Nature of Iranian traditional media in political communication process

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Abstract: In Iran political communication culture, due to high tension in its history affected by aliens` invasion and rulers` dictatorship , a kind of insecurity are appeared in Iran political culture that consequently is intensified by entering modernism from West into Iranian cultural sphere during the contemporary period of time which produce cultural dichotomy in political communication process. Since the communicative - verbal culture is more common in Iranian absolutist mentality due to a sense of insecurity, so the traditional- religious medias or traditional-national media have been promoted so they play a significant role in information interchanging in Islamic revolution victory, even though after its victory, the traditional- religious media are also strengthening the intermediaries between people and government in political communication process till after three decades modern media joint with IT development could influence the content of these media such as mosques, religious site (Hoseineia) by representing the traditional-religious media so that the governmental radio and television turn into a virtual mosques and religious sites ... as well as lead to weaken the traditional- religious media.

Keywords: Species richness; beta-diversity; taxonomic diversity; forest

1. Introduction

It should be reiterated that by Iran's Islamic Revolution victory (1979 AD) the revolutionaries had lacked the modern media such as radio, television and publications, thus in that period of time traditional media communicate information through networks such as mosques, religious sites (Hossainia), Holy shrines and the public thought was mobilized against monarchy, since after the victory, clergymen could lay their secular rivals aside and surround Iran political governing by dominating the traditional media. More importantly, the political communication process about the relationship between the political government and people are linked mostly through traditional media till the modern media gradually spread into traditional media content and attached the process from traditional media to itself, therefore today the modern media have grown increasingly after three decades of Islamic revolution victory so it could digest and absorb traditional media in such a way that they cannot play role as same as before (especially in the first decade of the revolution) in the political communication process between the general public and the political - religious system(*Howard, P.* (2009) . Anderson, A. 1997 says on culture: "Culture consists of all plans have been designed for life over the history and always exist as a potential guide for people behaving obviously or obscurely, intellectually and anti-rationally and injudiciously."

Jenkins, H. 2006 also states on culture as: "A culture in a society is the way of its citizens` life [also] is a set of beliefs and habits which are learnt, shared and handed over through generation".

In Iranian culture, because of stressful and anxiety raised by alien`s invasion and political tyranny, a kind of insecurity has been formed at the heart of Iranian culture and undesirably has been continuing through the history from the past to present era and has been maturing as a defense mechanism in the form of cultural duality, so that the issue has been internalizing in their religious beliefs in various forms of "dissimulation" (religious or political self-mealy mouthed), as an example. In addition, the white lie is the other instance of self- mealy mouthed that cannot be seen in other religions and faiths formally. The other sign of high using of "lie" as a defense mechanism is swearing too much in Iranian dialogues, because the person has to invoke to "oath" to prove his legitimacy and gain other confidence. The three factors that caused duality in Iranian culture was the Arab new- Muslims invasion to Iran that made the Iranian in negative struggle and self-mealy mouthed mode in two early H.A centuries based on Arabs dominance on their lands.

Second, historically Iranian society had been attacked by foreigners, especially after Arabs invasion, Iran had been subject of great massive invasion by Seljukians, Mongols, and Afghans and..... The issue forms the great part of Iran history after Islam entrance. Third, the arrival of the Western culture from Europe to Iran in the late of 19th centuries crystallized in Constitutional Revolution. Although Iranian culture and identity, maintaining its ancient cultural heritage, could interact with western

modern culture, the interaction did not existing between Iranian religious identity and Western modern culture. In this regard, *Kelly, J. & Etling, B.* (2008) says:

"Cultural duality and communication consist of the first contacts between Iran and west …".

"Fargang Rajai" writes on Iranian`s identity problems:"Today, Iran is a nation who seeks its identity. Iran is a society fluctuating in modernity democratic ideals and suppressing aspects of tradition". Meanwhile the fourth factor can be taken into account which today is more than abovementioned factor; it is the political government tyranny over Iran history which causes mental-cultural despotized. Today, the significant part of duality in Iranian people culture is raised from worries of public people for the process of their political communication with political government in addition to historical and cultural issues which will lead to imbalances within the society and outside of it. Naturally, the problem feed the political and even cultural duality, if this imbalance continues inside and outside of people and political government relationship, undoubtedly, the way of political- social movement will be prepared. Because the system does not meet the outside and hidden expectations of the society, also it is likely against them. Especially, new Iranian generation lacks historical memory toward Islamic Revolution after three decades. Since, the generation actively enters to information-global community domain. Therefore, the political sovereignty is not so capable to impact this new arrived generation public thought. According to "Hippocrates" and Freud, "character is future destiny", overall, new generation cannot adapt itself to such a dual space like its father, altogether it is not satisfied with present status for having numerous national resources in any sense. So it tries to elevate its social base, sometime if it fails, it will attempt to emigrate from the country. For example, rural people who immigrates to cities for their needs to social mobility or citizens who know society as an obstacle for their social mobility, thus they prefer to immigrate to developed countries. Notwithstanding, the majority of the generation are not able to immigrate because of their fixation to their own society and other prohibitions, but in comparing to the first generation of revolution lack the memory of religious-revolutionary ideals because their identity formation is affected more by modern media rather than religious traditional centers. Thus, they may live natively, but they think by membership in global information community (Retamal, G. and Aedo-Richmond, R. (eds) (1998)). Nevertheless their religious beliefs foundation will be formed by modern media. Today, even Islamic fundamentalist

are without identity without modern media, thereby when the Islamist prejudiced terrorists want to do a suicide attack, they produce videos and photos to be broadcasted and covered from media after operation. Apparently, this indicates the religious and faith manifestation through media; however the most religious conflicts start from the media circumstance and finally spread into real environments. Today there are several types of churches, mosques, synagogues and other religious centers which are active online on Internet and media channels. Because of that religion turns from private mode to public one. So that the boundaries between media and faith have been removing and collapsing. Hence there is many evidence that show the religion and media live together in contemporary period of time with not complete but high level of convergence, media widening was a cause the religious phenomenon will be publicized more than before, because the high impact of media and information technology on contemporary religion has led to decay "reward power" of faith, means that buying obedience and devotion to the religion is being undermined, so the submission and obedience to religion is more for "Conditional power Faith ", not because of its spiritual influence. It seems, the media weakens the public relations with organized religion and probably despite of convergence between media and religion, media get itself upper hand as expressing and representing people mentality, since today religionists are concern about the case media predominate on religion and define itself dominantly and occupy religion place as well as induce its special culture as a value system and educational factor.

According to Wedeen, Lisa. 2002, "Television and media try to act as a basis for common belief such as traditional and religious faith." Since the nature of Iran's Islamic government mass media (including radio and television and etc) is modern, regularly the media influence the religious content, i.e. the modern media impose themselves on religious concept so that there will be a conflict between the media and content, Gradually, experimentally, the modern media will desanctify religious content and will reduce ideological aspects because it is in religion place and consequently religious message will be transmitted to the audiences in a way that the modern media read and interpret it by itself (Rahimi, Babak.2003). Therefore, the Islamic government of Iran as a religious government seeks to convey Shi'ite concepts through modern media, it is not only failed but the effects were opposing. But modern media compared to traditional one are mostly influenced by society`s general beliefs and ideas(Chagay, Ram.1992). So the traditional media of any society and nation have their own particular identity and

circumstance and it distinguishes the traditional media of cultures and nations to each other. Traditional media can operate more completely in some culture than modern ones with respect to communication mechanism and are more effective than new media. Means that presenting "feedback" and "reaction" of message receiver to sender can be conducted fast and promptly perhaps and it may be due to the its bilinear nature, in the other word the sender is "the first side" of the process and the receiver is the "second side", as well as traditional media is preferred for short time and place distance and for face to face communication between sender and receiver. Inevitably, a kind of emotional and sentimental cognition will be created between sender and receiver, in addition the function of traditional media can involve social, political and economical because of their historical, social, cultural source also traditional media is trusted more than modern one due to their historical and cultural roots. For example, traditional media in Iran including mosques, religious sites, tea shops, gymnasium in public culture are considered as media bases that represent Iran identity and function, more importantly some traditional media in Iran could influence modern media for its approaching to religious government ideology after Islamic revolution. At first, the Clergymen ruling in Iran using traditional media (with religious nature) could spread Islamic Revolution in public thought and bring it to victory, secondly the social- political origin of Clergymen was in the heart of traditional-religious media, such as seminaries, mosques, etc religious sites and so on, thirdly the expansion of verbal culture due to the insecurity culture signifies the traditional media, because the traditional media mechanisms often form the communication process relying on human memory, because insecurity in the public culture does not allow communicator to present the message content in a written and recorded form. Nevertheless, verbal memorized content in the form of rhythmic poetry, stories, simple myths, symbols and so on will preserve the real message. According to scholars in this field, oral culture is rooted from closed cultures and cultures in which there is a fear and insecurity that ultimately leads to duality in social -political communication. So the governments are not as able as modern media to control and censor the traditional media why the traditional and verbal communications are considered as a best political-communicative process, because have almost formal and informal nature. The [traditional] communities more tend to attempt to retain what they are and what they have, and their transformation depends on preserving the culture and memorizing the current knowledge and pervious statements. So [The changes] would be so slowly that

the innovation and creating would not be encouraged". Consequently, the traditional communication process in society like Iran will opposed to modern media if it is not surrounded by it. Therefore the Islamic government of Iran wants to backward to social and traditional-religious historic models. Because there is a past-orientation in the form of religious traditions in Iran Islamic system, so there it is trying to organize its official modern media affected by traditional media culture. Nevertheless, the modern media-affiliated to Islamic State of Iran almost try to represent the traditional-religious medias, such as mosques, religious places, and Clergymen lectures pulpits, seminaries, shrines, mourning groups and.... .

   Clergymen in Islamic revolution of 1979, clearly could impoverish the king`s (Pahlavi II) modern communicative networks by support of traditional media. Even non-religious revolutionaries inevitably turned to the traditional media because of not accessing to modern media, but after the revolution victory, the traditional media could not be exploited due to lack of intellectual conformity to Shia and Sunnite religious clergymen, thus they could not have a share in political power. Today, Islamic broadcast (IRIB) and other modern media depending to Iranian Islamic regime want to reflect the content of traditional- religious media as a mirror, so these media becomes   virtual mosques virtual religious places, virtual lectures pulpit, Virtual seminary schools but their modern property have less conformity with religious content, as well as weaken the traditional-religious media. Because when the person can do a rituals in front of the TV show, he/she does not tend to go to mosque and it is especially true for old people and new generation after revolution, so the modern media have weaken the social function of traditional-religious media, yet the process of political relations between sovereign and people that has been strengthened by traditional -religious media is consequently weakened. Professor Hamid Mowlana, the International communication professor in USA and Ahmadinejad`s consulate in the first period of his presidency, optimistically writes:"Iranian television is a powerful media, but not because its own technology but also due to durable cultural factors that legitimizes it ..... It is mainly said that TV has ritual function which is comparable to religion if TV in United States and Europe is religion. In Iran, it is the religion that makes provision for the TV. In Iran, it is the media's legitimacy that depends on traditional channels not vice versa ...[From] the other hand, ritual functions may cause legitimacy and why it is considered higher than communicative function of a media. Overall, traditional media in Iran

proportional to Iranian culture and history are divided to two main streams:

1 - The traditional Shi'a media, such as mosques, religious places, traditional markets, seminaries, Clergymen lecture pulpit, Imams shrines, religious cities like Qom, Mashhad and ...

2 - The traditional - national media, such as hospice, the gym, the coffee houses, especially Persian literature and poetries...

Traditional   Shiite media are often supported financially by traditional markets and controlled or driven by Shia Clergymen but the features of such traditional - Shiite media is socially common among the poor and weak classes of people in combination with popular shi`I religious and its vulgar aspect will be considered as the most important index of the media.

Traditional - national media are socially belonging to the middle classes and educated people of society (especially poetry and Persian literature). In general, traditional- national media is different to traditional- Shiite media because it enjoys the civilization and nobility which transformed from the pre-Islamic era to post Islamic period flexibly and could move alternatively and interactively with traditional-shi`I media despite of differences.

Since Sufism was considered as an "attitude" of the middle classes and elicits consequently, looking at religion from Sufism perspective has spiritual nature is not so much vulgar. Naturally entering into Sufism is not relatively simple because needs to pass certain steps why the most important media is Persian poetry and literature for that social class and is full of secrets and mysteries. Poets in their own period of time were doing the same task as press today. They were people`s spokesman and interpreter of their feeling and perception of people and on the other hand they serves the powerful men.

Traditional- national media always seeks to preserve the glorified Iranian past legacy. Although there is flexibility and interaction with other culture in the nature of this media and the reason of secrets and mysteries in "Persian literature" admit the story, although Persian poetry seeks to interact and associate with shie`i and its own media. As a result, the duality element is more subtle in traditional-national media in medium class especially ″Sofia".

Rudaki (d. 329 AH) used less Arabic words in his poetry, and is lenient against prejudice; he exploited ancient Zoroastrian elements more than Iranian and Islamic factors and pay more attention to sensory aspects in religious issues. Hafez poetry as traditional- national media (on elicits) have a structure and style according to insecure and unstable situation of the society, and in the meaning sense has ambiguity and contrast. The secret and mystery in

"Bayhaqi" word indicates the frightening and insecure circumstance which surrounded him, he praising the Ghaznavi kings, have to maintain his culture and identity by interacting with political power and preserve his own culture and legacy under its power. He says: "My goal was to write fundamental history and raise a great construction and immortalize its memory throughout the world". So he repeated in his book continually:"Wise men know ...", "wise men admire..." or "wise men learn a lot from this." Ferdowsi also as a scholar tells about his poems:

"*I founded a high palace by poem,*
Neither wind nor storm can abolish it».

Turmoil, social tension and insecure feeling among educated people, caused they resort to poetry as a mysterious communication. Hafez and Saadi`s poetries was crystallized as a middle class media in insecure and unstable Mongol captured Iran, but it did not mature because concentration and relatively stability was rules in safavid and Ghajar era.  There is no poet and poem like Hafez and Sa`adi but also the poem and literature in Safavid period was strict and artificial with great exaggeration and magnification was very common in the era. So that national poets have to leave their hometown to India and Othman or sometimes Guilan in the manner the poetry and literature had been an advertizing media for Safavid kings. The elite literature was not so much durable in Persian society and immigrates to aboard with its poets, and replaced by "epic – faith", but "bacchanalian verse" that had indicated human suffering in sixth century was begun in the Safavid era (tenth century AH). In addition to popular religious attitude toward Persian poetry, Turkish poem was growing in Safavid kings palace and may be a foreground the media that is driven by elites and intellectuals lose its advertising use. During this period, the poetry media become two streams of national (Sufi), who were forced to migrate and religious (advertising) that is selected from Safavid superficiality. Subsequently, Safavids in response to the Ottoman and Uzbek prejudiced Sunni empire, provide a new reading of Shiism and tried to revive governmental Shia Revival and to strengthen Shia media or even import religious rituals from East of Europe, creates a ministry entitled "tragedian and commemoration" to complete the project, so that the minister traveled to Europe and add a ceremonies like Kotal Keshi, reading a commemoration fron Karbala martyrs, elegizing in group, music (cymbal) and sign bringing (as same as cross) which were adopted from Christendom in 16 and 17 centuries to Shi`ei ceremonies. Qajar kings followed the Safavids,

magnified the third Shiite Imam martyrdom as a tools for strengthening their political sovereignty to conventionalize the Karbala event and stupefy the Shiite and prevent people offend toward their government. By arriving modernity from Europe to Iran and Constitutional Revolution (1906 AD) the first modern European literature was founded in Iran.

A phenomenon could interact with the national media - particularly the traditional national poetry and affect thinking at the beginning of modernity.

The first Persian novels were generally critical, emotional and love story were written imitating from Europe literature.

Writhing the collection of ''charand and Parand' by A.Dehkhoda is a sign of entering Iran literature into new area and simplification is its main characteristic. Specially, story transformation into western style was because of rationalism in contract to Romanism in literary poems.

Naturally that traditional media ˝ today strongly are influenced by modern and traditional media and strongly affect on as traditional-religious media more than past and gradually lost their independent identity in political communication. So any mosque or religious place in Iran as traditional media depends on Internet and other new media.

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