

## The Revolutionary Fever in the Syrian Crisis

Bahram Navazeni\*

Associate Professor, Imam Khomeini International University

Ali Navazeni

MA of International Relations, Imam Khomeini International University

### Abstract

By studying the internal factors of the 2011 crisis in Syria, this article aims to describe causes led to the self-stimulation of some Syrian people in fighting against the Assad government and in attempting to change the political system of the country. Investigation of the Syrian crisis indicates that beside the extensive support from the outside borders, the Assad government naturally and inevitably has prepared the opportunity for the popular revolts to occur, and resulted in the conversion of public hatred into a revolution. Based on Crane Brinton's findings in the book "The Anatomy of Revolution", it seems that Syria's crisis is almost consistent and uniformed like the pattern of four revolutions which Brinton studied. Symptoms such as: existence of a tyranny and its inability to suppress revolutionaries severely and completely, and also the prevalence of the notions like idealism and liberalism among revolutionaries, which had a fundamental role in providing necessary and sufficient objective and subjective aspects for the revolution, are also observed in Syria's crisis. While investigating the internal factors of the crisis, this article tries to describe the symptoms of revolutionary fever which has resulted into this crisis.

This article concludes that the internal symptoms of Syria's revolutionary fever can be categorized in four categories: 1- the historical hardship that had dominated the country since a long time ago, and during Hafez Assad era, resumed with an unexampled suppression, and left its effects on Bashar Assad's reign; 2- presence of extremist and Salafi groups in this crisis which has resulted in advent of extremism in the country and rejection of any compromise and talk with the government; 3- political, economic and social inefficiency of Syria's system that blemished its legitimacy and failed to suppress opposition groups; 4- the political discourse of the government system as a result of resistance discourse against Israel and the great powers. Focus on these issues and through descriptive and analytical methods, the article has utilized library resources, news sites, newspapers and field sources through interviews with Syrian students in Iran and cognizant people.

**Key words:** Crisis, Syria, Legitimacy, Bashar Assad, Revolution.

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Email: info@navazeni.ir

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## 1. Introduction

Revolution has been widely used with the meaning of a sharp and sudden change, accompanied with improvement or development in various intellectual and behavioral fields at various individual and social levels. This change usually results in substitution of revolutionary fighter groups with the ruling government in management of countries political system. This substitution is practically associated with an uprising, accompanied by force or at least a conspiracy to overthrow the government, due to its severity and abruptness; and the fact that the element of “violent” which divides the revolution from the changes that are based on compromising or formed gradually and evolutionary. their obvious difference here, is undoubtedly the fact that the sudden and sharp change, unlike the gradual and evolutionary change, results in disrupting the stability of society, and this possibility strengthens that unwanted elements may interfere in the progress of change to take advantage of its original intention for their own benefit (O’Kane, 1996; Krejci, 1994; Skocpol, 1979; Huntington, 1968; Goldstone, 1991; Greene, 1990; Tilly, 1993).

Revolutionary fever phenomenon, like other historical events, has various causes and factors, but probably one factor (conceptual or concrete, national or international factor) has more influence than other factors and acts as determinant or critical factor. The opponents of the revolution have always tried to diminish these reasons to their lowest degree, while proponents wish to give historical and social depth to their revolution. Thus, those who don’t have any interest or benefit in international affairs, or are afraid of dealing with international backgrounds of revolution as an imported, artificial, foreign or alien element from a particular community, simply ignore it and proscribe it as “the theory of conspiracy”, and even Brinton denies the existence of “planning” by internal “small minority”, and he not at all mentions the role of large European governments in emersion and victory of England, Us, French and Russia’s revolution in “The Anatomy of Revolution”. Brinton’s farthest conclusion of the causes of revolution is “the cooperation of human and nature” which he sees as “a large group of majority who are so unsatisfied and will rage when the appropriate time arrives” (93: 1363). Rosemary Okin (1996) also believes that the causes of revolution are more resulted from the internal aspects of the reign of government than the challenges from outside.

In contrast, others deny the validity and depth of social revolutions and by relying only on external factors, believe any event originates from beyond the country’s frontiers, and attach a very important role to International Powers that preserve the current situation. Theda Skocpol says, the international system and trespassing by the great powers, are responsible for it as the "Mother of revolutionary crises" (1979: 285-286) and Fred Halliday (1999: 3) has talked Even more explicitly about the life and fate of the revolution “being tied” to the international system, and by giving evidence throughout his book, he argues that since Revolutions are done for internal change, turnover of norms and values between countries and people, “the international change power in

countries” are simulated to hamper the “the process of developing and limiting governments and revolutionary aspirations , and the same “ mutual relationship“ causes interplay between revolutions and international system.

Lots of other scholars, by mentioning the different causes of revolutionary fever phenomenon, state that the consistency of all of these factors is the cause of the revolution and its specific consequences (Calvert, 1996: 3; Goldstone, 2001: 26-27). Krejcie (1994) who had studied six big revolutions in order to find a common pattern for beginning and development of revolutions, concluded that big revolutions –not all of them- have some effects on foreign powers and international system.

These disagreements also exist about the Arabic revolutionary fever in the Middle East and Syria. Many intellectuals and politicians consulted about the causes and motives of revolt and people’s revolution against the Arabic states. Abdullah Al Aaroui, Arab intellectual, states that one of the main reasons for the gap between the people and Arabic governments is the governments’ negligence towards Islamic principles and codes, and emphasizing on the rule of "Arabism" instead of the "nation" which is considered to have an Islamic essence. He says this will cause people to think more about their livelihood and sanitary problems than they do about their religious problems, and on the other hand, Ulema and religious scholars became indifferent about the problems of society, due to being rejected by the government; Because they are seeking an utopian based on Caliphate, which could make them undermine the position of the government.

The created gap between religious Ulema and government results in government losing its legitimacy and predisposes it to people’s revolting against it (Baghjeri, 1390:116), and this is evident despite Syria government’s numerous actions for religious compromising and communicating with Ulema ([www.khabaronline.ir](http://www.khabaronline.ir)). In an interview with Iran’s National TV, Bashar Asad admitted that his religious opponents, in Salafi and Taliban groups, are not seeking compromise but are rather after unseating his government to establish their own (interview in 8/4/1391).

Some scholars believe that since the independence of Middle Eastern countries, they have experienced political structures based on nationalism, socialism, Marxism, and liberalism and pan-Arabism. These governments had two important features that are: 1. Most of them are secular, and 2. they suppress lots of freedoms In the name of independence and national security. Therefore, we are witnessing the formation of laws under the title of emergency conditions in most Arabic countries, according to which any opposition no matter how small, are vigorously suppressed. This suppressing is specially applied in the case of religious groups, and results in people revolting (Dehghani and Farazi, 1391: 287).

Wadah Flares, one of the Lebanon intellectuals, says one of the reasons for the movement against the government in the Arab world is the injustice in society; injustice is in a way that government’s rents are in the hands of a few,

This has led to the state dominating over the civil society, and putting distance between them and the government. On the other hand, the racial and ethnic structure in the Arab world make this problem more sever (quoted in Baghjar, 1390: 120). As it can be seen in Syria, in cases like class conflict and assignment of key positions to members of the Baath Party or to the Alawi individuals (Lee Norji, 1383: 160).

Some of the other intellectuals, like Samir Amin, important Egyptian intellectual, count the commercial recession and economical infirmity of Arabic countries as the reasons for their corruption, which lead to domination of corrupt capitalist who exploit people (quoted in Baghjar, 1390:129).

Although some had predicted such days for Syria, but the scale, the severity, time, duration of the crisis and so on, were not easy to predict. More than 20 entity and charity and humanitarian organization criticized UN security consul widely, by publication of figures in mars 2015. According to this report, as a result of Syria's 4 years long civil war, 200 thousand were killed and 10 million, almost half of the population, were forced to leave their homes. The number of children who needs attending, with a 31% rise compared to 2013, reached 5.6 million and life expectancy for Syrians was lowered to 20 years. Maybe the pictures demonstrated in this report are representatives of tragic situation of Syria and Syrians in last 4 years. These satellite pictures of lighten parts in night, shows that Syria is 85% darker than past (<http://persian.euronews.com>).

This article, in addition to rejecting any single-factor approach to revolutionary fever phenomenon, and admitting to the existence of several symptoms for it, tries to survey this crisis and symptoms of revolutionary fever phenomenon in it, while focusing on internal factors. For achieving this goal, it has relied on Crane Brinton's Conceptual Framework in the book "The Anatomy of Revolution" and other famous writers in the field of revolution. This article has explained the main issue in descriptive and analytical ways by using library resources, news sites, newspapers and field sources through interviews with Syrian students in Iran and cognizant people.

## **2. Conceptual Framework of Revolutionary Fever**

Crane Brinton, after obtaining his PHD in Philosophy in 1923, In addition to being active in the American Philosophical Society, as a professor and a researcher in history at Harvard University and president of the American Historical Association in 1936, wrote various works in the fields of history and political thought and foreign Relations. "The Anatomy of Revolution" is his fifth book which was first written in 1938 and was re-published several times. Mohsen Salasi translated its 1938 edition in Persian in 1368.

Crane Brinton notes several times through his book, that symptoms of beginning and changing of revolution are different, and he's no intention as to present a unit pattern to be used as a criterion for identifying or predicting a revolution, and he's not seeking an "ideal type" or "Platonic idea" for revolution

(ibid: 6). However, in the introduction to this book, he aims to "monitor" the processes of social transformation and the acquisition of scientific "knowledge" of the revolution, or at least taking "effective steps" in this way (ibid: 4-5) and this try for "finding some estimates of uniformities" in four victorious revolution in the new states, shows his inner desire to extract and provide a model applicable to other similar revolutionary situations, at different times and places.

For example, his concern about the crises like blacks' rebellion in the 1960s within American society (ibid: 313) and America's "past errors" in opposing against the revolutions in China and Cuba, (ibid: 315) was a sufficient Motivation to reprint this book in 1964 and to add another part to it, in which going as far as suggesting that instead of opposing revolutions such as China and Cuba, we should "put ourselves in the position of leadership in these revolutions" (ibid: 315) the same thing we interpret as compassion with friends and tolerance for the enemies in Iranian-Islamic philosophy. Brinton hopes that his findings were useful and an "almost more peaceful century" than the twentieth century would be coming (ibid: 316).

Brinton's effort to recognize causes of the revolution isn't a new work in a sense, so does he admit in the introduction of the book (ibid: 14-15) that before him, it was a professional historians' profession, to study "the realities of human behavior in the past " and the sources which he used in writing his book, are all produced by the same historians in the past era, who studied "the facts about past humans' behaviors" and did the " collection ", " sorting "and" benchmarks " of revolutions, but his innovation which is recognized as his theory, is in drawing a conceptual frame and work that by adopting metaphors like "storm" and "fever" from natural science, to describe circulation period of four revolutions and analyze the issue without describing the historical development of each of them.

The idea of comprising four big contemporary revolutions of England, America, France and Russia, and analyzing their common factors, and his efforts to compare natural science with social science, shows his main goal which is to achieve something like law or uniformities in mathematics. He has expressed this several times (ibid: 8-23, 278) he said he's planning to identify "Fever chart Parameters" before "outbreak of revolution" by using his conceptual pattern, and through timely "Pathology", (Ibid: 18) find a " balanced" social system (ibid: 16).

In Brinton's opinion, (ibid: 20) a community that has undergone a revolution, is like a human body that has been infected and undergone an "evil microbus" attack, and the fever caused by this condition, is a sign of ruling elites' mismanagement in dealing with microbes.

So in Brinton's theory, the revolution is divided in three part: symptoms, fever and treatment. Uniform signs that he has considered as a manifestation of this revolutionary conditions are: 1) overall financial growth while people are discontent because of injustice and humiliation towards them, along with rolling

group's financial collapse 2) a certain affluent group complaining about not having social merits and therefore uniting to find a solution for government's financial collapse through occupying the political positions of authority, 3) intellectuals' hatred towards government and their withdrawal from it due to the fact that their requests are being ignored by it 4) negligence and incompetent of governing group in making the necessary reformations, 5) governing group's loss of confidence and showing weakness and divisiveness in suppressing the dissent and 6) organized campaigns and their partners gaining the Positions of authority (ibid: 292-295).

### **3. Symptoms of Revolutionary Fever in Syria**

The Syrian community was not healthy in the time of outbreak of the revolutionary fever, because ongoing Riots went as far as turning into crisis and caused severe and unpredictable changes. Crane Brinton's use of expression "revolutionary fervor" means "Just like evil fever burns microbes, ... Revolution eliminate evil people and institutions to eliminate disadvantageous and harmful." (Ibid: 20)

One of the most important goals in the Syrian crisis was the reform of the political structure in order to enhance civic engagement and social and political freedoms in the country. These goals can be understood from slogans people shouted on the streets or wrote on walls (Dehghani Firozabadi and Farazi, 1391: 285). What happened in 2011 in Syria was the result of the government mismanagement and the discontent of public, for which it might be impossible to find an agreeable starting point.

The most accurate starting point for evolutions might be related to what a youth named Mohammad Bouazizi did in Tones, who committed Self-Immolation as a protest against police, who prevented him from doing curb service; this incident was a representative of the situation in all Arab countries in the reign, including Syria, where the inappropriate behavior of state officials, every time, had set up a fire that led not only to the revolution in Tunisia, but also involved its neighbors by its consequences (Javanpur and Bani Hashemi, 1392: 156).

What's more important than Self-Immolation itself is the feeling of deprivation among the young, which make them think that present condition is adverse to their economic life. According to Crane Brinton, in fact, the feeling of deprivation predispose protest more than actual deprivation, because in that case the person feels his or her opportunities are unjustly limited by some groups(Brinton, 1376: 37-39). This predisposes the formation of opposition groups against the government, to put it under the pressure to make reformations.

These groups act as associations and do anything from advertising and legitimate demands, to intimidation, in order to achieve their goals, (Brinton, 1376: 45). This was the same thing that happened with the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia, and brought the Tunisian people to streets and

started the revolutionary waves which quickly took over the Arabic countries (Amini and Ghasemi, 1391: 64).

### **3-1. Beginning of the Crisis**

Perhaps it's possible to associate Syrians' reaction with the human's need to be respected and behaved with self-esteem. What started revolution in Syria and other Arab countries is not just about humiliation of the young student, Mohamed Bouazizi, because the same attitude and humiliation is used by dictator governors towards Arab nation, and according to Amini and Ghasemi (1391: 64), this is the most precise factor in analyzing changes in Arab countries.

Syria was one of the Arabic countries that was not immune to the revolutionary fever. The first revolution symptom in this country appeared on 18 Avril 2011 in Alomry mosque in Dara city, near Jordanian border (Ebrahimi 1392: 304) and made this city the center of further changes, and from there went to other reigns of Syria as far as Damascus.

Someone who'd traveled to this country and stayed there for 45 days in 2012 (one year after outbreak of crisis) as an agent of a research organization, states that government's adversaries believe crisis began due to inappropriate and sever way by which government forces tried to surpass some adolescences. According to what he learnt, these adolescences were influenced by what the media named "Arabic Revolution", showing people who chanted the slogan "People, come, bring down the government", and they wrote similar slogans on the walls in Daraa city (Interview with A. A, 04/25/1392).

Statements of a Syrian student studying at the International University of Imam Khomeini also confirmed this. This student who's a resident in Hama city, another city influenced by revolutionary fever, believes that the violent behavior of government's agents against protesting parents who asked for their children's release, started the crisis. Following the protests, security forces opened fire on some of them, resulting in a number of people (2-3 people) getting killed. These events made its way to the news throughout the Syria and ignited fury in people. People who were affected by the events in Syria, staged mass protests to show support for the victims, but governments surpassing acts became more severe too, so gradually it became an regional and international issue and other states and international organizations like UN stared interfering (Interview with a Syrian student, 20/7/1392).

### **3-2. Roots of the Crisis**

But to what extent we can attribute the agitation in various Syrian cities, such as Daraa and Hama, to disrespect to the people? Although Syrian crisis was accompanied by the violence of government forces, but violence was very limited in quantity and severity; Violence was not associated to all of security forces and the crisis was in a country scale, and even in some cases some reforms was began that led to the desired results. In order to examine crisis of

Syria thoroughly, we need to go back to Hafez Assad's period. He was one of the martial who gained power after the military coup of 1970 in Syria, and like lots of other Arab leaders, made the rolling Inheritable to keep the power in Assad's family. Bassel Assad had this right but he died early, So Bashar was recalled from London to be ready to receive the power (Salehi, 1391: 45).

Bashar, who was 35 years old, was faced with a constitutional obstacle, because presidential position was allowed only for men 40 years old and above. Although he didn't have this qualification, the constitution changed to make his leadership possible, this started a wave of opposition from parties and Western intellectual groups, which strengthened later serious objections to his rule (Imami, 1376: 108-133).

Developing a secular constitution in 1973, joining the peace process after the war with Israel in the same year and the intervention in favor of the Maronites against Palestinian groups in Lebanon, were some of the Assad's actions which were opposed by the Syrian Islamists, particularly the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn). (Salehi, 1391: 44). In the eye of Islamists, these measures were too bad that they declared armed jihad against the government and in response, thousands of people were killed.

Syria is among the countries where the military elite plays an important role in passing the country from liberalism to a one-party authoritarianism structure. This happened due to ideological motives and by the help of a group of intellectuals and civil society. When military elite gained power, they adopted democratic and progressive ideologies. Their main slogan, was the fulfillment of basic social needs of lower and middle classes in the society, This mobilized lots of people in favor of ruling group, in a way that lots of unions and organizations related to the women and the young turned in to government's arm; but on the other hand, this military elite were strongly against division of political power or the formation of Independent power centers, and this resulted in military dictation and Political impasse in the country and protest of democratic movements (Baghjar, 1390: 281-282).

Although in his ruling period, Hafez al-Assad was trying to reduce the intensity of opposition by attracting his opponents within the government system, he was not quit successful in doing so ([www.khabaronline.ir](http://www.khabaronline.ir)).

Since a long time ago, The Syrian government has been facing the resistance of Western intellectuals in this country, whom were formed under the west's influence and would resist any kind of dictatorial regime. Some of these intellectual whom can be labeled as Arab Christian intellectuals, were formed under the influence of Christian missionaries in past eras, and their strong tendency towards west is the reason for their resistance towards Islamists. They supported national-socialist pattern and there has been friction between them and Syria government for a long time (Imami, 1376: 133-108). By forming National Progressive Front, Hafez al-Assad tried to give the chance of participating in political activities to non-Bassi groups, but this association's authority was limited; for example, its members were not allowed to recruit



members in universities or the military (ibid: 140). He was somewhat adherent to democratic practices and pluralism, but not to the extent to let his competitors have equal chance in gaining authority; for example when he saw his brother Rifaat al-Assad as a dangerous rival to his regime, he marginalized him from politics.

On the other hand, allocation of rents by the government to certain people, caused gaps and Inequality in Syrian community, Leading to protests and dissatisfaction of some corps commanders and managers of the country (ibid: 143-165).

These issues were the problems that Bashar Assad, aside his rule, inherited from his father (Ibid: 47). After good events which happened in international level and what was called "Arab spring", these problems manifested their effects and caused chaos in Syria; its trigger was the government's refusal of doing actual reforms and obstructing legal tracts for people to achieve their will (ibid: 46).

### **3-3. Inability to Provide Security and Prosperity**

The economic mismanagement of Government and its weaknesses and inefficiencies in providing people's basic needs, were among the most important factors that led to loss of legitimacy in the eyes of the people. According to Mousavi, "the unfair distribution of wealth, corruption and oppression" is one of the causes of social movements and degeneration within the system (1390: 6) And Crane Brinton in his "Anatomy of revolution" about four revolutions in England, France, Russia and the US, had concluded that "all these revolutions generally had a financial origin, and they all began by protests to taxing system (1363: 41). Syrian political system has been both under military threats and economic threats; this becomes clear when we consider that the Syrian crisis began in poor and marginal regions, Who wanted to improve their living conditions and economic state and if the leadership was in their hands, maybe the manifestation of objections were different -City of Daraa, which was kind of a center for the changes in Syria, is one of Syria's impoverished cities- But intellectuals and the younger generation quickly took the leadership of the protests in their hands and slogans such as freedom and social justice were introduced. (Zubaydah and Pashaii, 1390: 168). Although by planning economic reform and giving the chance of participation in The Baath Party to the Peasants and serfs, the Syrian government tried to establish a center for itself between the poor, but economic sanctions and Domestic and international crisis prevented the realization of reforms (Salehi, 1391: 39).

Ajorloo (1390: 65-64) by presenting a report from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and International Transparency organization, has summed up the main challenge for the Syrian economy in four challenge: 1- Lack of economic justice, as intense class gap among residents of large cities and other marginal areas is evident; 2- Severe food price inflation under the impact of rising global food prices that had resulted in pressure on the country's

poor; 3- Rising unemployment caused by the growing young population and mental health problems caused by it, caused some young people resorting to terrorist acts; 4- Financial and administrative corruption so that in 2002, out of 178 countries, Syria ranked 127 in the integrity of financial and administrative space, and since then its rank has increased. The Syrian government tried to attract foreign investments to some extent, in order to increase the welfare of citizens and overcome internal problems, However, due to the government's willingness to socialist economy and external threats, it did not find much success, and the economic prosperity of the late 1990s not only did not continue but during the government of Bashar al-Assad, the economic crisis became more severe (Imami, 1376: 178).

### **3-4. Inefficiency of Political System**

Another one of Syrian political problems is the crisis in participation in authority and political power shift in the system. By exclusively controlling public resources, The Syrian government has fueled the authoritarianism in the region; although these controls exist in different countries in the Middle East, in Syria, the regime adopted the same approach regarding both political opponents and even some passive social organizations. In order to understand the politics in the region, it's essential to consider the situation and how the fate of opposition forces, like the ways in which they are supported, selected or suppressed by the ruling regime (Lee Nvrjy, 1383: 159). The Baath Party is the center of power Circle in Syria, and doesn't allow any group or organization to operate independently, to such an extent that no private organization can operate without the permission and representatives of the Baath Party, also no organization is permitted to communicate with foreign governments without the presence of representatives of the Baath Party (ibid: 160); While Syria has various Ethnicities and religions that were brought together under a centralized government, this variety has led to various crises in social and political structure of Syria, in any period. Lack of social cohesion, unfavorable International position, followed by its domestic and international cultural consequences, bad relations with regional neighbors, etc. are among the signs that could indicate the inefficiency of social and political structure of the Syrian regime, Although the Syrian government doesn't believe in it and associates most of its enemies with incitement by foreign countries (Assad, 08/04/1391)

There is no doubt that such crises have led all rulers to create an atmosphere of tyranny and oppression in order to overcome internal problems, though sometimes this method expanded the crisis by itself, an example of which can be seen in the recent crisis in Syria. Although according to Ajourloo the crisis had internal and external factors, one of its reasons might be the lack of internal cohesion, whether within the government or among the people (1390: 66-61) threats to the legitimacy of the Syrian political system faced it with one of the most difficult political challenges in its history, because It became very complex and the scope of the crisis and internal pressure from all sides tried to overthrow

the Assad's regime ([www.irdiplomacy.ir](http://www.irdiplomacy.ir)); but of course, this doesn't mean that armed opponent groups are legitimate, In fact, they're dispersed and incoherent due to the lack of legitimacy and this makes victory difficult for government's opponents; that's why Syria is in a devastating civil war (Zubaydah and Pashaii, 1390: 168).

### **3-5. Religious Ideas and Ideals**

Various conflicts between Muslims and Christians and also Muslims of different sects, especially among the Sunnis, led by the Muslim Brotherhood, and Shiite Alawies, , led to the country's holding a position lower than its actual regional position, and weakness of political systems in that region (Ayorloo, 1390, 59-6). In Syria's population of 23 million, 90% are Arabs and the rest are other minorities, Armenians, churches, Chaldeans and Turkmens. In terms of Religion, 74% of the Syrian population is Sunni, 13% Alawi and 10% various Christian sects, and the remainings are of other religions. Syrian Christians can be divided into 10 different sects and Muslims into least 5 sects of Ismailis, Alawies, Sunnis, Druze and Yazidieh; But regardless of religious separation, Public acceptance of Islamic parties and Islamic slogans, turned to another of the hallmarks of this revolutionary fever and In other words, this dissatisfaction and economic, social and political difficulties are companied by expression of ideas and ideals of a better world. According to Crane Brinton, "if there's no idea, there's no revolution" (1363: 59). Much of the Syrian government opponents are those who were religiously and in terms of religious customs, targeted to hostile attitudes, they've been against the domination of majority Sunnis over Alawite minority, since Hafez al-Assad's period. These oppositions have shown themselves as conflicts between the Muslim Brotherhood, representing Sunni community and the government, on behalf of the Alevies (Salehi, 1391: 48).

The Muslim Brotherhood is among the groups that have the most challenges regarding the political system, and its most striking feature is its constant opposition with the political system of the country. As was mentioned in finding historical roots for the Syrian crisis, they regarded developing a secular constitution in 1973, and joining the peace process after the war in the same year and intervention in favor of the Maronies in Lebanon and against Palestinian groups, as the greatest sins of government at the time of Hafez al-Assad. These Islamic groups, some of which are believed to have Salafi ideas, believe in Islamic caliphate (Salehi, 1391: 44). They initially tried to oppose government by preaching and advising people to act against the government, but a group of them regarded preaching as ineffective and got involved in gun battle with security forces, in which several thousand people died. After the conflict, Hafez al-Assad government became a full police state, which announced all clubs and associations such as Pharmacists Association and the lawyers Association dissolved. Until 2011, the Muslim Brotherhood, was not able to participate in Syria's domestic and foreign policy effectively, because on

the one hand, its leaders disagree over strategy and on the other hand, the government's political and economic reforms made their fighting fruitless, but Changes resulting from the "Islamic awakening" or "Arabic spring" made it possible for it to once again gain ground in the Syrian society (ibid: 47-48).

One of the most radical movements fighting the Syria government in the name of Islam is Salafi movement which's derived from the teachings of Hanbali, especially Ibn Taymiyyah and, in the past two centuries, Wahhabism.

Wahhabism showed itself as al-Qaeda and the Taliban in recent years, with an inhuman, irrational and cruel face (victim emirate, 1391: 112); but, this movement should not be confused with the Muslim Brotherhood, Although the Muslim Brotherhood is derived from the ideas of Ibn Taymiyyah too, but in contrast with Salafies, they believe in the unity of Muslims and the Islamic Ummat, and avoid divisions (Mousavi, 1390: 355). Salafi movement goes as far as excommunicating Muslims, and the growth of this movement in Syria has caused the crisis in this country to deepen further.

Salafi movement won't do any kind of negotiation and compromise with the Syrian government, and the bloodiest battles in the country are associated with this movement (the victim emirate, 1391: 115). But the Syrian government's problem is not only the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafies, but even some Shiites in Syria Excommunicate Alevis and declare them as outlaws, because they think they are extremists, this made Hafez Assad ask Imam Mosa Saddr for his "Istefta" or religious opinion, so that they will be recognized as one of the Shiite groups (www.snn.ir). He planned to win Shi'ite's satisfaction this way, on the other hand, in order to satisfy the Sunnis, he advocated the constitution's requirement, about the essential role of Islam and Muslims in legislation and the law that says president should be Muslim. This principle led to Alawi people like Hafez al-Assad to be regarded as true Muslims (Www.khabaronline.ir).

The increase in Islamist popular sentiment during the 1980s, caused government to build the mosques and establish Quran competitions, Urge people to observe the Islamic dress code, issue licenses for their mosques preachers and speakers and monitor them, allow prayers in the barracks, and allow people who were under its support, to criticize the government, although these policies were effective to some extent on mitigating opponents, but failed to silence them forever, and they were waiting for any opportunity to show their opposition (Salehi, 1391: 48-49).

### **3-6. Failure of Reform Strategies**

Syrian political system is more democratic than most Arabic countries, but government's strict control over national industry had increased its power (Imami, 1376: 143-165). Assad tried to continue his father's reform plans during his rule. As his first step in 2000, He started with the plan "Damascus Spring" to do political reform. "Damascus Spring" was a term used for a period of free political activity that had two main pillars: Free discussion forums or conventions, and 99, 1000 declarations. In statement 99, a number of

intellectuals and opponents of Assad's government requested the ending of the state of emergency that was established in 1963 and greater political freedoms to be granted (Salehi, 1391: 51) In statement 1000 that was signed in January 2001, 1,000 political opponents of Bashar al-Assad, requested political freedom and equal rights for all citizens, but none of these plans had not sufficient continuance and reliability, and in the end by the excuse that such arguments are counted as attack on the foundation of society and are trying to divert the attention of government from important issues such as the tension between the Arab and Israel, prevented political activities and did extensive actions to arrest dissidents. Other efforts were made to achieve political openness, including the Damascus Declaration and the Beirut-Damascus declaration, but none of them achieved the desired results (Ibid: 52).

This inefficiency was a sign that the ruling elite as "the people in front of everyone and on top of the social pyramid" had failed in carrying out their job (Brinton, 1363: 60) and the idea that taking power from them was unfair made its way to the mind of the key members of the delegation; that everybody are Brother and equal, and they doubted the beliefs that they were grown up with, and thus not only didn't resist opponents, but also joined revolutionaries; they requested a change in the situation, but before reaching this stage, they tried a lot to reform the state. According to Brinton, in the process of the revolution, a time comes when "a class reaches wealth, but feels like being deprived of the highest dignity in social and the political authority" and right at this time "social conflicts reach their peak" (Brinton, 1363: 76); it means "when being wealthy, especially for two or three generations, cannot do anything for you in this world, you have a very reliable preliminary sign of revolution" (ibid: 77).

### **3-7. Organized Groups**

What we discussed so far, confirms Brinton's idea (Ibid: 181) of "the masses do not create the revolution" and "they can be used for some exciting performances only." Brinton says a "small group active group" starts to form a revolution, which is established by "discipline, principle and Bigotry" And through advertising, being contentious, protesting, sit-ins, street battles and non-violence guerrilla insurgencies, requesting mediation to put pressure on governments, sporadic assassinations for punishment and purge, and other techniques, they get prepared for it. Brinton writes: At this time, forming associations and pressure groups is a necessity, so that within them, some people get trained and organized for specific targets and to use all kinds of pressure, from advertising and legal demands to terrorism, in order to achieve their goals. According to Brinton, the severe acts for changing the fundamental orientation of the governing group, which increase over the time, is caused by these pressure groups; that go further than making legal demands and advertising, and plan and organize direct actions against the government. Their importance and the impact they have on the success of the revolution, caused Brinton to call them "illegitimate government". (1363: 46) If some opponent groups hadn't organized

a group called "Free Syrian Army" and incited people for armed rebellion against the government, maybe the protests wouldn't result in some people getting killed (Ajourloo, 1390: 58). But why should such an army establish within three months and a half after the beginning of the Syrian crisis on July 29, 2011? Before Ryadth al-Aasd accept the command of the "free army" and start resisting with a group of military deserters and defectors from the Syrian army, another group of military defectors from the Syrian army, called "Free Syrian officers" had been formed under the leadership of Colonel Hussein Harmosh, who established the initials core of armed resistance ([www.shakhsiatnegar.com](http://www.shakhsiatnegar.com)).

Crane Brinton (1363: 62) says "Eventually, when people from high classes who have the political power had no solution but to use force, they did it in a scattered and ineffective way" and this "Last uniformity ... is perhaps the most clear and important one."

In his *Anatomy of Revolution*, he concludes that in the case of defiance and "illegal revolutionary acts", "Normal reaction of any ruler is to use police force or military" but although they did so, "But in any case such a reaction resulted in a surprising failure." Because "they clearly failed to apply enough force." (Ibid: 102).

However, since the Syrian government by receiving political, economic and military aid from Russia, China and Iran has been able to prevent "the fall of its system" and been successful in maintaining unity at least among the Alawites and Christians, it's lost its control over nearly two-thirds of its territory; But in contrast the Syrian opponents Failed to reach a unified stance against government due to having different set of beliefs which are sometimes conflicting with those of others, They also don't have a coherent organization with powerful leadership. The gap between the permanent members of the UN Security Council and opposition from Russia, China and Iran prevent the establishment of an international coalition against Syria government.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Although in the development of the Syrian crisis, there were many domestic, regional and international factors involved, what emphasized in this article, are internal factors that underlie the crisis, or according to Crane Brinton, the "revolutionary fever symptoms." Although the Syrian government in some cases had the characteristics of a democratic government, it was put under circumstances that revealed its great shortage in terms of other democratic characteristics.

An Alawi state that only represents 13% of the population of Syria, and a lack of Sunnis' consensus about the Legitimacy of this government and incorrect political actions led to Syria becoming the center of attention of Arabic countries and regional and international powers, in the same time with the beginning of changes in Arabic countries in the Middle East and North Africa in 2011. Consistency of internal movements with external powers on one

hand, and the lack of consensus among the opponents on the other hand, caused the crisis not to reach a compromise and not to form a democratic government. Actually, the only results are greater destruction and losing property and lives for people who maybe did not have much to do with this crisis.

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