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ELECTIONWITHOUT DEMOCRACY, DEMOCRACY WITHOUT ELECTION

Abstract

In this essay the relationship between democracy and election is studied. In the first section, different features of democratic elections are defined. In second section, examples of elected governments which are not democratic will be declared. In the third section, the concept of legitimacy will be clarified. In the fourth section, the relationship between election and legitimacy is discussed in more details.

Keywords: Democracy, Election, Legitimacy

SEÇİM OLMADAN DEMOKRASİ, DEMOKRASİ OLMADAN SEÇİM

Özet

Bu makalede, seçim ve demokrasi ilişkileri incelenecektir. Birinci bölümde, demokratik seçim süreçlerinin özellikleri tanımlanacaktır. İkinci bölümde, seçilmiş ama demokratik olmayan hükümetlerin örnekleri verilecektir. Üçüncü bölümde, meşruiyet kavramı açıklığa kavuşturulacaktır ve dördüncü bölümde, seçim ve meşruiyet arasındaki ilişki daha ayrıntılı bir şekilde tartışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Demokrasi, Seçim, Meşruluk

I. FORM AND CONTENT OF ELECTIVE PROCEDURES

Election is subject of political science that is formed in history of construction of social structures with improvement of liberties in order to show off public will of the people. Moreover, election as a competitive procedure can play a crucial role in democratic cycle which includes democratic accountability and responsiveness in political participation. Furthermore, election is just one aspect of political process in politics which can play an important role in valuation of politics.¹

Schumpeter assumes election as a democratic method of institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.² In other words it can be claimed that democratic challenges arise from issues of representation: who should be involved in the decision making structures of the various components of the network; to whom should such bodies be accountable.³

Also, political competition may not be the most important factor but it can be supposed as crucial elements of democracy in which there is an attempt to gain legitimacy. In other words, Free, fair and competitive elections are seen as the minimum precondition of democracy.⁴ Moreover, election is a means for achieving legitimacy which is used for expression of opinion in political life.

In brief election is considered as prominent indicators of democracy which provides opportunity for political stability and political participation. This can provide environment and opportunity for dialogue among appointed institutions and elected institution. Moreover, it helps in formation of political institutions and political culture. No government without democratic culture can become democratic. In democratic culture different voices have possibility for emergence and most of the time is tolerated. This can facilitate participation in democratic process. Moreover, Democratic culture is result of tolerance of opposite forces and gaining political culture in elective procedure.

Request for democracy and practicing democracy at different fields of elective procedures are possible. Democratic culture has two distinctive features. Pluralistic politicization and political participation are two important features that with added value of tolerance of opposition are different facets of democratic culture.

Election is considered as a necessary constituent of democracy but it cannot be claimed that all elected institution are democratic. In other words, election can be considered as a prerequisite condition but not adequate for democracy. Election can be used as a tool for proof

¹ Aboli O Shuriye, "The Course of Election and Democracy in the Taxonomy of Islamic Political Relation to the Democratic Revolutions in the Middle East & North Africa", *Asian Social Science*, vol.8, No.1, January 2012, pp.1-8

² Lipset Seymour, Martin, Seong, kyoung-Ryug; and Torres, John Charles, "A Comparative Analysis of the Social Requisites of Democracy", *Interanet Soc. Sci.J.* 45, May 1993,75-155

³ Julia Black, "Constructing and Contesting Legitimacy and Accountability in Polycentric Regulatory Regimes", *Regulation and Governance, Journal Compilation, Blackwell Publishing Asia Pt LTD*, 2008, 137-164.

⁴ Marc Buhlmann, David Zumbach, "On the multidimensionality of political competition: Measuring political competition in a Bartolinian Way", *Zurich Open Repository and Archive University of Zurich Main Library Strickhofstrasse 39 CH-8057 Zurich*, 2011, pp. 1-30.

of the legitimacy of government in order to guaranty the survival of system. Moreover, election can be recognized as a tool of modern World in order to acquire political awareness in political arenas.

Elective procedures can cause political dynamism and political awareness. But application of just forms of election are not satisfactory. In order to have democratic systems, it needs democratic culture of participation and cooperation. Constructing democratic institutions and parties can be considered a prerequisite of democratic participation. Moreover, Freedom of press, freedom of speech and religion are complimentary features that are considered necessary in order to fulfill democratic purposes. In a case that freedom of expression, freedom of speech, and freedom of press are not present then just imitation of democracy happens. Furthermore, election turns to meaningless procedures when violation of legal, social and humanitarian rights of different minorities have become part of unwritten rules of society or part of written rules of society. Then election turns just to a tool in hands of authoritarian regimes to demonstrate the international community that we have election but this is just imitation of meaningless gestures which don't carry meaning.

Election which is empty of democratic procedures cannot result in democratic systems. Moreover, elections without democratized content and procedure cannot be effective in construction of democratized systems. Democratic systems are formed in democratic procedures which have its own conditions like having free, fair, and safe conditions. In free elections respect for plural and diverse ideas are preserved. Moreover, perseverance of rights of different social groups in order to participate in different political procedures can guaranty stability.

II. ELECTION MEANS DEMOCRACY?

Are all elected governments democratic? There are governments like Bashar Assad government in Syria that election has been conducted regularly and Bashar Assad has gained votes of majority but no stability and democracy is dominant on this area. There are other examples of election without democracy and democracy without election in modern World. In modern World, Nazism gained majority vote in election but vote of majority is not sign of democracy. Sometimes elections are means in hands of despotic regimes in order to gain legitimacy in international society. In these cases elections carry just formative features which don't carry democratic features.

It is mentioned that election can take different functions in various countries. It can be symbol of democracy which accentuates its effect or it can be misused for consolidation of despotism. In order to eliminate the idea of despotism in the minds of people many governments used electoral tools which are common in democratic societies in order to justify their own dictatorship. Moreover, elections are considered as a means to stabilize the society and sometimes is considered as a platform for solving social problems. Also, clash of rivalry parties provides dynamic environment for societies in order to express demands.

Form and content of election have distinctive features. Elections can be assumed as a kind of response that governments give in front of legitimacy crisis. Legitimacy crisis is raised in recent years in Arabic Countries has caused creation of different mass mobilization movements.

III. LEGITIMACY AS A PREREQUISITE

What kind of relationship there is between legitimacy and election? The state of legitimacy has a long tradition in political science and public administration and sociology.⁵ Prerequisite for participation in political process is a kind of legitimacy which is constructed by regulators, politicians, governors and network of these. There are different means and measures for evaluating concept of legitimacy.

Legitimacy of governments can be evaluated by different measures. Political valuation of legitimacy is sometimes associated with source of power. If legitimacy of power is associated with divine sources like God, religion and etc. Then administration is related to non-human which is not connected to the tangible resources.⁶ As mentioned, in early eras of history, legitimacy was connected with divine sources like God, Religion and etc. However, these criteria for legitimacy have been modified. In modern world legitimacy is related to efficiency of Governments. Moreover, there have remained very few tracks of heritage and divine sources concerning legitimacy. Despite these modifications, there are societies that rely on divine sources in order to justify their legitimacy. Islamic Republic of Iran is one of these countries that use these divine sources beside electoral resources to justify legitimacy of government. They wouldn't be able to get rid of traditional charismatic resources of power. But they added election as a prominent element of modernism to constitution. Some other countries like Saudi Arabia consider divine sources and heritage in justifying sources of power. Syrian government is considered as an example of modern government that has least legitimacy because of not being able to provide security in different regions of the country.

John Lock and Rousseau, magnified legitimacy to be linked with the "will of people".⁷ Legitimacy is associated with satisfaction of people which evolve around the existence of distributive policies of government for people that enhance the stability and authority of state and secures obedience.⁸

As mentioned before, in modern governments legitimacy has a political function which is related to efficiency of Governments. In power relations, strengthening or weakening legitimacy can be done by different mechanisms like election, or security. Governments who conduct election and backed by mass of people are considered as legitimate governments. Legitimacy is not something stable. Moreover, politicians invest on improving legitimacy by increasing satisfaction by investing on efficiency of government.

Efficiency of governments can be analyzed from different aspects. Public satisfaction, social welfare, and rule of law are considered as different aspects of government efficiency. Concentration on these dimensions can be variant in different ideologies. Nationalists concentrate on political participation, left Marxists concentrate on class conflicts and rationalists emphasize on the rule of law. Moreover, Administration by dominance of law is considered as

⁵ Rafael Di Tella, Juan Durba, Alejandro Iagmarsino, "Meet the Oligarchs: Business Legitimacy State Capacity and Taxation", *Harvard Business School*, Working Paper, 2016, pp.1-28.

⁶ Julia Black, "Constructing and Contesting Legitimacy and Accountability in Polycentric Regulatory Regimes", *Regulation and Governance*, Journal Compilation, *Blackwell Publishing Asia Pt LTD*, 2008, pp.137-164.

⁷ Jean D' Aspermant, "Legitimacy of Government in the Age of Democracy", *International Law and Politics*, vol38/877, 2006, pp.1-42.

⁸ Jean D' Aspermant, "Legitimacy of Government in the Age of Democracy", *International Law and Politics*, vol38/877, 2006, pp.1-42.

an efficient type of government. Another point that considered being helpful in increasing efficiency of government is providing security. Especially those governments which are not able to provide security for the people are not considered as legitimate governments.

Legitimacy is recognized as a political value which empowers an authority to talk on behalf of government. This constitutes trust and confidence toward political system. As mentioned before, in democratic systems election and voting system play crucial role in reaching to political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the “people’s vote. To sum up, it can be declared that in democratic societies legitimacy as a kind of political value that is entitled to government in order to speak and act on behalf of a state.

DIFFERENT MEANS FOR LEGITIMACY

Can election transform to a tool in the hands of authoritarian governments in order to be proof of legitimacy? Russian, Ukraine, Venezuela, Iran and Turkey are considered as governments that have elections but are not considered as democratic. Why governments like Turkey, Iran, Ukraine, and Russia are not democratic despite of having different elections?

To answer this question we should ask whether conducted elections have necessary features in order to be considered democratic. Are elections in the mentioned countries carry free, fair, effective features?

If election doesn’t carry fair, free, and effective features that represent the wills of the people. Then, elections don’t carry democratic features that are necessary for emergence of democratic institutions. In other words, elections which just carry formative features of election and don’t have free content for various social groups cannot cause democratic resolution. As a matter of fact democracy failed to develop in countries like Egypt. But this lack wasn’t because of lack of voting system.⁹

But some analysts consider election as an opening toward democracy. Elections are considered as administration of mass energy and dynamisms of societies. Green Movement in Iran is a movement which was shaped during election and dynamic energy of electoral campaigns had prominent role in its formation. Some political analysts believe that election is not product of democracy but electoral process provides opportunities for improvement of democratic participation and democratic culture.

Some countries like Iran do not have predefined political parties. Political parties are temporary constitutions that are formed during political events and they turn off when political events are finished. Then elections without freedom of assembly, without freedom of speech cannot provide democracy and legitimacy.

In other words, we can say that elections provide environment for explosion of hidden energy which is under pressure during different periods. Just during rivalry election finds free opportunity to be expressed in society and converts into a movements that can question legitimacy. This hidden potential under the skin of the society finds place for emergence when minimum political freedom is prepared. Some governments provide opportunity for these hidden energies during election in order to come out and show itself. Moreover, freedom for

⁹ Nathan J. Brown, Tracking the “Arab Spring”, *National Endowment for Democracy and the John Hopkins University Press, Journal of Democracy*, Volume 24, Number 4, October 2013, pp.1-15.

expression of opinion in shadow of elective procedures opens new routes for democratic dialogue between different sections of society and power.¹⁰

Furthermore, if these energies do not come out regularly it can convert into a volcano and can cause contagious revolutions like Arab spring in different regions. But some governments misused elections in order to Show legitimacy of their governments to international arenas. Authoritarian regimes misuse vicious circle of election with repetition of elections.

In other words, it can be assumed that electoral procedures have lost the democratic meaning. Electoral procedures have converted to the justificative tools. These justifying tools don't consider democratization of society. Election and electoral procedures are not democratization tools. They are tools in the hands of dictatorship regimes in order to eliminate legitimacy crisis.

IV. CONCLUSION

Election is a prerequisite condition but not adequate for democracy. Freedom of press, freedom of speech and religion are complimentary features that are considered necessary in order to fulfill democratic purposes. Moreover, elective procedure which is empty of democratic conditions cannot result in democratic systems. Also, it can be claimed that elections without democratized content and procedure cannot be effective in construction of democratic systems.

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¹⁰ Aboli O Shuriye, "The Course of Election and Democracy in the Taxonomy of Islamic Political Relation to the Democratic Revolutions in the Middle East & North Africa", *Asian Social Science*, vol.8, No.1, January 2012, pp.1-8.

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