Gender Cleavage and Political Conflict in Iran: A Sociological Approach

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Abstract:

A look at Iran's contemporary history shows that in the past century, Iranian society has been alternately involved in riots, movements, revolutions and political instability. To explain the causes of these conflicts, theorists have emphasized various factors, among which the number, type, nature and structure of social divisions in Iran can be mentioned. One of the faults that became activated after the Islamic Revolution is the gender cleavage. This article deals with the question of what role gender played in the process of political conflicts in post-revolutionary Iran. The findings show that the activation of the gender cleavage caused the political conflicts after the revolution to take on a gendered color. As a result, while women pursue specific demands related to their gender class, other groups and political factions involved in political conflicts also have emphasized their demands to attract their opinion, and from time to time, they have highlighted these demands in their campaign agenda. The current research is of a qualitative type based on documentary and library methods, and the relevant data were collected through note-taking of various books, articles, and documents, and the data were described and analyzed with a sociological approach.

Introduction

Since conflict is an inevitable aspect of human relations and it leads to the emergence and intensification of insecurity and instability in different societies, it is of fundamental importance to deal with its various aspects. A look at the history of Iran for the last century shows that as society is on the path of modernization,

the ground for the occurrence of political and social conflicts has also increased. For half of the last century, Iranian society has been alternately involved in riots, movements, revolutions, and the resulting political instability, and the other half has been dominated by authoritarian regimes. Although the revolution of 1979 was expected to be the end of the long-term political conflicts, after the new system came to power, a new round of violent clashes broke out between the various factions of the revolutionaries, which eventually led to the victory of the Islamists.

With the end of the Iran-Iraq war, the scope of these conflicts entered a new stage. The necessity of rebuilding the ruins of the war opened Iran's gates to international markets. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, a new order emerged in the international arena, and the process of globalization intensified. Iran's relations and interactions with the international system in the era of "globalization " on the one hand, and the demographic and structural changes of Iranian society, on the other hand, activated the dormant "social faults" and paved the way for new conflicts between different social forces.

Among the "faults" that became active with the victory of the Islamic Revolution was the "gender cleavage" which caused the political conflicts after the revolution to take on a gendered color. As a result of the activation of these faults, while women pursued specific demands related to their gender class,

other groups and political factions involved in political conflicts also have accentuated women's demands to gain their opinion and from time to time, they have highlighted these demands in their campaign agenda.

Hence, this article aims to investigate the effect of the gender cleavage on political conflicts in the post-revolution stage using a political sociological approach and within the framework of an interactive perspective. In this article, we will show that conflict is a phenomenon, focused on the communication process, that is built-in interconnected networks and emerges only through the communication and structures that surround the actors and phenomena. Here, we will try to leave aside the discourses limited to politics, which mostly deal with the studies of power with a focus on society and the government, while raising the question of the formulation and process of conflict, we will try to create a context for searching and process analysis of political phenomena and relations between power and security in other meta-political relations and institutions.

In this article, we try to find a valid and methodical answer to the question of what role gender played in the process of political conflicts in Iran after the revolution. In this regard, the entire article is organized around three axes: first, in the conceptual and methodological framework, we will discuss the social contexts of political conflicts and also the gender attitude toward them. Then we will point out the measures to activate the gender

cleavage in Iran, and finally, we discuss the formulation and consequences of gender-based political conflict. The current research is of a qualitative type based on documentary and library methods, and the relevant data is collected by extracting various books, articles, and documents, and we describe and analyze them with a sociological approach.

Theoretical Framework
Conceptual Review

Several definitions of the concept of conflict have been presented. In a general sense, conflict is a more or less violent confrontation of individuals and social groups over values, resources, and privileges. Alain Birou defines conflict as open opposition and disagreement mixed with violence and considers the conflict situation as a situation in which "Each of the competitors uses various means to force the other to surrender and leave the fight" (Birou, 2016, p. 62).

Coser sees the conflict as a kind of struggle over values or claims related to dignity, power, and scarce resources, in which the conflicting groups are not only seeking to achieve their desired values but also seeking to neutralize and harm the competitors or eliminate them (Coser, 1963, p. 30). Terner considers conflict to be a series of events that result in some degree of open mutual violence, at least between two groups (Terner, 1982, p. 82). By separating the conflict from the usual disputes, Burton considers it as a type of behavior between individuals, groups, and nations that go beyond the limits of disagreement and normal and daily stance-takings, and as such potentially or tends to destroy individuals, groups, and systems (Burton, 1990, p. 2).

Simell considers conflict as a form of social life and a part of social interaction that always exists in its various forms (Ritzer, 2012, p. 175). Dahrendorf defined conflict as the alignment of social roles against each other. He considers conflict to be a permanent cause within all "authoritarian organized" groups, including small groups such as family and large groups such as official organizations, government, national society, etc. Based on this, he believes that actions based on cooperation also include some kind of conflict (Collins, 1985, p. 140).

The definition of the concept of conflict that we have in mind in this article is not so open and broad as to include almost all the processes of daily social life, and not so limited that it refers only to violent social confrontations. In this case, we largely agree with Oberschall when he says: "the theory and concept of conflict should not be limited to violent confrontations over resources and values, but should also include those situations in which divergent interests and incompatible values confront each other in a non-violent manner and without necessarily eliminating or harming one of the parties of the dispute. At the same time, the concept of conflict can also be ap-

plied to situations in which the conflicting parties reach an agreement on how to allocate resources, values, affairs, and rare values (Oberschall, 1973, p. 30).

However, what we mean by political conflict is any kind of open, general, and relatively durable confrontation - whether violent, peaceful, irregular, or organized (institutional) - between individuals and groups over resources, territory, and the way of exercising political power. These confrontations go beyond the normal and temporary agreements and disputes between political agents and appear as more stable fronts and confrontations that aim to maintain or change the status quo (See: Davoudi, p. 2011).

The Causes of Political Conflicts

There are various points of view regarding the causes and grounds of political conflicts. Each of these opinions highlighted a specific aspect or aspects of the subject and in turn, stated some of the facts related to the subject.

Some of these views have reduced the factors related to the phenomenon of political conflict to one factor or variable; like orthodox Marxist views that attribute all dimensions and forms of political conflict to the field of production relations and class conflicts arising from them. Some other theories attribute conflicts to the power structure within social groups and claim that any social or political structure in which power is unequally distributed is a source of tension and conflict. (Gibbins, 1985) These theories are based on the psychological assumption that humans have a desire to escape from power and subjugation, however, this assumption is a source of controversy, and some social psychologists claim that people run away from freedom in some situations and tend to be subjugated. (See: Forum, 1978).

Some views attribute the phenomenon of conflict and political violence to the type of political systems and regimes. For example, in the theories of comparative politics, democratic and authoritarian regimes are based on indicators such as the presence or absence of political groupings, methods of conflict and political competition, and the way the government and the ruling group deal with opposition groups and methods of conflict resolution. They are differentiated from each other. Some theorists such as Eisenstadt consider culture as the source of political conflicts and on this basis they consider some cultures to be bigoted and more violent and others to be more tolerant and peaceful (Oberschall, 1973). But it should be kept in mind that if we attribute the violence of a society to its cultural values, firstly, we should not consider these values as inherent and eternal, and secondly, we should consider the backgrounds and factors of the formation of these very values. Thirdly, we should consider the reasons and factors for their continuation and reproduction in the intended periods.

Considering the purpose of this article, which is to know the fields of formation, nature, and effects of the phenomenon of political conflict from the perspective of gender in post-revolutionary Iran, only choosing and applying one of these views and theories would not suffice. In addition, the study of the process of political conflicts in a society like Iran with a diverse, complex, and conflicting combination in terms of economic, social, cultural, religious, ethnic, ideological, etc. elements, will not be possible by applying one theory, especially in a period of the social and political life of this society in which it has experienced multiple, extensive and rapid transformations in various political, economic, social and cultural fields. (Weiner, 1986) To understand the dynamics and general trends of the conflict and to understand the various categories of political conflict, we have to prepare a more coherent analytical framework, which will be discussed below.

Selected Framework

It seems that among the existing concepts, the "social cleavages" is a suitable one for providing an analytical framework for this article. Social cleavages refer to standards and boundaries that separate different social groups from each other or put them against; In other words, the cleavage in its natural form indicates the boundaries of differences and conflicts between individuals, groups, and institutions (Lasswell, 1952, p. 2).

In terms of the sources of formation, social ruptures are divided into two types: "structure" and "history". The first type is said to be those types of ruptures that have been formed due to some unchangeable and stable characteristics in human societies and always exist, such as the sexual cleavage. The second type is the cleavages that are the result of the historical fate of a country and do not have a structural necessity, but historical changes and accidents play the main role in their formation, such as religious, ethnic, linguistic cleavages, etc. (Bashiriyeh, 1994, p. 100).

From another point of view, social ruptures can be classified according to the degree of influence on political life. Accordingly, they can be divided into active, semi-active, and inactive. "Active" refers to cleavages based on which" awareness, organization, and political action" can take place. "Semi-active" refers to cleavages based on which awareness or political organization may occur, but it does not reach the stage of action and political grouping. The inactive ones are the cleavages based on which no political awareness, action, or grouping has taken place (Bashiriyeh, 1984, p. 101). Active and to some extent semi-active divisions are very important in terms of influencing political life.

The nature of the cleavages, which indicates the type and content of distinctions and differences hidden in them, also affects political conflicts. Some cleavages are caused by distinctions and differences over economic status and

interests, while some cleavages originate from differences in identity or belief. It seems that the type and nature of the cleavages affect the nature and characteristics of the conflicts arising from them. Conflicts arising from identity cleavages, such as gender cleavages, are likely to contain more hostility and violence than conflicts arising from functional cleavages.

In terms of the formation method, social divisions may be combined in different ways, which itself has important effects on grouping and the potential for political conflict. The dense combination of cleavages increases the probability of conflict and conflict between the two poles because of the fields of difference and distinction increase. But the cross-combination of the cleavages reduces the intensity of the conflict due to the increase in the common points of the resulting groupings (See: Delavari, Sadeghi, p. 1389).

The direction of the social cleavages, that is, the direction of the opposing forces that have been activated around the axis of the cleavages, is also important. Sometimes the opposing forces emerging from within the cracks get involved with the government, sometimes with other forces within the civil society. The direction of the cleavages in any society depends more than anything on the situation and nature of the government on the one hand and the characteristics of the civil society on the other hand. In societies where the government is closed and authoritarian and most of the country's resources are under the control of the government, usually the social and political divisions and conflicts are more or less focused on the government.

The Gender Cleavage

The gender cleavage is one of the structural cleavages that has existed in all societies since the beginning of history as a result of stable biological differences between men and women. However, according to the difference between sex and gender, unlike the sexuality cleavage, the gender cleavage has emerged as a result of historical changes in human societies. The distinctions of sex-gender, sexism, and patriarchy have emerged in the process of transformations and structural changes in patriarchal societies. Centuries must have passed until women became aware of the existence of discrimination and their inferior position compared to men. Apart from the limited role that women have had in the field of politics throughout human history, the political and economic developments that took place after the commercial, industrial and bourgeois-democratic revolutions in the West paved the way for women to be aware of their gender and discrimination caused by it. (See: Mohammadi Asl, 2000)

From the middle of the 18th century onwards, the struggle to end such discrimination began in the form of feminism. At the beginning of its emergence, this movement was raised as a limited protest, but it later turned into a movement in the field of women. Feminism is a philosophical and political discourse

that supports women, achieving equal rights for women and men, and fighting against gender discrimination in all forms, and by entering various fields such as law, politics, history, and philosophy has developed various branches. The central goal in all feminist trends is to defend women's rights in both public (society) and private (family) arenas. It also aims to emphasize that the position of women in society is inferior and discriminatory and women have faced it only because of their gender (See: Sanasarian, 2003). Therefore, to reduce and finally overcome the existing discrimination, all these tendencies want changes in the social, economic, political, and cultural order.

Therefore, the sides of the gender cleavage are men who have most of the resources of political, economic, and social power and women who have not benefited much from these resources and have risen to fight to improve their situation. This is why some have considered feminism as a moral conflict with male supremacy or overturning patriarchal supremacy. In addition to the moral aspect, this reversal also takes on political aspects. Patriarchal supremacy is a system of male authority that oppresses women through its political, economic, and social institutions, and gives gender color to such conflicts (See: Abbott, 2011). In all historical forms of patriarchy, from feudalism and capitalism to socialism, the sex-gender-based system of discrimination has been used. Patriarchy arises from the power of men to

have more access to the resources and interests of the power structure outside and inside the home. This definition is reminiscent of Foucault's thoughts about the role of power institutions in modern society and the "regime of truth" (Mathew, 2014, p. 13).

Gender Cleavage in Iran

The history of the activation of the gender cleavage in Iran goes back to the era before the constitutionalism movement. Under the influence of the Iranian society's encounter with modernity during the constitutional revolution, the traditional discourse became problematic and declined due to the elements and concepts of the modern discourse. The arrival of the manifestations of modernity, such as new schools and newspapers, and the authoritarian modernization of the Pahlavi period, opened the way for the emergence of a new discourse in the field of gender issues in Iran and raised women's awareness of their unfavorable situation in the entirely masculine society. During this period, the condition of women improved relatively, and some parts of women were able to participate in political and social arenas. But due to the dominant role of religion in the lives of Iranians and the traditionalism of Iranian women, an important part of them remained away from new developments (Baghdar Delgosha, 2018, p. 44).

The occurrence of the Islamic revolution was a turning point in the activation of the gender cleavage in Iran and brought a large number of women to the

stage who did not want to appear in the public arena due to Sharia restrictions. The developments that took place in the post-revolution period showed the emergence of a new discourse that tried to define a new role and place for women in the political and social arena in competition with the pre-revolutionary discourse. The Islamic revolution brought traditionalist women to the social and political scenes and gave their presence a complete shari'a aspect because they appeared in different scenes with the motivation of fulfilling a shari'a duty.

During the revolution, Iran witnessed the presence of roaring waves of women who, until then, did not consider participation in gatherings as part of their duties, and within the impenetrable fence of the family, they were potential forces that were not easily attracted and absorbed in social scenes. This sharia assignment shook the undisputed authority of the head of the family and to some extent reduced the submission of traditionalist women. Gradually, traditionalist men did not forbid their wives from participating in the political sphere they were assigned to (Baghdar Delgosha, 2021, p. 53).

The religious leaders of the revolution, who did not agree with the political presence of women on the stage before the beginning of the revolutionary movement, and even in 1963 raised against the approval of the law granting the right to vote to women, considered the presence of women necessary to achieve their revolutionary goals and they gave it a legitimate dimension. The result of the legitimacy of women's presence was the demand to achieve political and social rights equal to men. However, the women who were enthusiastically present during the emergence and formation of the revolution, in the institutionalization phase of the revolution, which began with the establishment of new rules, realized the issues related to their gender and came to believe that due to the traditional forces' emphasizing the foundations of gender, they do not tolerate women's continued presence in the arena. In dealing with these inhibiting factors that distorted some of women's acquired rights, protesting women rose to oppose and took different stances during political developments. In this way, the political power of women, which was latent until the formation of the revolution, became activated (Kar, 2000, p. 18) and the gender cleavage became more active. A glance at the four decades after the revolution shows that the gender cleavage in Iran is becoming more active day by day and in terms of gender equality or justice indicators, Iran's situation seems more complicated compared to other countries.

The Gender Indicators

To measure the level of activity and the depth of the gender cleavage in society, several indicators have been developed. Among these indicators, "Gender Development Index", "Gender Empowerment Index", "Gender Cleavage Index", "Women's Economic Opportunity In-

dex", "Gender Equality Index" and "Gender Inequality Index" can be mentioned. Since it is not necessary to discuss each of these indicators in this field, to show the position of Iran in global gender indi-

cators, we briefly examine the "Gender Inequality Index" according to the United Nations Human Development Report and also the "Gender Cleavage Index" of the World Economic Forum.

Table 1:

				The trend of changes in the quadruple parameters of Iran's gender gap index from 2006 to 2020													
Annual Report	GGI Ranking	Number of Countries	GGI Value	Economic Participation			Access to Education			Health and Survival			Political Power		
				Value	Global Average	Rank	Value	Global Average	Rank	Value	Global Average	Rank	Value	Global Average	Rank
2006	108	115	0.580	0.358	0.596	113	0.954	0.939	79	0.978	0.973	52	0.031	0.138	109
2007	118	128	0.590	0.395	0.577	123	0.968	0.916	90	0.978	0.958	58	0.031	0.142	122
2008	116	130	0.602	0.449	0.587	118	0.965	0.929	92	0.978	0.958	60	0.017	0.163	128
2009	128	134	0.584	0.377	0.594	131	0.964	0.930	96	0.978	0.960	63	0.017	0.169	132
2010	123	134	0.593	0.426	0.590	125	0.959	0.929	96	0.971	0.955	83	0.017	0.179	129
2011	125	135	0.589	0.444	0.588	125	0.952	0.930	105	0.971	0.956	85	0.017	0.185	130
2012	127	135	0.593	0.412	0.599	130	0.953	0.932	101	0.971	0.956	87	0.035	0.195	126
2013	130	136	0.584	0.366	0.599	130	0.965	0.932	98	0.971	0.956	87	0.034	0.195	129
2014	137	142	0.581	0.358	0.599	139	0.957	0.932	104	0.971	0.956	89	0.010	0.195	135
2015	141	145	0.580	0.357	0.599	141	0.954	0.946	106	0.974	0.957	99	0.037	0.230	137
2016	139	144	0.587	0.357	0.592	140	0.975	0.946	94	0.971	0.957	98	0.047	0.230	136
2017	140	144	0.853	0.357	0.585	140	0.965	0.953	100	0.963	0.956	135	0.046	0.227	136
2018	142	149	0.589	0.376	0.586	143	0.969	0.949	103	0.966	0.955	127	0.046	0.223	141
2019	148	154	0.584	0.381	0.586	147	0.953	0.949	118	0.966	0.955	130	0.037	0.223	145
2020	148	153	0.584	0.381	0.582	147	0.953	0.954	118	0.966	0.958	130	0.037	0.239	145

Source: Extracted from the World Economic Forum Reports

The gender inequality index reflects the deprivation of women in three dimensions of health (reproductive health), empowerment and labor market. The range of this index can vary between zero (equality between men and women) and one (women are more deprived in all measured dimensions). Therefore, a larger gender inequality index indicates lower achievements. According to the United Nations Human Development Report in 2015, the average world gender inequality index in 2014 among 155 countries is 449.0. This number in the case of Iran is 515.0 (much higher than the global average) in such a way that Iran has ranked 69th among 188 countries in the human development index

and 114th in the gender inequality index among 155 countries. According to this report, in the fourfold division of human development levels, Iran is in the category of countries with a high level of human development, but the gender inequality index of Iran is not only compared to this group (310.0) but also the group with medium human development (506.0) is also higher. Among the 19 countries of the MENA[1] region, in terms of gender inequality index, it has a worse situation than 11 countries and a better situation than 7 countries (United Nations Development Program, 2012).

Since 2006, the World Economic Forum has been presenting the global "Gender Cleavage Index" report. This

1. Middle East and North Africa Countries

index presents the cleavage between men and women in the four basic dimensions of health, education, economic participation, and participation in political power, and in fact, it is a framework for measuring the level of inequality based on gender and its changes over time. The following table shows the situation in Iran between 2006 and 2020.

Based on the above table, during 2006, the amount of gender cleavage in Iran increased regularly every year. During this period, the growth of the gender cleavage in Iran has fluctuated between a minimum of 58% and a maximum of 60%. During this period the elimination of the gender cleavage in the issue of economic participation (maximum 44.4%) has been more than the others and in the issue of participation in political power (maximum 3.7%), it has been the lowest of all and throughout this period, lower than the global average. Although according to the above table, at least 97% of the gender cleavage in the field of health and 95% of the gender cleavage in the field of education have been resolved, and in these two areas we have had a better situation than the global average, but the drop in Iran's ranking can be seen in all four measured dimensions. In total, the changes in the gender cleavage index during the years 2006 to 2020 do not have a constant trend and show a kind of regression or at least stagnation from the middle of the last decade in the reduction of gender inequalities. It should be noted that in other international gender indicators, a similar

picture of the unfavorable situation of Iranian women can be seen.

The Growth Index of Women's Demands

One of the important indicators in knowing the degree of the gender cleavage activeness in society is to examine the demands and expectations of women at different levels. In 2014, field research was conducted by the Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs of the Presidential Administration, according to which, the most important demands and expectations of women in Iranian society are as described in the chart below:

In response to the question of whether you or any of the family members have encountered the problems mentioned above, the following were given priority: unemployment and employment issues (19%), discrimination and inequality (15%), Social security (10%), poverty and economic deprivation (10%), lack of freedom and right to choose (9%), compulsory dress code and hijab (7%), and violence and abuse against women (7%). When the issue is brought up at the level of objective and tangible experiences and women's encounters with deprivations, the main problem of women is "lack of freedom and the right to choose". This problem has a frequency of 26% in the total average among those women who said that they are facing problems (See: Geranpayeh, 2014).

In the same research, women's priorities and expectations of Mr. Rouhani's government are, respectively: economic

measures, law reform, cultural measures, ensuring women's social security, supporting women's social freedoms, reforming the executive structure, creating educational spaces and recreation and dealing with social harms. In this survey, nearly half of the women stated that the root of their problems is the culture and traditions of the society. There is another aspect of the root of problems in the existing legal system. Laws and legal systems, which are the legitimized form of current culture and customs, are also considered the root of problems by another section of women (See: Geranpayeh, 2014).
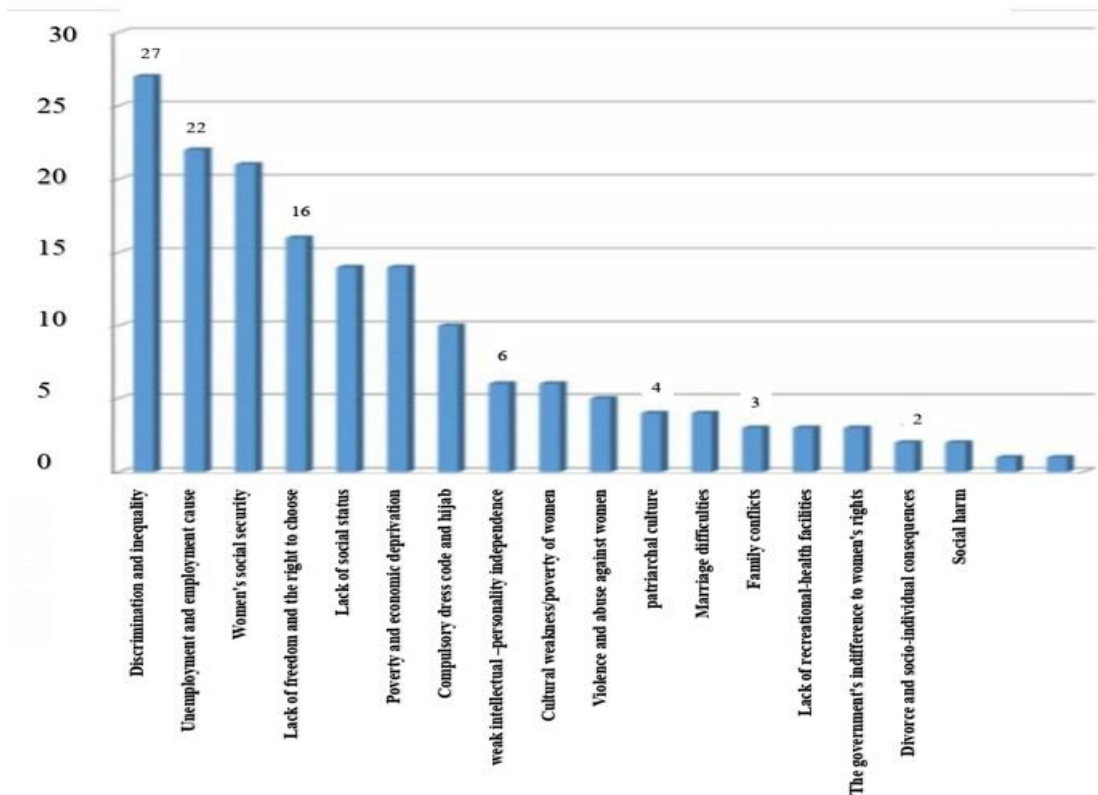

Figure 1: *Diagram of Women's Challenges*

From the above cases, it can be clearly understood that the issue of discrimination and inequality, including civil, legal, gender, educational, occupational, and income, is one of the main concerns of women; It can also be seen that the scope of women's needs and expectations from the government and policy-makers is beyond the international gender indicators and is not only directed to the four dimensions of economic participation, health, education and participation in political power, but also to the legal and cultural system. Also, due to the prominence of the employment issue in the relevant research findings, the

main challenge in establishing gender justice is not in the field of education or health, but in the field of political and economic participation.

Arenas of Gender Conflicts

With the victory of the Islamic Revolution, it was expected that the women who were active in the demonstrations would enjoy more rights and privileges, but over time, new restrictions were imposed on them. This meant that women had to organize new campaigns to achieve their natural rights; a battle that was not only from one voice in isolation but from millions of women who were among the supporters of the Islamic government. These women were increasingly moving away from their initial visions regarding the position of women and sometimes they had turned to deny their former views or new interpretations of gender equality (Tohidi, Azar 2003, p. 42). As a result, the political conflicts of the post-revolutionary period gained a gendered color. Below we will examine the different fields of this struggle.

Hijab

The first field of conflict based on gender in the first days after the victory of the revolution was the hijab issue. The women participating in the revolutionary process had heard many times from the revolutionaries that the hijab would not be compulsory in the Islamic government, but despite this, the first moves to make the Islamic veil compulsory for Iranian women began in March 1979, and in less than two years later, on 14 July 1981, entry of unveiled women into government offices was also prohibited. On March 19, 1981, women held a protest rally against the mandatory hijab in Tehran court, which turned into a conflict with the intervention of radical elements in favor of the mandatory hijab. In this rally, the women against the mandatory hijab declared that women perform their social duties and their conventional clothing should be left to their discretion according to customs and habits. In this gathering, Homa Natiq read the statement of the National Organization of Academics which it was stated: "We are not against the hijab, but we are against imposing it" (Etelaat, 19 Isfand 1978, p. 2).

With the arrival of 1979, the importance of the hijab issue decreased, but in July 1980, Ayatollah Khomeini, in a sharp speech, asked the then-president to quickly Islamize government offices. Following this speech, from the morning of July 14, women without headscarves were banned from entering government offices. In the month of Ramadan 1981, the regulations related to the month of Ramadan were announced, and according to that, public places were obliged to display a placard in front of their customers, on which it was written: "By the order of the Anti-Abomination Court, customers who do not observe Islamic appearances are not accepted" (Shojaei, 8/26/2009).

The widespread use of communication technologies in recent years and the

subsequent increase in social interactions have objected to the mandatory hijab being raised again at the top of social demands in Iran and becoming a kind of social movement. Even though the Islamic Republic has spent huge amounts of money to promote the hijab and to fight against the so-called "insufficient hijab", and by creating institutions to revive what is good and forbid what is bad, it has shown that it is not flexible in the field of voluntary clothing. But these efforts have stopped campaigns such as "Sneaky Freedoms", "White Wednesdays", "Girls of the Revolution Street", "No to Mandatory Hijab" and "March 8" which have many audiences and fans, and measures such as the use of frontal or glass cloaks and non-observance of hijab in the car, which is observed abundantly, to spread in the society; Even though these protestors have been warned through threats and warnings that their actions will not be considered only as non-observance of Islamic hijab and they will be accused of encouraging vandalism, but the protest movements continue.

Shariahization of Women's Rights

Even though in the pre-revolutionary period, steps were taken to secularize women's rights, and due to the efforts of some women's organizations, the family law was approved, in the post-revolutionary period, traditional religious laws gradually replaced the existing laws about the family, and women lost many of the rights that they had before the revolution. This provoked pro-

tests among women, which were reflected in the press. Amendments to the family law led to more confinement of women, and later the mandatory hijab law was passed (Tohidi, Azar 2012, p. 28).

In general, although the presence of women in various fields after the revolution had gone much further, the existing laws regarding their legal and social status remained far behind before the revolution. Women had to fight against the government and the laws enacted by it to get their minimum rights. Civil movements and conflicts in defense of women's rights were formed in protest against some social inequalities, but over time, these protests turned into currents that analyzed the inequality of women and feminine ideals in the Islamic society based on specific religious concepts and proposed specific strategies for it. Part of these struggles was carried out by women supporters of the revolution and within the government. For example, several women who entered the Islamic Council Parliament in different periods made efforts to organize women's rights to achieve gender justice, but these efforts did not reach the desired results, although limited successes were achieved. In the 6th parliament, a faction called women was formed. Its first action was to focus on eliminating the exclusion of girls from continuing their education abroad by using the government scholarship. In general, due to the prevalence of gender role attitudes, a small part of women had the opportunity to participate in political arenas, and this has been one

of the major challenges faced by women in the Islamic government. Even when women are present in important jobs, they have to go under the sword of gender perspective. This gender view has not only overshadowed the issue of women's employment, but also it has attacked their education, divorce rights, custody of children, and many of their civil and citizenship rights and has made them subject to a gender perspective. These discrimination against women were the source of gender political conflicts with the Islamic government at the legislative level (See: Hedayatnia, 2006).

One Million Signatures Campaign

Women's struggles to assert their rights and remove discrimination against them were also followed outside the government institutions by women's rights activists with all seriousness and in a completely civil manner. Some of the famous activists in this field were supposed to hold a rally on September 5th, 2006 in one of Tehran's cultural centers, but the doors of this public place were closed to them. This led to the rallying behind closed doors to launch a campaign to change the discriminatory laws, which later became known as the "One Million Signatures Campaign". This movement is one of the most well-known movements of Iranian women in recent years (Shojaei, 8/26/2009). Activists of the one million signature campaign called for the change of all discriminatory laws against women in the initial document of the campaign. Their priority is to change the

laws related to marriage and divorce, polygamy, the age of criminal responsibility, the right to citizenship, dowry, inheritance, testimony, and laws that facilitate honor killings. The members of the campaign were able to increase public awareness of women's rights and promote the idea of social equality in society so that the demand for gender equality was generally raised in society.

This campaign was in pursuit of legal reforms and raising the level of society's awareness of women's rights and promoting the concept of equality among all. Increasing dissatisfaction and a cleavage between society's expectations played a significant role in intensifying and provoking the activities of this campaign. The activists of this campaign were fighting for the implementation of the civil rights of women. Although they faced many problems in this way, they also achieved success. As a result of their efforts, some of the goals of this campaign were realized, such as the amendment of the inheritance law in 2007 and the amendment of the regulations related to dowry. (Tawana Website, 6/19/2019) But these successes were not liked by many and the activists of this campaign faced many challenges. In the political and civil atmosphere that governs Iranian society, with the birth of this campaign, a spark of hope was struck in the hearts of civil activists. Those who were looking for social reform in women's rights found this campaign a breakthrough but, many activist members of this campaign failed to continue for several reasons.

Women's Demand-oriented Electoral Coalition

2009 was a turbulent year in the field of Iranian politics. The protest against the result of the presidential election brought a huge number of people from different groups to the streets. Before the elections, different groups of women formed a coalition to come together to present their demands. This was the first independent and demand-oriented participation of women in election competitions. This coalition, regardless of the specific raising of women's demands, was also important in another aspect, and that was the bringing together of women with different intellectual tendencies; from religious to non-religious and secular. Maybe this cohabitation was formed for the first time in these dimensions. The level of participation of women in the political and cultural fields with the events of 2009 caused the women's movement to gain new momentum and find new opportunities to participate in social, political, and cultural affairs (Isna Website, 2010). Although the coalition of active women's groups brought them together at this point, the results of the 2009 election and the subsequent developments caused this convergence to fail and the efforts of the women's movement this year didn't achieve the desired result.

Challenge Against the Family Law Bill

In 2007, a bill titled "Family Protection" was prepared in the Judiciary and presented to the government. At that time, the governing board made changes to this bill, which caused the opposition of a wide range of lawyers, especially women lawyers. This year, this bill was submitted to the parliament and due to many protests, it remained in the parliament until 2012. This bill was one of the sensitive and controversial bills in the field of women's affairs in the years after the revolution and was repeatedly noticed and protested by the press and social activists. Activists of women's rights believed that this bill not only does not provide the goals mentioned in it and does not strengthen and consolidate the foundation of the family, but it will also have the opposite effect.

The draft of this bill in the parliament caused the protests against gender inequalities in Iran to once again become a vehicle for some political conflicts between different factions. Conservative currents defended the traditional discourse of women's rights, and modernist currents defended the egalitarian discourse of women's rights. According to the latter group, Iranian society has been dominated by the patriarchal system for many years and the need for change in this situation is to amend the laws, values, and cultural perspective of the society. As a result of their efforts, the issues related to women's rights became a critical and dynamic trend in society and directed the case reforms to the expansion of equality in different fields and criticism of Islamic culture. After many amendments and adjustments, this bill was finally approved in March 2012 and was also ap-

proved by the Guardian Council of Constitution (See: Mohseni, 2018). Although this law did not fully fulfill the demands of women's activists, as a result of their efforts, positive points were included in it and showed that achieving the ideal of equality in political and social rights in Iran has a long way to go.

Conclusion

What we followed in this article was how the activation of the gender cleavage in the post-Islamic Revolution period affected political conflicts in Iran. First, from a theoretical point of view, we discussed that the basis for the formation of political conflicts in society is social cleavages. With the activation of social cleavages, the ground is provided for the awareness, organization, and political action of the forces around the cleavages, and as a result of the competition and struggle to acquire resources and privileges, a conflict is gradually formed. From the constitutional movement onwards, as a result of Iranian relations with the West, various social divisions, including the gender cleavage, were activated in Iran. The Islamic Revolution brought the gender cleavage to a new stage by granting the Shari'a permission for the presence of traditional women in politics and society. The atmosphere of empathy in the early years after the Islamic revolution's victory created hopes for the realization of the ideal of legal equality in the field of women's affairs, but the consolidation of Islamic ideology blocked the way to the realiza-tion of this ideal. The process of modernization and the spread of modern social media in Iran made women more aware of their situation and its comparison to their peers in other societies and paved the way for the struggle for their rights. The analysis of international statistics shows the deepening of the gender cleavage in Iran, and this points to the prospect of more conflicts for the realization of women's political and social rights in the field of Iranian politics. From various campaigns on social networks to the open street protests of the girls of the Revolution; there are signs of the organization of public civil campaigns. This way of protest has always caused conflict between women activists and the government. Consequently, in addition to harming the legitimacy of Iran's political system, such a situation also creates the ground for exerting international pressure against Iran under the pretext of human rights.

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