

POLITICAL FREEDOM CAN NOT BE A SINGLE FREEDOM

Introduction:

Freedom in general may be the word familiar to most, but it is a concept still misunderstood and misused at a time, when dictators, single-party regimes, military coup leaders and so forth alike assert popular support by claiming the mantle of some concepts like democracy, freedom, etc. Yet the idea of freedom has prevailed through a long and turbulent history in practice and theory as well. 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 indicates not to be a slave or, in other words, not to be constrained by the conditions of slavery. This is 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.¹

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.²

Although the history of freedom concept may be helpful to perceive the concept of freedom in different terms, writer, in this paper, attempt to analyze the term in another view externally and internally, not historically. Based on this view, to better understand the concept of freedom in general and the concept of political freedom in particular, it seems the division of political freedom in two different concepts in area of political philosophy can be helpful. In the course of describing, developing, and clarifying such freedom in the political sense it is necessary to think about this issue deeply. To do this, we need to go back to a much more basic level of discussion of political freedom than is usual in discussions of the general issues of that.

In other words, it can be vital to locate and consider the various elements of the freedom in the political sense and examine their interrelationships. In doing this it is important to go beyond the conceptual boundaries imposed by automatic acceptance of traditional or usual assumptions. We need to explore whether other means of political freedom may exist or be developed in addition to the means of control relied upon internal and external concepts.

¹ 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.

² Hobbes Thomas, *Leviathan*, Ed Edwin Curley, Hackett: Indianapolis, 1994, P.110.

Negative freedom:

There is no doubt that the meaning of negative freedom is a complex concept in the field of political philosophy. For instance, according to April Bernard, for Isaiah Berlin, the theory of negative freedom is only the absence of external constraints including the State.³ As in Berlin's words, "liberty in the negative sense involves an answer to the question: 'What is the area within which the subject — a person or group of persons — is or should be left to do or be what he is able to do or be, without interference by other persons'."⁴

For example, According to Skinner, for the classical liberals, only direct interference (physically or by coercing our will) counts as such, whereas the republicans believe that the mere possibility of interference resulting from one's being 'within the power of another' makes man unfree, or a slave.⁵

This idea that mentioned above implies Hobbesian analysis of freedom implying that freedom is only absence of obstacle that is an external issue. On the other hand, according to ideas of Erich Fromm, The concept of negative freedom has a twofold meaning:

The first is that a person is free from things such as traditional bonds, society, religion, and so on. The second is that the person feels alone and powerless as Fromm said according to human history:

"It showed that freedom from the traditional bonds of medieval society, though giving the individual a new feeling of independence, at the same time made him feel alone and isolated, filled him with doubt and anxiety, and drove him into new submission and into a compulsive and irrational activity."⁶ Therefore, freedom in the negative sense can describe as follows:

Common ideas, at least in this paper, about freedom in the negative sense does emerge the situation that there is no interference in individual condition. This is because freedom in this perspective is an external notion and occurs only in the absence of external obstacles. Thus, this idea insists on absence of restrictions that is the most important consideration in this view.

Special idea about negative freedom is this that one is left alone, powerless, helpless. In this case, freedom occurs not in the company of others. Namely, negative freedom is the lack of personal capacity to determine the best course of action and the existence of opportunities for them to realize their full potential.

In short, although, Negative freedom means the lack of forces which prevent an individual from doing whatever they want, it is the lack of personal capacity to

³ **Bernard April**, The 21st Century Caribbean Woman's Question: What is the Meaning of Freedom?, in *Journal of Eastern Caribbean Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3, pp. 1-23, September 2008, P. 9.

⁴ **Berlin, Isaiah**, 'Two Concepts of Liberty,' in Isaiah Berlin (ed.) *Four Essays on Liberty*, New York: Oxford University Press, PP. 72- 118, 1971, P.73.

⁵ **Skinner, Quentin**, *Liberty before Liberalism*. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1998, P. 39.

⁶ **Fromm Erich**, *The Fear of Freedom*, London: ARK PAPERBAKS, 1984, P. 89.

determine the best course of action and the existence of opportunities for them to realize their full potential.

Positive freedom:

In comparison with negative freedom, positive freedom identifies freedom the existence of internal barriers or self as the cause of one's oppression and also capacity to do or not to do whatever to want. For this reason, it can be understood that positive freedom is a stage that man can be free and yet not alone, critical and yet not filled with doubts, independent and yet an integral part of mankind. Man can attain this freedom with the realization of his self, by being himself. As Fromm says: "Positive freedom is identical with the full realization of the individual's potentialities, together with his ability to live actively and spontaneously"⁷

In other words, as opposed to negative freedom which is freedom from external restraint, positive freedom is defined as having the power and resources to fulfill one's own potential (this may include freedom from internal constraints).⁸

In fact, the positive concept of freedom that some scientists like Berlin and Fromm put forward is a single freedom that is majorly related to internal issue. All this can clarify in two major parts that can be seen in answering two questions; how man can attain positive freedom? And how man can be free in the positive sense? Or what is positive freedom?" as follows:

The first would be answered by this way that man can attain positive freedom by the realization of his self, by being himself. Thus, that is important to know that this kind of view put emphasize on the autonomy of the individual rather than virtues. In other words, virtue and the virtues are not crucial elements of freedom correctly conceived. Then the idea of some thinkers like Pinkaers can not be acceptable as "Pinckaers notes, virtue and the virtues are crucial elements of freedom rightly understood, and the journey of a life lived in freedom is a journey of growth in virtue — growth in the ability to choose wisely and well the things that truly make for our happiness and for the common good."⁹

The answering of the second question is this as mentioned before that man can be free in the positive sense if he/she can be critical and yet not filled with doubts, independent and yet an integral part of mankind. Then in this perspective, the positive freedom is freedom of the self rather than freedom of other things like political systems, traditions, religions, and so on.

⁷ Fromm Erich. *The Fear of Freedom*. Great Britain, 1942, P. 228.

⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/positive-liberty>.

⁹ George Weigel *A Better Concept of Freedom*.

www.catholiceducation.org.

At the end of this part, it is obviously known that the meaning of positive freedom here is not in metaphysical discussions, where it is equaled with virtue or ethical life. As stoics claimed that only the wise man is truly free.¹⁰

Political freedom:

The concepts of political freedom are notoriously various and tricky, but then for this paper's purposes, this basic definition can be helpful 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 have equal capacity to do or not do what they want independently in political respect.

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.¹¹

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."¹²

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 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.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Srinivasan Sahrath, No Democracy without Justice: Political Freedom in Amartya Sen's Capability Approach, in *Journal of Human Development*, United Nations Development Programme, Vol. 8, No. 3, Nov 2007, PP. 8-9.

¹² J. ARROW, *Freedom and Social Choice: Notes in the Margin* Kenneth, Stanford University, Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2006, P. 58.

Negative freedom can not be political freedom:

Despite the fact that the negative freedom is the inseparable part of political freedom, in this part, based on the explanatory views like that was mentioned for explaining some concepts, political freedom and negative freedom, it seems these ideas can be helpful for explaining the failure of negative freedom to be political freedom alone.

"Negative freedom" accurately describes one important aspect of the political freedom. As negative freedom is a state that there is no interference in individual condition. Namely, freedom in this perspective is an external notion and occurs only in the absence of external obstacles. Therefore, this idea insists on absence of restrictions that is the most important aspect of political freedom that can see in respect of opportunity.

But it is necessary to know that freedom in the negative sense is simply a neutral situation of choice, not ability to choose necessarily. In other words, although all sorts of doors may be open in negative freedom-giving individuals a large amount of negative freedom-people yet find that there are still obstacles to taking full advantage of their opportunities. As it can be seen in Daniel Greenfield' view as he says:" It is possible to be legally free, yet to have no freedom of action whatsoever."¹³ In other words, political freedom can not be occurred just in free condition.

Despite the fact of that the political nature of freedom can simply be referred to as 'freedom from,' or not being prevented from acting on one's own accord by the state or any governmental body, the deep belief is that simple absence of coercion is the only necessary condition for this state of freedom. This is what is referred to as 'negative freedom.'

Thus, the opportunities that are consequent of negative freedom are crucial elements of political freedom rightly understood, and the absence of obstacles in negative freedom is an important ring of political freedom. But it is understandable that like playing a musical instrument. Anyone can bang away on a piano; but that is to make noise, not music, and it's a barbaric, not humanistic, expression of political freedom. As it is understandable that when there is election in some society. It doesn't mean the society has political freedom. Then, it is rational to say negative freedom can not be freedom perfectly.

Positive freedom can not be political freedom alone:

As it has been mentioned under the positive freedom term in this paper, positive freedom has no spiritual character. The reality is autonomous man, not virtuous man, for positive freedom has nothing to do with goodness, happiness, or truth. Freedom is simply willfulness that means doing whatever you want no matter

¹³ Daniel Greenfield Sunday, Surrounded by willing slaves who preach the creed of slavery, we must speak for freedom, From Slavery to Freedom. April 15, 2012.
<http://www.canadatfreepress.com/index.php/article/46000>

other people whatever think or say. Indeed, Positive freedom can attach itself to any object, so long as it does not run into a superior will, human or divine. Therefore based on that view, freedom in the positive sense can not be like Berlin's views as he believes that positive freedom has come to rest at the heart of many of the nationalist, communist, authoritarian, and totalitarian creeds.¹⁴ In fact, opposed to some thinkers like Berlin that believes positive freedom causes totalitarian, authoritarian creeds, in the new definition in this paper, it can be part of political freedom as one aspect of that such as capacity or ability. As freedom in the positive sense is something that grows in human being, and the habit of living freedom wisely must be developed through education, experience, exercise, self-realization, self-mastery or so forth, which among many other things does not involve the experience of emulate others who live wisely and well.

Thus, "Positive freedom", like negative freedom, accurately describes one important aspect of the political freedom. Since, freedom in the positive sense is defined as having the power and resources to fulfill one's own potential.¹⁵ Namely, freedom in this perspective is an internal notion and occurs only in the absence of internal obstacles. Therefore, this idea insists on absence of internal restrictions that is the most important aspect of political freedom that can see in respect of real capacity or ability in general.

While the positive understanding of liberty may be important lofty and even noble part of political freedom, it is necessary to know that this concept of liberty can not be political freedom alone as if you are a person of great talent, capacity or even autonomy based on the definition of positive concept of the freedom in the absence of free condition that you have no option, your freedom just will be limited to your mind.

In other words, political freedom does not emerge when one left alone. As it can see in Arendt' standpoint indirectly "She [Arendt] nevertheless considered negative liberty a counterfeit notion. Freedom, she insisted, does not emerge when one is left alone. It occurs only in the company of others whose criticism and judgment, however harsh, is necessary if individuality is to flourish. This is so because freedom is a political notion and occurs only within politics:

An idea that runs counter to our predisposition to "measure the extent of freedom in any given community by the free scope it grants to apparently nonpolitical activities..."¹⁶

Political freedom is combination of negative and positive freedom:

¹⁴ Skinner Quentin, A third concept of liberty, Proceeding of British Academy, No 117, 2002, P. 264.

¹⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/positive-liberty>.

¹⁶ Arendt on Freedom, by Keith Quincy, pl.

[http://keithquincy.com/articles/Arendt On Freedom/ Arendt On Freedom.html](http://keithquincy.com/articles/Arendt%20On%20Freedom/Arendt%20On%20Freedom.html).

Although the concept of political freedom are notoriously various and tricky, writer attempts to explain the concept based on both concepts, negative and positive freedom. Hence, early arguments in this article can be helpful for analyzing the issue.

As it was mentioned previously, the major principles for political freedom were opportunities and capacities. In this view, it seems that political freedom is the combination of the negative and positive freedom. In other words positive freedom and negative freedom complete each other rather than to be contrast each other in the sense of political freedom.

A better way of summarizing this combination would be this that the term should express more than one concept. For this reason, this part is focused on the mentioned principles, opportunities and capacities, to prove the claim of this paper as follows:

The issue of opportunity:

As it was clearly shown, on the one hand, the opportunities in political respect are the inseparable components of political freedom. On the other hand negative freedom is the absence of obstacles that can truly translate to opportunity for example according to On Concept of Freedom Efraim Podoksik says:

"It is negative in the sense that it is based on the principle of the absence of external constraint. Obviously, this principle can be applied differently in different circumstances. We may wish not to be constrained by our neighbors with regard to our private life. We may wish not to be constrained by a tyrannical government. Or, we may wish our country not to be constrained by a foreign power. And even if the most important issue for us today is not to be constrained in our personal lives, we can easily grasp the meaning of the term when it is applied not to us personally, but to the whole community."¹⁷

Consequently, Negative freedom may be the right of people to determine the best course of action and the existence of opportunities for them to realize their full potential. But, it does not mean that negative freedom can be the capacity of people to determine their own actions, in a community which is able to provide for the full development of human potentiality.

The issue of capacity:

Although opportunity – freedom from unwanted controls over us – is important, without capacity, freedom is hardly meaningful. Capacity means having the capability to make choices about what to do or not to do, and the precious right to say "Yes" or "No!"

¹⁷ Efraim Podoksik, One Concept of Liberty: Towards Writing the History of a Political Concept I, in *Journal of The History of Ideas*, Vol. 71, No. 2, April 2010, P. 226.

The above point of view is reminder of positive freedom that is meant, in this paper, having the capability to make rational choices about what to do and what not to do, and the precious right to say either “Yes” or “No!”¹⁸

Therefore, Positive freedom in its own explanation is a matter of having the capacity to take the rational option: whereas, according to a concept of negative freedom, the opportunities that there is alone determine the extent of freedom.¹⁹

To attain political freedom is thus to have attained ‘harmony with the true capacities and opportunities as well. To speak of the political freedom of a man is to speak of ‘the state in which he shall have realized his ideal of himself under the concept of positive freedom, on the one hand. And the state in which he shall have opportunity to whatever wants to choose or not to choose in political respect, on the other hand. Therefore, it seems the combination of two concepts can give birth to a political freedom externally and internally. Since each concept can complete one aspect of political freedom.

ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆ ԱՉԱՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ ՉԻ ԿԱՐՈՂ ՄԻԱՏԱՐԻ ԼԻՆԵԼ

Աշխատանքում ներկայացվելու է քաղաքական ազատության խնդիրը, որի հիմքում ընկած են ազատության երկու հիմնական բաղադրիչները՝ դրական և բացասական: Այդ նպատակով որոշ հարցեր պարզաբանելուց հետո ապացուցվելու է, որ ազատության առանձին վերցված դրական կամ բացասական նշանակությունը քաղաքական ազատության նշանակություն համարվել չի կարող: Չնայած ազատության երկու հիմնական բաղադրիչները կարող են քաղաքական ազատության մաս կազմել՝ դրանցից յուրաքանչյուրը առանձին վերցված քաղաքական ազատություն լինել չի կարող: Բացի այդ, կապացուցվի, որ քաղաքական ազատությունը երկու հասկացությունների, այսինքն՝ բացասական ազատության և դրական ազատության գույակցություն է:

Ընդհանուր առմամբ, աշխատանքում մանրամասն ուսումնասիրվելու է քաղաքական ազատության առանձնահատկությունը, որը բխում է ազատության երկու տարբեր ասպեկտների սովորությունից:

¹⁸ www.guystanding.com/motivation.

¹⁹ www.creativecommons.org/by-nc-sa/2.0/uk/