranian women compared to other countries and Islamic regions are examined. In the next section, the Iranian women political participation compared to other Islamic countries and regions is examined by using two indicators: index of women parliament seats using data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union, as well as an index of women's political empowerment from the data of the 2020 Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum, that In

addition to the number of women holding parliamentary seats, contains their positions in senior managerial and executive positions.

The results of this study indicate that despite the Iranian middle position among the Muslim countries in terms of some necessary backgrounds and requirements for political participation, but the level of women political participation is lower than Global averages and even among Muslim countries. For example, in terms of the average number of years of schooling for women, Iran ranks 10th out of 27 selected Muslim countries with 10.2 years that has the most incompatibility with the 21st position in terms of female political participation. Compared to the high educational potential of Iranian women, their political participation is much lower than expected.

Also, in terms of effective financial and economic conditions and facilities, Iran with 18484 \$ women's gross national income is ranked 18th among 29 selected Muslim countries. Also in terms of employment rate and economic participation of women compared to men, Iran with 381%, ranks 19th among 25 selected countries which compared to the 21th rank of women political participation, indicate among contextual variables studied in this article, economic variables are most relevant to the political situation of women. In this regard, we can claim the relationship between the variables of employment status and income of women in Iran with the level of their political participation. In terms of security and prosperity index and its economic, social, political and security variables, affecting women's socio-political participation, the Islamic Republic of Iran (0.657) is ranked 12th among the 25 Muslim countries and in the middle levels of the table, which this position is not consistent with the level of political empowerment of women at the bottom of the table, and due to the average situation of Iranian women in terms of political, social and economic security indicators, a higher level of political participation for women is expected.

The statistical data studied above indicate that the low level of political participation of women in Iran in the executive and macro policy position doesn't have a direct relation with the level of education or security factors, including political and social security variables, but to some extent we can relate it to economic factors such as employment and Economic situation, In such a way the promotion of economic and employment status of women can lead to the promotion of their political participation, because they considers macro-policies to be effective in their economic situation and livelihood. And then can be seen as an incentive for their political participation.

Of course, in relation to women's political participation some political and structural and also cultural factors such as patriarchal culture of Iranian society, as well as psychological factors related to women themselves, including women's lack of interest and acceptance of political categories and lack of self-confidence in women are effective, due to the volume of the article and also because it has been reviewed in some other studies that mentioned above in the research background section, it has been omitted in this article.

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