

AS A SOCIAL CONTROL MECHANISM “THAMADE”: CAN BE A MODEL SOLVE THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS?

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study is to discuss whether the institution of Thamade that functioned as social control mechanism in Caucasian societies exiled from Russia in 1864 and later could have the same function in modern times, as well. Another purpose of the study is to take the institution of Thamade to the agenda of Turkey and World, and discuss this matter. The study aims to find out whether the institution of Thamade that still functions as the control mechanism in facilitating the social order in Caucasian peoples which preserve their traditions and are considered to be a relatively closed society, could have the same function in other societies. The sub-problem sentence of the study is "What could be the capability of the traditional institution that makes the Thamade functional in Circassian and Abkhazian societies to be functional at modern times?" The benefit expected from this study is to enable recognition of "Thamade institution" in addition to ombudsmanship and mediation systems and its use as a control mechanism particularly in local governments. Methods of focus group discussion and observation were used within the framework of qualitative research design in the study. Research findings reveal that the institution of Thamade functions as a powerful control mechanism in such societies, and the arguments of both Thamades and court records that Thamades resolves problems on the spot is true; crime rates are considerably lower and disputes are resolved without appeal to the court in places where the institution of Thamade is carried on.

Key words: *Thamade, Opinion leader, leadership, social control, social order*

1. Introduction

Inspection of social structure and the problem of societies becoming "risk societies" in the historical process of traditional surveillance have given rise to certain control and surveillance practices (Horlick-Jones, 2009). The concept of risk that manifests itself as a growing element in social life is directly related to increasing stringency of surveillance. The risk of terrorism that is spread over a global area, market domination concern, and preventive risk theories, paranoia of predominating the future and the surprises it will bring along give rise to the definition of risk society, and this definition provides justification for turning societies into surveillance societies (Beck, 2009).

More frequent use of surveillance and use of surveillance for social control were largely analysed by Foucault, and bearing a great deal of importance for social life in modern societies, surveillance has been analysed in different aspects. This topic is still subject to considerable analyses within the framework of the fundamental problem of modernity. The concept of social control is both used as a general name and for the control of all layers of the society. According to Charles Medwar, one of the pioneers of social control theory, social control is only possible when the decision-makers of social control behave considering all possible outcomes of their power of practice, take responsibility, and in the presence of the principle of democracy (Abdioğlu and Meydan, 2006). Ideas related to social control increased in parallel to the developments that took place particularly in late 1980s. Furthermore, social control started to be used in a wider sense meaning both control of the society over institutions or organizations and self-control of the society (governance).

Although the principal significance of social control has started to be felt in modern times, it had been one of the most important means of restricting the power throughout history. Social control gained importance with the rise of "nation states" and development of large-scale bureaucratic organizations, and new theoretical approaches were introduced on the matter. In this respect, social control was subject to comprehensive

analyses, and the matter was dealt with not only in terms of institutions but also from a larger perspective that covers all layers of the society. In his approach to the notion of social control, Foucault sets out from the assumption that humanities function as controlling and disciplining individuals in modern societies. *According to Foucault, institutions such as family, school, court, barracks, and workplace define their respective standards of normality, imposing the abnormality as "lifestyle" in an institutional manner on masses that are governed.* Such institutions of control that are argued to have emerged from social order and needs are in fact oppressive products and "ideological apparatuses" in Althusserian terms (Althuzer, 2000).

Foucault defines power as a process that "creates its own organizations, transforms, strengthens or reverses power relations, and a group of strategies that makes power relations effective." Having founded many of his works on power relations, Foucault thinks that there is an abstract power apparatus, and that power is larger than legal apparatus and implements a lot of power procedures. He stated that what is truly effective on individuals is such illegal restrictions and abstract power. According to Foucault, in addition to the relationship between the state and society, there are many forms of "micro-power" such as the power relations between a father and his children and wife, or power relations that an employer imposes on his employees, and all these fragments of power are organized in a totality (Foucoult, 2003).

Apart from the critical and somewhat anarchist perspective of Foucault, different methods of control were needed for further developing the public administration system and making it more effective in time, and such methods of control emerged in the form of political control, administrative control, ombudsmanship, mediation, judicial control, pressure groups and public control. The subject of this study is the self-control that emerges in time within the internal dynamism of the society. Emergence of social control not as the means of government by the political power but self-control of the society through respected and wise persons becomes more meaningful and important in "Thamade institution". Furthermore, social control - in this sense - can gain functionality through the powerful normative rules of tradition without the need for the conception of participatory democracy, an active and strong civil society, social responsibility of the public towards civil society, and availability of a suitable political setting.

The Thamade institution that ensures "social control" in Northern Caucasian peoples is an institution that concretizes in the person of an individual and is formed on the basis of confidence, respect and a clean history. Thamade is a real person, however being Thamade does not mean being a leader or pioneer but it means leadership and pioneering. What concretizes in the person of Thamade is the body of normative and traditional rules. In Abkhaz culture, Thamades are chosen wise persons who act in a guiding, uniting, integrating manner and provide solidarity, leading a life based on values. They are individuals who try to solve all problems within the framework of justice and ethics in the protective and assuring climate of historical context and traditions, and function as leaders and "mediators". As distinct from ordinary systems of mediation, Thamade is not a bolt from the blue or assigned by a certain authority. He is a concrete person who has gained confidence of all segments of the society, has been approved and confided in by everyone in the restricted area where he lives. He is the most functional wise representative of opinion leadership. For all these characteristics, Thamade is a modest, respectable person who resolves problems in a fair manner and maintains social peace on the basis of the confidence in him.

In the origin of the power and authorities of Thamade within the social system lies a set of regulating rules formed by the combination of the customary law called "Xhabze" with primeval Abkhaz and Circassia

tradition. This tradition is a philosophy and style of life based on personal-social sublimity, freedom, love and respect for humanity and society, honour and peace throughout the long story of life that lies with the 6000-year-old ancient Caucasian culture through the filter of history. In traditional societies, there are various rules that define right, wrong, positive and negative filtered by the history for thousands of years. Thamade is based on the principles of "morality" and "public responsibility", and functions as a sensitive means of control towards the society. By spreading the sensitivity to social problems, in a sense, it makes self-government possible. While implementing social control, Thamade contributes to establishment of social order through values such as honesty, social harmony, self-government, helpfulness, preserving nature, personal responsibility, and sense of community, cooperation and reputation. Today, Thamades still act as a means of "soft control" and regulators, and provide guidance organized around a strong concept of "shame" that has sanctions on the basis of the social values and norms.

2. Social Control Phenomenon: Conceptual Framework

The concept of social control was coined in 1950s by Howard R. Boven, and this concept was rather used to explain the social control of enterprises and other organizations that time. Then the concept started to be used in England and other European countries for evaluation of social effects of some developments in the private sector in 1970s, and explaining such effects to the society. In 1980s, the concept of social control was brought from the private sector to the public one as the concept of governance gained prominence (Berthin, 2011). The control phenomenon which started to gain importance for public sector in inspection of public resources and public services, as well as for non-governmental organizations and citizens, was redefined to require participation of social stakeholders. Today, the concept of social control is used to express a process of inspection and evaluation in which state cooperates with citizens in making and implementing the public service program and policy, and creating legal regulations in this respect. Citizens are thus made to take part in government in all matters (governance) and informed by the government.

Social control aims to regulate behaviours of individuals and groups on the basis of common social good. In all societies, there are norms and rules that direct social behaviour. The possibility of following or violating the norms marks the importance of social control mechanisms. Various rules of law have been developed to establish and maintain social order. Rules of law turn into a means of oppression in the hand of political power in time (Hobbes, 1995), and oppressive approaches can be manifested in the bodies that provide security. The actual purpose of law is to ensure a social order in security and balance. This is the ideal purpose of law. However, it is not uncommon to see that law is an instrument of enforcement for the political power. This is indicated by the practices that have been experienced so far and observed in the society.

The concept of social control is used in the sense of keeping the actions or processes of government under control by internal or external means and trying to make them the way they should be. In fact, control is not an instrument of government but an instrument used for administrative activity and a function of management performed to find out whether the administrative functions such as planning, organizing and directing achieve their objectives. It is an instrument of government executed to reveal the difference between the planned and the realized; what occurred and what should occur. The "control" mentioned here, which is a function and instrument of government, is not the control in classical sense. When the concept is used on social plane, it means making the will of the power sovereign on all layers of society. Having conducted important theoretical analyses on the matter, Foucault considers the concept of control in this second sense,

arguing that it is used in the sense that political power extends the public authority against the autonomous domains of individuals in modern societies by their distinctive techniques and methods.

According to Foucault, the space of control in modern societies includes all social layers and shortly, the life itself rather than a specific organization or place. Institutions such as school, family, barracks, prison, factory, hospital are instruments or apparatuses of power where the pressure of power is felt on the individual who is under constant surveillance in every respect. What Foucault objected to was that societies gradually become "surveillance societies", and that the individual space narrows down through such instruments of control. Political power narrows down the individual living space by closely monitoring the attitudes and behaviours of individuals, institutions and organizations, and all civil units by means of social control.

As a type of control that has a wide meaning, social control exercised through Thamades differs from other types of control in terms of its characteristics and advantages. For instance, while "financial control" is restricted to accuracy of financial information and operational control is restricted to plans, policies, laws, regulations, identified purposes and effective use of resources, social control deals with social benefits and ensures that these social benefits functions fairly and effectively among different social groups in the light of various good governance principles (India Centre For Good Governance, 2005). Different from financial and operational control, social control allows citizens to take part in the control (Berthin, 2011). Social control is a wide sense of control that also covers "social accountability". Here, "social accountability" covers all activities that include social development, participatory government and provision of service (Ringold, Holla, Koziol and Srinivasan, 2011).

The social control phenomenon is important as a need for all societies traditional or modern, and lots of reasons such as increasing income inequality among social classes, employment-related problems, demand for a more comfortable life, technological advances, increase in the level of education, ease of expression of the requests for right to remedies, ease of influencing and directing people, improvement of the sense of social responsibility make social control increasingly necessary. However, the problem here is the narrowing down in the individual autonomous domain, and expansion of the sovereignty of the political power through social control. Social order gains power through government and control apparatuses of the political power, and the special domain narrows down in the relations between individuals and groups. However, various objections are raised by different segments of the society against ideological apparatuses of the state gaining power, and societies turning into surveillance societies and requests are made to make the society control itself. At this point, increase in literacy rates, demand of citizens to take part in political processes; computer technologies making it easier for citizens to participate in governing processes rise importance citizen-oriented governing. One of the important components of citizen-oriented governing is citizen-oriented control, and the institution of Thamade leaves a large domain for it.

2.1. Thamade as a Means of Soft Control against Surveillance Society

The surveillance phenomenon was conceptually analysed under certain socioeconomic theories within the historical process. These theories include Panopticon of J. Bentham, which epitomizes how surveillance turns into a social control instrument; Foucault's analysis on Panopticon^{*} as well as the theories of Marx, Weber, Giddens and Taylor containing the surveillance formed in the sense of both workplace and bureaucracy with modernity. In addition to its theoretical and historical aspects, surveillance as an instrument of social control has been the topic of literature and certain works of dystopian literature. The *Ministry of Truth* is noteworthy in Orwell's novel within the framework of using surveillance as an instrument of social control. Showing how strong the initiative of the supervisor is, the *Ministry of Truth* has the capable of destroying or modifying all collected data and constructing and governing the social consciousness, thereby turning modern societies into truly "Panopticon Societies".

The Panopticon model of society has been established in Bentham's architecture, Foucault's theoretical works, and Orwell's dystopia. However, it was Foucault who strengthened the theoretical foundations of the concept. According to Foucault who discussed the power relations within the social structure at micro and macro levels, control reveals the logic of a system and functioning mechanisms related to social control. This is a mechanism that transforms the society and keeps individuals constantly monitored. The "panoptic society" of Foucault is "the new form of power imposed on individuals under personal and constant surveillance, control / punishment / reward ... and form of correction; which means transformation and shaping of individuals according to certain rules" (Foucault, 2000). In this definition, the triad of surveillance / control and correction which manifests itself to cover the entire society marks the foundation of power relations that apply to today's societies. As a surveillance practice that turns visibility into a trap, Panopticon is based on the eye of the supervisor that does not miss any detail and the gazes of those under surveillance, which intersect from sight to sight. What matters here is a political technology that allows hiding behind the curtain while making the positions of those under surveillance transparent and enables monitoring "everything" at any time. Today, the increase in the surveillance capability of the political power has caused people to lead a life that resembles a prison based on the panoptic order introduced and programmed by Bentham.

* Panopticon is the prison model designed by British social theorist Jeremy Bentham in 1785. The fundamental logic of its design is that it allows surveillance. Derived from Greek words "pan" standing for "all" and "optic" standing for "of or pertaining to sight", this concept is designed on the basis of multi-storey rings made up of single-room cells. The structure incorporates a surveillance tower central to the ring, which is populated by guardians who are totally hidden from the inmates. The fundamental principle of panopticon was that the inmate who lives in a single-room cell has nowhere to hide. According to Bentham's approach, the inmate who knows that all his misdeeds would be penalized but does not know when he is monitored would have no option but act responsibly and behave in the knowledge that he is always monitored, thereby watch his behaviors. Bentham expressed Panopticon as a new model of domination by a "superior mind". Source: (Bentham, Jeremy. Panopticon (Preface). In Miran Bozovic (ed.), *The Panopticon Writings*, London: Verso, 1995, 29-95)

The opposing view to the critiques of Foucault is that the information society is a myth that is developed to serve the interests of those who started the revolution of information and of the ruling class. According to those who are of this opinion, constant surveillance arises from the internal dynamics of developing social structures in mass democracies. Surveillance mechanisms with an infrastructure relying on information technologies have to turn into standard instruments of social control in terms of retaining and governing the power. Some of the advocates of this view treat the information society within the classification of 'ideology', and consider it an obligation caused by the current needs of the capitalist system as the ideology of the sovereign can only have meaning and escape abstraction within the concept of social control (Kumar, 1999). With the central authority being the source of social control, instruments and form of social control are important. Instruments of social control are essentially the symbols that are communicated to individuals via mass communication channels and direct them into certain behaviours. The perceptive universe created with such symbols makes up political culture with semantic maps and instruments of social functioning. Finally, technologies that are used in the supervision of guilty-not guilty does not make distinctions, people who are guilty of these technologies is not a matter of being uncomfortable, although we should not underestimate the discomfort of the occurrence of innocent people under constant surveillance.

Even though the arguments attempted to be developed for surveillance society consider surveillance a necessity for modern societies, it does not rule out the fact that actions of individuals do not take place in an autonomous area and by free will contrary to what is believed in modern times that are also known as the age of freedoms. In surveillance societies, the simplest daily activities of individuals are shaped and controlled by being subject to surveillance. This process, which is called "Electronic Panoptism" by some and "Information Surveillance" by others, solidifies the power of the sovereign (Lyon, 2006). "Therefore, the "surveillance" phenomenon here is used in a sense related to social control, power and sovereignty. Thus, daily lives and social relations of persons both in the public life and in private domain are under constant monitoring of electronic eyes (big brother).

In surveillance societies, an individual is recorded systematically at every stage of the social life from the day he/she was born, and the individual is monitored and stored in the databases of personal profiles by information technologies, recording devices and smart cards for economic transactions (Bozkurt, 2000). The most private corners of streets, avenues, and even cities are monitored by surveillance cameras; all visited addresses online can be monitored, and individuals leave traces that cannot be concealed. Access to email messages removes the domain of private life, leading to the loss of the individual autonomy. In addition to providing social control, mass media functions as the source of power which is one of the primary instruments of social transformation. Media constantly offers a "system of meanings" to the society, redefining what is ordinary and extraordinary according to its own authority to identify what is normal and what is not (Demir, 2006).

Althusser defines the second form of control, namely "soft control"(Dolgun, 2005), one of the forms of social control, as "ideological apparatuses of the state", identifying such apparatuses as components that make up the state apparatus such as the government, army, police force, courts, prisons. Ideological apparatuses of the state also include religion, school, family, law, labour unions, press and culture. While the state's apparatus exists in public domain, majority of state's ideological apparatuses that exist as scattered is in private domain.(Althusser, 2003) However, defining the political power as such means placing the power in a state

apparatus only. Nevertheless, there are thousands of types of power at macro and micro scale in the society, and even the smallest one of power relations that takes place in every domain of the society is promoted by the power of the state to reinforce this power. Theories of power mention power using legal terms, thereby try to establish justification of the power. The research conducted by Foucault does not focus on ideological apparatuses of the state but, on the contrary, on social impacts of the apparatuses of power. The primary objective of Foucault is to show how political power forces masses submit to it.

In traditional societies, behaviours are formed in thousands of years, and particularly in closed societies, familiarity and recognition that extends to primeval times force societies to control themselves, which causes traditional regulatory set of rules such as customs and moral laws increase functionality of social control along with legal rules, consolidating the society. In fact, institutionalization of the relations in social life is an ideal phenomenon that the law of nature tries to attain. The *Thamade* institution allows functionality of social rules and norms as well as self-control the society without turning it into a surveillance society or destroying the autonomous and private domain. The *Thamade* institution ensures healthy functioning of social order, and allows voluntary participation in the rules of law. This is acceptable to all societies for justification of the rules of law before the society. Trying to establish social control by formal rules of law only turns the society into a "surveillance society". In Abkhaz societies where the *Thamade* institution is still in existence, social control is addressed by citizens within the framework of "an approach of common responsibility", which is concretized in the person of *Thamade* who functions both as a natural entity and a legal entity. The institution of *Thamade* makes turns control a means of self-control function rather than the means of government for political power. The meaning of the *Thamade* institution increases social responsibility of official bodies, and social sensitivity of non-governmental organizations and individuals.

2.2. *Thamade*: Conceptual Background

Before providing the semantic content of the word *Thamade*, I would like to give some brief information about the geography of Circassian people where this tradition still strongly exists. The land of Circassians who continue the tradition of *Thamade* is Caucasia. Many historians and cartographers use this term to denote the central and southwestern Caucasia which covers lands of Adyghe tribes and Abkhaz-Abkhazin tribes, and Ubykh people in the sense of the Circassian lands. Considering the entire Circassian people (Adyghe, Abkhaz, Ubykh, Karachays, Ossetians, Chechens-Ingush and Daghestani) under the upper identity of Circassians, historians and organizations express the whole Northern Caucasia as Circassia. It is seen in Ottoman records that Circassians, the Daghestani, Nogais, Chechens, Karachays, and Kalmyks came to Ottoman Empire in forced migrations from 1860 to 1920s. In the first years of migration, Ottoman Empire did not interfere in social classes of Circassians in order to ensure that they fit into the society. This played an important role in dependence of Circassian tribes on social classes from 1860 to 1950s and 1960s, and survival of Circassian culture (Karataş, 2013). An element that survives in Circassian culture is the tradition of *Thamade*.

Thamade is an example of a respected wise person who holds the leadership traits in the Circassian society. They are commissioned by the society, community or representatives thereof to perform a certain duty and elected to maintain a mission for a certain amount of time. In fact, *Thamade* is the name of a mission, a leader and the institution of leadership. In this sense, in addition to being a person who is elected and commissioned to carry out a certain duty (Aslan, 2005). *Thamade* is abstraction of tradition in the mental map in archaic Abkhazian societies. In etymological sense, *Thamade* is the common name for the leader accepted and

gratified by God, and the leadership mission that has a significant meaning in the customs of Adyghe (Güngör, 2012).

In the well-organized Circassian society, when two persons would perform a task together, one of them is positioned as Thamade (leader) and the other as Guadze (helper, assister). Thamade tries to protect not only himself but also the the small society or group that he forms with his helper from the attitudes and behaviours that are against the ethics and traditions or tendencies that are against the customs. Furthermore, he is responsible for ensuring that the task to be performed or any activity is performed in compliance with the rules. His helper is liable to obey him and perform the duties assigned by the leader. Thamade is not tried unless he commits a gross crime against Xabze (customary law). A Thamade who committed a gross crime against can be questioned, held responsible before major Thamades or in Xase when necessary, and even his social and class titles may be revoked, if any.

The "laws of customary law" mentioned as "Xabze" above are laid by the legislative (people's) assembly called Xase. This practice is monitored and inspected by the entire society. This functioning system makes self-government possible by a widespread and effective social control mechanism in the traditional Circassian society. The behaviours that violate Xabze are first attempted to be solved at local level. They are referred to upper ranks in the hierarchy of Thamades (opinion leaders) to the extent possible, because it is essential that adversities be resolved rather than noised about and spread. In addition, the problems that are not possible to resolve at local level can be referred to a higher rank of hierarchy, and finally to Xase. Behaviours that violate Xabze can be penalized with sanctions at any level. An Abkhazian proverb "talk about the evil and it goes astray; talk about the good and it proliferates" points to this conception (The Jordan Times, 2017).

It is because Circassians are strictly attached to their traditions and regulatory qualities of institutions such as Thamade that the problems experienced in Circassian societies that are scattered to various parts of the world on a tragic exile from Caucasus are not referred to courts (Karataş, 2013). Attaching greater importance to verbal rules than written rules, the Abkhazian culture has been passed down and preserved verbally and practically through generations. Thamades are estimable persons who have proven themselves by their actions and respectability. Furthermore, the respectability arising from "wisdom", confidence and "age" increase the functionality of the institution of Thamade, and maintains peace and order in a self-controlled society without turning it into a surveillance society. However, "old age" is not a prerequisite for being a Thamade. Anyone who has the qualities required by the duty can be commissioned as a Thamade.

A candidate of Thamade should have these qualities: Being intelligent and understanding, not having a physical disability, being aware of the duty to assume, having personal experience and social responsibility as well as the competence to overcome such personal responsibilities, being capable of expressing his emotions and ideas and convincing, respecting social values and being the member of a family that has social respectability, being a trustworthy and reliable person in the society... With all their qualities and skills, Thamades incorporate all qualities that a "missionary leader" should have in terms of modern leadership theories. They are capable of mobilizing people in accordance with certain objectives. They can notice social necessities, and direct social energy in line with social purposes and goals. Those who do not have such qualities cannot be chosen as Thamade regardless of his own or his family's status. As stated by Adair, Thamade is essentially an opinion leader that has special skills of directing people. He is able to influence a community to obey a set of actions thanks to such skill of his (Adair, 2009).

Thamades assume important duties and responsibilities in society. They can be listed as follows:

- Maintaining the qualities he has during his election until the end of his duty,
- Making sure that all behaviours are within the framework of social acceptance,
- Deriving no financial gain from any situation throughout the period of his duty and not using his duty as a means of influence,
- Being a sensitive observant depending on the conditions, who has the power of reasoning to use the power of jurisdiction, and knowing and implementing the rules of xabze at all times,
- Being a charismatic individual who is able to preserve his reputation with humble actions and behaviours while performing his social roles...

A Thamade is liable to satisfy the requests and directives of those who elect or commission him. He is still accountable to them until the end of his service and he transfers his duty according to traditions.

Examination of the origin of Thamade's authority on society reveals that this is a coercive force. Coercive force is a kind of force that depends on respect and fear, in which the leader may penalize, criticize or condemn the persons under his responsibility. "Condemnation" is the most prominent sanction in Abkhazian societies, and a condemned individual is obliged to live as a debased member of the society. Thamade uses this authority to ensure submission of the society which he governs, and those under his management gladly accept his authority. As people are aware of the fact that they would be penalized when they do not act in compliance with social norms, they constantly feel this power and take it as the basis of their self-control. Another form of power used by Thamades is the charismatic power. The source of this power is directly related to the personality of the Thamade. A charismatic Thamade is taken as an example by the society. Thamades with dominant charismatic characteristics are individuals who are respected and imitated by the society. Especially the young members of the society try to associate themselves with such persons and try to imitate them. Thamade uses his power originating from his social position, status and charisma for "social good". Thanks to functionality of social control, he implements various social resolutions in line with the needs and priorities of the stakeholders; helps citizens access their rights; and supports the efforts of institutions in resolution of social problems (Kumar, 2012). He contributes to the success of social control, and facilitates transparency and institutionalization. He also coordinates the domain and purpose of activity and participation of interest groups for efficiency of social control (Eivani, Nazari and Emami, 2012).

The institution of Thamade relieves the burden of the stakeholders of social control (public sector, NGOs, citizens and private sector). A multiple perspective every stakeholder would reflect their own opinions even if indirectly regarding such public services would be possible. In other words, the infrastructure of a participatory government (governance) would be established (Berthin, 2011). Thus, the requirements of modern government such as transparency and accountability would be fulfilled (Kumar, 2012). Thanks to social control, which is the fundamental component of democratic governance, a contribution is made to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of all units of the state (Berthin, 2011). Thanks to social control that can be implemented locally or centrally, citizens and state's units find a chance to cooperate and a large path is paved to participation of citizens in government (governance) (Eivani, Nazari and Emami, 2012).

3. Research Method

In this research, Focus Group Study has been used as a data collection tool. The main reason of preferring this method is that the subject needs in-depth analysis. Moreover, focus group study is an interactive process which is suitable for rapidly collecting detailed data on the subject and enables producing much more options. Focus group discussion is a qualitative data collection technique frequently used in action researches. Although focus group discussion is used together with the techniques of interview and survey in social sciences, it is actually one of the systematic data collection methods on its own (Kitzinger, 1995).

According to Bowling (2002), focus group discussion is an effective data collection technique performed between the researcher and a small group. It has such superiorities as utilizing the impact of group dynamics in interviews and discussions and allowing for obtaining in-depth information. It is a carefully planned discussion and data collection technique in which individuals express their opinions freely. This technique is used within the framework of predetermined directives. Krueger (1994) defines it as a qualitative data collection technique aiming for getting information about the cultural features of the sample and learning the underlying reasons of their behaviours.

The participants were diffusively informed about the subject, objective and context of the research before the focus group discussion. All participants were carefully chosen among the ones in harmony with the research subject. Semi-structured questions prearranged for the research were addressed to a group of eight persons, some of whom have a good grasp of Thamade culture and some of whom have the “position of Thamade” in their societies. Totally nine questions were asked to the participants. The responses were recorded by a tape recorder, and then the resulting data were tried to be analysed after the voice records were transcribed.

4. Findings and Implications

The aforementioned questions and their answers are as follows:

1-What is the source of Thamade’s power or authority when establishing social order?

First of all, when we consider the society and its customs and culture to which the institution of Thamade belongs, it is understood that the source of Thamade’s power is social values integrated with religion (Xhabze) and normative principles composed of centuries old manners and customs. Therefore, it is impossible to distinguish religion from tradition. For instance, the concept of shame (ahaşara-haynap) implies not only a situation to be ashamed of, but also the concept of sin. Its power of sanction stems from this religious connection.

2-What kind of audit mechanisms are there for Thamades to keep them within the limits of legitimacy while they work as a social audit mechanism?

Thamade is firstly a position of leadership. It is not a position in which one person functions arbitrarily or with his/her personal initiative. When expressed sociologically, Thamade is a natural leadership. Thus, Thamade’s decisions hold the characteristics of normative rules like moral rules and rules of law, not of legislation. These decisions win the approval of the majority and are accepted as “common good and common right” by the

society. On the other hand, if an exceptional case occurs, “the council of Thamades” can undertake a supervisory function upon the abovementioned decisions.

3. To what extent do Thamades use democratic processes when they fulfill their social missions?

As the institution of Thamade defines not a person but a function, not the leader but leadership, Thamade takes decisions by using democratic processes as is the case with natural leadership. A Thamade is under supervision and audit of both society and other Thamades while he/she is performing his/her duty. He/she is a member of the society in which he/she performs a duty. He/she is a well-recognized person along with neighbor and friendship relations with this society since old generations. Due to this acquaintance, his/her every decision and action is under the audit of the society and democratic processes run there spontaneously.

4. Why are the Circassians loyal to Xabze, which has an important role in regulating social life?

North Caucasians are ancient peoples with long historical backgrounds and strong traditions. The calamities, exiles and mass migrations they experienced throughout their long historical journey have made them unite as a nation and hold on to their traditions much more. As they were hard done by and exiled from their own lands, they tried to overcome all the misfortunes by protecting and strengthening their traditions.

5. What is Xabze actually? What kind of regulatory principle is it: law, custom, tradition, practice or common law?

Xabze is a body of uncodified, regulatory and normative rules. Xabze is a legitimacy framework which encompasses both manners and customs and the belief system of the society. It is a body of regulatory principles that form the behavioural patterns of the society and contribute to the regulation of social life.

6. What is the position and role of religion in regulating social life?

First of all, Caucasian peoples are traditional societies. Therefore, in these societies it is not proper to make a distinction between the rules regulating social life, like between religious life and unreligious life, between religion and tradition. All the habits, customs, manners and beliefs inherited from the ancient culture of the society were intertwined. All these normative rules were imbedded together in the collective memory of the society and undertook important tasks in regulating daily life. It is the greatest sign of this fact that there are very few cases in judicial bodies belonging to the societies bound up with the Xabze tradition. Therefore, it is impossible to distinguish between religious rules, moral rules or customs in these societies which live together with all these normative rules as part of a natural process.

7. Is there sex discrimination in representing the position of Thamade? Can a woman be Thamade?

Although it is not incongruous with social wisdom and collective conscious for the position of Thamade to be represented by a woman, customs stipulate being male for being selected as Thamade. The Circassian society is ultimately a traditional eastern society. In traditional societies, men play a more active role in social life than women. Thus, the position of Thamade has been predominantly represented by men.

8. *What is Xase? What are its authorities and functions?*

Xase is a mechanism functioning as a judicial body like “supreme court” in modern legal systems. Thamades are accountable to Xase for their all actions. This institution not only ensures that social life runs within the framework of normative rules, but also audits the arbitrary actions of Thamades.

9. *Can such a traditional institution as Thamade function in postmodern societies? What do you think about its future?*

Social structures and institutions are dynamic and this dynamism absolutely affects the societies in which the Thamade culture prevails. Postmodernism challenges and scorns all traditional structures and institutions. Accordingly, Thamade and other social regulatory institutions are under the pressure of this postmodern assault. However, Circassian traditional institutions have always resisted strongly against degeneration thanks to the relatively self-enclosed structure of the Circassian society.

5. Conclusion

Among the factors that are used most frequently in explaining social control are rules, institutions, organs and methods. The prominent elements acting as the origin of such factors are norms and values (Tan, 1981). While surveillance of behaviours and activities of individuals on behalf of some organizations and the state gives rise to surveillance society, imposing social control by methods of soft control such as the institution of Thamade makes peace, order and directly participatory democratic government and governance possible. While those who support vigilant technologies of surveillance societies argue that innocent people who have nothing to hide are not disturbed by surveillance (Wood and Ball, 2009), no person wants to be monitored and followed whether they are guilty or not. As is the case in the institution of Thamade, people would rather control themselves in the warm atmosphere and protective quality of tradition than surveillance caused by suspicion and anxiety. In today's world where paranoia of security is on the rise, consenting to the surveillance capability of the information technologies of military tactics even in civil security increases the importance of institutions such as Thamade for protection of individual private and autonomous domain (Horlick-Jones, 2009).

The findings yielded from the research data and the information obtained from interviews in person show that Thamade and other traditional institutions in Circassian society which has a tradition of thousands of years still function as a social control mechanism. There is a good deal of qualitative evidence indicating the functionality of Thamade institution. The fact that there is only a small amount of law cases of societies in which such social institutions still exist is a solid evidence of this. Another finding that provides a positive answer to the research question is the decision made by Thamades in Sakarya and Düzce that no alcohol consumption and use of firearms be allowed in wedding ceremonies. 141 Thamades elected by the residents of 45 villages around the provinces of Sakarya and Düzce where Northern Caucasians live gathered in July 2004 for the purpose of finding a solution to the problem of deaths and injuries caused by reckless firearm discharges particularly in rural wedding ceremonies. Considering particularly the persistence of decisions to be made in the discussions and evaluations, use of firearms and offering of alcoholic beverages were prohibited in wedding ceremonies. This resolution has not been violated so far, and it is significant as an indication of the enforcement and acceptance of the resolutions taken by Thamades.

Findings of research and the data obtained directly from the population of the study show that the institution of Thamades constitutes a prominent social control mechanism. It is necessary to conduct extensive research on, open for discussion, and making the subject of sociological research the institution of Thamade which has the advantage of being "domestic" as well as significant functionality in comparison to the institutions of ombudsmanship and mediatorship that have recently been practiced in our country. It is expected that using this topic for further studies such as master's and doctoral research would lead to spread of the institution of Thamade and establishment of social order.

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