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PRE- FREEDOM AS AN OBSTACLE FOR POLITICAL  
FREEDOM

It is no wonder then that the term “freedom” was first and foremost attached in the ancient world to the distinction between slaves and free persons. As for Greeks, to be free often indicated not to be a slave or, in other words, not to be constrained by the conditions of slavery. This was the most frequent meaning of the word even in Aristotle’s Politics: when Aristotle used the word “free,” he usually employed it in the sense of the opposite to being a slave.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, in the modern context, although, the concept of liberty is wide and indeterminate, and its very indeterminacy is part of our understanding of the term, at least in one principle is common that is called being constrained as Thomas Hobbes believes that freedom is absence of obstacle in a material perspective.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, two major things can be said about the place of liberty in respect of solution. Firstly, some scientists like Plato believe that slavery is a natural course. Thus there has been no solution to free slaves. As Plato wished to found his city on the principles of justice and virtue, not a free city. Secondly, the early modern period was the moment at which the value of liberty significantly increased. As some scientists like Locke and Rousseau, their works were often led in defense of liberty against political and social authorities.

However, the form of political regime and position of political authorities can be a big obstacle for freedom; the all obstacles for freedom can not be relevant to political systems. Therefore, it has to be considerable other issues like the pre-freedom that can be a major problem for freedom. By the virtue of this view the paper will set a new notion.

**Political freedom:**

In the field of political philosophy, a vast literature has already emerged about Political freedom that is known as a verity of conceptions like negative freedom, positive freedom, internal freedom, external freedom and so on. (See,

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<sup>1</sup> Podoksik Ephraim, One Concept of Liberty: Towards Writing the History of a Political Concept. Journal of the History of Ideas, Volume 71, No 2, , April 2010, p.222.

<sup>2</sup> Hobbes Thomas, *Leviathan*, Ed Edwin Curley, Hackett: Indianapolis, 1994, p.110

for example Thomas Hobbes as the author of *Leviathan*; Isaiah Berlin as the author of *Two Concepts of Liberty*; Stuart Mill as the author of *On Liberty*; Hanna Arendt as the author of *Government and Freedom*); For instance, according to Quentin Skinner: "[Berlin] begins by suggesting that, whereas negative liberty is freedom from constraint, positive liberty is freedom to follow a certain form of life."<sup>3</sup>

But then for this paper's purposes, this basic definition can be sufficient that political freedom is kind of participation that each participant not only has equal power and equal opportunity in the decision-making process, but also they do or do not what they want independently.

However, at first glance, this definition is so simple, it is ideal if it is noticed in depth. Since in deeply way participation can not be just voting by participants or even become candidates and so forth. In other words, as Amartya Sen has implied; the definition of political freedom can not be minimized to 'mechanical measures'. There is really important that political freedom should be understood deeply rather than a 'mechanical measures' based merely on elections and voting.<sup>4</sup>

As it is well known that "In a free and democratic election, the people of 'Germany' voted in 1932 to abolish their democracy and their freedoms. This was not a *coup d'état*, a surrender to superior force. Although there are not many cases, Germany in 1932 is not the only example of a free choice to give up freedom: Peron in Argentina and Mussolini in Italy come to mind."<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, it seems that the political freedom should be understood beyond mechanical measures that can be called "real freedom" as it implied this term should be recognized as a foundation of freedom since without this understanding, striving for freedom can not be successful, in other words, People feel they have achieved freedom each time they change their governors or even the form of their political system to replace the outmoded model; but changing of the politicians or even the form of the government doesn't take it away, since there has not been any positive point in the removing one falsehood only to replace it with another one.

Based on what has been mentioned above, it seems that the main center of freedom should be understood beyond the simple meaning of freedom. As a result, this definition can be employed that the political freedom is the

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<sup>3</sup> Skinner Quentin. A third concept of liberty, *Proceedings of British Academy*, No 117, 2002, pp.238-9

<sup>4</sup> Srinivasan Sahrath, No Democracy without Justice: Political Freedom in Amartya Sen's Capability Approach *Journal of Human Development*, Vol. 8, No. 3, Nov 2007, United Nations Development Programme, PP. 8-9.

<sup>5</sup> J. ARROW, Freedom and Social Choice: Notes in the Margin Kenneth J. Arrow, Stanford University, Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom ,Vol. 18, No. 1, 2006, P58

congruence between one's will or true self and the ability to exercise their full capacities in the respect of political good that can emerge whether in the form of being active or not being active.

### **Pre freedom:**

Pre freedom is known as the stage of life before negative freedom in terms of the process of freedom (for more information read: Erich Fromm on Freedom)<sup>6</sup>. In this stage a person is conscious of himself only as a member of community, race, party, corporation, etc. therefore, the person's measure is not based on self realization, self identification, and so forth. In other words, the person is still related to other ones by primary ties in view of the fact that the person does not yet conceive of itself as an individual being through the medium of itself social role. This stage can, thus, take two major features in aspect of lack of freedom as follows:

### **Identification:**

In this state, pre freedom condition, people are defined by the some things such as ideologies, governments, religions, mass media and so forth. In fact, they are aware of themselves according to what mentioned above, not their attempt. As Berlin says about a Nazi:

"I [a Nazi] do this not because it is good or right, or because I like it, but because I am a German and this is German way to live."<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, to highlight the conception of pre freedom, it can be translated into volunteered slave that means the person is satisfied with its unfree condition since the one does not have any idea about himself which make friction with another idea. Indeed, it seems that the person in this state must be a real slave; he must be ready for doing everything even to victimize him or herself.

### **The doll of authorities:**

This feature, the doll of authorities, of pre freedom would be understood in this way that ones, in pre condition, would be likely to accept their tyrants as liberators and believe their chains to be freedom. However, they usually have a political presence; just they are the doll of authority that can be easily found in some periods like the Middle Ages as a significant example which is called 'Dark Ages'.

<sup>6</sup> Hassani Hassani, Erich Fromm on Freedom, Bulletin of Yerevan University, International Relations, Political Science, No. 134.6, 2011, PP. 70-76.

<sup>7</sup> Berlin Isaiah, my intellectual path, Princeton University Press, 2002, P.10.

Besides, they think their political opinion is for their selves, but if it is carefully considered, it is only repeated ruler's sentence. But we must not forget that this state can be seen in oppositional individuals as well.

For Tocqueville, this is a dangerous form of existence that members of society will embrace their tyrants as liberators and believe their chains to be freedom. Mostly, because, the citizenry will be too blinded by apparent benevolence to notice the invisible violence being done to them.<sup>8</sup>

### **The problem of freedom:**

Based on the definitions of pre freedom and political freedom that mentioned before, the two features in pre freedom; 'identify' and 'the doll of authority', especially at a turning points in political situation like revolution, can be a dangerous combination against freedom. In the other words, they threaten the foundation of freedom that lies at the heart of human life since they are in opposite position of freedom's items such as equal power and opportunity in particular when confronted with real- life. In the period of pre freedom people just have few choices to how react in order to social and political decisions.

Since when a person entirely accepts a type of external belief and also gives their allegiance to it, they may go in one of two major directions.

Firstly, they may become very rigid in their allegiance to some organizations or systems which they have belonged to them. This type of conformity can be seen through the various forms of fundamentalisms such as religious, political, or social systems.<sup>9</sup>

In this state, it is considerable that individual's behavior is really not according to their responsibility as it was said under two concepts, identify and the doll of authority, people have no independent ideas about themselves irrespective of falsehood or not falsehood as it is implied:

"The problem comes with blind allegiance where a person gives up their responsibility to critically think through the beliefs, perspective, and values of the organization. When this happens, the individual's values are no longer authentic."<sup>10</sup>

And secondly, they may make this great problem that they identify their slavery with freedom. As Fred Alford says "I think, I better understand the strange affinity of freedom for constraint: why so many people are willing to

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<sup>8</sup> Locke McLendon Michael, Tocqueville, Jansenism, and the Psychology of Freedom, California State University, Los Angeles, American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 50, No. 3, July 2006, P.670.

<sup>9</sup> Hoffman Louis, Freedom, Responsibility, and Agency, available at: [www.Existential-therapy.com/CEDP.htm](http://www.Existential-therapy.com/CEDP.htm)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

cover their chains with garlands of flowers, so as to call them signs of their freedom".<sup>11</sup>

In the pre-freedom, the person loses himself / herself or at least their individual responsibility in the different names such as in the name of national security, collective responsibility, leader, and something like those as "[Arndt] she stresses that in many cases compliance with the law really amounted to an excuse for not taking responsibility for one's actions: the Nazis claimed that, 'they had just followed orders.'"<sup>12</sup>

To imply the idea of Tocqueville, it can be understandable that the state of pre freedom is not only as a obstacle for freedom, but it is also dangerous for freedom as he believes that this is a dangerous form of existence that people only would be as followers, mostly because the citizenry will be too blinded by apparent benevolence to notice the invisible violence being done to them.<sup>13</sup>

That's why this, pre-freedom condition, is the noticeable problem for freedom as it seems, the circumstances actually destroy freedom by creating a systematic despotism that paternalistically takes responsibility for even the most trivial parts of a human being's life.

### **The solutions to the problem of freedom:**

Nevertheless, it is not doubttable that there is a variety of views for the problem of freedom. As a result, the solution of the problem can take various forms, but this piece of essay only argues on bases of pre-condition course.

In this perspective, it seems, solutions can come from understanding the root of the problem. Consequently, according to above parts, the main roots of the problem can be the absence of person's role to define itself and also blind allegiance.

It is therefore considerable that if people are to retain or to arrive at their freedom, they must choose to contend with their "unfree condition" by trying to redefine their identity and associations. Although, scientists like Freud, Jung, and also Adler believe that "the hardest thing for human beings to do is to know themselves and to change themselves,"<sup>14</sup> human beings have no choice if they would like to be free in that view.

To clarify, it seems, for freedom, a person should be aware of themselves by themselves and another step is to change based on the new conscience. Since

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<sup>11</sup> Alford Fred, *Rethinking Freedom*, 2005, P.23.

<sup>12</sup> Herzog Annabel, Hannah Arendt's Concept of Responsibility, *Studies in Social and Political Thought*, P.42.

<sup>13</sup> Locke McLendon Michael, *Tocqueville, Jansenism, and the Psychology of Freedom*, P.670.

<sup>14</sup> B. Ewen Robert, *An Introduction to Theories of Personality*, Sixth Edition , 2003. Mahwah, New Jersey London, PP. 93-95

person can not be free till his/her identification is determined by others such as ideology, government, tradition or other things like those.

For instance, they should not let ideology do the work of actual experience and derive their self-worth from abstract principle alone. In contrast, they should define themselves by themselves. In other words, they should define themselves independently even if it would be inadequate since they would have responsibility to their measures at least in this sense. It seems, therefore, human being can really be himself when he identifies himself.

This is not only necessary for arriving at freedom, but also this is vital to remain the freedom, as for Tocqueville, if people are to retain their freedom, they must choose to contend with their "weakness" by reaching out to their neighbors through civic associations.<sup>15</sup>

It is certainly obvious that the political freedom, under definition of this article, is not accessible before human's awareness because it is beyond human's awareness. As the lack of self-knowledge cause to enslave humanity in the name of various things even in the name of freedom as it can be seen in some sentences as follows:

"Without freedom we cannot give ourselves freely to our Lord, for the most supernatural of reasons, because we want to."<sup>16</sup>

In fact, the natural solutions are based upon the acceptance of change and learning how to define, control, and harmonize humans' opinion and behavior under principles of freedom. Namely, human being does not have to make, find or change one problem to another one.

Indeed, all people need to do is, to be doubtful about what is going on, on the one hand And people should begin to redefine their identity on the other hand. This can similarly see in below phrase, not precisely:

"All we have to do is to show people that they are trapped in the silken but fragile shrouds of a pattern of discourse conventions"<sup>17</sup>

### Conclusion:

For most scientists like John Locke, "freedom" simply refers to a set of political systems like the kind of governments. They may argue over how these systems ought to be configured to best realize it. But they rarely suggest that it entails anything more than getting the systems. The scientists almost never speak of the problem of freedom. Rather, on the one hand, some of them assume it,

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<sup>15</sup> **Locke McLendon Michael**, *Tocqueville, Jansenism, and the Psychology of Freedom*, P.670

<sup>16</sup> **Rodriguez Luño I Angel**, *Freedom, Responsibility, Participation, and Solidarity in Political Life*, available at: [www.univforuni.org](http://www.univforuni.org)

<sup>17</sup> **Ratner Carl**, *Harre's Social Philosophy and Political, Philosophy: A Social Scientific Critique*, *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, No. 39:4, 2009, P.10.



freedom, is something that everyone naturally desires. On the other hand, others believe being free or not being free is natural issue. For example, Plato believes that a slave was born as a slave and they have to live in that way.

These kinds of views can be considerable in terms of issue of liberty in general. But, in particular, the pre-freedom can be understood as a major obstacle for liberty. This challenge is associated with two features of pre-freedom, 'identification' and 'the doll of authorities' that is in paradox of freedom.

It seems, the paradox between two concepts came from two opposing directions, one based on an insistence on congruence between one's will or true self and the ability to exercise their full capacities in the respect of political good that can emerge whether in the form of being active or not being active (more extensive than that which is called 'mechanical measures') and the other on the absence of self realization or at least lack of that ability. (The person does not yet conceive of itself as an individual being through the medium of itself social role.)

As it was said the hindrances come from the paradox. Automatically, the solutions need to be concentrated on the paradox to omit it or fade it at least. Thus, if people are to retain or to arrive at their freedom, they must not only choose to contend with their "unfree condition" by trying to redefine their identity and associations, but also they have to change their good based on the new way since there is no a short cut for freedom .

#### Նախ-ազատությունը որպես խոչընդոտ քաղաքական ազատությանը

Այս հոդվածը պնդում է, որ ընդգծի նախ-ազատությունը՝ որպես հիմնական խնդիր ազատության, ինչպես նաև ցույց կտա խնդրի լուծումը: Այդ նպատակով առաջին հերթին, հեղինակը փորձում է հստակեցնել երկու տարբեր գաղափարներ քաղաքական ազատության և նախ-ազատության համար: Երկրորդ, այս հարցը պետք է պատասխան ստանա, ինչու կամ ինչպես է նախ-ազատությունը լուրջ խոչընդոտ քաղաքական ազատության համար: Հարցին պատասխան կտրվի կենտրոնանալով վերը նշված երկու խնդիրների վերաբերյալ իրական պարադոքսի բացատրման վրա: Հարցին պատասխանելուց հետո, պարադոքսի անտեսելը կամ նույնիսկ թուլացումը կդիտվեն որպես խոչընդոտների հաղթահարման միջոցառումներ: