



The Position of the Concept of Revolution in Hannah Arendt's Political Thought

Erfan Ahangari¹, Seyyed Khodayar Mortazavi^{2*}

¹Department of Political Sciences, North Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

²Department of Political Sciences, South Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

Received: 10 Oct 2017 ; Accepted: 20 Jan 2018

Abstract:

Revolution is a new phenomenon whose history dates back to the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries. With the occurrence of the magnificent revolutions of England (1688), the United States of America (1776) and France (1879), the concept of revolution entered political literature.

Hannah Arendt, a well-known intellectual of the twentieth century, addressed the dimensions and effects of the concept of revolution in the context of the great events of this century, and by examining the American and French revolutions gained global reputation as a revolution theorist. This paper examines the concept of revolution from her point of view considering other concepts and subjects she has discussed, and shows that the concept of revolution has a privileged position in the totality of her political thought.

Keywords: Hannah Arendt, Revolution, Freedom, Violence, Political Thought

Introduction

The concept of revolution has a history of about three centuries, dating back to the British, American and French revolutions, having been discussed ever since. This concept belongs to the modern era from an idiomatic and lexical viewpoint (Navazeni, 2009: 340).

Revolution is a socio-political phenomenon and its meaning, however defined, is "change" and "transformation". More precisely, revolutions are a feature of the era of modernization and the ultimate manifestation of a view that is being modernized, a view

that argues man possesses the power to control and change his environment, and not only has such ability, but also the right to do so (Goldstone, 1986: 64).

Today, the term "revolution" has gained various applications, including industrial revolution, green revolution, scientific revolution, political revolution, communications revolution, social revolution, and so on. According to this and the fact that new revolutions bring on a wider range of changes, some authors believe before late eighteenth century revolutions, a "Revolution" meant a

*Corresponding Author's Email: skmortazavia@gmail.com

return to the desired conditions of the past, while modern era revolutions bring about a new era in the history of the countries.

In this paper, we seek to answer the question, from Hannah Arendt's point of view, what is the meaning of revolution, and how it is related to concepts such as freedom, totalitarianism, war, liberation, and political action?

To answer the question, this paper initially defines the concept of revolution from Arendt's viewpoint, and then elaborately discusses the relationship of revolutions with freedom, totalitarianism, war, political action, liberation and violence. The paper ends with a conclusion.

The word "revolution" has its roots in astronomical grounds, meaning the rotational rotation of the planets and the return of the stars to their initial location. Before the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, the return to some already-experienced desired state were called a revolution; while contemporary revolutions are associated with the creation of new epochs in the history of countries (Arendt, 1963: 36).

In Arendt's view, revolutions are one of the main manifestations of action in the public domain and their most important function is the reopening of a new chapter in history. Without a new beginning, a revolution will not make sense. One cannot distinguish the new concept of revolution from the notion of the course of the history suddenly beginning again and a whole new story that has never been told nor will known begin to happen (Ibid: 119).

Arendt argues that "in order to describe the phenomenon of revolution, attention to the element of 'change' is important; one can speak of 'revolution' only when a change in

the sense of a new beginning takes place and is used to establish a totally different form of government and create a new nation". The metaphorical concept of "revolution" that is common among the nations today comes directly from the experience of those who first brought revolution to the scene in France (Ibid: 72).

Hannah Arendt considers Machiavelli the spiritual father of the concept of revolution in the modern era. She writes; "Machiavelli is not the father of political science or political theory, but the spiritual father of revolutions" (Zarshenas, 2005: 22).

In 1963 Hannah Arendt wrote the book "On Revolution", in which she expressed her views about revolutions. Arendt's main purpose was to express what revolution is and what it means. She is one of the most important theorists addressing the consequences of revolutions. In Arendt's view, every revolution consists of two stages: the first, involving violence is uprising and liberation and the rise against force and coercion, and a calmer second step is the one in which revolution and foundation work (legislation) are done (Arendt, op, cit: 200).

"Revolution" was a rotational movement resembling earth's orbit; originally it was a term related to astronomy. However; Arendt believes that on the night of July 14, 1789 (the French Revolution), the word "revolution" gained a new political implication; that is, when the King angrily shouted "but this is a rebellion", Liancourt responded "no Your Majesty; this is a revolution" (Ansari, 2000: 153). From that date onwards, the "irresistible" character replaced the lawfulness in a rotational movement. The French revolution definitely led to the introduction of the term "revolution" into the political and historic

jargon; however, nobody considered the event a revolution; they considered it a "return" of the legitimacy and power of the past to the rule of the monarchy (Arendt, op, cit: 58).

Arendt believes that the concept of revolution cannot be restrained to a limited sense. There have been revolutionary changes in ancient Greece, but their causes are different from the causes of revolutions in modern times. She argues that Aristotle is the first materialist theorist in history, since he considers material factors the origin of revolutions; but in contemporary time, there is another determining factor, "social problems." According to Arendt, social problems have been effective in emergence of revolutions since the modern age (and not before that), when the general public became skeptical of the notion that poverty is an essential part of human condition (Ibid: 15).

Arendt considers two factors important in revolutionary spirit: the establishment of a new government and awareness of abilities (Bashiriyeh, 2006: 152). The two factors are significant in a revolution and can cause it to lead to different results.

In her book "On Revolution" Arendt interprets revolutions from a philosophical perspective and in this respect there is a distinction between her work and the sociological theories about revolutions (Yunesi, 2009: 117). In Arendt's thought, a revolution can be called a revolution in its real sense when it considers the future and envisages a new beginning. She regards revolutions as founding a whole new form of government, the use of (even) violence to formulate a novel political system and eliminate oppression and injustice in order to achieve freedom.

According to Arendt, a problem in history has always threatened the coherence and lasting success of revolutions; in her view, it actually arises from the lack of a clear vision of

the government and the inability to adapt to conditions following the fall of the fighting fever (Bradshaw, 1989: 102).

In the opinion of Arendt, revolutions begin with public discontent and end with codification of a constitution. In her book about revolutions, she points out that people unite in seeking livelihood, combining into a gigantic beast that can easily become a toy in the hands of the totalitarian power to be exploited. Arendt defends revolutions as "the only political events that directly and inevitably confront us with the issue of the beginning" (Ibid: 104).

The glorious aspect of a revolution, in Arendt's view, is its close connection with "productivity" or reproduction and its attempt to make a new and free beginning in human society. Revolutions, when immersed in the idea of liberation from a form of injustice or the oppressing agent, break their own goal, which is forming a new beginning.

From Arendt's point of view, the important point in the case of revolutions is that no revolution has been every begun by the poor masses, no matter how much it opens the doors to the poor, and no revolution has ever been launched due to rioting and agitation, even if there has been extensive dissatisfaction and conspiracy in a country (Arendt, 1963: 322). She refers to another aspect in the new revolutions, which is the undeniable influence of the social issues in all revolutions, which according to her, in this regard one can find history of revolutions in previous eras.

Therefore, this revolution emanates from the core of the society; no one can cause revolution unless the core of the society makes conditions propitious. Revolutions are one of the main manifestations of action in the public domain, and the primary purpose of the formation of every revolution is to realize the

concept of public freedom, not rebellion or human life necessities (Ibid: 161).

Considering what has been said, according to Arendt one can only speak of a revolution when a change in the sense of a new beginning occurs, where violence is used to create a new form of government.

In general, reading Arendt's individual books may make them look distracted and unrelated, since all Arendt's books are interrelated. Arendt, in her book "On Revolution", considers revolutions political incidents, synonymous with a fresh beginning, a new start, birth and reproduction; but the particular point that distinguishes the concept of revolution in Arendt's thought from others is that Arendt does not consider revolution merely a battle liberation from oppression and tyranny, and regards revolting for elimination of oppression and oppressor defeating the purpose of revolution, which she considers to be fresh beginning.

Revolution and Political Action

In order to express the position of revolution, Hannah Arendt first tries to find the roots of human activities; she considers human activities the results of three types of efforts. The first of these is the effort for livelihood, or labor, which is an indispensable and inevitable effort, and a man who is constantly struggling and working hard is industrious. This kind of endeavor aims to capture and meet the needs of life and is more in the economic context. The most prominent feature of this type of activity is the speed of consumption and its uniformity and repetition. In her view, the Marxist revolution is in this line because the ideal goal of revolutionaries was to eliminate social classes and eventually bringing the lower class to a better life from an economic point of view (Ansari, op. cit: 125).

Another one of human activities is working, which has creative and innovative characteristics, and formation of industry and technology are among its consequences. Culture and civilization are also studied in this field. This type of activity is freely at man's disposal. One of the features of this kind of activity and effort is, there is no futility trait in this type of activity and its beginning and end are defined (Ibid: 127). The person who carries out this type of activity is the constructive human, the outcome of whose work is not only available to him but is also enjoyed by the others and perhaps the public as well.

The third type of activity, emphasized greatly by Arendt is action. This kind of activity is the most excellent activity Arendt respects for human beings; so she bases her philosophy on the basis of action. The distinction between the second type of effort and the third type of effort and activity is that the third type is alive among humans and objects are not involved in it. Therefore, its consequences cannot be defined nor determined (Ibid). A person who acts in the public realm and in politics is an activist; one who is not indifferent and neutral to his political destiny, but plays an active, determining role. In the same vein, the position of revolution in Arendt's view is a political incident of the third kind of activity which confronts mankind directly and inevitably with the problem of beginning and start.

Arendt's distinction between labor, work, and action can be said to have been manifested in her thought about revolutions as well, because she does not define revolution as the will of the masses that is the war on poverty. In Arendt's political thought revolutions are a symbol of the spontaneous action of humans, a symbol of human presence in the realm of

action. Revolutions have provided modern human with a political space to once again experience some faces of political activity in its real sense.

Arendt considers the truly political and modern revolutions to be conscious and free and believes that revolutions that are merely due to poverty and the necessities of life (such as Marxist revolutions) are emotional and non-modern (Bradshaw, op, cit: 101).

According to Arendt, Augustine "was the first person to formulate the philosophical latencies of the ancient idea of freedom." (Ansari, op, cit: 125). Freedom can be obtained when people enter political action and begin to initiate it. Therefore, since the public realm is the realm of political action, it must be a realm of freedom as well. Only where such a realm exists and humans can exploit it for liberation can they establish their own reality.

Revolution and Freedom

Arendt sees the phenomenon of revolution within the framework of political action. In her view, revolutions are a manifestation of a fresh beginning in the scene of human life. Revolutions are an attempt to achieve freedom through political action. Arendt considered human political freedom a representation of his unpredictability. She believed that freedom and political action are the only dimensions of human life that distinguish human from animals.

In Arendt's view, political freedom is guaranteed only in the case of direct individual participation. Physical freedom is a prerequisite for freedom, but as Arendt writes, freedom is experienced through practice, not anyhow else. The close relationship between practice-oriented action and freedom is what revives the desire for revolution. In the times when freedom is revered, revolutions tempt

us in the hope that the course of history will suddenly begin to have a fresh restart. Revolutions, as a point of convergence between the idea of freedom and the beginning of the new experience, realizes the experience of being free.

In George Kateb's view, the meaning of political action must also be sought in freedom (Ibid: 126). The only means of freedom is political action; thus, freedom from Arendt's point of view is both related to political action, which is initiation of action, and self-knowledge; when human beings acquire freedom through action with others, they will obtain self-knowledge as well.

Arendt considers politics the reason of freedom; in her opinion, freedom is obtained only in public and political life (Bashiriyeh, op, cit: 148). From Arendt's point of view, the political public realm is a realm in which individual freedom and individuality are realized, and human actions and works become meaningful (Jahanbagloo, 2006: 65). Therefore, the principal meaning of human life becomes noticeable in a common world he shares with other human beings.

In Arendt's thought, freedom arises from political action; when people enter the public domain and engage in dialogue and consultation, a feeling of freedom emerges (Ansari, 2000: 162). Freedom has its roots in action, specifically a coordinated action. Arendt considers freedom as the product of plural people. According to Arendt's arguments and thoughts, politics means freedom (Bashiriyeh, op, cit: 149).

In any case, Arendt is placed among the modern liberal intellectuals who describe politics as a manifestation of freedom. Although this thought was criticized by some critics, other critics regard such an approach an important factor in the philosophy of liberalism. Arendt has a special understanding

of freedom in which freedom is taken equal with the possibility of action in public and political arena; this interpretation of freedom is in contrast to the new liberal interpretation of freedom, that is, liberation from foreign domination and coercion.

Arendt considers a revolution as a way to freedom; in fact, she believes that revolution is for freedom and if it does not reach this goal it cannot be called a revolution, because political participation means "freedom" (Johnson, 1966: 121). So a revolution is a sign of political participation that brings freedom with it.

"A human being is free because he is a fresh beginning himself," Arendt writes. Therefore, the purpose of politics is not to end the objectives; it is an activity that never ends and is always in its infancy. Arendt inspired by the phrase from St. Augustine in the book *The City of God*, states: "Man was created, to be a beginning" (Jahanbagloo, op, cit: 157).

Without freedom, political life is literally meaningless. The "cause of existence" of politics is freedom. Despite all theories, we believe that "freedom is the cause of the existence of politics" (Bashiriyeh, op, cit: 132).

From Hannah Arendt's perspective, freedom is experienced only in the public realm, historical examples of which can be seen in ancient Greek cities, especially in Athens.

Freedom is a new beginning and stems from revolution, and this allows humans to provide themselves with the ideal facilities. This point makes Arendt's existentialist tendencies obvious (Ghaderi, 2000: 175). In Arendt's thought, human life is realized with taking distance from nature and is blended with freedom. In turn, freedom requires spontaneity and unpredictable action. Today, with

the emergence of felicity as prosperity instead of freedom in the public domain, the economy has attacked politics and politics has become part of private family life. Independence of America in 1776, the French Revolution in 1789, the Paris Commune in 1871 and the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, all against what Arendt calls imperialism and totalitarianism, are examples of the establishment of freedom (Ibid, 175).

According to Arendt, the true freedom is when a person is free to leave his home and move to a political space (Bashiriyeh, 1997: 135). Arendt says: "The freedom is revealing the ability of one person to refresh him and does not think solely about reaching his individual goals and monitoring personal purposes, and this is the ideal of a free society formed in ancient Greek city-states." Arendt regrets that liberation in countries that have experienced no revolution in their past history is much better than revolutionary countries, and claims that most revolutions have been not only incapable of founding the basis for freedom, but also incapable of guaranteeing civil rights and the provision of a limited government based on constitutional law (Ibid, 136).

Freedom can only be realized in the realm of politics, and a revolution should lead to the foundation of political institutions guaranteeing freedom. Arendt believes that in order to understand the revolutions in the new age, it is essential to pay attention to the fact that the notion of freedom and the initiation experience must be coherent and consistent, and the level of one's acceptance of this point depends on one's level of understanding of revolutions as well as one's notion of freedom, which itself depends on revolution. This is due to the fact that according to the current

standards in the free world, the highest criterion for measuring the foundations of every country should be considered its freedom (Ibid).

Arendt initiates the discussion about different subjects with the idea of freedom. In Arendt's view freedom is, in the first place, a political idea, and revolutions have a clear-cut relationship with freedom.

The foundation of freedom for Arendt is not a slogan or a subordinate matter; it is considered to be a pivot from which a revolution derives its meaning and value. In her view, revolutions are only legitimate if they approximate the ideal of human freedom that can be achieved in the general context of the story (Bradshaw, 1989: 98).

Arendt, like Isaiah Berlin expresses two types of freedom in the realm of revolutions: positive freedom and negative freedom. According to Arendt, positive freedom is realized through an individual's right to choose consciously and his intellectual and moral independence and the most important manifestation of positive freedom is participation in political life (Arendt, op, cit: 174). Freedom in this sense can be realized only in certain political regimes (Bashiriyeh, 2008: 148). In the negative sense of freedom (in the thoughts of people like Locke and John Stuart Mill), the following issues are considered: the independence of the private aspect of an individual, the lack of human integrity, abstaining from interference in an individual's affairs, autonomy and self-government, self-organization, and free choice of various ways of life. According to Arendt, in the traditional, established pattern of revolutions positive freedom has been forgotten and instead revolutionaries consider their mission to be addressing the social issues and as a result dominate the course of revolutions and establish new autocracies.

Revolution and Liberation

Arendt distinguishes freedom and liberation. For Arendt, the goal of a revolution should be to establish freedom. About the distinction between freedom and liberation, Arendt states that, firstly, liberation and freedom are not the same; second, liberation may be a prerequisite of freedom; but it does not automatically result in freedom. Third, the notion of freedom, implicitly emanating from liberation, can be merely in its negative sense, and therefore even thinking about liberation does not equal a desire for freedom. The reason such an obvious point is often forgotten is that liberation have always looked great and dignified, in contrast to founding of freedom which has been either deemed futile and absurd, or at least its necessity has not been apparent (Arendt, op, cit: 38-39).

Liberation means to emancipate man from natural constraints. A human being liberated from his nature is relieved of the necessity of spending effort for livelihood, but is not free; that is, he has not entered into action in the public domain (Bashiriyeh, 1997: 131). Even though such a person can be emancipated from the domination of nature, at the same time he may be under the rule of a tyranny that does not provide him the opportunity of freedom. Therefore, the emancipation from nature's dominance is only an antecedent to liberation, not the same as it. If the will of the masses in overcoming their poverty and their need for the dictatorial regime predominates freedom and cast it aside, dangerous consequences will follow. The desire to eliminate poverty and necessity has been the underlying cause of foundation of communist societies, while the realization of freedom is possible only in a civil society.

Arendt mentions that one of the most common faults is still to mistake 'liberating' for 'the foundation of freedom'. The freedom

that has been chanted by people in their revolutionary slogans and has been their principal demand is in fact a demand for the liberation from the present situation, which sometimes manifested itself in inequality and aggression, sometimes in repression and tyranny, and other times in poverty and indigence; where it carried a "social" burden and meaning. In Arendt's view, the purpose of the French Revolution was not freedom, but to emancipate humans from suffering, distress and poverty (Shojaee Zand, 2001: 59). Given the mentioned difference between the two concepts of liberation and freedom that she consciously completes her claim as follows: liberation from the necessity (basic human needs), which cannot be delayed, has always been in preference to the establishment of the foundation of freedom.

Crane Brinton, who introduces the four revolutions he has studied as a democratic and with the purpose of freedom, actually means liberation, that is, the emancipation of the "majority" of the people from being captive of the ruling minority (Ibid, 2001: 60).

Arendt insists that political freedom should not be taken equal with liberation, which means to overthrow the ruling autocratic regime, both being aspects of a revolution. This kind of liberation does not automatically lead to freedom; that is, a revolution destroys the dictatorial foundation, but is not capable of constructing a free society.

From the viewpoint of Arendt, liberation is accompanied by the realization of a set of basic and defined principles that must be considered for every human being. Liberation is accompanied by the fulfillment of a series of minimum standards of living for all individuals and citizens in society. The Declaration of Human Rights or the documents

drafted in the name of human rights mention a series of rights and freedoms for all human beings. All these rights, irrespective of what they contain or which standards they consider in their formulation are categorized below the liberation topic, that is, liberation from a situation in which human beings have been deprived of these privileges and rights. The main characteristic of such affairs is the emancipation of an individual from the pressure of foreign forces and has a preventive aspect. Liberation defends an individual against generalities but does not necessitate anything; however, freedom from Arendt's point of view is something completely different, even though it is partly dependent on liberation for its realization. Some extent of liberation is the requisite for freedom; but liberation is not freedom.

Revolution and Violence

In her studies about revolution, Arendt tries to find out the cause and the meaning of revolution simultaneously. In her description of the distinction between revolution, and revolt and coup, she considers violence to be the only common denominator of them; however, like change, violence is just one of the characteristics of revolutions. It is important to consider that one can speak of revolution only where change means a new beginning, where violence is used to create a completely different government, and where emancipation from oppression is focused on the establishment of freedom.

Arendt believes that because in itself a revolution also involves the use of violence against the state of affairs, it is sometimes better to tolerate of the present status, no matter how cruel and dictatorial, rather than battling against it (Arendt, op, cit: 321).

Revolution and Totalitarianism

In the twentieth century, communist and Nazi totalitarian regimes emerged. Revolutions should be considered as their consequence, as another link of the same chain (Ansari, 2000: 150).

According to Arendt, totalitarianism is a product of modernity. To escape the sufferings and effects of modernity, man must seek foundation of freedom. In Arendt's point of view, the real types of revolutions and liberty movements follow such an important purpose (Ghaderi, 2000: 175).

Arendt's views on political issues and debates, especially on revolution, are affected by the issues and events of the French Revolution. In particular, Arendt's lifetime conditions and contemporaneity with the emergence of totalitarian regimes are among the reasons that make Arendt, in line with many scholars and members of the Frankfurt School, focus to understand the reasons for the emergence of totalitarianism. In one of her works, Arendt rightly poses Stalinist and Hitlerian regimes as totalitarian systems.

From Arendt's point of view, it is science and modern attitude that cultivates totalitarianism. Therefore, in order to escape the problems and consequences of modernity, one should seek to establish freedom.

Arendt is one of the Western intellectuals who, after World War II, sought to combat totalitarianism through fully understanding the nature of this system and the causes of its emergence. She believed that in order to eliminate totalitarianism it has to be understood and its history must be controlled; she considered revolutions one way of eliminating totalitarianism. The generations who fought against totalitarianism in the second half of the twentieth century took great advantage of her thoughts.

Arendt distinguishes dictatorship and totalitarianism, and finds the outcome of a totalitarian state, the destroying of human life (Bashiriyeh, 1997: 136). She considered the main reason for the formation of totalitarian governments to be the emergence of the masses due to the collapse and vanishing of society class structures formed on the basis of collective interests and commonalities, and defines mass as an isolated, outcast and lonely population that not because of common needs and goals, but due to the lack of identity start to serve some specific minority in the form of a political organization.

The origins of totalitarianism are to be sought through the gradual accumulation of problems that prevented the emergence of a beneficial civilian life; a life that could unite the citizens without depriving them of their freedom, a situation that Arendt calls plurality (Ibid, 156).

The effects of the world war, the recession and the spread of revolutionary uprisings created a mentality among people that blamed people themselves for all these miseries, and the definitive path leading outside a future uncertain world full of dangers originates from a theory, possibly in the hands of a person. The totalitarian ideologies claimed to have found the key to history; that with this key, the events of the past and present can be better explained and understood, and the future can also be predicted and guaranteed. Similarly, the response of European societies to the ideologies of totalitarianism was the result of a series of problems that had destroyed the public or political atmosphere as they had destroyed free atmosphere.

By examining totalitarianism as a phenomenon that has a "dreadful freshness" that is in disassociation with all traditions; Arendt concludes that a new definition of politics is needed. She defines politics as "the world of

appearances" and "the common world", which leads to the proximity of human beings to one another (Jahanbagloo, 2006: 157).

Arendt argues that throughout history we have had a great deal of autocracy, tyranny and dictatorship; but totalitarianism is of a different kind, and if we cannot recognize the difference between totalitarianism and other types of dictatorships and not acknowledge that totalitarianism is a new phenomenon, we are at such a risk that humanity has never been exposed to before during the course of the history. From the point of view of Arendt, totalitarianism is the closure of politics.

According to Arendt, if we do not identify the elements of totalitarianism, we might get caught up in its newer forms. Today, the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union and the fascist regime in Italy have disappeared, and Hitler is not in power anymore, but the question is, is there not the possibility of reproduction of totalitarianism in a new form unknown to us? Arendt, by pointing out the elements and roots of totalitarianism in their infancy, wants us to stay vigilant not to let that happen.

Arendt considers the basis of all social problems of modern society in the possibility of totalitarianism. During her years of life, she strives to follow and pathologies the causes of her contemporary totalitarian status from the sources of human history. For Arendt, a revolution is the existence of common objectives and social ties, along with hope for a fresh beginning and crossing barriers, and ways of confronting totalitarianism.

Revolution and War

Arendt considers war and revolution as two issues, the common denominator of both of which being violence. Arendt has distin-

guished between war and revolution and regards revolution as one pursuing the purpose of freedom (Ghaderi, 2000: 175).

The perspective of twentieth century has been defined by wars and revolutions. War and Revolution, despite the loss of their ideological aspect, still form two of the fundamental issues of our world in the realm of politics (Arendt, op, cit: 17). We are in a situation in which war has put human beings in the danger of total extinction; meanwhile, man hopes that revolutions grant all human beings liberty and freedom.

From a historical perspective, war is one of the oldest phenomena in the recorded history of human beings; however, revolution did not have a proper meaning until the new era and is one of the newest political concepts.

Revolution and the Social Issue of Poverty

According to Arendt, in the French Revolution, bread turned into the most important existential criterion, and good politicians were the ones capable of producing more bread for more people (Ansari, op, cit: 109). In the French Revolution, what driving people forward was the need for bread, and the cry for seeking bread always rose united, because we all need bread, and truly we are all one. Thus, Rousseauian general will seem to have become the voice of the miserable; those who cry out united and loud, "save us from poverty and hunger." The emergence of the poor masses in the French Revolution made the revolution subject to the despotism of nature and the necessity of livelihood; consequently, freedom was forced to submit to social and economic necessities (Arendt, op, cit: 186).

From the viewpoint of the Arendt, the French poor launched the revolution because of physical and material necessities; therefore the revolution was caught up in ensuring biological well-being, and according to Robespierre, lost the moment of freedom. Arendt studies everything in term of the social issue. The social issue, that is, mass poverty, is always open to terror and fear. Revolutions are a prominent example of solving economic and social problems through political means. From Arendt's point of view, attempts to resolve economic and social problems by political means always end in violence and authoritarianism. She believes that the pressure from the poor in the French Revolution to put an end to social constraints led the revolution to a mournful fate. Arendt's most intense attack on social affairs can be found in her book "On Revolution", in which she argues that the acquaintance of the poor with the public realm led to the destruction of the French Revolution. This was because the revolution considered eliminating the necessities its purpose, as opposed to the foundation of freedom (what Arendt considered as the purpose of all revolutions and the glory of the American Revolution). Poverty is the basic social substance that ruins politics as soon as it begins to engage with it (Ibid, 187).

Arendt notes that what caused the wave of assassination and executions with guillotines in the French Revolution was the very pressure from the poor to gain better economic positions. Robespierre, the French revolutionary leader, described himself as the representative of the deprived lower classes of the society. Arendt quotes Robespierre saying: "The destitute praise my violence". Arendt even claims that the emergence of dictators in the shadow and support of the poor is not her discovery or innovation. Before her Aristotle also claimed that the presence of the poor in

the political scene would lead to the emergence of dictators claiming salvation and eliminating oppression and discrimination. The continuous pressure from the poor for obtaining higher positions in the course of the French Revolution led to a wave of massacres. Even in the case of the coup d'état by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1799, known as the coup d'état of the unemployed and the destitute, Napoleon succeeded by the means of mobilizing the unemployed and in 1804 transformed the French Republic into an empire (Ibid, 188).

In the French Revolution, the idea of necessity emerged in the form of a "social question." The social question was the existence of poverty, and poverty was itself the ultimate condition of necessity. Arendt argued that all of the subsequent issues arising from the French Revolution were due to the fact that the inherently anti-political phenomenon of necessity, not only had found its way into politics, but also began to deeply distort politics. When the French impoverished arrived at the scene of the revolution, as they had arisen under the influence of their motivation for their physical needs, they brought with them the idea of necessity. Arendt argues that this was necessity, that is, people's essential needs, that led to the assassinations and resulting in the misfortunate destiny of the revolution.

Arendt does not approve the entry of the poor into politics, mentioning that the revolution of the poor against the rich is much more powerful than the uprising of the oppressed against the oppressors (Ibid, 156). Arendt opposes poor's entrance into politics as she considers politics a realm of freedom. She believes that the poor cannot be free and do not understand freedom. They are subject to their physiological and pre-political constraints and deprivations. Human beings can-

not showcase their humanity as long as they are in the prison of their physical needs, so wherever the poor have entered the realm of politics to fulfill their demands, they have ruined freedom. Freedom has always been crushed under the feet of the impoverished. Arendt also disagrees with the policies related to the poor, because she considers freedom the superior social welfare, and believes that in principle the physical and biological necessities of humans moves in opposition of the principle of freedom; therefore, political programs that are based on economic development, social welfare and the elimination of discrimination are fertile grounds for the growth of authoritarianism and dictatorship (Ibid, 157).

Conclusion

Revolution is a way to liberate humanity from the prison of despotism and to achieve freedom. In moments from the history, the ruling of totalitarian and autocratic powers and the predominance of aristocratic structure in the countries could be disrupted by nothing but by a storm of revolution. A revolution, shall it bear the message of novelty and innovation, is the sign of society's vitality, and strengthens man's hope for the future due to the fact that in itself, revolution arises from hope.

Arendt is one of the greatest theorists of the twentieth century who has paid attention to the phenomenon of revolution more than others, and reflected on its various dimensions. Arendt considers the understanding of modern revolutions possible, given the concurrency with of the "idea of freedom" and the initial experience of solving them, and tries to find the cause and meaning of revolution simultaneously in her studies about revo-

lutions. In Arendt's thought, revolution stands in the position it deserves best, and can be called a revolution in its literal sense, only when it is in the sense of a new beginning and looks forward to the future. In Arendt's view, revolution is one of the genuine manifestations of action in the public realm, and the most special thing it does is reopening a new chapter in history and without a new beginning, revolution will not be meaningful.

In Arendt's view, freedom is related to the issue of action, and these two reveal their value and position relative to revolution, and this is the only determinant of the success and failure of revolutions. Arendt also distinguishes between positive freedom and negative freedom in discussing the objectives of a revolution. In her opinion, "negative freedom" means the one's liberation from constraints and the absence of obstacles in the way of free expression of his needs and necessities, and the most important manifestation of the negative freedom is the emancipation of man from poverty. However, in her opinion, freedom is obtained only through public and political life, and revolution is a way to freedom, and in fact the objective of revolution is achieving freedom; if it does not achieve this objective, it is not a revolution. This is where she differentiates between liberation and freedom. She considers liberation as the precondition and antecedent to freedom, but considers the establishment of freedom the ultimate purpose of revolution.

To explain the history of development of revolutions, Arendt considers it adequate to explore only the American and French revolutions. This is due to the fact that Arendt's main assumption is that all the 19th- and 20th-century revolutions have a pattern similar to that of the French and American revo-

lutions. She assumes that every revolution has either regressed, advanced in the course of degeneration, and ultimately resulted in dictatorship due to the domination of the poor over the revolutionaries in the same way as the French Revolution, or, similar to the American Revolution, have achieved their purpose of liberty and the ideals of revolutionaries.

Given the fact that Arendt draws a relationship between revolution on one hand and violence and totalitarianism on the other hand; in her view, violence is only permitted to the point where it leads to a revolution that will lead to the establishment of freedom, otherwise violence, per se, will endanger humanity with catastrophic damages. On the other hand, violence is an integral part of revolution, and if it is not put on the path to freedom and establishment of a republic, is yet another problem and defeats the purpose. It should also be noted that totalitarianism also plays an important role in political thought and leads to isolation and lacking of identity in human beings, and not only will it lead to the atomization of people, but also basically leads to the redundancy of human beings. In conclusion, the concept of revolution plays a central role and has a pivotal position in Arendt's political thought, and other concepts and topics make sense around the axis of revolution.

References

- Ansari, M. (2000). *Hannah Arendt And Criticism of Political Philosophy*. Tehran: Center.
- Ansari, M. (2010). Public Domain In Hannah Arendt's Political Judgement. *Political - Economical Information Magazine*.
- Ardakani, M. A. (2013). The concept of self and its relation to political action in the thoughts of Hannah Arendt and Herbert Marcuse. *Quarterly Scientific - Research Journal of Theoretical Politics*.
- Arendt, H. (1958). *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Arendt, H. (1963). *On Revolution*. New York: Viking.
- Arendt, H. (1972). *Crises of the Republic: Lying in Politics; Civil Disobedience; On Violence; Thoughts on Politics and Revolution*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.
- Arendt, H. (2004). *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Schocken.
- Bashiriyeh, H. (1996). Hannah Arendt's Political Judgement. *Political - Economical Magazine*.
- Bashiriyeh, H. (1997). *Liberalism And Conservatism*. Tehran: Ney.
- Bashiriyeh, H. (2006). Hannah Arendt And Politics. *Bukhara*.
- Bashiriyeh, H. (2008). *Revolution And Political Mobilization*. Tehran: University of Tehran Publications.
- Bradshaw, L. (1989). *Acting and Thinking the Political Thought of Hannah Arendt*.
- Brinton, C. (1965). *The Anatomy of Revolution*. New York: Vintage.
- Cohan, A. S. (1975). *Theories of revolution: an introduction*. Thomas Nelson & Sons Limited.
- Cohen, J. A. (2006). *Hannah Arendt's World. Bukhara*.
- De Montesquieu, C. (1989). *The spirit of the laws*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fazeli, H. (2005). Arendt, Equestrian Republican. *Rahbord*.
- Foran, J. (1997). *Theorizing revolutions*. London: Psychology Press.
- Ghaderi, H. (2000). *Political Thoughts in the Twentieth Century*. Tehran: Samt.
- Goldstone, J. A. (1986). *Revolutions: theoretical, comparative, and*

- historical studies*. Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Jahanbagloo, R. (2006). *Hannah Arendt And Modern Politics*. Bukhara.
- Johnson, C. A. (1966). *Revolutionary Change*. New York: Little Brown & Company.
- Navazeni, B. (2009). Mutual impact of internal motivation and external stimulation in the victory of revolutions. *Politics Quarterly*(2).
- Sadria, M. (2012). *Modern Critique of Hannah Arendt's Modernity And Political Judgement*. Tehran: Niloofar.
- Shayanmehr, A. (2015). *Hannah Arendt*. Tehran: Akhtaran.
- Shojaee Zand, A. (2001). Revolution or Democracy. *Rahbord*.
- Skocpol, T. (1979). *States and social revolutions: A comparative analysis of France, Russia and China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tocqueville, A. d. (1856). *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*.
- Yunesi, M. (2009). Politics and Existentialism: A Study of Hannah Arendt's Approach to the Concept of "Action". *Quarterly Scientific - Research Journal of Theoretical Politics*.
- Zarshenas, S. (2005). A Talk About Revolution With Reference to Hannah Arendt's Opinions. *Sooreh Andisheh*.