

***The Impact of Contemporary Social Movements (Student Movement) on  
the Emergence of Democracy (1997-2017)***

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**Abstract**

The Iranian student movement stands as a leading advocate for democracy, playing a crucial role in advancing democratic discourse in Iran. Known for its influence on civil society, it represents diverse national demands and strives to achieve and deepen democracy through a postmodern approach. This research examines the factors impacting democratization in Iran by focusing on specific societal traits alongside global democratic principles. Using the theories of Alain Touraine and Alberto Melucci, it creates a framework for understanding contemporary movements, identifying factors that either support or hinder democratization. Key elements of this study include analyzing the positive and negative influences on democracy, examining obstacles that hinder democratic progress, and exploring methods to enhance democratic practices. A central question addressed is how the student movement has shaped Iran's democratic discourse. This historical-analytical research concludes that the student movement has effectively used its accumulated experiences to push for democratic ideals, contributing to a national consensus on democratic governance. The movement's impact is evident in fostering civil participation, transparency, and accountability, which are essential for a peaceful, cost-effective democratic transition. Through its efforts to build discourse and engage the public, the student movement has promoted democracy as a path aligned with the people's right to choice, thereby supporting a shift toward a more inclusive, democratic society in Iran.

Keywords: Student Movement, Democratic Systems, Contemporary Movements

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## Introduction

To understand the influence of student movements on democratization in Iran, one must consider both universal democratic principles and the specific cultural, social, and political characteristics of Iranian society. Since the establishment of universities in Iran, student movements have acted as prominent advocates of democracy, especially since the Islamic Revolution. Their efforts in pushing for democracy are rooted in intellectual thought and the dissemination of ideas, evolving from being affiliated with political parties to embodying new social movements as defined in postmodern theory.

## Research Background

Since Iran's university system began in the 1940s, extensive research has explored the Iranian student movement. Two significant theses highlight different aspects of its evolution. Hadi Nakhaei's 2011 doctoral dissertation, "The Evolution of the Iranian Student Movement: Process and Outcome (1925-1980)," examines the stages of the movement's emergence, growth, and decline, proposing that its identity has been shaped by Iran's political landscape, causing fluctuations within the movement.

Taleb Jalilian's 2014 master's thesis, "Power and the Rise and Fall of the Student Movement in Iran (1953-1997)," investigates the student movement's shifting relationship with political power. Jalilian argues that the movement's proximity to or distance from political power influenced its success and decline, analyzing the movement's approaches before and after the Revolution and during key events such as the Second of Khordad in 1997.

## Theoretical Foundations and Framework

"Every political discourse contains principles and rules that determine political behaviors. Discursive changes are transformations in these behaviors. The political structure is shaped by discourse, and when discourses change, the structures also transform and take on new forms" (Bashiriyeh, 2006, p. 63).

This research is based on the theories of those scholars who have examined new social movements and accepted the student movement as a new movement within the framework of the postmodern shift, particularly as a cultural discourse. Specifically, this study draws on the theories of Alain Touraine and Alberto Melucci as its theoretical framework. Their views, grounded in the "postmodern paradigm shift" and with a focus on cultural discourse centered around "identity," are organized around four key principles:

**First Principle:** The identity of the movement – Who are the supporters of the movement? In this study, the focus is on the student movement.

**Second Principle:** Who is the enemy of the movement? The student movement, for its historical significance, is positioned against "authoritarianism."

**Third Principle:** What is the movement's goal or destination? If the student movement succeeds, what historical narrative does it seek to impose? This movement is centered around the concept of "freedom."

**Fourth Principle:** The understanding of the enemy – Analyzing the commonalities and differences between the movement and its adversary. The student movement's commonality is based on the central theme of "justice," while its differences are defined by the central theme of "totalitarianism."

"New social movements fight over identity. These struggles are efforts to compel others to accept things that the members themselves believe in; they fight to affirm what others deny." (Melucci, 1996, p. 46)

This study uses the frameworks of sociologists Alain Touraine and Alberto Melucci to analyze how the Iranian student movement contributes to democratic discourse. Both theorists highlight the transformation of social movements in the postmodern age, where the focus has shifted from traditional economic or class conflicts to struggles for identity and cultural autonomy. Touraine's four principles for understanding social movements — movement identity, opposition to authoritarianism, goal of freedom, and a fight against totalitarianism — are applied here to clarify the aims and opposition faced by the Iranian student movement.

### **Alain Touraine (1925–)**

Alain Touraine's work emphasizes a shift from traditional class-based social structures to societies driven by knowledge and information, where technocrats hold control rather than the capitalists of industrial society. In this context, social movements are less about economic exploitation and more about establishing "historicity" — a group's power to shape the future. Central to his theory is the "subject," which represents individual agency and consciousness within social movements, striving for self-determination against oppressive structures, as seen in the Iranian student movement's resistance to authoritarianism.

Touraine's journey into sociology began with firsthand experience working alongside miners in France, which informed his understanding of worker struggles. He later studied under Georges Friedman and collaborated with sociologists like Talcott Parsons. His focus turned to social movements in the 1960s, inspired by events like the French student protests of May 1968. Over the decades, he has developed a model that examines movements through institutions, actors, and communication, establishing him as a significant critic of modernity and an expert on "new social movements" worldwide.

According to Touraine, movements like those of the 1960s in Europe and the Americas marked a new era in which traditional tactics and demands gave way to cultural and identity-focused struggles. He coined the term "new social movements" in 1968 to describe these identity-driven movements, which he argues became necessary to counter the impacts of industrialization and authoritarian control. Unlike Marxist views of class struggle for the abolition of property, Touraine views these movements as battles for historical agency rather than economic restructuring. He believes that as industrial society has evolved, so too have the axes of conflict, moving away from class divisions to conflicts around knowledge, identity, and subjectivity.

Touraine's concept of the subject is vital to understanding these movements. He defines subjectivity as the individual's pursuit of autonomy and dignity, which requires a struggle against forces that deny their right to self-expression. Each subject must develop an awareness of their individual and collective identity, often opposing societal structures in pursuit of rights and freedom. Touraine also emphasizes the commonalities across movements, especially their shared struggle to align global citizenship with local cultural dynamics and power relations.

## **Alberto Melucci**

Melucci builds on this postmodern analysis, focusing on the way new social movements create collective identities through shared values and struggles. He asserts that these movements resist the encroachment of state and market forces on individual identity and privacy, emphasizing the significance of “floating, invisible networks” in transmitting ideas and solidarity. Unlike traditional resource mobilization theories, Melucci's work centers on the symbolic and cultural politics that underpin these movements. His perspective aligns with Touraine's in viewing the Iranian student movement as one fundamentally focused on identity rather than material or class interests.

Both theorists suggest that these student-led movements, as part of the global wave of democratization in the postmodern era, serve as agents for individual empowerment and collective identity. They resist oppressive state power and seek to create spaces for individual autonomy. By promoting democratic ideals, the Iranian student movement exemplifies a new social movement that thrives on cultural influence and intellectual advocacy rather than traditional political structures.

In sum, the Iranian student movement embodies the postmodern social movement model, advocating democracy through cultural and identity-driven activism. It serves as a progressive force that leverages intellectual discourse and identity politics to challenge authoritarianism and promote democratization, reflecting the transformation of social movements globally in the knowledge and information era.

## **Influential Factors on the Discourse of Democratization**

Every democratic and rational force seeking to influence democracy must understand a range of factors that facilitate the democratization process. In the transition towards deepening democracy, several opportunities, situations, and processes exist in the modern world that create extensive opportunities for influencing the democratization process. These factors include:

1. *Urban Economic Development*
2. *Expansion of Public Education*
3. *Communication Networks*
4. *Emergence of New Social Movements*
5. *Transparency*
6. *Expansion of the Middle Class*
7. *Strengthening Civil Society*
8. *Cultural Exchange*
9. *Democratization*
10. *Globalization*
11. *Division of Labor on a Global Scale*
12. *The Era of Democratic Transition*

## **Factors Influencing the Process of Democratization**

The following section further elaborates on these factors:

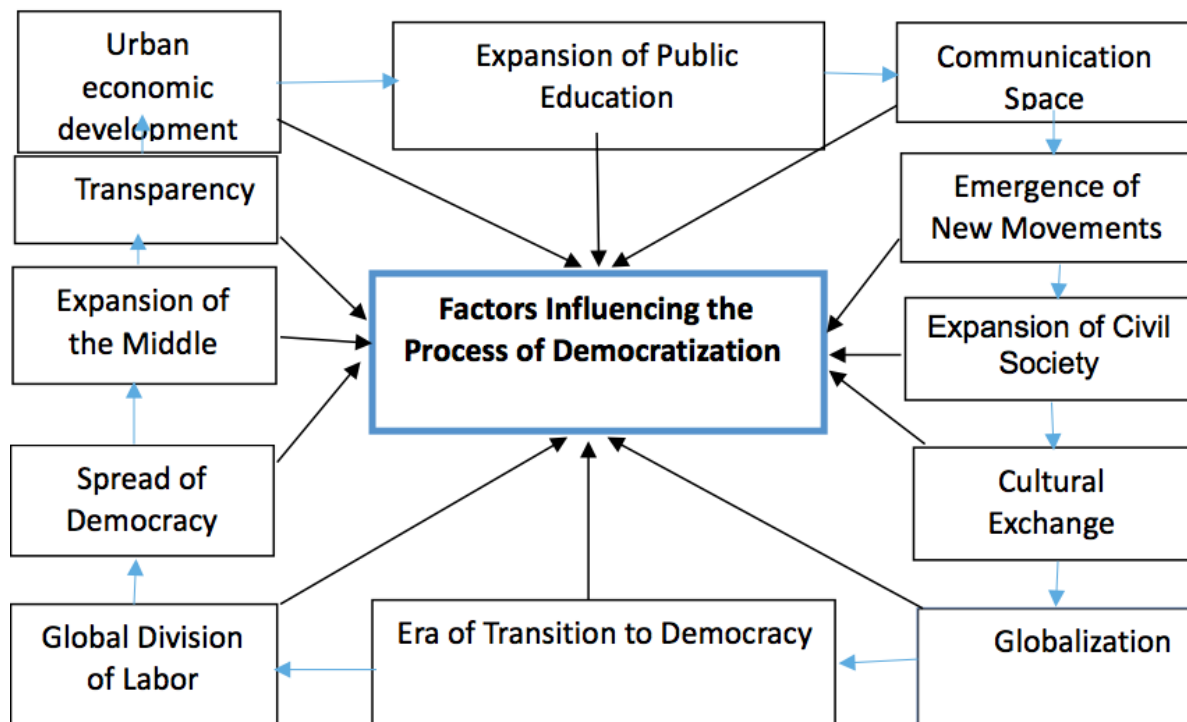


Diagram 1: Factors Influencing the Process of Democracy Seeking (Source: Author)

## The Era of Democratic Transition

Democracy, as one of the most common forms of governance in the modern world, has undergone several phases. Although the historical origins of democracy date back to ancient Greece before the birth of Christ, in the modern era, democracy has gone through different stages. While there may not be universal agreement on these stages, most scholars acknowledge that democracy has evolved over time. The first wave of representative democracy began with the American and French revolutions and continued until World War II. After World War II, a new wave of democratization emerged, though in a bipolar world and amidst anti-authoritarian movements, this wave did not achieve significant victories. Political changes and regime transformations during the transitional phases often favored authoritarian regimes.

## Globalization

The terms “globalization” and “globalism” have significant differences that must be clarified when discussing the modern world. "Globalization" refers to the natural process of global interaction and interdependence between nations and governments, driven by mutual needs and global institutions, with the weight of responsibility resting on international organizations. In contrast, "globalism" is rooted in the aggressive policies of global capitalists, particularly the neoconservatives, who strive to impose their own will and accelerate the process of global capitalism on other nations (Bashiriyeh, 2007, p. 76).

What this paper considers is "globalization," not "globalism." Globalization is not solely influenced by capital; it is also heavily shaped by the cultures of developed societies (Bashiriyeh, 2015: 97). In short, the role of international organizations, developed societies, and the establishment of security for investment are among the most effective factors in expanding democracy through globalization.

## **Division of Global Labor**

The communication revolution and the vast array of facilities have greatly expanded intellectual and material exchanges due to globalization, significantly enhancing the division of labor on a global scale. This means that the production of industrial goods is no longer confined to a single country (Colin Turpin, 2006, p. 67). Moreover, countries' "comparative advantages" in producing industrial and agricultural goods and their "mutual dependence" facilitate the global division of labor. If human and natural resources are managed properly, this can raise living standards and, as a result, strengthen the democratization process (Dahl et al., 2013, p. 214). A quick glance at the ASEAN countries, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and the Philippines, supports this perspective. These investments are crucial to the growth of the middle class and the expansion of democracy in various sectors.

## **Dissemination of Democracy**

Countries with similar socio-economic and cultural structures can often spread democracy to each other once one country establishes it. In modern times, the widespread wave of democratization and the establishment of democratic systems, especially after the collapse of the socialist bloc in Eastern Europe, has pushed many governments to adopt democratic systems. This provides a fertile ground for democracy advocates to positively influence the democratization process (Tavakoli, 2011, p. 96). For instance, after the military coup in Portugal, democracy spread to countries like Greece and Spain. In the late 1970s, the democratic wave even reached Latin America, which is another example of the dissemination theory in practice.

## **Urban Economic Development**

The democratic system is inherently tied to modernity, and modernity is meaningless without the growth of capitalism and the expansion of urbanization. As a result, modernity and the bourgeoisie are intertwined. The lifestyle and production methods of the bourgeoisie—mass production and distribution—can only occur within the framework of urbanization (Ghiyoori & Jafari, 2008, p. 214). "Lipset" associates democracy with urban economic development and believes that the most widespread relationship between political systems and other aspects of society is that democracy correlates with the level of economic development. This implies that wealthier nations have a greater chance of maintaining democracy (Afkhami, 2009). Therefore, one of the main demands of urban dwellers is the establishment of a transparent, orderly, and law-abiding system to protect their rights. The collapse of the feudal system is closely tied to the decline of rural life, while a healthy urban life necessitates close communication, legal regulation, and cultural production (Abrahamian, 2015, p. 210). Thus, the need for and experience of living under a legal system are fundamental to the democratization process.

## **Expansion of the Middle Class**

Democracy and democratic systems are products of the social classes that emerged in the modern and postmodern eras, particularly the middle class. The growth of the middle class, influenced by the global division of labor, has created new conditions that demand a system capable of meeting the needs of this class, which inherently leads to the deepening of democracy (Bashiriyeh, 2007, p. 99). Economic development has a significant impact on

social structures, especially the expansion of the middle class. When the middle class grows and strengthens socially, it enters the political sphere and adopts a peaceful approach to democratization, occupying a central role in advancing the process.

### **Communication Networks**

In the modern era, due to the capitalist mode of production, the way individuals interact has fundamentally changed. The emergence of virtual communication spaces has drastically altered how people organize themselves in their fight for maximum democracy. In this newly created space, individuals can engage with others in society and converge through new movements (Jalaiepour, 2010, p. 32). Today, information dissemination and education through virtual spaces have become commonplace. People no longer rely solely on closed party systems or education through party newsletters and bulletins (Rezaei et al., 2015, p. 81). Virtual spaces play a unique role in accelerating communication, enhancing transparency, and enabling quick coordination. This space has also reduced the significance of political parties and organizations compared to the past, giving virtual spaces a dominant role in promoting and advancing democratic environments. As such, virtual spaces are one of the primary tools for organizing new movements, including the student movement, and for creating a more democratic society.

### **Transparency**

In his theories, Foucault speaks of the "panopticon," a concept that refers to the ability of power structures to monitor and observe everything. Today's world is a panopticon, where everything is visible in all areas (Zarei, 2015, p. 217). Civil society is no exception when it comes to the pursuit of democracy. With the help of technology, information, and virtual spaces, it can shed light on political affairs and illuminate the path toward transparency in ongoing matters. One of democracy's primary goals is to create a transparent government and environment in most institutions of power (Ravanestan, 2017, p. 89). Authoritarian and totalitarian regimes typically resist transparency. They try to keep most critical issues out of the public eye, preferring secrecy and ruling from the shadows (Estowar, 2017, p. 66). One of the main objectives of new social movements is to bring transparency to these darkened areas, as transparency is a cornerstone for advancing democracy.

### **Expansion of Public Education**

Education is one of the most fundamental rights of individuals in any society. The expansion of public education has significantly influenced the growth of the middle class. In addition to expanding the middle class, education is a core foundation for empowering various social classes and one of the main goals of new movements striving for advanced democracy. In the democratization process, educated individuals, elites, and democracy advocates are the main sources of influence (Saie & Akbarzadeh, 2015, p. 59). Available evidence suggests that education and higher levels of learning are essential prerequisites for achieving democracy in the modern world.

In Iran, public education began to grow, especially from the 1960s, and after the Islamic Revolution, it saw a massive increase in numbers. Higher education has become one of the main goals for every family in Iran, and it serves as the primary source for producing elites in all levels of society (Jalaiepour, 2010, p. 23). Although the educational system in Iran has faced many challenges and limitations, including problems in the quality of higher education,

the widespread enthusiasm for education at all levels of society and the millions of students pursuing higher education serve as essential building blocks for a developed and democracy-seeking society.

### **Emergence of New Social Movements**

New social movements are key actors in influencing the democratization process and fostering democracy at its fullest. Democracy is incomplete without the presence and emergence of these movements, which, in a dialectical relationship, not only shape democracy but also strengthen its core pillars. Movements such as the student movement, civil rights movements, the women's movement, environmental movements, peace movements, anti-racism movements, and indigenous rights movements all play an active role in social and political life today. Their mutual interaction and influence on each other significantly contribute to the democratization process (Naghbi Mofrad, 2011, p. 195). New social movements, with their civil society orientation, collaborate in the pursuit of empowering society, and their activities and goals are interconnected and closely aligned. By working together, they enhance each other's capabilities and collectively promote democratic goals.

### **Expansion of Civil Society**

The main foundation of advanced democracy is based on the lessons learned from the human experience of civil society and civil institutions. Therefore, developed countries that possess a strong civil society enjoy more democratic governance and society. Learning from these developed societies, transitional societies have realized that establishing a sustainable democracy requires empowering civil society (Nash, 2013, p. 17). Creating a strong civil society depends on several factors, including establishing democratic civil institutions. Educating the public to foster civil harmony and encouraging national consensus and demand-based actions are essential components of civil society growth (Milani, 2013, p. 189).

Civil society institutions such as cultural, sports, social, literary, and professional organizations—like labor unions, employee organizations, and trade unions—are key players in strengthening democracy. These civil institutions are vital for deepening democracy.

### **Cultural Exchange**

Habermas argues that the colonization of the social life-world occurs through the government and capital, a result of the excessive growth of "instrumental rationality," which sidelines "communicative rationality" (Tessler, 2016, P. 34). The development of instrumental rationality, manifesting as unchecked capitalism, has resulted in "incomplete modernity" (Ghiyoori & Jafari, 2008, p. 214). Opportunities for close cultural exchange and the transfer of democratic experiences in developed societies, both culturally and materially, are significant factors influencing democratization and the establishment of democratic governments. Today, the cultural exchange and transfer of experiences in establishing democracy have reached such levels that activists and advocates for democracy have access to all necessary tools.

The basic and influential factor in transferring democratic knowledge is "communicative action." Through communicative action, it is possible to address deficiencies and correct



them. Since democracy-seeking culture has become the dominant culture worldwide, the dominance of democratic thought makes it easier for countries, especially transitional ones like Iran, to establish democratic systems.

### Obstacles to the Democratization Process

The examination of economic, social, and cultural factors, and the comparison and contrast between democratic and other forms of government, alongside the obstacles and catalysts that influence the democratization process, has long been a topic of interest for political science scholars and philosophers. While democracy is considered the "preferred system" by most people globally in the modern world, many existing structures and rulers, due to conflicts of interest, place numerous obstacles in the path of democratic progress. In other words, the establishment of a democratic government and the realization of democracy's goals require several prerequisites. In the absence of these prerequisites, achieving democracy and establishing a democratic government becomes impossible.

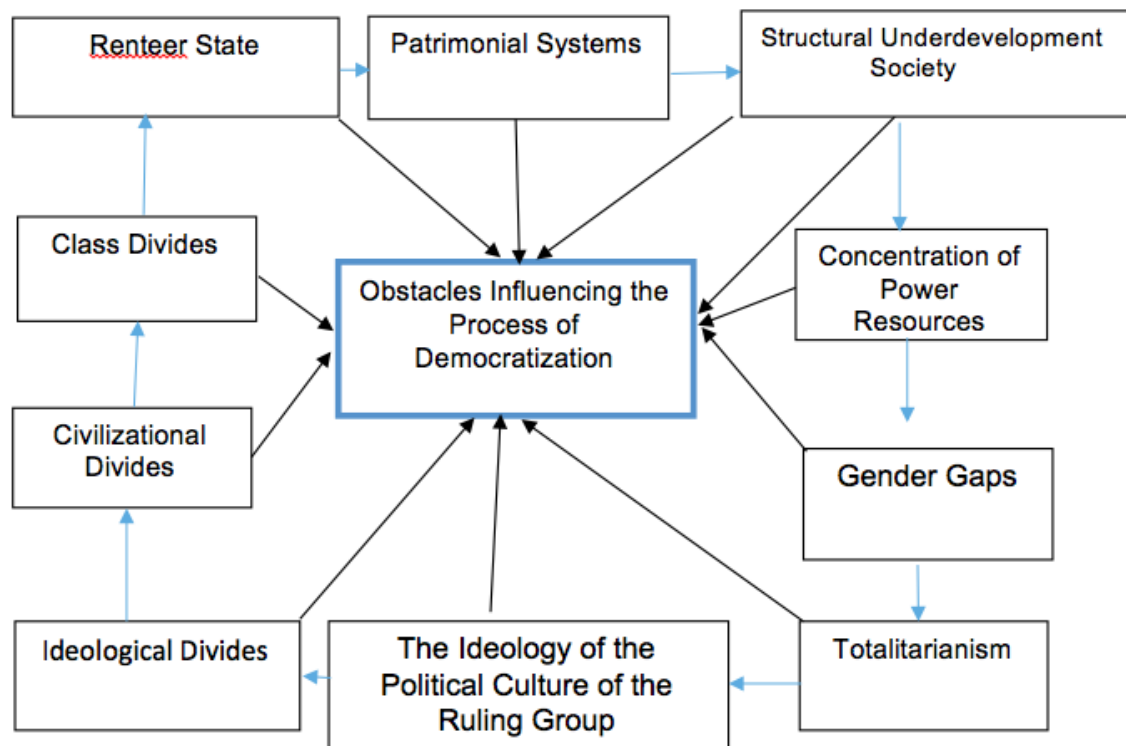


Diagram 2: Factors Affecting the Process of Democracy Seeking (Source: Author)

#### Key Obstacles to Democratization:

1. *Structural Underdevelopment of Society*
2. *Patrimonial Systems*
3. *Rentier State (Resource Dependency)*
4. *Class Divides*
5. *Concentration of Power*
6. *Civilizational Divides*
7. *Totalitarianism*
8. *Authoritarian Political Culture*
9. *Ideological Divides*
10. *Gender Divides*

## **Structural Underdevelopment of Society**

Democratic governments historically emerged with the rise of the bourgeoisie and the development of liberal ideologies in the 18th century, following the Renaissance, leading to the establishment of representative democracy in a few countries (Meydari, 2005, p. 277). Although capitalist countries served as models for other nations, these same capitalist countries became significant obstacles to democratization in developing countries at certain points in history. Establishing a democratic system requires a specific level of economic and social development. Without development, maintaining and advancing democratic systems becomes impossible. A prime example of this is the patriarchal system and the Asian mode of production that once dominated Iran. The close relationship between feudalism and the patrimonial system was a major obstacle to development and the establishment of democracy. The constitutional revolution and democratic movements aimed to eradicate this anti-development system, preparing society for democratization, a goal that was largely realized with the Islamic Revolution.

## **Patrimonial Systems**

Patrimonialism, also referred to as paternalistic or ethnic governance, was a dominant system in many pre-modern and modern countries. It was one of the greatest barriers to the establishment of democratic systems. In Iran, the patrimonial and ethnic system, particularly after the Mongol invasion, became entrenched and remained the dominant form of governance until the Constitutional Revolution (Motaharnia, 2005, p. 159). Although the Constitutional Revolution and the drafting of the Constitution shook the foundations of this system, foreign interventions and the underdeveloped nature of society prevented its complete victory. The persistence of patrimonial thought, from the Constitutional Revolution until the Islamic Revolution, remained a significant obstacle to establishing democracy in Iran.

## **Rentier State in Iran**

A rentier state is a government that generates revenue from the sale of natural resources, such as oil, rather than from the taxation of citizens or organized production. Iran's government is an example of a rentier state, where income is derived primarily from the sale of oil rather than from taxes (Ghiyoori & Jafari, 2008, p. 180). Many scholars argue that one of the main reasons for the failure of democratization in Iran is its dependence on oil revenues. Since such governments do not rely on citizens to generate revenue, they are less accountable to them and often lack transparency. This dynamic makes it difficult for rentier states to embrace democracy, and in many cases, they actively oppose it.

## **Concentration of Power**

Democracy is inherently opposed to the concentration of power because it hinders political development. Democracy cannot thrive without political development, and anything that obstructs development is an obstacle to deepening democracy (Milbrath & Goel, 2016, p. 70). Some scholars in transitioning societies argue that centralized power and a strong state are necessary for growth and development, and in these contexts, a powerful central government is the primary driver of progress. Others advocate for the empowerment of civil society and argue that political development is only possible through civic participation, expanding political spaces, and decentralizing power (Madani, 2015, p. 137). Ultimately, the

sustainability and endurance of democracy depend on distributing power and preventing its concentration. Separation of powers, decentralization, and efforts to resist authoritarianism are all critical to establishing democracy.

## **Ethnic Divides**

The existence of irreconcilable social and ethnic divides within a society prevents consensus on political objectives, hinders national cohesion, and obstructs the frameworks necessary for participation, competition, and national unity. Ethnic divides themselves do not necessarily threaten democracy, but when these divides are politicized and lead to antagonistic conflicts, they become serious obstacles to democratic development (Estowar, 2016, p. 130). If ethnic divides are neglected by governments and political elites, they can transform from latent threats into actual barriers that prevent the establishment and advancement of democracy.

## **Civilizational Divides**

One of the most significant fractures in Iranian society is the civilizational divide, which manifests in the clash of various cultural identities. Iranian society suffers from three distinct civilizational divides:

### **1. Ancient Civilization (Iranian Nationalism):**

This view holds that Iran once possessed a great ancient civilization, which was destroyed by the Arab invasion. Advocates of this view often believe that Iran's glory lies in its pre-Islamic history, and this sentiment was especially promoted during the Pahlavi era. The Iran-Iraq war reignited nationalist fervor, leading to the widespread revival of these views (Saie & Akbarzadeh, 2015, p. 89).

### **2. Islamic Civilization:**

A significant portion of the population, including members of the ruling class, believes that whatever cultural achievements Iran has made occurred after the arrival of Islam. In their view, pre-Islamic Iran was characterized by chaos, oppression, and injustice. Proponents of this view advocate for the concept of "Islamic democracy" as a counter to Western liberal democracy, believing that any value system contrary to Islamic principles is false and should be rejected (Sarparast Sadat, 2015, p. 90).

### **3. Western Modernity (Modernization):**

This cultural paradigm, while partially integrated into Iranian society, continues to conflict with traditional elements and is generally referred to as "modernization." The conflict between this paradigm and traditional culture has persisted for over a century and is often described as a confrontation between "tradition and modernity" (Bashiriyeh, 2015, p. 29). The tension between these civilizational paradigms has created many social and cultural conflicts in Iran, hindering the development of a coherent and unified democratic movement.

## **Authoritarianism**

The dominant political ideology in Iran throughout the contemporary era has been authoritarianism. This perspective emerged after the Constitutional Revolution as a response to the potential disintegration of the Iranian state in the face of internal ethnic divisions and external pressures. The belief is that without a strong central authority, Iran could fragment into smaller regions, threatening national unity (Rezaei Jafari et al., 2015, p. 128). This ideology supports centralized power and opposes political decentralization, contributing to

the persistence of authoritarian governments in Iran and hindering the establishment of a pluralistic democratic system.

## **Totalitarianism**

Totalitarianism is fundamentally incompatible with democracy because it relies on a single, all-encompassing ideology, a single ruling party, and centralized control over every aspect of public and private life, all justified by higher, supra-human laws (Dabbagh & Nafri, 2008, p. 15). In all totalitarian states, democracy is seen as the hidden dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and as such, totalitarian governments are hostile to democratic principles.

## **Class Divides**

Class divides are one of the most prominent social fractures in the modern era. Marx viewed this divide as the primary driver of conflict and change throughout human history (Wheatley, 2013, p. 49). Democracy, especially in its fullest sense, aligns with the interests of the lower classes because it advocates for social justice and reduces the gap between the rich and poor. In countries transitioning to democracy, significant class divisions are often a source of violence and government repression. The primary proponents of democracy in these societies are the middle and lower classes.

## **Gender Divides**

The ideologies of governments that reject the notion of equal rights for all citizens are major obstacles to democracy. Democracy, by nature, is aligned with the principle of equality among people. For a society to establish a truly democratic system, gender equality must be a central component (Naghbi Mofrad, 2011, p. 19). One of the core tenets of democracy is that all individuals, regardless of gender, race, religion, or background, must have equal rights to vote and be elected. In societies where such equality does not exist, true democracy cannot flourish.

## **Conclusion**

Iran's modern history is marked by the persistent struggle of its people to establish a democratic political structure and societal system. This quest for democracy has resulted in two major revolutions and numerous social movements, with significant costs to Iranian society. In authoritarian political systems, the radical and idealistic nature of student movements stems from several factors:

- **A:** The shortcomings of authoritarian systems, which drive much of the activism in various movements, including the student movement.
- **B:** Generational demands, particularly from the youth and students, who are considered the most dynamic and informed segment of society.
- **C:** Dissatisfaction stemming from the lack of educational and political resources in many developing countries, including Iran, where there is a massive student population.

By building on the data from this research, the obstacles to democratization, the influential factors, and the methods for impacting democratization were identified. The findings reveal that the student movement has effectively used these factors to make a profound impact on the democratic discourse of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

New social movements focus on identity struggles. Their efforts are aimed at compelling others to accept what they believe in, fighting for values that others deny. In Iran, the student movement, as part of the broader "new social movements," has worked within the postmodern paradigm shift and cultural discourse, centering around the four principles of "identity," "justice," "freedom," and "opposition to totalitarianism." Over the years, the student movement in Iran has leveraged all available experiences and resources to advance its democratic goals. Through the formation of national consensus and the creation of democratic discourse, the student movement has successfully brought the nation's right to choose closer to realization.

The student movement, with its demand-driven approach, has managed to influence the process of democratization by fostering national unity, civil participation, transparency, and accountability. These efforts have played a significant role in the peaceful and cost-effective transition towards democracy in Iran, as well as the deepening of democratic discourse.

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