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THE RISE AND FALL OF A SOCIAL MOVEMENT IN IRAN: THE IRANIAN GREEN MOVEMENT

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Abstract

The Green Movement, which we can consider as the pinnacle of the social movements that started in the 1990s, started when people took to the streets to protest the results of the elections in which Ahmadinejad was elected president for the second time in 2009. The Islamic Republic of Iran, which witnessed millions of people filling the squares in the metropolitan cities and the capital Tehran in a short time, started to eliminate the opposition with pressure and intimidation policies as soon as it got over the initial shock on the regime. The protest demonstrations, in which tens of thousands of Iranians were detained, hundreds of them sentenced to prison and tens of them were murdered, did not succeed, although they made a worldwide impact. After the leaders of the movement were sentenced to house arrest, the movement lost its effectiveness to a great extent when the connection between the leaders and the movement was broken. However, it can be claimed that the Green Movement was a very important turning point in Iranian political history. As a matter of fact, despite the passing years, the Islamic regime is still concerned about the revival of the Green Movement. Although years have passed since the Green Movement, there has not been a significant change in the way the regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran suppressed social movements and protests, and the current regime continued to use violence as the most important tool

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in intervening in social events. This situation is not limited to public movements to change the regime, but also continues in demonstrations where economic conditions, water problems or police violence are protested. Whether the movement has a center or a leader group does not make a significant difference in the dose of violence. In this study, we will focus on the Green Movement, which, as a social movement, has left serious effects in Iran.

Keywords: Green Movement, Green Way of Hope, New Social MovementsPopulism, Reform,

Iranian Islamic Revolution and Social Movements Before the Green Movement

After the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, the constitutional monarchy was overthrown and the Islamic Republic was established. Although this event is recorded in the history books as the Islamic Revolution in Iran, it is not only the clergy who carried out the revolution. The Iranian Islamic Revolution was made possible by the resistance of a broad anti-Shah coalition (which included liberals, bazaar shopkeepers, guerrillas, clerics…etc.). According to Fred Halliday; The clergy's leadership of this coalition and their role in legitimizing and spreading the movement distinguish this revolution from other revolutions in modern times.[1] Groups acting jointly during the Iranian Islamic Revolution following the seizure of power by the clergy led by Ayatollah Khomeini, they began to oppose the newly established regime. The new regime's process of purging and removing old comrades from power accelerated especially during the Iraq-Iran War, when attention was focused on an external threat. After the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the new regime

[1] Fred Halliday, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003). (Second Edition) 46-47. For another study comparing the Iranian Islamic Revolution with other revolutions in modern times, see. Keddie, Nikki R. "Iranian Revolutions in Comparative Perspective." *The American Historical Review* 88, no. 3 (1983): 579–98. https://doi.org/10.2307/1864588.

embarked on a major purge that would remove the remnants of the Shah era in order to establish an armed force that it could rely on and to retain the force that would prevent other groups. Thus, the revolutionaries, who have established a new armed force loyal to them, will be able to survive or fail thanks to the army they have established. During this period, the Revolutionary Guards played a vital role in the preservation of the revolution. During this period, the Revolutionary Guards played a vital role in the preservation of the revolution. In the case of Iran, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Army, which was established right after the revolution, went through an important test in the Iraq War, which started a year later. The fact that the army was new had an effect on Iran's inability to win a decisive victory over Iraq and the fact that it had to retreat in many cities in the first years of the war.

After the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989, a new constitution was prepared in Iran, which had been eroded by an eight-year long war period. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Hashemi Rafsanjani, who were elected as the new religious leaders, ruled in a more moderate and pragmatist line. Many experts evaluating this period in terms of Iran describe the Ali Khamenei-Hashimi Rafsanjani line as "Thermidorian".[2] In this period, when more realistic and pragmatist policies were followed, efforts to eliminate the destructive effects of the Iraq-Iran War, rebuilding the country devastated by the war, abandoning the isolationist policy and establishing more reasonable relations with other countries came to the fore.[3]

[2]The word Thermidorian refers to the overthrow of Maximilien Robespierre and the end of the era of terror, as a result of an initiative in parliament on 27 June 1794 (9 Thermidor II) in the French Revolution. See: Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Thermidorian Reaction." Encyclopedia Britannica, September 5, 2022. https://www.britannica.com/event/Thermidorian-Reaction.

[3]Gheissari, Ali, and Vali Nasr. "Iran's democracy debate." Middle East Policy 11, no. 2 (2004): 94+. Gale Academic OneFile (accessed October 14, 2022). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A118417353/AONE?u=anon~b8cb2033&sid=googleScholar&xid=bfa10695.

After Hashemi Rafsanjani's presidency for two consecutive terms (1989-1997)[4], Mohammad Khatami, known for his moderate and reformist features, became the new president of Iran. During the rule of Mohammad Khatami, who served as the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran between 1997-2005 (this period is accepted in the Thermidian period)[5], serious reactions rose from the conservative sections and the Army of the Islamic Revolution Guards tried to be a little more involved in domestic politics. The aforementioned segments criticized President Mohammed Khatami for showing too much tolerance against threats to the regime. One of the most important examples of the Revolutionary Guards trying to intervene in domestic politics is the student movements that emerged in 1999.[6]

In Iran, a conservative Islamic student organization was established in 1979 under the name Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat (Union Consolidation Office) to combat leftist and secular student groups. With the Cultural Revolution in 1980, it became the most well-known student organization in the country, because all opposition organizations were purged from universities during this period.[7] The Union Consolidation Office (UCO) underwent a transformation after the Iran-Iraq War and started to advocate reformist ideas (social and political freedoms, pluralism, increasing public participation in decision-making mechanisms, etc.). During the presidential elections, the UCO, which

[4]According to Article 114 of the Iranian Constitution; Presidents are elected for a 4-year term and can only be re-elected once. constituteproject.org, Iran (Islamic Republic of)'s Constitution of 1979 with Amendments through 1989, last modified April 27, 2022.

https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iran_1989.pdf?lang=en,

[5]For general information on the alleged Thermidorian period in the history of the Islamic Republic of Iran, see: Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 182-194.

[6]Navid Pourmokhtari, *Iran's Green Movement: Everyday Resistance, Political Contestation and Social Mobilization* (London: Routledge, 2021) 122-129.

[7] Ibid., 85-86. For detailed information about the establishment and evolution of Unity Consolidation Office, see: Behzad Yaghmaian, *Social Change in Iran: An Eyewitness Account of Dissent, Defiance, and New Moments for Rights* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002) 76-89.

actively supported Mohammed Khatami's election campaign, joined the "Dovom-e Khordad Front" (Second Hordad Front) formed by reformist political groups.[8] The political activities of the UCO started to rise with the election of the reformer Mohammed Khatami as president. However, the closure of the reformist newspaper Salaam (Selam) in July 1999 caused a rift between the reformist student organizations and the administration. Student organizations organized protest demonstrations in Tehran and some cities. On July 9, the security forces raided the Tehran University dormitory, detained 1500 people, injured hundreds of students and killed a few students in order to break up the protests, which led to the further escalation of the events.[9] The increase in street demonstrations and the attacks of pro-regime groups on the demonstrators inflamed the atmosphere of violence. The largest and most sustained act of civil disobedience the regime has faced since the Islamic Revolution will greatly disturb and cause concern to the Tehran administration.[10] President Mohammad Khatami's strategy of solving the problem by finding a middle ground did not yield any results, and the President was criticized by the Revolutionary Guards for not taking a firm and determined stance.[11] To defuse the guards' rage and the threat

[8] UCO left the reformist electoral coalition in 2001 because of disappointment with the reformist politicians in the government. As a result of this, the reformist wing was defeated in the 2003 local elections. See: Farideh Farhi, "Political Reform in Iran: Dead or Alive?", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, August 25, 2008. https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/21533

[9] Suzanne Maloney, "Fifteen Years After the 18th of Tir: The Legacy of Student Protests That Shook Iran," Brookings Institutions, July 10, 2014. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2014/07/10/fifteen-years-after-the-18th-of-tir-the-legacy-of-student-protests-that-shook-iran/.

[10] Ibid.

[11] On July 12, 1999, twenty-four commanders from the top officials of the Revolutionary Guards Army sent a warning letter to President Mohammed Khatami that the student demonstrations were now taking the form of attacks on the pillars of the revolution. It can be interpreted as the first direct serious intervention of the Revolutionary Guards in the internal affairs of the country. See: Bayram Sinkaya, "The Revolutionary Guards And The Iranian Politics: Causes And Outcomes Of The Shifting Relations Between The Revolutionary Guards And The Political Leadership

of a military coup, the supreme leader addressed the critical press, proposing the use of "legal violence" rather than "illegal violence" to stop the "enemy's" infiltration into the country. In less than a week, the judiciary acted on the leader's directives. Prominent journalists were put on trial and jailed.[12]

To undermine the student movement in Iranian public opinion, conservatives have accused it of foreign machinations and ties to exiled opposition groups. Disillusionment with the reformist government cost the reformists a crucial source of support in the February 2004 parliamentary elections.[13] In 2005, the conservative (according to some authors, neo-radicals) candidate Mahmoud Ahmadinejad emerged victorious from the presidential elections. Conservatives winning the election against a reformist and pragmatist candidate is described as the end of the "Thermidorian" period.[14] This designation is made with frequent reference to Crane Brinton's theory of "stages of the revolution". According to the theory in question; After the victory of the revolution, liberals who want to establish a democratic and constitutional order come to power, but in this period, the power is still weak and the revolution is witnessed in this process. With the radicals seizing power, the second stage after the revolution is passed. The radicals' strict application of revolutionary ideology and their turn to acts of oppression and violence causes an opposition to the radicals to rise. Inspired by the history of the French revolution, this reaction of the opposition is called thermidorien reaction. In the period when thermidorians were in power, politics became pluralistic and a pragmatic understanding dominated the administration. The

In Post-Revolutionary Iran" (PhD. Dissertatiton, Middle East Technical University, 2011) 215-216.

[12] Behzad Yaghmaian, *Social Change in Iran: An Eyewitness Account of Dissent, Defiance, and New Moments for Rights*,(Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002) 140-141.

[13] Farideh Farhi, "Political Reform in Iran: Dead or Alive?", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, August 25, 2008. https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/21533

[14] Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 182-194.

pluralization of politics can sometimes create internal turmoil. The Thermidorian period is of critical importance because it is the stage that determines the fate of the revolution. It is possible for the revolution to be well established and institutionalized, as well as the return of radical powers. The revolutionary process may come to an end with a military coup or the re-establishment of the deposed authority.[15] In the case of Iran, we can talk about the return of radical governments after the thermidor period. The coming to power of radical or, according to some authors, neo-radical governments led to the revival of the opposition in the moderate-reformist line. Iran, which has become an economically troubled and more isolated country due to the policies followed by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, is not desired at all by the new generation Iranians, who desire to integrate more with the world.

2009 Presidential Elections and the Birth of the Green Movement

It can be said that the political, economic and class codes of the opposition bloc, known as the "Green Movement" because of the green color they used during the presidential elections, are hidden in the developments in Iranian politics after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini. Political rivalries and factions that did not come to light during Khomeini's charismatic-authoritarian leadership began to clash with each other after his death, each led by different clerics. It can be mentioned that there are three main tendencies in this political competition that started in the 1990s. The first of these; It is a radical trend under the leadership of the religious leader Sayyid Ali Khamenei, supported by lower income groups and lower-middle-ranking ulama, and strengthened by the support of institutions built after the revolution. The leader of the second trend is Hashemi Rafsanjani. This trend had the support of wealthy merchants, landlords and high-ranking ulama. It

[15]Sinkaya, Bayram. 2011. “The Revolutionary Guards and the Iranian Politics: Causes and Outcomes of the Shifting Relations Between the Revolutionary Guards and the Political Leadership in Post-Revolutionary Iran.” Ph.D. - Doctoral Program, Middle East Technical University.

would not be wrong to say that this tendency, which we can describe as liberal-conservative, is a pragmatist tendency that advocates integration with the global economy and free market. The third tendency is the moderate tendency, which is identified with the reformist identity of Mohammed Khatami. This trend is supported by intellectual clergy. This tendency both emphasizes the legacy of Khomeini and argues that the demands of the people should be taken into account. In foreign policy, it desires the normalization of relations rather than an isolationist policy. We can say that the third trend is somewhere between the first two trends.[16]

The 'Tehran Bazaar,' the traditional middle class's center of power, where the heart of the country's economics and politics beats, has undoubtedly played the most significant and crucial part in this class rift. Although the integration of the Revolutionary Guards into the economic system and the embargoes imposed on Iran as a result of the radical section of the administration's foreign policies have shaken and bent the traditional bazaar's priority position, a sizable portion of this group was elected in both the 2005 and 2009 elections. He favored Ahmadinajad, who embodied the extreme movement.[17]

The results of the tenth Presidential elections of the Islamic Republic of Iran, held in Iran on 12 June 2009, gave rise to suspicions in a large part of the public that the elections were rigged. The conservative President of the period, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, was re-elected as President with the majority of votes in the first round, with 62.63% of the votes, brought along the objections of the reformist candidate After Mahmud Ahmadinejad's re-election, large masses of people who supported her rival Mir Hussein Mousavi and thought the election results were dubious, held demonstrations and marches across the country protesting

[16]Tolga Gürakar, "Bir Toplumsal Hareketin Anatomisi: İran Yeşil Hareketi," in *Doğu-Batı Yol Ayrımında Iran*, ed. Barış Adıbelli (Istanbul: Bilim+Gönül Yayınevi, 2013), 18.

[17]Ibid., 18-19.

the election results.[18] It was not expected by the reformist wing that Mir Hussein Mousavi received around 34% of the vote. For this reason, there were other developments that increased the doubts of the reformers who were skeptical of the election results. Shortly before the election results were announced, the police had taken intense security measures in the capital, Tehran. Events such as the very quick announcement of the election results and the hasty act of the religious leader Sayyid Ali Khamenei to congratulate Mahmoud Ahmadinejad were other developments that increased the suspicions. Shortly after the announcement of the election results, on June 15, 2009, according to estimated figures, more than 500 thousand[19] Iranians protested in the capital Tehran using green belts[20] and placards with the words "where is my vote" against the Iranian regime. has been shocking. Because the Islamic Republic of Iran has not faced such a protest since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.[21] After these events, the regime and radical groups approached the reformists with suspicion. In fact, we can see that this concern came to light after a relatively moderate candidate, Hasan Rouhani, won the presidential race in 2013. Because while the new President was forming the cabinet he wanted to work in, some of the candidates he nominated were vetoed because they made positive statements about those who took part in the demonstrations in 2009. In

[18]Eve Bower, Samson Desta, Shirzad Bozorgmehr, etc. "Ahmadinejad hails election as protests grow", *CNN International*, 13 Haziran 2009, http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/06/13/iran.election/index.html

[19] According to Abbas Milani the number of protesters in Tehran has reached 3 million. See: Abbas Milani, "The Green Movement", The United States Institute of Peace, *The Iran Primer*, https://iranprimer.usip.org/sites/default/files/The%20Green%20Movement.pdf.

[20] The name "Green Movement" comes from a green belt given to Mir Hüseyin Musavi by Muhammed Khatami. It became a symbol of support for another reformist political leader, Mohammed Khatami, who served as Iran's president for two terms and was the reformist wing's most prominent figure. See: Ibid.

[21] Ian Black and Saeed Kamali, "Iran uprising turns bloody", *The Guardian*, June 16 2009, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jun/15/iran-elections-protests-mousavi-attacks

fact, it was for the same reason that Hasan Rouhani had to nominate 3-4 times for some ministries.[22]

The news that seven people died during the protest marches held in Tehran on June 15 was reported by the state media. A day after this incident, thousands of protesters took to the streets in the north of Tehran (where the wealthy usually live) and the public authority banned foreign journalists from leaving their offices.[23] On 19 June 2009, the religious leader of the regime, Sayyid Ali Khamenei, made a statement that held the leaders of the activists responsible for any massacres that may occur and any blood spilled during the protest demonstrations. Sayyid Ali Khamenei also stated that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won the elections fairly by getting 11 million votes.[24]

One day has passed since the religious leader's warnings, state television reported that 10 people, including a 26-year-old student named Nida Ağa Sultan, had died and 450 people had been detained. Nida's lifeless body was served to the world via the internet and Nida became one of the symbols of the opposition movement.[25]

The harsh suppression of the Green Movement protests caused serious disturbances both in the country and in the international public opinion. US President Barack Obama stated that his country was horrified by the pressure and violence applied to the protesters. There was a problem between the two countries due to some British Embassy personnel who

[22] Hossein Bastani, "How Powerful is Hassan Rouhani in the Islamic Republic?", *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, (London: Chatham House Publications, November 2014).6. https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_document/20141124RouhaniislamicRepublicBastani.pdf

[23] "Timeline: Iran after the election", *Al Jazeera*, February 11 2010, http://www.aljazeera.com/focus/iran/2009/11/200911411259869709.html

[24] Ibid.

[25] Nida Sultan Aga's death was recorded on a mobile phone on the pavement after she was shot by a sniper. The video in which Nida was seen dying was circulated around the world, and the picture of Nida with blood splattered on her face became one of the symbols of the Green Movement. Abbas Milani, Ibid.

were arrested for their alleged involvement in protest demonstrations. Britain described this event as a kind of "intimidation and intimidation" attempt and demanded the release of the diplomats. After two of the British diplomats were expelled from Iran, Britain also expelled two Iranian diplomats. Three days after Hashemi Rafsanjani stated that Iran was in a crisis, Mohammad Khatami proposed to take the legitimacy of the government to a referendum. However, this proposal was not taken into account by the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and on 3 August 2009, he officially approved the second term of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency.[26]

The regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran claimed that this movement was directed, encouraged and provoked from abroad since the beginning of the demonstrations. Religious leader Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei stated that the incident of the dormitory raid, which caused the protests to intensify, was directed by "*hidden hands behind the scenes*".[27] What is meant by the secret hands pointed out by the religious leader is the intelligence services of the anti-regime countries, especially the CIA. The arrest of British diplomats for allegedly participating in protest demonstrations and the expulsion of two of them can be evaluated within this framework. Thus, it was desired to undermine the legitimacy of the Green Movement in the eyes of the people. The accusation of a French woman, two Iranians working in the British and French embassies in Tehran, and dozens of people with espionage and trying to overthrow the existing religious system through a conspiracy set up by the West can be evaluated accordingly.[28] Moreover, after Mousavi and Karroubi were placed under house arrest, the influential leaders of the movement found the solution to flee abroad. This has resulted in the movement being almost completely

[26] Ibid.

[27] Maloney, *Fifteen Years After the 18th of Tir: The Legacy of Student Protests That Shook Iran*.

[28] "Timeline: Iran after the election", *Al Jazeera*, February 11 2010, http://www.aljazeera.com/focus/iran/2009/11/200911411259869709.html

deprived of its open field leaders. In the lack of leaders, some of the movement's men sought financial, media, and even political backing from other sources. As a result, they provided the government with a good chance to accuse them of servility and betrayal to the revolution and the republic.[29]

According to official figures, 33 people lost their lives during the Green Movement demonstrations that lasted for about nine months. Of these 33 people, 16 were alleged to be members of Basij[30], a paramilitary force affiliated with the Revolutionary Guards. On the other hand, according to supporters of the Green Movement, at least 110 people were killed, 10 thousand people were arrested, and most of the detainees were sentenced. Akbar Ganji claims that many prisoners were tortured and some were forced to "confess" that they worked for foreign countries.[31]

Although the Iranian administration's taking strict measures to prevent the protests and choosing the path of violence partially prevented the people from taking to the streets, especially in the first months of the Green Movement, it was seen that Mir Hussein Mousavi, who came to

[29] Abdul Qader Tafesh, "Iran's Green Movement: Reality and Aspirations", *Al Jazeera Center For Studies*, Report, November 5 2012, p.3

[30] Basij-i Mustazafin (Defense Force of the Oppressed), which continues to exist and operate under the supervision of the Revolutionary Guards Army, is primarily a civil defense movement with the additional attribute of being a militia force. It was formed soon after the Islamic Revolution as a volunteer armed force to safeguard the revolution from both internal and external dangers. Furthermore, the Basij Forces are in charge of fighting cultural attacks and fostering a revolutionary culture. In addition, they are required to fight against internal and foreign threats as members of the armed forces in the case of a conflict or crisis in the country. It has been noticed that the country's opposition protests were violently suppressed by the Basij Forces. Basij is generally the first person to come on the scene and intervene in an action or protest. However, its reaction to the events has been so strong that it has been noted that the police occasionally even shield the demonstrators from Basij. "Guide to Understanding Iranian Politics," Abdullah Yegin, Ankara: SETA Publications, June 2013, pp. 62-63.

[31] Akbar Ganji, "Iran's Green Movement Five Years Later 'Defeated' But Ultimately Victorious", *Huffington Post*, August 9 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/akbar-ganji/iran-green-movement-five-years_b_5470078.html

the forefront as the leader of the movement, gave a message of determination. In statements published on his website on October 18, Mousavi stated that they would continue their efforts to change Iran. However, over time, the Green Movement continued to lose blood. In addition to the arrest of tens of thousands of people and the killing of many demonstrators, the death of an important opposition leader such as Grand Ayatollah (Ayatollah al-Uzma) Ali Muntazari caused the Green Movement's voice to be heard less.

While the crisis continued at a high pace until the 31st anniversary of the Iranian Islamic Revolution, the regime organized huge demonstrations in support of it.[32] It is possible to say that these celebrations were a turning point for the Green Movement, because after the celebrations, the protests on behalf of the Green Movement were much more muted than the previous ones. The fact that the leader of the movement Mir Hussein Mousavi and his wife (Zahra Rahnavard) were kept under house arrest since February 2011 left the movement without a leader and greatly reduced the effectiveness of the movement.[33] Another prominent figure of the movement, Mehdi Kerrubi, was also placed under house arrest. He could not establish a connection with the leader of the movement, nor could he create an administration that would surpass Mir Hussein Mousavi and bring a new excitement. Although public support for the Green Movement has declined, the presence of those who support Mousavi and Karroubi and criticize the Green Movement's failure to rule the streets shows that not all social classes have dispersed around the leaders. If Mousavi and

[32]Mehdi Mozaffari, "The Iranian Green Movement: One Year after", *Center for Studies in Islamism and Radicalisation* (CIR), Aarhus University, Denmark, June 2010, p.1 http://cir.au.dk/fileadmin/site_files/filer_statskundskab/subsites/cir/pdf-filer/Iranian_Green_Movement.pdf

[33] Arash Karami, "Larijani comments renew calls for release of Mousavi, Karroubi", *Al-Monitor*, July 1 2015, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/07/iran-judiciary-2009-overthrow-system.html#

Karroubi return to the political arena, it is possible that they will again receive great popular support.[34]

Demands of the Green Movement

The Green Movement initially had two basic demands; first of all, reviewing the election results and staying on the street until the first demand is met. However, we can say that these demands were not accepted by the regime because the Guardian Council rejected the request for annulment of the election results.[35] After the religious leader and all official institutions, military and civilian, approved Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's election victory, the leaders of the Green Movement, Mir Hussein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, and the supporters of the movement thought it would be useless to hold on to the above-mentioned demands at this point. After this point, more effective and realistic ideas of the movement began to come to the fore.[36] Former President Mohammed Khatami, known for his reformist identity, and Hashemi Rafsanjani, who had a significant weight in the regime, left the green movement and participated in the parliamentary elections held under the rule of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and although this event was interpreted as a major retreat for the movement, the movement defended the ideas summarized through three principles.

1. "Iran First" Principle: The Green Movement produced the slogan "Let my soul be sacrificed for Iran, neither for Gaza nor for Lebanon" and advocated that a balance should be struck between supporting organizations such as Hezbollah and HAMAS and the country's economic needs. With this principle, the Green Movement, which tries to draw attention to the difficult economic conditions of the Iranian

[34] Tafesh, *Iran's Green Movement: Reality and Aspirations*, pp.3-7.

[35] "Timeline: Iran after the election", *Al Jazeera*, February 11 2010, http://www.aljazeera.com/focus/iran/2009/11/200911411259869709.html

[36] Tafesh, *Iran's Green Movement: Reality and Aspirations*, pp.3-4.

people due to the sanctions, received support from university students, economic circles and some scientific circles.[37]

2. The principle of reviewing the powers of the Velayet-i Fakih (Religious Leader)[38]: This is the most important principle that led to a fierce struggle between the Green Movement and the regime, because it was perceived as a direct threat to the regime itself. This principle has not been adopted by all the supporters of the movement. The termination of the support given to Mousavi by names such as the Speaker of the Assembly of Experts, Hashemi Rafsanjani, Mohammed Khatami, the Speaker of the Assembly Ali Larijani, and the former Commander of the Revolutionary Guards, Muhsin Rızai, caused the conservative religious and moderate reformist segments of the people in the movement to withdraw their support.[39]

In addition, this principle has turned into a material used by the regime to accuse the supporters of the Green Movement of "sedition". Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and radicals have taken an extremely uncompromising stance towards the green movement, such that even if they did not join the green movement, those who did not react to them, among the deputies nominated for the ministry, were vetoed by the conservatives. The Green Movement's advocacy that changes should be made in the principles of the regime by crossing the red line did not

[37] Ibid.

[38] The issue of power sharing lies at the heart of Mir Hussein Mousavi's criticisms of the religious leader Ali Khamenei. The claims that the Islamic Republic of Iran is experiencing a crisis of legitimacy have also been put forward, starting from a similar point. According to Mousavi, the fact that Ali Khamenei as a "leader" supports one side instead of being the leader of the entire Iranian people, has made his legitimacy problematic. Therefore, Ali Khamenei can no longer be considered a true successor to Ayatollah Khomeini. In a statement he made in March 2010, Mir Hussein Mousavi explained why he yearned for the Khomeini era. Namely, according to Mousavi, under Khomeini's leadership, the Imam was not the leader of a faction or a faction. He preferred collective thinking and avoided factionalism. See: Mozaffari, "*The Iranian Green Movement: One Year after*", pp.1-2.

[39]Tafesh, *Iran's Green Movement: Reality and Aspirations*, p.3-4.

receive full support from the movement's own base either, because although there are many people who have problems with the regime, these crowds do not have a problem with the velayet-i faqih system. Mir Hussein Mousavi's criticisms of the government system in the country mobilized the authorities and they decided to treat the green movement as a "sedition" that should be uprooted from society and the institutions of the regime. Musavi openly advocated for a reassessment of the velayati faqih's unrestricted powers, an increase in the president's authority, and a rethink of the velayati faqih doctrine as a political philosophy appropriate for the administration. Thus, Mousavi and the Green Movement masses behind him passed a critical red line.[40]

3. Reasonable Foreign Policy and Constructive Relations with the World Principle: It has been argued that good relations should be established with all countries except Israel and there should be no taboos in these relations. Mir Hussein Mousavi argued that the final decisions in foreign policy should be made by the parliament, not the religious leader.[41] This situation imposes a restriction on the power of the religious leader, since the religious leader has the authority to draw the general framework of the country's foreign policy.[42]

The views we have stated as the principles of the Green Movement do not include all the demands of the movement. According to Farhad Khoroskhavar, the main demands and aims of the Green movement can be listed as follows; respect for the equality of all regardless of their ethnic class, religious belief, social-economic status. Developing a secular understanding of Islam in which religion and state are separated. The subculture of mourning and martyrdom is replaced by a more joyful lifestyle, the rejection of the use of violence as a political tool, and the acceptance of civil disobedience as a democratic way. The rejection of gender inequality in all its forms and forms is among the demands of

[40] Ibid., p.4.

[41] Ibid., p.5.

[42] See: Article 110 in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iran_1989.pdf?lang=en

the Green Movement.[43] In fact, it can be said that the arguments used and the demands expressed by the Green Movement do not constitute a homogeneous image.[44]

Groups Supporting the Green Movement

Although "romantic" discourses are frequently included in the works written by the authors supporting the movement, as all segments of the public support the Green Movement, it is not possible and unreasonable to say that the movement includes all Iranians. Of the three politically competing tendencies mentioned above, we can say that two of them (liberal-conservative pragmatists and reformist-moderate tendencies) supported the Green Movement at least early in the process. In other words, the support of the poor and those outside the traditional middle class to the Green Movement was in question, in other words, the movement received most of its support from the urban middle-upper income classes (especially the women and students of these classes) and the intellectual segments.[45] In short, the urban character of the movement predominated, and its influence was limited to Tehran and a few large cities. The Green Movement did not receive support from large masses and organized social forces (workers, teachers, civil servants, etc.) within the cities.[46]

The apparent political actors were Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Mir Hussein Mousavi, followed by religious leaders Sayyid Ali Khamenei and Hashemi Rafsanjani, respectively. It can be said that this segregation is a reflection of a similar segregation in the social sphere.

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[43] Farhad Khosrokhavar, "The Green Movement: Harbinger of a New Democracy", Foundation For Iranian Studies, *Iran Nameh*, XXV(4) https://tavaana.org/sites/default/files/Green%20Movement.pdf

[44] Gürakar, *Bir Toplumsal Hareketin Anatomisi: İran Yeşil Hareketi,* p.18.

[45] Ibid. p.19.

[46] Mozaffari, "*The Iranian Green Movement: One Year after*", p.4.

The reasons that lead urban women and youth to support the Green Movement may be related to the desire to get rid of the pressure they feel on their private lives rather than economic. The fact that Mousavi promised more personal freedom during the election campaign, and that he included photographs of him holding hands with his wife, lecturer and artist Zehra Rahneverd, who gives the image of a strong woman, left a positive impression on women and young voters. There can be many different reasons behind the support of the intellectual sector. Since intellectuals constitute a non-homogeneous group, they supported the movement not only for economic reasons, but also because of social, cultural, political and ideological wishes and expectations. The demands of this group can be summarized as "... *the restructuring of Iran's national identity with its national values, the non-intervention of the clergy in the field of politics, the regulation of a constitution in European standards, the development of modern national state institutions based on national sovereignty instead of the traditional and charismatic state structure...*"[47]

In the opposition discourse of the Green Movement, prioritizing political problems and leaving economic problems in the background is a strategy that does not comply with the economic priorities of the people. Although the current negative repercussions of the international sanctions imposed on Iran due to its nuclear program on the country's economy and its candidate structure for more dire consequences in the future have provided an important opportunity for the Green Movement to reach more human resources, the movement has been negligent in developing the necessary discourse. However, the failure of the economic policies of the government headed by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad caused reactions among the conservatives as well. In short, although there is a segment that is dissatisfied with the current administration due to the economic problems that the Green Movement can use to its advantage, the movement has not succeeded in

[47] Gürakar, *Bir Toplumsal Hareketin Anatomisi: İran Yeşil Hareketi,* p.19.

incorporating the said segment. It is possible to evaluate this situation as a failure in terms of the Green Movement.[48]

Social Movements and the Green Movement

It can be said that the history of expressing discontents or needs in different ways at the social level is as old as the history of humanity. These expressions have caused changes in people's lives, conflicts and rebellions have constantly appeared in social life. For this reason, it can be said that social movements have gained a place in human life since ancient times.[49] Today, however, it is possible to say that we live in a "movement society"[50] and even all societies live in a "movement world".[51] Social movements have become common phenomena that can be found almost everywhere, especially in contemporary Western societies.

Since social movements are one of the main mechanisms that provide social change, the number of studies on social movements in academia has increased. In academic studies on social movements, the existence of a relationship between social movement and the phenomenon of collective behavior is frequently emphasized. According to Sidney G. Tarrow, social movements refer to movements typically undertake controversial challenges to elites, authorities, other groups, or cultural codes through disruptive direct action. Disruption, while often public in

[48] Tafesh, *Iran's Green Movement: Reality and Aspirations*, p.6.

[49] According to Charles Tilly and Lesley Wood, the wide interpretation of the idea of social movement to include practically all protest acts is incorrect. Because, while it has little effect on daily political discourse, it severely hampers efforts to explain how social movements function. See: Charles Lily and Lesley Wood, "Social Movements As Politics", in *Social Movements: 1768-2018*, eds. Charles Tilly, Ernesto Castaneda, and Lesley Wood (New York: Taylor & Francis 2020) (Fourth Edition) pp.9-10.

[50] The term "Movement Society" is a term used by David S. Meyer and Sidney G. Tarrow. The book they co-wrote in 1998 was titled 'The Social Movement Society'.

[51] David A. Snow et. al.,"Introduction: Mapping and Opening Up to the Terrain",in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, eds. David A. Snow et. al. (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell Publishing, USA, 2019 (Second Edition), p.2.

character, can also take the shape of organized personal opposition or the group acceptance of new ideals.[52] On the other hand, we can say that collective behavior is the type of action that is performed improvised, in which a large number of people voluntarily participate, and that forces the values and norms of the dominant group. Blumer (1951) states that collective behavior encompasses unplanned, unstructured and unregulated group activities.[53]

The identities of those who carry out the collective behavior are influential on whether the collective behavior will turn into a combative action. The collective behavior of those who do not have the opportunity to communicate normally with institutions or who oppose others/authorities is highly likely to turn into a combative action. Likewise, collective behavior will turn into a belligerent action when it is carried out by people who make a new claim or whose claims have not been accepted. The basis of social movements are combative collective actions. Although these actions contain violence and extremism, they are seen as the only way for ordinary people to rebel against well-equipped and powerful governments.[54] Collective action has many manifestations; Collective behavior can be short-lived or permanent, or it can be institutionalized or destructive. It is also possible for collective action to be monotonous or dramatic.[55]

Although the history of social movements can be traced back to ancient times, social movements did not remain constant in the historical process, and the change and transformation experienced in the societies they were born into naturally reflected on social movements. It is very natural to experience a change and transformation in social movements

[52] Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) (Revised and Updated Third Edition) p.9.

[53] Filiz Göktuna Yaylacı, "Toplumsal Hareketler ve Kuramsal Yaklaşımlar", in *Yeni Toplumsal Hareketler*, (Der.) Bilhan Kartal, Belkıs Kümbetoğlu, (Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2017) p.32.

[54] Ibid.

[55]Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* p.6.

because social movements are not detached, independent and unchangeable from societies. The change experienced in social movements brought with it adjectives such as "old" and "new" and to be categorized and evaluated in different ways. Although it is not possible to make a sharp distinction between "old" and "new" social movements and to consider them as two completely unrelated phenomena, it is possible to say that there are serious differences between these two types of social movements. It is difficult to say that experts working on social movements agree on the criteria used to distinguish these two types of social movements. However, in the distinction between old and new social movements that started to be discussed after the various social movements that emerged from the late 1960s, the term "new" mostly means social movements operating on themes such as environment, ecology, human rights, peace, gender, culture. While the term “old” includes nationalist movements, it mostly refers to working class movements. According to Alain Touraine and Alberto Melucci, the most important factor that makes the two types of movements different from each other is that they were born in very different societies. Accordingly, while the "old" social movements, that is, the working class movements, emerged in an industrial society, the "new" social movements were born in the post-industrial society or information society.[56]

Since the new society has different structural conditions from the old society, new forms of domination and as a natural result of this, new areas of conflict and social movements have emerged. Thus, different from the working class movements shaped around economic and political issues, new social movements have emerged that center on issues related to culture and identity such as the environment, gender, peace. Melucci stated that the new social movements do not aim to gain state power through political actions, but instead aim to produce new

[56] Hayriye Özen, “Meydan Hareketleri ve ‘Eski’ ve ‘Yeni’ Toplumsal Hareketler, *Mülkiye Dergisi*, 39(2), 2015. p.15

meanings (lifestyle, language, culture…) different from the meanings imposed by the current system in the face of dominant cultural codes and to be included in the system in this way.[57] According to Özen's quote from Alain Touraine, similarly, in industrial societies, politics and economy constitute the center of conflict, and in post-industrial societies the center of conflict is the cultural sphere because, according to Touraine, domination is established through material production in industrial societies, while in post-industrial societies it is through the production of knowledge and the manipulation of symbols. domination is established. Therefore, although the new social movements born into post-industrial societies cover many areas of social and cultural life, they stay away from politics and do not aim to seize state power and transform it.[58]

When we evaluate the Green Movement in Iran in this context, it is difficult to define it in the category of "new" social movements with certain lines, since this movement has a direct relationship with politics and a goal of transforming the state. In this respect, it is not possible to evaluate it as a movement that stays away from politics and seeks social-cultural rights. Essentially, the Green Movement has both some features of the old social movements (direct relationship with politics, the aim of obtaining state power and transforming the state…) and some features of the new social movements (equality, gender, cultural change, lifestyle… etc.). making demands in the fields). In addition, as mentioned above, the fact that the Green Movement is supported by certain segments of the people gives it a class character. However, there are some writers who claim that the new social movements are also class-based. For example, as Özen quotes from Claus Offe "…*the new social movements are largely middle-class based, though not class movements, and states that these movements 'carry out a class politics,*

[57]Alberto Melucci, The Symbolic Challenge of Contemporary Movements, *Social Research*, 52(4), 1985, p.813 https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40970398.pdf

[58] Özen, "Meydan Hareketleri ve 'Eski' ve 'Yeni' Toplumsal Hareketler", p.15.

but not on behalf of a class'."[59] Accordingly, the Green Movement in Iran is a class movement that has political demands but does not put socio-cultural issues (gender, race, ethnicity, environment, lifestyle… etc.) in the background, generally supported by the middle-upper class, but is literally a class movement. It is possible to evaluate it as a largely new social movement that does not exist. In this case, the Green Movement can be considered as a kind of hybrid social movement. Perhaps it would be a more accurate approach to consider the Green Movement as a "square movement" rather than placing it in one of the categories of old or new social movements.

Although social movements have some common features, many points of uniqueness have given social movements a wide variety. In general, when social movement forms are subjected to a classification, they can be classified as revolutionary, reformist, religious, alternative and resistance movements. Within this classification, it is possible to describe the Green Movement as a reformer at the beginning of the movement, as the initial demand of the movement was to relieve the widespread concern about the accuracy of the election results. In other words, it is to stay within the system and to ensure that a reformist name is placed in the presidency with the change of election results, and thus to ensure change, transformation and improvement in the current system. However, the principle, which later became one of the main principles of the movement and made the authority of the religious leader a matter of debate, was perceived by the current regime as a threat to its existence. The author of these lines is of the opinion that the regime's perception of threat is not entirely wrong. Because, although wide powers were given to the religious leader in order to create a balance and control mechanism between the president and the religious leader in order to prevent the government from getting out of control and becoming authoritarian in the Islamic Republic regime, it seems that it was not calculated that the religious leader could become

[59] Ibid., p.16.

authoritarian. Considering the fact that the religious leader is at the center of the political system and the impact that a change to be made here will have on the entire system, we can say that the Green Movement wants a change in the entire system. Although it was claimed that this was not an anti-regime movement in the first period of the movement, the slogans such as "death to the dictator" in the squares did not support this claim. The appearance of organizations that are considered terrorist by the regime, such as the People's Mujahideen, sometimes appear in the demonstrations, deepening the concerns of the regime. It is perfectly understandable that the most serious and most crowded opposition social movement the regime has faced is disturbing the regime.

Life Cycle of Social Movements

Herbert Blumer, who made scientific studies on social movements, stated that social movements have a life cycle. According to him, the life cycle of a social movement consists of 4 stages. The first stage is the "social ferment"[60] stage, which we can translate as social fermentation or social confusion. At this stage, the social movement has not yet been organized and has not yet focused on the provocations and propaganda of the instigators. The second stage is the “popular excitement” stage, which we can translate as popular excitement/enthusiasm, at which the main causes of discontent and the goals of the movement have become a little more obvious. In the third stage, formalization, the social movement chose the path of formalization in order to discipline participation in order to achieve its goals and to ensure the coordination of strategies within the movement. In the final stage, the social movement institutionalizes and turns into an organic part of society and a professional structure.[61] Below is a table

[60] Gemma Edwards calls this stage “social unrest” and refers to this stage as the period when agitators try to reveal people's emotional reactions to social problems. See: Gemma Edwards, *Social Movements and Protest*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014) p.26.

[61]Donatella Della Porta, Mario Diani, citing from Herbert Blumer, “Social Movements”, in A. McClung Lee (Ed.), *Principles of Sociology*, Barnes & Nobles,

extracted from Blumer's work that summarizes the above-mentioned stages.

Table 1. Life Cycle of Social Movements

Stages in the Career of the Social Movement	Mechanisms revealed by the advances
1. Social Unrest/Agitation	Drive/Surge
2. Popular Excitement/Enthusiasm	Developing a Sense of Unity
3. Formalization	Development of Group Morale/Spirituality
4. Institutionalization	The Development of Ideology and Tactics

Source: Adapted from Herbert Blumer's Social Movements (1951), Gemma Edwards, Ibid. p.27.

Blumer's descriptions of the life cycle of social movements have been renamed, defined and analyzed by succeeding scholars. Today, it is generally accepted that social movements have the following stages. 1. Emergence, 2. Coalescence, 3. Bureaucratization, 4. Decline.[62] The decline stage does not only mean the failure of the social movement, but also for the social movements that have achieved their goals, this stage can be called the decline because the movement will need to transform and set new goals for itself in order to provide its motivation. Especially among the local social movements, those who pursue very specific and specific goals are more likely to realize their goals, but we

New York, 1951, p.203, "Social Movements: An Introduction", (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006) (Second Edition), p. 150.

[62] Jonathan Christiansen, "Four Stages of Social Movements", in *Sociology Reference Guide: Theories of Social Movemets*, ed. The Editors of Salem Press, (California: Salem Press, 2011) pp.15-19.

can say that these social movements that achieve their goals will lose their reason for existence in a way.[63]

We can start the emergence of the Green Movement after the election results were announced, but we think that this social movement did not emerge out of nowhere, but can be considered as a continuation of the student protests in the 1990s. We believe that the remnants of an unsuccessful social movement at that time were the source of the protests in 2003 and that there was such an accumulation behind the movement in 2009. According to Tarrow, social movements operate in a cycle, and even if a movement completes its process and achieves no success, a residue is left behind. Later movements emerge more strongly. As a matter of fact, it can be argued that although the student protests of 1999 did not succeed, they contributed to the birth and strengthening of the Green Movement in 2009. Said Haceryan, a reformist political strategist who supported the student movements in 1999, adviser to the then President Khatami, and one of the architects of the Green Movement in 2009, said: "Reform is dead, long live Reform!" He said (Reform is dead, long live reform!).[64] In other words, he stated that the reform movement would continue on its way with different forms and methods, as it was, and in 2009 the Green Movement emerged as the strongest opposition movement against the 30-year-old Islamic Republic.

The second stage, the merger/integration stage; It refers to the period when the Green Movement was able to put millions of Iranians on the streets in its early stages. I think the analytical tools developed by Ernesto Laclau around the concept of "populism"[65] are capable of

[63] Ibid.

[64] Farhang Rajaee, *Islamism and Modernism: The Changing Discourse in Iran* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 196-197.

[65] The concept of populism is used here to express “a form of articulation, whatever its social, political or ideological content”. Ernesto Laclau, “On Populist Reason”, Verso, London, 2005, p.34, cited in Hayriye Özen, “Square Movements and 'Old' and 'New' Social Movements, Mülkiye Dergisi, 39(2), 2015. 28

explaining the fact that groups with very different goals and demands can come together within the Green Movement. According to Laclau, movements such as square movements can turn into populist movements that symbolically divide the society into two, namely, that on the one hand, there is the "people" with many social problems and demands, and on the other hand, it can be claimed that there is "power" that ignores the problems and problems of the people. According to Laclau; social demands initially arise independently of other societal demands and remain so as long as they are met by the existing system. But when they are rejected or not met by the system, they tend to be combined with other unmet demands. This social situation constitutes the first step towards a form of political articulation called populism.[66]

An "equivalence relationship" or "equivalence chain" can be established by the aggregation of unmet demands. The power, which rejects many demands or turns its back on them, thus turns into a 'common adversary' that makes the demands equal and creates a weak and ambiguous solidarity against the power that turns away from the demands of different social groups.[67] Laclau sees this solidarity as the second condition of populism. As different social groups come together due to their unmet demands, the social space is symbolically divided between the "victim" people and the power that refuses to meet the demands. "*This border, which divides society dichotomously, changes the nature of social demands and makes them the cornerstones of a popular struggle; The demands are no longer simple requests sent to a competent authority, but demands that struggle against the power that*

[66] Ernesto Laclau, "Populism: What Contains a Name?", trans. Hayriye Özen, Atılım Journal of Social Sciences, 1(1), (2011), p. 135-136.

[67] Ernesto Laclau, "On Populist Reason", Verso, London, 2005, p.34, cited in Hayriye Özen, "Square Movements and 'Old' and 'New' Social Movements, Mülkiye Dergisi, 39(2), 28-29.

rejects, ignores or suppresses them."[68] Mir Hussein Mousavi, who we can call the leader of the Green Movement, created a political formation called the Green Way of Hope shortly after the protests started. He stated that the goal of this political formation is to "…*regaining people's denied rights*".[69]

While there were liberal, libertarian and feminist groups among the supporters of the Green Movement in Iran, leftist, marxist, revolutionary groups and even monarchists could come together under the same roof. All these groups, whose demands do not match or even conflict with each other, come together on a common ground about not meeting their demands and started a struggle against their common enemy, the Islamic Republic regime. However, even though this "equivalence relationship" between the groups brought these movements together, created a sense of solidarity, albeit weak, and mobilized the groups, we cannot say that the Green Movement has reached a political power that can challenge the existing system. According to Laclau, the demands must be crystallized around a collective identity in order for the groups that come together after a weak sense of solidarity created by the equivalence relationship to gain a power that can challenge the existing power/system. In order for this to happen, one of the claims must override the equivalence chain and assume the representation of all other claims.[70] When we look at the demands of the Green Movement, we do not witness the existence of a demand that assumes the representation of all other demands. In addition, despite the rapid spread and strengthening of popular movements, which constitute a heterogeneous structure, they also have some weak points. It is possible that the differences between groups

[68] Ernesto Laclau, "Populism: What Contains a Name?", trans. Hayriye Özen, Atılım Journal of Social Sciences, 1(1), (2011), quoted by Hayriye Özen, "Square Movements and 'Old' and 'New' Social Movements, Mülkiye Dergisi, 39(2), p.29

[69] Borzou Daragahi and Ramin Mostaghim, "Mousavi forms new political front", *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 2009, http://articles.latimes.com/2009/aug/16/world/fg-iran-mousavi16

[70] Özen, *Square Movements and 'Old' and 'New' Social Movements*, p.31.

contain some structural inconsistencies that hinder integration. The desire of some groups in the movement to come forward or to act autonomously can form one of the soft bellies of the movement. As a matter of fact, the fact that the People's Mujahideen organization determined methods to steer the streets and include violence apart from the general tendency, caused the Green Movement's reputation to decrease in the eyes of the people and strengthened the hand of the government. In addition, we can say that movements that contain different demands can be targeted by the government's strategies to prevent the integration of groups within the movement by meeting the demands of some groups. Therefore, it is possible to say that it contains some handicaps that facilitate the disintegration of heterogeneous social movements.

The second stage, the merger/integration stage; It refers to the period when the Green Movement was able to put millions of Iranians on the streets in its early stages. I think the analytical tools developed by Ernesto Laclau around the concept of "populism" are capable of explaining the fact that groups with very different goals and demands can come together within the Green Movement. According to Laclau, movements such as square movements can turn into populist movements that symbolically divide the society into two, namely, that on the one hand, there is the "people" with many social problems and demands, and on the other hand, it can be claimed that there is "power" that ignores the problems and problems of the people. According to Laclau; social demands initially arise independently of other societal demands and remain so as long as they are met by the existing system. But when they are rejected or not met by the system, they tend to be combined with other unmet demands.

It is difficult to argue that the bureaucratization stage has been fully realized for the Green Movement. Although Mir Hussein Mousavi, who we can accept as the leader of the movement, formed a political formation called the "Green Path of Hope" on August 15, 2009, shortly

after the protests started, he realized that the Green Movement could literally turn into a hierarchical structure. we cannot say. The regime could not allow the bureaucratization and institutionalization of the Green Movement, which it perceived as a serious threat, as it was seen that the regime tried to neutralize the Green Path of Hope through repression. The leaders of the movement, Mir Hussein Mousavi, Mehdi Karroubi and their spouses (Zehra Rahneverd and Fatima Karroubi, respectively) were sentenced to house arrest in February 2011.[71] Even their close relatives were prevented from communicating with them. The silencing of the members of the Coordination Council (Mir Hüseyin Mousavi, Zehra Rahneverd and Mehdi Kerrubi), the most important organ of the Green Way of Hope formation, under house arrest, rendered the said political formation ineffective. The absence of an organization covering the entire Green Movement, coordinating the groups and determining tactics and strategy was a factor that facilitated the disintegration of the movement.

Although the decline phase may seem to have a negative connotation, it is generally accepted that the decline phase of a social movement results in one of four ways. 1. Success, 2. Repression, 3. Selection/appointment, 4.Failure. In terms of the Green Movement, it is not possible to claim that they have achieved their goals, so we cannot say that they were successful. A second result is failure. Considering that there are comments that the Green Movement is generally defeated, we can consider the Green Movement as a failed social movement. Some writers in the movement claim that the regime was also morally defeated, that the Green Movement only "apparently" lost, and that the goals and demands of the Green Movement expanded and spread over time.[72] It is also possible to argue that the Islamic regime still fears the

[71] "The Coordination Council fort he Green Path of Hope Blasts the Heinous Crimes of the Authoritarian Regime of Bashar al Assad", *Majzooban.org*, 15 March 2012, https://www.majzooban.org/en/?p=2057

[72] Akbar Ganji, "Iran's Green Movement Five Years Later'Defeated' But Ultimately Victorious", *Huffington Post*, August 9 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/akbar-ganji/iran-green-movement-five-years_b_5470078.html

Green Movement. Because, after Hasan Rouhani's election as president in 2013, the fact that the regime still does not take concrete steps in this regard, despite attempts to abolish the house arrest sentences of Mousavi and Karroubi, brings with it the interpretation that there is a fear of the resurgence of the Green Movement.[73]

Conclusion

Social opposition movements, which became evident in the 1990s in Iran and became concrete with the 1999 student protests, were generally suppressed through oppression and violence. In 2009, the Green Movement, the most serious social opposition movement that the 30-year-old Islamic Republic of Iran has faced throughout its history, the regime's policies of oppression and intimidation, its inability to fully control the groups within the movement, the severing of its ties with the leaders of the movement, the inability to take advantage of the opportunities for the movement, Giving a lot of leverage to the regime that it is externally connected…etc. For reasons, the movement shook the regime but could not overthrow it.

The fact that the regime is still concerned about the revival of the Green Movement despite the years that have passed can be interpreted as the regime has some data showing that this movement will probably find social support today. In Iranian society, as in almost every society, it is extremely possible to encounter groups whose demands are not met or rejected. A society without discontent is hardly possible in this respect. As a matter of fact, even if the demands of each group are met satisfactorily, fulfilling conflicting demands at the same time will still lead to discontent. Therefore, social opposition is a phenomenon that can only be minimized but never reset. The suppression of all social

[73] Akbar Ganji, "The Green Movement Still Terrifies Iran's Leaders", translated from the Farsi by Ali N. Babaei, *The National Interest*, February 11 2015, http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-green-movement-still-terrifies-irans-leaders-12224?page=3

opposition movements by the Islamic Republic of Iran can only be a temporary solution. For permanent solutions, it is necessary to listen to the demands of the people and to meet their demands to a large extent. Otherwise, like many authoritarian regimes, the biggest fear of the Islamic Republic of Iran will be its own people.

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