The Conflict of Democracy and National Culture Challenges in the Middle East

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ABSTRACT

Democracy is a term that today has attracted almost all people and it can be considered as words and keywords to use it as true or false in a community causes growth or decline. On the way of the development of democracy, in addition to human factors, structural factors also play a role that these factors can be outlined as structural barriers. These barriers can be criticized in the areas of economy, culture, and politics. This study attempts to greater emphasis on the cultural dimension of the obstacles created by the spread of democracy and its deviation in the countries of the Middle East.

Keywords: the Middle East, democracy, culture, superficial democracy.

INTRODUCTION

By studying the barriers, the reasons of backwardness and underdevelopment obstacles can be found in every society. One of the factors influence the political and democratic development is the development of political culture. Culture as being the cause of development can prevent the spread of political or social steeply as well. Development has the cultural roots. In other words, for creating cultural infrastructure development in the country, a new culture for positive cultures, strengthening the weakening of the negative culture should be examined. This will not be achieved unless the people unity and demand that the internal and external aspects. Internal demand: population target, to the conclusion that measures personal and social behavior should improve. External demand, political and cultural measures policy makers in the political system and political culture in the society are observed and studied. Qavam (professor of Tehran University) has stated policy development challenges, or the development of democracy in the world by Western countries these counts:

1. The establishment of polarization and conflict between East and West camps

2. Increasing socialist and communist movements in the Third World

3. The movement of McCarthyism in America

4. The increasing movement of liberation and independence

5. Increasing the growing number of
independent political units on the territory of the Third World [1].

The main question of this research is that “What are the challenges of democracy and national culture in the Middle East conflict?” And the hypothesis of the study is that “after the defeat of fascism and Soviet, it spreads the political system that is democratic around the world, but because of the peculiar nature of this system, for example in the Middle East, there are more challenges that dealing with the world of culture and national democracy.” This research was descriptive-analytical research using library studies and documents that it has issued the conflict of national culture of democracy in the Middle East. And in this regard we take the opinions of Raymond Aron.

Globalization of democracy:

The word democracy is derived from the Greek word Demokratia. In this way the word democracy means rule by the people, definition of the term democracy provides verbal definition. In terms of democracy, the democracy is the rule of people over people. In the book “Ma’ref and Marif”, it is stated: “Democracy means government by the people, a government in which sovereignty is in the hands of people, and it is run according to the people and ideas of the people. The government in the hands of a certain class is run by a certain individual arbitrarily”. David Bitham and Boile, two Western scholars, believe in this regard that: “Democracy is not an absolute concept, and the country can be called democratic government that came to power through electoral competition and accountable to the people. All adults in the country have the equal right to elect and to be elected and the law dictates civil and political rights. “As it became apparent in the sense of the term democracy, people play an important role in the government of the country; it should be noted that even though people interpret democracy as government by the people; But the reality is that if democracy is to be fully implemented in accordance with what is stated in the rule of the majority over the minority people. There is no escape for that, because the consent of everyone for a matter is not fully possible, as it has been always like that. [2].

Pillars of democracy:

Freedom:

Freedom of expression: education, media, parties, gatherings are the most important means of creating democratic acceptance of the freedom of individuals in society. This means that if there is no freedom in the society, democracy will lose its shape means there will be no possibility of its realization; therefore, those who are ready to create a democracy should ensure freedom of individuals. Freedom also includes many aspects that no unreasonable restrictions or any of its aspects to seriously impede the formation of true democracy. The various aspects can be noted as freedom to freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of education, freedom of assembly and freedom of the parties [3].

Freedom of choice and decision-making: In addition to the aspects of freedom, there is more fundamental and important aspect that is called freedom of choice. This means that people should be free to choose the content, form and who will reign over them. They should have the right of free choice and the absence of this principle and the aspect of freedom, democracy and the sovereignty of the people over their own destiny are meaningless [4].

Rule of law: On the side of freedom, rule of law is a fact for the establishment of democracy; As noted earlier, as well as the freedom to choose the form of government the people have the freedom to choose the governing law so that they can have the right to select the rule in order to have the maximum role in society.

Power sharing (separation of powers): the acceptance of the principle of freedom and the law for the establishment of democracy, what is important is to prevent tyranny and the return of society to the first place; because the philosophy of democratization is to release the people and society from authoritarian regimes and totalitarian authority, and since absolute power causes tyranny or according to Lord, it tends to corruption, theorists such as Montesquieu proposed power sharing and the separation of powers that the public feel secure, and thereby the power govern the power. After the separation of power is not to establish democracy, but it is necessary to maintain that. As Article 16 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and France Citizen, the separation of power is as part of necessary principles of democracy. So the separation of powers is considered as the condition of the establishment of genuine and sustainable democracy.

Press (media):

News and information: A democratic government is that people should be aware of own affairs. One of the tasks of the press is to inform about the important issues that are so important for the people. If the people don’t know about the update information, they couldn’t decide about them. Press in democratic societies should be very careful in their duties. Because otherwise the press may mislead the people who are greedy to be informed. Of course, in realization of this duty of press, there are two important factors [5].

Transparency in the notification: the fundamental principles of a civil society and a democracy is the principle of transparency and what has been set the role of the press as a pillar of the democratic system is transparency in information because transparency of government actions is one of the pillars of the democratic system. The press is expected to publish the transparent information that
are free from lies and censorship that the faked news cause to lose the validity of the government.

Preventing corruption: accurate notification that is away from censorship just because transparency in various areas can prevent corruption in government and non-government systems. Free media in the country reveal the wrongdoing and fraud, or theft in the state and prevent the loss of people's rights. Press prevent the incidence of corruption in the system by their activities in the areas of political and economic, even if they face difficulties and risks in this way. The press can be called guardians of the public interest.

Human Right:

The concept of human rights is taken from the philosophical tradition in the West, and it is established based on the historical experience of Europe, so many developing governments adopted human rights, but their priorities differ from the priorities of the West, including the right of self-determination of these differences can be economic and social rights as well as more emphasis on the fight against racism. Many developing countries have a poor record on human rights, about the reason for this, it can be explained by internal factors both internal external factors noted in this regard to issues such as poverty, ethnic conflicts and the government's authority-oriented. One of the challenges of human rights in the Middle East is to refer the countries of their cultural traditions and religions to region that challenges perceptions of human rights. Some Middle Eastern countries also believe that the human rights issue is a cover that Western governments follow their benefits through poor administration. Although this is partly true, but the Middle East has some reports on the violation of human rights [6].

Development of Information Technology:

Apart from the major news agencies, the advent of the Internet has led to the emergence and spread of virtual agency. The information revolution has created the third generation media technologies that the most powerful to date is technology of Internet software. The Internet has been able to develop the public communication regardless of the limitations of time and space, beyond the personal relationships, and it creates a virtual field in this space that the people achieve a new sense about themselves and others [7]. This field affect the manner of people’s communication and have changed the fundamental concepts such as individual and social identity, personality, mental and reflection, the domain of social relations, public debates, personal and ethical performance of the Agency. Virtual space is complementary to the official news agency, as it is impossible to spread of news that are invalid due to security, moral and political reasons, these news are spread widely by news agency. It is so clear that this feature is so important for the invading powers. According to Christian Lord, "the Internet is a subtle, yet bold solution that was created against national security threats." All agencies audio, visual, and written on the Internet has its own site and news are available [8].

Web sites that emerged at the time, were considered as marginal phenomenon, is now widely available and used. The possibility that changes in the networks increase the expansion is now available to users via the Web. The most important distinction of this device with the previous model of the web is “direct participation” in shaping the content to users through the manipulation of their websites, so that the contents of the Web site can add or reduce or change them. Users can even chat with each other in this virtual environment [9]. While the former, users of web sites appear only in the role of consumers and administrators of Internet communication with the audience, it was mono-lateral communication. The online media in this new scene are social media or social networks. The most popular social networking sites are Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The largest of these networks is Facebook, if we compare Facebook with the world in terms of population, it is the third most populous country in the world after India and China [10].

The Reasons for Rejection of Democracy in the Middle East:

Weak democratic infrastructure in the Middle East: Due to the ruling tyranny and oppression over decades, there is no necessary infrastructure for the rule of the people in these countries or it is very weak. The basic requirements of democracy are people's awareness of their own rights, tolerance and the conviction of having the right to vote for the general public, free and competitive media, civil society development, the establishment of a parliamentary system and a council, a free economy and independent judiciary. Arabic Middle East region has never witnessed the institutionalization of political participation by the community and not a weakness and backwardness of civil society in these countries that all researchers have agreed that. According to some experts, the political culture of the Middle East has the features and characteristics that makes impossible to establish an efficient and democratic political system. Patriarchal culture, character, patriotism, authoritarianism, hierarchical and authoritarian completely opposed to concept of democracy [11].

National Culture:

Culture can be considered as a general set, including knowledge, obsession, art, morals, and law, custom and other capabilities and habits that a person as a member of the community achieves them. Culture is a coherent pattern of beliefs and behaviors that humans acquired through learning and transfers
it to the next generation, and culture is considered as common ideas, concepts, rules, meaning that emerge in the methods of human life. Therefore, culture can be regarded as a set of customs, beliefs, ideas, arts, lifestyles, and the social system of a country or the special group. Nowadays, the density of the human societies in Yemen, wonderful and amazing advances in transportation and communication have changed the face of the world over the past few decades so that it improves cultural events in large-scale. [12] Culture in a range of meanings and symbols, such as behaviors, speech and various symbolic and significant objects that people interact with each other due to their validity and common experiences and beliefs are achieved and evaluated as a way of life. In types such as popular culture, political culture, economic culture and popular culture can be identified, experts believe that there are an integrated political culture in a relatively stable political system that all structures, institutions and political processes tend to strengthen and support each other. Integration of political culture is the main cause of assimilation and harmony in orientation behavior of citizens [13].

The Existence of Subcultures:
Berik, English sociologist, knows the subcultures as a reaction to the cultural fashions, he also knows their formations are the results of efforts of each generation to solve the structural problems of the members of that generation experience. [14] Middle East is the origin of religious groups: Muslims (Sunni, Shi’a, Sufi, Alawite, Druze, and Wahhabi), Christians that are low (Orthodox, Maronite, Armenian, Coptic, Assyrian, Protestant, Anglican and Melkonks) and Jews. Huntington to assess the successful transition to democracy believes that: The institutionalization of a system depends on achieving a great level of consistency, complexity, independence and continuity of the organization and procedures of the system's manufacturer. Huntington considers the civil society in contrast to pre-Turin society. Pre-Turin society causes disintegration of low institutional system that is collapsing. The characteristic of such a society, frankly face of difficult political and social groups that are hostile to each other, are opposed to any dialogue and reconciliation and reject any rule of the game. However, the irreconcilable parts in every society in any case prevent the emergence of a unique identity and solidarity and consensus on the goals, future of political life and the means to achieve them, which is the most outstanding feature of Arabic communities in the Middle East [14].

One of the functions of subcultures can be explained as: The existence of sub-cultures is the sign of combat in the groups of society toward the lifestyle in the general culture of society that can be useful in most of the cases. For example, the preservation of cultural and indigenous values of Iran by Iranian residents in other countries that try to maintain the Iranian culture and make them legal in dominant culture of foreign countries (as a sub-culture) is as function of creating sub-cultures [15].

Patrimonialistic Culture in Middle East:
Tribal Patrimonialistic culture in the Middle East beside the tradition of tribal life and the acceptance of the elders and charismatic tendencies associated with Department create the subjective field of people in this region. King acceptance culture or old and master in these countries that are created in the historical governed states is the feature of tyranny and Department in people. Based on this vision, the king is the symbol of national authority with a charismatic nature to be the head of the command. No doubt, this vision will not be easily compatible with the democratic culture of patriarchy (patrimonialism in this area, Hisham Sharabi writes in “new paternalism”: Modernity at the same time include the reason and revolution in the Arab countries and in a way that the traditional patriarchal discourse is reproduced; thus, the individuals and entities do not mean in the modern sense in these lands [16]. Patrimonialism culture creates abeyance as a feature. Thus, all governed by patriarchal institutions and participation does not mean. In Patrimonialism political culture, the power is considered as a secret phenomenon, the leader is a unique characteristic who is as a hero.

Other features Patrimonialism culture, is the expectation that all problems should be solved by the government that is an obstacle in the way of the development of corporation culture. Another prominent feature of cultural Arabic Middle East is superstitious ideas and attitudes that today does not fit in any modern intellectual and cultural context. To set up a democracy, the superstitious ideas should be removed by consciseness. Anyway, the transition from passive cooperation to active cooperation depends on two developments: First, changing the political system from the head of the base to the rule base. Second, changing the cone imagine of society to the pyramid imagine. First changing arises from the historical acceleration and the second transformation arises from plurality of resources in the community. It seems that for changing passively participate to dynamic partnerships in developing countries (including Arabic countries in the Middle East) culture of each of them should be studied, as active participation has intellectual roots, and it is formed by human capability and we cannot prescribe something that occurred elsewhere to these countries for the development and dynamic participation. Behaviors and ideas of people are hided in the heart of culture, and the general culture in the Arabian countries of Middle East is not separated from the ideas of people. Middle East citizens in most political systems do not respect for human rights. This case is even rooted among the scientific and intellectual elite of the Middle East. The main concern for many
citizens is livelihood and security in Arabic countries. Therefore, opportunity of recognition of fundamental rights and the rights of national and global are lost and they seek their citizenship rights so late.

Signs of Conflict of Democracy and National Culture in the Middle East:
Formal democracy and corruption:
Creating power-oriented systems in different countries including Egypt, Kuwait, Bahrain, Turkey, Azerbaijan and the form and shape of democracy can be seen in these countries. Although the election is held in these regimes, the special party comes to power; in protest over the state of democracy in these countries repressive measures are carried out [17]. Recent studies indicate that the oil-rich developing countries do not have strong regulatory institutions and the militant groups who are not willing to participate and cooperate with each other. The structure of the “underdevelopment” leads to economic area and “detrimental effects of democracy” in the political sphere. In other words, increasing the share of oil in the economy of a country leads to reduce the democracy index that shows Rentier and disruptive effect of democracy. Econometric analysis shows that if the democratic index number is considered 0 to 10, and if the country do not have oil reserves, the democracy index increases from 5/1. Thus, as long as the legal and political institutions are not fully established, increased oil revenues act reversely, and the black gold becomes the main factors of controlling government’s behavior.

Spread of terror and violence:
Huntington and Bernard Lewis argue that Islamic fundamentalism is a reaction against the West. The Islamic fundamentalists believe that Islamic government can be democratically controlled, because democracy devolves the power to the people, in their view. Islam does not accept the doctrine of popular sovereignty. Superficial understanding of Islamic fundamentalists has led to disparate group of scholars of Islamic theology with modern life, new knowledge, new technologies and pretend democracy and Islam religion inherently violent, and intolerant. If institutions and civil organizations are incapable to develop relations based on democratic values in ties based on tribal culture in the Middle East and Arabic countries because lack of civil institutions in these countries are clear and democratic ethic do not have role in behaviors of people, the significant potential is concerned and there is a new discipline under authority. For years, Arabic countries in the Middle East against the problems and crises facing the people of fatalism, retreat and personal interpretations of religion have the outcome of the birth of groups that are fierce and mongers and are opposed to any behavior and any non-traditional lifestyle and causes losses for communities.

The most important things that can be observed in terrorist nodes is extreme dedication. This extreme dedication leads to a lot of prays and at the same time, clash with their opponents to the extent that the believer, by endangering the lives of others, is ready to lose his lives. The method is meant suicide bombings. In this type of operation, many lives may be lost. But since the fundamentalist knows himself right and others wrong, so killing other is not important to them. This status will be more in the spirit of al-Qaeda [19].

Conclusion:
There is a direct connection between the method of the state of the Arabic countries in the Middle East and the traditional context of these communities, it has been the greatest obstacles to democracy in these countries because patriarchy is citizens obey, hierarchical authority orientation, along with individual and group perceptions of religion and faith have historical root in these societies. So, it is natural that the government system has these features and causes the reproduction of these features in the country. The result of this condition is that the democratic thought, civil society, and the right of political participation are rare. Since the Arabic countries in the Middle East, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire emerged and had very little background, the rulers of these lands, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arabic Emirates claim the traditional legitimacy, and others as rulers of Iraq and Libya, the former relying on radical ideology have created the ideological legitimacy for themselves. So if we know one of the fundamental symbols as the democratic legitimacy, it should be said that most governments in the region do not have political legitimacy; because the use of force to prevent the introduction of desire for freedom and political repression has been seen in these communities.

REFERENCES


