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EXPLAINING THE OBSTACLES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Faisal Hamidi¹, Ali Akbar Amini^{2}*

¹Ph.D. student in Political Science, Zahedan University, Zahedan, Iran.

²Assistant Professor of Political Science, Azad University, Tehran Branch. Tehran, Iran.

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, one of the socio-political terms and expressions that has been vastly regarded and applied by experts and thinkers in the relevant field is the term civil society. Since civil society plays a noteworthy and undeniable role in revitalizing public and citizen rights, different aspects of this subject and associated issues have been explored, including obstacles to the development of the society. Consequently, in the current research, it is tried to inspect the existing obstacles to the development of civil society. In this study, a descriptive-library technique has been utilized to collect information and data and an analytical technique has been applied to achieve the result.

INTRODUCTION

Before addressing the central subject as an introduction and concerning civil society in the country, it should be stated that the fundamental philosophy of participatory democracy is that people should be involved in decisions that influence their lives. Thus, the human being is defined as a citizen with specific rights and status, and the concept of citizenship extends beyond the ordinary area of politics to all institutions. The priority in the realization of participatory democracy is to guarantee full political rights and representation for all units of society, irrespective of ethnicity, language, religion, race, etc. If, for any reason, part of the population of a society is to be deprived of this right or unjustified discrimination is to be applied in any way to a specific group, then the philosophy of participatory democracy is called into question. There are many steps to take in the following parts:

Civil society is efficient in promoting and supporting the human capacity for self-government and can affect collective action by political representation (Warren Mark, 2000, p63).

Civil society can increase the level of trust and cooperation by the participation of citizens and clarify the political rights and duties of the people by political participation and political competition (Tim Plumper,

1999, p68). Civil society can also play a role in the establishment of social capital and by creating the essential channels and information resources, increase the empowerment of citizens, and force governmental units to respond (Mafunisa, 2004, p102).

Civil society encourages thinking and public relationships, and acts as representative to the people, and can improve negotiation skills, bargaining skills, forming alliances, etc. by improving political skills (Warren Mark, 2000, p85).

Thus, from what was explained, we can understand the significance and position of civil society and the role it can play in fulfilling the rights and requirements of the people as a fundamental axis in the country. In the following, the present obstacles to the development of civil society will be designed and described.

CONCEPTOLOGY

Civil Society

Today, what is agreed upon about the meaning and use of civil society, and most of these meanings come to mind, is that civil society is part of the public life of human beings, which is independent of the government and occurs in the form of associations, guilds, parties, cultural groups and assemblies and is the connection between the individual and the government (Kaabi, Bitu, p. 75). Based on this meaning, three elements are considered for civil society: 1- The first element is the market economy. 2- The second element is the independent public media. 3. The third element is the thriving networks of impulsive organizations in all areas of community life, including private, cultural, or social associations and institutions. So, what we want from civil society and there is more agreement on it, is organizations and institutions that are the link between the government and the nation and are in front of the mass society. A mass society is a society that is not unified and is characteristic of totalitarian societies, societies in which the masses serve the government and the government employs them, like masses of sand from which a building is made. In a mass society, the goal of the rulers is to recruit the individual; in contrast, in the concept of civil society, it is the human being who builds the government from the bottom up through the organization, association, and party, and the government comes to power, and the discourse between the government and the nation is shaped through these independent organizations. These independent organizations are interpreted as civil society. Therefore, civil society generates and establishes the government in its current sense. The government is born of this society and these independent organizations, and this is contrary to mass society (Ibid., P. 80) Here we can name a feature of civil society in the face of mass society, which is in civil society the government serves people and the government has a concept called the servant government. The government becomes the servant of people.

Along with this meaning of civil society, civil society has taken on another meaning in its evolution, when it is said that civil society is more about the rights of the nation, in other words, the rights of citizens and the rights of individuals belonging to a country are considered. Also, the rights of citizenship and citizens are considered (Afrough, 2008, p. 56).

Therefore, generally, it can be stated that civil society has two meanings; one meaning is the organizations that produce the government, such as parties, guilds, and other groups (parties, including political parties) that are the link between the government and the nation, and this is its organizational meaning. There is a second meaning to civil society, and civil society in its evolution becomes equal to the rights of citizens, it is a legal, political attitude to civil society that civil society is equated with the rights of the nation.

Consequently, it can be noted that in the most complete definition and explanation of the meaning of civil society, there are two basic elements, one is the subject of the rights of the nation and the other is the presence of political parties, organizations, and guilds.

In the following, the meaning of civil society will be clarified from the viewpoint of thinkers and experts in this field, including In defining civil society, Hegel describes that civil society is a market system in which the exchange of goods and labor takes place (Gerameshi, 2005, p. 96). Alexis de Tocqueville considers civil society as a set of independent institutions and voluntary associations that the government has no role in generating, but these associations have the support of customs and social institutions in line with democracy (Afrough, 2008, p. 19).

OBSTACLES TO THE GROWTH OF CIVIL SOCIETY

No fundamental modifications in social formulations, and the confrontation between tradition and modernity

One of the obstacles to the growth and development of civil society, followed by the development of parties, etc., can be the absence of basic modifications in social formation, and the confrontation between tradition and modernity because of the limited and small changes, with this explanation that, one of the historical reasons of the failure of civil society and its lack of development, as well as the failure of parties in Iran, is that, unlike post-Renaissance Europe, modifications in social formations in Iran have not been fundamental. In post-Renaissance Europe, following events such as the weakening of feudalism and the rise of capitalism, diverse social groups appeared, each competing for political power and a greater portion of economic income. If the social formations in Iran did not undergo such modifications until the middle of the twentieth century, still the economic foundation of Iran was the government and the government acted as the largest employer. Even the land reforms, which were performed by the Shah's regime in the early 1960s to overthrow the lord-servant system, in which more attention was paid to the regime, could not make much modification in that formation (Zibakalam, 2010, p. 195). On the other hand, another historical, social, and political obstacle that has always been in traditional societies is the direct and indirect conflict between tradition and modernity. Civil society and the formation of parties is a new phenomenon and obviously, the traditional society and structure did not and will no welcome it. Traditional societies are almost always confronted with new phenomena and are less open to such modifications. At first, there is a special confrontation between the people and diverse classes of the government and the nation in this regard, but after a while, the people of the society follow it and analyze its different dimensions. Of course, history has shown these

conflicts ("Tendency to partisanship after the 2nd of Khordad", interview with Mohammad Javad Haghshenas, former general political director of the Ministry, Khordad newspaper, June 10, 1999, p. 11).

In a more detailed description of the subject, it should be stated that one of the constituents of social formations in civil society is the development of political parties. Political parties with functions such as expanding political participation, generating legitimacy, national unity, conflict management, political education, and political socialization, can be efficient in shaping and developing civil society. On the other hand, Iranian society at this point in history wants political, economic, social, and cultural development. Of course, in this direction, obstacles such as ethnicity and sectarianism can be seen that in small levels, including cities, this type of sectarianism, along with working in harmony with the parties, has even replaced them in many cases. Thus, by accepting that such a situation is a type of social disease and a key challenge for balanced and comprehensive development, the negative influences and destructive impacts that clan culture has on the development of civil society are irrefutable (Zarshenas, 2014, p. 51).

But in fact, the history of Iran has seen many tribal conflicts, and this situation has influenced the historical mentality and political culture and has shaped their political behavior, and this issue has resulted in thought analysis, and correct political decision, so that the interests of the tribe and clan prevail over the interests of society and the city. Likewise, the factor of kinship as one of the sources of power is a key obstacle to meritocracy and in such conditions prevents healthy social harmony and civic and political participation. This condition is undoubtedly in contradiction to civilization and the modern world. This sectarian nervousness and supremacy generate a current of thought and politics called sectarianism and tribalism, which is one of the obstacles to the non-expansion of civil society because of the modifications and developments in the civil society (Ghorbani, 2012, p. 357).

Thus, it is worth mentioning that one of the obstacles to the development and activity of the civil society is the absence of fundamental modifications in social formation, because the modification in traditional societies can be said is almost always with a type of dissatisfaction and absence of reception, and on the other hand, one of these new formulations is the formation of parties, which is a subset of civil society and for reasons such as the superiority of ethnic culture and tribalism in many parts of the country, the formation and strengthening of the activities of these parties has not been welcomed, and as a result, this issue has some impact on the underdevelopment of civil society.

Public pessimism and ignorance of the people about the position of civil society and its constituent elements, including parties

As an introduction, it should be stated that after the Islamic Revolution, the level and quality of study and political, social, and cultural awareness and information of people in the country improved. The increased level of information, literacy, and education of the general public in society is specific to the last two or three decades in the contemporary history of Iran, and it is a fact that after the Islamic Revolution, the political vision and attention of the public has improved, but in the past decades, due to the nascent and new civil society and party and related political literature, large

sections of society were unaware of the position of civil society and political parties and groups in organizing and optimizing the political structure of the country, and even many politically informed people are unaware of the position of this category and its effects on the progress of the country in different aspects. This ignorance and doubts still exist in parts of the masses and specific social classes, and part of the pessimism and unfavorable historical mentality of society towards civil society and consequently towards parties and groups is due to this misinformation and doubts. Other reasons for the historical pessimism of the general public towards the civil society of the parties include the fact that the theoretical and practical actions and programs of the civil society were not according to the traditions, customs, and beliefs of the public and religion. For instance, Saeed Hajjarian, a member of the Central Council of the Islamic Participation Front, has said: "In our society, there is no appropriate socio-political memory of partisanship. If we want to trace its roots, along with structural and social roots, its historical roots can also be mentioned. There has always been political pessimism in the history of the country. The historical and structural problems of civil society and parties have made it difficult for political organizations to go through the process of institutionalizing themselves and be welcomed by the public, part of which is because of the poor performance of some parties in the past." (Hajjarian, 2000, p. 46).

Thus, as mentioned, one of the other factors that exist in the development of civil society in the country is the absence of adequate and valuable information about this phenomenon and the pessimism of individuals about it, which of course can be due to the lack of alignment of the performance and programs of civil society with traditional society in matters such as traditions, customs, public opinion, etc.

Existence of person-centered and government-affiliated regime parties

Many Iranian parties in the last century have been dictatorial and government-made. These parties, because of their unpopularity, spontaneity, lack of independent bases, and lack of bottom-up formation process, have made a fundamental deviation in the path of the real party in Iran and have caused more distrust and pessimism towards the parties.

In the history of Iran in the last century, parties have emerged mostly in three structures: parties that rely on one personality and are formed on an individual axis; parties that were made by the order of the ruling regime by prominent agents of the regime, and in other words, they are reactionary parties. Mandatory parties, of which government-formed parties are also part, are those parties that do not have deep social roots and are formed based on individual, class, or foreign motives. Such parties lack a cohesive party organization and do not have a codified ideology. Gathering members and making a party and ideological faith in these types of parties face many problems. These parties are called mandatory because their foundations are not natural and do not originate from the heart of social conditions. The group and class interests of individuals and political and economic gangs are the cause of the formation of such parties (Tabriznia, 2002, p. 246). Mandatory parties are formed in special political conditions, i.e. a situation where the group and class interests of some outside or inside the political system are endangered, and as a result, the reaction of the stakeholders in the form of

these political parties emerges in the social arena and within the party, and therefore their lifespan is determined according to the wishes of their directors and their constructive political system. Important and government-owned parties of the Pahlavi era, including the Rastakhiz Party, Iran, New Iran, the Nation, and Millions, dealt a fatal blow to the party's weak body in Iran. Nonetheless, we can not ignore the fact that after the Islamic Revolution, main parties such as the Islamic Republic Party, construction agents, the Islamic Participation Front, etc. were also established by government agents and high-ranking officials of the system (Ibid., P. 163).

As a result, it is worth noting that the existence of government-affiliated parties, which play a very vital and significant role as one of the constituent elements of civil society, has resulted in the lack of development of civil society because these parties only serve the interests of a particular group and class. They are individuals and political and economic gangs, and because of this, these parties are made and come into being.

The effect of atheistic thoughts on civil society and its constituent elements and its dependence on foreigners

One of the historical problems and obstacles in the way of the development of civil society, which causes more pessimism towards this group of organizations, is the effect and in the more severe stage, dependence on the two poles of East and West and especially dependence on Soviet and Freemasonry collections. As the affiliation of one of three or four mainstream political parties and groups - the leftists - to the atheist Marxist-Leninist ideology, further widened the gap between them and the general public adhering to deep Islamic beliefs. It is worth noting that generally, for instance, we can refer to the major leftist groups and parties of the decades of 1940, 1960, 1970 affiliated with the former Soviet socialist systems and the communist and Maoist system of China.

The effect of foreign powers in Iran and the dependence of individuals, leaders, and elements of civil society and parties and groups on these powers were among the factors that hindered the growth and development of civil society activities in the natural course of the socio-political requirements of society, and will ultimately prevent the development of civil society. Generally, the effect of foreign powers can be seen in democratic and pro-Western organizations, and more specifically in the Tudeh Party. The betrayals, intrigues and sabotages caused by the blind obedience of this party and other leftist groups to the orders and policies of the leaders of the former Soviet socialist system in different issues and scenes such as World War II and the betrayal of communist party leaders in the north and west, the 1940s issues of north oil and then the issue of nationalization of the oil industry, the events of the Islamic Revolution, etc., increased historical pessimism and distrust towards parties in Iran (Ghorbani, 2012, p. 357).

Though, with the establishment of the Islamic Republic in the early 1981s and the dissolution of many leftist groups and parties and the expulsion of some of their members, the intervention and effect of the northern neighbor in the party currents relatively reduced, which accelerated and continued with the collapse of the former Soviet Union. In the last decade, Western countries, led by the United States of America, have stepped up their

efforts to infiltrate and interfere in the internal party events, to claim, through these intellectual and elite parties and currents, the implement overthrow revolutions carried out in some former Soviet republics. - and the current Russian neighbors - and the Eastern block in Iran. The invitation of the leaders of some political and intellectual currents and groups to conferences abroad, such as the Berlin Conference, was done for the same drive, and unfortunately, some political and partisan currents and members of these organizations responded positively to these invitations and demands without learning from the past. They embraced it with luck and by adopting an extreme technique, they followed the path of passing through the system, which fortunately has not achieved success so far (Alamdari, 2016, p. 55).

As a result, another obstacle to the development of civil society in Iran can be considered the dependence of civil society and its constituents on foreign and atheistic ideas and structures, because with this public dependence of people who adhered to deep Islamic beliefs in opposition to this thoughts and structures were put in place and for this reason, they did not welcome the formation and development of civil society and tried to be inactive in rejecting this field.

CONCLUSION

From what has been said, it can be concluded that the term civil society is one of the new and emerging terms and expressions that have been very much considered by socio-political thinkers in recent decades. Nevertheless, in recent years, this category and its different dimensions have been addressed a lot, but there are still obstacles to its spread in society, including those that are studied and explained in the research text: the influence of atheistic ideas on civil society and its constituent elements and its dependence on foreigners, the existence of individual and government-affiliated regime parties, public pessimism and ignorance of the status of civil society and its constituent elements, including parties, the lack of fundamental changes in social formulations, and the confrontation between tradition and modernity.

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