THE NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT IN PRESENT-DAY IRAN

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Classical and new social movements

Social conflicts are considered as a context to examine occurrences of socio-economic changes and as a common issue in social life. On the other hand, social conflicts are analyzed as a gap in social life and pathological phenomenon. Classical sociologists do not present a special theory about social movements; however we can derive some ideas from their books.

Karl Marx adheres to the theory of class movements, while Emile Durkheim considers anomic movements, and Max Weber considers movements that are formed only by a charismatic leader. (Weber: 1988:179) The only exception is Pareto who considers all the movements as a sign of non-logical behaviour. Pareto's opinion that all movements are based upon actions not rooted in logic is due to his limited view in wide spectral description of behaviour.

These political philosophers' ideas are under domination of their more general fundamental global view, they look from more or less value point of view toward social movements, with the exception of Marx and to some extent Weber; they look with scepticism toward social movements. Such cynicism may be attributed to their limitation in fundamental definition of social movements, which has emerged from this issue. The key argument is that the "value point of view explanation" put forth by Marx, Weber, and Pareto cannot satisfactorily explain social movements; therefore, new theory is needed. (Aeron, Raymont: 1998:189)

Each "scientific" systematic discussion about social movements–like all other social phenomena–needs more or less extended studies to identify important factors in the creation and evolution of social movements.

Despite the difficulties that a scientific, comprehensive study in social sciences faces, obvious and severe limitations are to be expected. The efforts put forth by classical political philosophers can no longer explain the phenomena of social movements. Undeniably, further efforts of sociologists will have roots in the original pioneers of the subject, the classical sociologists. However, it is imperative that new theories depart from the "value point of view explanation." The vast part of social and political thinkers' ideas in the twentieth century has been formed from basic concepts and insights that pioneers of sociological thoughts first issued; such a progression should be viewed as natural, and the synthesis resulting from the use of old concepts and new ideas is important. The following section will examine the new social movement theory and discuss the new social movements in Iran.

New social movement theorists aim to explain social phenomena beginning in the 1970's. This examination often coincided simultaneously with student and women movements in 1967 and 1968. Before this date, the theorists attempted to explain social movements, but often they considered it under more general concepts and theories or examined them through a narrow lens like Marx, Weber, and Pareto.

The emergence of a great diversity of sociological theorists is to such an extent that we cannot easily classify and compare them. Despite the challenge that classification represents, some systematic classification is possible.

Theories of social movements can be categorized into three main viewpoints. The standard of categorization of these points of view is the difference and similarity in social situations, collective action, group identity and behaviour. In one category, theories that explain social movements as emotional behaviour due to environment pressure are placed because they represent a collective behavioural trend. The second category is composed of theories which recognize a social movement's nature as political process and hold the rational for existence in the social movement themselves. These types of theories are categorized separately because they exist as an institutional trend. The last category explains theories that arose from existing identity in civil society and the goals of these movements towards changing civil society. The third category is identified as a civil society trend and is separate and unique from the other two categories.

New social movements are distinct from other movements, because they have the following features:

1. Non–instrumental: there are social movements that express a universal interest and concern. Non-instrumental social movements often protest in order to show a moral status, not one that is representative of any direct interest from a specific social group.

2. New social movements represent the civil society more than the state.

A: These movements are centralized bureaucratic structures and are in favor of changing the public opinion, not changing the government's institutions.

B. These movements focus more on aspects like culture, ways of life and participation in politics, and are in favour of symbolic protest rather than claiming socio-economic rights.

3. These movements are organized in informal, "open-minded," and flexible ways. At least in some contexts they avoid hierarchy, bureaucracy, and even occasionally the requirement for a membership.

4. These movements strongly rely on mass media. The movements speak about their demands through them. This way their protests have been shown and their thoughts have been expressed effectively by capturing the thoughts and feelings of the public. (Scott: 1992:148)

Iran's new social movement

In the contemporary society of Iran, two substantial movements can be identified. The first significant social movement is a popular, religious, and anti-American movement that is Iranian in nature.

This movement originated from the large and popular movement of Islam Revolution (1977-1978) and has all four components required to make it a true movement. First, this movement was formed before the Islamic Revolution as a result of the gap between the government and people. The Government before the Revolution was not based on popular election or a voted electorate; the populace was therefore not civically minded and was not aware that the power of the government resided in the populace or that the government belonged to themselves. After the Islamic Revolution's victory and the establishment of the Islamic Republic, this movement was continued to widen the gap or conflict between Iran and America. In this mode of thinking, Iran is

considered to be an oppressed country and America is regarded as a ruthless, criminal country.

Second, before the Revolution, descriptive and normative groups helped activists and supporters of revolution in thinking. Therefore, revolutionaries understood why the Pahlavi reign is unjust (*Taghuti*) and why we should fight against it. After the Islamic Revolution's victory, the conflict with the government–as the Pahlavi reign ended and the Islamic Republic was established–was reconfigured and interpreted as a conflict with America.(Masis:2005:84)

Iraq's attack upon Iran during The Eight Year War was significant because the power to fight Iraq resided in the people; therefore, people began to realize the power they held. The third feature is that before the Revolution, organizations, clergy, intellectual and students followed the ideals of the Revolutionary discourse. Yet, on the threshold of revolution, the most widespread and important organizations of this movement were popular-religious organizations and networks of religious committees in mosques and Hosseinieh, and homes that were supporters of ideals of revolution led under the leadership of combatant clergymen.

After the Islamic Revolution's victory, these vast religious networks spread and grew in popularity. Other revolutionary organizations, like SEPAH, BASIJ, and JEHAD, government organizations, and the Prime Minister, *Rejahii,* were also conscripted as part of the popular, anti-American movement.

The forth feature, occurring one year before the Revolution, is protest, which manifested in Iran as the protest of millions against the Pahlavi reign. These protests were often public, occurring in the streets and widely visible to the world. After the Revolution, this protest against America in all its manifestations, repeated in the streets of Iran's cities continuously. The power of this popular movement was the same power that revolutionary leaders could utilize to destroy the Shah's reign. A power conflict, especially resulting from two different social groups or movements in conflict with each other will ultimately result in one group overcoming the other. The owners of a revolution can claim leadership once the majority of the populace agrees with their cause or social group. The consolidation of power in the majority is a common result of this conflict. The consolidation of power that usually happens after a conflict or revolution can be seen in Iran. The establishment of the Islamic Republic, resisting Iraq's attack during the Eight Year War are examples of this power. Another phenomenon of the Revolution related to the consolidation of power was that controversial and populist characters who participated in the Revolution were allowed to rise to positions of political importance. Some argue that this offered a degree of continuity and support. On the other hand, post- Revolution, the popular movement faced some fundamental problems. The movement was deprived of charismatic leadership following Imam Khomeini's death. Khomeini represented a special and exceptional connection with millions of interested people. Such a connection was the most important power base for the popular movement.

The second problem was that following the Revolution there was not a common enemy like Shah or Saddam Hussein, which resulted in the unity of millions during the Revolution. A common enemy is an important factor in a coalescent, political group.

The efforts for creating an enemy after war (like cultural invasion of the USA) did not work so effectively, as the Shah or Saddam Hussein had unity as an

enemy. Third, movement leaders were simultaneously both leaders of the popular movement, religious or Islamic. Consequently, the combination of these issues represented a fundamental problem for the movement.

Since movements have protest role, the role of the movement becomes confused when the movement takes on a governmental function. Along these lines, a function of the government is to restore order and justice, which presents a challenge to a government with roots in a protest, social movement.

Reform movement of Iran is the second major social movement that has features of the new social movement theories.

In May 23, 1997 (Second *Khordad)* democracy advocates utilized civil society to protest instead of the mass society or the populace. On the national level by electing Mohammad Khatami, (the candidate who was the main rival of people of political privilege.) as president by using civil society support. (Razzaghy : 2008:4)

The second *Khordad* movement worked to support democracy mechanisms by solving problems that popular movement and Islamic Republic faced.

The emergence of the democratic movement did not rely on the common support of mass society or the populace, but relied on the free elections and support of civil society. Although this phenomenon was not compatible with the main idea of a democratic government, the use of civil society was a helpful phenomenon for the movement and became important for the state in the domestic and international arena.

This movement invited people to reach their citizenship rights through participation in election and participation in civil institutions, political parties and independent media for a specific purpose, participation in the government; therefore it did need heroic leadership and extensive planning of goals.

The second *Khordad* movement was intended to consolidate achievement and power of the revolutionary and popular movements in the form of realization of republic mechanisms and freedom by strengthening democratic institutions through civil society.

Over the past two decades, deep changes have happened within Iranian society. These changes have caused social mobility and mental and cultural dynamics in social groups and different social movements, such as movements of students, women, and labour. These diverse social movements have appeared in the Iranian society, and each of these movements has altered throughout its existence. Common features of all social movements in Iran are that all movements attempt to redefine public concepts, relationships, and issues. Through this process, the social movements' goal is to affect the power centre and influence change.

Conclusion

There are some factors that play a role in the dynamic mobility of the new social movements in Iran. One of the factors is the appearance of new social movements. The creation of new social movements with protest as the ultimate goal is a residual effect of revolutionary emotion. This emotion can put distance between the ideological vision and the public's issues of community development by becoming an agenda for privatization and suspended economic policies.

The next factor for a new social movement in Iran is the reformist discourse and political liberalization policy "between" 1997-2005. This period was a chance for expressing social-political demands of social groups that were suppressed.

Another factor in the acceleration of new dynamic social movements in Iran was the international development of democratization and unprecedented increase of international communications.

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ՄՈՀԱՄՄԱԴ ՀՈՍԵՅՆ ԷՍՄԱՅԵԼԻ ՍԱՆԳԱՐԻ (ՄԱՍԻՍ) - *Նոր սոցիալական շարժումն արդի Իրանում -* Հոդվածում ներկայացված են սոցիալական շարժումները բնութագրող սոցիոլոգիական որոշ տեսական մոտեցումներ, ինչպես նաև արդի Իրանում տեղի ունեցող սոցիալական գործընթացների և շարժումների մասին դատողություններ: Հեղինակը դիտարկում է Իրանում սոցիալական շարժումների հիմնական ալիքները, քննարկում դրանց առանձնահատկությունները, արդյունքները և հեռանկարները:

МОХАММАД ХОССЕЙН ЭСМАЕЙЛИ САНГАРИ (МАСИС) – *Новое социальное движение в современном Иране.* – В статье изложены некоторые теоретические подходы к описанию социальных движений, а также суждения автора о происходящих ныне в Иране социальных процессах. Кроме того, прослеживаются основные волны социальных движений и их последствия, анализируются особенности социального движения в современном Иране и его перспективы.