

Comparison of authoritarian government and transition to democracy in China and Iran

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Abstractt

This article seeks to examine the transition to democracy in China and Iran at the end of the 20th century with regard to economic and social reforms in the two countries. Both countries sought a series of economic and social reforms at the end of the 20th century, but the democratization of the linear model with economic and social prerequisites for the transition to democracy desired by some theorists did not occur in the two countries. This question is raised, why even though the economic and social changes as a prerequisite for democracy happened relatively in two countries, but the democratization did not happen from below in the two countries? The method of research is historical comparative. It will try to survey the obstacles to democratization in the two countries of Iran and China, despite some similarities such as the increase in the gross national product, the growth of urbanization, the growth of the middle class and etc. in the two countries. The findings of the research show that the traditional Confucian culture based on a harmonious society and the Leninist institutional legacy of the Communist Party based on the monopoly of power in China and the Islamic culture based on divine sovereignty in Iran as well as the necessity of economic development, public welfare and political stability as the priority of the people in Both countries have weakened the possibility of democratization from below and only made democratization possible from above.

Keywords: : authoritarian government, economic development, transition to democracy, China, Iran.

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Introduction

Nowadays, democracy has been one of the desirable methods of governance among societies, and many political systems are trying to make their governments appear democratic and move in the direction of democratization. There are many texts about the transition to democracy, such as the three waves of the transition to democracy by Huntington and development theorists and the transition to democracy such as Lipset, Engelhart, Karl Deutsch, etc. Many theorists consider the linear model of the transition to democracy as a criterion for the transition to democracy in other societies, considering the experiences of the West, especially in the transition to democracy. However, it is possible that democracy in different societies is subject to multiple cultural, political, etc. factors rather than being affected by the linear model of transition to democracy based on economic and social changes, especially from the bottom.

Iran and China are two Asian countries facing the communist popular revolutions of 1949 in China and 1979 in Islamic Iran; Both countries faced issues such as the cultural revolution with different angles and economic and social reforms at the end of the century; In order to increase global interactions, the two countries turned to economic and social reforms based on free economy and privatization in the late 20th century to increase the country's resources and coordinate with global financial institutions. Economic and social changes began in China during the Deng Xiaoping period and in Iran during the Hashemi Rafsanjani period⁴. In both countries, economic and social changes lead to an increase in the gross national product (with the difference that in China the gross national growth is due to receiving taxes from successful privatization, but in Iran the gross national growth is preferably due to oil revenues), urbanization, increased education and Strengthening the new middle class , But the possibility of democratization in the two countries based on the linear model of economic and social prerequisites for the transition to democracy did not happen from below; Some movements such as the student movement of 1989 in Tiananmen Square in China and the student protests of 1999 and the election protests of 2009 in Iran did not make democratization possible from below, And in contrast, people's support for the communist system in China and the Islamic Republic in Iran continued as in the past.

Regarding the transition to democracy in a comparative way between Iran and China, there has been no research activity, but regarding the transition to democracy in Iran and China, there are a number of research activities that have dealt with the transition to democracy in the two countries from different angles; Regarding the transition to democracy in Iran, Majid Astwar in the article "Transition to Democracy in Iran with Emphasis on the Role of the Ruling Elites", He considered weak civil society and strong mass society, ideological government and economy based on oil revenues as obstacles to democracy in Iran. In the article "Transition to Democracy in the Islamic Republic", Ahmad Javani has examined external factors in the transition to democracy between 1989 and 2009 with regard to the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the spread of liberal democracy in

other societies, and has come to this conclusion that, In Iran, reformists and modernists were also on such a path, but despite various incidents, they failed because of religious values and wise leadership. In the article "Globalization, Democracy and Democratic Movements in Iran", Seyed Amir Masoud Shahram Nia has discussed the impact of globalization with regard to the increase of communication and trade exchanges in strengthening civil society and democratization in Iran and has come to the conclusion that globalization has increased political participation, political awareness, the number of press and political parties, etc. in Iran. Regarding the transition to democracy in China, Boping (2009) in the book "Democracy is a good thing" and in the article (2008) "Ideological change and growing democracy in China during the reform period", has investigated the activities of civil institutions after reforms, such as business associations, social organizations, and interest groups under the guidance of the Communist Party, which have been activated after the reforms in China. Ning Feng (2014) in the book "The Road to Democracy in China" has discussed the retreat of Deng Xiaoping's reforms, how it happened after the turmoil in Eastern Europe. Jai Chen (2013) in the book "A middle class without democracy" has discussed the preference of social order over democracy by the middle class; How the middle class does not have much desire for democracy based on political and social irregularities due to the connections with the government.

The researchers conducted regarding the transition to democracy from different angles narrated the social and political realities of China and Iran in the process of democratization. In addition to describing some economic, social and political realities, this research will explain the obstacles to the transition to democracy in the two countries, considering somewhat similar experiences in the democratization process. Of course, what is the highlight of this research will be a critique of the linear model of the theorists of the transition to democracy with an economic precondition. Therefore, the purpose and necessity of researching the authoritarian government and the transition to democracy in China and Iran, in addition to criticizing the linear model of the transition to democracy based on the economic and social preconditions of the transition to democracy, various institutional and cultural factors in China and Iran in preventing the transition to democracy from below based on the linear model of the transition to democracy despite economic and social changes are examined. That not all societies will go towards democratization based on a linear model of transition to democracy, other factors such as political and cultural factors may accelerate or hinder the process of transition to democracy.

The research method of the article is comparative history. By comparing the economic, social and political reality of the two countries, It is tried to present a more accurate account of the obstacles to the transition to democracy in the two countries despite the economic and social progress in the late 20th century.

Conceptual and theoretical framework

Democracy is formed from two Greek words demos meaning people and krasia meaning power. The meaning of such a government is people's participation in decision-making for society administration. Today, democracy is the appropriate

method of government among thinkers and societies, compared to the non-democratic systems of dictatorship, autocracy, etc., and many countries are moving towards democracy. Democratization theorists have also studied the transition to democracy from different angles.

Some modernization theorists consider the economic precondition as a criterion for the transition to democracy. In 1960, James Coleman concluded that there is a positive correlation between economic development and the level of political development (meaning the expansion of competition between groups) during a research based on the comparison of 75 countries (Bashiriyeh, 2018: 15). Lipsett and Kathrip measure democracy by fulfilling socio-economic conditions such as high per capita income, high education, urbanization, etc. (Rustow, 1970). Lipset believes that there is a high correlation between industrialization, literacy, income and urbanization with democracy (Lipset, 1959). Amartiasen believes that economic development eliminates poverty and deprivation and creates economic security (San, 1381: 26) and this creates the possibility of political freedom. Farid Zakaria believes that economic growth will change social structures and adapt them to new conditions (Zakaria, 1385: 10). In Huntington's opinion, economic opportunities are more associated with a high level of education; This will lead to increasing tension in authoritarian systems and weakening its control tools and decision-making based on citizens' satisfaction (Qawam, 1994: 115).

As discussed above, many development theories consider the linear process of economic and social development in societies as the basis for the transition to democracy. The linear development approach cannot fully cover the realities of development and transition to democracy in different societies. S.C. Dube believes; modernization and development are multi-line or multi-track processes. Historical experience has shown that all societies do not follow the same path for development and modernization (Jabari, 2013: 13); It is criticized that most countries with high economic growth and social mobility have democratic regimes and most democracies have a high level of economic and social development. Some regimes with high economic growth like China and relative economic and social changes are not democratic of the western model. They may even experience a nonlinear to linear transition to democracy (Chen, 2007); It is not like that economic development and social changes will necessarily lead to western model democracy; In China and to some extent in Iran, indicators of modernization supporters such as urbanization, increase in gross national product, education, etc. have occurred, but these changes have not led to the desired transition to democracy; The reason why the transition to democracy in China and Iran has not occurred from below due to the economic and social changes as a precondition for democracy, must be related to the position of Confucian tradition and Leninist institutional heritage in China and Islamic culture based on divine sovereignty in Iran and Preference for economic development (Guo, 2003: 4), public welfare and political stability as the people's priority over democracy, considering the society of China and Iran.

Diagram number 1

The possibility of transition to democracy from top to bottom



Low probability of transition to democracy from the bottom to top

According to chart number 1, the probability of success of the transition to democracy in China and Iran based on the economic and social preconditions of the linear model of the transition to democracy from below is weak; Confucian tradition based on values such as harmonious society and state-centered and Leninist heritage of the Communist Party based on the monopoly of power in the hands of the party-government in the People's Republic of China and Islamic culture based on Islamic values (divine sovereignty, following the dictates of the Islamic ruler and mutual rights and duties of the state and the nation) in the Islamic Republic of Iran, it weakens the possibility of independence and strengthening civil society, and on the other hand, it strengthens society's dependence on the government, meanwhile, in both countries, due to the role of the government in economic and social matters, economic development and public welfare are preferred by the majority of people over democratization. Therefore, despite some student movements such as Tiananmen Square in China in 1989 and student protests in 1999 and election protests in 2009, democratization was not widely welcomed by the people.

Authoritarian government in China and Iran

An authoritarian government is a government that has the necessary power and ability to exercise power in a certain territory; Of course, it is possible that such a totalitarian government interferes in private spheres or is authoritarian and simply suppress the opposition (Bashirieh, 1380: 140-141). Authoritarian regimes existed in various forms throughout history in Europe and Asia; Despite the historical background of authoritarianism, China and Iran had authoritarian and quasi-authoritarian governments after the Chinese Communist Revolution and the Islamic Revolution of Iran; Chinese authoritarianism is subject to the traditional Confucian heritage based on a harmonious society, social discipline based on the observance of hierarchical rules, and state-centered and the Leninist legacy of the one-party system of communism based on the monopoly of power in this party and the quasi-authoritarianism in the Islamic Republic is also based on the institutional heritage of the Islamic religion based on divine sovereignty and following the Islamic ruler's menus and accepting the plurality of parties after the dissolution of the Islamic Republic of Iran under the constitution and Islamic values.

The Communist Party in China was established after the Chinese Revolution in 1949 under the leadership of Mao, adapting the legacy of Leninism in the Soviet

Union based on state ownership, but after Mao, it was accompanied by economic reforms. Economic reforms with orientation towards free economy and privatization occurred with Deng Xiaoping's rise to power. Deng Xiaoping was expelled twice during the Cultural Revolution period, but after gaining power, he did not seek to weaken the party, he sought to regularize the party with constitutional reforms, meanwhile, due to the challenges of the communist parties in Eastern Europe and the inability of the Communist Party in the Great Leap Program During the Mao era, it was necessary to strengthen the party by changing the state economic planning to a free economy and reviving the traditional Confucian culture for the stability and harmony of the society. Confucian thought was also proposed as another legacy of China in the ancient period in confronting anarchism and creating harmony and peace by Confucius (Ryu, 2008:27-28). In the Confucian view, a harmonious society based on hierarchical order is manifested from the beginning in the family, then in the society with certain roles, and the task of the ruler is to maintain harmony between all the components of the society (Dessein, 2019). Such Confucian characteristics were in harmony with the characteristics of the party- government in strengthening the authority of the party- government. Gan Yang, one of the thinkers of China, considers China's heritage as the policy of economic liberalization and tendency towards market forces, the unforgettable legacy of justice and equality of Mao and Confucianism as a symbol of a harmonious society, a legacy from the past (Billioud, 2007). Today, Confucianism in China has been revived to a certain extent to reduce the legitimacy of Marxism (Carsten, 2011) and considers itself to be the basis for governing the country along with communism and is a symbol of authoritarianism in China for economic and social development. In fact, Confucius and Communism as a traditional and modern heritage in China, due to its political and social characteristics, has increased the government's authority in managing China's economic, social and political affairs and In a way, it has strengthened society's adherence to the government-party's guidelines and weakened democratization from below.

In Iran, with the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the Islamic culture and values based on material and spiritual prosperity became the foundation of the society's administration by the Islamic State. Islamic values based on divine sovereignty and following divine rulers in a way increases the authority of the Islamic state towards the society. The religion of Islam based on divine rules was promoted by the Prophet of Islam for the welfare of the society. In the religion of Islam, material and spiritual happiness of people is related to divine rule and rules. There are many verses and traditions in this regard; In verse 55 of Surah Ma'idah, it is stated: "Your guardian is God and the Messenger of God and those who believe, perform prayer and pay zakat while bowing"; In verse 103 of Surah Imran, it is stated: "All of you hold fast to God's thread (religion) and do not go on different paths"; It is stated in verse 59 of Surah Nisa, "You who believe! Obey God, the Messenger of God and your superiors"; In verse 7 of Surah Hashr, it is stated, "Take what the Prophet has given you [from property, rulings and religious teachings], and refrain from what He has forbidden you, and fear God; Be-

cause God is severe in punishment. In the 34th sermon of Nahj al-Balaghah, Hazrat Ali (AS) says, " people! I have a right over you and you have a right over me." Your right is to instruct me and your benevolence, to divide the booty fairly between you and your teaching so that you do not remain ignorant, and my right over you is that you are faithful in your allegiance, and be good in front of me and behind my back, and obey whenever I command». The verses and traditions indicate the superior position of the Islamic state and the society's dependence on the state in material and spiritual prosperity. There are such rules in constitution of the Islamic Republic and in the view of the founders of the Islamic Republic. Article 56 of the Constitution gives absolute sovereignty over the world and man to God, and God has made man sovereign over his own destiny; Article 57 of the Constitution placed the legislative, executive and judicial powers under the absolute authority of the jurist (guardian of religion). Imam Khomeini also says in his words that if we maintain the unity of the word based on Islam, we will win until the end (Sajadi: 2011). In his speech, he suggested to the parliament, the executive officials and the other officials to serve the deprived and the oppressed and consider yourself as one of the people and them as yourself (Imam Khomeini, 1374: 13). In fact, considering the superior position of the government in Islam in economic and social matters, and the commitment to the material and spiritual well-being of the society by the Islamic government, and the crystallization of such values in the constitution of the Islamic Republic, in a way, material and livelihood provision is one of the duties of the government with regard to earned incomes from oil. On the one hand, this is the reason for increasing the government's power in economic, social and political management, and on the other hand, increasing the society's dependence on the government and weakening democratization from below.

Economic and social development in China and Iran

The issue of economic development with the communist approach of the planned centralized economy was taken into consideration by the Communist Party in 1950 and failed to achieve the goals of economic growth. This led to a shift from a state-planned economy to a free economy and privatization in the late 20th century during the Deng Xiaoping era; Before the reforms, China's state-owned enterprises dominated the national economy and produced three-quarters of the value of industrial production, but after the reforms of the 1980s and later until 2002, state-owned enterprises accounted for only 25% of industrial production and a wide range of private companies became active and led to an increase in employment in the private sector (Child, 2003). The reforms led to an increase in exports and a positive trade balance. In 1980, China accounted for about 2% of the world economy. In 2018, this amount was approximately 16% (Song, 2019:1). Economic growth has also affected the living standards of the people. The living standards of urban workers and peasants have increased. Between 1980 and 2000, the average income of each Chinese person increased from 1,394 dollars to 3,976 dollars. That is, it has almost tripled. About 130 million people are above the poverty line (Zakaria, 2006: 93). The 2008 Pew Global Attitudes

Survey in China shows that 86 percent of people with China's economic performance, 81 percent with their family life, 64 percent with their jobs, and 58 percent with their income were very satisfied. This improvement in living standards has increased the legitimacy of the party- government, And people and many intellectuals also do not consider democracy suitable for China today due to the fear of anarchy (Guo, 2017). Of course, such economic and social changes have been accompanied by the growth of urbanization and increase in literacy. Despite Mao's anti-urban policy, urbanization has been accompanied by a large scale, especially after Deng Xiaoping's reforms. According to estimates, the urbanized population has reached around 150 million people in 1970, 200 million people in 1980, 300 million people in 1990, 470 million people in 2000, and 600 million people in 2010, (Kamal-Chaoui, 5)). According to the national census estimate, the illiteracy rate was 33.58% in 1964, it decreased to 22.81% in 1982, 15.88% in 1990, and 6.72% in 2000 (Rose, 2006:3).

The tangible economic and social welfare changes in China should be seen in the strong government based on the monopoly of power in the Communist Party and the revived traditional Confucian culture(based on the government's support of the private sector) by Chinese statesmen and intellectuals. At the end of the 20th century, due to the challenges that were happening to the communist governments, especially in Eastern Europe, and the inability of the Communist Party in the economic planning of the Mao government in the leap forward program and cultural revolution, the existence of reforms in the party manifesto in the direction of free economy and rethinking of traditional Confucian culture and its compatibility with free economy were considered; persons like Sheng Hong in his works believed that there is compatibility between classical Chinese thought and modern economics. This attitude was promoted among intellectuals in the society that during the period of Emperor Ging based on Confucian culture, the government did not intervene in the market and recognized the free market (Carsten, 2011); Of course, in the tradition of the Ging dynasty, ownership was something that the government gave to individuals for benevolence (Fukuyama, 2016: 371). However, maintaining the position of the government-party according to the Confucian culture based on a harmonious society and accepting the authority of the government in the society and economic reforms in the program of the Communist Party with the orientation of the market economy and supporting the private sector, not only was able to strengthen the opportunities for entrepreneurship and job creation of the private sector but became the basis for the growth of the middle class in society in China and the enjoyment of welfare facilities.

The issue of economic development in the Islamic Republic was also taken into consideration especially after the end of the war during the reconstruction period. The government of the Islamic Republic sought economic growth and development in order to repair the damages caused by the war and respond to the welfare demands of the society. One of its mechanisms, considering the global conditions and the weakening of the position of the planning economy in the communist governments, was to change the path towards privatization and reduce the state's ownership and Supporting foreign investment. Hashemi Rafsanjani,

the president at that time, believed that foreign capital is not inherently evil and can be used in production projects (Hashmi Rafsanjani, B. Ta: 103). Regarding giving importance to the private sector, he believed that it was a matter of reducing the government's burden; The works that did not need to be in the hands of the government should be left to the private sector and the government should only have a sovereign work (Hamidi, 1380: 103). The program of economic liberalization and reduction of tenure was proposed in the policies and programs of the first program of economic, social and cultural development of the country from 1989 and its implementation was implemented from 1991 with the announcement of the list of transfer of government companies to the non-governmental and private sector. With the implementation of privatization, the proportion of private sector salary- earners increased in this period. In 1986, the ratio of salary earners in the private sector was about 17%, it increased to 22.4% in 1996. in contrast, the ratio of salary earners in the public sector was about 31.4% in 1986, which decreased to 29.2% in 1996 (Mahajerani, 1998); However, such actions did not take place on a large scale in the matter of privatization, and only few changes occurred in the ratio of government revenues from the private sector; In such a way that the ratio of tax revenues to GDP reached from 4.3% to 6.4% in 1993 (Islamic Republic newspaper, 22/12/1993). However, this did not mean a decrease in the dependence of government revenues on oil; due to the Islamic responsibility of creating suitable conditions for the growth of talents according to the constitution, the government was able to make changes in the social structure by creating welfare, health, educational facilities, etc. in urban and rural centers by using oil and tax revenues. Despite the expansion of facilities in the rural centers, the flood of migration continued to the urban centers in order to have welfare, urban facilities and jobs. The educational program of the government was also able to face fundamental changes in the ratio of literate people in the country in such a way that the literate population of the country increased to 23913000 person in 1986 (61.77 percent) and in 1996 to 41582000 person (79.5 percent) (Zibakalam, 2009). Such economic and social changes should be sought in the compatibility of the Islamic culture based on the duty of the material and spiritual well-being of the society by the government of the Islamic Republic with regard to the availability of financial resources, especially oil revenues, which led to social movements in the country, especially the growth of the middle class with political and social requests.

In fact, the two governments of China and Iran, considering the unsuccessful conditions of the planned economy in communist countries, especially in Eastern Europe, moved towards free economy and privatization; Both countries were able to increase their gross national incomes, with the difference that in China, the growth of the government's gross national incomes was influenced by the free economy and privatization, but in Iran, economic reforms did not have much impact on the growth of the gross national product and most of the government revenues were still dependent on oil revenues. However, despite the difference in government revenues, preferably from taxes in China and preferably from oil

resources in Iran, which had turned the Iranian government into a rentier government, the path of the two governments in social changes was the same; Both governments were on the path of expanding urbanization, increasing literacy, etc. Although such economic and social changes according to the linear model of the transition to democracy with economic and social preconditions in the two countries did not lead to democratization from below due to the traditional patriarchal culture and harmonious Confucian society and the Leninist heritage of the Communist Party in China and the Islamic culture based on sovereignty divine and it only allows some modifications from above.

Political development and transition to democracy in China and Iran

Economic and social development in itself was an opportunity for the emergence of new classes, especially the new middle class in the two countries. Of course, along with economic and social development, the two countries also moved towards limited political development, in other words, cautious democratization from above, considering the global position of liberal democracy.

In China, after the death of Mao and the rise of Deng Xiaoping, many of those who were condemned as counter-revolutionaries in the previous political struggles were acquitted. The new constitution also specified the legal scope of the party's activity. Strengthening people's congresses and more freedom for unions to pursue their interests was the new approach of Deng Xiaoping's government (McCormick, 1990, 1-10). The independence of the market also became the basis for the expansion of new types of commercial companies, professional groups and social associations (Weller, 1999:1-23). In fact, changes in the economic and political environments caused the rapid expansion of civil society organizations since the late 1980s. By 1989, there were 1,600 national mass organizations and over 200,000 local organizations. However, after the political turmoil in Beijing in 1989, the number of civic groups temporarily declined. By 1992, there were only 1,200 national mass organizations and 180,000 local organizations. However, the number soon began to rise again. Until 1997, the number of social associations at the township level or higher reached 180,000, of which 21,404 were at the provincial level and 1,848 were at the national level. By 1998, there were more than 700,000 civilian organizations (Keping, 2009). All in all, such changes in economic and political matters have in turn reduced the government's arbitrary interference in individual affairs; Even some intellectuals have enjoyed the freedom to comment on multi-party competitive democracy (McCormick, 1990: 190-201); the new ideas of people-centeredness, human rights, rule of law, civil society, etc. have not only gone beyond the traditional ideology but also Social political life of China has affected; Intellectuals with a sense of responsibility in the 1980s supported people-centeredness and humanism despite the difficulties, and finally, in late 2003, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China officially proposed that the principle of protecting citizenship rights be legalized. This proposal was approved by the majority in the National Congress of China in March 2004 and was drafted into the constitution. (Keping, 2008)).

During the Hashemi period, an attempt was made to create a somewhat more open atmosphere in the political arena. Hashemi Rafsanjani in his inauguration

ceremony in 1989 states that any amount of unjustly restricting people's freedom may not benefit the country in the long term (Islamic Republic Newspaper (19/8/1988). Of course, such an attitude of Hashemi was not indicative of breaking the law. He believed that freedom should be within the bounds of the law, freedom should not be an opportunity for lawbreakers in the society. Such an approach to politics in the Hashemite period became an opportunity for the growth of parties, civil institutions, etc; During Hashemi Rafsanjani's term, the parties, organizations, etc. that were licensed to operate included 10 associations, 13 societies, 2 communities, 5 clubs, etc. Hamshahri newspaper started working in the field of press in 1991. The number of applicants for press activities in 1993 was about 129, and in 1996 it was about 302 and in 1997 it was about 591 (Jabari, 2017: 136-137). During Khatami's period, the number of newspapers grew by 8.8 percent annually from 1997 to 2001. During this period, more than 4,000 non-governmental civil organizations were registered in the Ministry of Interior, which the government gave 5 billion tomans in subsidies, and one of the events of this period was the implementation of the Islamic Town and Village Council Law in 1998 (Jabari, 1396: 181).

However, the economic and social changes as well as a series of limited political changes from above in the two countries did not lead to the strengthening of democratization from below according to the model of democratization with economic and social preconditions. In China, such changes caused the growth of new social classes, especially the new middle class, such as the educated people, intellectuals, etc.; This class raised the demands of democratization with their civil protests; In such a way that the student movement started its protests in 1976 regarding the economic corruption of the high authorities and the lack of permission for political activities and the lack of political freedoms and reached its peak in Tiananmen Square in 1989; In this year, in protest against the death of Hu Yaoyang, the deposed reformist leader with liberal tendencies, the students demanded democracy, freedom of the press, an end to corruption, etc., but it was not well received by the majority of the people and was finally suppressed by the military forces. However, despite the suppression of student protests, the Communist Party-government strengthened rural elections to increase its legitimacy; in such a way that today, the Chinese government has allowed the election of village committees and leaders in rural areas, which have limited power at the local level. Of course, this can also be a mechanism to listen to people's demands for providing services (Fukuyama, 2016: 386).

In Iran, the economic, social and political changes during the Hashemite and Khatami periods provided the basis for the growth of the new middle class; Economic and social reforms with the growth of gross national product, preferably due to oil revenues, growth of urbanization, increase in literacy rate, etc., became the basis for the growth of the new middle class and the demand for the creation of a suitable political environment for the activities of civil institutions, but it was not possible to transition to democratization from below by challenging the democratic system based on divine sovereignty, and it was only possible to make reforms from above due to the globalization of democracy and for increasing the

legitimacy of the political system. In 1998, the Islamic Council of Town and Village was activated and a proper atmosphere was created for party, press, etc. activities (Prohan, 2003). Although some party and press activities created social movements such as student protests in 1999 and election protests in 2009, due to the creation of a suitable political environment for the activity, but it did not lead to widespread acceptance by the people and in contrast people marched against such protests in support of the Islamic Republic system

In fact, what has weakened the possibility of the success of democratization in the two countries from below is not the economic and social preconditions in the two countries according to the model of linear theorists. Such preconditions happened relatively in two countries, but the democratization from below could not challenge the government - the Communist Party in China and the government of the Islamic Republic in Iran and only a kind of reforms from above has been possible in the two countries; As mentioned in the previous discussions, the traditional Confucian culture based on patriarchy and a harmonious and stable society and the Leninist institutional heritage complementary to such culture and Islamic culture based on divine sovereignty and material and spiritual prosperity of the people by the government of the Islamic Republic and the necessity of economic development, public welfare and political stability as a priority of the people has played an important role in the failure of the transition to democracy in the two countries. These factors produce a different model of democracy compared to the Western model, which is also expressed by thinkers and statesmen. Chiang believes that Confucius is Confucius, democracy is democracy, China is China, and the West is the West. There is no possibility of combining both. he considered the legitimacy of the government in the form of heavenly, earthly and human legitimacy and considers the legitimacy of Western democracy to be only earthly and inappropriate for China (Jiang, 2018:164-166). Imam Khomeini says that the Islamic Republic is a word based on content, the content of which is the Islamic nature of all government institutions (Imam Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 9: 261). The Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, in a speech among the people of Qazvin city in December 2012, said that in the solid and deep logic of religious democracy, no governorship or sovereignty is desirable unless God has delegated it and God has delegated this sovereignty to those who are just and pious and people accept him (Hosseini, 2013).

The middle class also prefers stability over democracy in the two countries due to the position of the government. In China, the majority of social classes look for their growth and prosperity due to the position of the party- government and the Confucian culture based on patriarchal culture and harmonious society in the party- government and do not want to democratize from below; many business and social elites and even government-affiliated intellectuals have some advantages. Business and social organizations need the government to survive. Intellectuals request funding from the government for research projects. Labor and social elites believe that their interests are better served by maintaining cooperative relations with the government. Capitalists look for their business in government agencies (Guo, 2017). The community's dependence on the government has

not weakened their economic status, and the middle class has increased and they support political stability. According to 2012 estimates, China's middle class is between 300 and 400 million person. This class criticizes some actions of the government, but when asked about democracy, many of them equate it with individual freedom and the provision of needs by the government, which they believe the government has provided for them, so it is unlikely that the middle class will support the transition to multi-party democracy (Fukuyama, 2016: 447). Today, people and many intellectuals do not consider democracy suitable for China due to the fear of anarchy (Guo, 2017). Such conditions, in turn, weaken the possibility of democratization from below and only provide democratization from above in view of the globalization of democracy and in order to increase the legitimacy of the party- government (Guo, 2017); In Iran also, due to the ownership of oil resources by the government and the society's dependence on the government in benefiting from resources and facilities, as well as the redistribution of the identity of Islam in an Islamic society, the majority of the middle class, alongside following the government of the Islamic Republic, are dependent on the government of the Islamic Republic in enjoyment of resources and opportunities and do not welcome democratization from the bottom which leads to instability and disorder.

In fact, in both countries, due to the superior position of the government due to the Confucian culture and the Leninist legacy of Chinese communism and the Islamic culture based on divine sovereignty and following divine rules for material and spiritual prosperity, the possibility of a strong civil society has been weakened and society has become dependent on the government for opportunities and resources. meanwhile, such a culture in both countries prefers political stability along with economic development and public welfare over anarchy caused by democratization from below.

Conclusion

This research investigated the obstacles to the transition to democracy in the two countries of China and Iran through a comparative historical method in the late 20th century. The two countries have commonalities and differences in the economic, social, political, etc. process, but in the transition to democratization according to the linear model with the economic precondition of the transition to democracy from the bottom, they have a similar experience and outcome. Both countries were faced with the communist revolution led by Mao and the Islamic revolution of Iran led by Imam Khomeini and with the cultural revolution and economic reforms with the change of planning economy towards free economy and privatization in the late 20th century. Economic and social reforms in both countries have been accompanied by an increase in gross national product, growth in urbanization, literacy, etc. in a similar way, although there are the differences in the sources of gross national product and tax revenues such as tax revenues in China from the fields of industry, services, agriculture, etc. and the dependence of government revenues on oil revenues in Iran and the one-party system in China and the plurality of parties after the dissolution of the Republican Party Islam in Iran. If we examine the obstacles to the transition to democracy

based on the linear model of the economic preconditions of the transition to democracy, the growth of the gross national product, the growth of the middle class due to the growth of urbanization, increase in literacy, etc. occurred in the two countries, but they did not move towards democratization; It is possible that such changes are necessary conditions for democratization, but they cannot be necessary and sufficient conditions for democratization considering the obstacles to democratization in the two countries. meanwhile, despite the one-party system in China and multi-party system in Iran, democratization in Iran did not happen from below despite the multi-party system, while both countries faced the same consequence of obstacles to democratization. Therefore, it is necessary to look for the factors that have been effective in the obstacles to the transition to democratization in the two countries.

Despite some similarities and differences, both countries share a common cultural and political background, which has been able to hinder democratization in both countries. Confucian culture based on patriarchy (state-centered) and harmonious society and the Leninist legacy of the Communist Party based on the monopoly of power in the party government in China and Islamic culture based on divine sovereignty and the realization of material and spiritual happiness in following the divine rules and Islamic ruler's menus in the republic Islam has weakened the possibility of democratization from below in both countries. Both countries were able to provide a suitable platform for the growth of the middle class with the economic and social changes and limited changes in the political affairs with the relative growth of the civil institutions after the reforms, which require a suitable political environment for activity, but such changes did not lead to the success of the transition to democracy from below despite some civil protests such as the student movement in Tiananmen Square in 1989 in China with demands such as the fight against the corruption of officials, licensing political activities, etc., and student protests in 1999 with demands such as press freedom and the protests of 2009 by protesting against electoral fraud and In contrast, the support continued for the Communist Party of China due to the compatibility of the Communist Party of China with the free economy and traditional Confucian culture of China and the dependence of the majority of social classes in benefiting from the opportunities and facilities provided by the party- government and the support of the Islamic Republic of Iran with regard to the redistribution of Islamic values as the identity of the Muslim community and the dependence of many social classes on the government in creating facilities and opportunities with regard to oil resources. Such conditions have weakened the possibility of democratization from below in the two countries, and it has strengthened only a kind of democratization from above due to the globalization of democracy and in order to increase the legitimacy of the political system of the two countries by allowing the people to hold village elections in China, Legalizing the Communist Party and Including some citizenship rights in the Chinese constitution and strengthening local institutions in Iran by holding elections for Islamic councils in villages and cities, improving the relative atmosphere of party and press activity in Iran under the constitution and so on.

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