

Survey Report on “The Islamic Republic: Yes or No”

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GAMAAN

(The Group for Analyzing and Measuring Attitudes in IRAN)


Gamaan.org

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GAMAAN institute is grateful to all who voluntary cooperated in conducting this survey, result analysis and report preparation.

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Survey Findings – Summary

- More than 204 thousand Iranians have responded to this survey, 180 thousand of whom stated to be inside Iran. The findings of this report reflect the views of literate people over 19 years old in Iran (equivalent to 85% of eligible voters); the results can be attributed to this population with a 95% confidence level. The survey is an attempt to systematically measure and record the legitimacy of the Islamic Republic as a form of government, according to Iranians and in an environment where these questions cannot be publicly asked.
- 79% said that in a free referendum they would vote NO to the Islamic Republic.
- 71% said that they would vote NO to the Islamic Republic regardless of context, 18% would vote YES to the Islamic Republic in any situation, and 11% stated that they prefer the continuation of the status quo and vote YES to the Islamic Republic until an alternative regime does not appear as an option.
- 68% stated that they do not intend to vote in the parliamentary elections (Islamic Consultative Assembly) of March 2020, while 18% said that they will participate in the elections. Approximately 14% said they haven't decided yet.
- The results reveal that 35% of those who voted for Raisi and 96% of those who voted for Rouhani in the 2017 presidential elections would say NO to the Islamic Republic in a free referendum. In other words, 65% of Raisi's voters and 4% of Rouhani's voters in the 2017 presidential elections would say YES to the Islamic Republic in a free referendum.

Section One: Sampling Method & Sample Specifications

1-1 Specifications of the survey and raw sample

The survey “The Islamic Republic: Yes or No” was conducted by GAMAAN (the Group for Analysing and Measuring Attitudes in IRAN) between March 18 and April 1, 2019, coinciding with the 40th anniversary of the 1979 referendum on the Islamic Republic in Iran. This survey was conducted online using SurveyMonkey, one of the most professional and secure online platforms. The survey was conducted using virtual snowball sampling through social networks (Telegram, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Facebook), and 204,100 respondents participated.

According to a [HootSuite report](#) (Jan. 2019), about 57 million Iranians are Internet users, with 47 million active social media users, and approximately 41 million mobile social media users. The [ISPA survey](#) inside the country also shows that 66% of the Iranian people are social media network members. This makes it possible to communicate with a large part of the Iranian society and ask for their opinions.

- This survey is composed of 13 questions of which the last 6 are demographic control questions (age, sex, education, province, urban or rural region, and occupation; the questionnaire is available in Appendix 2 of this report).
- The average time spent on responding to the questionnaire was two minutes.
- The respondents participated anonymously in the survey and therefore felt more secure in expressing their real opinions.
- 91% of participants stated that they live in Iran. Verification analysis showed that about 5% of respondents are likely to have reported the wrong location.
- Normally, it is possible for each participant to access the survey just once from a personal computer, laptop or smartphone. Data assessment shows that the number of people who responded to the questionnaire more than once is less than 2% of the total sample, which is disregarded given the sample size.
- Iranians inside the country have participated in this survey from all 31 provinces and from urban and rural areas. The specification and distribution of sample frequency are reported in Appendix 1.

1-2 Cleaning data and preparation of the final sample

In this survey a question was asked to detect accidental or robot responses; incorrect answers to this question as well as inconsistent responses (such as those who stated that they hadn't reached the voting age in 2017 but said that they were above 30 years old) were excluded from the sample.

- Given that only those over the age of 18 can participate in a referendum or election, the final sample used in this analysis only includes respondents over the age of 19.
- After refinements, the final sample size for Iranians inside Iran is 172,627 and the final sample size for respondents abroad is 14,208.

- In this report, the term “survey sample” refers to the refined sample, not the raw primary data.

The target population for this survey are literate Iranians over the age of 19 who live in Iran (those who can use the Internet and read the poll). According to the 2016 national census, the literate population over the age of 19 is about 47 million. This population is about 85% of the total number of eligible voters in the country. The findings of this report can be generalized to this section of society in Iran with a 95% confidence level.

The sample of online surveys is usually not completely consistent with the specifications of the target population. Therefore, to acquire a representative sample, a weighting method is used to balance the sample and match it with the demographic specifications of the target population.

The weighting method, demographic sample specifications, target population specifications, and the survey’s methodological challenges are discussed in Appendix 1.

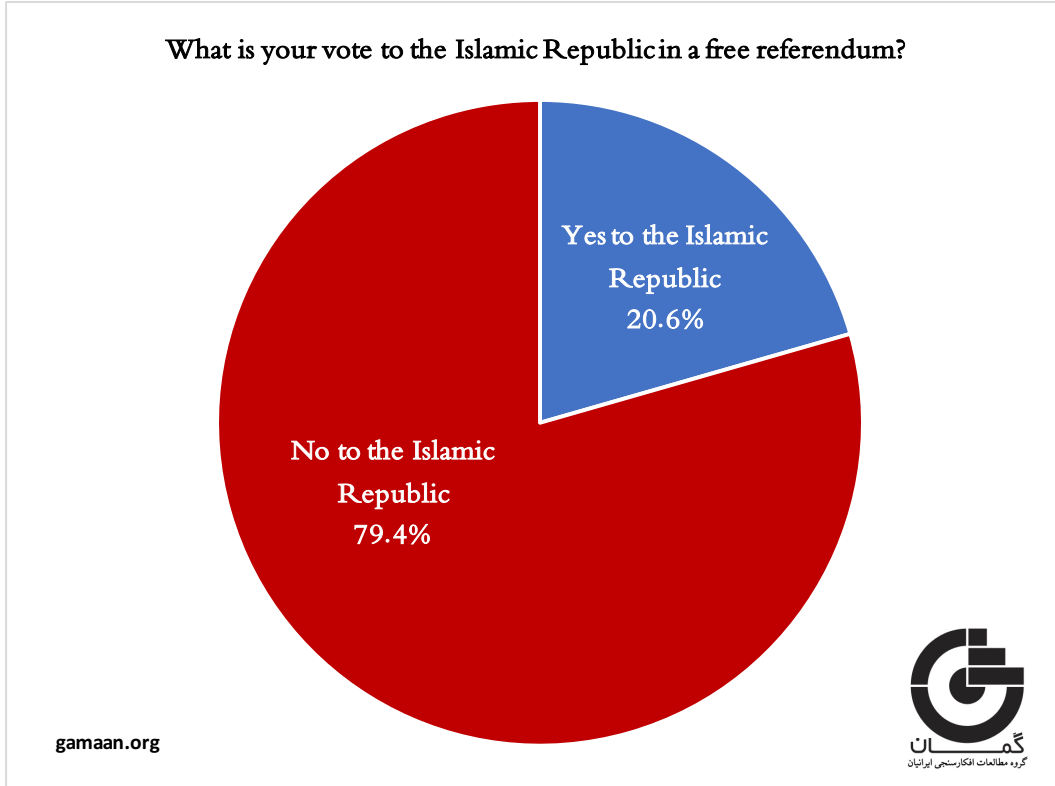
Section Two: Main Findings of the Survey

In this report all results and charts are calculated based on the “weighted sample” of participants from inside Iran. The findings of this report could be generalized to the literate population over the age of 19 in Iran with a 95% confidence level (which is approximately 85% of eligible voters in Iran). To compare the differences between Iranians living inside and outside the country, the findings for the sample of outsiders (without weighting) has been reported as well.

2-1 The Islamic Republic: Yes or No; 79% of Iranians say “no” to the Islamic Republic in a free referendum.

Figure 1 demonstrates the opinion of Iranians inside the country on a Yes or No referendum. According to the results of this survey, more than 79% of respondents declared that in a free referendum, they would vote NO to the Islamic Republic.

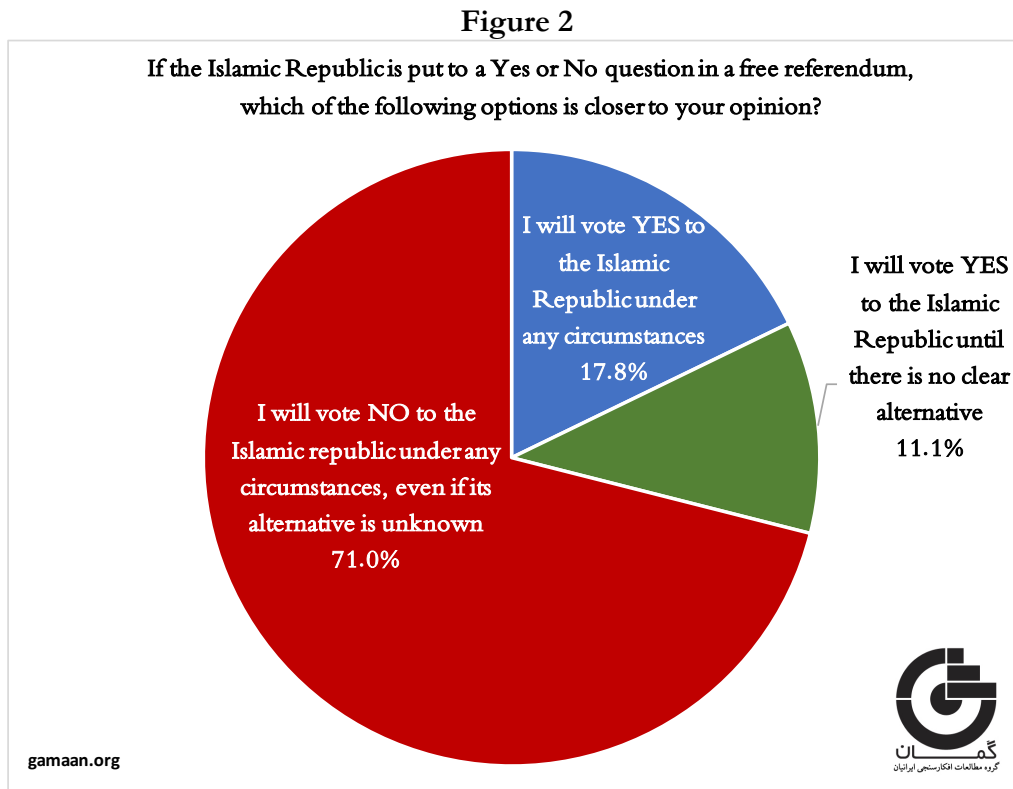
Figure 1



It should be noted that according to the sample of Iranians abroad, 97.5% of them would vote NO to the Islamic Republic in a free referendum.

The question on the Islamic Republic was asked in another form in order to better determine how much of the population are resolute or conditional in their responses.

Figure 2 demonstrates that 71% expressed that their answer is NO in any situation, 18% declared that their answer would be YES under any circumstances, while 11% of respondents said that they would agree to the continuation of the Islamic Republic until its alternative is specified.



Among Iranians living abroad, 84.4% responded that they would absolutely vote NO and 14.6% declared that they would conditionally vote YES (Yes until an alternative is specified).

2-2 What is the opinion of those who voted (or not) in the 2017 presidential elections of Iran?

Figure 3 demonstrates that about 96% of those who voted for Rouhani in 2017 and about 35% of those who voted for Raisi stated that in a free referendum they would say NO to the Islamic Republic.

Almost all of those who did not participate in the 2017 presidential elections, expressed that in a free referendum, they would say NO to the Islamic Republic. It should be noted that an absolute majority (96%) of those who said to have voted for the reformist candidate, Hassan Rouhani, declared that they oppose the continuation of the Islamic Republic.

Figure 3

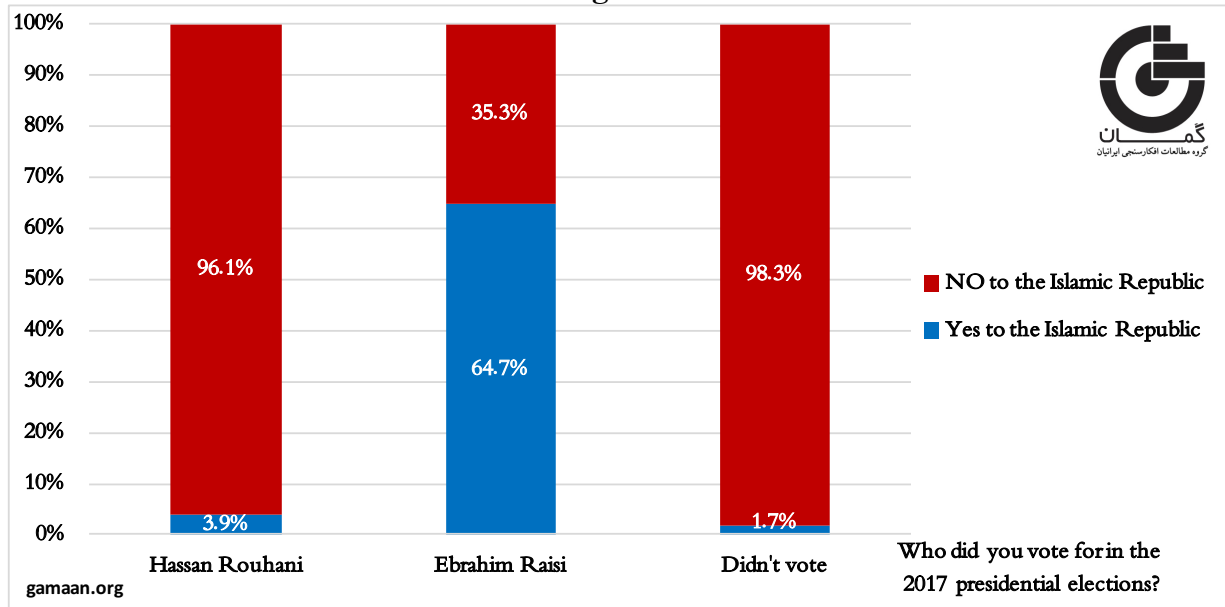
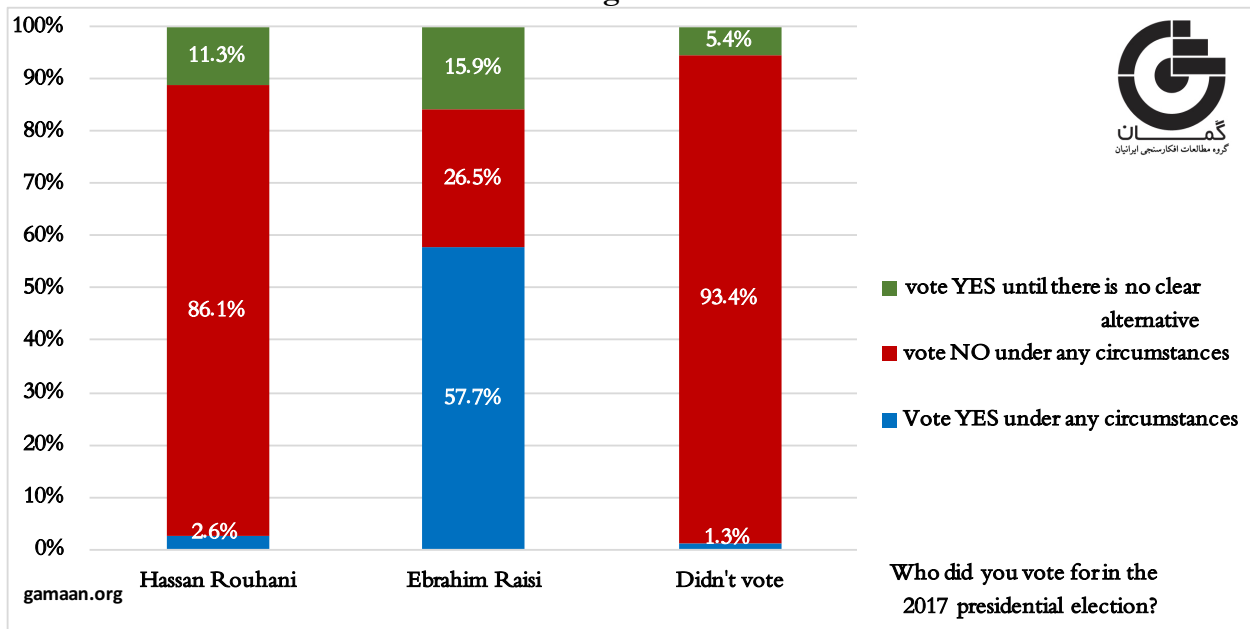


Figure 4 demonstrates that about 16% of those who voted for Raisi, about 11% of those who voted for Rouhani in the 2017 presidential elections, and also more than 5% of non-participants, would conditionally support the continuation of the Islamic Republic.

It can be argued that those who both voted for Raisi in 2017 and definitely vote a YES to the Islamic Republic (that is, about 58% of the voters of Raisi) are the base of the conservative ruling party. Considering the official election data of 2017 (with 28% of the votes for Raisi), the voting base of the conservatives is estimated at about 16% of eligible voters.

Figure 4



2-3 About 68% of the population is determined to not participate in the parliamentary elections of March 2020

The survey asked participants whether they intended to participate in the parliamentary elections (Islamic Consultative Assembly) of March 2020. As demonstrated in figure 5, 68% stated that they will not vote, 18% expressed that they will vote, and about 14% say they have not decided yet.

Figure 5

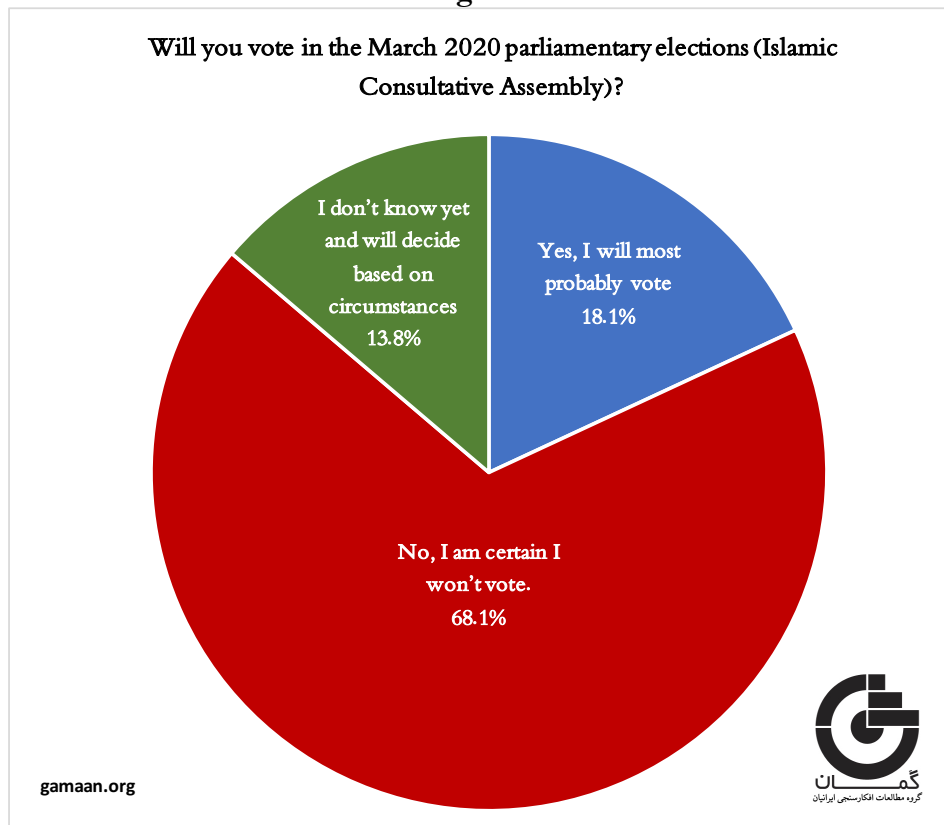
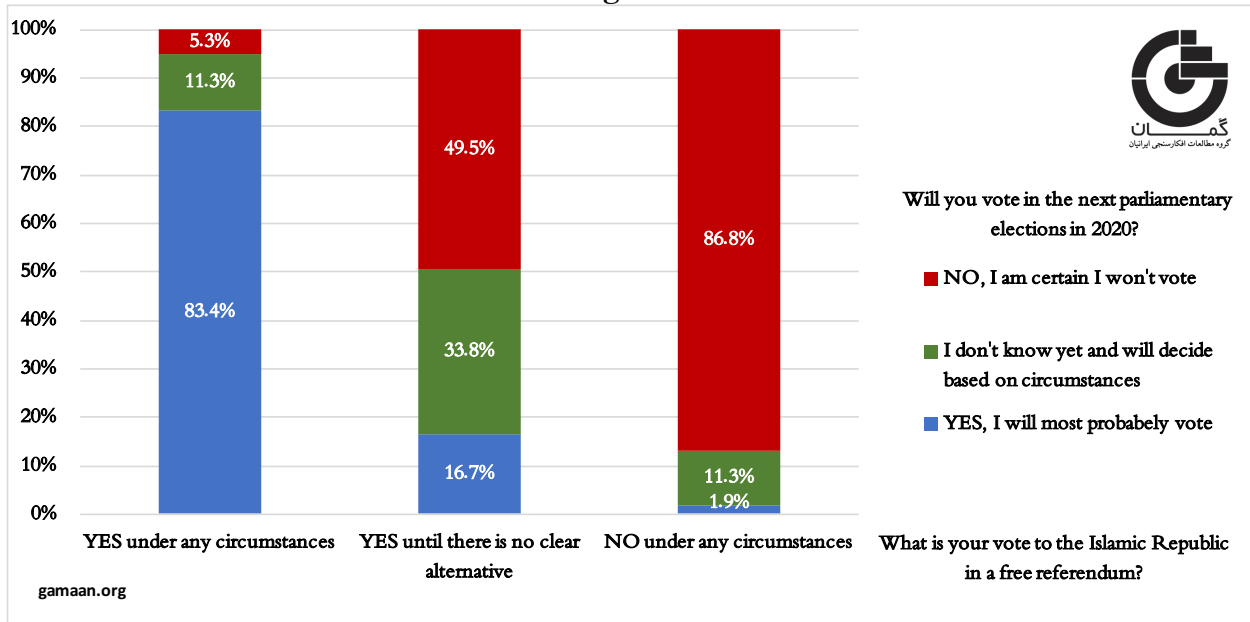


Figure 6 shows the relationship between people’s views about the Islamic Republic and their reported decision about participating in the upcoming parliamentary (Islamic Consultative Assembly) elections of March 2020.

More than 83% of those who say “Yes” to the Islamic Republic said they would participate in the 2020 election. In contrast, about 87% of those who say “No” to the Islamic Republic in any case, do not intend to participate in the 2020 elections. About 17% of those who would conditionally vote in favor of the Islamic Republic, say they would participate in the 2020 elections, while half of them do not want to participate and 34% have not decided yet.

Figure 6



Concluding remarks

GAMAAN (The Group for Analyzing and Measuring Attitudes in IRAN) humbly thanks all Iranians who once again trusted GAMAAN and participated in this survey. We hope to maintain and keep this trust and be able to reflect the people's views on the various issues that cannot be openly expressed in the status quo of Iran.

GAMAAN institute welcomes all comments, criticisms, questions and suggestions about this survey and its findings. The raw data of this survey, after the removal of personal information of responders (the IP address), is accessible for scholars, research centres, and universities under certain legal conditions.

Appendix 1: Research Methodology

Sample weighting and balancing method

In order to make the survey sample representative, in this report the established weighting method of “raking” is utilized. As a comprehensive [study by the PEW](#) research center has shown, considering the application of the proper demographic variables, the raking weighting method is one the most effective and reliable balancing methods for online survey samples. Also, based on the suggestion of [the same research](#) by PEW, in order to reduce the bias and increase the generalizability of the final findings , we have also used a political variable for weighting. This variable shows the electoral behavior of respondents in the 2017 presidential elections. The data weighting process was done with the consultancy of [SpinnakerResearch](#), a professional Dutch company, using specially developed software for weighting data.

Target population specifications and weighting variables

The target population for this survey are literate individuals over the age of 19 in Iran. According to the results of the 2016 national census, this category includes about 47 million of Iranian people or 85% of eligible voters. Since the estimated population of Iranian social media network users is about 47 million, it seems that a very large majority of the target population of this survey, are social media users. Accordingly, the large sample of this survey includes data, to the acceptable level, from all strata of the target population. It is striking to mention that after applying weighting coefficients, the [effective sample size](#) is still 20,110, which is a very high and reliable sample size.

In order to create a representative sample, the cleaned sample of the survey for the population inside the country is weighted based on gender distribution, age distribution, educational level, provincial population distribution, urban and rural regional distribution, and voting behavior in the 2017 presidential elections. Regarding the demographic data of the target population, the official results of the [2016 national census](#) and the [2017 Iranian labor force statistics](#) were utilized.

The results of the weighted sample

Figure 7 compares the gender distribution between the survey sample and the target population.

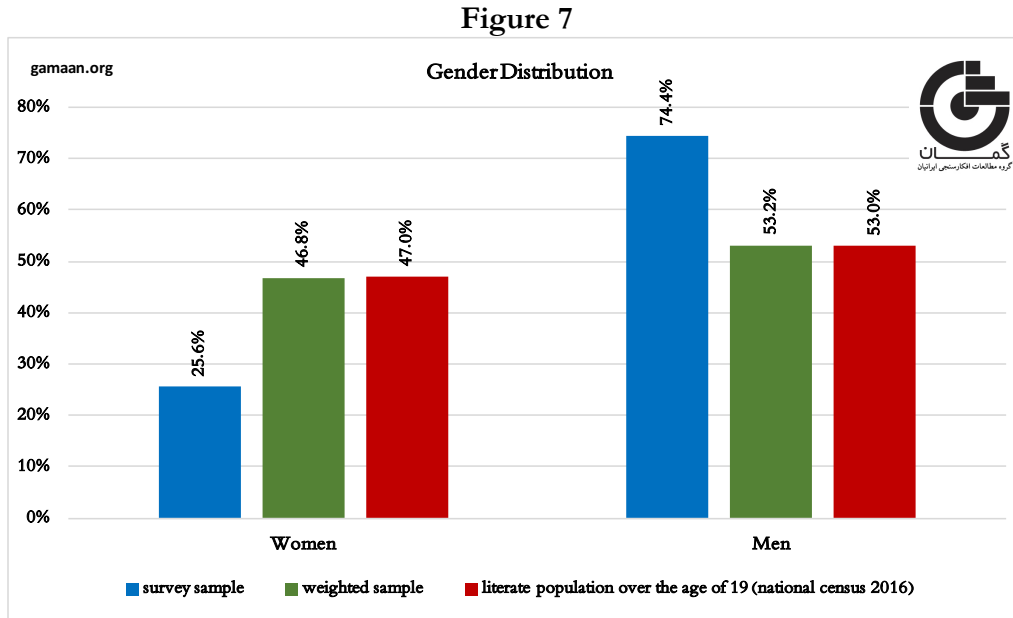


Figure 8 shows the comparison of the age distribution between the sample and the target population. People aged 30 to 39 had the highest participation rate, and people over the age of 60 were relatively less involved in the survey; in other age groups, there is a high consistency between the survey sample and the target population.

Figure 8

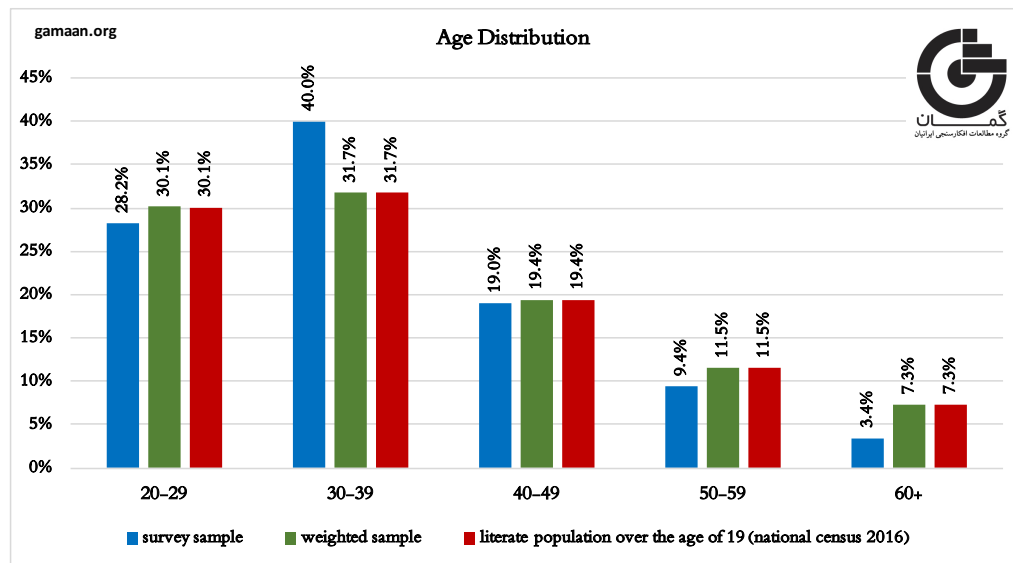


Figure 9 shows the distribution of the educational level in the sample and the target population. As can be seen, the sample mostly includes those with higher education, which is less consistent with the target population in terms of demographic suitability. However, having a very large sample size including all the education groups (under high school diploma, diploma, or associate, undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate degrees) made it possible to balance the sample by weighting.

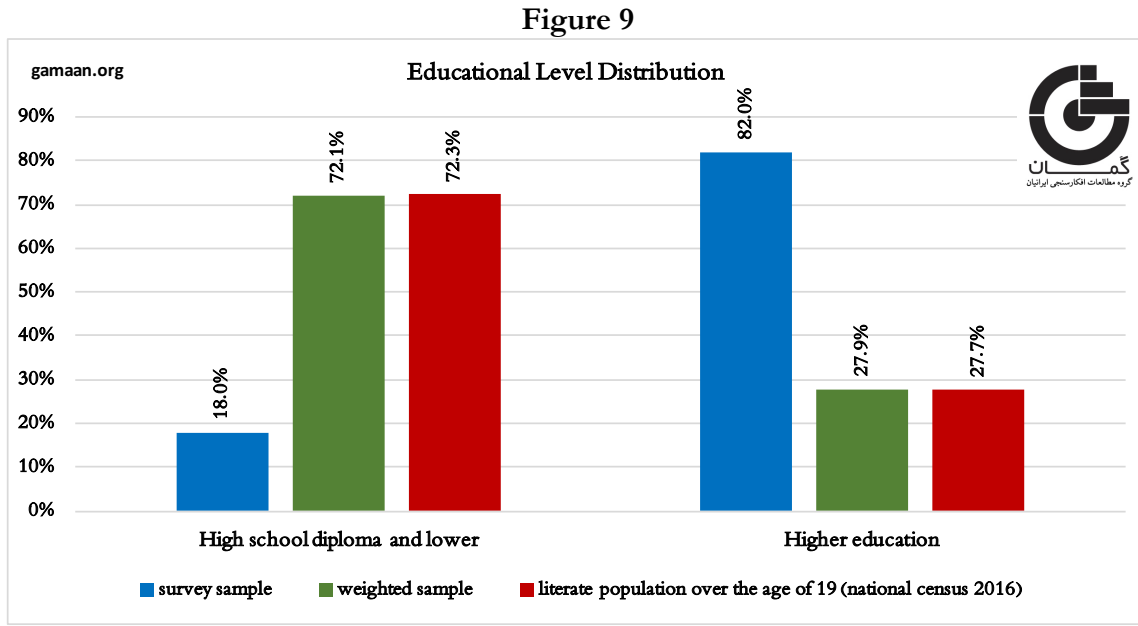


Figure 10 shows the provincial distribution of the survey sample and the target population. It should be noted that there is a considerable sample size from each province. The largest sample size is from Tehran province with 67,000 respondents and the lowest sample size is from Ilam province with more than 700 respondents.

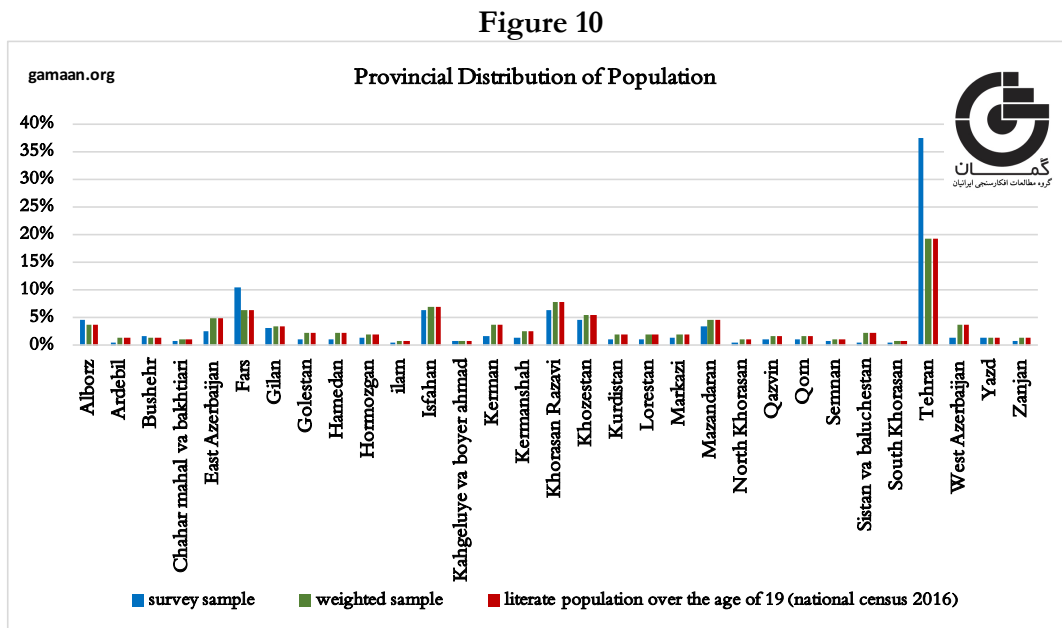


Figure 11 shows the geographical distribution of rural and urban areas. As can be seen, the rate of participation in urban areas are more than rural ones. Nevertheless, the considerable sample size of rural areas made it possible to balance the sample by weighting.

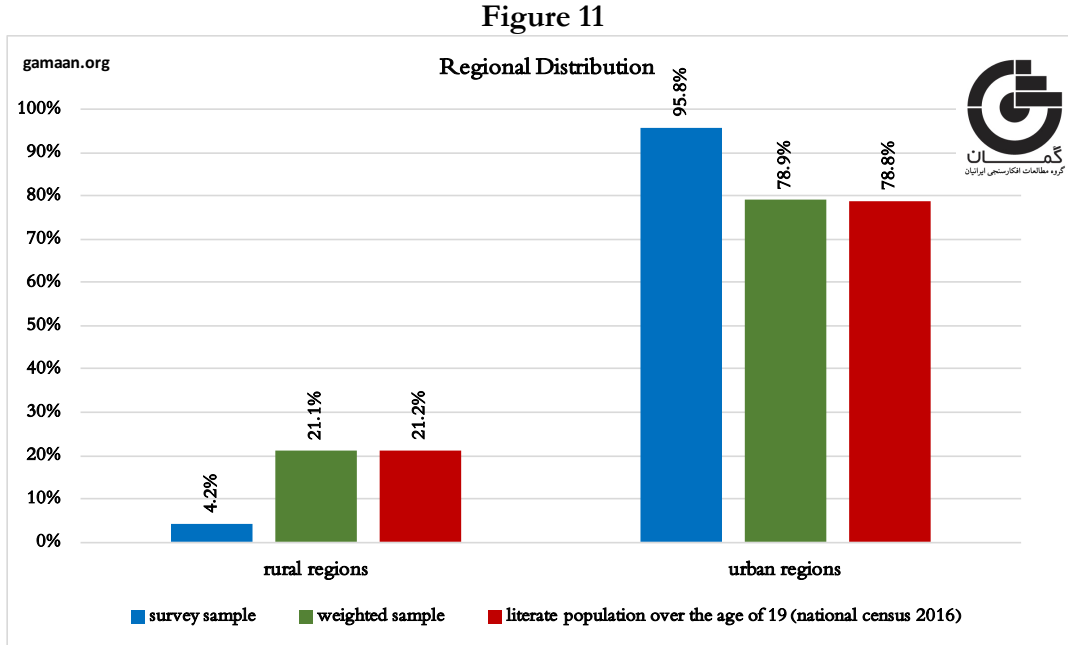
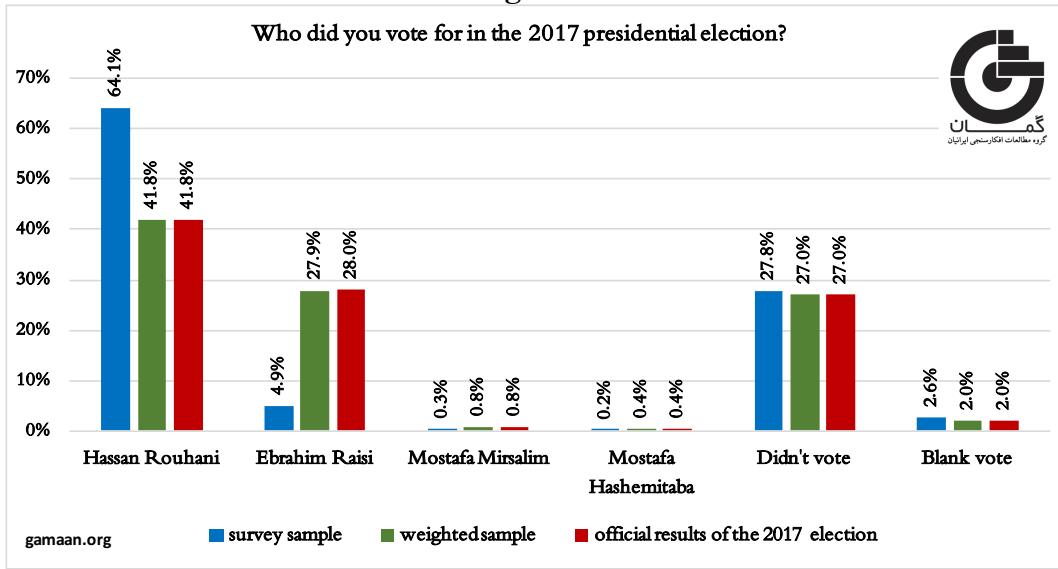


Figure 12 shows the distribution of electoral behaviour of respondents in the 2017 presidential election in the survey sample and the number of eligible voters (based on the official election data). Given the fact that there is no official data on the people’s election behaviour in terms of age distribution and literacy levels, we used the official election data for the entire population of eligible voters (and not the target population), assuming that the electoral behaviour of the target population (literate and over the age of 19) and that of eligible voters are similar.

As can be seen, those who voted for Raisi in the 2017 presidential elections participated to a lesser extent than Rouhani voters. Nevertheless, the sample size of Raisi voters in this survey is notable (in contrast with a [previous GAMAAN survey](#) on the political attitudes of Iranians); therefore, by weighting and balancing the sample, it became possible to generalize the results to the target population (within a specific error margin).

Figure 12

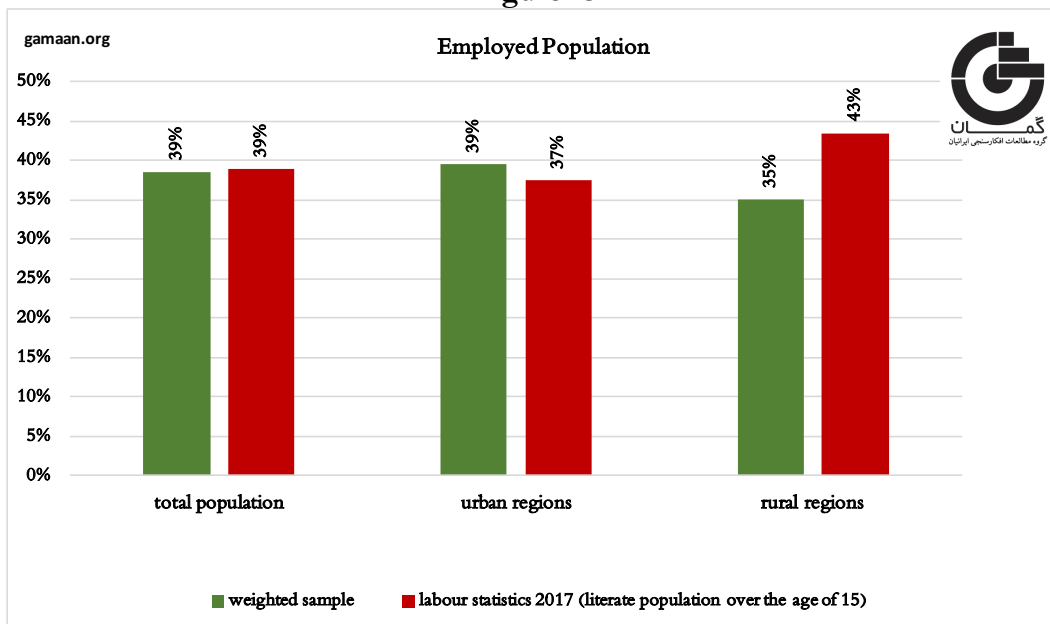


Testing the external validity of the weighed sample

One of the ways in which the reliability of the weighed sample and its generalizability can be examined is to assess the extent to which the sample results are comparable with external evidence.

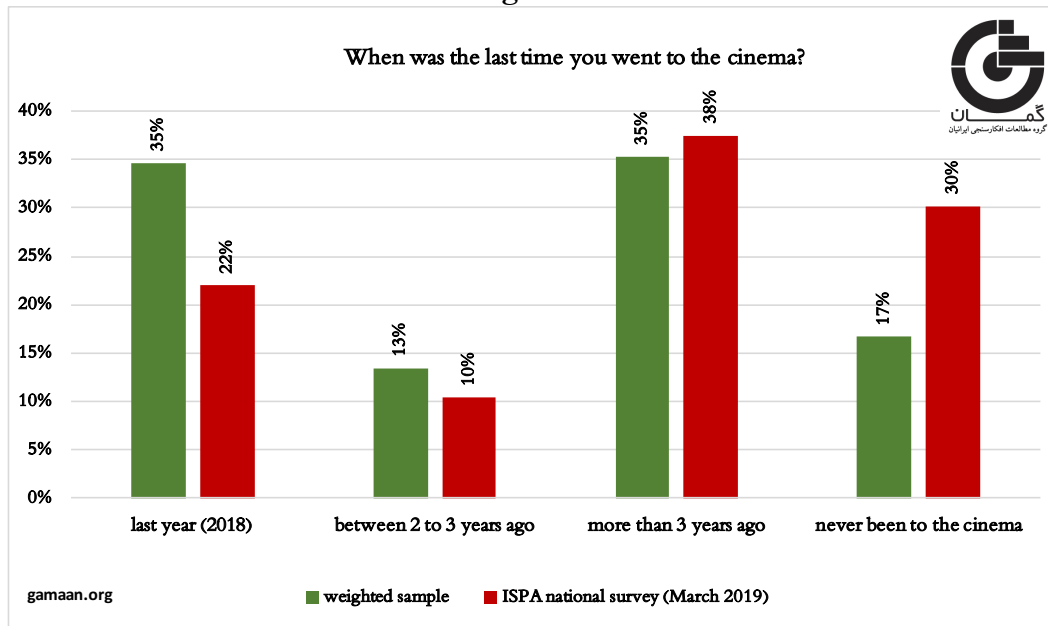
Figure 13 shows the status of economic activity (employment rate) in the weighted sample compared to the target population at both urban and rural levels. While the weighted sample consists of individuals over the age of 19, statistics of the Iranian labor force are based on people over the age of 15. Considering the insignificant difference between the employment rate of the population over 15 and over 19, it could be observed that the weighted sample is highly consistent with the target population, in both rural and urban regions.

Figure 13



The Iranian Students Polling Agency (ISPA), which is a state-owned polling institute in Iran, has conducted [a national survey](#) in March 2019 on cinema attendance rates. With the aim of doing a comparative study, we have asked the same question in the survey to compare the results of the weighted sample with their findings. The ISPA has not yet provided any information about the sample and the target population of the cinema survey, but looking at the previous surveys of this institute, it seems that their target population is individuals over the age of 17 (both literate and illiterate) all over the country. Figure 14 shows the ISPA survey results compared with results of the weighted sample of this survey.

Figure 14



The comparison of the results between these two surveys is noteworthy; The difference in the percentage of those who said they have gone to the cinema last year and those who have never gone to cinema, are reversed in the two polls. However, the sample population of this survey is literate and over 19, while the ISPA sample includes ages over 17 and the illiterate population as well.

As a result, the target population of this poll was less than the ISPA target population. Assuming that literate people (who are likely to have higher income levels) are more likely to go to the cinema, the difference between the results from the two surveys can be justified. If more detailed information would have been available from the ISPA survey, this comparison and the existing differences between the results could be assessed more accurately.

Altogether, it seems that the weighted sample can represent the target population (literate population over the age of 19), and the results can be generalized (with a confidence level of 95%) to a large majority of the Iranian society (i.e. about 85% of eligible voters in the country).

Methodological challenges

This survey and related statistical analysis is burdened, as it is in comparable cases, with the challenges and deficits of online sampling. One of these challenges is that of the network effect, which means that the survey would mostly reach the network of its organizers. In order to reduce this effect,

measures were taken to share the survey through various individuals and groups of different political orientations. Also, using virtual snowball sampling and releasing the survey through various social networks (Telegram, Instagram, WhatsApp and Twitter) to increase the sample size, we tried to reduce the bias derived from the network effect as much as possible. Receiving a large sample size of all existing political orientations in the society (in spite of their unbalanced share in the primary sample) and the consistency of the results with external evidence reveals that the aforementioned efforts succeeded in reducing the network effect to a great extent. However, this report does not claim to have completely overcome this challenge. We are committed to keeping the trust in registered data by respondents, applying scientific methods in extracting a representative sample and data analysis, and transparency in methodology, reporting and publishing the results to the public. We hope that we have been successful in this matter.

Appendix 2: [Translation of] the questionnaire of the survey “Islamic Republic: Yes or No”

This survey tries to ask the question of “the Islamic Republic: Yes or No” referendum once again on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the 1979 referendum in Iran.

This opinion poll is secure, completely anonymous, and will take about two minutes of your time. It doesn't contain any questions about your personal and private information and no one can find the responder's identity. In this survey, only general demographic questions will be asked about sex, age, literacy level, occupation and your provincial location. This set of questions is asked in order to compare the survey sample with the demographic specifications of Iranian society. We aim to make the survey results generalizable for the Iranian population through scientific methods.

GAMAAN (The Group for Analyzing and Measuring Attitudes in IRAN) is an independent research institute registered in the Netherlands and conducts scientific research on the matter of measuring attitudes of Iranians.

This online referendum is active from March 18th to April 1st, 2019, and the results will be announced on social media after statistical analysis. We are grateful for your participation in this survey.

1. What is your vote to the Islamic Republic in a free referendum?

A- Yes

B- No

2. Here, the previous question is asked in another way: If the Islamic Republic is put to a Yes or No question in a free referendum, which of the following options is closer to your opinion?

A- I will vote Yes to the Islamic Republic under any circumstances.

B- I will vote Yes to the Islamic Republic until there is no clear alternative.

C- I will vote No to the Islamic republic under any circumstances, even if its alternative is unknown.

3. Who did you vote for in the 2017 presidential elections?

A- Hassan Rouhani

B- Ebrahim Raisi

C- Mostafa Mirsalim

D- Mostafa HashemiTaba

E- I did not vote

F- I casted a blank vote

G-I was under age and did not have the right to vote

4. Will you vote in the March 2020 parliamentary elections (Islamic Consultative Assembly)?

A- Yes, I will most probably vote.

B- No, I am certain I won't vote.

C- I don't know yet and will decide based on circumstances.

D- I would be under age to have the voting rights at that time.

5. Please choose number seven among below options. (This question is designed to guarantee that you are not a robot)

- A- 2
- B- 4
- C- 7
- D- 5
- E- 6

6. What is your age category?

- A- Younger than 15
- B- between 15 to 19
- C- between 20 to 29
- D- between 30 to 39
- E- between 40 to 49
- F- between 50 to 59
- G- Older than 60

7. What is your gender?

- A- Woman
- B- Man

8. What is your level of education?

- A- I am a high school student
- B- I have a middle school degree and no high school diploma
- C- I hold a high school diploma
- D- I hold an associate's degree or I am studying for an associate's degree
- E- I hold a bachelor's degree or I am a bachelor student
- F- I hold a master's degree or I am a master student
- G- I hold a PhD degree or I am a PhD student

9. Where do you live?

- A- Eastern Azerbaijan
- B- Western Azerbaijan
- C- Ardebil
- D- Isfahan
- E- Alborz
- F- Ilam
- G- Bushehr
- H- Tehran
- I- Charmahal va Bakhtiari
- J- Southern Khorasan
- K- Khorasan Razavi
- L- Khorasan Shomali
- M- Khuzestan
- N- Zanjan
- O- Semnan
- P- Sistan va Baloochestan
- Q- Fars
- R- Qazvin
- S- Qom

T- Kordestan
U- Kerman
V- Kermanshah
W- Kohkilouye va Bouyerahmad
X- Golestan
Y- Gilan
Z- Lorestan
AB- Mazandaran
AC- Markazi
AD- Hormozgan
AE- Hamedan
AF- Yazd
AG- Outside of the country

10. What is your region of residence?

A- Rural area
B- Urban area

11. What is your employment status?

A- Employed
B- Unemployed
C- Student
D- Household
E- Have income without employment

12. Did you use anti-filter or VPN while responding to this survey?

A- Yes
B- No

13. If you live in Iran, when was the last time you went to the cinema? (This question is designed to assess the sample)

A- I went to the cinema last year (2018)
B- It was between two or three years ago
C- It was more than three years ago
D- I have never been to the cinema
E- I live outside the country