



The Problem of Fearing the Political Situation at University

Hamed Taheri Kia¹

Received: Nov. 24, 2018; Accepted: May. 05, 2019

Extended Abstract

This article studies the experience of fear of confronting the political state at the Iranian university. From the early days of establishing the university in Iran, Iranian university has been engaging in the politics and triggering political movement. In other words, student political movement, in Iranian contemporary political history, is a key term. Hence, the previous researches, in this field, just consider the historical approach, and then there is a lack of deep and qualitative examination which analyzes the current features of the political state at the university. Thus, in this article, analyzing the political state connects to the recent Iranian political approaches and its changes. Our study is after the green movement of 2008 and security encounters with students. Therefore, for students, based on those days and experiences, involving in political state is with fear and frustration. For examining this, we studied the University of Poly Techniques, Faculty of Social science at Allameh Tabataba'i University and Faculty of Medical Science at Tehran University. We conducted deep interview with 50 of political and non-political students. The object of the article is to answer how the fear of the political state at the university, for students, does make sense? And, how political student activists have encountered the fear? Consequently, students' families are the basic factor to produce fear of the political situations, for the historical facts proves the political actions at the university threaten students' future opportunity to get a job and even continue studies. Besides, in the everyday life at university, students alert each other to the adventures of the political engagements. But, when we talk about political state, mostly, it is about radical and reformist approaches and not those conservative practices which are supported by hardliners. Also, those political students who passed the gate of fear to the political sphere and doing political actions are like a catalyzer to persuade and stimulate other students to pass from the gate of fear.

Keywords: fear, political subjectivity, university, student, political state

1. PhD of Cultural Policy from Iranian Institute for Cultural and Social Studies, Tehran, Iran.

✉ kia.erhut@gmail.com



INTRODUCTION

History of Iranian university has a very complicated relationship with the Iranian political discourses. Commencing of the university, in the early of 20th, was based on a political decision to make a new era of Iran which is called modern Iran. The lack of political parties turned universities into a possible political protesting situation with the young and educated population. One of the most important protesting populations during the Islamic Iranian revolution of 1976 was students. Also, in the post-revolutionary society of Iran, universities have a very political function. Now, the political activity for students and having a political role for the university is an undeniable fact.

Political student activists have to become a member of the student political organization, which are under the supervision of the university. There are two general political approaches, based on the Iranian political discourse, conservative and reformist. Then, different political and social studies have tried to examine the political features of the university.

These studies focus on the historical and contemporary aspects of the political student movements. Historical studies have a discursive method and the quantitative method is best suited for analyzing contemporary facts. Both of these approaches do not consider political student's lived experience of doing the political activity.

PURPOSE

Therefore, we try to understand political student's experience especially his/her feeling of fear. The feeling of fear is a very significant point for reformist political students since they have been exposed to political accusation. Then, how does student experience the fear of the political situation?

METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative method. Fifty students are conducted an in-depth interview. Three universities of the Polytechnics of Amir Kabir, Faculty of Social Science of Allameh Tabatabaee, and Faculty of Medical Science of Tehran University are fields of study. Also, for thematic analyzing of data, data is coded by the qualitative software of Nvivo.

RESULT

Iranian political discourse gives advantage to political conservative approaches, and then the reformist political activity is accompanied by the political accusation. The

recent history of the political activity, in post-revolutionary Iran, has demonstrated that political reformist movements have been seen as a threatening subversion.

Hence, most of the families advise their children not to take part in political situations or student political organization. Also, students become each other aware of the threatening consequences of doing political activity. Then, in order to take part in political situations at the university, every student needs to pass the gate of fear.

Meanwhile, student political activists, who have passed the gate of fear, face the feeling of fear in a more complicated manner. They are more sophisticated inasmuch they engaged in threatening political situations such as arrested by security service; going to jail or even not allowed continuing their higher education. Therefore, they work as a catalyzer for other students behind the gate of fear.

From this perspective, for general students and political students, the regime of feeling (Glynos & Stavarakakis, 2008, 266) about the political situation is the case of challenging with the fear.

DISCUSSION

For Maffesoli (1991, 7), there are two types of power: 1. Power over; 2. Power to. Power over is about the hegemonic and dominance power, and power to refers to the changing dynamics of everyday life. From this view, for the reformist political students, experiencing the political activity, as the situation of power to, is not safe and it is with the feeling of fear. Then, the dominant position of power over makes a problematic field for any reform movement emerges from the culture of everyday life.

CONCLUSION

Iranian students face the gate of fear. The gate of fear is to estimate the consequences of entering the political situation and finding himself/herself with political signs and acts. This is a technology of self to keep the future of personal progress safe. Then, every political student needs to make a decision to highlight values for taking a subject position in the political situation. This means to pass the gate of fear and to step on the way of political reformation.

NOVELTY

On the contrary to the other researches, this study is qualitative conduct. It tries to approach the political and non-political students. Then, it extends the view for the political situation at the university. Also, understanding the experiencing of facing the political situation by students is termed and analyzed by the concepts of fear.



Iranian Cultural Research

Abstract

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Emamjomehzadeh, S. J., & Nejatpour, M. (2010). Asibšenāsi-ye jonbeš-e dānešjuyi dar Iran (Dahe-ye 70 va 80) [Pathology of student movement in Iran]. *The Quarterly of Islamic Revolution Studies*, 7(21), 105-127.
- Jalayipour, H. (2010). Fahm-e jonbeš-e dānešjuyi dar Iran [Toward an understanding of student movement in Iran]. *Iranian Journal of Social Problems*, 1(3), 179-213.
- Rezaie, M., Kazemi, A., & Taheri Kia, H. (2017). Čahār ruz az hayāt-e dānešgāh pas az Enqelāb; April 19 to April 22, 1980 [Four days of life university after Islamic revolution: From April 19 to April 22, 1980]. *Jouranal of Iranian Cultural Research*, 10(1), 177-200. doi: 10.22631/ijcr.2017.327
- Salar Kasraie, M., & Poozesh Shirazi, A. (2011). Tahlil-e goftemān-e jonbeš-e dānešjuyi pas az piruzi-ye Enqelāb-e Eslāmi bā estefāde az nazariye-ye goftemān-e Lclau va Moufee [Discourse analysis of the student movement after the Islamic revolution, using discourse theory of Lclau and Moufee]. *Politic Quarterly*, 41(3), 227-245.
- Sajadi, F. (2010). Negareš-e jāme'ešenāxti bar jahatgiri va farāyandhā-ye jonbeš-e dānešjui-ye Iran 1979-2009 [A sociological approach to directions and processes of Iran's student movement: 1979-2009]. *Low and Political Science*, 40(1), 117-134.
- Shiroudi, M. (2013). Tavānsanji-ye goftemānhā-ye jonbeš-e dānešjui-ye Irān-e mo'āser [The ability of deliberating conversations of student's movement in contemporary Iran]. *Quarterly Secientific - Research Journal on Islamic Revolution*, 2(5), 67-89.
- Ketabi, M., Vahida, F., & Ghasemi, V. (2001). Gunešenāsi-ye farhang-e siyāsi-ye dānešjuyān-e šāghel be tahsil dar Iran [Typology of student's political culture in Iran]. *Literature and Human Science (University of Isfahan)*, 26&27, 77-108.
- Kashi, Gh. (2006). *Fazā-ye dānesgāh, siyāsatvarzi va nāsāzehā-ye hoviyați dar zendegi-ye danešjuyān* [Space of university, policy making and naughty factors of identity in students' life]. Tehran, Iran: Institute of Science and Culture Studies.
- Kachoian, H., & Kalantari, A. (2014). Mafhumsāzi-ye goftemāni-ye jonbeš-e dānešjuyi dar Iran (Motāle'e-ye mowredi daftar-e tahkim-e vahdat) [Discursive conceptualization of student movement in Iran (Case study: Office for strengthening unity)]. *Politic Quarterly*, 44(2), 219-249.
- Mohammadi, M., & Mahboubi, Gh. (2012). Tahlil-e goftmāni-ye jonbeš-e dānešjui-ye Iran az āghāz tā piruzi-ye Enqelāb-e Eslāmi bā ta'kid bar goftemān-e Eslāmi-ye Imam Khomeini [Analysis of Iran's student movement from beginning to triumph of Islamic Revolution]. *Iranian Jouranal of The Knowledge Studies in the Islamic University*, 16(51), 315-332.



- Nakhaei, H. (2011). *Tahavvolāt-e jonbeš-e dānešjui-ye Irān: Ravand va farjām (1925-1980)* [Changes of Iranian student movement: Process and consequence (1925-1980)] (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.
- Badiou, A. (2009). *Logics of worlds* (A. Toscano, Trans.). London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Deleuze, G. (1969). *The logic of sense* (M. Lester, & Ch. Stivalc, Trans.). London: The Athlone Press.
- Gómez, A., Puigvert, L., & Flecha, R. (2011). Critical communicative methodology: Informing real social transformation through research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17(3), 235-245. doi: 10.1177/1077800410397802
- Golkar, S. (2012). Cultural engineering under authoritarian regimes: Islamization of universities in postrevolutionary Iran. *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 21(1), 1-23. doi: 10.1111/j.1949-3606.2012.00124.x
- Golkar, S. (2015). *Captive society: The Basij Militia and social control in Iran*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Glynos, J., & Stavrakakis, Y. (2008). Lacan and political subjectivity: Fantasy and enjoyment in psychoanalysis and political theory. *Subjectivity*, 24(1), 256-274. doi: 10.1057/sub.2008.23
- Maffesoli, M. (1991). The ethic of aesthetics. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 8(1), 7-20. doi: 10.1177/026327691008001002
- Maffesoli, M. (2004). Everyday tragedy and creation: Translated from the French by Karen Isabel Ocaña. *Cultural Studies*, 18(2-3), 201-210. doi: 10.1080/0950238042000201482
- Mohammadi, M. (2007). Iranian university students' politics in the post-reform movement era: A discourse analysis. *Iranian Studies*, 40(5), 623-634. doi: 10.1080/00210860701667704
- Razavi, R. (2009). The cultural revolution in Iran, with close regard to the universities, and its impact on the student movement. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 45(1), 1-17. doi: 10.1080/00263200802547586
- Rancier, J. (2010). *Dissensus: On politics and aesthetics* (S. Corcoran, Trans.). London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Sobrinho, B. J. (2001). *Signs, solidarities, and sociology: Charles S. Peirce and the pragmatics of globalization*. United States of America: Rowman & Littlefield.



Iranian Cultural Research

Abstract