

Democratic Model of Karl Popper in Transition Democratic Countries

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Abstract-This article used the democratic model of Karl Popper in transition democratic countries. We can analyse the democratic model of Karl Popper either from concept, form, negative heuristic and positive heuristic perspectives. The important point in the concept of democracy in Popper's ideas is the potential for peaceful deposal of rulers which lead Popper to the concept of two-partied democratic systems. On the other hand, Popper argued in negative heuristic of his own democratic model that democracy is not the rule of people over people or the governing of the majority of people over all people. He emphasized in positive heuristic of his own democratic model that we have to know democracy as a system which helps us to prevent the damage brought about by bad rulers in politics by peaceful changes. Popper's purpose in his own democratic model is to prevent absolute governing, on the one hand, and to maintain liberal democrat governments as powerful political systems, on the other. He sought liberty with security; free press with powerful government by establishing a balance between the power of people and that of government. On the other side, rulers in non-democratic countries and in transition democratic countries always sacrifice democracy for security and immunity considerations. They move towards absolute power and undemocratic ruling under the pretext that people abuse democracy and freedom. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to evaluate applicability of Popper's democratic model (the two-party system) to the transition democratic countries. The authors argue that this model keeps such countries democratic and secure. It helps them to prevent dictatorship and cease of absolute power, on the one hand, and leads them to powerful and focused democracy, on the other. This article proposes for transition democratic countries to move normatively to the two-party democratic system. The transition democratic countries have to prevent development of third or more parties in their own countries. Moreover, these countries have to guide pluralism in civil society institutions, think of democracy as a technical method in politics, and give up pluralism in democracy.

Keywords: Karl Popper, Negative Heuristic, Positive Heuristic, Democracy, Transition Democratic Countries.

I. INTRODUCTION

In this article, we clarify the democratic model of Popper from four aspects: concept, form, negative heuristic and positive heuristic perspectives of view. Then, we briefly discuss the political positions of transition democratic countries like Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Turkey, internally and internationally. Finally, based on this work we introduce to the suggestion that democrats in their own countries and abroad have to foster the democratic process by implementation of Popper's democratic model because, as

we prove, no democratic models are more suitable to the political positions of these countries than Popper's model. In the meantime, we point to international difficulties and internal problems in the face of the democratic process in transition democratic countries.

II. POPPER'S DEMOCRATIC MODEL

A. The Negative Heuristic of the Democratic Concept in Popper's Model

In this part Popper raised the question: "What is not democracy"? First of all he criticized the classic question of politics which was designed by Plato. He argued that the question "who has to rule?" was a big mistake and lead us to a bad destiny in politics. Response to this question is not useful also; the assumption of questioner is that we cannot control government. In this assumption they believe in the absolute power and sovereignty of governments and therefore they do not believe in controlling governments. Nonetheless, they try to put best or wisest or labors or philosophers or the majority of people as governors. Popper advocated that everybody tends to abuse power while in a governing position and we have to find a way to control rulers. Popper also criticized historicism in the political thinking because this lead to social violence. Historians claim that history has the first and final destiny and we can discover. History has particular laws, and that we can realize and assimilate its laws and then foresee the future. Historians seek chosen class to implementation discovered laws and historical determinism. Popper claimed however that historicism lead to the theory of chosen class in both left and right sides and then they converted crash into success (Popper, 1966, p18).

Therefore, historicism is against democratic purposes and a threat to them. In contradiction with what historicism says about the start and destiny of history, Popper believed that future is open and is non-consolidated. Future depends on our decision making. Popper additionally criticized essentialism for that the concept of democracy is lacking in it. Essentialism in both science and democracy was rejected by Popper indeed. Popper described this theory as a *methodological essentialism*. As he said (Popper, 1966, p39): "I use the name *methodological essentialism* to characterize the view held by Plato and many of his followers that it is the task of pure knowledge or 'science' to discover and describe the true nature of things." Moreover, Popper also criticized the classic definition of democracy as a rule of people over people. He demonstrated that the classic definition of democracy creates problems because first of all the majority of people never ruled over all people at all in the history, and

second it is not a correct expectation that all people will get disappointed by democracy whilst they understand that the government is in the hands of a particular group chosen by the majority of people and they realize no difference between a democratic government and an undemocratic one; because in both of them government is in the hands of particular group. Therefore, he proposed to change the classic definition of democracy to a new one; namely, the capacity for peaceful deposal of rulers. He furthermore criticized the unlimited freedom and argued that unlimited liberty is against liberty. Unlimited liberty and freedom in politics or economics has negative consequences and he used to call it as a paradox of freedom.

B. The Positive Heuristic of the Democratic Concept in Popper's Model

From the positive aspect, Popper raised a new question for both science and democracy: "What is the application of things or government?" His famous method is the nominalism. In this method, it is important to provide answers to the questions (Popper, 1966, p40): "How can the energy of the sun be made useful?" "How does a planet move?" and "Under what condition does an atom radiate light?" In democracy and politics he formulated these and similar questions and provided an answer as to the question: "How can the government be made useful?"

Moreover, he presented prediction as a scientific work rather than a prophecy as was the usual practice of historicisms. Social scientists also have to predict the abuse of power by the politicians and establish social institutions and democratic traditions that will prevent any abuse or guarantee that if abuse cannot be prevented, at least is kept within the minimum limits possible.

Far further, Popper re-structured the old political question into a new one by stating (Popper, 1966, p126): "How can we organize political institutions such that bad or incompetent rulers can be prevented from doing too much damage?" The assumptions of this new question are: 1- There need be a mechanism to check and balance the performance of the government, and 2- Politicians in general abuse the political power. Therefore, we have to check their performance and control them as much as we can. The important point in the democratic concept of Popper's model is: "the theory of democracy is not based upon the principle that the majority should rule; rather, the various equalitarian methods of democratic control, such as general elections and representative government, are to be considered as no more than well-trying and, in the presence of a widespread traditional distrust of tyranny, reasonably effective institutional safeguards against tyranny, always open to improvement, and even providing methods for their own improvement." (Popper, 1966, p130) As a consequence, according to Popper's idea of democracy we have opportunity to give back our vote peacefully in elections. We can depose incompetent ruler peacefully. Governments have been divided into two types: democratic, which is the government kind that can be changed peacefully and tyrant; the government which citizens have no opportunity of changing peacefully.

C. The Negative Heuristic of the Democratic Form in Popper's Model

To comply with the liberal democrat's political system, the political system should have more than one political party. As Giddens demonstrated about democratic models, we can divide democratic systems into three parts in terms of political participation: representative multi-party democracy; one-party representative democracy; and participatory, or direct, democracy (Giddens, 1989, p848-849). Giddens and most of the liberal thinkers believed that the representative multi-party democratic system can be thought of as liberal democratic system and of the one-party representative system as non-liberal democratic one. Consequently, compliance with the liberal democratic political system entails presence of more than one party. The liberal democratic systems hence can be two-party democratic systems or multi-party democratic ones. Popper preferred the two-party democratic system over the multi-party one and reasoned this preference by stating that, in contradiction with the multi-party democratic systems, in the two-party democratic systems we can do peaceful political changes or peaceful depose of rulers completely. We can reduce the vote percent of parties in the multi-party liberal democratic systems, ultimately. In popper's idea of the multi-party systems which have parties more than two, the one-partied system is not more responder than the two-party ones. In this system, every party tries to blame the others for the political problems encountered. The experiences of parties in the multi-party liberal democratic countries reveals that they are not more powerful than the two-party ones in international status and that additionally they are not such powerful in internal position as well. Popper did not consider democracy as a goal indeed. Rather, he used to view it as a method to make the government as much as possible responder. Hence, in the multi-party systems few voter parties remain in political power and have such opportunity to do coalition or exit from a coalition against the winner party; indeed by doing so they will be queuing against the majority of voters.

D. The Positive Heuristic of the Democratic Form in Popper's Model

Just because in two-party systems we can see complete peaceful changes and deposal of rulers, Popper confirmed this and emphasized on two-party liberal democratic countries. Popper's aim in democracy was responsibility of government. Thus, the two-, rather than the one-, party system is more responder. That's why Popper preferred it over the multi-party system. We can summarize Popper's argument in that the play law in the multi-party system is bad-less bad law while that in the two-party system is good-better law. Therefore, in the two-party system we will progress step by step to best, and even to further good. Just because the two-party system has no choices except to be a responder government. Popper's aim in designing a democratic model was to keep government democratic and powerful. The new definition of democracy in Popper's ideas was not used as a goal rather it was used as a method of preventing the incidence of dictatorship or absolute government. Popper also had the aim of creating a powerful

government. That's why his favorite government is not like liberal classic government. His favorite government is not minimized or laissez faire like liberal classic philosophers think and it is not maximized like social classic philosophers think. His government is intermediate; indeed it is a night-watchman government which protects people. In sum, his favorite government is responder of a one by two-party democratic form. He paid special attention to creating a model that is secure, powerful and democratic. This is the critique on Popper's model that the two-party system is not normative. If we have one gap in a particular society, the political situation leads to the two-party system and if we have more than one gap, then we end up with the multi-party system. In other words, the various political parties depend on the gaps in societies and we cannot solve this normatively.

To respond to this critique, we have to say: first of all, critics incidentally agreed on that the two-party system is better than the multi-party one, but we cannot receive it normatively. Second, it is normative also to say: don't say normatively. Third, most of current realities were ideal in the past, or most of what we are doing now was usual and considered by our society as ideal, but in the meantime that was regarded as strange by Philosophers in the past and they changed them normatively. For example, free press in the past age was not usual but it is now and stands as an absolute right of people. So, that we advocate normative switch to Popper's model (two-party) is not strange. If we have to go to multi-party systems because of social gaps and as a reality prevalent in the society, and then obey it, we cannot do change. If Philosophers in the past thought so; that we have to obey the existing realities, we couldn't see any change and transformation. Therefore we have to embrace change, sometimes normatively. Our current systems were the last normative parts of history; if we move off the history; we cannot create the types of changes and evolutions formerly created in history. Fourth, if we have to choose one from dictatorship and the two-party democratic models, which of them is the preference of democrats? If we have to create a political model by force, it is preferred to create two-party democratic model, not dictatorship, for democrats.

Then, as earlier discussed, Popper's aim was not to create democracy for democracy, that would lead to pluralism in democracy. We can extrapolate pluralism in democratic societies to the social activities and civil society institutions which have power as well, and we have to look at political actions as political techniques. Social gaps are not all political; most of them are economic, or religious, or ideological, and so on. If we look at the government and its people as a balance of power, we can direct non-political gaps to civil society activities because the civil society has power also and may direct political gaps to a one gap and lead to the two-party democratic system. Finally, we claim that Popper's government is medial, protector, and night-watchman government and that it can operate under both real and ideal scenarios; prevalent realities or future useful normative. That democrats are acting according to social gaps and lead inevitably to multi-party systems is not correct. Liberal government or democrats can act according to musts or 'oughts' and normatively lead to the two-party system.

Therefore, democrats can sometimes function according to reality *per se* and sometimes according to what have to be done; and if we create a two-party democratic model normatively, we will not deviate from Popper's democratic model. Because the important features of democracy are the peaceful deposal and the peaceful changes in politics, Popper's democracy can do this through the two-party system, normatively or by social experiences, much better than by the multi-party liberal democratic one.

III. TRANSITION DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES AND POPPER'S MODEL

Democracy is a process which does not stop at any time. We have lots of works to do for democracy, even in consolidated democratic countries. In this sense, all countries are transition democratic countries because the democratic process will not finish. However, the so-called transition democratic countries such as Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Azerbaijan are the topic of this article. First of all we have to acknowledge that the democratization process is necessary for the whole world and this conception is a basic principle in this article. As Hood (Hood, 2004, p5) stated: "During the nineteenth century, the democratic advances in America, France, and Britain provided powerful evidence that democracy, notwithstanding its flaws, benefited humankind in ways never before realized. Until recently, however, democracy was only practiced in handful of countries."

The other important assumption in this article is that consolidated liberal democratic countries are concerned about global democratic advances and that they help the democratization process in every corner of the world. Therefore, democrats in everywhere, inside or outside of these countries, embrace democratic advances. As McGrew (McGrew, 1997, p241) claimed, "If the aspiration for substantive democracy is to be realized under contemporary conditions then liberal democracy must embrace those global and transnational spheres of modern life which presently escape its territorial jurisdiction."

Thus, we have two assumptions: 1- Democracy is the global value in the world, and 2- Liberal democratic countries embrace democratic advances. With these assumptions, we have to look at the problem of democratic transition in these countries. Dissenters of democracy in transition democratic countries sacrifice democracy by security pretext. They reason, however, that democracy and liberty are good, but people abuse them and create chaos in the society, and that this way democracy will threat security. This is the main reason why undemocratic rulers sacrifice democracy and liberty for security. As stated by Popper (Popper, 1966, p598): "The claim that if you want security you must give up liberty has become a mainstay of the revolt against freedom. But nothing is less true. There is, of course, no absolute security in life. But what security can be attained depends on our own watchfulness, enforced by institutions to help us watch—i.e. by *democratic institutions* which are devised (using Platatonic language) to enable the herd to watch, and to judge, their watch-dogs."

How can democrats give back this cause from undemocratic rulers? We want to offer the democratic model of Popper in concept and form to these countries; to all democrats who are concerned about the democratization process in every corner of the globe.

We can divide democratization problems in these countries into two different parts: internal and international problems. At the internal level, we can point briefly to flaws like economic, cultural and religious conditions and elites as Hood stated (Hood, 2004, p64). At the international level, sometimes we can see that even liberal democratic countries such as the USA were against the democratic process and its growth in transition democratic countries. International problems of the democratization process are related to the crash between national interests of powerful countries, including democratic ones, and the process of democracy in transition democratic countries. However, it should be pinpointed that some international movements benefited democratic advances also. As a result, it seems to be the best idea to simultaneously consider democratic advances in transition democratic countries and national interests of consolidated democratic countries. This is the major responsibility of all democrats in every corner of the globe. By this idea transition democratic countries will not be under threat. As far as the internal position of these countries is concerned, Popper's model helps them to be secure, democratic and powerful. Additionally, adoption of the multi-party system is justified by the gaps in these societies, including economic, religious, ideological, race, language, traditions, and the non-modernity gaps. However, we have to pay special attention to inclusion of liberalism because democratization without liberalism is a threat. All causes including social gaps in these countries lead to pluralism in democracy which contradicts with security and this is the best pretext in the hands of anti-democratic leaders to justify sacrificing democracy for security. Hence, democrats at the international level have: 1- Given democratic advances and national interests in power priority considerations as much close to one the other as was possible, 2- Supported most democratic parts of governments in those countries, and 3- This is the best way how to extend the two-party democratic model of Popper in these countries to prevent pluralism in democracy which will lead to social chaos and weak democracy, and, subsequently, provide the anti-democratic leaders with the best justifications for tyranny.

The democratic model of Popper has a remarkable capacity to help the transition process in these countries to be both democratic and powerful. Thus, if we normatively move towards the two-party democratic system in these countries, first of all we are still democrats because in this model we have the best opportunity for peaceful deposal and political changes, and second this democratic model is suitable for the chaotic and undemocratic conditions and position of these countries. Then, the democratic model of Popper in concept (peaceful changes and deposal of rulers) and in form (two-party democratic system) is the best one in both consolidated democratic countries and transition democratic ones. Nowadays, we have only two examples of Popper model in form; the USA and the UK. However, in the latest elections

in the UK we saw coalition between the conservatism party and a third one. Nonetheless, the democratic model of Popper seems to be logically and empirically the best model.

IV. CONCLUSION

Popper changed the classic expectation from democracy from the rule of majority of people over all people to the new expectation that democracy is a method for preventing damage of bad ruler as much as possible by civil society institutions and democratic traditions. He extended the concept of democracy to possibility of peaceful deposal and peaceful changes and considered the two-party democratic systems as a political system that is better than the other political models. In Popper's model, the political system is both democratic and powerful, and as stated, the two-party system is better than the multi-party democratic one because in the two-party system a party will be completely able to depose a ruler while in the multi-party system one can just reduce the voting percent of parties in such a way as to make them not any more responders to people. The law play in the multi-parties democratic system is bad-less bad whereas in the two-party system it is good-further good play. In transition democratic governments, the anti-democratic leaders always sacrifice democracy for security pretext. Therefore, we have to 1- Give democratic advances and national interests in power priority considerations as much close to one the other as is possible, 2- Support most democratic parts of governments in those countries, and 3- This is the best way how to extend the two-party democratic model of Popper in these countries to prevent pluralism in democracy which will lead to social chaos and weak democracy and subsequently provide the anti-democratic leaders with the best justifications for tyranny.

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