The Relationship between Globalization and the Civil Society Development in Iran during the years 1997-2013 (with an emphasis on parties and press)

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Abstract:

Globalization reflects the notion that the world has become a common social space through technological and economic forces so that development in a region of the world can have profound effects on the livelihood of individuals or societies in other regions. It is not difficult to find the relationship between this phenomenon and the civil society development. Globalization has had a profound impact on the various dimensions of human life. The expansion and influence of this phenomenon accelerated with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the expansion of the neoliberal economy and the communications and information revolution. Therefore, the present research investigates how this phenomenon affects the development of civil society, which has a tremendous role in the formation or non-formation of democracy in a country. In addition, two institutions of the civil society, namely, the press and parties that play an important role in the civil society development and political development have been addressed between 1997 and 2013.

Introduction

Globalization means the accumulation of the world and awareness in the world, thereby the world is considered as a single place in which national societies, especially people, have to accept their existence as part of a larger collection. Globalization is a comprehensive process that is going to transform all the dimensions of the individual and social life of humankind, but the extent of the impact of this process varies in different areas of life. This process covers almost all dimensions of human life and has changed them dramatically. The effects of the globalization process in various fields grew increasingly after the end of the Cold War following the

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collapse of the Soviet Union. One of such effects is removing the national state of the economy, which has led governments to engage in an international arena in order to maintain balance and power. On the other hand, the diversity and plurality of the global media and the growing spread of modern communication technologies have brought people closer together and created a common concern for them. Civil society is also one of the concepts that date back to the history of human societies and has existed since the time of Aristotle, and its redefinition has become inevitable in this era. Civil society, as a social force, is the most important factor of sustainable development and democracy. In recent decades, civil society has been talked about as the largest third-millennium project due to profound social changes around the world and the development paradigm shift. In the last 100 years, civil society has been a source of concern for intellectuals and civil society activists in order to escape from the backwardness and the establishment of democracy in Iranian society.

Discussion

The discussion of civil society and political development are among the most important technical terms in the present research, and there is need to provide a comprehensive and concise definition of them. The expansion of civil society is one of the topics to which many politicians and political scholars have been concerned. The process of globalization and its increasing expansion is undeniable and cannot be ignored. Therefore, the present research aims to identify the effect of the relatively new phenomenon of globalization on the civil society of Iran between 1997 and 2013. Research question is: To what extent

and how did globalization affect the development of civil society in Iran between 1997 and 2013?

Literature Review

In the last few years, the undeniable role of globalization in various areas of human life has caused Iranian scholars to compile or translate texts related to this phenomenon. However, it cannot be said that all aspects of globalization have been studied in the country. Except for some scattered studies and articles, there is no comprehensive study on the impact of globalization on civil society, especially on parties and press. Thus, there are some relevant researches that canbe found here.

Zarei, Arman, (2009) in a research entitled "Globalization and Political Culture in Iran", studies structural changes with indicators such as population growth, literacy, higher education institutions, communications, relative economic growth, transport, etc. in the second decade of the revolution, on the one hand, and the communications revolution as well as the political and cultural globalization on the other, which leads to the intellectual development and political awareness followed by participatory-democratic political culture in Iran. According to the author of the book, globalization through the inclusivity of the speech of democracy in the world has provided grounds for the expansion and prominence of democratic tendencies among the Iranian elites and has led to a change in their political culture.

Tehraniani (2004), in a research entitled "Globalization, Challenges and Insecurities,"has brought six papers about globalization organized into three sections: "Global Identi-

ty,""Global Network," and "Conclusion." These papers investigated various consequences of globalization in different areas, such as community administration, legal relationships, environmental, economic, and other activities, and have indicated the relationship between globalization and national security.

Robertson, Ronald (2001), in a study entitled "Globalization of Social Theories and Global Culture, "discuss on issues such as globalization, culture, and sociology, universality, identity, civilization, modernity, nostalgic paradigm, etc. The focus of the discussions in various chapters is the social and cultural globalization. From the perspective of Robertson, the common sense of globalization is not intended, but the author applies globalization as a social theory and method of analysis. From his point of view, globalization is a large-scale social theory, which, like many inclusive social theories, will address the major issues of the contemporary world, both nationally and globally, either in smaller or larger dimensions. The axis of Robertson's theory is globalization in the particular sense that he applies; in this sense, globalization means to squeeze the world and transform it into a single place.

Scholt, Janarte (2008), in his research entitled "A Careful Look at the Globalization", presented various definitions of globalization and considered rationalism, capitalism, technological developments and facilitating laws and regulations as the most important causes of the formation and development of this phenomenon. From his point of view, among the various definitions of globalization such as Westernization, internationalization, globalization and liberalization, the de-territorialization in the contemporary world is an objective reality and the right definition of globalization.

GolMohammadi, Ahmad (2008), in a study entitled "Globalization, Culture, Identi-

ty," investigates the process of globalization and cultural specificism and the relationship between these two variables. In his view, although the process of globalization eliminates the relief of the passive and dysfunctional human of the traditional society, transforms identity into a person-centered action, reveals the possibility of being human while being specific, and illustrates the boundlessness of culture, difference, and variety. Certainly, it is possible to be glocalized with such a framework, conditions, and possibilities.

Methodology

The present research is descriptive-analytical in terms of nature and methodology. This study has been conducted using library method. In this regard, the researcher has used resources such as books, articles, specialized journals, research reports, especially websites and computer information systems related to the subject.

Contribution

There is no compiled article and research about the relationship between globalization and the development of civil society in Iran during the years 1997 to 2013, so an important contribution of the present research is the emphasis on the expansion of democratic institutions, culture, and democratic civil relations in the Iranian society, particularly under the inevitable globalization process. Therefore, it can be said that the present paper has an innovative aspect and hopes to add to the richness of literature.

Political parties and press
Political parties from 1997 to 2005

In this period, the parties were expanding, and the government's motto was political development, civil society, and democracy. Subsequently, many groups and parties have

been formed and previous political parties enhanced their activity in this period. One of the main characteristics of political space after the Iranian presidential election, 1997 was the birth, growth, and competition of political parties in Iran. During this period, party activities thrived, and the strengthening of civil institutions, including political parties, was at the head of the President's plans for political development. In addition to previous parties and groups, new political parties and organizations started to work. It should be noted that this period coincided with the beginning of the third millennium and the great transformation of the world community; a period when civil society faced with massive changes through the information revolution, and the phenomenon of globalization was happening truly. Another measure taken in this period to promote and institutionalize the parties was the establishment of the House of Parties of Iran. This civil institution was formed as a lesser experience in developing countries in the late 1990s.

Political parties from 2005 to 2013

2005 coincides with the victory of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the ninth presidential election. In this period, the receipt of licenses for the activities of associations and non-governmental institutions decreased considerably compared to previous periods. As the previous governments emphasized on the need for the development of civil institutions and political development, it was opposed during this period. Hence, one of the important measures taken by the reformist government to promote parties in Iran was the establishment of House of Parties, which was suspended during Mahmoud Ahmadinejad administration. Many major and important parties that were considered key actors in the country have been suspended or dissolved. It was as if five parties and organizations that were more active than the rest of the parties were removed due to the post-election tensions. After two decades, we again observed the dissolution of the parties in Iran. Considering that out of 226 parties on the list of House of Parties, only 10% of them can be referred to as active formations; the dissolution and suspension of the four major reformist parties' blow to the institutionalization process in the country. Party subsidies were cut one year after the coming of the government of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. As it is clear, the response of the ninth government towards the parties contradicts the indices of democracy.

Press from 1997 to 2005

After the seventh presidential election on May 23, 1997, a new era began in the development of the press. During this period, the country witnessed significant and unprecedented evolutions in the press, from licensing to the defense of legal freedoms and press support. The press was able to train of logical and principled discourses on various political and social issues and succeeded to trigger the society through the introduction of individuals with social rights and social status, and also contributed to the transparency of society and the accountability of the state and the provision of the grounds for criticizing ideas and innovations (Jafari, 2004: 60). By issuing publication license, we saw the publication of a new newspaper every day, and on the other hand, we observed an increase in the circulation of newspapers, so that within two years of the reform government, the number of publications increased from 2.1 to 3.5 million

copies a day. We also witnessed the publication of four newspapers with a circulation of half a million a day (ibid). Such increase reflects the public's confidence in the press in those years.

Press from 2005 to 2013

During this period, once again the publication ban, the migration of journalists and the shift in journalists' job began among the second generation of the revolution. The circulation of the Iranian press fell sharply, and Iran was in a very difficult position in the ranking of free-press countries.

In this period, although the number of issuance and publication of the press has expanded, we saw a decrease in the circulation of newspapers in the country, indicating the lack of public acceptance of the press. The causes should be found in issues such as the growth and development of the virtual news agencies and the spread of political distrust. The seizure of the press, which had entered a new stage in the history of the press since 2000, continues to be in these years. According to the statistics of human rights organizations, 27 journals were published in 2006, and 77 publications were banned in 2008 (Website of the Authors Association and website of the International Rescue Committee of Iranians).

The Impact of Globalization on Iranian Civil Society
Economic dimension

Foreign direct investment is one of the main indicators of globalization, in which Iran's contribution is very small. In the years 1997-2000, the amount of foreign direct investment was between $ 24 and $ 53 million. Compared to foreign direct investment in the world ($ 1,270 million in 2000) and even in developing countries ($ 240 billion), this fig-

ure is negligible. Following the policy of ignoring the international system, taking the banks under government administration, confiscation of the factory, restrictions on the attraction and support of foreign investments, continuous political instability and the level of existing risks for the investment are the main deterrents of attracting foreign capital (Azghandi, 2002: 40). The status of world trade is another economic indicator of globalization that can be used to understand Iran's position in the globalization process. Iran's share of world trade has fallen sharply, for example, Iran's share of world exports, despite its oil and gas intensity, has fallen from 69% in 1966 and 23% in 1975 to less than 5% in 2000 and 4% in 2001.

Information Technology Dimension

The development of long-range information and telecommunications technologies and the quality of access by countries is one of the key determinants of globalization; because it could lead to the expansion of ties and bonds between nations. The Internet and its penetration rate are other indicators that show the extent of ICT development in a community. Although there is no exact number of Internet users in Iran, according to the Internet World Stats website in 2000, the number of Internet users in Iran is 250,000, indicating that, with a population of 69 million, had an Internet penetration rate of 8.3%. Accordingly, we see the growth of users in Iran by 2002, as 5.5 million people in Iran were using the Internet at this year. From this date onwards, the Internet has grown dramatically by 2012, so that the number of people who have access to the Internet in Iran has reached 42 million; indicating that, according to the 78 million Iranian population at this time, the Internet penetration rate has grown more than 14% compared to 2000, reaching 53.3%. Another

important indicator in the field of communications is the number of fixed, mobile telephone lines, and the rate of calls abroad. In September 2010, Iran ranked 63thamong the 139 countries in terms of the fixed line index. The penetration rate of fixed telephone lines in Iran is 8.34.

Political, social and cultural dimension

Globalization creates a space for the growth of civil institutions, parties, groups and national or transnational movements and helps the development of the middle class due to the characteristics of a free market economy, which is based on middle-class activities. The factors that have been socially and politically effective in this development can be studied in several categories, including increasing population and urbanization, increasing literacy rates, increasing the production of books, etc.

Conclusion

As we have seen in the study of Globalization Indicators in Iran, two indicators out of the three under study have always followed the upward trend to this day. In other words, economic indicators, especially the indicator of telecommunication technology development, have always grown in Iran. In the meantime, the political index of globalization in Iran has led to the emergence of two different insights. The first insight looks optimistically at globalization that can be seen as the direct impact of globalization and the spread of democracy. The second insight is the militant confrontation that has emerged in

the face of globalization. The second-insight advocates have positioned globalization as a Western project, and have taken a protracted approach against it. Hence, globalization, through the spread of democracy and democratic culture in Iran, led to the emergence of resistance from the traditional authority in Iran.

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