

Investigating the Obstacles to Achieving Good Governance in the Public Sector with an Emphasis on Civic Ethics

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Abstract

Introduction: Civil society can lead to good governance by relying on civil ethics and legality. Civil ethics is the core and essence of civil society. The realization of good governance as one of the development models is not possible without the participation and presence of the civil sector. In this regard, the purpose of this research is to analyze the obstacles to achieving good governance in the public sector with an emphasis on civil ethics in the city of Yazd.

Material and Methods: The qualitative research method was using qualitative content analysis with an inductive approach. The participants were active activists in the public (civil) sector in Yazd. 10 interviews were conducted using the purposeful theoretical sampling method, the data collection tool was a semi-structured interview. The validity and reliability of the research data collection tools were confirmed, and the theme analysis method based on open coding was used to analyze the data.

Results: The results showed that the main obstacles to not realizing good governance in the civil sector are: intra-group distrust and the challenge of becoming a circle of civil organizations, the challenge of creating tools from civil organizations and the emergence of extra-group distrust, inter-group distrust and the challenge Self-destruction, promotion of passive participation and emergence of individualistic spirit, structural inefficiency and emergence of structural problems. Strengthening the public sector and increasing social capital and civic ethics can facilitate the achievement of good governance.

Conclusions: Civil ethics is one of the most important variables in the realization of good governance and can be effective in the direction of moral excellence of society and desirable perfection.

Keywords: *Civil Ethics, Good Governance, Social capital*

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INTRODUCTION

The ever-increasing growth of the urban population, the urbanization of societies, globalization and the necessity of accountability and citizen orientation have led managers and decision-makers to use the best methods in the field of urban management, one of the prominent methods in this field is good urban governance [1]. Based on the principles and goals governing good urban governance, governments alone are not able to respond to new needs and it is necessary to increase flexibility and attract active forces in public institutions and involve citizens in the decision-making stages as the main beneficiaries. Increase responsiveness to new needs [2]. Civil society based on civil ethics and legality can lead to good governance. Civil society, without civil ethics, will be only a name and a shell without substance. The most important structures or characteristics of civil ethics are: trust, mutual respect, legality, tolerance, responsibility,

accountability, criticism, transparency, etc. [3]. If such characteristics create ethical behaviors of the civil foundation in civil activists and then in citizens, then we can witness a strong and moral civil society that can cooperate and encourage the government with the support of such attitudinal-value beliefs along with practical adherence. [4]. In this regard, the values and norms of human social life in a period of civilization that has been overcome by urbanization constitute civil ethics. has been associated [5], this concept is associated with social solidarity, social bond and social order [6]. One of the most important issues for living in a modern society is the issue of ethics. Although ethics and morals are rooted in history and human civilization, civil ethics is one of the characteristics of life in a civil society [7]. In a civil society, the institutionalization of civil ethics plays a decisive role, civil ethics is a set of foundations,

standards, dos and don'ts, and norms that govern the behavior, actions, relationships and social relationships of citizens, and in terms of importance, it is one of the most important issues in citizens' lives. It is considered that with the passage of time and as a result of the progress of new sciences and technologies and the promotion of different cultures, as well as the growth of urbanization and the revelation of new material and spiritual needs of humans, its necessity is felt more [8, 9]. Behaviors such as punctuality, not disturbing others, participation in preserving the environment, trying to create and maintain healthy neighborhoods or preventing any kind of pollution, including noise, visual, etc., can be done, participation in city administration and preventing the destruction of public property and other such cases among the key indicators of civil ethics [10].

One of the most important behavior patterns in democracy is good governance, which includes three public, private and public sectors [11, 12]. How and why governance in recent centuries has always been the main concern of nations and governments in national and global dimensions, and many views and theories have been presented about it [13]. Governance is related to the relationship between the government and civil society, the rulers and the ruled [14]. Governance is the exercise of administrative, economic, and political authority in line with the management of the country's affairs at all levels and includes mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups of society connect their interests and protect their rights. Follow up, fulfill their obligations and resolve their disputes [15, 16]. Good governance will lead to an increase in public trust and satisfaction towards the government [17].

Researchers believe that the functioning and better governance of the democratic regime has a close link with the social and cultural environment. They attach great importance to the factor of political culture in the formation of social capital (democratic beliefs, civil ethics, trust and civil behaviors) and consider it decisive in the field of good governance; because civil virtues and democratic political culture lead to social capital and civil behaviors, and after that, government inevitably becomes good governance. The researchers are of the opinion that the greater the simultaneous dependence of citizens on several associations (i.e. social networks are expanded in a cross-sectional manner and have common points among citizens) and the closer the relationships between people in the networks are horizontal, not vertical, the capital The society will be bigger and the civil involvement will be more, and then the accountability of

the government will also increase, because it cannot ignore the social capital and rule with peace of mind [18]. Researchers provide a conceptual model of social capital, based on this model, it can be said that people's communication within associations and social networks is the result of information exchange, cooperation, democratic attitudes and joint decision-making. Civil and cooperative behavior of citizens will be at the local, regional and national level. Governance against civic identities within the framework of civic associations and groups will inevitably lead to good governance. Social power originates from various civil identities and makes the government face challenges [19]. Among the perspectives in governance, we can mention the perspective of the big government and the small government, the theory of the responsibility of the government, the theory of the crisis of legitimacy and the theory of the urban regime, all of them stress on reducing the role of the government and increasing the role of civil and non-governmental institutions in managing social life and It is territorial and urban management [20-22]. Urban governance, according to the definition of the United Nations ecosystem, is a set of methods of planning and general management of the city by individuals, public institutions and private institutions, and it is also a continuous process through which conflicting or conflicting interests are brought together and the context Work and interaction are provided. According to this definition, urban governance includes both formal institutions and informal measures and citizens' social capital [23]. Good governance is among the concepts that have been paid attention to in experimental and field studies. By reviewing the articles and books, one can find some of the most important variables related to it. In general, a review of previous research indicates that trust, participation, and civic ethics have a positive effect on democratic political culture [24]. Undoubtedly, the main elements and pillars of society (geographic structure and environment, population structure, economic structure, cultural structure and political structure) have provided unfavorable grounds for social transformation, development and evolution due to their structural heterogeneity. This fact has not succeeded in providing a suitable ground for the formation of fair social relations, fair division of social work, distribution of facilities and social privileges based on humane rules and regulations. Therefore, the gap created between the management of society and socio-cultural groups from the past centuries has remained. This trend has caused the community managers to go towards individual government,

unilateral decisions and paying little attention to the demands of social groups instead of social participation, cooperation and cooperation with the management, in a position of opposition with silence, indifference and defiance. In fact, the process of social developments in Iran has continued in this way until recent decades, and the ground has not been provided to legalize the ideas, speech and actions of the parties in the society. Therefore, the movement towards civil society has also progressed slowly [25]. Good governance includes government but goes beyond it by involving the private sector and civil society. All three of them are necessary for sustainable human development [26].

The condition of achieving happiness and well-being is a natural desire and one of the basic rights of every human being. In a society where moral corruption, mistrust, and injustice rule, the desired happiness and peace is impossible. In order to establish and sustain itself, a free and democratic society needs a series of valid ethical rules, criteria and standards that are accepted by all citizens and give order to social relations as a behavioral model. The well-being and preservation of physical and mental health of the residents in addition to being supported by the legal system, the country is highly dependent on the moral commitment and conscience of these citizens towards each other. Therefore, civil ethics is a set of moral principles that considers the good and goodness of each citizen as a member of the human society and regulates their relations with each other regardless of their religious beliefs and personal characteristics. Civil society in the general sense is a democratic and democratic society, which is first of all based on two moral standards: equality of value and human rights, guaranteeing individual freedoms by law. Other foundations of a democratic society, such as free elections, separation of powers, independence of the judiciary, etc., are all based on the two principles of freedom and equality. The ultimate goal of civil society is the well-being, security and happiness of all citizens of

any age regardless of their gender or physical and social conditions. The most important means of achieving comfort and a better life is the creation of a fair and lawful system. The guarantee of the implementation of the law is the responsibility of the citizens who consider themselves obliged to obey the law with their free will and according to their conscience. Only in this way can we hope for the strength and stability of democracy. Justice and mutual trust can only grow in a society where the majority of citizens adhere to the principles of democracy and civil ethics. Honesty, support and benevolence provide the foundation of trust in the society and are a necessary condition for creating healthy social relations and mental peace of citizens. Drafting the constitution of a democratic society is undoubtedly the first step towards establishing a democratic government. In the second degree, it is learning the behavior and character of democracy and civil ethics. The freedom and well-being of Iranians is guaranteed when all citizens join hands and formulate civil ethics and then implement it in their daily lives with the commitment of conscience and free will. Based on what was discussed, the aim of the current research is to answer the question, what are the obstacles to achieving good governance in the public sector with an emphasis on civic ethics?

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The method of the current research is practical in terms of its purpose, and in terms of the method of data collection, it is a qualitative content analysis method with an inductive approach. Research participants include active activists in the public (civil) sector in Yazd. In order to get informed about the views and opinions of experts and experts, the purposeful theoretical sampling method was used with 10 people. The estimation of the desired sample size was done based on the theoretical saturation of the data. Based on this, the interview reached theoretical saturation with 9 people, and another interview was conducted for more certainty.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Interviewees

Interviewee	Gender	Age	Education	Profession
1	Female	32	Ph.D.	Manager of the facilitation office, Civil activist
2	Female	47	M.A.	Manager of school, Civil activist
3	Female	31	B.A.	Manager of institute, Civil activist
4	Female	36	B.A.	Manager of kindergarten, Civil activist
5	Female	39	Diploma	Qur'an teacher, Civil activist
6	Female	40	M.A.	Manager of institute, Civil activist
7	Male	55	M.D.	General medicine, Civil activist
8	Male	39	Diploma	Director of the people's association of children of divorce, Civil activist
9	Male	35	M.A.	Manager of the facilitation office, Civil activist
10	male	41	Under diploma	Operator, Civil activist

The research data collection tool was semi-structured interview. In order to comply with the principles of research ethics, during the interviews, the participants were asked to record their conversations, and after the end of the interview, the interview was carefully reviewed and returned to paper. Along with other questions that followed the main objectives of the research, one of the questions related to the current research was: Please tell us about the obstacles and challenges that the civil sector faces in good governance. According to the answers of the participants, the researcher asks sub-questions during the interview. After collecting the data obtained from the interview, the process of analyzing and summarizing the qualitative data began. Triangulation method was used to check validity in the first place, in this regard, it was checked and confirmed by collecting evidence from various sources including various theories, various information sources, and validity experts. Participation was presented and the process of arriving at the codes, sub-categories and main categories was explained for them, the findings of this work confirmed the general findings of the research. Also, Christiansen's angle technique was used to evaluate the validity and quality of the findings. In this regard, it was tried to make the breadth of information and the depth of information possible by continuous mental engagement with the data. To achieve this goal, after

coding the data by the researcher, two people were asked to code some of the interviews to evaluate the accuracy and validity of the coding and the obtained categories, and the results of this section were similar to the code. The decision that was made in the previous step.

In order to analyze the data, the theme analysis method, which is based on open coding, was used. At this stage, the data obtained from the interviews were carefully examined, the main unit of analysis for open coding was the concepts, the transcripts of the interviews were regularly reviewed to find the main categories, categories, and subcategories.

RESULTS

From the data analysis, 25 concepts and 13 categories were extracted from the concepts, and 5 main themes were extracted from them. Five broad themes were identified from the current research, which are: intra-group distrust and the challenge of becoming a circle of civil organizations, the challenge of creating tools from civil organizations and the occurrence of out-group distrust, inter-group distrust and the challenge of self-destruction, promoting passive participation and emergence of individualism, structural inefficiency and occurrence of structural problems. Figure 1 shows the network of research topics.

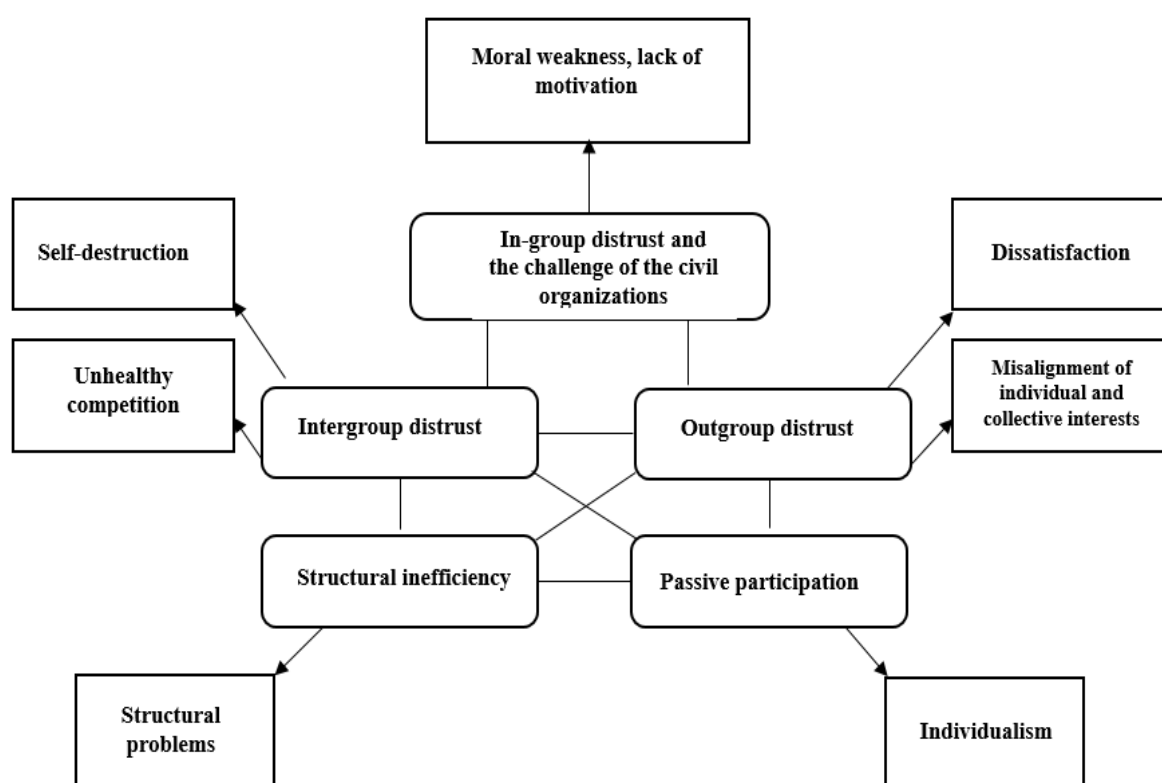


Figure 1. The network of obstacles to good governance in the civil sector

In-group distrust and the challenge of communalization of civil organizations

The crisis of distrust in civil associations has a historical record. The lack of trust in the moral health of the leaders of these organizations and doubts about the public and benevolent motives of the activists of these organizations have caused a large part of the audience of these civil organizations to not have enough motivation to attend and work in civil organizations, and this in itself It has led to the consolidation of these organizations and has provided them with few opportunities to be promoted from the network group. In spite of the above, a group of civil society contacts (who consider the demands of an association to be their own demands) try to achieve its goals by being present and active in these organizations.

The challenge of creating tools from civil organizations and the emergence of out-group distrust

It is clear that the activities of these civil organizations can also seek to realize their individual interests like all members of the society. However, the logic of working in the public sphere requires that they define their individual interests in a way that is in line with the public interest. Experience has shown that the main motivation of a group of people to participate in civil organizations is to be able to communicate with government institutions and solve their personal problems. This causes mistrust among government administrators towards civil organizations. According to one of the activists active in the civil sector, "unfortunately, people prioritize their own goals and receive a budget that they spend on their own personal expenses." From the point of view of other activism, "they intervene in the name of public interests, but they do their own work behind the scenes, and this has caused the level of satisfaction to drop."

Inter-group distrust and the challenge of self-destruction

Despite the above-mentioned challenges, a group of civil organizations can achieve their desired goals and realize their collective demands. In this case, the relationship and perspective of other civil organizations active in civil society with these civil organizations can affect the overall performance of civil organizations in the country. Regardless of some cultural and individual characteristics such as narrow-mindedness and jealousy, with the success of some civil organizations, the interests of individuals or some other organizations are endangered. At this stage, it is likely that some less successful organizations will define their main goal as trying to thwart successful organizations instead of focusing on achieving their general goals. In this case,

and with the formation of the game of self-destruction by civil society organizations, the overall performance of civil organizations in the country will be weakened. According to one of the activists active in the civil sector, "competitions have become polarized and every organization seeks to be the winner". In terms of other activism, "Unfortunately, there are many cases of unhealthy and false competition among organizations, which all go back to factional games."

Promotion of passive participation and emergence of individualistic spirit

Many analysts of Iran's political culture believe that Iranians have a spirit of individualism and want to do things themselves and are less likely to participate with others. The weakness of participation in social, political and economic issues can also be analyzed in this framework. Examples of collectivism and collective movements can be seen in different periods of time, but the belief of many analysts is that the spirit of individualism prevails among Iranians. The individual and his sociability are related. According to one of the active activists in the civil sector, "We accept and strive for participation to the extent that it is in line with our goals and plans, and in fact, this type of participation will be passive." From the point of view of other activism, "participation and collectivism has become a ceremonial and showcase thing".

Structural inefficiency and occurrence of structural problems

Some barriers to participation are related to the existing structures in society, while the structures should facilitate participation, not stand in front of participation. Some structural barriers to participation are related to the law; The law has not been successful in providing mechanisms and fields for participation. The structures of our country have always been non-participatory, appropriate laws that can remove the obstacles to people's participation on the one hand and, on the other hand, create the basis for participation in various fields. It has not been approved and implemented. According to one of the activists active in the civil sector, "the law has not provided the mechanisms and grounds for participation in the society; therefore, we cannot hope to improve the participation spirit of the people". From the point of view of other activism, "one of the obstacles to achieving good governance is the large size of the government, and the government should be made smaller and many responsibilities and tasks should be handed over to the public and civil sectors."

DISCUSSION

Ethics is a part of society's culture that predicts the organization of ethical and unethical behaviors [27]. Ethics is generally focused on people's view of life and their understanding of good or bad things [28], in this regard, civil ethics is one of the most important variables in the realization of good governance, and according to its components, including Participation, responsibility, legality, transparency, etc. can be effective in the direction of moral excellence of society and desirable perfection. But unfortunately, this issue in Yazd city is faced with challenges that were discussed in the findings section and we will discuss it in this section; One of the existing obstacles to achieve good governance is the fat body of the government, the reduction of which can be effective in achieving the indicators of good governance and civil ethics, because a small government provides more opportunities for the participation of people and civil society, and to After that, transparency will also increase. The government should review centralized policies and by giving more authority to local communities and provincial authorities, provide more participation of people and local authorities in activities and affairs. The theories of pluralism and civil society confirm this and have been effective in changing the role of the government in managing society. Discussions such as: circulation of power between groups, decision-making process and collective decision-making, participation of the public and private sectors alongside the public sector and bottom-up management are closely related to civil society and pluralism. Researchers believe that the government and civil society should work in partnership with each other and each one should facilitate the work of the other, but at the same time act as a control factor for the other. The theory of the responsibility of the government refers to the fact that governments have gradually taken on more and more responsibilities, including public ownership of industries, public works and transportation, as well as welfare and social services, etc., responsibilities have obtained that is beyond their financial and administrative ability and in many cases the governments have not been able to do them. As a result, it has caused the failure of governments and a decrease in public trust and support towards them [29]. Studies show that political culture affects citizens' participation in local government [30]. And the level of democracy, participation, accountability, justice and effectiveness in the government structure are the key indicators of good governance [31]. Also, studies show that the obstacles to good governance are autocratic

culture, instability, lawlessness, participation avoidance, complexity and ambiguity, everyday life and indifference, individualism, injustice [32]. In a research, it was shown that the obstacles to good governance in the country include non-recognition of local powers, political engagement instead of civil engagement, inverse correlation between the independence of the governance system and urban management and the boom of urbanization in Iran, the lack of differentiation between the city administration system at different levels. different (demographic-political), complete and relative lack and weakness of citizens' elected institutions, is the welfare model governing urban governance and rentier use of resources [33], in another research, government structural obstacles such as the spread of populism, rentier economy, centralism, Comprehensive bureaucratization, weakness in the implementation of law and justice by the authorities, the spread of political corruption were identified as the factors that weaken the social capital that builds trust between the people and the government for the realization of good governance [34]. In another study, it was found that the main problem and obstacle to achieving good governance in Iran is created by political systems. Political systems both before and after the revolution have always threatened the distribution of power and limited the freedom of activities of parties and civil organizations. Going towards sustainable development and respecting the rights of citizens and the rule of law is the fundamental basis for achieving good governance in Iran [35], these results can be in line with the findings of the present study.

Among the other results obtained from the findings was the self-destruction of organizations and unhealthy competition, which is an obstacle to the realization of good governance. And we will practically lose the civil part in decisions. Healthy competition and prioritization of resources through shared efforts and consensus of all stakeholders are very important in the decision-making process. This article has important and vital implications for creating and developing a technical framework in order to increase transparency at all levels of governance, especially at the local level. Therefore, transparency plays a key role in the correct formation of decision-making processes [36].

Civil society has no identity without civil ethics, but unfortunately, the weakness of participation and the emergence of the spirit of individualism were also considered as other obstacles to the realization of good governance, which is in line with the results of another research, which has raised the predominance of the spirit

of individualism and the weakness of participatory culture.

According to the results of the research, structural inefficiency is clearly seen in the public, private and civil sectors, and this structural weakness has hindered the ways to achieve good governance and the application of civil ethics. Civic ethics and good governance are different concepts, yet both play an important role in democratizing the political system. The model of good governance is an effort in line with the rule of law, accountability, participation, equality, efficiency and effectiveness, hence this model is considered as the most effective, least expensive and most sustainable way of community management. Good governance includes three sectors: government, private and civil or public. In this research, the obstacles to achieving good governance in the public sector were analyzed with an emphasis on civil ethics. According to the results of the research, the role of the civil sector in the realization of good governance indicators is weak, among the ways out of this problem is the strengthening of non-governmental organizations and civil organizations. The realization of good governance depends on the weakness or strength of civil ethics, and the realization of good governance requires the existence of a civil society based on civil ethics. In this regard, the government should review centralized policies and by giving more authority to local communities, provide more participation of people and local authorities in activities and affairs. A strong civil society leads to the production of civil participation, social capital and citizens' relationship with the government.

CONCLUSION

The general results of the research showed that intra-group distrust and the challenge of communalization of civil organizations, the challenge of creating tools from civil organizations and the emergence of out-group distrust, inter-group distrust and the challenge of self-

destruction, the promotion of passive participation and the emergence of the spirit of individualism, structural inefficiency and Occurrence of structural problems. Strengthening the public sector and increasing social capital and civic ethics can facilitate the achievement of good governance. Today, megacities in all countries are the arena for the emergence of all kinds of problems, from air pollution and traffic and environmental issues to all kinds of physical-physical abnormalities, marginalization, etc. On the other hand, issues such as lack of satisfaction of citizens, lack of fair service delivery, non-participation of citizens in the affairs of the city and similar issues are troubling them. Meanwhile, underdeveloped countries have special conditions and the range of problems mentioned in them is much wider. The root of many existing problems goes back to the type of thinking that governs their management system at the national level and consequently at the local level. Because the manifestation of the type of thinking is crystallized in the plans and designs presented by the responsible authorities. Therefore, the recognition of this important issue has prompted many countries to solve their existing problems by designing a codified urban management system and trying to implement it.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues (such as plagiarism, conscious satisfaction, misleading, making and or forging data, publishing or sending to two places, redundancy and etc.) have been fully considered by the writers.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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