

THE FACT OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND FACTORS AFFECTING POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR

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Özet

Gelişim sürecinin başlangıcından günümüze kadar her siyasal sistem, karşılaştığı sorunların üstesinden gelebilmek ve bütünlüğünü koruyarak gelişimini devam ettirebilmek için, belirli mekanizmalar geliştirmiştir.

Gene, her siyasal sistem, siyasal rejim türü ne olursa olsun, kaynak ve değerlerin yukarıdan aşağıya doğru aktarıldığı, buna karşın ihtiyaç ve taleplerin aşağıdan yukarıya doğru iletildiği, bir mekanizmaya dayanmak durumundadır ve bu mekanizma, sistemin meşru olması için, karşılıklı yarar ilkesine göre çalışmaktadır.

Siyasal sisteme katkıda bulunabilecek temel mekanizmalardan en önemlisi siyasal katılımdır. Siyasal katılma işleyen, gelişen, değişen dinamik bir organizma gibidir. Yani; siyasal sisteme ön aşamada, girdi sağlayarak, sistemin karar vermesinde etkili olduğu kadar, sistemin çıktısı da sayılmaktadır

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yani karar sonuçlarını, etkileyerek, denetleyerek sistemi harekete geçirmektedir. Böylece sistem, girdi-çıktı-feed back döngüsü içinde hem kendisini var etmekte, hem de değişmektedir. (Uysal, 1984:35)

Siyasal sistemin kabul ettiği ve uyguladığı siyasal rejim türüne göre, siyasal katılma biçimleri farklılaşmaktadır. (Fincona, 1991:3-51). Otoriter ya da totaliter siyasal rejimlerde siyasal katılma biçimleri sınırlandırılırken, demokratik rejimlerde bu sınır genişlemektedir. (Çam, 1984:280-283)

Ayrıca siyasal katılmaya etki eden, çok fazla etkenden söz edilebilir. Bunlar bireysel, ulusal ve uluslararası etkenlerdir. Bunların niceliksel ve niteliksel yoğunluğu ve bu etkenlerin karşılıklı etkileşimi, siyasal katılma biçimlerini etkiler, örneğin azaltır ya da artırır, hızlandırır ya da yavaşlaştırabilir. (Milbrath, 1977:26)

Burada siyasal katılma biçimleri ve siyasal katılmayı etkileyen faktörlerden birisi olan medya üzerinde durulacaktır.

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Political participation, which is both an aim and a means in various research and in the working of a political system, has unfortunately no single and global definition (Asharf&Sharma, 1988:144). Definitions of political participation can be taken in different perspectives such as normative (Parry, Moyser, Day, 1992:1-5), progressive and behavioural (Nie&Verbas, 1984:4).

In general, however, political participation can be defined as a process that determines the ways that are useful and used in realizing all types of social and political aims.

Through participation, both the wishes and needs of the society and the interests provided for them by the government are well determined by matching at the most proper level.

Ergüder (1980-81:8) claims that variables related to the behaviours of individuals in political participation, and variables of political atmosphere, and of socio-economic status are determined and affected by national, international and environmental factors. On the other hand, Özbudun (Özbudun, 1974:3) determined the factors that direct the individuals in political participation as personal devotion and solidarity, the consciousness of interest and patriotic feelings. Özbudun states that the first two factors in this order are mobilized (directed by others) and the last two causes autonomous behaviour.

Types of political participation

Research findings and theoretical views based on the factor analysis conducted in the empirical-area types of political participation suggest that political behaviour is realized in many different ways (Almond, Verba, 1989:3-42). These types can be shown on a scale from vote-casting behaviour that requires the least time and effort to actions that require much energy and time in the direction of changing the political system. For example, while Pizrono (1970:30) sees spreading rumor in relation with the system as a form of participation, Dahl (Baykal, 1970:31) sees it as political interest, knowledge, action, and Almond (1987:59) looks at the matter through a broad perspective dealing with behaviours from an ordinary to anarchy, and to political alienation.

Berelson, Lazarsfeld, Mc Phee, who conducted research in this field, determined that types of political behaviour are in relation both each other and in correlation (Turan, Karamustafaoğlu, 1989:8-9)

Buffalo Group, which conducted research in the same subject, classified the types of political participation according to the results of research made by Sidney and Verba (Verba & Nie, 1989:1-3).

This type of classification is shown below:

- Apathetics (Those who are not interested in politics or who do not cast votes, or who get alienated to the system after getting interested deeply)
- Gladiators (Active participants)
 - Those who get contacted with special people (those who get contacted with important people only for their own interests)
 - Communication setters (those who warn, orally or in written form, people positively or negatively on the decisions of government)
 - Those participating in activities of parties and campaigns (such as money donation, taking active role in activities, and attending the meetings etc.)
 - Group participation (those who attempt to solve local or international problems) Gladiators falling in this category present a pattern of behaviour as usual.
 - Action of protesting (those who try to change the political system)
 - Perfect participants (those who bear patriotic consciousness and those who take part in action)

Those who fall in this category of gladiators, on the other hand, present extraordinary pattern of behaviour.

As can be seen, although behaviours of participation show variation, they form an integrity in itself.

Interaction Between Media and Political Participation

Studies investigating the relation between media and political participation are not new. But results of investigation show that media affected political participation differently in historical phases (Yumlu, 1994 : 39-69).

Research findings in years 1900's - through 1945 show media, as a means of propaganda, has accelerated participation (Yumlu, 1994:39-69).

Since individuals were elective and media intensified only the already present believes of individuals through the years 1900-1960, it has been stated that it did not played much role in participation. In the years 1980-2000, however, media turned into gigantic corporations or industry. No empirical area investigation was done in this field, but theoretical views in this domain are different from one another. Some of them claim that media imposes the already present system and make participation sensitive through political system. On the other hand, other theorists state that media, which is commercial in essence and which spreads popular culture, makes people apolitical and insensitive (Curran, 1997:170-190).

Findings of case study conducted by the author of this research and the model developed in compliance with the results are as follows:

Method of investigation: Investigation of description

Subject of investigation: Frequency of reading newspapers is effective on the types of political participation.

Research technique: Observation, public survey, interview.

Data analysis: frequency distribution, chi-square correlation, 0.05 confidence interval are taken as basis.

Place of investigation: İzmir

Sample size: 200 subjects selected from different sections of the city by sampling method of selecting with equal probability.

Validity and confidence tests were applied in this research.

Conclusion

Political participation, in today's democratic societies, may be defined as entire ways that individuals follow in order to fulfil their social and political aims of all kind. With the action of participation, an equilibrium is tried to be reached between the necessities, desires and expectations of the social actors and the possibilities provided by the government to the actors and institutions. Meeting the changing demands of the masses on the distribution of resource and wealth on the one hand, and creating the values that will continue the system on the other constitute the main purpose of political participation.

There are many individual, cultural and physical factors affecting participation. Newspapers are an important part in the media. Today newspapers are defined as the forth power. One of the most important duties of the newspapers today is to undertake the function of an expert witness between the society

and political decision-making organ. Newspapers provide the system with both input and output.

But the research findings of the author of this study suggest that newspapers increase political interests in the readers because they convey only political information.

Alongside this, even while fulfilling this function, the role of intermediate variables (income, profession, education) weighs more. In short, newspapers realizes their functions indirectly but they also contribute to active participation.

