



Iranian Universities and Politics: Political Student Associations as a Camp

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Abstract

This article deals with Iranian student political associations at universities. Iranian universities, throughout their history, have played an important role in political movements, and their most effective function is related to the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. But after the Islamic Revolution, the university had to witness a shift from its revolutionary role to a political one. In this functional shift, student political associations were organized by a supervisory committee as the representation of Islamic political discourse. Thus, inspired by the Agamben's lexicon of camp, student political associations can be regarded as a refugee camp (Ramadan, 2013, p. 146) in which political students are held and seen as emigrants who have immigrated to the pole of politics. To study this, we explored three important universities in Tehran with a significant political background. We interviewed political and non-political students, and conducted field observations as well. Consequently, student political associations are monitored as a camp in which political students release their energy. Also, political students use some parallel spaces, such as social networks or spots close to universities, like parks, to come together and develop political plans. Finally, pursuing ideal objectives, trying to affect others, and feeling a responsibility are the motivations that make political associations acceptable for political students.

Keywords: Politics, University, Students, Camp

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Introduction

Throughout the history of the formation of Iranian universities, the connection between university and politics and the role of the university in social, political, and cultural issues have been among the most important features that provide Iranian universities with a distinct characteristic (Mashayekhi, 1992, p. 61). Political activities at universities, as a space for criticizing government policies, have caused them to be constantly under security control. Throughout the history of political struggles in Iran, since the Pahlavi era, university students have been among political prisoners. This was at its zenith in the formation of the Iranian Revolution in mcmlxxix.

As a result, in the period following the Revolution, universities were, more than any other time, politicized while they were devoid of their revolutionary function (Razavi, 2009, p. 3; See Rezaie, Kazemi & kia, 2017; Golkar, 2012, p. 16). Universities, after the Revolution, should not have had a political function as the Iranian society had achieved its goal, i.e. the success of the Iranian Revolution (Golkar, 2012, p. 2). Therefore, universities became dominated by political views, and what is defined as political in universities is based on the principles approved of by the Islamic Republic's discourse.

In the Islamic Republic's discourse, there are two types of power division: (1) Conservative political power, and (2) reformist political power (Mohammadi, 2018, p. 42). Throughout the history of the Islamic Republic of Iran, conservatives have always had more political power than the reformists. The conservatives have had the important economic, military, and political sections under control, and the reformists have tried to form government by winning elections. Therefore, political associations at universities belong to either the reformists or the conservatives, and represent their political discourses. In other words, there is a form of standardized politics whose mechanism and orientation are quite clear. Thus, rather than being close to the civil society and its dynamics, politics

at university is associated with division of power in the Islamic Republic's discourse (See Chehabi, 2001). As a result, the following questions can be raised: How can the function of political student associations, legally active at universities, be explained based on the political frameworks of Iranian Revolution's discourse? What spaces outside the political associations can be a substitute for students' political activities? How do students enjoy being in the environment controlled by political associations?

To answer these questions, we studied students from three important universities, namely Amirkabir University of Technology (AUT), Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS) and Allameh Tabataba'i University (ATU), Faculty of Social Sciences. In addition to field observations, more than fifty in-depth interviews were conducted with both political and non-political students and the cultural authorities of universities. It should be noted that political student associations are categorized into conservative and reformist associations. These two political parties have been formed based on the power division in the political discourse of the Islamic Republic of Iran; they represent their political ideologies and are in rivalry with each other. Therefore, to refer to the interviews with political students, their political inclination is mentioned, while to allude to non-political students, only the name of the relevant university is mentioned.

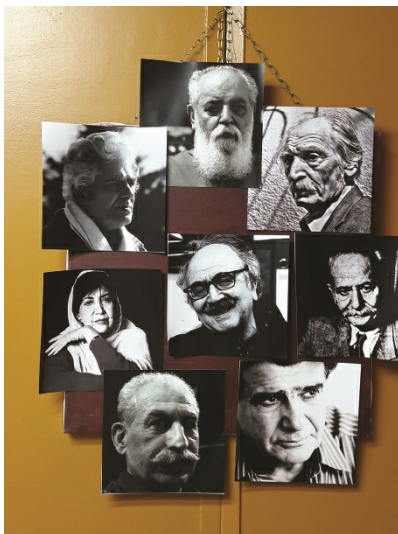
Camp and Political Subjects as Immigrant to the Land of Politics

In modern Western history, the concept of camp is of great importance (Diken & Laustsen, 2005, p. 10). Camp has developed through the conditions of exceptional beings and military rules. The presence of camps points to the importance of creating order and the process of civilization (Ek, 2006, p. 369). Thus, camp is the space for exceptional beings that are regarded as "the Other" (ten Bos, 2005, p. 22) and should be identified. These exceptional beings are kept under special conditions so that civilization can be formed away from them.

According to Agamben (Agamben, 1998, p. 169), the space of a camp is the space for a community without identity. They are considered as dangerous individuals, whom are grouped and put into order in camps. Also, it is the discourse system and rules governing it that identifies exceptional beings and puts them in the context of a camp. And on the other side of camps, civilization and civil societies can be found. However, the mechanism of the camp has a reverse function in the Islamic Republic's discourse. Camp is located in the heart of social and Islamic civilization, and outside the camp, there is security or political crime climate, as will be discussed below. Therefore, in order to deal with student associations as a camp, we need to provide a description of political subjects at universities.

Politics at universities is controlled by the Islamic republic and depends on political power divisions. As a result, entering student associations is accompanied by a number of pre-determined features. For example, a student who becomes a member of an extremist religious *Hezb-o-Allahy* association is first and foremost religious, believes in the segregation of women and men in their workplace (Arjmand, 2017, p. 7), is opposed to the Western culture, and is committed to the ideals of the Islamic Revolution. On the other hand, students who become members of reformist associations do not mind cooperation between girls and boys, believe in democracy and freedom of expression, and to them, the 2009 Iranian Green Movement was a movement for the establishment of justice. Even the photos seen in the offices of political associations somehow represent these political divisions. Each of these political divisions has prominent figures of their own, whose pictures are displayed in their offices to create a political identity (Pictures 1 & 2). "These are called identity photos. We kind of want to expose our identity. These people's ideas are clear and well-known. Their ideals are also known. ... Mehdi Bazargan, Ayatollah Taleghani, Ebrahim Yazdi were all members of this association. Sahabi was a member, too. They were all old members of the association" (a member of the

reformist political association, AUT). As can be seen, the climate of these associations is ideological, and this ideology is associated with the traditional divisions of political power.



Picture 1. Pictures on the walls of *Majma'e Eslami* office, AUT (with reformist tendencies)



Picture 2. Office of Islamic Association of Students, AUT (with Principlist tendencies)

On the other hand, student political action, especially following the Green Movement, is accompanied by danger and fear. Many families advise their children not to join these political movements, and friends warn one another that political action will not come without a cost. Students speak of political students who paid a huge cost for their political action. These students believe that suffering a heavy cost for political action without causing a change is not logical. When they speak of change through political action, they, in fact, speak of expectations one has of political student associations, i.e. associations that should bring about changes in the political conditions of the country. Therefore, students have a feeling of frustration as, throughout these years, no changes have occurred. Also, another cause for fear of political action at universities is building one's future. Students are concerned that if they are involved in political activities, they might be prevented from continuing their education or finding a good job. Thus, politics at universities is in a climate of anxiety and threat, and is accompanied by a kind of phobia; and political subjects who are active in politics have to take paths of fear and anxiety. As a result, the Islamic Republic's discourse treats political students as exceptional beings who, in spite of the inappropriate circumstances, still get involved in political action, and consequently, should be under biopolitical control (Schinkel, 2010, p. 156) and observation.

Our perception of political subjects as exceptional individuals is based on the categorization made by the Islamic Revolution's discourse. In Western culture, Agamben has defined the relationship between law and exceptional beings, thus:

The exception does not subtract itself from the rule; rather, the rule, suspending itself, gives rise to the exception and, maintaining itself in relation to the exception, first constitutes itself as a rule. The particular "force" of law consists in this capacity of law to maintain itself in relation to an exteriority. (Agamben, 1998, p. 18)

However, in Islamic Republic's discourse, the law does not separate itself from exceptional beings, but takes possession of them. In order to control political, cultural, and social events, the Islamic Republic's discourse creates spaces for action and issues legal permissions for entering and conducting activities in them. These spaces are governed by the laws of the Islamic Republic, and exceptional beings can be active there only under controlled conditions. Therefore, the exceptional being that leaves this space enters a security space and is recognized as an offending subject who has committed a political offence. In the context of the Islamic Republic's discourse, the structure of the camp changes. Camp is the definition of a threshold (Minca, 2005, p. 497) between good political and bad political subject. The camp exists at the heart of the Islamic society so that exceptional beings are possessed. For example, the production of cultural products, such as movies, music, and literature should be permitted by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. Therefore, these products are censored, and if they violate the laws, they will be prosecuted.

Political subjects at universities are exceptional beings that enter the domain of politics. They are exceptional beings who have migrated from the scientific domain to political domain. Political subjects have political concerns because of which they immigrate to the political space. Therefore, immigration to political space is an event for political students. An event is the possibility of constituting a new form of life, and political action is an attempt to create the conditions for a change that starts with an event (See Lazzarato, 2017). The event of immigration to the domain of politics is, in fact, the possibility of experiencing political subjectivity and political action. The desire to experience politics at universities causes political discourse to become sensitive to political subjects. The order of political discourse should not be disturbed at universities. The law should identify, categorize, and control them; and if this does not happen, they will have the potential to disrupt political order. They act as parasites to the order

of discourse (Serres, 1982,p. 52); as parasites that can make noise in political relations. They can be anywhere, and therefore, should be supervised: “Here, we can do nothing without permission. Whatever is going on is permitted by faculty officials” (a member of the reformist political association, TUMS).

The university supervises the political activities of associations through supervisory bodies. In fact, supervisory bodies are government’s means of controlling the political activities of associations: “The university approves of books and decides whether they are good or bad. We send a request to the supervisory board and tell them we want to hold study circles. After all, we are under the supervision of the university, and they should know what we are doing” (a member of the reformist political association, AUT). “This is the general policy of the university regarding associations. They say that we should tell them about our programs and plans, and then they provide us with what we need. For example, if we want books, they should first check them; and if they approve of them, they’ll pay for them” (a member of the reformist political association, TUMS). Therefore, supervision is carried out through allocating budget and issuing permissions for the activities of student associations. Also, supervision should be exercised from the very beginning in a way that would not cause political controversies or be reflected in the news. This can be seen in the case of supervision over student publications.

They give you permission for the publication at first ... you have to give some copies of it to the cultural affairs officials when you publish it and want to distribute it in the university. Then they read it and if there is a problem, they will suspend it. And that’s why first we publish a few copies and if they approve of it we’ll publish large numbers of it (a member of the reformist political association, AUT).

The supervisory board functions as the ideological apparatus of the Islamic Republic's discourse. It imposes its power on political associations and takes them under its control. The concepts of "power over" for control and "power to" allude to micropolitics for change (Sobrinho, 2001, p. 120). The supervisory board has "power over", which stands opposed to the attempts of political associations to change the circumstances; political associations have "power to". "Power to" shows the dynamic energies that exist in political associations (Maffesol, 1991, p. 7). "Power to" is the situation of a camp, which keeps the political subjects' energies in itself. Therefore, there is a tension between the control power of supervisory bodies and the power of political associations to bring about changes in each other.

Most tensions between the associations and the cultural management unit of universities concern issues like budget, obtaining permissions for meetings, and guests. Bargaining and frequent visits for these purposes can be a kind of resistance to the unilateral decisions of the university¹. "Normally, bargaining and insistence on what you need in the university and administrative affair works... sometimes officials are convinced, and if they're not, we'll talk to senior officials. But we usually don't argue about money. Normally we argue about issues like inviting guests" (a member of the reformist political association, AUT). "For example, they say they won't pay the costs and you can hold the meeting or whatever on our own. Then we start bargaining" (a member of the conservative political association, AUT). Thus, resistance concerns the way laws are implemented and decisions are made. However, it should be noted that the resistance on the part of political associations against decisions made by the supervisory bodies of universities only concerns how or whether or

1. Here, what is meant by "resistance" is the way political students talk to and interact with supervisory body officials. Resistance, irrespective of its material and physical aspect, takes a linguistic and symbolic form (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004: 536).

not political programs are carried out, and their attempt is never aimed at eliminating such supervisions. In other words, this resistance is not against the controlling body of the camp, but is rather about how the camp is supervised. Therefore, resistance is a kind of interaction of political associations with universities with the aim of preserving and sustaining their own political entity (Kim, 2010).

A charter has been developed for the organization of political subjects in associations, and the supervisory body of universities is responsible for its implementation. Students wishing to become members of political associations should first be nominated, and their qualifications should be checked and confirmed by the university. Therefore, supervision starts from the very beginning. Politics tries to exert its control over the entrance of these exceptional immigrants as much as possible. Candidates for political student associations take part in elections, and thus, enter a political camp. Political association as a camp is synonymous with presuming political subjects as exceptional beings that have been able to conquer their fear of political activity; and if they are not controlled, they can disrupt the political order. Therefore, government institutions should continue to hold the reins of politics. Political associations should define their identity in relation to the government and its legitimate divisions of power and must not represent other political discourses lest they threaten the political framework of Islamic Republic's discourse.

As a result, getting involved in social and cultural issues with the aim of making the voice of civil society heard is a red line for political student associations. Political identity should be formed solely through political camps controlled by the government. In the system of Islamic Republic's discourse, no institution, except the government, can legitimize a group or association to have a political identity, and consequently student associations can gain political legitimacy only through the political discourses of the government. Thus, political associations receive budget for their

programs, and the guest they invite should be approved. “We have told them that without arranging it [with us] first, they can’t invite [a guest]” (Cultural Deputy, ATU). Rooms and halls can be used only if permitted by the university, and the publication and bulletin boards of the associations are supervised. All these show that a camp has been set for controlling political subjects, as without it, the political order of the Islamic Revolution can be seriously challenged. Consequently, political associations act as camps for keeping political students, a point that can be better understood when parallel spaces, which create the political subject in themselves outside the control of universities, start to play a role.

Parallel Spaces and the Formation of the Political Subject

Political associations are a space where political subjects are presumed as exceptional subjects who are supervised in different ways with special sensitivity. In associations as camps, political subjects and their actions and concerns are kept to prevent them from turning into noises and parasites. However, those spaces should be also considered where relationships are formed through which political subjects with special concerns are formed. In this regard, the activities of associations in virtual spaces can be pointed out. However, prior to this, there are other forms of parallel spaces for political students.

One of the most important instances of this is the Faculty of Social Sciences of ATU. Active political students boycotted political association elections, and nobody voted, because the candidates they supported were disqualified for no clear reason. Therefore, the change-seeking political students had no association or office to be controlled by the supervisory board. As a result, they usually gathered in a park, known as Atousa Park, across from the university, and talked about collective actions and protests (Pictures 3 and 4).



Picture 3 & 4: Atousa Park, across from Faculty of Social Sciences, ATU

The closing down of the association had important outcomes. ... A part of our activities were moved to Atousa Park. For some activities and also for meeting, we used other associations. For example, we held one of our political gatherings through Andisheh Association. Andisheh is not a political association and couldn't carry out this program, but we used some tricks and managed to do it. That's how we ran the program (a member of the reformist political association, Faculty of Social Sciences, ATU).

It is clear that there is no political association at the university and political subjects establish relationships and create common political concerns at spaces outside the protected area of the university. Also, the cultural associations of universities, with their non-political function, act in a way that the groups that are not recognized by universities can follow their objectives. "Atousa Park was a place for all of us. Students from different faculties gathered in this park, all of them. All gathered in this park" (a member of the reformist political association, Faculty of Social Sciences, ATU). Therefore, when no association exists for students' activities, there will be an indistinct population that employs different methods to achieve its objectives.

Thus, when there is no political association at the university, other places come into being for political activities:

During the time we had no reformist associations, the reformist students focused on students' unions and associations. But when reformist associations were formed, a large part of students who were active in students' unions and associations joined these new associations. This was very useful for us because unions and other associations were less politicized. (Cultural Deputy of AUT)

As can be understood from the above quotation, student unions turn into spaces that, contrary to their charter, pursue political objectives. The

emergence of politics in unions and associations whose main function is not political indicates that there is no camp for the activities of political subjects. “I wanted to take part in some activities, and, because this was the only thing possible, I turned to union activities” (a member of the reformist political association, Faculty of Social Sciences, ATU).

We have been active in this political association for about a year and a half. Before, we worked in the students’ union of the university and student publications. Some of our friends worked in cultural associations. It was kind of a team work that had started before. But here, we worked in a more organized way. (A member of the reformist political association, AUT)

Therefore, although student unions and associations have cultural and union functions, they are a venue for political activities. Students interested in political action prefer to have an association so that they can pursue their concerns and objectives with more legitimacy. However, political legitimacy is granted by the government and the Islamic Republic’s discourse desires to control political associations, especially students’ political associations, and as a result, creates a supervisory camp for them.

The limitations of student political camps and control over them are no longer unknown to students: “There, you are under closer observation, but here, I feel I’ve more freedom. There, your freedom is limited; when you’re a member of an association, you’re watched more closely and supervision is stricter” (a student of TUMS). A student who is not a member of a political association refers to the political association as a geography of limitation and being under close observation. From this point of view, political associations are a collection of immigrants who have immigrated to the land of politics; immigrants whose political subjectivity is under control so that they act within the frameworks of law and carry out their programs only when permission is issued. Thus, being in a camp is being obedient to its laws so that nothing gets out of control.

For this purpose, the bylaws of student offences state that any disturbance aimed at damaging the pillars of the system or planned, coordinated or directed by illegal groups outside universities will be dealt with through disciplinary actions. The Islamic Republic of Iran responds to any political reform outside its political cultural borders (Golkar, 2015, p. 21).

Therefore, the concept of camp regarding political associations signifies that they must not go beyond the political discourses of power in the Islamic Republic.

Principalism and reformism are two popular political parties that are well established in the country, and, quite expectedly, they have supporters among students. ... They should have permission. And they should work within the framework and red lines that have been set in the relevant bylaw. ... They should carry out their activities in a clear, codified and legal manner. (Cultural Deputy of ATU)

Thus, political associations represent two political powers in the political system of Iran, whose political identity should be determined based on their political discourses. The supervisory board, in fact, observes the walls of the camp so that no incongruous form of politics gets out. For a criticism of this issue, this quotation should be considered: "Actually, I believe that the political atmosphere of these associations is a fabricated atmosphere. ... It's an atmosphere to let the student express their enthusiasm. They're closely observed. It's quite clear that they want to keep the enthusiasm of students within this political association" (a student of TUMS).

According to students, the political associations have a lot of limitations. These limitations keep them within the frameworks of standardized politics. Therefore, when students are not supervised within the framework of an association, they can have a more organic relationship with each other.

We decided to register for the Islamic Association of Students election. We were 25 people who became candidates; but fourteen of

us were disqualified for no good reason. Then, they didn't let us into the Association and we turned into oppositions of the Association for one and a half year. We're a group of students with no official position, but we have the highest legitimacy among students; and we've held two ceremonies, though we have no official position. (A member of the reformist political association, ATU)

As can be seen, those students who form a political group based on their common concerns but do not enter any associations can act as organic intellectuals (Smart, 1994, p. 213); intellectuals who are in an effective communicative action with other students.

The Issue of Enjoyment and Going beyond Camp

Considering the concept of camp and all the controls on the associations, how do political subjects nominate to enter these associations and how are elections held? The clearest answer to this question might be found in this quotation. "I try my best to know about politics and work in those fields of politics I know about; I work in the field that I know will produce a result, and this makes me feel satisfied" (a member of the reformist political association, AUT). As can be seen, associations as camps are, in fact, a space, like a protected room, where political subjects' energy is released. "I try to be useful for myself; I use my potentials" (a member of the reformist political association, TUMS). However, these energies are then controlled so that they are not discharged into the outside space, to prevent their power to influence, leading to undesired outcomes and releasing irrepressible energies. It is exactly this release of energy that gives meaning to satisfaction with the experience of political subjectivity.

However, the release of energy is only the starting point of deriving enjoyment and satisfaction from being in a camp. Following that, two important issues grow simultaneously: (1) Personal development,

and (2) attempts to have an effect on others. “It was really enjoyable because after that, when there was a debate, I could take part in it and express my ideas, and this somehow made me feel proud” (a member of the reformist political association, AUT). “This is because you are also expressing something. You are also supporting something. Now, you believe that there are things you can criticize or support” (a student of Faculty of Social Sciences, ATU). As can be easily understood from these quotations, political subjects have a feeling of satisfaction with their personality development and achieving self-awareness. This personal development creates desire and enjoyment that are developed within the walls of camps. Nevertheless, the subjects formed in the camp create ideals and missions for themselves – which is bringing about change and having an effect. “I thought I was doing the right thing at university level, and that’s why the university is becoming a better place” (a member of the reformist political association, AUT).

The issue of mission and developing ideals is of great importance and should be paid attention. “They’re sacrificing their personal enjoyment ... inner enjoyment is not personal enjoyment. What is important then is idealism and perfectionism (a member of the reformist political association, TUMS). The members of the reformist Islamic Association of Students speak about mission and ideals and so do members of the Principalist associations. “You feel you have a responsibility. It’s your duty to do something” (a member of the conservative political association, AUT). Therefore, what is of importance here is the ideals toward which political subjects feel a responsibility. Moving from the enjoyment of personal development to the enjoyment of collective development is an important point the political subjects experience in the camp. “Affecting others is enjoyable to me. ... having the power to affect is very important to me” (a member of the reformist political association, AUT). Thus, the process of transition from the experience of personal enjoyment to the experience of the enjoyment of affecting others turns the political

subject into an influential and determining factor at the university¹. It brings about change and belief in change, and impression that forms the political subject and strengthens belief in ideals. “I organize a speech or a study course, and then I realize I have helped my friend grow a lot ... I’ve been able to serve people and help people develop” (a member of the conservative political association, AUT). The fact that political subjects can cause changes is the most important reason for the self-confidence and enjoyment they experience; and even sometimes, belief in change is connected with a feeling of guilt: “I can’t remember being able to achieve even one percent of our ideals. We can’t say we’ve achieved an ideal and we’re satisfied. We’ve really never been able to do that. We’ve achieved none of them ... but at least we have an easy conscience” (a member of the reformist political association, Faculty of Social Sciences of ATU).

The feeling of guilt discussed above is connected with the responsibility the individual feels on his shoulders. “To be able to do what has been assigned to you, the responsibility you have. And what is that responsibility? The responsibility of having an effect on the society, and moving the society one step closer to the favorable destination that has been set for it” (a member of the conservative political association, Faculty of Social Sciences of ATU). Therefore, political subjects feel responsible toward the development they have undergone. Responsibility to bring about change and development in the surrounding environment and to play a role as an active factor is the most important issue highlighted in different ways, and failing to do it results in having a guilty conscience:

The enjoyment of leaving university with a clear conscience about your concerns and having been able to do something. Or when at least you try to do something about your concerns, it is enjoyable; that you can have an effect feels good; or it is enjoyable when the

1. Deleuze speaks about the power of impression and impressionability in the assemblage of relations. Impression and impressionability are the potentials for the occurrence of new events and create the line of flight. Therefore, the assemblage of relations is current and changing (Sibertin-Blanc, 2016, p. 222-7).

outcome of your activities has an influence and makes others become more concerned about different issue. (A member of the reformist political association, TUMS)

Therefore, the political subject follows an objective, and after some time, it turns into an enjoyment. “Like it or not, you get involved in things that define an objective for you” (a member of the reformist political association, AUT). Setting objectives is what gradually brings about obligation and commitment.

Thus, in the camp, the energy of self-confidence is released and changes into a desire to have an effect. It is a movement that starts with the political subject and goes toward the factor of change. It is a factor that tries to transform the everyday at the university. “It’s really enjoyable for me that groups of people get together and read poems, talk and have an approach that is different from the university routine” (a member of the reformist political association, Faculty of Social Sciences, ATU). A way to go beyond the university everyday life can be found in the setting of extracurricular activities; activities that are arranged by the university in camps. Camps are like safe rooms where energy explosions occur. Everything is under control, and if something goes beyond it, a security issue will come up. Students turn into a security issue when they go out of this camp and can have an unfavorable effect on or cause an undesirable change in political security. That is why legal authorities, both inside and outside universities, control these camps so that nothing moves toward the university gates, which join the university to the streets and the people.

The enjoyment of being useful remains at personal development level, the reason for which should be sought in the political structure of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the interviews conducted with them, non-political students referred to political students as the infantry of politics. In the interviews, political students repeatedly pointed out that nobody – by which they meant government organizations – listened to them. However, in no interview did they mention that the civil society did

not listen to them. In its political history, the university was in contact with civil societies, which took on a revolutionary form. But after the Islamic Revolution, the university had a political function, rather than a revolutionary one, and any revolutionary movement on the part of the university was considered a subverting action, as was seen in the case of the Green Movement (Rahimi, 2012, p. 69). From this point of view, students enter camps in order to start a dialogue with the government. Their audience is the government rather than the civil society. For the same reason, the government organizes political associations in the form of a camp and places itself between students and the civil society. As a result, political students experience political disappointment. However, this political disappointment is accompanied by the experience of impressionability and the power to have an effect, and these two have established a dialectical relationship with each other.

Attracting attention and being seen as a charismatic leader are among other enjoyments experienced by political subjects:

In 2009, a photo of me and some others was put on the wall with red circles around our heads to show that we were the main cause of the riot in the university. This made me feel better, rather than worried, because I'd become more famous. (Political activist, member of the reformist political association, Faculty of Social Sciences, ATU)

The desire to be known is the same as gaining legitimacy in the eyes of others. The experience of being famous among students is one of the most important experiences the political subject gains. "Giving speeches to others and being applauded. It's great. Most people can't give it up. You experience it once and then can never give it up" (a student at TUMS).

Also, being attractive and charming causes the charismatic power of students to grow. "Those who do this gain an advantage, and if they do it and study their lessons hard, they will become a model; those who are more active are more respected" (a member of the conservative

political association, AUT). Therefore, having influence due to fame and charm increases the power to be effective and influential:

It was the year 2010. Our class finished. ... Then a man came to me and said that ... he was the head of the Islamic Association and invited me to the Association. He spoke about five minutes. ... At the time I thought to myself 'Who is this person?' 'An active person?', 'An important person?' 'Politically and cultural active?' Then when I joined the Association and became a famous person myself and other students knew me, I made many friends. (A member of the Islamic Association, TUMS)

The experience of gaining social capital through joining associations is one of the most enjoyable and motivating experiences for political subjects. These subjects get in contact with different people such as university professors, experts and political authorities. Social capital is an important issue that contributes to an increase in political subjects' self-confidence and submission of subjectivity in them:

I'm personally in touch with the rich people at the university. Who can find a job or connection more easily, me or a student who sits in a corner and just studies? ... Can people like us who invite political figures once or twice a year create more opportunities or those who sit in a corner and say 'it's useless'. (A member of the reformist political association, AUT)

From another point of view, gaining legitimacy and the experience of charismatic leadership can be discussed in the form of protest. For example, in the Faculty of Social Sciences of ATU, those students who had been disqualified turned into oppositions to the Association at the university. They could gain a high legitimacy among students. They did not enter the structure of associations' camp, but rather tried to organize their relations at two levels. 1) The main members created groups on

social networks, such as Telegram, to organize their plans and programs. 2) They tried to make friends with other students and establish an intimate relationship with them. For example, they established a close relationship with members of student unions in order to deal with the students' problems concerning union issues. "We've been active since 2008, for eight years, and we've never entered the structure. All our activities have been out of the structure ... but we have legitimacy among students. They say we have some connections at the university!" (A member of the reformist political association, Faculty of Social Sciences, ATU). This kind of charisma and social capital can be found only in this kind of political subjects. Social capital of this type is only due to legitimacy among students; however, the administrative system and government authorities do not recognize them. Therefore, their only media are social networks and meetings held through other associations.

Virtual social networks have a very important function and can take the political activities of associations beyond the limitations of time and space of university walls. In Iran, social networks have numerous political and cultural functions (Lerner, 2010, p. 558). Telegram and Instagram have played a significant role in political activities of students. Political associations have channels and groups on Telegram. Members of associations normally set up a group, and, thus, keep in contact with each other outside the university as well. They organize and arrange most of their programs through Telegram, which has resulted in an increasing dynamism among them. Also, channels can be created on Telegram, and thus, they can send information about their plans and programs to all the students who are members of the channel. Moreover, they post images and posters of their programs on Instagram, and students leave comments under these images, which sometimes results in political debates and discussions. These have made it possible to go beyond the walls of the university. Additionally, students and political associations can establish a relationship with each other. Telegram and Instagram are

two cellphone applications, and the fact that political activities are carried out through applications by students has led to the creation of an online political crowd (Alavi, 2005, p. 133).

Although the virtual space has helped political connections go beyond universities, these virtual networks are controlled (Baldino & Goold, 2014, p. 28). Therefore, virtual networks have made the establishment of political connections, rather than political activities, possible. Virtual networks have caused political and non-political students, and students from different universities, to get in contact with each other. However, organizing common political activities is a red line, crossing which is regarded as a security threat and crime. Thus, political action is possible only inside camps and within the framework of standardized politics, and changing political connection into political action will lead to immediate police reaction. As a result, the policy of controlling the mass with the aim of preventing it from turning into a protesting crowd has been one of the major concerns of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Golkar, 2016, p. 139).

Conclusion

In the Islamic Republic's discourse, camps are a space for being in possession of exceptional beings in order to prevent political, social, and cultural events. The Islamic Republic's discourse is highly sensitive about preserving its political order, and consequently, supervision and control of events, which lead to the emergence of new signifiers and subjectivity, is very strict. Camps are legal spaces for political, social, and cultural actions; and permissions are issued for these activities, closely observed by the censorship and control systems. Any violation of camp rules results in the formation of an offending subject, who will be charged with a political crime.

Unlike their function in the Western culture, camps are at the heart

of the Islamic society, and, outside these controlled areas is the space of wrongdoing and being charged with political offense. The subject who leaves the camp is a threat to the political order of the Islamic Republic's discourse and will be prosecuted. Therefore, camps are an apparatus for taking possession of exceptional beings, and the law tries to encompass them so that all events are controlled. The law is expanded to the extent that it identifies any exceptional being that exists outside the camp. Because of this function, it is not the law that separates itself from exceptional beings but instead, it is exceptional beings who suspend their position regarding the law so that they can leave the camp.

Thus, a political association functions as a camp, which means that we are dealing with exceptional beings who have immigrated to the land of politics. Politics is the territory of Islamic politicians, and, as a result, the entrance of new members and claimants should be under control. A place should be prepared to accommodate these exceptional immigrants; this place is nowhere but political associations as camps. Politics in the camp is standardized and is devoid of revolutionary elements, provocation of collective sensations, and connection with the concerns of the civil society. It is pasteurized politics, which has been deprived of its power to create crisis. Political subjects in associations are supervised by different institutions and need permission to carry out their programs.

However, there are spaces parallel with associations. Raising awareness and creating common concerns through online networks such as Telegram, Facebook, and Instagram have made different political groups able to be in contact with each other and even organize meetings, gatherings and protests without having to ask for permission. It is these parallel spaces that form organic political subjects. These spaces can face disciplinary punishments if they cause any trouble. For this reason, for example, the Instagram pages of active political students are secretly controlled.

Nevertheless, there is more to these political associations than just being controlled. Political subjects active in these associations speak about ideals,

objectives and responsibilities to which they are ideologically faithful; failure to fulfill these responsibilities will even trouble their conscience. Therefore, this kind of idealism and commitment will be connected with the goal of influencing other students. Such a connection somehow creates a feeling of being a charismatic subject, who experiences the joy of being famous. This subject, who has extensive social relationships, is known by political institutions because of his activities, and can use his social capital to pursue his personal and associational goals. As a consequence, gaining social capital and the existence of ideals lead to the presence of political subjects who enjoy being in political associations as camps; an enjoyment that is accompanied by charisma and attempts to attain ideals.

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